

frontier

Vol. 6: No. 49

MARCH 23, 1974

PRICE: 50 PAISE

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BITING GUJARATI DUST

AFTER two months of feet-dragging and refusal to submit to the will of the people of Gujarat, the Government of India has agreed to the dissolution of the State Assembly. Contrary to the well-established practice, the decision to dissolve the Assembly was announced not from New Delhi but from Ahmedabad, probably to give the impression that the Assembly had been kept in a state of animated suspension at the instance of the Governor. President's rule has been and is being so frequently used by the ruling party to serve its own ends that no one will be sold on the suggestion that the Governor acts as a free agent and New Delhi acts up to his recommendations in strict constitutional propriety. It is New Delhi's two-stage obstinacy that has cost more than eighty lives and two months of total disruption of the life of one of the more prosperous States. More than forty people had to die in police firing to convince the Centre that the Ministry of Mr Chimanbha Patel must go and almost an equal number to bring home to the Government that the Assembly has to be dissolved so that Gujarat may be spared a Ministry from the old pack. For two months the Congress saw to it that human life went cheap in Gujarat, if not essential commodities.

The sole aim of the Congress leadership all these weeks was to maintain a continuum of the party's rule. The Assembly was not dissolved in the hope that it will be possible to foist on the State another Congress Ministry under the leadership of some other faction leader. The alternative pretext that the Assembly was not being dissolved in view of the forthcoming Presidential election seems untenable, for the Congress has such a majority in Parliament and State assemblies that its candidate would have romped home even if there was no Gujarat MLAs to vote for him. If this argument had any validity, that was wholly lost after the Uttar Pradesh and Orissa elections. Yet almost to the day the Gujarat Assembly was dissolved the Congress leadership went on insisting that the agitations must be called off and normality restored before it condescended to consider the question of dissolving the Assembly. The people of Gujarat saw through the trap and have forced the Government to eat its words. They have demonstrated that the upsurge in their State was not phoney as in Kerala under the first

Editor : Samar Sen

PRINTED AT MODERN INDIA PRESS,
7, RAJA SUBODH MULICK SQUARE,
CALCUTTA-13 AND PUBLISHED WEEKLY
BY GERMAL PUBLICATIONS (P) LTD,
BY SAMAR SEN FROM 61, MOIT LANE,
CALCUTTA-13
TELEPHONE: 243202

Namboodiripad Ministry or in West Bengal under the second United Front Government when Mr Ajoy Mukherjee conspired with the Congress against the Ministry headed by himself. The upsurge in Gujarat was against the Congress as a whole and not merely its Ministry.

It is only national that Morarjibhai should have started a fast to reap political benefits out of Chimanbhai's predicament. Other fraternal parties in the Opposition might have tried different tricks to profit from the anti-Congress wave. Such harmless rivalries are permissible in a family; they are in accordance with the rules of the game. But the Congress sought to stretch the credulity of the apolitical majority too far when it conjured up visions of fascist uprising to pull down the democratic edifice it had built. All that after it has shot down more than 80 people in the streets of Gujarat and indiscriminately arrested and harassed citizens to force them into submission. The people of Gujarat have refused to be intimidated or bluffed into changing their course of action; they have brought down the mighty Congress to its rheumatic knees. In the process the Congress strategy has been laid bare. Whenever a Gujarat-type agitation is launched by the people in other States, the Congress is ready with plans to unleash a Gujarat-type terror. It has in Bihar, and already 23 people have been killed. To the suffering masses, however, the ultimate humiliation of the Congress in Gujarat is unlikely to lose its appeal.

Lotus Eaters

The Government's handling of the agitation by West Bengal doctors and engineers is a classic example of blowing hot and cold. The agitators have been called seditious, threatened punishment through the DIR, and immediately after promi-

sed some concessions. Publicly the Government has been very stern towards the agitators; in private it was all smiles during discussions. It seems, however, that this time the Government has caught a tartar. Doctors and engineers are also blowing hot and cold in tune with the Government. Threatened with the DIR, they have threatened stoppages of milk, electricity and water supply. When the Government talks of the people in distress, they too talk of the people in distress.

Under the circumstances, Mr Siddhartha Ray reacted in the predictable way—he fled to New Delhi. Apparently, he has been successful this time; he has convinced New Delhi that the problem is not his, it is the Centre's. And the Centre reacted predictably as well, it has announced the formation of a committee.

But the problem has not solved itself—a thing the Government has been expecting all along. It has been trying to provoke the people against the doctors and engineers. But whatever attitude the common man may have towards the agitators, he cannot possibly force his views on them. What is more, the movement has been snowballing. Such have been the exploitation and abuses of power by the IAS that more and more government people are coming out and joining the doctors and engineers. The IAS have been trying to entice in the arena the WBCS into its fold but the WBCS disdainfully declined the invitation; the other government services too have voiced their sympathy for the doctors and engineers. In a country where there is one doctor available for 5000 people and that too on payment of fees beyond the means of the common man, the Government's concern for the poor man's health is ridiculous. Equally ridiculous is the Government's concern at the irrigation and power generation breakdown due to the engineers' agitation. At a time when Howrah has become the hotbed of cholera and small-pox because of the stoppage of municipal services and of

the Government's inaction, even concern expressed for the people sounds howlingly preposterous. Our country continues to be the land of lotus eaters nonetheless. The Maidan is resplendent with lights of culture when factories in and around Calcutta are having lay-offs because of power famine.

A technical man under whose guidance Bokaro had been making rapid progress for two years and some workshops had started production ahead of time, has been thrown out, thanks to the machinations of the IAS men in New Delhi and their puppet Ministers. Bokaro is but a glaring and recent case; our history in industries is replete with a multitude of such instances; the public sector undertakings are going topsy because of bureaucratic indifference, indulgence and downright corruption. The question is simple. Given the set-up at present, there is a possibility of more production if technical men are given chances. More production means more exploitation, true. But lesser production means more unemployment and greater distress too. Should one support the cause of the technocrats, even when they strengthen bureaucratic capitalism or should one continue to be the playground of the IAS and remain stagnant?

Revolt In Ethiopia

Perhaps the Lion of Judah was the only person to be surprised when non-commissioned officers and their men in the Second Division seized control of Asmara, the capital of Eritrea. Others were surprised that the mutiny by the armed forces was so long in coming. Emperor Haile Selassie at first sputtered at the mutinous forces that their action would cause satisfaction to the enemies. As regards the demand for a higher pay packet the octogenarian Emperor who has removed himself from the mainstream of Ethiopian life said, "This is a poor country. You

country cannot afford to give you more. His appeal to their loyalty could not dissuade the thousands of soldiers who were mutinying in different garrisons throughout the country. The Lion did not roar at this point; he simply caved in. But it was not only for increased wages that the rebels were pressing; they also demanded the immediate dismissal of the nineteen-member Meles Meles Hapte Wold Cabinet. Here also the Emperor initially refused to concede the demand but when the rebels took control of the key points in Addis Ababa he capitulated. A new Cabinet headed by career diplomat Endalkachew Makonnen has been appointed. This will not in any way improve the lot of the common people since the feudal socio-economic structure remains. The mutiny by the armed forces and last month's popular demonstration against the government when the police killed five people all point to the grave economic crisis that has afflicted the country for quite some time. What has heightened the revulsion against the regime is the indifference of the officials to the growing distress of the people reeling under severe price inflation. The man in the Jubilee palace surrounded by courtiers and sycophants was no longer in control of things. He did not even have the courage to drop those officials who were enriching themselves with people's money. He is fortunate that even after all this there is as such no demonstration against him. When last year's drought played havoc with the rural economy and the people living in villages were subjected to untold sufferings, the Government in Addis Ababa showed no concern for a considerable period. By the time the officials were woken up to the situation some 100,000 men and millions of cattle had already died. Again it was not the administration but the students who had drawn the world community's attention to the famine. The relief that was provided was insufficient compared to the need of the drought-stricken people. As it happens everywhere, people who had

lost their crop and cattle moved to the cities. As a result of this food prices there rose abruptly. Prices of other things kept pace with that of food. Violent demonstrations in this situation were only to be expected. The mutiny in Asmara cannot, however, be explained only by the armed forces' inability to meet two ends. It has also something to do with their frustrating experience in putting down the Eritrean rebellion.

Empty Noises

Quite a few of our patriotic MPs have voiced a sense of indignation at some of the recent press reports which said that the World Bank has leaked out an anti-Indian report which is supposed to contain a strong indictment of Indian economic planning. It is nice to find that there are at least some people still left in the country who even now believe that the rest of the world cares about all that is said and discussed in Indian legislatures. A student of contemporary developments however tends to have a different impression. The youthful exuberance with which we still express our opinion about this or that event hardly counts much beyond the national frontier, the latest example being the Indian protest on the Diego Garcia affair. There is therefore little ground to believe that all the noise made about the alleged report would make the World Bank shiver. A formal contradiction of the news item has been published, and its absence would have made the whole thing look still more grotesque. But it is by now pretty clear that if the present crisis in the Indian economy were to be saved from turning into an explosive situation. New Delhi has little options but to seek a much larger dose of foreign aid. And the type of noise that had been made does not benefit one condemned to seeking favour.

The situation is eerily reminiscent of what happened in 1966. Two had

years of drought had made the Indian economy lie prostrate. The United States and other aid-givers offered help but demanded a high price in the form of devaluation of the Indian rupee. It is now largely a matter of debate if the devaluation has done any good or not, but it was certainly not very honourable for the country at that time. This time also it can be said with reasonable confidence that the World Bank would organise a kind of bailing out operation. But what price would be demanded now? It might be either of the two things or both: we temper our excessive camaraderie with the Soviet Union and we lift all the checks on Indian and foreign big business to expand. In other words, we unlearn and undo some of the basic tenets of our policy.

Top Companies

Rs 108.89 crores—this is the loot which 36 top foreign companies, mainly American, took away from India during the three years 1970-73. According to the Finance Ministry, this represents the profits, dividends, head office expenses, technical know-how fees and royalties these companies were permitted to repatriate. Funds repatriated by smaller ones are besides the above. But even that is not all the money the foreign companies have taken away. According to an official committee, something like Rs 250 crores a year is taken away by them through illegal means—under-invoicing, over-invoicing, smuggling etc.

Despite all the "regulations" which the Reserve Bank of India has imposed, the loot is increasing year after year. In 1970-71 the 36 companies repatriated Rs 3266.8 lakhs; in 1971-72 Rs 3431.6 lakhs; in 1972-73 Rs 4199.1 lakhs. The biggest amount was repatriated by the oil companies. Tyre companies also had it good. Firestone took away Rs 106.8 lakhs, Rs 119.0 lakhs and Rs 244.3 lakhs in the three years respectively. Good-year's share in the three years was Rs 68.3 lakhs, Rs. 84.1 lakhs and Rs

112.4 lakhs. Among the banking companies, National and Grindlays led with Rs 133.3 lakhs in 1970-71, Rs 178.4 lakhs the following year and Rs 196.0 lakhs in 1972-73. Other bigtime profiteers were Hindustan Lever and Union Carbide.

Despite this huge loot by the American companies operating in the country, the Congress Government, to please foreign capital, has been repeatedly saying that no foreign companies will be nationalised, except in very special circumstances. Mr Subramaniam, during a discussion in the Lok Sabha on the working of foreign monopoly companies producing consumer goods, made the stand on nationalisation very clear, quoting Mrs Gandhi. Ministers declared in Parliament that the foreign oil companies would not be taken over.

Leave aside nationalisation, the Government is afraid of stopping expansion of American companies even when its terms are disobeyed. Its declared policy is not against expansion of foreign companies but that such expansion would not be allowed unless the proportion of foreign holding in the ordinary shares of a company is reduced to a specified level by floating new shares in India. The branch of the Ingersoll Rand Company which is a fully U.S.—owned company operating in India, producing air compressors, has been allowed to expand even though it refused to act in accordance within the Government guidelines.

Besides taking away huge capital the U.S. Government is taking a stiff attitude to India in regard to trade also. A good way of paying back loans to the USA would be to increase the margin of exports from India over imports from the USA. But the USA takes a different stand; if India wants to increase exports to it, it will have to increase imports from the USA also. India seems reluctant to resist this. This failure arises from the fact that dependence on foreign monopoly (capital still remains a dominant feature in the Congress scheme of economic development.

Islamic Summit : Before And After

R. P. MULLICK

IF the oil war unleashed by the producer countries could be regarded as the conditioned reflex of Arab victims of imperialistic aggression, the Islamic summit represented that phase of their liberation struggle as has coincided with their indigenous rulers,—some of them feudalist proteges of imperialism, taking up an anti-imperialist stance as part of an over-all policy to snatch a front place in the struggle.

It is remarkable, however, how religious sentiment, working under the legacies of medieval pan-Islamism, could and has become the forte of a movement for emancipation. The backdrop is furnished by the urges and aspirations of Arab peoples in the Near East, especially the Palestinians, for real independence (not the shadow so long offered by proxy-States of imperialism, e.g. Jordan) and freedom from exploitation by the gigantic oil companies belonging to classical imperialist countries and such States. The perspective now opens up new possibilities for new equations of power and relations, and of conflict as well, between those traditionally enslaved and exploited and the imperialist nation-States themselves.

Hints of economic war, including politico-diplomatic pressures, military threats (of occupying, selectively, oil-producing sites with lightning commando-type expeditions), and denials of "aid" (technological expertise and armament) failed, until recently, to erode the Arab peoples' morale or wear out their determination to stick it out in the attritional oil war. (The Tripoli agreement is not going to be a permanent one). Fulminations, and pious platitudes offering "co-operation" and help for removing the burden of starvation (with a pittance from the highly developed ones' burden of affluence) have had no impact on the Arabs'

new-found psychological firmness and work of unity. It is the imperialists who are facing the prospect of international division. France, with its heritage of Gaullism, has firmly opted for an Arab policy based on bilateral deals and arrangements with oil-producing countries on the basis of "oil for you and oil for us". Britain, though it would rather not create a rift in the lute of the 13 developing nations' consumer conference, has also been lately moving with the same French approach of "marketing separately"; its round of succeeding long negotiations with Iran and Arab States are pointers.

West Germany is the big power with a strong balance of payments, a strong position and expanding industrial profile in this conclave; yet, it would not mind dropping its "going it alone" should economic compulsions so rule. The latest meetings of Nixon and Kissinger, however, again angered Western Europe.

All American sermons on world wide cooperation for finding a way out of the present crisis, which that advanced capitalist States have already reached a moribund stage and pointing back fearfully to the pulverizing slump of the thirties, when evoking no response even from the faithful among the inauspicious. Since it cannot tame the profit of its own five giant oil corporations it has no alternative left but to placate those among the OPEC countries (Saudi Arabia e.g.) who it considers still vulnerable to economic blandishments. The latest American offer to equip the Iranian navy, besides the air and land forces, is an indication. Trying to prevent Iraq infiltrate the conclusive deliberations of the Islamic summit, the Trojan horse of imperialism, another.

Long before the Islamic summit was due to meet, there was a court

d After

New Delhi, where there is not only several architects of foreign policy now, their assessments being many and varied. The bitter legacy of India's self-sought participation in the Rabat Islamic conference (1973) made the government doubly wary this time, yet it is common knowledge that the dimensions of the summit extended far beyond the Asian problems. The question of self-determination for Kashmiris looms behind Bangladesh's participation.

The recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan introduces new equations, and possibilities of multi-lateral cooperation and understanding, both formal and informal. The blanket grant of "collaborators" suffered long-term imprisonment in Bangladesh jails was the precursor to the right-oriented swing within the

the big State League rulers; the need for a through-going offensive against revolutionary fighters for people's liberation has led to a prodigious orientation of their foreign policy. There are other imperatives

The latest move will a seat in the UN, and softening the Chinese attitude towards Bangladesh. But it is well known that China may not back the admission of Bangladesh to the UN unless the latter respects the policy resolution of December 1971 and the resolutions of international law. The admission came only in the thirties, when it was understood that New Delhi even from the Dacca could no longer keep up the ghost of war crimes trials.

oil corporations

Though some splitters, potential among the OPWC (not actual, have been silenced at the Islamic summit, others are still trying to safeguard U.S. interests. The latest Iranian has been offering cooperation to industrialized consumer countries of the West, in a phased manner, with the ulterior purpose of creating an unseen split in the ranks of Islamic countries which still bear the brunt of imperialist aggression and exploitation. It has pursued the

Islamic summit were was, fluted

its present acute economic crisis, what with mounting difficulties in balance of payments, depletion of foreign exchange reserves, and budgetary imbalance. The recent Indo-Iranian agreement reflects the double face of neo-imperialism at its worst, (i) the bait of an unspecified billion-dollar "aid" to India to enable the latter to increase its purchase of crude oil for the refinery, set up with Indo-Iranian cooperation, from 2.8 million tonnes to 3.5 million, and (ii) export of industrial materials from India to Iran, e.g. high grade steel pellet-feed (2.5 million tonnes) and alumina (1,00,000 tonnes).

India's export of military hardware to some undeveloped countries of Africa and Asia, and the supply of military-training-facilities to Iraq, which is a thorn towards Iran, underline its double-faced character, as "part of our overall policy to share our exports with the developing world". (Statement of a spokesman of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, India). It is significant how the ruling class of India utilizes the state machinery for implementing its policy of driving a wedge between Pakistan and Afghanistan on the one hand (over the Pushtoon and also the Baluch movements for self-determination), and in maintaining close military and political liaison with Iran, on the other. With Britain gradually retreating west of Suez, and States like Jordan and the Gulf Emirates coming within the orbit of U.S. influence, although the Arab peoples everywhere are in revolt against their indigenous rulers and are compelling them to adopt policy measures running counter to imperialism, it has devolved on India to function as a running mate to Soviet Russia's grand strategy of revised imperialism in this sensitive area of contention—between Suez and Shatt-El-Arab-Persian Gulf.

The recent developments in Egypt—the ouster of Heykal, the famous editor and brain behind the government, and the slow extension of Kissinger's diplomatic offensive to

bring together the confronting interests of the United Arab Republic and Israel, i.e. of Zionist neo-imperialism—signify some success, limited though at present, in splitting the Islamic anti-imperialist front that the political circumstances after the October war had thrown up. The employment of oil as a weapon has evoked instant reaction from imperialism in the form of economic war and military intimidation. The epilogue to the Islamic summit shows serious symptoms of some erosion of its achievements; the economic rapport and institutional arrangements, set up for extending necessary financial support (investment, facilities of technological expertise, indirect price-concessions etc.) to developing countries of Africa and Asia might just wither away.

Thanks to continuous provocation, prodding and tactics of insinuation by imperialism, the USA specially, misunderstanding has already started in undeveloped Islamic Africa.

Bangladesh goes West

Two trends were alive in the forces that brought about an ad hoc reconciliation between Pakistan and Bangladesh at the Lahore summit. The recognition by Pakistan was more a result of the trend towards fighting unity among the exploited and aggrieved Muslim States and their move for coordinated action against imperialist machinations. The response by Bangladesh to this gesture of the summit States in general and to Pakistan in particular, was the effect of the other trend, the West-inspired one which has been active since the formal withdrawal of the Indian Army. The leadership that rules Bangladesh at present has decided to swim with this trend and has actually gone West while going to Lahore. Viewed from this perspective, the start of this phase of Pak-Bangladesh detente is a victory for America's global strategy, not of the Indo-Soviet combine. Hence the spate of dry speculations in New Delhi, the wry smile of welcome offered by leaders here and in the

*For shortage of news-
print we may not be
able to bring out the
March 30 issue of
Frontier*

Kremlin to this development, and the startled resumption of contention between the two super-powers in the region of the Indian Ocean. Diego Garcia symbolises the sombre aspect of this contention: the political propaganda offensive by India and the USSR, ostensibly directed against the Western brand of world imperialism but in reality aimed at confronting and detracting the power potential of the USA and its European partners, is the other aspect.

What could possibly be the role of the UN in the inter-related developments of the historic crisis of today—the economic agonies of capitalism touched off by the uncertain oil-flow and the crystallization of political and military antagonism between the two varieties of imperialism in the Near East and South Asia?

Meanwhile, liberation elements active in all repressed and enslaved countries will continue to gather strength within and outside the complex of the Islamic States until real secularism is established with the revolutionary transformation of capitalist society and the elimination of pseudo-socialism and counterfeit democracy now being practised by the masked hangers-on of world imperialism like, say, India, Iran and Iraq, and others.

Dissent And Hypocrisy

NIKHILESWAR

THE Solzhenitsyn affair once again revives the question of the nature of freedom of thought in socialist countries. The concept of freedom of the individual has different manifestations in the Western and the socialist countries. In the former society is self-centred and personal plus industrial espionage is the order of the day. Whereas a socialist set-up is collective centred, of course with KGB-type shadows. For that matter no country is free from censorship of writings. As the Czech writer in exile, Arnost Lustuats, says, "A dictatorship needs censorship the way hell needs the devil".

Every individual has to restrain his personal fancies and mental arrogance for the collective goal. One has to strive hard for people's democracy. If an individual places himself above the masses and treats himself as a parallel government, then, naturally he has to face the prospect of downfall. Solzhenitsyn, as a result of his persistent personal stubbornness, has fallen directly into the hands of the capitalist press. True to his nature, he came out with his anti-Marxism to advise the Soviet rulers to abandon Marxism.

To achieve a real socialist society "in actual fact a very severe and protracted process" (Marx) has to be undergone. A self-centred individual should be transformed into a social being. But the present Soviet set-up seems to have turned vice versa. Other Solzhenitsyns may follow suit because of the prevailing conditions in all socialist states which have become profit-oriented. But in reality communism should become the solution for all conflicts. "This communism, as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism; it is the genuine reso-

lution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man—the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species. Communism is the riddle of history solved and it knows itself to be this solution" (Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 p. 95).

To an outsider, Solzhenitsyn may seem to be a stubborn man. It was revealed in his unrelenting attitude in facing the Soviet socialist system headed by the new class of rulers. These rulers call their country "socialist" but many a true Marxist thinker has unmasked the real nature of their social-imperialism. To hide their own sinister revisionist approach the rulers of Russia parade as the real saviours of the Third World. But in their own country they are not able to face the dissent of intellectuals and writers with courage and foresight. As they do not believe in learning from the masses, they never allow their dissenters to go to the masses and explain their case.

No Charity At Home

When Solzhenitsyn was banished, almost all the newspapers and journals highlighted his case. Here in India, the conscience-keepers of the so-called free press are regularly shedding tears. Paradoxically, they never said or wrote even a single word against the persecution of writers in their own land. On the contrary, they became silent collaborators in the repression of left thinkers and people's writers.

The other day one of the editors of a 'largest circulated daily' observed in his editorial: "The knock on the door at midnight as the secret police arrived to question political

ed literary undesirables, was a symbol of the Stalinist age". And he viewed the Solzhenitsyn affair as a literary revolt. But what about the India where the knock on the door of writers at midnight by plainclothes police aided by uniformed guards of the establishment is not uncommon?

Naturally when poets and journalists like Subba Rao Panigrahi of Andhra Pradesh and Saroj Dutta of West Bengal were shot dead as dangerous political elements, nothing happened to the liberal conscience of the editors. Even now the literary and political undesirables in the eyes of the present Indian rulers are systematically harassed, harassed, detained, tortured, and if not be killed in "encounters." In Andhra Pradesh, the members of the Revolutionary Writers Association are still kept under the strictest vigilance. More recently, Mr Jeeva, one of the executive members of the IWA, was unlawfully remanded for a long interrogation. His house was raided at midnight and nearly 400 books were taken away. Mr Jyoti, another member, was kept in the police lock-up for four days for the crime of writing a poem and publishing it in a local weekly of Tirupati two years ago. Later, he was fined Rs. 50 by the Magistrate for "literary crime".

Now turning to Solzhenitsyn, he is very much obsessed and haunted by his bitter past. Ideologically he is opposed to communism and very much opposed to the Soviet system. One can hail him as a persistent fighter in confronting the Soviet hierarchy, in exposing the 'mental hospitals', 'concentration camps' and Gulag Archipelagos. Yet, a true Marxist can doubt and question the very approach and attitude of Solzhenitsyn in his writings.

Roy Medvedev, a dissident historian who supports 'scientific socialism and communism', in an analytical review of 'Gulag Archipelago', says, "Solzhenitsyn's book overflows with dreadful facts. It would be difficult to absorb even a much smaller

quantity of such material. The book includes the detailed descriptions of the tragic and extraordinary facts of hundreds of people—people whose fates, however, were typical of past decades. The book is full of thoughts and observations, both deep and correct ones, and perhaps some incorrect ones, but all born in the monstrous sufferings of tens of millions of people, sufferings unparalleled in the centuries-long history of our country". Apart from the monstrous sufferings faced by many, Medvedev says that some of the things described by Solzhenitsyn are incorrect. So it raises many more doubts. Ervin Sibar wrote in *The Guardian*, the American weekly: "Both the book and the incredible publicity created around it, plainly speaking, are a hoax". And he alleges that there are wild rumours, conjectures, gossip and self-pity hardly worthy of attention if the author's image had not been swelled artificially, turning him into a world celebrity.

Usually, it is the practice of the Western press to boost whatever unusual happens in the socialist camp. So apart from some genuine concern for an intellectual and tortured writer, the concern takes the shape of regular anti-communist propaganda. Here, we have to distinguish between the reality and the stubborn persistence of Solzhenitsyn. We have to once again evaluate the real freedom of a people's writer in the communist world.

We regularly hear about the consistent persecution of writers and intellectuals and dissident scientists in the Soviet Union. The affairs of Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn took on alarming proportions. Many other dissident poets were jailed or deported to Siberia.

More recently, some of the cellists and other artists were kept in so-called 'artistic quarantine'. Even the poet Yevtushenko was harassed because he lent some sort of moral support to Solzhenitsyn. Yevtushenko had reacted sharply to the arrest and exile of Solzhenitsyn, saying that the Russians must be told about their

past and present. He said, "In our timidity, let each of us make a choice whether to consciously remain a servant of falsehood or, to cast off the lies, and become an honest man, worthy of respect by our children and our contemporaries". All this and other scores of bungling reveal the deep-rooted malaise in the present Soviet set-up. We are compelled to believe that there is something seriously wrong with the present Soviet leadership.

Let us look at the treatment of writers in People's China. We rarely hear any news about the isolation, torture or liquidation of any intellectual in that country. In the formative years many of the Chinese writers were made to learn from the people. To go through that process they were compelled to clean the floor and work with their hands. Gradually the dissident writers were convinced through the discussions and the realities of the people. Basically the true Marxist society never liquidates or exiles but transforms the intellectuals towards service to the masses and social reality.

No system will thrive on the fanaticism and static nature of a thought. One should be allowed to express one's opinion even to the dislike of the rulers. The rulers may belong to the majority yet sometimes the truth may be with the minority. So the writer or an intellectual who represents that sort of minority must be given full opportunity to put forward his ideas before the masses. If his truth is really stronger, it will certainly triumph. Ultimately that truth may become the path of the masses. And the criterion is that truth or an idea should uplift the people from material and moral degradation. They have to be transformed into a dynamic society where in they will be active participants in material production, control and the political structure.

To perfect the socialist system, the path of constant struggle should be followed. The revolution of thought and action has to be guarded from the people's enemies. These ene-

ties, may sneak from the capitalistic society or from within. All sorts of opponents or dissidents should be exposed and given a chance to re-educate themselves, to help achieve the real classless society. If they are unrelenting they may be given an option to migrate to a like-minded set-up.

Solzhenitsyn was an opponent of the communist system from the beginning. Even during the period of life and death struggle of revolutionary Russia, he could not adjust with it. He was more or less a self-censored intellectual with powers of perception and expression. He seemed sensitive and romantic like Pasternak who could not tolerate revolutionary upheavals and the inevitable restrictions and violence at the beginning. As just liberal-minded writers, they were moved by the violence and the counter-violence of

so many forces in the struggle to achieve real power for the Soviets.

We have to understand the psychological and pathological depths of a person who underwent all sorts of cruelties. Solzhenitsyn was one of the victims of excesses of the Stalinist regime. The managerial class of the revisionist regime failed to bring him to the people. To hide their own new class hierarchy they depended more on the secret service than on the people.

Sometime back even poets like Andrei Voznesensky and Yevtushenko expressed their discontent and protested, through veiled words, against the orthodox communists and the bureaucratic new class. They were not anti-Marxists, yet they too were taken to task in a different manner. It exposed the real nature of the dogmatic rulers.

Some pseudo-progressive thinkers in India term the Solzhenitsyn affair as a 'disease of rebellion'. They do not seem to distinguish between the 'reactionary disease' and the true rebellion in the Indian context. Under the Solzhenitsyn pretext, they make sincere rebellion as a disease because they are content with the existing order in this land. As the conscious agents of the comprador bourgeois class, they proved to be the tail-bearers of the ruling class.

We should certainly protest against the persecution of true people's writers in any system. But the real motives and the intentions of the dissident writers have to be exposed before we protest in order to know the real nature of the system—whether it is for the masses or the few selfish rulers.

ANDRE BETEILLE

STUDIES IN AGRARIAN SOCIAL STRUCTURE

In 1968 Dr Beteille was awarded a Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship to work on the problem of agrarian social structure. This book is a product of that work. The author has selected a number of topics and examined each in a sociological perspective, contributing thus to the development of a new area of inquiry in the discipline. The author's main concern in this work is with the patterns of inequality and conflict as these arise from the ownership, control and use of land—a subject of crucial importance to an understanding of conditions in India.

In terms of the conventional divisions of sociology, the studies in this book belong where the domains of social stratification, economic sociology and political sociology intersect.

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Book Review

DAILY LIFE IN REVOLUTIONARY CHINA

By Maria Antonietta Macciocchi
Monthly Review Press, New York
Price £1.80. (Distributed in India by the Oxford University Press.)

This is a massive book, one of the most interesting of the Western observers' reports on China. A. Macciocchi is of course an ordinary Western observer, a regular member of the Communist Party of Italy, and Communist Deputy in the Italian Parliament, she travelled with her husband Alberto (Chief of the foreign desk of *Unita*) after receiving permission from the Chinese authorities to visit China, as tourists, but not as leading cadres of a West European Communist Party, still nominally 'allied' to the CPSU. The piquancy of the encounter between the guests and the hosts is evident throughout the narration, and Maria Antonietta Macciocchi herself draws frequent attention to the delicious irony of 'the situation.'

This fact—that it is an account written by a veteran member of a Communist Party—and not by a naive-eyed observer, or a professional 'Sinologist', or a working newspaperman, ought to be kept in mind. Macciocchi is hardly interested in leading a line. She is so obviously a participant in the communist movement, she is not really interested in the picturesque; nor is she interested in merely writing an exposé. This is a practical book, addressed mainly to the Western audience, especially to that section of the Western audience which may broadly be classed as Left. Nevertheless, the account is valuable for us, Indians, because even we, or at least that section of 'articulate intellectuals' among us, tend to look at China, even when sympathetic to it, through 'liberal' Western eyes. We too have our own humbler version of 'Sinologists' based in Delhi

and the various RAW centres and similar outfits. At a different level, we have a fairly large number of admirers of Chairman Mao, some of whom at least went to the extent of expecting China to come down and do the jobs that are needed to be done here by us. No doubt the book is going to be read for 'gleaning of 'sinological wisdom' (a wonderfully ironic account of such 'gleaning' in Hong Kong is presented on page 464 of the book) by the people in the first category. But those in the second category too could learn a few profitable lessons by studying this book.

The book is massive, but it reads easily. The major part of it is devoted to a very vivid description of the author's journey in China, her meetings with various people and summaries (in some cases, almost verbatim accounts) of the political discussions she had with the various people she met. This is all first class reading, and one is tempted merely to summarise the book. The last chapter on Some Theoretical and Political Questions presents the basic Maoist views on the future course of revolution in China and the world. (Not forecast, but the kind of work that needs to be done, the kind of revolutionary renewal that constantly needs to be kept in mind.) But these theoretical issues are themselves placed in a particular historical context—the context of the present political reality of China, during and since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. So, the 'narrative' part needs to be kept in mind when one reads the 'theoretical' part; and so I propose to present, in drastically abridged form, the account of daily life in revolutionary China, before going on to a brief discussion of the theoretical issues involved.

Macciocchi's journey (her visa was valid for months) takes her to Peking, Tientsin, Shanghai and Canton, as well as to areas in the countryside. It was undoubtedly a tight itinerary. But the wealth of detail observed and reported is truly

astonishing. It is not the broad impressions of life in China—the tremendous political ferment, the austere purity, the general appearance of well-being and health, the absence of beggars, the almost obsessive honesty in dealing with foreigners, the cleanliness etc., that are interesting, unique as they are; it is the account of the various conversations with a host of Chinese people, party cadres, intellectuals, workers and peasants, students and children and women, and the constant political lesson that is being derived from these examples, that makes Macciocchi's account so fascinating.

Points of Emphasis

There are what may be described as four 'continuous emphases' in the course of this narration, all linked to each other, and all arising under Mao's direction of the course of the Communist Revolution in China. First and foremost is a continuous emphasis on *the people, the masses* (not in any abstract sense), and on the releasing of the creative energies of the masses. To ask the question that Mao asks—For Whom?—is in a sense to answer it. It is the masses, and the masses alone that make history, and of course no communist would ever question this self-evident truth. But with this difference, that in China, the masses are being urged to be conscious of this revolutionary historical rôle of theirs. Their historical rôle is more creative than that of the most important and powerful leader, for even he derives his sustenance from the masses. The second point that is continuously emphasised is the importance of *struggle*—a continuous struggle—between two lines, two modes of thought. In the field, in the factory, in the army and the university and the schools, in hospitals and homes, everywhere two lines of approach are contending for supremacy, and the struggle against revisionist thinking ought to be waged relentlessly. The choice would involve seemingly 'non-ideological' alternatives, like whether to build,

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buy or lease ships; whether to marry at twenty or thirty; but all these are ideological alternatives, as a moment's reflection would reveal. A third, related emphasis is on the danger of revisionist thinking, which can be combated by a constant process of re-education, which is the fourth point that is continuously emphasized.

It is the operation of these four emphases in various aspects of contemporary life in China, domestic, military, intellectual, technological, educational, political &c, that forms the major narrative part of the book. The book opens with a brief account of the author's travails in securing permission to visit China, these travails acquiring a peculiar flavour in the context of the 'special' status of the author. Then follows vivid descriptions of everyday life in China, observed in Peking, Tientsin, Shanghai and Canton. We are taken to the heart of the cultural revolutionary struggle in China—Tsinghua University in Peking—and meet a whole lot of Red Guards who took a leading part in the stirring events of 1966-67. Nobody is born 'red', not even the children of the working class. It is through struggle that one acquires experience. Macciocchi presents a most interesting account of a Round Table discussion at Tsinghua, and this account provides valuable points of comparison and contrast to the classic account of the Cultural Revolution at Tsinghua by William Hinton. A most interesting part of the Round Table discussion is Macciocchi's explanation of the so-called 'jargon' of much contemporary Chinese political discussion (which, personally speaking, I find more meaningful than the jargon used by academics in the West). In the context in which the discussion takes place, in the sheer 'openness' of the debates, the words hardly sound like jargon. The self-critical account of Lin Ping, deputy first secretary of the party at the University—if even one used jargon, he should have used it—is so moving and sincere precisely be-

cause the feelings are couched in political terms. Another fact that emerges out of the account of the Round Table discussion is that contrary to the belief popularly held, the intellectuals were not disgraced, much less distrusted as a rule. There is a most moving account of Shih Kuo-heng, the Professor of Sociology undergoing re-education. As he says, "An intellectual like myself who has been exposed to the influence of the old society for so many years, obviously cannot resolve all his problems in a short time". But he too changes. "From being a mere admirer of a painting [of a peasant planting rice in the fields], he [Shih] came to resemble the man depicted in the painting." Even more moving is the self-critical account of Chein, a famous professor of dynamics. His words about his perception of himself as an intellectual have a profound relevance to all intellectuals: "My books were my products, I wrote books in order to acquire prestige, and signing them gave me intense pleasure."

'Internal Guerilla War'

But the re-education is needed not merely for university intellectuals. The dangers of revisionist thinking—a constant emphasis of Mao—are most insidious in the party itself, and the members of the party and state administration are to be always on guard against it. The visit to the Party Cadre School (known as May 7 School, after the famous May 7, 1966 directives of Mao) is the subject matter of Macciocchi's next chapter, and here too, we are provided with a first-hand account of cultural revolution at work. A most important feature of the Communist Revolution in China is that there has been no 'new class' of aristocrats, associated with the party or the administration. This constant renewal of faith in the masses is achieved by a kind of 'internal guerilla war', which manifests itself most clearly in the accounts given by the various important party cadres, and their engaging—not

merely symbolically—in active manual labour. The May 7 schools everywhere, and even the highest party are not 'above' the masses to engage in self-criticism and education. In the words of Macciocchi, "the superstructure and the workers' structure must simultaneously be transformed in order to define correct revolutionary relationships between them, to comprehend its continuous dynamic." (p. 101)

The next chapter (IV) describes everyday life in China, and stresses the special purity and austerity of life there. But the Chinese society hardly be described as 'pure'. Then follows a chapter on the Chinese experience at organizing their production and development, and the deliberate choices made by them of the model to be taken. "The Chinese Communists know that state ownership of the means of production will in itself guarantee a socialist system of management, and the defining factor is the system of relations established inside a society." This follows a detailed account of attempts of the Chinese to organize an alternate model of production (or its 'socialist' variations). The search for an alternate model naturally leads to a new attitude towards technology, experts &c. In each of the alternatives, two clear ideological approaches were evident—socially-identified with Liu Shao-chi and Mao Tse-tung. A by-product of the strategic choices made by the Chinese is that wage differences between different kinds of workers are at least blatant in China, and Macciocchi reports that the extreme ratio of salaries would be roughly in the ratio of 1:2.5.

The next chapter entitled Part of the Dialectic is an account of the port city of Tientsin. In this chapter, Macciocchi narrates the way Mao's thought is applied creatively to the problems concerning the building of ships, cranes &c. A most relevant account is that of Chen

Barefoot Doctors

The next two chapters, IX and X, describe the GPCR at work in the fields among the peasants, and in the hospitals among the doctors. The latter chapter provides a most valuable supplement to the well-known account of Dr Joshua Horn of his experiences as a surgeon in China. One of the basic lessons of Mao—make the best use of available resources—is especially relevant in the field of medicine in such a vast, poor country like China. Barefoot doctors and mass medicine are not mere catchwords, but a working reality in China, observed by a host of independent observers, of whom Macciocchi is only the most recent. The next two chapters (XI and XII) deal with Shanghai; the first with Shanghai as it was in the horrible 'good old days' and as it is now. I cannot resist quoting here a part of the paragraph on Shanghai and Calcutta:

With the panorama of Shanghai spread out before us, a prophetic remark by Lenin comes to mind: "The world revolution will pass by way of Shanghai and Calcutta." Perfectly true, but in Shanghai it has already come to pass—in Calcutta, not yet. Today, Shanghai and Calcutta was, in a way, the alpha and omega of an alphabet which can deliver us from the illiteracy of our Eurocentrism and enable us to understand Asia, and hence China. One has to have known the other Asia—the smell of India, with its blend of foulness and incense, the eyes filled with horror, the sickening decay—in order to understand China. I remember India as a country inhabited by a shadowy people, bereft of light, living in darkness, groping their way. In India, little children, their hollow eyes ringed with purplish circles, cling to your legs like leeches, brandishing their sores and stumps. They are hardened beggars. Hordes of lepers, blind men, and cripples imprison you in a circle of tainted flesh, rapacity,

mystical neurosis, squalid devotion. They sleep on the ground, spread out over the vast reaches of the city of Calcutta... All this must be remembered, I think, if one is really to understand the strength of China, to understand what cities like Shanghai—once as tragic as Calcutta—started from. (p. 302).

Seeing the old Shanghai, one is constantly reminded of the old, bawdy brothel of pre-revolutionary days. One gets a lump in one's throat as one thinks of the intense humiliation that Shanghai symbolized for the Chinese people for decades. Now, it is gone, all gone. The Bund is still there, and so presumably (though Macciocchi does not mention it) the 'famous' Long Bar. But the tables are now turned for a foreigner in Shanghai. In the old days, a foreigner was bitterly hated and feared; now, instead of hatred and fear, there is only curiosity and tolerant amusement.

The report on the Cultural Revolution in Shanghai which is the subject of Chapter XII is an extremely valuable account, in that it confirms other accounts of those stormy days, especially the role of mass debate, in the evolution of a correct line, the transformation of the pro-Maoist faction from a minority to a majority. How does a participant in those stirring events view them after four years? Here is a Red Guard of Shanghai speaking:

I don't know to what extent this description of the Cultural Revolution in Shanghai is consistent with Mao's thought, for Mao's thought has to be applied creatively, in practice and in struggle. Today I may work here, in Shanghai; tomorrow, somewhere else. Each of us goes where the needs of the revolutionary struggle call him. Sometimes we are part of a revolutionary committee, then we may go to work in a factory, in industry; from top to bottom, from bottom to top. Even when, as cadres, we are at the top, we try never to divorce ourselves

... who built a highly sophisticated grinding machine capable of polishing steel by polishing the surface to the highest degree (pp. 133). The inventive capacities of the workers really came into full play during the Cultural Revolution. There is yet another instance of the creative application of Mao's thought, the way in which Mao's simile of the Foolish Old Man Who Moved The Mountains is applied to the problem of building a 13,000-ton hydraulic press. The most interesting part of this chapter is the quotation of the Little Red Book (pp. 104), and its especial relevance in the context of Chinese language and culture.

Chapter VII describes the Chinese model of development and industrialization and shows how China has avoided the worst aspects of Western industrial production, like pollution and ecological ruin. A whole lot of details are presented about Chinese economic development in the fields of metallurgy, chemical construction, mining and geology, electronics and precision machine building, chemicals, textiles, transport, &c.

Chapter VIII is about Nanking. How long is the Nanking Bridge? The question can be answered literally—so many spans, so many miles as well as in a political metaphor. The famous Nanking Bridge not only spans the Yangtze, but it spans continents, and reaches to the Third World; for the heroic achievements of constructing the bridge presents yet another example of the Chinese model of development. The bridge too, like everything else in China, has a political meaning. "It was a struggle between two classes, two roads, two systems. That of Chairman Mao triumphed, and the bridge is the result of the fusion of the efforts of technicians, and workers; moreover, that even in this difficult task, China does not need foreign aid." (Emphasis added.)

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from the masses. Among ourselves, we engage in constant criticism and self-criticism in order to raise our consciousness of the class struggle, to transform our world outlook. (p. 346).

Hardly the 'fanatical, destructive' Red Guards speaking.

Role of Women

Chapter XIII describes the impact of the Chinese Revolution on the role of women in China, the changes that are occurring in the traditional rôle of the Chinese women. That the battle against sexual tyranny is yet far from won even in Revolutionary China is acknowledged by the Chinese leaders themselves. A habit of millennia cannot be overthrown by mere decrees, or tokenistic measures. But what is to be noted is that the Chinese are struggling to establish equality not merely in a 'linear' sense (like having a woman Prime Minister), but in a 'horizontal' sense as well. Women work in China, not merely in a symbolic sense. They are indeed now winning 'half of heaven'. But what about love? Macciocchi's account of love in China dispels many myths about the destruction of the emotion of love there. It is promiscuity that is missed by those who once again want to nostalgically slum in China. But love? "Good Heavens, where do you think all those babies come from!"

The next chapter, on the PLA, is mainly a summary of Lin Piao's views; a postscript dated 1972 unfortunately tries to hedge on the question of Lin Piao. Actually, of course, there is hardly any need to hedge, for the political report presented by Lin to the Ninth Party Congress of the CPC was endorsed by the Tenth Congress, even while his subsequent disgrace was being confirmed. The Chinese themselves seem more open about their internal problems than sympathetic Western observers.

Chapter XV discusses what has popularly come to be known as 'Ping Pong Diplomacy'. That the

Paper Tiger was invited to play with Celluloid Balls was a peculiarly apposite event. Apart from the larger question of China's attitude towards the USA, Chinese reactions to events in East Pakistan, the Sudan and Ceylon (as it was then) are discussed. The most important point made is that China has always firmly rejected the idea of a World Communist Centre, the idea of patriarchal party. China has not become a guide country, neither before, nor during, nor after the GPCR, even if perfervid "admirers" of China wishfully want it to be. It would hardly do to cling to the Chinese experience as an older generation of Leftists did to that of the USSR, or transfer to China the hopes placed earlier in the Soviet Union. As Macciocchi observes at the very outset, "one historical error cannot be redeemed with another." That China has consistently stuck to the five fundamental principles of the Bandung Declaration is often forgotten by 'admirers' as well as critics of China; but the Chinese themselves have been nothing but consistent on this score. "The Chinese recognise, as do all Marxists, that revolution cannot be exported and that socialism cannot be imposed through intervention of one or another guide country [cf. Czechoslovakia]. . . . China's contribution to the revolutionary movement lies in its presence in the world, in its determination to make its experience and its reality known to all, in the aid it furnished to countries which are subject to imperialist aggression—as was the case in Korea and as in the case of Vietnam—and last but not least, in the general lines of its foreign policy." (pp. 417-8).

A charge frequently made by hostile critics of GPCR is that in launching the Cultural Revolution, Mao was actually aiming at the destruction of the CPC. The absurdity of the charge seems evident, and yet it is made seriously. Macciocchi's chapter on the CPC shows how, with all the criticism launched against the leading party cadres during the

GPCR, few if any really got hurt. Bombard the Headquarters, urged the famous tatzupao of Mao, but the Party Headquarters emerged out of the bombardment purer, rectified rather than purged. If the 'attacks on the Party' that the GPCR meant anything at all, they meant that the masses were indeed supreme, that the party should not merely lead the masses, but should also be led by them. The party should be built upon the masses; it should be subject to criticism of the masses; it should never substitute itself for the masses who must liberate themselves. (437). And of course, the 'bombardment' was so open to the public, unlike other well-known examples of inner-party struggle I found, though, the repeated suggestion that Liu was following a 'Stalinist' model in his conception of the Party, rather disconcerted Mao and Stalin no doubt differed on many vital points; but it should be possible to recognize the genius of Mao without belittling the mighty achievements of Stalin. Despite all his errors, Stalin was a leader and enricher of a profound moving, essentially creative revolution; such a thing cannot be done by people like Liu and his followers.

Chapter XVII is an all too brief chapter on school education of Chinese children. The primary politics is inculcated into the child at a very early age, not because Mao wants to have an empire of mandarins, but because of his profound faith and hope in the future generations, but in terms of centuries, millennia, dictates the need to constantly renew the struggle with oneself, one's society, one's world. A whole world is waiting for 'Mao's Children', millions and millions of them not merely in China, but all over the world, and it is they that produce at present in China, but hopefully in the near future in the whole world, the living and continuing examples of change and revolution.

The narrative part ends on a page

ly got his... note of joy and sadness. If that horrible cliché 'mixed feelings' expressed a genuine emotion, when Macciocchi describes her return from Canton, and her arrival in Hongkong a few hours later, she had seen the future, and it worked. One is moved to such heights of joy that the experience of Hongkong, the 'China-watchers' who follow upon China, comes as a shock after eight weeks of intense participation in daily life in Revolutionary China. But after the emotions and the trauma, what does one do? Of course, the most obvious way to profit from the Chinese experience is to initiate revolutionary changes within one's own country. But how?

The Chapter

This, in a sense, is the subject matter of the last chapter of the book, a very profound and deep analysis of some theoretical and political questions posed by the Chinese experience. Mao's creative elaboration of the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin are presented in this chapter. It is not enough if the productive apparatus of a society is owned by the masses; it is not even enough if a revolution is made under the leadership of a Communist Party. All this has been done; and yet, the internal organization of society within the socialist countries is yet to be satisfactorily undertaken; and concepts such as a Communist Society, or the Withering Away of the State, are as mere words. It would be stressing the obvious to say that the Chinese and the Chinese Revolution have not yet solved the problems inherited from the 'Old order' as yet.

For Frontier contact :

BANKURA NEWSPAPER

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The reason, as Macciocchi sees it, is that whereas the bourgeoisie has been overthrown and in some cases defeated, there has not been a corresponding replacement of the bourgeois ideology. "On the ideological level, the defeated classes still have major powers and are controlling new positions". How to strip them of their power, how to establish the hegemony, not so much of the proletariat as a class, but of the ideology of the proletariat? For, a class—the working class—does not truly become dominant unless it has made its ideology dominant. "In order to create the ideology of the proletariat class it is not enough to have destroyed private ownership of the means of production". It is not until power has been won that the struggle begins. (Lenin) Thus, the relevance of the struggle in China, which is essentially a struggle for power (not in any vulgar sense as interpreted by sinologists), power for the masses, and not for a hierarchical bureaucratic party apparatus imposed from above. Macciocchi discusses the ideas of Gramsci and Althusser, which broadly corroborate the Maoist line. Contradictions will exist even after 'classes cease to exist. Struggle is constantly necessary, for the bourgeoisie has the capacity, like the phoenix, to rise from its own ashes even after it has been overthrown and destroyed. After the most thorough-going revolutionary experience under Lenin and Stalin, there are signs of return to capitalist ways in the USSR, which even the most sophisticated 'dialectical' rationalizations can no longer hide.

The chapter ends with a brief critique of Stalinism from the Left, and an explanation of the seeming 'Cult of Mao'. It is not exactly the Cult of Mao, but the Cult of Mao Tse-tung Thought, that provides wide inspiration to the Chinese people. The fact that Mao himself, of late, has taken steps to suppress the 'Cult of Mao' can be seen in the generally 'low key' note of the birthday celebrations of Mao.

There are many ways in which

one can look at Revolutionary China. The 'ardent' admirers who wait for the Chinese to come down the mountains and 'liberate' their countries; the behavioural scientists crazy with joy at the infinite variety of data provided for them by 'China watchers'; the intelligence men trying to make one-page summaries for their chiefs to read; the liberal visitor who spends a week in Peking and publishes a fat book six weeks later; and the communist visitor, one who is not automatically conditioned to genuflect to Moscow. But every one, provided he is really genuine in his commitment to Marxism-Leninism, will have a creative sojourn in China, however brief and inconvenient the visit might be. "Whether we like it or not, it is the thought of Mao Tse-tung which, objectively, in spite of all official condemnation, influences the masses of Communist cadres and, especially, the rank and file of the Communist parties, both in the East and the West." (P. 497). And it is to them that the book is primarily addressed, and it is they who will most benefit from the book. We need every bit of our intelligence. It is by an intelligent application of Mao Tse-tung Thought that we can hope to usher in revolutions in our own countries. Will ever the Calcutta of our day become a city like modern Shanghai? Will the road ever touch Calcutta at all? Each of us has a lot to answer for. A close study of Macciocchi's book will at least tell us how the Chinese people, under the leadership of the CPC and Mao Tse-tung, have traversed over their part of the road that Lenin spoke of. But what about us?

M. S. PRABHAKAR

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Letters

The Primrose Press

A striking evidence of our Press comes from a letter in the *Times of India*, February 26: "There are corrupt people in all countries. But in other countries the Press keeps a close watch over shady deals and exposes them. In India the press is as flabby as our politicians... In a country full of all sorts of misuse of power and corruption, how many scandals have been exposed by the big Press? The tragedy of Gujarat was that the people could see the corrupt politicians in action but could not find anyone who would raise a finger against them. The Press failed in its duty: so the people did the job themselves at a much higher cost."

A similar 'higher cost' has been recurrently paid by the minorities in Manipur, not to mention Assam. For the Press and news agencies threw ethics to the winds and aided crime.

The civil supplies authorities unearthed in Junagadh (Gujarat) recently huge quantities of groundnut, edible oil, khandasari, kerosene, cement, wheat and rice. Is it not clear that the Chiman Ministry connived at this hoarding, for it had a pie in the profiteering, and the moment people remonstrated, they were silenced by guns. The ministry deserves jail, at the least.

The opposition has failed us by playing the putrid game of parliamentary ping pong. The left is at bay, and bankrupt. The Press is

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with the fascist forces of reaction and rapine. Shiv Sainik chief Bal Thackeray has threatened Gujaratis and Dalit Panthers in Bombay. Has Mr Naik the courage to arrest him? A month ago Mr Krishna Menon had asked him and Y. B. Chavan to resign from the Congress and join the Shiv Sena. The same Congress helped the Jana Sangh in Banda (U.P.).

How degenerate our politics has become is clear from the worry Mr Indrajit Gupta (CPI) expressed in Parliament at people garlanding jawans of Gujarat. Why does he want a mercenary army as against a people's army? Because he is afraid of revolution? But can he and his parliamentary gang stop it?

It is a treasonable perversion of journalism to conceal the momentous event of 18,000 people gheraoing the Maharashtra Assembly on February 25 until 11 p.m. What deserved a streamer of multiple-column spread was consigned to a corner!

—How far is our redemption?

ARUNA
New Delhi

Costly Venture

In the Union Budget presented recently, a sum of Rs. 28 crores has been earmarked for the space programme in which the launching of an India-made satellite from the Soviet Union in next December is also included.

India is as yet unable to provide a square meal to crores of her starved people and she still looks forward to the affluent nations for help. Her economy is tottering, with the consequence that the number of those who live below the poverty line is increasing. Why, in spite of all these facts, should the Government of India go in for a space satellite when many really rich nations dare not go in for it? Why this unnecessary venture on the part of India?

YAMINI PHUKAN
Gauhati

Condemned To Death

Mr Kista Gowda, 46, belongs to a poor peasant family. In the peasant armed struggle of Telangana (1947-49) he worked as a courier for a year and for another year as a member of a guerilla squad operating in the Cuttipalli Murli area till he was arrested. He was subjected to inhuman torture and imprisoned for two years in the Central Jail, Warangal. He married Smt. Eswaramma. The struggles of 1969 again attracted him and he joined the CPI(M).

Mr Bhoomaiah, 48, also took part in the Telangana armed struggle. He provided shelter to the guerillas. The armed struggle of 1969 attracted him and he became a pathiser of the CPI(ML).

The prosecution alleged that along with other local peasants he took part in the murder of Late Patel of Ginnedhari village of Bodikunta Mallayya, of Goyalpalli Village of Asifabad Tq., Adilabad dist. on 24-4-1970.

The Sessions Court of Adilabad sentenced them to death in 1970. The High Court of Andhra Pradesh confirmed the sentence. They are now in the District Jail, Nuzvid, Secunderabad.

The motive for their action was public and in defence of the exploited poor peasantry, not for personal gain.

The death sentences on Mr Kista Ramana Reddy and Mr Nagabhusham Patraik, leaders of the CPI(M) have been commuted to life by the High Court of Andhra Pradesh and the Central Government respectively.

We urge the Government to cancel the death sentences on Mr Kista Gowda and Mr Bhoomaiah and request all the democratic forces of the country to raise the demand.

GENERAL SECRETARY
Andhra Pradesh State Civil Liberties Committee
Hyderabad

Death

Undependable

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ERAL SECRET... ash State Civ... ties Committe... Hyderabad

MARCH 23, 1974

of its policy, world-domination, is a fixed star".

Lenin on the same topic: "Tsarist Russia was second only to Britain in the size of its colonies with a total area larger than all the colonies of France, Germany, the United States and Japan put together".

But the post-Stalin publication *Modern and Contemporary History states:* "There is no evidence in support of the assertion that Tsarist Russia's goal was to achieve world hegemony".

Again,

"In the entire world history before 1971, Russia had been erroneously described as a major, and almost the only, force of aggression."

Lenin pointed out that the rivalry between Tsarist Russia and Britain in Central Asia was for a "division of the spoils" between imperialist powers.

But the *History of the U.S.S.R.* published in the 1960s says: "Tsarist Russia's invasion of Central Asia was to resist British colonial expansion in the Middle and near East".

VED PRAKASH GUPTA
Bhatinda (Punjab)



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