

# frontier

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## On Other Pages

COMMENT	2
<i>The Nixon Papers</i>	
THE MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 15, 1972	4
ARAB MAP BEING RE-DRAWN	7
<i>The Sunderbans—I</i>	
MYTH AND REALITY BY A CORRESPONDENT	7
TAMIL WRITING R. SANKAR NARAYAN	9
THREE TRENDS	10
FILMS FROM BANGLADESH MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY	11
A MERE JALSA BY OUR MUSIC CRITIC	11
FOUR EXHIBITIONS SANDIP SARKAR	12
LETTERS	14

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## THE BANG

WHEN Mrs Gandhi feels cornered, she goes in for high drama. Some of her moves swept people off their feet,—the split with the old guard bank nationalisation, the war with and dismemberment of Pakistan. All these paid large dividends in the 1972 elections. But as the situation changed, beyond recognition, for the worse in the past two years, many expected Mrs Gandhi to come out with something dramatic to boost her frayed image. She has done it again, with a bang.

The nuclear non-proliferation treaty, to which India does not subscribe, was designed by the two super-powers to preserve their world hegemony. France and China went their own ways and the world is none the worse for it. On this score, one cannot criticise the Government of India for keeping the options open. But keeping an option and executing it are two different things. The explosion of a nuclear device "for peaceful purposes" will have wide repercussions, particularly when a government is bound to a super-power by a friendship treaty which is name for a defence pact. From the first reactions, Russia seemed to be pleased. If Iran feverishly arming herself, can be an outpost of American imperialism in that part of the world, a nuclear India can be that of Russia in the Soviet strategy of containment and defeat of China. Pakistan is dismayed. Other smaller neighbours will be perturbed. After the 1971 war it was claimed—and feared—that India had emerged as the dominant power in South Asia. Two and a half years of dire utter maladministration, corruption ruthless exploitation of the masses and cynical manipulation at all levels including elections, dealt a severe blow to these illusions of grandeur. Now the Rajasthan bang will perhaps encourage New Delhi to embark again on a forward policy from a position of strength—hasn't this government fought three wars in the last 12 years?—and be even more ruthless to the people at home.

In one respect, however, India is unique. The Western nuclear powers, Russia and China are not poor countries; their industrial development has been at a par with their nuclear achievement. But in the land millions of people are unclad, half-clad and starving and millions live on payments. A rampant inflation is taking people to the low depths of misery. The shadows of a man-made famine are lengthening. Millions of villagers have to walk miles for drinking water. Unemploy-

ment is phenomenal. The power system is cracking and the economy is crippled. Our need for foreign aid is so chronic and urgent that we have almost become street-walkers. We have seen the past and the present and we know that the future will not work unless the present system is destroyed. But in spite of our naked poverty, Mrs Gandhi has chosen to go nuclear. And at what a cost! Now railwaymen and others know why no extra money can be spared for them.

## The Strike

In the war the government has declared against two million railway workers since May 8 it has given up whatever pretensions it had till May 2 for a negotiated settlement; and it makes no bones about it. It has resolved to break the strike with all the means at its disposal, such as the DIR, MISA, AIR, TV, and so on. More than 30,000 workers have already been arrested. At least 5,000 have been summarily dismissed. Thousands of families have been forcibly evicted from their hearths and homes. Thousands are being intimidated by cutting off water and electricity supplies to their quarters in the railway colonies. Even more shockingly the Government has bailed itself out of the statutory obligation to pay to the striking workers their earned wages. The idea is to starve them into submission.

The Army, BSF, CRP and the State police forces have been deployed on an unprecedentedly massive scale in every railway centre to terrorise and force workers back to duty. The methods of repression are atrocious. The Kishanganj railway colony in Delhi is a representative example. Hundreds of women and children demonstrated near Serai Rohilla station on May 10. For nights together the CRP have been raiding their colony, hounding and chasing the workers. There were cases of severe beating of women. Members

of Parliament who later visited the area met a large number of women who bore marks of torture on their bodies. During the raid, the police went into the quarters, looted the cash and threw their belongings out on the streets. It was in protest against this that the women organised the demonstration. Led by Sarala Rani, wife of a union leader, they marched to picket at the station. The police made an indiscriminate lathi-charge, severely injuring Sarala Rani. The following day, again there was a demonstration.

The Kanchrapara railway colony in West Bengal, where 12,000 workers of the loco workshop used to live, has been a police target since May 8. Thousands of their womenfolk have been picketing to prevent the police and outside anti-social elements from entering the colony. On May 12, the BSF raided the colony. The women were beaten up with lathis. All the quarters were ransacked, but the women came out and gheraoed the BSF and these men resorted to firing. Twenty-five women were seriously injured.

Over 10,000 railwaymen of the Liloah workshop are on strike. On the first day of the strike, 76 reported for duty, but on the second day only 39 came to work. Large contingents of the armed police and Congress goondas swooped down on the colony at 1 a.m. on May 9. The women residents who gave a heroic resistance were severely beaten and some of them were arrested. What exactly happened at Kharagpur last week is not yet known. Armed attacks have been reported from different railway colonies in the county. The railway colonies at Anwargunj, Dhanbad, Patna, Goregaon, Poonā, Bombay, Akola, Parel, Byculla, Wadala, Visakhapatnam and Perambur have been turned into armed police camps. In Tamil Nadu, a number of summary trials and convictions have taken place—another form of intimidation of the employees.

The Government cannot stomach the tremendous success of the railway strike. It has started to turn

the screw tighter on the striking workmen. First it resorted to threats. When these did not work, it began arrests. As that, too, did not deter the strikers, it is now trying to gain public sympathy by cooking up or magnifying acts of sabotage.

## A Policy In Trouble

The new wheat policy is riddled with so many flaws that nothing short of a miracle will make it work. And the way things have shaped up during the first two months of its operation has not been inspiring. The traders, who have ceremoniously been reinstated to run the business, are clearly speaking in two voices. Some times they say that they will work all out to achieve a respectable procurement figure but at other times they are not so emphatic. Indian agriculture depends on so many imponderables that they can always take refuge behind one or the other to explain away their inability—actual or designed—to meet the commitment. Reports indicate that wheat prices in some regions have eased partly owing to larger arrivals. But food prices in India are not decided, as is well known by demand and supply alone. The worst thing perhaps is that the Government has largely forfeited, it seems willingly, its authority to do anything about the matter. It is hoping to import about four million tonnes of foodgrains by June and this might give it a little more bargaining strength. But nothing will work if the trade decides to play truant and create artificial shortage and rig prices. It can almost be said that the interest of so many had seldom been left to the discretion of so few.

Some of the State governments are trying to mount a belated move to hold the situation. Punjab and Haryana had never been in favour of scrapping the takeover of the wholesale trade. And even though they had to submit to the decision, they are trying to change the ground



rules to suit their interest. They are believed to be deliberately delaying issue of permits to traders which would have enabled them to start buying from the mandis. The governments want to give their own agencies an opportunity to enter the market first, make some quick purchases, harden the price and then leave it to the traders. The governments also fear that if the entire marketed surplus passes to the traders, the foodgrains, or at least the bulk of them, would be exported to other States. But the implications of such a dog in the manger policy for the rest of the country and the consumers in general are clear. The food traders will be richer by one more excuse for raising prices, and they will only be too eager to use it to their advantage.

## After The Coup

The liberation movements in Portuguese colonies in Africa have generally and guardedly welcomed the developments in Lisbon since the overthrow of the Caetano regime. General Antonio (Spinola has long advocated that it is not possible to find a solution to the problem of African colonies through military means though he did not hesitate to be ruthless himself. He has observed in his famous book Portugal and the Future that to want to win in a war of subversion by military means alone is to accept defeat in advance, unless one possesses unlimited capacity to prolong the war indefinitely. That is definitely the case with Portugal as its present economic crisis bears out. Spinola's idea is to have a multi-racial federation of Portuguese States where the overseas territories would have a fair amount of autonomy including their own parliaments and administrations but with the final control of foreign policy, defence and economy in Lisbon's hands. He likes to call this a Lusitanian community.

The liberation movements have not jumped for the idea and they are unlikely to be persuaded to accept it. The new Government in Lisbon says, however, that it has no rigid formula; on the contrary it has asked guerilla leaders in Mozambique to set out peace terms as a basis for negotiating an end to 13 years of bitter warfare. The meeting between Mr Mario Soares, the socialist Foreign Minister of the Provisional Government and the Secretary General of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands (PAIGC) has been described by Lisbon as part of a new orientation aimed at finding political solutions to the problems of Africa. It has also been announced that talks on a cease-fire in Guinea-Bissau will continue in London on May 25. Incidentally, the PAIGC set up a republic in September 1973 and it has been recognised by many States. The liberation movement in Angola is ready to start negotiations with Lisbon. What has prompted it to take such a stand are the policy changes in Portugal following Spinola's accession to power and the presence in the Cabinet of socialists and communists. The negotiations must be on the basis of recognition of the people's right to self-determination and national independence.

Spinola has set free many political prisoners in the colonies and assured the guerilla leaders the necessary protection. With the quiet exit of the governor general of Angola and Guinea-Bissau and the forced departure of Dos Santos, governor general of Mozambique there is now little chance of a unilateral declaration of independence on the pattern of Rhodesia. The guerillas have fought a "forgotten war" for over thirteen years; perhaps during peace negotiations they will attract more international attention.

As they say, their struggle for total independence will strengthen the democratic forces in Portugal itself.

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## The Meeting Of September 15, 1972

September 15, 1972—Nixon, Haldeman, Dean.

President—Hi, how are you? You had quite a day today didn't you. You got Watergate on the way didn't you?

Dean—We tried.

Haldeman—How did it all end up?

D—Ah, I think we can say well at this point. The press is playing it just as we expect.

H—Whitewash?

D—No, not yet—the story right now....

P—it is a big story.

H—Five indicted plus the WH former guy and all that.

D—Plus two White House fellows.

H—That is good, that takes the edge off Whitewash really, that was the thing Mitchell kept saying that to people in the country Liddy and Hunt were big men. Maybe that is good.

P—How did MacGruder handle himself?

D—I think very well. He had a good statement which said that the grand jury had met and that it was now time to realize that some apologies may be due.

H—Fat chance.

D—Get the damn (inaudible).

H—We can't do that.

P—just remember, all the trouble we're taking, we'll have a chance to get back one day. How are you doing on your other investigations?

H—What has happened on the bug?

P—What bug?

D—The second bug. There was a bug found in the telephone of one of the men at the DNC (Democratic Party offices).

P—You don't think it was left over from the other time?

D—Absolutely not, the bureau has checked and rechecked the whole place after that night. The man had specifically checked and rechecked the telephone and it was not there.

P—What the hell do you think was involved?

D—I think DNC was planted.

P—You think they did it?

D—Uh huh.

P—(expletive deleted)—Do they really want to believe that we planted that?

D—Three months ago I would have had trouble predicting there would be a day when this would be forgotten, but I think I can say that 54 days from now nothing is going to come crashing down to our surprise.

P—On well, this is a can of worms as you know, a lot of this stuff that went on. And the people who worked this way are awfully embarrassed. But the way you have handled all this seems to me has been very skilful putting your fingers in the leaks that have sprung here and sprung here.

D—Well, as I see it, the only problems we may have are that human problems and I will keep a close watch on that.

P—Union.

D—Human.

H—Human frailties.

D—People get annoyed some finger-pointing, false accusations, any internal dissension of any nature.

P—You mean on this case?

D—On this case. There is some bitterness between the finance committee and the political committee—

they feel they are taking all the heat and all the people upstairs are bad people, not being recognized.

P—We are all in it together. This is a war. We take a few shots and it will be over. We will give them a few shots and it will be over. Don't worry. I wouldn't want to be on the other side right now. Would you?

D—Along that line, one of the things I've tried to do, I have begun to keep notes on a lot of people who are emerging as less than our friends because this will be over some day, and we should not forget the way some of them have treated us.

P—I want the most comprehensive notes on all those who tried to do us in. They didn't have to do it. If we had had a very close election and they were playing the other side I would understand this. No, they were doing this quite deliberately and they are asking for it and they are going to get it.

We have not used the power in this first four years as you know. We have never used it. We have not used the Bureau and we have not used the Justice Department but things are going to change now. And they are either going to do it right or go.

### "Exciting"

D—What an exciting prospect.

P—Thanks. It has to be done. We have been (adjective deleted) fools for us to come into this election campaign and not do anything with regard to the Democratic senators who are running, etcetera. And who the hell are they after? They are after us. It is absolutely ridiculous. It is not going to be that way any more.

H—Really, it is ironic that we have gone to extremes. You and your damn regulations. Everybody worries about not picking up a hotel bill.

D—I think you can be proud of the White House staff. It really has had no problems of that sort. And I love this GAO audit that is going on now. I think they have some suspicion that even a cursory investi-

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gation is going to discover something here.

I don't think they can find a thing. I learnt today, incidentally, and have not confirmed is that the GAO auditor, who is down here, is here at the Speaker of the House's request.

P—That surprises me.

H—Well, (expletive deleted) the Speaker of the House. Maybe we better put a little heat on him.

P—I think so too.

H—Because he has a lot worse problems than he is going to find down here.

D—That's right.

H—That is the kind of thing that, you know, we really ought to do is call the Speaker and say: "I regret to say your calling the GAO down here because of what it is going to cause us to do to you".

P—Why don't you see if Harlow will tell him that.

H—Because he wouldn't do it—he would just be pleasant and call him Mr Speaker.

P—You really can't sit and worry about it all the same. The worst may happen but it may not. So you just try to button it up as well as you can and hope for the best, and remember, basically the damn business is unfortunately trying to cut our losses.

D—Certainly that is right and certainly it has had no effect on you. That's the good thing.

H—No, it has been kept away from the White House and of course completely from the President. The only tie to the White House is the Colson effort they keep trying to pull in.

D—And, of course, the two White House people of lower level—indicted—one consultant and one member of the domestic staff. That is not very much of a tie.

P—This happens all the time. Well, you can follow these characters to their Gethsemane, I feel for those poor guys in jail, particularly for Hunt with his wife dead.

D—Well, there is every indication they are hanging in tough right now.

P—What the hell do they expect though? Do they expect clemency in a reasonable time? What would you advise on that?

D—I think it is one of those things we will have to watch very closely. For example...

P—You couldn't do it, say, in six months.

D—No, you couldn't. This thing may become so political as a result of these hearings that it is a vendetta. This judge may go off the deep end in sentencing, and make it so absurd that it's clearly injustice that they have been heavily...

P—Is there any kind of appeal left?

D—Right. Liddy and McCord who sat through the trial, will both be on appeal and there is no telling how long that will last. It is one of these things we will just have to watch.

P—My view, though, is to say nothing about them on the ground that the matter is still in the courts and on appeal. Second, my view is to say nothing about the hearings at this point, except that I trust they will be conducted the proper way and I will not comment on the hearings while they are in process.

Of course, if they break through—if they get muck-raking—it is best not to cultivate that thing here at the White House. If it is done at the White House again, they are going to drop the (adjective deleted) thing. Now there, of course, you say but you leave it all to them. We'll see as time goes on. Maybe we will have to change our policy. But

the President should not become involved in any part of this case.

D—I agree totally, Sir, absolutely. That doesn't mean that quietly we are not going to be working around the office. You can rest assured that we are not going to be sitting quietly.

P—I don't know what we can do. The people who are most disturbed about this (unintelligible) are the (adjective deleted) Republicans. A lot of these Congressmen, financial contributors, et cetera, are highly moral. The Democrats are just sort of saying "(expletive deleted) fun and games".

D—Well, hopefully we can give them Segretti.

P—(Expletive deleted). He was such a dumb figure. I don't see how our boys could have gone for him. But nevertheless, they did. It was really juvenile. But, nevertheless, what the hell did he do? What in the (characterization deleted) did he do? Shouldn't we be trying to get intelligence? Weren't they trying to get intelligence from us?

D—Absolutely.

P—Don't you try to disrupt their meetings? Didn't they try to disrupt ours? (expletive deleted). They threw rocks, ran demonstrations, shouted, cut the sound system, and let the tear gas in at night. What the hell is that all about? Did we do that?

D—McGovern had Dick Tuck on his payroll, and Dick Tuck was down in Texas when you were down at the Connally ranch and set up to do a prank down there. But it never came off.

P—What did Segretti do that came off?

For Frontier contact :

**BANKURA NEWSPAPER**

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For Frontier contact

**MANITHAN,**

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**Madras - 17.**



D—He did some humorous things. For example, there would be a fund-raising dinner, and he hired Wayne the Wizard to fly in from the Virgin Islands to perform a magic show. He sent invitations to all the black diplomats and sent limousines out to have them picked up, and they all showed up and they hadn't been invited. He had 400 pizzas sent to another...

P—Sure, what the hell, pranks. Tuck did all those things in 1960, and all the rest.

D—I think we can keep the Segretti stuff in perspective because it is not that bad. Chapin's involvement is not that deep. He was the catalyst, and that is about the extent of it.

P—Sure. He knew him and recommended him.

D—That's right.

P—But he didn't run him. He was too busy with us.

D—Well I was—we have come a long road on this thing now. I had thought it was an impossible task to hold together until after the election until things started falling out, but we have made it this far and I am convinced we are going to make it the whole road and put this thing in the funny pages of the history books rather than anything serious because actually...

P—I will be somewhat serious but the main thing, of course, is also the isolation of the President.

D—Absolutely, totally true.

P—Because that, fortunately, is totally true.

D—I know that, sir.

P—(expletive deleted) of course, I am not dumb and I will never forget when I heard about this (adjective deleted) forced entry and bugging. I thought, what in the hell is this? What is the matter with these people? Are they crazy?

I thought they were nuts. A prank! But it wasn't, it wasn't very funny. I think that our democratic friends know that too. They know what the hell it was. They don't think we'd be involved in such.

D—I think they do too.

P—Maybe they don't. They don't think I would be involved in such stuff. They think, I have people capable of it. And they are correct, in that Colson would do anything. Well, OK—have a little fun. And now I will not talk to you again until you have something to report to me...

P—There must have been an indication of the fact that we had poor pickin'. Because naturally anybody, either Chuck or Bob, were always reporting to me about what was going on. If they ever got any information they would certainly have told me that we got some information, but they never had a thing to report. What is the matter? Did they never get anything out of the damn thing?

D—I don't think they ever got anything, sir.

P—A dry hole?

D—That's right.

P—(expletive deleted).

D—Well, they were just really getting started.

P—Yeah. Bob one time said something to me about something, this or that or something but I think it was something about the convention. I think it was about the convention problems they were planning something. I assume that must have been Macgregor—not Macgregor but Segretti.

D—No. Segretti wasn't involved in the intelligence gathering piece of it at all.

P—Oh, he wasn't? Who the hell was gathering intelligence?

D—That was Liddy and his outfit.

P—Apart from Watergate?

D—That's right. Well you see Watergate was part of intelligence gathering, and this was their first thing. What happened is...

P—That was such a stupid thing!

D—It was incredible—that was right. That was Hunt.

P—To think of Mitchell and Bob would have allowed—would have allowed—this kind of operation to be in the campaign committee.

D—I don't think he knew it was there.

P—I don't think that Mitchell knew about this sort of thing.

D—Oh, no, no. Don't misunderstand me. I don't think that he knew the people. I think he knew that Liddy was out intelligence-gathering. I don't think he knew that Liddy would use a fellow like McCord (expletive removed), who worked for the committee. I can't believe that.

P—How the hell does Liddy stand up so well?

D—He's a strange man, Mr President.

P—Strange or strong?

D—Strange and strong. His loyalty is—I think it is just beyond the pale, nothing...

P—He hates the other side too, doesn't he?

D—Oh, absolutely. He is strong. He really is.

P—Is it too late to go the hang-out road?

D—Yes, I think it is. The hang-out road...

P—The hang-out road (inaudible).

D—It was kicked round Bob and I and...

P—Ehrlichman always felt it should be hang-out.

D—Well, I think I convinced him why he would not want to hang-out either. There is a certain domino situation here. If some things start going, a lot of other things are going to start going, and there can be a lot of problems if everything starts falling. So there are dangers, Mr President. I would be less than candid if I didn't tell you there are. There is a reason for not everyone going up and testifying.

P—I see. Oh no, no, no, I didn't mean to have everyone go up and testify.

(Next week: The Three Meet Again)

For Frontier contact

POPULAR BOOK STALL,

Near Bank of India,

Bhadra

## Arab Map Being Redrawn

The map of the Arab East is being redrawn: not for the benefit of the oppressed or even that of the ruling Arab cliques in the long run, but for the purpose of establishing neo-colonialism in the area and placing it within the orbit of American global strategy.

The cartographers are Kissinger, the "superstat", Sadat the "commander for peace", Mrs. Meir "the only woman in the Israeli cabinet", and Feisal "the king of all Arabs". Those grand designers foresee a "permanent" Israel in Palestine with "secure and defensible borders" and when a final peace treaty is signed, Israel shall have access to Arab markets, capital, and society. As for the Arabs, a new status quo free of pan-Arabism, socialism and revolution shall obtain and be maintained under a Saudi-Egyptian entente based on Islam, oil, and friendship with America and Europe and undergirded by a joint Saudi-Gulf-U.S. partnership of investors whose reconquest of Egypt shall be enshrined in the re-establishment of an expanded stock exchange in Cairo and embodied in irrevocable guarantees for would-be investors ready to stake their future on the new paradise of oil and godliness.

In brief, an attempt is being made to reverse a half century of Arab anti-colonialism and to install a new order in the Mideast which requires for its implementation the aborting of the "national democratic" phase of the revolution: the sanctification of regionalism in the Arab World; the abandonment of the vision of a one Arab, socialist nation-state from the Atlantic Ocean as the West, to the Arab Gulf on the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean in the east. In other words, the 20-year Nasserite struggle to rid the Arab nation of its foreign masters and obtain true independence is being overthrown by a right-wing alliance under the aegis of the U.S. whose ideology is inspired by a religious fundamentalism based on upper class populist pers-

pectives; underpinned by an alliance of the possessing classes and their eunuchs within each State; and, externally endorsed and safeguarded by the continued presence of Israel in the Arab Mideast and the Sixth Fleet offshore. That is, the Nasserite world which posited Egypt as the storm centre of the Arab homeland and perceived the promotion of its national interests within the ambit of the three central circles: Arab, African and Islamic; that world is being supplanted by a world view which reverses the order of the circles and replaces the Nasserite alliance of four classes—peasants, workers, lower middle class, and the national bourgeoisie—by an alliance of military bureaucrats and restored feudalists supported by Gulf oil buccaneers and American sharks designated by the State Department and the Pentagon.

In a word, the Arab world is being made safe for joint exploitation by local and international hucksters, but this time more intensively and extensively under the aegis of neo-colonialism American style instead of traditional colonialism of the British varieties. It is the dawning of a new age of psychic violence, ruthless suppression of the opposition and brutal regimentation, militarization and atomization of Arab society. The question is, can the proponents of the "new order" rearrange the Arab world in such a manner as to establish it, maintain it, and secure it for posterity? The answer is such an order is historically doomed if established; but the revolutionaries must do their utmost to smash it before its midwives give it birth.

(Abridged. From the bulletin of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine).

## The Sunderbans—1

### Myth And Reality

BY A CORRESPONDENT

OF late the Sunderbans area has been brought before the limelight by the West Bengal Government. So many development schemes are supposed to be executed in this area. But is the Government really serious? It is hard to believe that projects like the Cotton Project in 1973 and the Tiger Project in 1974 in the Sunderbans area have been started with a view to helping the toiling masses. The Government knows that socially and politically backward areas are not able to judge the merits of any such project and so there will be no questions raised about the misuse of money, man-power and resources.

The Sunderbans area includes Sandeshkhali, Gosaba and Hasnabad police stations in the Basirhat sub-division, Mahurapur and Sagar police stations in the Diamond Harbour sub-division and parts of Canning and Jaynagar police stations in the Sagar sub-division of 24-Parganas district. A vast portion in the southernmost part is covered with dense forest. The area supplies rice from the inhabited parts and timber, fish, honey and wax from the forest. From this point of view its importance can never be ignored. About the people, however, there has been no serious study. Any such study does not seem to be profitable, for obvious reasons, to the Government. The Census report of 1961 betrays this lack of interest. But since the people of this area are among the most wretched of the earth a thorough study is imperative. An attempt will here be made to present in a series an account of the conditions and problems of these people.

There is no need to begin with an attempt to trace the history from the time of the Puranas. Even Pratapaditya is not at all important



when we are attempting to understand the people of the Sunderbans. Maybe the place was well-populated in his time. But it became deserted somehow and the time-span was sufficient for the place to be covered with dense forest. Thus the area lost all its tradition and a new chapter was to open in the British period.

The British rulers thought of reclamation of the forest area even in 1773. "In 1830 the grants of the forest were promulgated". In 1910 the reclamation works stopped and no further grant was given. So the history is as old as 200 years. But reliable records about the people who were brought there first are not available.

When the census was taken in 1891, the results of which were compiled in the Bengal District Gazetteers by L. S. S. O'Malley, it was already a history of a century. We may infer only from these records.

#### Scheduled Castes

The Sunderbans area of Khulna (now in Bangladesh) and 24 Parganas, according to O'Malley's Bengal District Gazetteers was mainly populated by Pods (Poundras) and Chandals (Namasudras). These two castes were, according to him, 'semi-Hinduised aboriginal-descents'. They were capable of adapting themselves to the peculiar conditions of this area. They were industrious and thrifty while their habits were almost 'amphibious', i.e. they could work hard both in land and on water.

The Census report of 1961 shows also that in the Sunderbans area more than 60% of the population are from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The scheduled castes of the area which deserve to be mentioned are Poundras, Namasudras, Bagdis and Rajbansis. Castes like Muchi, Dhoba etc. may be traced but their number is negligible.

Influx into the area within this period is due to many factors and from many places. People came

from Midnapur, Khulna and other districts. Profit-makers came from many corners. In spite of all these factors, the place remains even today an area of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. A major part of the non-scheduled caste Hindus—the Mahishyas and Tantis—are of Kaibartya origin which is classified as 'semi-Hinduised aboriginal descents'.

The caste-system was a reflection of the class system of the old society. The Brahmin culture was the culture of the ruling classes. Even in the British period we find the dominating Hindus of the society upholding Brahmin culture to be their own. This culture did not hesitate to make a compromise whenever necessary with the indigenous or folk-culture. The compromise was necessary because of changes of government. These changes before the British did not change the economy. So the Brahmin culture was cherished by the land and power-holding Hindus. The culture admitted 'the aboriginal descents' into the Hindu world only to compete with the Muslim influence. But these semi-Hinduised people were not recognised as caste Hindus. They were ruled, oppressed and exploited. They were used only to increase and safeguard the property of the power-holding section.

In the British regime this semi-serfdom could not hold much ground and these people were allowed to go to new areas only to make it habitable. In this way the oppressed section of the rural society, encouraged by the British rulers, came to the Sunderbans area from adjacent places.

To the question as to how they came, there is another probable answer. Perhaps they came for the first time as seasonal labourers. They would work for the season and then leave. There were two seasons—the season of cultivation and the season of harvesting. Ultimately they settled in the area. But their lot did not improve. Then they went to other places for jobs.

Men from the Scheduled Tribes were engaged in embankment and deforestation. But for cultivation of the area the hard-working men of the scheduled castes were essential. Perhaps in the earlier period they were seduced. But later, observations show, they came here stricken with flood, famine and pestilence. Lastly they came as a result of Partition.

The Muslim and Christian communities of the area include a large number of converted men from this section. In the areas adjacent to the forest the Muslims are not large in number but have an influence peculiar to the area.

The inflow of caste Hindus is not very old. They comprise only a small section. They are mainly landowners, businessmen, teachers and officials. Many of them are not permanent dwellers.

The Sunderbans is represented in the Bidhan Sabha and the Lok Sabha by Scheduled Caste members. That does not mean that the exploited class is represented. The sufferings of the toiling people are never voiced by their 'representatives'. These exploited men do not require superstructural institutions. The burning question for them is how to exist, how to get a job to maintain themselves. More educational institutions, or setting up of a bank or taking stock of the tiger population would do no good to them. A radical change in the economic condition and nothing short of it can put them in a better position. The Government, however, thinks of nothing but squandering money.

The author is fully conscious of the generalized statements made in this article. He will corroborate these with published documents and his own observations in course of this series.



## Tamil Writing

R. SANKARA NARAYAN

MR Iravatham's remark about the usage of Sanskrit words in the Tamil syntax (13.4.1974) is ridiculous. If we admit that the use of Sanskrit gives an exotic flavour, how could the use of English produce an aboriginal flavour? Tamilising Sanskrit words is being done right from the development of Tamil prose in a natural way and the blend is so fine that an average reader cannot even find out the etymology. He cannot easily understand pure Tamil writing without a Tamil dictionary. It is impossible to think of pure Tamil writing without exotic flavour, because the spoken Tamil language has always this flavour. But, in no way will this affect the growth of Tamil prose or poetry; conversely, it is only the so-called Tamil scolars or pundits who destroyed the growth of modern Tamil prose by following a pure Tamil style which is also equally exotic as *Manipravalam* (a horrible mixture of Tamil and Sanskrit).

It is better to go back to the ancient days to trace certain basic points before coming to any conclusion. Among all the 14 major languages in India, I feel that Tamil is the only language where the gap between a spoken language and a written language is so wide that literary Tamil prose or poetry seems Greek to the college students, Latin to the average Tamil reader and zero to the masses. Tamil college students find it very difficult to pass Tamil examinations. The standard is very high and meaningless.

There is no doubt about the antiquity of Tamil and its glorious Sangam age of the 1st century. With Aryan penetration, the language reached a new height by developing grammar, *Tholkappiyam*, *Agasthyam* etc. Unfortunately, after the Sangam, no real interest was paid to the development of prose or drama. Indigenous dialects were

not assimilated by the authors of the middle age. The language itself was destroyed by Brahminical mythologies like *Ramayanam*, *Mahabharatham*, *Siva Puranam* etc. etc. Further, the language remained a possession of the feudal lords and vassals. By this time, Sanskrit was able to penetrate deeply into the rural areas and a new style of *Manipravalam* developed, by blending Sanskrit and Tamil. Tamilising Sanskrit by the rural folk became a necessity since the 'pure' Tamil slept along with feudal treasures. After 1000 or 1500 years of total oblivion, the Tamil pundits of the 20th century suddenly realised this and started the eradication campaign overnight in the name of 'Pure Tamil Movement'.

Unfortunately, Tamil literature was monopolised by the upper classes. The hero and heroines are all kings and vassals or merchants who glorify the feudal elements. No prose or drama developed at this stage except some rubbish form of poetry. Tamil prose developed only in the 19th century starting with the *Manipravalam* style. The great V. K. Suryanarayana Sastri was one of those who did not tolerate the Tamilising of Sanskrit. He changed even his name to *Parithimar Kalaignar* (= Surya Narayanan). Anybody reading his prose can easily pick out hundreds of Sanskrit words on a single page! For language, he was using the word *baashai*, even though he could have used the word *mozhi* which was in vogue. However, people like Marai Malai Adigal and Thiru Vee Ka succeeded to a certain extent in the anti-Sanskrit campaign. Unfortunately their style is too hard. They wrote such Tamil that a layman cannot understand a single sentence without a dictionary. What we really needed was a middle way and that was achieved by modern poets following the tradition of Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi. Pure Tamil is now alienated from the masses. The scholarly writings of such pure

Tamil by Mu. Va. The. Po. Mee, etc. etc. are now out of date.

In the later part of the 20th century, there developed a middle way, a new technique in Tamil prose writing i.e. journalistic writing. In this field, Mr C. N. Annadurai, Mr Kalki stood foremost and their ideas were carried to the masses, thanks to their simple style. Unfortunately, in spite of several C.N.As and Kalki's, there are still some wrong notions that the style will be standard only if it is hard and not understandable. In Tamil, there are about half a dozen dailies and several weekly magazines which develop excellent modern Tamil prose. In drama and cinema you find excellent dialogue. The languages used in the press, cinema or drama is easily communicable to the masses, though some blend of Sanskrit is admitted.

But this kind of simple prose is never recognised by the conservative Tamil scholars. If you take English, a student who follows the journalistic style is sure to get a distinction at the examination. But if he follows the style of *Thina Thanthi* or *Dinamani* in his Tamil examination, he will certainly fail. To get a distinction in Tamil, a student is expected to write standard Tamil i.e. with hard words in vogue in the Sangam age of the 1st century. As a matter of fact, there is no active voice in the pure Tamil prose style, though originally Tamil was a very active language. It was Thiruvalluvar who introduced the passive voice in the language.

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### Three Trends

Iravatham's article on 'Modern Tamil Poetry' in the 13th April issue is insufficient and partisan. At least three trends are seen in modern Tamil poetry. One trend is the use of modern forms only to express mental distortions and philistine feelings. For example, Kalappirra, Devakottain Moorthy and two-thirds of the ka cha ba tha pa ra poets. Another trend is to use them for an attack on the present social injustices and overthrow the system by the toiling masses. This trend is represented by Inculab, Akkiniputhiran, Pudiyyarasu, Sakthikkamal Parinaman etc. It is needless to say that there is another group using both the trends and serving occasional petty

poetry to the masses. For example, Mera, Sirpi, Kamarajan, Tamil Nadan etc.

Iravatham has overlooked the content of modern Tamil poetry. He is ready to point out some petty bourgeois philistines as representatives of modern Tamil poetry. Because of this he is able to forget Inculab and others.

The author himself is a modern poet of mini-poems. Because of modesty he might have kept silent about his own poems. But I should not do the same. Two examples are enough.

#### (1) *Intercourse*

Forgetting all we have spoken  
Let us like dumb animals,  
Begin to love.  
The brightness of your eyes,

Shoulders, breasts  
And other silent areas  
Enough for me.....

#### (2) *Kanchipuram—1973*

Amidst ruined halls,  
Feeling of lost  
Shattered sculptures  
Denies to be alive.  
Bats' excrement  
Makes the stomach shrink  
The mind refuses to get rid of the  
sins  
By bathing in the scum-coated  
pond  
The temple stares at the sky  
As a question.

These show which trend Iravatham represents. How can one expect him to write about modern Tamil poetry in the other manner?

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## Films From Bangladesh

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

THE cinema in Bangladesh is still very young. It had a shaky start about two decades ago, initially with Urdu films, but gradually films in the Bengali language became more popular. Within a very short time, studios and laboratories were set up and film production gathered momentum. A few Calcutta technicians, mostly second rate, migrated to Dacca, but very soon the new film industry there was able to build up its own crew. Folklores and costume drama dominated the early films, but these slowly gave way to contemporary social themes. The 1971 military crackdown and the subsequent disorder interrupted film production; studios and theatres were damaged and many film people crossed over to the other side of the border. But after liberation production resumed with renewed vigour and during 1972-1974, more than thirty films were produced annually and there were always about two hundred films on the floor. A sort of exchange of ideas also started between India and Bangladesh when Ritwik Ghatak made a film in Dacca and Rajen Tarafdar launched co-production. The delegation which visited India on the occasion of the recent festival gave us a concrete picture of the film world in Bangladesh and from their reports it seemed that the industry could easily hope for a speedy recovery from the decay that set in during the Pakistani regime.

The festival gave the first opportunity for an overall assessment of the cinema in Bangladesh. Previously, we had seen only two films, Jahir Raihan's *Jiban Thekey Neyya*, which, in spite of its clumsy thematic presentation and sub-standard technical qualities, had a ring of sincerity and an embryonic sense of social purpose the other film was *Natun Phuler Gandha*, an innocuous love-story. These two films gave bleak ideas

about the Bangladesh cinema and the films in the recent festival could hardly improve on the earlier impression. The general level was curiously much below mediocre; the story-ideas were crude and childish; the cinematic construction was almost non-existent and the banal theatricalities were carry-overs of incompetent, amateurish stage traditions; the acting was plain and hammy and most of the technicians have yet to learn the elementaries of their craft. Two films in this festival were made after the liberation and the rest were pre-1971 products. Aesthetically, there was little difference between the two periods, although in the post-liberation films one could get a little closer to reality whereas the pre-liberation ones moved in a make-believe world, totally detached from objective social background.

The festival was a mixed fare. The audience had a taste of many varieties, social subjects—rural and urban, devotional themes, socio-political themes of the liberation struggle and its aftermath and historical costume dramas. Jahir Raihan's *Anwara* took us to the idyllic countryside and its story had a Cinderella touch where a simple village girl harassed by her step-mother finally met her Prince Charming. But many imbecile things preceded the denouement and we were served with a garish dish of full-blown melodrama. There were some interesting glimpses of Muslim social customs and rituals but these were there as just unnecessary paddings and added nothing to the total impact. Kazi Jahir's *Abus Mon* was a long-winding triangle-tale full of frothy sentimentality. Subhash Dutta's *Abhirbhab* was a futile attempt to explore the psychological problems of a barren woman and ultimately ended up as a medley of unbelievable coincidences. *Lalan Fakir* failed miserably both as a musical and as an authentic biography of the famous folk-mystic. *Ora Agarajon* more or less succeeded in the documentary portrayal of the liberation struggle

through a fairly expert blending of actuality coverages and the enacted scenes of guerilla-action, but the story-part was faulted by inept plot-handling, one-dimensional characterisations and a mesh of adolescent platitudes with a gusto of patriotic speeches in every reel. We had reports that *Alor Michhil* touched upon the post-liberation corruption and exposed the vices of the ruling class, but unfortunately, that film was not shown to the Press. *Nabab Sirajdulla's* dramatic structure closely followed the text of Sachin Sen-gupta's play (keeping most of the dialogue intact, but replacing the songs by better ones) and in spite of its loud acting style, the pace was brisk and there was a touch of authenticity in period recreation.

## A Mere Jalsa

By Our Music Critic

THE fifth annual music conference of the Suresh-Sangit-Sangsad held from May 2 to 5 at Rabindra Sadan comprised five sessions including a morning one on the last day. The first, the Tagore session, was dedicated to the late Anadikumar Das-tidar, the second to that of the late Pandit S. N. Ratanjankar, the third to that of the late Ustad Amir Khan and the last to that of the late Bhupendrakrishna Ghose; but none to the memory of the late Suresh Chakraborty in whose name the Sangsad stands. He lives in name only. Poor soul!

As regards paying homage to the departed musicians, apart from two documentary films on Ustad Amir Khan screened on his commemoration day, no discussion or talk or dissertation on the contributions to Indian music made by the musicians named above was arranged. The homage paid to the departed souls was nominal indeed.

A conference presupposes such intellectual pursuits as research, appraisal, evaluation, discussion etc.

that are rather painstaking to undertake and perform. Holding a musical soiree is a much easier pastime and, naturally, that is what the Sangsad actually did in course of its programmes under review. Far from a conference, it was a mere jalsa and nothing more.

The experimental venture of the Ashramik Sangha to enact Tagore's verse-play, *Gandhariv Avedan*, was reduced to a melodrama by dint of their misconception and the incapability of the actors to recite the poem according to the rhythms and metrical divisions laying emphasis on the proper syllables. *Shyama* presented by the same troupe was disappointing. When Uttiya was looking for the guard he was not to be found on the stage and it was not known why the brave fellow did not show up until after the end of the scene. Mr Mihir Ghosh as Vajrasen was so stiff that he did not know what to do when somebody on the stage was saying or doing something. The harmonium was loud and discordant and jarring to the ear. The singing of Mrs Suchitra Mitra and Mr Ashoktaru Banerjee, though not superb, did much to hold the standard of the session. Mrs Mitra was earlier accorded a reception on her attainment of Padmashree.

Mr Krishnadas Ghosh was conferred "The Musician of Bengal 1974" on Ratanjankar Day. Mr Chinmoy Lahiri paid homage to his late preceptor by introducing a self-made raga, Ratan-Shangkara, named after him. Though he infused much enterprise in his khyals, very little of shangkara was apparent in his Ratan-Shangkara. Comparatively his Kousikanara was well sung. Mr Ilias Khan gave a flavour of vintage sitar baaz in his alap and gat in Chayanat. Mrs Purabi Mukherji's Janasambodhini resembled the late Amir Khan Sahib's Kalashri. She betrayed much feeling for her departed preceptor when she sang an Urdu ghazal or remembrance. The alap of Mr Vilayet Khan, though not very systematic was full of the usual gimmicks concentrating on surprising the audience

with double octave glissandos (meend) and speedy tan. But the sweet pain of Puriyadhanashri was hardly revealed. He elaborated his alap in the song-style and complemented it further with his own singing. Then he announced that a gat was nothing but a gat and chose a medium tempo composition in trital in the same raga. Of course gatkari and tankari were the forte of his house and they were set in medium tempo. His make-believe dhun in so-called Bhatiali was neither Baul nor Bhatiali. His composition in Bihari was of course better appreciated.

Mr Aminuddin Dagar gave a commendable recital of alap and dhruwad in the major morning raga, Bhai rav. His barhat and gamaks were intelligent, and refined. It was really an intellectual treat. The best performance of the entire jalsa was the khyal recital of Mrs Girija Devi who gave a superb rendition of Deshi Tori. There was fusion of the emotional and aesthetic contents in her singing. The tans executed by her were as varied as delicately nuanced. At times she reminded one of Mrs Kesharbai Kerkar. Her Bhajan and Dadra were highly appreciated.

The much publicised artiste of the circle, Mr Amjad Ali Khan, presented alap in his self-created raga, Chandradhwani, inspired by the now-prevalent Koushidhwani. But why Chandradhwani? Why not Hindolika with which it has the highest resemblance? Mr Ali should realise that a raga is not merely a progression of notes as the Western scales. The chief divergence between Eastern and Western music is that a raga melody has an individual identity and character of its own. But Mr Ali's creation is lacking in these two essential prerequisites. No wonder that he hurriedly switched over to a composition in Abhogi where also his mainstay was virtuoso flourish and gimmick instead of emotive melodic cohesion. His style lacked genuineness inasmuch as it was an unhappy conglomerate of different styles.

Mr Subrata Roy Choudhury seemed

to be a true disciple of Mr Ali in the manner of his either performance in the major morning raga, Mia-ki-Tori, in the earlier session. The same reliance on gimmick and flourish, the same concentration on virtuoso playing to the detriment of the emotive development of the melodic patterns. He followed in the footsteps of Mr Ali, in a much less efficient manner though.

In accompanying Vilayet, Mr Keramatullah Khan proved once again that as a percussionist he is still unsurpassable. Mr Swapan Choudhury gave a good account of himself on the tabala while accompanying Amjad Ali and Mr Pankaj Chakraborty a new hand, displayed an improved manner of playing on the tabala. But Mrs Prabha Atre's vocal recitals were not up to the standard.

## Four Exhibitions

SANDIP SARKAR

**P**ARTHA Pratim Deb, trained in Visvabharati and Bardoda, teaches painting at the Rabindrabharati University. His first solo exhibition at the Academy of Fine Arts was quite refreshing. He has been slightly influenced by Subramanyam, but on the whole has given a very promising account of himself.

All types of visual arts have to depend on optical illusion to an extent. Artists generally transform this optical element and create a convincing maya which enchants the viewer. Partha refuses to add this magic property. He wants to be totally objective and analyse how our retina registers the various things that catch the eye. He wants to see how our vision plays tricks on us, how it employs our other senses while focusing on something, how it distorts, concentrates, chooses and arranges the world outside the etc. Three-fourths of a circle can force us to see the fourth that is not there. An absent colour may steal in where



there are two colours. A mere suggestion of a fruit-seller's shop may start a chain-reaction in our visual imagination. A bird's eye view of pastries layed out on trays may not be realistically painted but may tell us much about visual reconstruction. The texture of the icing and cream, design and colour may hint at something. Deb uses colours flatly in their purity and from time to time brings in impasto to accentuate the light, but that very rarely. From pointalism to cubism and after, he has studied and absorbed everything, but has taken all movements with a pinch of salt, making use of them where necessary but rejecting when it is unnecessary. His print-making plays with and studies optical illusion but adds a bit of the sacred magical quality.

Assuredly he will gain more experience in oils and measure up to his full stature.

Like Deb, Harekrishna Bag teaches at the Rabindra Bharati. His second

exhibition at the Academy of Fine Arts had lithographs, etching with one intiglio thrown in. Bag had his training also at Santiniketan, and although he is in no ways influenced by Somnath Hore, there is internal evidence of Hore's precision and skill. Some of his lithographs have the character of collage (21). Suggestive arrangements of space are sometimes breath-taking. Even where the form is abstract there is structure. Newspaper clippings are deftly used as a sort of motif as if to say that the modern world is in the grip of words and mass media. He sometimes uses silhouettes of war scenes to indicate a pessimistic, morbid atti-

Certain shapes that we take for granted, the square shape of a book, the circular shape of plates and lampsheds—geometrical shapes of everyday objects—are used by Bag. He only detaches these basic shapes from the objects and sets them side by side. He has brought in a certain amount of texture, sometimes linear

or fine-grained. There is an amount of technical jugglery involved but his keen sense of composition bypasses design.

Mrs Arundhuti Ray Choudhury's exhibition at the Academy of Fine Arts had a retrospective character. One felt that she has failed to mature. There were the usual water colours—landscape and scenes done while still a student. There was a series of excellent drawings. These drawings had a charm that the paintings lacked. Then there were scenes done in Europe, cafes and usual outdoor scenes.

Samir Ghosh's drawing exhibition at Simlai Cafe had amateurish work done in student days. It shows that he has travelled a lot to usual and unusual places. Instead of camera he has used the pen and ink drawings to record things. He has unintentionally shown the limitations of drawing as well as that of the camera. On the whole the exhibition was rather unimpressive.

ANDRE BETEILLE

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## Letters

### Resignation

There has been a lot of speculation, confusion and a bewildered sense of suspicion about my going to China as a member of the Kotnis Committee. Some, like Mina Ghosh, (*Frontier*, May 11, 1974), have even gone further, to read in my proposed visit a move towards international detente between Soviet Russia and China.

Through your columns I would like to inform all of them that I have already resigned my post in the Information Branch of the USSR Consulate General in Calcutta.

HEMANGO BISWAS  
Calcutta

### Teachers' Organisation

A document called "Amendment of the constitution suggested by the Executive Committee, WBCUTA" was circulated among the delegates to the 48th Annual Conference of WBCUTA. We find it urgent and imperative to comment on two of its points.

(1) The words 'Laboratory Assistants' are to be deleted from the explanation of Clause IV of the constitution, that is, this section of the teaching community will no longer have the right to become a member of WBCUTA.

(2) The Executive Committee suggests that the General Secretary should in future be elected by the Executive Committee and its office-bearers and not by the Annual General Meeting and so Clause XXI should be adequately amended.

We also think that the constitution of WBCUTA has become badly outdated and is quite unable to cope with the complicated situation that exists in the world of education today. If WBCUTA is to serve the real interests of the college and university teachers its constitution must be changed to reflect the ideals and

aspirations of the militant teachers. But we also feel that the change must be for the better and should not pave the way for any curb on the democratic rights of the members. It is our considered opinion that the proposed changes mentioned above would divide the ranks of our members and further weaken the democratic spirit of our organisation.

Unity is the prime necessity of the day. Only a broad-based united front of all democratic elements can counteract the fascism now raging in this country. The whole teaching community must unite and present a solid front before the forces of reaction if it is to exist with honour. At a time like this any split in our ranks would be fatal. If we debar the laboratory assistants from joining our organization we shall be alienating a considerable section of our community and shall be yielding a great advantage to our adversaries. A problem will also arise about that portion of our membership who are laboratory assistants and who have for so long been our sworn brothers. This cannot be allowed to happen.

If we are to unite the democratic forces against our common foe, we must have an organization that would be democratic in word and in deed. WBCUTA can grow into such an organization if we can resolutely fight all the tendencies to the contrary. But if the suggestion of the Executive Committee is heeded and the constitution amended in its favour, if the power of choosing the most important office-bearer is taken away from the hands of the general members, vested in the hands of a few individuals of the Executive Committee, it will be a flagrant violation of the democratic norms of our organization and it will foster bureaucracy and despotism at the top.

The way in which we elect our General Secretary now is not very democratic either. The general members have to accept one of the two names recommended by the Executive Committee and can do nothing if none of the two candidates is to their liking. This should be reme-

died. A system must be worked out by means of which the General Secretary can be elected to the satisfaction of the whole membership.

We call upon every member of WBCUTA to resist the proposed change. They must be vigilant against all attempts to curtail their rights and we are confident that the members WBCUTA will triumph over all subversive activities of a few motivated persons.

A section of WBCUTA  
Calcutta

### Crisis In Israel

Only a move from confrontation to good-neighbourliness can ensure a lasting peace and genuine security for all States of the Middle East, including Israel the people of which are becoming increasingly aware of how benefit for the country the expansionist course is. Mrs Golda Meir's decision to step down from the post of Prime Minister reflects a crisis of political and military conceptions of the Israeli Government. The Israeli myth of 'safe borders' based on territorial seizures was shattered by Arab unity. The attempt to reduce the matter to 'miscalculations and errors' in the October war, to find a scapegoat by retiring the Army Chief Elazar, by removing Defence Minister Dayan to another post—all these are manoeuvres to delude the Israeli public, to gloss over the true cause of the crisis.

ATTAR CHAND  
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## AN APPEAL

*In view of the acute shortage of newsprint and the rising cost of everything under the sun, we reduced the number of pages and increased the price of 'Frontier'. But it is difficult to keep pace with the run-away inflation.*

*We are therefore compelled to appeal to our readers and well-wishers for donations to 'Frontier'. We do so reluctantly, for we are aware of the general hardship.*

## Defend Prisoners

The Legal Aid Committee has been organised to defend all those who are being victimised for holding political beliefs dissimilar to those of the party in power. Our object is to defend such cases irrespective of the political ideology of the victims.

There are thousands of detenus and undertrial prisoners in West Bengal only. Innumerable cases have been pending since 1968-69. Despite reminders the police are reluctant to submit chargesheets and bail is being opposed stubbornly. If one is granted bail he is tagged to some other cases. Thus the prisoners are virtually denied any defence. The overwhelming majority of those who had to be released after the Supreme Court struck down Section 17A of the MISA, were immediately re-arrested.

There is great need to expand our work and the task before us is huge. We can hope to tackle it adequately only if greater co-operation is forthcoming from all democratically-

minded people not only in this State but in the whole of India.

We appeal to all democratic people :

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Calcutta-1.  
Visiting hours: 4-30 p.m. to  
6-30 p.m. on weekdays (bar-  
ring holidays).