

frontier

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THE cost to the Arab forces, whether of victory or a setback, will be tremendous. But it is worth while. For too long the Zionists have been going berserk, and it began to seem that the no-war no-peace situation will break the backbone of the Arabs, till a tame settlement is contrived by the two Big Powers, whose game of collusion and contention is indeed fascinating—to those who do not have to pay the price. The perfidy of the Americans has been pretty obvious ever since the end of World War II. The dubious strategy and tactics of the Russians are not, to many outside the spheres of influence and contention. But those affected by Russian policy began to see through the game—even the long-haired, West-loving Czechoslovaks and the flamboyant, inept militarists of the undivided Pakistan. In West Asia, the Russians were humiliated by Sadat; arms, of course, were not banned by the Kremlin, but it began to send thousands of qualified Jews to Israel, which meant a severe blow to the dreams of return of the Palestinian refugees rotting in filthy camps. The Russian emigration perhaps emboldened the Israelis to establish settlements in occupied areas.

There is now a good deal of crowing among the Russians over the Arab performance, but let it not be forgotten that the Arabs joined battle when there were not too many bossing Russians around. In their own way, the Arabs have learnt that no outside advice can decide their future. There are welcome signs of renewed self-confidence among them. And signs of unity. Even King Hussein of Jordan has sent a contingent of troops to Syria, though not activating his front. It is evident that he has been in consultations with Egypt and Syria—and with Israel and the USA. He will have to share the responsibility for any serious setback. His massacre of the Palestine liberation forces in 1970 strengthened Israel, as did the anti-guerilla actions of some of the other regimes.

What the Arabs will do with their oil remains to be seen. There are chances of confrontation—the U.S., though mauled by Vietnam, has not yet been reduced to a paper tiger, thanks to the Sino-Soviet split. The Russians, who have specialised in acting through proxies ever since the Cuba fiasco, will see to it that their detente is not affected. There is on a Russian-American competition to flow arms

and President Nixon has hinted at American military intervention to safeguard the independence and sovereignty of Israel. What the Arabs are fighting for is the restoration of territory lost in 1967, not the destruction of Israel. Whether Israel can continue in the Zionist, racist way while the Palestinians languish in the wilderness is another matter. It is a strange story that the Jews who went to the Hitlerite slaughterhouse like helpless sheep—with a few exceptions, as in Poland—should be aping the Nazis in their treatment of Arabs.

A correspondent writes:

Who started the fiercest fighting in the Middle East since the Six-Day War? The Israelis and the Arabs accused each other in the UN General Assembly of starting the war. Mr Abba Eban, Israeli Foreign Minister, said that "there is not a single man or woman... who does not know in his heart that Egypt and Syria started the war." Mr Zakaria Ismail, Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister, on the other hand, observed that the Israeli attack was massive and of such proportions that there was no doubt that it was part of a premeditated plan. The Egyptian Foreign Minister, Mr El Zayyat, also affirmed that his country had struck in self-defence. Such claims and counter-claims carry little weight since the warring sides would in any case try to maintain a righteous stance. In the Middle East, everyone still cares for international opinion, whatever this lovely imprecise thing may mean. International mass media are mostly in the hands of people whose sympathies are with the Israelis. The American Press which is generally prepared to go all lengths to make objective reporting has never covered itself with glory when it comes to describing the situation in West Asia. It is well-known that the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* (which also owns *Newsweek*) are controlled by the Jews. Since the outbreak of the present round of hostilities, the

American Press is trying to project the Arabs as culprits and underplay their success on the battlefield. Those who are following the course of events in the Middle East are at a loss to understand why the Arabs should start a war at this point of time. The Arabs were not definitely getting ready for another war; the whole Arab thrust was to break the stalemate in West Asia—which was a no-war, no-peace situation—through diplomatic means. The world had long since stopped paying any attention to Sadat's threat of "total confrontation". The year of 1971 did not turn out to be his year of decision. The much publicised "inevitable battle" also did not come in the following year. In fact President Sadat became a subject of ridicule because of this theatricality. Sadat does not have the charisma of Nasser. The Rais was humiliated twice by the Israelis but did still survive.

Recently the Arabs have had some success in isolating Israel. Quite a few African States have severed diplomatic relations with the Zionist regime. The continued occupation of Arab lands, the inhuman treatment of the Arabs within Israel, the pitiable condition of the Palestinian refugees, the destruction of a Libyan airliner and the forcing down of a civilian Iraqi airliner have all earned Tel Aviv the wrath of the world community. Many Western countries have taken special care not to antagonise the Arabs at a time when an energy crisis is looming large. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia who used to take pride in his friendship with the Americans has now, it is reported, threatened to break off diplomatic relations with the USA and stop oil shipments to it if it provides new arms to Israel. He does not need any more U.S. dollars which he does not know how to use. Moreover, the black gold under the ground would appreciate in value if the supply is discontinued to America. It has been suggested in a section of the Western Press that the war strategy was finalised at last

month's summit meeting in Casablanca. The sole objective of the meeting was to revive the eastern front, but King Hassan's attitude was not found encouraging. In fact, King Hassan doggedly refused to be drawn into any future war with Israel. Last month Israel destroyed 13 Egyptian planes in a dogfight over the Mediterranean. As for Egypt, there was little preparation for war. The Israelis might have well argued that only by starting a new war could they deprive the Arabs of their diplomatic advantage.

American Justice

The least important part of the new story is that the career of a very reputable person is in a shambles. No tears will be shed over what may be the permanent exit from the American scene of a man who is just one heartbeat away from presidency. In fact, he has got off lightly; the fine of ten thousand dollars and probation for three years are scarcely adequate punishment for a person against whom the Justice Department had amassed sufficient evidence to have proceeded against on corruption charges. The US Attorney General has told a Baltimore court that the evidence established a pattern of substantial payments to Mr Agnew when he was Governor of Maryland in return for engineering contracts with the State and the payments continued till last December when Mr Agnew had been Vice-President for four years. The former Vice-President has not been punished for this grave misdemeanour, though it must be admitted that he has comrades in such corruption in high places all over the world. By agreement with the Justice Department this case has been folded up and Mr Agnew pleaded 'no contest' to a single charge of evading income-tax in 1967. Again not an infrequent lapse, though the former Vice-President apparently lacks the wits of a dear Union Minister

Price Policies

The Government has taken a number of policy measures to deal with the phenomenal price rise which symbolises the worst economic crisis of post-independence India. Along with the traditional instruments like monetary policy (credit curbs, bank rate hike), fiscal policy (cut in public spending, increased public borrowing), and direct controls (statutory price fixation, compulsory price display order, strengthening of the public distribution system), a far-reaching institutional change (take-over of the wholesale trade in wheat) has also been undertaken. The outcome has not only been poor and timid but has also sapped confidence so thoroughly that a certain amount of headlessness seems to have gripped policy formulations. Just one instance. Prices have been fixed under the Defence of India Rules in a number of States. But in some States deliberate sabotage has been resorted to. When the prices were really shooting up, indirect controls were fiddled with. Now that the mischief has already been done and a good monsoon has disheartened the speculative hoarders, resulting in stabilisation of the price level at a high point, prices are being fixed under the DIR. *The Times of India* of September 26 reports that though there has been a steep fall in the prices of pulses in the entire region, the Delhi administration, in collusion with the wholesalers, has fixed prices far above the actual market level. The same thing happened in West Bengal, with the Chief Minister agreeing to prices dictated by the wholesale traders. In a situation of spiralling prices statutory price control is a good thing, provided it could be made effective and the prices are fixed at much lower than the prevailing rates. But if the measure is resorted to when prices tend to stabilise at the peak, price fixing favours the traders and legalises the already exorbitant prices. Because of the slow-moving nature

of the bureaucratic machinery, its vested interests apart, such orders remain in force long after their utility is completely exhausted. Here also the people stand to be the losers.

The case of economy in public expenditure also reveals the contradictions of the Government's policy dispensations most glaringly. The Government denies any cut in spending on employment schemes and in the same breath adds that the spending may be slowed down. The policy of economy in public expenditure, whatever it may mean, is in fact the policy of going in for soft options, the policy of sacrificing long-term interests to the exigencies of the moment. Though it is always said that increased production is the ultimate answer to inflation, the policies the Government is adopting today are going to mean a lower rate of growth of output tomorrow. There may be some marginal slowing down in the price rise but in the process employment-generating schemes are also cut down, as a result of which incomes disappear altogether for thousands and lakhs of people. To these people without employment and income, what meaning does any price level have?

View from Delhi

Wheat And Chaff

FROM A POLITICAL
CORRESPONDENT

THE over-enthusiastic reporter who claimed that we would be eating chapatis made of Russian wheat for the first time was patently wrong. Back in the fifties, when there was famine in the Andhra area (there was no Andhra State or Andhra Pradesh then) of the erstwhile Madras State, there were shipments of Soviet wheat. That was the only occasion Indians ate chapatis made of Russian wheat. The two million-tonne Soviet wheat loan offer is a

who in a similar predicament. ... by simply pleading failure ...

clearly, Mr Agnew made a deal with the Justice Department. Only a few days before he sneaked into the courtroom to announce his resignation, he had dismissed the charges against him as a pack of damn lies and promised to fight to clear his name if indicted. He had no intention to resign, for as Vice-President he would have been in a strong position to fight the charges of bribery, corruption and extortion and possibly prevent prosecution. He was under intense pressure from the White House to resign. Mr Agnew perhaps wanted to appease Mr Agnew's scalp those who were clamouring for the President's resignation perhaps he wanted to present the American people with the difficult choice between him and a nominated Vice-President who will replace Mr Agnew. The White House could have made little impression on Mr Agnew for he knew the President's name was as much his own. What made him change his mind is the east-iron case set up against him by the Justice Department. He resigned only when he was convinced that even as a President he would not be able to head off conviction. His plea that he needed for resignation because of defence against the charges would divert public attention from important national issues is as funny as President Nixon's sense of deep personal loss at Mr Agnew's resignation. Resignation is the price Mr Agnew has paid to make the Justice Department agree to abandon prosecution. Through this deal he has not saved his reputation or whatever it is that he had; on the other hand, he has smirched the American system of justice. Mr Agnew and the Justice Department have conspired to deal another blow to American democracy which is already reeling under the impact of Watergate.

political gimmick, even if the CPI-M takes exception to anyone equating Soviet wheat with United States wheat. In the first place what we have begun getting is anything but Soviet wheat.

It was known in New Delhi late July that India had sought a Soviet wheat loan and it was cold-shouldered. It was fondly hoped in New Delhi that Mr Brezhnev will honour Mrs Gandhi with a visit to mark the second anniversary of the famous treaty that has now turned sour. Then it was hoped that Mr Brezhnev would come in October to announce the loan. But the loan was announced first, and the visit later. Even before the Haskar team could go to Moscow to sign the loan agreement, the first shipment arrived in Madras. The nation was solemnly assured by the captain of the ship that it was not U.S. wheat, it was Australian wheat. It is not clear when the next ship will arrive and from where. All the wheat will not be from Australia and even if it is, one cannot overlook the fact that the Soviet Union has a surplus of United States wheat and it is not difficult to divert Australian wheat from the high seas.

The Soviets quietly bought almost one-fourth of the last United States wheat crop, subsidised heavily by the U.S. Government. Without making any noise about the bad wheat harvest in July, the President of the Soviet wheat buying agency checked into a New York hotel. He bought seven million tonnes in July and another five million tonnes in August. To stimulate wheat export, the U.S. Government had fixed subsidies so that foreign buyers did not pay more than 1.5 dollars a bushel. None of the individual traders in the U.S. knew about the possible scale of Soviet buyings. After several deals were through, it had cost the United States over Rs. 790 crores (well over 100 million dollars) by way of subsidies. Further, the U.S. offers generous credit facilities. Early this year, the U.S. devalued the dollar,

The Soviets saved Rs. 540 crores. The cost of the wheat to the Soviets was as low as Rs. 396 a tonne while India paid over Rs. 1,500. India is to repay the Soviet loan in kind which means superior Indian wheat has to be shipped out later to replace the inferior U.S. wheat lent to us.

The wheat loan, and now possibly a newsprint loan, is meant to bolster the Soviet image in India. The Rumanian President's information that China wants normal relations with India, conveyed to President Giri in Bucharest, must have annoyed the Kremlin if the shrill reaction of its mouthpieces in New Delhi is any indication. But official New Delhi maintains that there is no sign of any Chinese anxiety to normalise relations with India. Maybe New Delhi is waiting for something tangible but one cannot help noticing the low-key reaction to the Chinese attitude to Bangladesh recognition. The absence of any reference to India and Bangladesh in the Chou En-lai report to the Tenth Congress is taken as a welcome, positive sign.

While the dependence on the Soviet Union grows, there is a planned manoeuvre to the right. At one level, New Delhi is trying to maintain a strident anti-U.S. posture. At another level, it is quiet diplomacy, to secure a bigger flow of U.S. aid and private investment under what are described as "mutually advantageous" terms. The ban on U.S. scholars, after all, was imposed by Mr T. N. Kaul who later pleaded that the ban handicapped his work. The decision was quietly reversed. A whole package of policies to pep the prospering kulak class and private capital in the country is being worked out, in the name of curbing inflation.

Even the CPI has emerged as the open spokesman of the kulak class. The last conference of its All India Kisan Sabha at Bhatinda demanded higher procurement prices, out of solicitude for the strategic class of farmers with a marketable surplus. A supplement published in a Moscow-

aligned daily to mark the conference was patronised with lavish aberrations from the State Government and manufacturers and distributors of the Green Revolution impulse. The kulak won at the last AUC which he also won at the CPI's Kisan Sabha, which ironically, Mr. Hare Krishna Konar of the CPI-M made it a point to greet in person. The CPI General Secretary, Mr Rajeswar Ranu wittingly gave the game away at Trivandrum the other day. The party was blasting away at the Congress for giving up the wheat trade takeover plan for rice. But his concern for stability of the Achutha Menon Ministry in Kerala he told newsmen that private traders in Andhra Pradesh were all too willing to sell all the rice Kerala would need!

Mrs Gandhi can take the CPI support for granted. She needs no rightist support now. A rightist manoeuvre has been coming for a long time. It is now clearer. The Congress (or rather a faction claiming to be closest to Mrs Gandhi) is out for the big kill. It wants to buy up a number of nonconformist newspapers from Gujarat right down to Tamil Nadu and across the plains up to Lucknow. The plan is to have a chain of papers which would attack the CPI and the Soviet Union and support Mrs Gandhi against the United States. She has the backward left press already to serve her interests from the other end—attack the right parties and United States and support her and the CPI. The only tragedy is that these interests could not buy up the papers they had hoped to buy. The weeks in Bombay cornered by them is done rather badly in terms of circulation under the new dispensation. The Tamil daily they hijacked in Madras is going down the inclined plane. The English dailies it wanted to buy up in Madras and Lucknow are reluctant to sell out, despite the difficult newsprint situation.

October 11, 1971

OCTOBER 20, 1971

Kerala

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Insipid Opposition Parties

RAMJI

THE strength of the CPI-led Coalition Ministry in Kerala is not thoroughly weak, impotent role played by the opposition parties, led by the Marxists. With a strength of 22 in the 134-member Assembly and with more popular backing than any other party in Kerala the Marxists as leaders of the opposition which could muster around 62 members in the Assembly, could come up only with routine, insipid gestures, during August and September when the State faced the most acute crisis even in its history. Along with skyrocketing of its price, rice became scarce in the market and this pushed up the prices of other essential commodities. There were food riots by students and others and the Government, in typical ostrich-style, ordered schools to be closed and the schools were closed. The opposition resorted to the familiar exercise of *bandhs* and more of these. And in between, the ruling parties and the opposition parties, except Marxists, indulged in the comfortable exercise of going on deputation to New Delhi in royal style to plead for more rice. While the plea had no effect on the State exchequer, had to spend lakhs over this spree. Then came the typical opposition stunt, which was as much hollow as the administration itself. The opposition announced a great march, of all places, to Trivandrum Raj Bhavan, to ease the corroding crisis! The March went off well on September 2. It was all so genteel and chivalrous: Victorian. The marchers went up to the Raj Bhavan gate in impressive style. The leaders went in and met Governor Vanchoo. They and the Governor exchanged views in ultra-sophisticated, low-profile idiom, about the great crisis that had the populace in its grip. The Governor

murmured his sympathies and that was the end to the great march of the opposition. To say that the opposition failed the public as much as the administration had done, would be to put facts in a very low key indeed. Meanwhile, the schools remained closed. The food riots continued. And the police, in addition to the usual quota of lathi charges, rounded up agricultural women workers and raped them inside the police lock-ups at several centres. To this also, the opposition reacted by lodging strong protests and calling for enquiries, with the Government forestalling them by ordering enquiries synchronising with the events!

A measure of the Gandhian ideology of the CPM leadership was thrown up vividly in connection with the beating up of one Keluettan, Secretary of the Calicut unit of the Marxist party. Close-up photos of two policemen and a police officer raining blows on Keluettan, the old and highly respected leader who had fought during the British regime under the Congress banner, were published in *Deshabhimani*, the official organ of the Marxist party. The police aimed the lathis to kill the leader. Though he protected his head with his hands, it was clear that the police were aiming to crack his skull. They succeeded in doing it and Keluettan was hospitalised in an unconscious state, for offering peaceful satyagraha to protest against food prices and scarcity. The revolutionary ardour of the Marxists surfaced when *Deshabhimani* turned the photo of the naked, unprovoked assault by the police on a veteran Marxist leader, into a 'caption contest'. The paper called for captions suited to the police terror depicted in the photo. Thus the revolutionary

role of the party was fulfilled!

During Onam, the major national festival of Malayalees in September, the workers of the State Road Transport Corporation numbering over 16,000, were on strike on the issue of the percentage of Onam bonus due to them. The strike paralysed the entire State as the State transport is the mainstay of public transport, particularly in the erstwhile Travancore region. All trade unions, including those controlled by the ruling front parties, were in the strike. The Transport Minister, the CPI chief, Mr M. N. Govindan Nair, succeeded in weaning away the leadership of the ruling front trade unions on the 11th day of the strike. The leaders issued statements calling off the strike. The strikers did not obey and the strike continued. This strike, along with the closure of schools, the scarcity of foodgrains etc. triggered a Niagara of statements from opposition parties. It was even loudly rumoured that the opposition MLAs would resign from the Assembly. They met under a grim canopy enveloping the State. And the mountain brought forth the proverbial mouse. Instead of resignation the opposition MLAs decided to go on indefinite hunger-strike all their demand for the immediate convention of the Legislative Assembly was met. From this fantastic stand it would seem that the mere convention of the Assembly would be the panacea for the searing ills of the State! And it may be recalled that when the Assembly had been in session last, the opposition had specialised in walk-outs and boycott of the sessions. It is clear that parliamentary democracy has reduced even such an alleged revolutionary party like the Marxists to mere formalists with a penchant for clinging on to seats of power and influence which an MLA-ship ensures. A mass resignation by the opposition would have established their credentials before the people. Now, with this Gandhian exercise of non-violence and hunger-strike, the cynical Ministry could go about serenely in the

never ending exercise of statement-mongering and presiding over public functions. While the Ministers are determined to cling to their seats without a shred of shame in the face of the Ministry-made crisis in the State the opposition is also determined to cling to their MLA gadis and discharge their duties to the public with statements and futile, outmoded political stunts.

Andhra Newsletter

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

Deccan Chronicle, Hyderabad, of 18th September 1973 carried a news-item giving extra prominence to it by putting the entire matter in a bolder type than normal on the front page. The item headed "MLA's charge against Collector" said.

"Mr. K. Madhava Rao IAS District Collector Warangal was today charged with spreading Naxalism in the District.

"A delegation of legislators and prominent citizens of the district headed by Mr Dharma Reddi MLA submitted a memorandum this evening to President Giri making serious allegations against the Collector.

"Mr Giri promised, according to a Press note issued by Mr Dharma Reddi, prompt action in the matter.

"The District Collector, Warangal, is a close friend of theirs (Naxalites) and there is not a single day when he does not confer with any one or some of them for hours together in his chamber", the memorandum told the President.

"The delegation included Mr T. Hayagriva Chari, a former Minister."

Everybody is wondering why a responsible Officer of the Government has been charged with Naxalism by a handful of unemployed, discredited Congressmen, Jan Sanghites in Congress garb, well-known blackmarketeers and pro-Telanganites.

Mr Madhava Rao, a Harijan by birth, comes from a family of landless agricultural labourers. It is learnt

that his father, till Mr Rao passed his IAS, was a farm servant under a rich landlord, who, with all due credit, was responsible for most of Mr

Rao's education. With this background it is but natural for Mr Rao to look into the grievances of the poorer and backward sections personally, as he knows what poverty means and what atrocities the richer sections commit on the poorer sections. It is learnt that the main grouse against him is that he deals directly with such people instead of allowing the so-called leaders to act as brokers and go-betweens. Mr Rao's denial to the leaders of this privilege has deprived them of their livelihood i.e. income as go-betweens. It is these poorer and weaker sections who meet the District Collector to discuss their grievances who have been described as Naxalites. The only Naxalite or extremist alive that Mr. Rao has ever met is the extremist leader of the District, C. Sankara Rao, and even in this case it was during the investigation of a crime—the beating to death and burning of the body of a Harijan by landlords in Sankara Rao's village, Akinepalli Mallaram, Mulug Taluk. It was not only the District Collector but a

whole lot of officials including the District Superintendent of Police, the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Assistant Collector who met Sankara Rao, who, it is understood, was responsible for exposing the gruesome crime which the lower cadres of the Police tried to hush up because they were bribed heavily. The crime attracted the attention of the Centre which instructed Mr. Rao to look into it personally. Even in this case, it is learnt, one of those who signed the memorandum a man who has held various responsible offices, received Rs 20,000 from the landlords to act on their behalf. He failed. It has been the same with the others in other matters. On enquiry, it was learnt that neither the State SP or the CBI have ever made a report about Mr Rao's association with the Naxalites; even now the downtrod-

den sections want the CBI to look into the matter to clear Mr Rao of the charges.

Andhra Pradesh is plagued with such charges and interferences of petty politicians. In the Warangal District the predecessor of Mr Rao, Mr Venugopal, IAS, a young honest and sincere officer, tried to implement Mrs Gandhi's slogans was hounded out of the district by the same Mafia group of Congressmen, Mr Krishnam and Mr Parthasarathi, IAS, both District Collectors of Khammam, were hounded out of that district, the only crime being that they were sincere and honest.

Recently three senior IAS officers of the Board of Revenue-Civil Supplies requested for transfer from the Department. Their action in resigning two top blackmarketeers of Hyderabad under the MISA was reversed by the advisers within a few days under pressure from the Centre, as the two blackmarketeers were patrons of the Congress Party. Mr Sarin, who had earned a poor reputation in Andhra Pradesh, issued a very sorry figure when he issued a press note explaining the release of the accused—"the two dealers got up 5,000 bogus ration cards and were released". Mr Sarin, who must have drawn his misery of the same evening—Scotland coming to his rescue.

‘অনুষ্ঠান’ শরৎ সংখ্যা

এ সংখ্যার আঁকে :

প্রবন্ধ : স্টালিন : একটি মূল্যায়ন। স্বাধীন কমিউনিস্ট আন্দোলন ও নেতৃত্বের কৃতিত্ব। বাংলা প্রগতি সাহিত্যের আঙ্গনমালায় তৎপ্রসঙ্গে আলোচনা।

গল্প : কবিতা : সাম্প্রতিক সংস্কৃতি সমালোচনা। স্টলে শাওয়া যাকে ৯ মূল্য ১'৫০ টাকা মাত্র।

OCTOBER 20, 1973

The

A new breed of leaders is emerging in the world. These corporations are savagely to the world. It is not only in their wa- tions, but a they have h projects. W ol, it is no merger".

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The New Giants Of The World

A. K. ESSACK

A new breed of monsters has arrived to replace the pteredactyls of the dinosaurs of the prehistoric era. These are the multinational corporations and they are fighting valiantly to become the master of the world. They have made meals of not only those who have stood in their way, namely their competitors, but also those with whom they have had joint collaboration agreements. When a friend is devoured, it is not a "takeover" but a "merger".

As they grow bigger and bigger, their numbers grow smaller and smaller. Today they do not number more than a few thousand. In 1980, it is reliably predicted between 50 to 100 multinational corporations will control 80% of the world's industrial capital assets. In other words a few hundred will control the lives and destinies of over 50,000 million people (5 billion).

Such has been the growth of monopoly on the international scale that 7 old companies account for 70% of world production. Similarly, 200 in chemicals, 8 in rubber, 9 in paper, 5 in plate glass and 9 in iron form our three-quarters of the total world production in their respective fields.

What is the size of these corporations? In 1971 General Motors had a turnover of 24,000 million dollars. This is greater than the entire economic activity of Belgium and Switzerland combined. Its wage bill of 7,000 million dollars is greater than the entire economic activity of Greece. In other words its economic activity in terms of GNP is greater than most of the African states.

In the field of banking monopolization has gone even further than industrial monopoly. Ten to fifteen banking consortia in fact dominate the capitalist financial world. Heading this is the Bank of America fol-

lowed by the First National City Corporation, Barclays Bank, Society Generale, Dresden and the Bank of New South Wales.

Frederich Donner, one-time chairman of General Motors, said, "Our corporations are no longer described as Dutch, German, French, Italian or U.S. corporations... it (multinational corporations) is creating a new kind of capitalism."

Albert Thornborough, head of Massey Ferguson Corporation, described its new type of activity: "My agricultural implements with 27 plants in a few countries can take a transmission from Holland, an engine from Italy, other components from England to build a tractor to specifications in France or other way round. We think and live internationally."

A multinational company is defined as one with sales above 700 million (Tanzanian) shillings, operating in at least six countries and its overseas subsidiaries accounting for at least 20% of its assets. Under this definition about 4,000 companies qualify. They already account for 15% of the world's total production.

Are they pioneers in bringing about a transformation of an economic system which is the greatest since the Industrial Revolution? Or do they simply represent a quantitative development from the monopolies which made an appearance in the early 20th century and were aptly described by Lenin and Hobson in their books on imperialism?

No Boundaries

The feature of the old monopolies was the concentration of power in a few hands. It is the same with the multinational corporations. However, the difference is that power now is not confined to a particular nation State. It cuts across national boundaries. For example there is a Board meeting in New York. They

decide to close a factory in Paris or in Coventry in London because the workers have come out on a series of strikes which they have not been able to break. Or they may decide that it would be more profitable to operate the plant in Spain. The result is that thousands of workers are sacked. Not only that. Since they have been trained only in particular form of skills it would mean that they would now be dumped into the human scrap heap living on hopelessly for the rest of their lives. The governments are saddled with their care as a result of a decision over which they had no say. The monopolies are out of reach. However, the sacking of workers, due to "redundancy or falling off of demand" is nothing new to the capitalist system. The newness lies only in that the capitalist is not answerable to anybody. He has no loyalty to any of the States. His loyalty is to his profits.

The contradiction between the nation State and the multinational corporation is going to increase in the coming period. This is the new feature at this stage of capitalist development. The nation State has grown out of proportion from the time it made its appearance with the advent of private property under the present system. The bureaucracies in the legislature, judiciary, executive, armed forces, police and the civil service are representatives of the super-monopolies generally. But then the State bureaucracies have their own momentum and they do not always react in time to the new requirements demanded by new economic developments. The superstructure usually lags behind the economic processes.

The nation State of the developing bourgeoisie paved the way for economic investments in Africa by its colonial conquests in the late nineteenth century. It laid the basis for further working by granting of political independence. This made it possible to start investments after the newly independent countries set up infrastructures with aid from

these countries. But now such is their power that these monopolies negotiate joint collaboration projects independent of their own governments with developing countries. They behave like States and act on their own rights.

The war in Indochina showed that the nation State was not able to perform its job. America had one of the greatest arsenals of firepower known to mankind at its disposal to defeat the Vietnamese. Over half a million U.S. troops were employed for this purpose. So sure were they of victory that the big banks were already drawing up plans and schemes about the massive aid that would have to be given for the "Rehabilitation" of Vietnam after the defeat of the Communists. But it was the U.S. which was defeated and all the plans had to be thrown away. What then was the use of the nation State if it is not able to do its job?

The multinational corporations do not hide the fact that the nation State is anachronistic. What this means is that they do not regard the huge bureaucracies necessary to advance their own interests.

In fact it is they and not Nixon who brought about the phase of detente by discreet contact with socialist countries. The Nixon and Kissinger visits just rubberstamped what they had already done. They see the bureaucracies as millstones which now hang on their necks. It is not that they want to get rid of the bureaucracies altogether. Rather they want a new bureaucracy that would be able to understand them and their needs. They are not prepared to support this nonproductive sector without any limitations.

But this will mean slaughter of entire sections of the bureaucracy. Yet this is not new. When technological advances were brought to the fore, like the use of automation it meant an entirely new working class with a new outlook. But this meant the virtual slaughter of all those workers trained under the old mode of production. This was done and they were all dumped in-

to the human scrap heap to rot and die. Those who were skilled and trained found that society had no need for their skills. They were doomed to spend the rest of their lives in queues for soup kitchens.

In this the multinational corporations show no sentiment. They have a morality of their own which has cast aside national honour and patriotism. As one writer said, "Considerations of democracy, individual freedom and other such prosaic moralisings have long since been relegated in the board rooms to the status of quaint folklore".

The conflict between the nation State and the multinational corporations is over spoils of exploitation. The Nixon administration as well as the legislative bureaucracies were concerned about the amorality of their evasions. However, they did everything "legally". What they did was to set up what they euphemistically called "tax havens". A good example is that of Luxembourg, a tiny territory of 2,586 square miles with a population of 339,000. The capital city Luxembourg has 76,143 people. Yet this territory has 60,000 holding companies registered there because it has the lowest tax rates in the world.

Tax Haven

A tax haven is a place to escape taxation. Thus in Britain, France or the U.S. the multinational corporations show a small profit or even loss while they show their highest profits in these tax havens. In this way they save as much as 30 to 40% of their profits which would have been eaten up by the State bureaucracies. This means weakening the bureaucracies and denying them the much needed funds necessary for their upkeep. Thus last year the U.S. multinational corporations made a bumper profit of between 18 and 24% while there was dollar devaluation. They not only refused to save the dollar, but they themselves were responsible for its disgrace by transferring about 3% of their assets.

As early as 1971 the Nixon admini-

stration allowed the introduction of the Burke Harte Bill. It was aimed at the multinational multinational corporations. It aims at: repeal of income-tax credit on payment of foreign taxes, stricter guidelines on depreciation of machinery and quotas on imports. The President was to be given authority to regulate transfer of capital from the U.S. headquarters to its foreign subsidiaries.

The big monopolies saw the danger. One said, "This would bring our international operations to a screeching halt". The Nixon administration went further. It set up a Senate Committee to head an investigation into the activities of the multinational corporations. It was given an allowance of 1,400,000 for this purpose. Said Church, its Chairman—the aim was to "find out what the multinational companies really do in the world". The anti-trust law was now again being revived to see whether the multinational corporations had violated their trust.

Thus even before Watergate we saw the emerging battle between the political power of the nation State and the economic power of the multinational corporations.

There will be no reprieve for the State bureaucracies. The bell has begun to toll for them. Only a complete restructuring of the state machinery will satisfy the multinational corporations. That means sending large sections to the slaughterhouses.

For Frontier contact
People's Book House
Cowasji Patel Street,
Meher House,
Fort, Bombay

A Major Group Show

SANDIP SARKAR

A group show by the Society of Contemporary Artists always raises viewers' hopes, and most often does not keep its promise, even at heavy odds. This group is famous for locating new talents, nurturing and helping them. It has also been a trend-setter, a research institution in artistic expression.

The latest drawing and graphic exhibition of the group was, on the whole, good. As usual, certain standards were maintained. How could it be otherwise when the group consists of such members as Somnath Hore, Shymal Dutta Roy and Sarat Chandra?

The show was neat. Considerable care was taken to display and frame—a good indication. Art demands a professional attitude. Sadly, however, a few artists seem more concerned with selling their stuff than with improving the quality of their works. Again there are one or two artists like Anil Baran Saha and Sushil Gupta who should have steered from exhibiting.

Somnath Hore stood out as a lone figure challenging the viewers to judge his work on its merits only. The volumes, which showed technical mastery as well as depth and feeling, were hung into the wall without being mounted on board or framed. His mature attitude to art and life commands respect.

Shymal Dutta Ray has proved himself far above the common run of graphic artists. There was a touch of subtle poetry in his work. Somnath Kar showed that he is a craftsman of the first order. His "Radha" and "Ravana" attract attention for their exquisite execution. However, his approach is a bit too sweet. Most graphic artists like Lala Shaw and Dipak Banerjee have combined a decorative element with a kind of seriousness that is altogether happy. One feels that aside from such artists as Somnath Hore, most of the

others doing graphics have come to a dead end, where they are marking time rather than going forward.

In drawings Suhas Ray stands out for his sincerity and depth of feeling. His "Tree", "Woman" and "Rider" have a seriousness, an evocative quality, a maturity which make one praise him. It is evident that Ganesh Pyne (one of my favourite artists) of late has not been overpowered by the creative spirit. His "Belonging" does not attract. "Magician" and "Dog" have Pynesque elements to an extent. There was a time when we had good reasons to expect great things from Sunil Das. One does not understand what has happened to his skill. The non-figurative pencil drawings, with a bird thrown in here and there, vaguely reminded us of drawings by the Austrian School of Fantastic Realism.

Another fine artist who failed us this time is Bikash Bhattacharya. It is better for an artist to be neglected than to be praised, over-praised and over-rated by critics and the public. For this in most cases hampers artistic growth and dwarfs creativity. Bhattacharya, in the beginning, had shown great promise and considerable skill. He was praised, pampered and spoilt. When he took to surrealism, no one cautioned him or gave him a word of advice. The buyers began to buy his paintings which misled him even more. In his drawings he has sprayed paints reminding us of Sunil Madhav Sen's use of stone chips on the canvas, or the image makers' use of peacocks feather and every conceivable material these days.

The grotesque drawings of Manu Rathod, although a bit overworked, were good. Dharmanarayan Dasgupta's pen and ink drawings had a dreamlike quality. One found Manu Parekh's savage fury very disturbing.

In spite of lapses, this has been one of the best exhibitions of this year.

Artists Of West Bengal—V

SANDIP SARKAR

Bijon Choudhury

Biographical Notes: 1931 Born in Calcutta. 1946-51 Studied art in Calcutta and Dacca. Founder member of Society of Contemporary Artists and Calcutta Painters. Academy of Fine Arts award in Modern Art Section 1964-65. National Gallery of Modern Art has three of his paintings. *Solo Exhibitions:* 1956 Dacca; 1962, 63 Calcutta. *Group Shows:* 1959, 1960 with Society of Contemporary Artists in Calcutta. 1960 Banga Samskriti Sammelan-sponsored show in Calcutta and Bombay. 1964, 1965, 1966 with Calcutta Painters in Calcutta and Delhi. 1966 Show in honour of Gitanmitti with Sarbati Raychoudhury, Provash Sen, Nikhil Biswas and Ranjan Roodra. 1968 with Provash Sen, Mohin Roodra, Paritosh Sen and Sarbati Raychoudhury. 1968 With West Bengal artists in Bombay in an exhibition sponsored by Srinantwu. A widower with two sons and two daughters.

Interview

As Choudhury is short and slim, he looks much younger than his years. There is something boyish and charming in his manners. His amiable disposition attracts people. As he goes out of his way to help others he has a lot of friends, but for his outspokenness he has many enemies too.

Choudhury is known for his eloquence in expounding art. One can hardly forget his talk on modern art in O. C. Ganguly's house or the seminar in the Banga Samskriti Sammelan in 1960 when he explained current art trends with lucidity and deftly repulsed attacks on such stalwarts as Gopal Ghose. Recently his exposition of Picasso's art at a condolence meeting in Birla Academy was highly appreciated by everyone

present. His opinion is sought not only by younger painters, but senior artists have a high regard for his understanding of art, knowledge of its history and precise use of language.

I have known Choudhury for a long time. That is why I was wondering how he would react to my questions. He, however, was very receptive and answered without second thoughts.

He felt that the main problem of modern Indian art was a kind of naivety, a misunderstanding of what was involved. The strides that art has taken in Europe since the medieval times are a fact. The impact of the West on ancient civilization is a fact. One cannot alter certain events, certain historical situations and conditions. Similarly the cultural pattern of India is a living reality. Modernization, industrialization and urbanization cannot alter the basic structure of the Indian world view, its tradition and social conditioning. What the West has to offer artistically is certain ideas and methods, but one's visual experience, fantasy and expression should spring from one's soil, atmosphere, sky and heritage. What one saw in the art of India today is anarchy which springs from bewilderment due to the impact of the West. Foreign influence has overwhelmed artists and forced them to mimic the West. As the Westernised Indians have the money to buy this trash the artists go on grimacing in the mirror. Changes in artistic fashion in Europe guide the artistic tastes of artists, the public and critics. They run after strange gods and make monsters (he said 'apadevata') which they then worship. Art that limps after the latest fashion cannot be worthy of the name of art.

The so-called artists in India do not want to understand that art springs from and has its roots in society. Art reflects social change, change of production, historical events and upheavals. It is a society's visual expression of its expe-

rience of a certain period in history. The industrial revolution and the two world wars were quite a unique experience for the people of the West. Surrealism and diverse avant garde movements in art were the direct results of certain major events in the recent history of the West. In India these conditions do not exist. Moreover the movements are never permanent. These movements may have certain definite things to impart, but an artist should understand its relevance to the Indian situation, judge what he would integrate and what he would reject. From Gandhara to the Indian miniatures, foreign influences have come, but these have never overwhelmed the artist. He has integrated and made them his own. In Europe art has left the public place and chosen the isolation of the individual home; in spite of the galleries it has lost its congregational character and become a showpiece of drawing rooms. But in India art has still a public role to play. As yet India has not lost its rural and feudal character. During the pujas and fairs this dormant quality exposes itself. There has been no move by anyone to exploit this situation.

Choudhury does not understand how an artist can forget the Indian tradition, especially the tradition of Indian sculpture. This great heritage should be an artist's launching pad, his true inspiration. Indian cave painting and especially sculpture performed a social function. He admits that religion has no meaning for modern man but the congregational aspect of art can survive religion. The themes that the artist selects are the experience of not only the individual but of society as a whole. So an all-out effort should be made to save this aspect. For art is nothing but communication. It is not only a thing that connoisseurs, critics and snobs should enjoy. In India art should spring from the total Indian experience. It should be aware of Indian life and conditions, history and current events, fantasy, psychology and soil. If these

conditions are fulfilled then modern Indian art will have the magic quality and vitality that overwhelms the viewer of Indian sculpture. It is then that they can work out an Indian identity. But as yet modern Indian art lacks the breath of life.

Bijon's Art

He was lucky to have such academic masters as Atul Bose as his teacher. No wonder his early works smack of realism—academic realism. Fortunately he had as his mentors two other famous artists. When he studied art in Dacca under Jamal Abedin (famous for his drawings of the 1943 famine) he was told by Abedin to paint on large pieces of paper. His weakness for always trying to paint on large canvases is perhaps due to this. From Abedin he learned to value the poor and the insulted, their misery and poverty, the poetry of their life and the beauty of their simplicity. This with his friend Prakash Karmakar he became the disciple of Nirody Mazumdar after Mazumdar's return from Paris. Mazumdar taught them not only the methods of using oil, but the art history of Europe. He also taught them the value of Indian artistic heritage.

So at the second stage one sees Bijon vigorously integrating Indian artistic tradition and certain European methods. What marked him out as one of the leading figures among the younger generation of painters in the early sixties was his maturity. When most of the painters of his age group were confused he showed confidence, continual renewal and growth. In search of new realism he would break form and take liberties with colours. The second thing was that when a wave of non-figurative fever was catching his friends he proved immune, for in his painting form and content are complementary. He borrowed and reinterpreted Indian form from pot and terracotta temples.

There is nothing pretentious in his paintings. Earlier he had painted the scenes around the Kalighat tem-

...and this vaguely reminds us of the 'bazar' paintings consumed by pilgrims of the 19th century. But he had been able to fuse international styles with that of Bengal terracotta temples. His abiding interest in folk life and religion showed itself in that early period. He chose for his subject the Gajan festival, fans, image-makers, sellers of birds, fruits, toys. These paintings not only commented on the condition of a people but the emotional response of an artist to his immediate environs. He has a feel for rhythm. Although he breaks lines to simplify form and sweeps the canvas with mighty curves, the figures never seem distorted but are very clear. His unconventional approach creates an atmosphere. One cannot forget his exquisite texture of dresses and glowing hues and such paintings as 'Vermillion Desire', 'Charak Ceremony' and 'Bengali New Year'.

His composition is essentially linear and his drawing very powerful. In fact, it would not be too much to say that drawingwise he is peerless in the Calcutta art world.

Earlier when he reinterpreted Indian mythological themes, they were mere illustrations, for he has always struggled to give his painting a pictorial character. The juxtaposition of figures and colours, fusion of content and form are his great qualities. Restlessly he has always painted complex scenes on large canvases. Geometrical patterns weave semi-abstract series of figures. His 'Towards Heaven through Hell', done in white and orange yellow, shows white bodies above and dark nudes below. Inspired by the story of Lalitak the painting takes us through a series of visual experiences—a sort of apocalyptic vision transformed into painting.

In the late sixties Bijon was more concerned with social issues—especially the problems of suffering and evil. He would have many riders on horse, falling bodies. Flexible lines and rhythmic nuances were brought into play and his 'Black Christ'—a comment on the suffering

of Black Africa—attracted attention by the sheer force of its character. During this period he over-dramatised and reacted emotionally.

He is now busy painting certain aspects of the day-to-day life of Calcutta. He has leaned heavily on Indian sculpture for the dimension and volume of his pattern. His tendency to create an impact by using large canvases and the art of transforming everyday scenes into terms of painting are almost always successful. A quality of fantasy pervades his whole approach. He searches for exactness and precision, leaves out everything that is unnecessary. Yet in everything he does one can feel the vibration of life. In March 1974 he will end his self-imposed exile and exhibit once more to prove that he is a force to reckon with.

Puja Releases : The Usual Rut

MRIGANKA SEKHAR RAY

PLAYING a little rough is such a novelty for our lollipop screen-heroes that the critics wax eloquent over Uttamkumar doing a couple of fist-fights and gulping off bottles of country liquor in *Roudrachhaya* and we have our rough and rugged characters heralding a new trend in Bengali cinema. A close look at the film will tell us that such ideas are silly and superficial. With all its pretensions to being an objective study of violence, the film is just a rehash of the well-worn pattern, the story of a rich man's long-lost son who gets into bad company, meets his parents after many years (who, of course, do not recog-

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nise the hero (although how he does still remains a mystery), tries to redeem himself, but is caught up by his past and finally death comes as a retribution. There is a romantic angle, a fleshy vamp and some drunken brawls, a pale aping of Bombay. The whole set-up is unconvincing and the script is a bundle of melodramatic contrivances. I have not read Bimal Kar's original story, but it should be miles apart from this crude stuff on the screen.

Salil Dutta has a hard job for the protagonist of his film *Sesh Prishay Dekhun*. He makes him atone for all the sins committed by mankind, ranging from malpractices and crimes engineered in big business to the atrocities in Hiroshima and Vietnam. The burden is a little heavy on his tiny soul, and all that he can do is to sport a beard and go on an aimless sojourn along Calcutta streets and as he dies an innocent victim of a gang-fight, a martyr without a cause, the Voice of God filters through a beam of psychedelic lights, assuring him that he can die peacefully, because on the last page of human history, the story of the triumph of faith will come as a fitting conclusion. Whether the hero's problem is one of troubled conscience or unsated libido is left unexplained and some answers could be provided by the heroine. But she is too busy dishing out some entertainment for the audience and is released from her preoccupations to weep on the garlanded photograph of the dead hero at the end. Had the director been a little aware of the dangers of little learning and remained within the limits of his own experience, the film might not have been an unmitigated disaster.

The makers of *Ek Jo Chhilo Bagh* have chosen an interesting, although not very original situation where the characters of a particular area, their vices and virtues are examined through the eyes of an outsider, in this case a tiger who has sneaked out of a circus cage and goes for a prowl in the village, creating a big scare. There is another do-gooder

in the village who dons a tiger's skin and these two tigers, one fake and one real, launch a crusade against all the wrong-doers of the village. Thus a wayward husband is thrown back at his wife's feet, the village lover gets his girl and the corrupt civic head is brought to book. There is some genuine fun in sequences like the marriage ceremony on the treetop and in the scenes of the village kids playing around with the tiger, but in general the script suffers from a lack of pace and there is often a sudden slackening of tempo at some crucial moments.

Letters

What Came After Anger

All criticism must necessarily aim at improving the object of criticism, but when it only tries to destroy, it degenerates into mere denigration. Unfortunately Mr Mrinal Sen's attack on the CPI (ML) in his latest film *Padatik* falls in the second category. That he is talking about the CPI (ML) in his film is quite obvious.

No one will deny that the CPI (ML) suffered from faults, political and organisational. Yet by now it is known to all that those of the CPI (ML) who are still alive and still free are criticising themselves and are trying to regroup. So today it is the duty of all progressive and democratic people to help them with constructive criticism and suggestions so that a strong and correct party can be built up. Unprincipled attack at this stage would be nothing but a repudiation of the party principle and a repudiation of the revolutionary movement as a whole. About such repudiation Lenin said, "And this is tantamount to completely disarming the proletariat in the interests of the bourgeoisie." (Lenin's italics). It is tantamount to that petty-bourgeois diffuseness, instability, incapacity for sustained effort, unity and organised action,

which, if indulged in, must inevitably destroy every proletarian revolutionary movement". (*Left Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*). The attack on the CPI (ML) by Mr Mrinal Sen can therefore only be described in the terms quoted above.

The allegations brought forward by Mr Sen in *Padatik* are apparently not incorrect. There was a lack of democracy in the Party, there was commandism and bureaucracy, there was mutual mistrust and a tendency to accept whatever the leaders said without question. But this was not most emphatically not, all the other side of the coin is very fully ignored by Mr Sen. The CPI (ML) cadres did not only do what they also fought heroically and sacrificed their most precious possessions. They not only burned schools and broke statues, they also did painstaking work in rural areas, however limited it may have been in some places. They did not take orders at face value, they also argued and debated. They were definitely not mere "cannon fodder" as Mr Sen would have us believe. Degeneration set in later, but that was not after Chaman Mazumdar had gone completely haywire with all the others singing in tune and when C.M. fetishism usurped the place of Mao Tse-tung Thought in the Party. Of course, left opportunism lay dormant in the fight against right action and came out at the crucial moment. "Chairman Mao has constantly taught us: It is imperative to note that one tendency covers

সালতাবা

পূর্ববর্তী নবম সংখ্যা আগামী বাইশে জারি প্রকাশিত হচ্ছে। এতে থাকবে: তেলঙ্গা সংগ্রামের নেতা ডি. জি. বাণ্ডের তেলঙ্গা সংগ্রাম প্রসঙ্গে বিশেষ প্রবন্ধ। মার্কসবাদী লেনিনবাদী শিক্ষা-সিবিজ 'জানবার কথা' নেতৃত্বের আদর্শ সম্পর্কে বাণ্ড গেরু ও প্রসঙ্গ সহ অন্যান্য প্রবন্ধ।

। যোগাযোগের ঠিকানা:

১৫০, মুক্তাধাম বাবু ষ্ট্রিট, কলকাতা-৭১

puppet in the hands of the leaders and because I was cannon fodder.' The afore-mentioned film critic has applauded Mr Sen because "the conventional approach to indict left adventurism is farthest from his intention". Why so? And why then does he bother to question the organisational policies of the CPI (ML)?

It is heard in various quarters that Mr Mrinal Sen is acquainted with knowledgeable circles. If this is untrue, then his misrepresentation of the situation and the protagonists can be excused, though his right to talk about something he does not know can be challenged. But if what is heard is true and if Mr Sen does know what really happened in those days, then his motives for being glaringly one-sided become suspect. Several disturbing questions raise their ugly heads. Why did he deliberately hide a part of the real picture in his film? Why is his film, which supposedly goes against the ruling class, given financial assistance by the Film Finance Corporation and Dena Bank? Have these organisations become anti-establishment overnight? Why is *Amrita Bazar Patrika* so happy with the film? A good brain going down the drain is not a pretty sight. So, with some regret, we mourn the passing of yet another might-have-been people's artist.

A FILM-GOER

Calcutta

(Sahil Biswas
City College)

The reviewer of *Padatik* (September 29, 1973) has tried to bring out the inner worth of the film. But the effort has not met with success.

No doubt Mrinal Sen is the one film-maker in our country who has taken a bold step in portraying its socio-political condition in unambiguous and pungent terms, but he has not been able to marry the goddess of art to the demons of reality.

The film has served us a dish with reportage, some facts and figures trying to synchronise the political conditions in this country with that in South-East Asia and Africa, and a

few delightful and impressive shots of encounter between the father and the son (the fugitive revolutionary) and so on. Nothing more. The self-introspection of the revolutionary is neither deep nor based on scientific self-analysis nor philosophical. The images of the past come crowded into his mind and go. The self-realisation emerges all of a sudden. That close contact between the cadre and the masses is urgently needed for a political movement or revolution to bear fruit is a universal truth stated in simple terms and disgusting propagandism (here in this film)!

The film ends—ends with what? Does it throw a whither-to-go light on the revolutionaries of the near future?

ARUN KANTI LAHIRI
Calcutta

A Request

The writings of the late communist leader, Sri Sushital Roychowdhury, will soon be published along with a biography. People who can throw some light on his personal life and/or possess any of his writings are requested to contact the undersigned. Rare articles, if necessary, will be copied and returned.

Smt. Amiya Roychowdhury,
Secretary, Sushital Roychowdhury Memorial Committee,
Government Housing Estate,
VIP Road, Block T, Flaz 3,
Calcutta-54.

‘প্রস্তুতি’ পড়েছেন?

মতামত জানান

৩২, রাণী হর্ষমুখী রোড, কলি-২

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The faults of the CPI (ML) were born of a graver defect. About that Mr Sen has kept very silent. He has not said a single word against the wrong political line of the CPI (ML) which was the source from which all the other faults stemmed. We should always bear in mind that if the main political line is erroneous a thousand defects will manifest themselves. If Mr Sen had criticised the politics of annihilation and had tried to point at a correct path his endeavour would have been welcome. But he has confined himself to superficial aspects of the problem.

A film critic wrote in the Autumn Number of *Frontier*, "What was a confused, amorphous mass in *Interview*, took a more definite shape in *Calcutta '71* and in *Padatik* the mirror has become clearer." He has brought out, unwittingly, the exact truth. The anarchy of *Interview* became radical defeatism in *Calcutta '71*. In the latter film Mr Sen spoke of oppression, exploitation and misery, but for reasons best known to himself could not speak of the struggles against these. All characters in the film accept the life stoically without a murmur, they cannot stand up against the forces that crush them. The real picture of the years he spoke about was utterly different. The time traveller, the only person who dares to fight, is finally shot down, background music notwithstanding. But even then the director's call to the people to wake up and be aware of the oppression and exploitation was a redeeming feature of the film. In *Padatik* he has shed his pretensions. Now he openly preaches bourgeois diffuseness. This he has disguised behind a clever facade of so-called unbiased judgement, "human warmth", refinement and emotional development. It is as if the wise man of twenty" who asked the audience in *Calcutta '71* whether they wished to know why he has died, answers his question himself and says, "I died in vain, I died because I was an unthinking

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 forth-

coming from all democratically-minded people not only in this State but in the whole of India.

We appeal to all democratic people:

To contribute generously to this Committee;

To communicate to us all cases of political victimization in need of legal aid.

Cheques drawn in favour of Bina Banerjee may be sent to either of the addresses given below; money orders, cash and communications to the office (2).

1. Bina Banerjee
Account No. 10816
United Bank of India,
Sealdah Branch,
28, Acharya Prafulla Chandra
Roy Road,
Calcutta-9.
2. Jayasree Rana
Legal Aid Committee
11, Old Post Office Street,
Third Floor,
Calcutta-1.
Visiting hours: 4-30 p.m. to
6-30 p.m. on weekdays (bar-
ring holidays).

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