

frontier

Vol. 6: No. 35

DECEMBER 8, 1973

PRICE: 40 PAISE

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PRINTED AT MODERN INDIA PRESS,
1, RAJA SUBODH MULLICK SQUARE,
CALCUTTA-13 AND PUBLISHED WEEKLY
BY GEMINAL PUBLICATIONS (P) LTD.
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THE Asian Collective Security idea of Mr Brezhnev is becoming something like the idea of God—it is very vague, very vast, very meaningless and very ominous. Like the word, God, which may mean many things to many people, from Brahma to atom. Asian Collective Security may mean a multiple of things. Mr Brezhnev thinks, or at least his spokesman Mr Zamyatin wants us to believe that he thinks so, that it is nothing but a gradual development of ties based on the principles of peaceful co-existence. If it were really so, Mr Brezhnev should have been equally engrossed with African Collective Security or South American Collective Security, development of ties being a very noble idea which should get a global currency. But Mr Brezhnev talks of this only with reference to Asia. Not for nothing, therefore, one of the documents signed during the Brezhnev tour has become thoroughly suspect. The document relates to a new consular convention which may define the terms on which facilities at Indian ports will be made available to Soviet ships. The American ships are making a dash towards the Indian Ocean—maybe through detente, the Americans know better.

Indo-Soviet co-operation in economic planning began two decades ago, with a bang; it was supposed to prove, among other things, that socialism was obtainable by peaceful means and economic competition. The slogan was, the Soviet aid would enfeeble private capital. The slogan was, India would achieve self-reliance through socialist aid and thus out of gratitude veer to socialism. The matter of the fact is, Soviet aid has produced a mess everywhere. Textiles and wagons showed that the Russians meant business and not socialism. And about the economy of India, the less said the better. The latest findings of the Chairman of Weight and Measures Commission: defective weights have produced in the last five years Rs. 9000 crores of black money. Undeterred, Mr Brezhnev has signed a 15-year treaty, moving into more vital sectors of the economy.

Mr Brezhnev was a guest in this country and for decency's sake had to say that India had won a place of prestige in the world. The leader of the country, which has the lowest per capita income, lowest intake of calories and total bankruptcy in economic planning, however,

took the compliment at face value. This new Alice in Wonderland believes what she wants to believe or what it suits her to believe. However, the sights she is seeing these days are not very wholesome, the rags bursting at every seam, and the Opposition getting a handle too many for attack. Of course the knight has come in the form of Mr Brezhnev, who has been reported to have said to Mr Madhu Limaye that India now can dispense with the Opposition parties who are a stumbling block against the rapport between the Government and the people. This is a clear enough hint for the CPI to take its stand—but will the other parties be equally obliging?

All said and done, Mr Brezhnev had of course enough reason to make a smiling record—he has taken a signed treaty, which our Mr D. P. Dhar says is so very general in nature. Spelt out in more specific terms the treaty will reveal how much more India would have to rely on foreign aid, to offer which the world powers are so very keen and of which the Russians, through the Bangladesh melodrama, are getting a bear's share.

Massive Protest

A correspondent writes:

The wave of protest against the intolerably anti-people inflationary policy of the Government locally culminating in the sharp rise in bus-fares reminds one of the 1966 food movement. It should be realised that this too is in essence a food movement. A rise in bus-fares alone would not have caused such an upsurge; it is a culminative product of a long period of exploitation and deceit. Coming on top of the crushing rise in the prices of all vital foodstuffs and all common consumer goods, the busfare rise caused the long-suppressed fury of the pauperised people to boil over. Though roused by a particular issue,

this is a general protest against the sweet-tongued and sharp-toothed exploiters.

Also, as in 1966, the suffering masses, regardless of their loose party affiliations, joined in the massive protest. Breaking through the senseless party cordons, streams of youthful cadres joined hands with the masses in launching a vigorous protest that threw the ruling classes and their State machinery into confusion on Monday—the day of the total transport paralysis: to shoot or not to shoot, to arrest or not to arrest (although several lathi charges did take place). Even the different wings of the Chhatra Parishad came forward, in virtual defiance of the mandate of the ruling party to which they belong, to protest against the anti-people measures of the Government. Even the august commandment of Congress President Annamatta, calling upon the Parishad to stop the anti-fare rise agitation has gone unheeded. It would seem as though, despite the cautious middlemanship of the leaders, ordinary political workers are at long last coming to understand the basic distinction between the exploiter and the exploited. Yet another promising feature is the persuasive, non-coercive attitude, on the whole, of the demonstrators towards the people—perhaps a further indication of the dawning of the same vital distinction. The Bandh of 17th November was itself a step ahead in the sense that the aggrieved people had staged it practically on their own after the great Left leaders had succeeded in emasculating the movement by having all their militant cadres arrested through the four preceding days of Gandhian agitation. But while on that occasion, some Chhatra Parishad and Youth Congress elements had tried to resist the Bandh, this time the starker economic reality has largely brought them out together.

A conspiracy to break this new-grown unity of people, however, is already afoot. The Transport Mi-

nister who has been turning into day over the last few days over the radio on Monday noon that the peaceful agitation started by the youth had come to take a turn (though none saw any anywhere because of the machination of the Left. (It must be remembered, that while setting fire to a vehicle is considered violence multiple cold-blooded murders of the police are held to be violence and democratic). carbon copies of the Minister's memos were propagated on the evening by certain Chhatra and Youth Congress leaders in corner meetings, announcing in view of the infiltration of oriented violence, the movement would from now on be rather than supported. Mr Das Munshi, M.P., also reproduced on the same evening a tape version of the same.

Will this succeed in breaking new unity of the people? Will Chhatra Parishad boys, whose poses are as learnt as those of Left cadres, fall into this trap and dissociate themselves from the aggrieved masses whose they had so eagerly supported the (invisible) Left leaders another of their long-practised mostatic responses and advise "political" retreat as the heat is being the people down after them on? Or will this new of the exploited prove more ing in the face of reactionary and revisionist equivocations?

A Matter Of Statistics

Come November and all economic problems would be so we were told. The new would arrive on the market prices would go down and thing will be in place. tely, though not unexpect none of this has happened. The

former President was accused of taking the nation back to "the same forms and habits" which made the armed forces revolt in 1967. It was further said that Papadopoulos's objective was to deflect the army from their national mission and use them for an electoral travesty in order to humiliate the people. The army everywhere is allergic to any move towards democratisation and the Greek generals were particularly resentful of Papalopoulos' idea of quasi-democracy where they had no role to play. Papalopoulos, however, wanted to reign supreme till 1967 when the first presidential election was scheduled under the Constitution. The civilian Government headed by Markezinis wanted to win the confidence of those who did not accept the 1967 coup or its results. It promised the people a free election but warned them at the same time of the danger that might follow if its efforts to restore democracy came to nought. The students would, however, have nothing to do with the sort of democracy Papadopoulos had in mind. They wanted the immediate restoration of people's sovereign rights, freedom of the Press and other mass media and rights of trade unions and political parties. But it was just not possible to reconcile the dictatorial prerogatives that the Constitution gave to the President with the students' aspiration for liberty. The workers and students had a real taste of the liberalisation measures when more than a hundred of them were killed by the army. Brigadier Ionnidis took advantage of the confused situation to ease out the President. The Press was muzzled under the Papadopoulos regime and Ionnidis told the publishers that they were free to publish or not publish their newspapers but if they did they would have to support the new Government. It will not, therefore, be easy to know what the generals do not want to tell the world. What the world knows at the moment is that the November coup is another misfortune for the Greeks.

View from Delhi

The Party Is Cover ?

FROM A POLITICAL
CORRESPONDENT

THE Santa Claus from Moscow came and went and sunshine has been restored to the hearts of all those trafficking in public credulity. The party is over. On the balance the CPI seems to have lost on the swing what it gained on the roundabout.

For the first time in Indo-Soviet relations, the Congress party in India was singled out for fulsome praise. When the CPI delegation met Mr Brezhnev, this became an issue for discussion. When the CPI spokesmen drew the Commissar's attention to the discomfiture his Red Fort speech had caused them, Mr Brezhnev snapped back to question the utility or the relevance of strikes and agitations in a developing economy and pulled them for their obsessive fears about the growth of monopolies. Ironically, even when Mr Brezhnev was holding his summit with Dr S. D. Sharma, the Prime Minister was rather apologetically justifying to the Congress Parliamentary Party executive the grant of expansion licences to the big business houses (most of them multi-national corporations) to cut down on imports amidst foreign exchange scarcity. There is little doubt that the Soviet party will do business with the Congress party without the mediation of the CPI. It is not needed any more. The CPI's credibility as an opposition party will be eroded further. Mr Brezhnev's homilies to Mr Madhu Limaye on the redundancy of Opposition in India fit in well with Mrs Gandhi's thesis that all the Opposition parties save the CPI are interlopers and therefore had no right to exist.

What is the upshot of the visit ? It seemed to have been timed to provide the utmost demonstration effect, to proclaim to the world that the

Soviet Union was still the dominant force in the South Asian subcontinent and Indo-Soviet relations were not soured since the 1971 treaty. The five documents signed appeared impressive on paper, though when they came through the economic arrangements could have been got by without the formalities. The year agreement at best institutionalises or formalises an existing situation. It is clear that the Soviet Union will underwrite the major in New Delhi whether it is left or rightist. Mr Brezhnev could care less for ideology. His programme amounts to endorsement of the Congress party, its leadership and its non-ideology. The CPI will be obliged to bring its own thinking in focus with the Soviet leadership and justify its position to its rank and file. The fun and games are beginning.

The ruling classes have foreclosed their options in relation to China, it would seem. The China issue gave them a leverage with the Soviet leadership even after the cold war had ended. Every time the need to pull down Soviet arms to Pakistan or to secure more arms for India was felt, these classes asserted their resolve to make their China policy "flexible". The options were closed in 1971 with the signing of the Indo-Soviet treaty and now one hears in New Delhi the talk that normalisation of relations with China is unnecessary and Soviet aid and friendship are more important. Even "self-reliance" needs to be underwritten by one super-power or the other. The United States is keen on improving relations with India, in the detente spirit and Mrs Gandhi has lost her old apprehensions and reservations about the super-power detente. The joint declaration in New Delhi makes this clear. Mr Brezhnev has succeeded in persuading her to believe that the detente will do India good and India should go along with the super-powers. As a sop for Indian susceptibilities, the Asian collective

Study Of A Jail—I

By A GROUP OF REPORTERS

FOR the last three or four years shooting prisoners dead in prisons, particularly in West Bengal, has been almost a regular feature of the administration in this country. While this sort of thing took place only once during British imperialist rule, killing prisoners in jails has taken place countless times under the "National Democratic" Government, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of prisoners.

This is one aspect of the matter. The other aspect relates to the conditions, in which thousands of prisoners, particularly political prisoners, are being kept confined year after year—what sort of food they are fed on and what kind of treatment they daily receive. Those who are at the helm of power today on behalf of the comprador bourgeoisie and landlords used, once, in the guise of national leaders, to decry the maladministration in British jails. It is therefore the duty of every honest citizen to hold up before the people of India a true account of the reality inside the jails in "Free Democratic" India, so that they can judge for themselves whether things have improved or horribly worsened since the days of foreign rule. In the big newspapers we often come across enthusiastic accounts of so many plans formed and so many measures taken by the Government for effecting an all-round improvement in jails. The Jail Minister of West Bengal has assured us that a radical change in conditions in jails is imminent, that the process is already under way, and that the noble purpose behind this great change is to reform the prisoner so as to enable him to return to normal life. We would like the people to judge from this absolutely genuine report what exactly is the inner reality of this "ideal democratic prison" which has reached its present rich luxuriance in course of the twenty-six marvellous years of Indian independence.

whether its influence is likely to turn criminals into human beings or to drive human beings irresistibly, day by day, into an inhuman state. We would also like the people of the country and people all over the world to consider whether this kind of jail can exist in a civilised, free, democratic country, to judge the character of the ruling class in a country where such monstrosities can exist as also the character of the Leftist opposition leaders who can observe a docile silence on such vital matters.

This report has been prepared on the basis of the direct experience of about twenty-five prisoners lately confined in the Calcutta Presidency Jail, supposed to be one of the very best in India.

As you enter Presidency Jail through the massive iron gate, you will find on getting past the office rooms a beautifully tended, neatly laid-out flower garden bordered with croton and casurina, with a square pool of clear water nestling by its side and a green-carpeted playground on the further bank. This is the "front view" of Presidency Jail—which is usually all that the important visitor gets when he comes to inspect the prison. But if, instead of ending your tour here, you go ahead a few steps on your right, then, getting past another gate, you will come across the "Chowka", i.e., the kitchen. Food for about 2,000 people is daily prepared there. If it is around 10 or 11 a.m. you are likely to see (not everyday of course) a couple of well-dressed authoritarian-looking gentlemen, followed by a retinue, entering or coming out of the Chowka. These are the great prison overlords, the Super (Superintendent) or the Deputy Super and the Jailor, who have taken infinite pains to pay a hurried visit (with handkerchiefs to their august noses) to these dirty and stinking kitchen precincts. You might even hear them making comments like "Too good!" as they heat a hasty retreat without having come anywhere near the actual cooking place. Former superintendent B. J. Das had been often heard saying things

security plan was not mentioned in the joint declaration but the gap between the two countries on this issue has all but disappeared.

The Soviet diplomatic offensive for a conference of Asian countries to discuss the security plan might take place. But at the end of the New Delhi talks it was clear that the Soviets would go ahead with the plan without Chinese participation. Pious declarations that the plan is not aimed against any country are matched by announcements of China. The Delhi declaration made no reference to China but Mr. Brezhnev chose to attack China in his Red Fort speech when he referred to those allegedly interfering in India's internal affairs. Even the Indian Government has not charged China with such interference.

The visit was a spectacular show, with the Russians behaving like second-class Americans setting up colour TV channels linked to the satellite and the like to demonstrate to poor Indians that they do matter in the super-power game. Mr. Brezhnev seems to have got a very rosy picture of India's economy and would not agree with Mr. Madhu Limaya who had a different picture to paint. Well, Mr. Brezhnev does not agree even with the CPI's formulations or assessment of the class character of Mrs. Gandhi's Government.

The press coverage of the visit was on the whole well "managed" and the Tan chief could call an Indian journalist "incompetent" because he did not agree with the correspondent's interpretation of the talks.

While on the press, here is a quote from the Lok Sabha records:

My friends from the Press Gallery will forgive me. I am talking about Lali Narayan Mishra. Every time I am told, he goes abroad, he gets wrist watches, suit lengths etc. For getting coverage in the newspapers he invites journalists for dinner and articles put in special envelopes are given to them. Those envelopes contain something Mr. Chavan deals with every day. finance. Shri Mishra should welcome enquiry to let truth come out... Mr. Jyotirmoy Bosu (CPI-M), on November 21.

December 1, 1973

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like, "Why are you putting so much oil in that (oilless) curry? It will make them ill. Can dogs digest ghee?" The substances in question are, of course, duly transferred to the quarters of those who can very well digest them.

Opposite the Chowka you will find a large crowd gathered around two water-taps struggling to get water for drinking and bathing. Especially in summer it is exceedingly difficult to get more than four mugs of bathing water. All of a sudden you will see two or three persons in convict's uniform arriving with a huge drum which they start filling, quietly shoving everyone off. No complaint is possible because the water in the drum is needed for the "25th Degree" convicts, i.e., those notorious convict agents (chamchas in jail parlance) with whose aid the authorities run the prison. (More on this "25th Degree" later). Anyway, the result is that the entire pressure descends on the remaining tap. Maybe, just then two more such people carrying a huge bucket get hold of the other tap this time to secure water for the "Jamadar Saab" and the sepoys. Complaints would be equally futile. All have to stand by helplessly until the drum and the bucket have been filled. Within a few minutes again turn up people from the Milk Department with huge empty cans. Everyone knows what this water is for—to be put into the milk. Yet they feel grateful in a way that they are taking fresh water from the tap rather than getting it from some dirty ditch.

"Tenth Degree"

The way to the godown passes by the Kitchen and alongside it is a huge filthy drain down which all the dirt from the prison flows. Right upon it stand the punitive cells—the "Tenth Degree". These cells admit neither light nor air and each has a single ventilator opening right on the stinking drain. Five of these cells are inhabited by prisoners suffering from leprosy while in the other five "dangerous" and "obsti-

nate" prisoners are kept by way of punishment. It is in one of these that the Naxalite leader Jangal Santal is at present being forced to pass his days. There are 44 more ordinary cells in another part of the Jail and they are not much better than the punitive cells.

Accommodation and Sanitation

Turning West from the Chowka one comes across after a couple of minutes' walk, a long two-storied building divided into wards—the "residence" of convicts and under-trial prisoners and "without trial" detenus. In each room 50 to 100 prisoners are kept confined; at times many more. (In 1971 more than 250 people used to be packed at times in each.) At such times there is hardly room enough for all even to sit on the floor. Besides, there is a huge hall known as "Dari hazat" or "Daria" in which about 350 people are forced to live. In 1971 near about 800 prisoners used to be forced into it. Presidency Jail has an official capacity of 2000 prisoners. In 1971 nearly 4000 people used to be kept there.

All the wards are locked up for the night at 5:30 p.m. (earlier in winter, and from then till 6 in the morning the hundred or more people inside urinate (within the room) at a window-side drain. For defecation during the night there is a tub, practically exposed to view, set in a corner in each room. The terrible all-night stink is stifling. Stinking drains run immediately outside the walls of each room. Besides, the entire Jail premises are full of clumps of bushes, filthy open drains and broken old cisterns full of dirty stagnant water, rendering them a perfect breeding ground for flies and mosquitoes. These pests render the lives of the prisoners intolerable by night and by day.

A prisoner is taken to his particular ward the day after he arrives. There he gets from the "Mate", i.e., Ward-in-Charge (a convict) a couple of blankets, an aluminium plate and a bowl (manufactured in

the Jail). It is of course different in the "Dari hazat"; there nothing can be had unless one can "manage" it. (More anon on this "management" business.)

The doors of the wards are locked at 6 a.m. for two hours to enable prisoners, to brush their teeth, bath, answer calls of nature etc. A sort of courtyard is attached to the front of every ward (which also serves as the upper storey. On one side of it are the latrines, each about two feet wide, the partition walls being about 2½ feet high. These latrines are neither of the service nor of the sanitary variety. They are cleaned only once in 24 hours, at about 8 a.m. The result is that they are almost all the time heaped up with excrement, rendering them, with their awful stink and the swarms of flies, practically unapproachable. There is a water-tap and a cistern for every two wards. The cisterns are mostly damaged and unusable and the taps get clogged quite often. When working, they only yield the merest trickle of water, and 150 to 200 prisoners jostle and fight each other in trying to get water for bathing, washing clothes and utensils, for drinking, for the latrine, etc. at that slender source. Many resort to the taps at the Chowka because the flow is better there; but the difficulties there have already been described. On top of all this the great abuses of the sepoys (warders), often hit out indiscriminately with their clubs to "preserve law and order". At times the sepoys just order the prisoners not to go to the Chowka taps, resulting in a terrible rush at the taps in the wards. Then, quite often, it is not possible even to get one's drinking water, not to speak of bathing. Only if the sepoys can be effectively bribed with tea, cigarettes, etc. can the prisoners get permission again to go to the Chowka taps. Bribing also becomes absolutely necessary if, finding the allotted latrines clogged with filth, one wishes to use a latrine in a neighbouring ward. The wards are

different things managed in a different way. They are opened for the night at 5-30 (5 p.m. or earlier in winter).

These wards, especially the ground floor rooms, admit very little light or air. To make matters worse, there are baffle-walls before most of the windows. The rooms are dark and damp all the time. The walls of even the upper rooms remain water-soaked throughout the rainy season, and on the ground floor the damp seeps into the blankets which serve as beds. Lighting arrangements at night are even worse. Each of the huge rooms (averaging about 50 ft x 25 feet) are lit by four 40-watt lamps of which some are always out of order, sometimes all of them. Reading is out of the question; nothing is visible clearly.

Homosexual Traffic

In this weird twilight go on the homosexual activities of the long-term convicts—which is under unofficial registration from the authorities and is one of the standing sources of their illegal income. This sort of activity has been going on in the jail for years in a fully planned and organized way. The entire jail staff, from the sepoy and jamadars right up to the officers have weekly or monthly arrangements with these homosexual criminals. When the new prisoners arrive in the late afternoon these hardened old convicts go out to inspect whether there are any "bhala chhokra" ("good young men") among them. If there are, bargaining once starts. That is, this "bhala chhokra" is put on auction. Fifty! Seventy! One hundred!—the bidding goes on. The unfortunate youth is put in the ward in which the highest bidder lives. The help-cries and complaints of the boy fall on deaf ears, and prove quite futile, because the entire staff including the officers have been rendered "barabbar", i.e., squared, with money. There is, of course, a rule

designed to prevent this sort of atrocity—for putting the prisoners under 18 years in a separate room known as the "Youth File". But that paper regulation has no effect on the triumphant running of this racket.

Prisoners in entire wards often have their sleep rudely disturbed by the noise of the cruel beating inflicted on their victims by these homosexual monsters and the pitiful cries of the victims. But anyone daring to protest is sure to be beaten mercilessly by the sepoy and jamadars next morning.

There are some "dangerous" prisoners in many of the wards whose feet are kept chained either with "danda-beri" or with "shikli-beri" for three months or six months or indefinitely, as the case may be. But if you can make a cash arrangement ("nagad karbar") with the jamadars and the officers, you can get your chains off immediately. On the other hand, inability to pay may result in a prolongation of the punishment.

Prisoners' Food

There is a standing alliance between contractors and the Jail authorities leading to enormous mutual profit. At intervals the contractors get busy with repairing, whitewashing and painting work. Nothing is done. The whitewash leaves the walls almost as drab-looking as before. Plaster which had been only recently done and which is in quite good condition is taken off with great pains and new plaster put on. This process may be repeated only three months later. Another of the ways in which the Jail authorities add to their income.

Food is served to the prisoners thrice daily (i.e., usually). No food is served at night. The meal that is served at 5 or 5-30 p.m. immediately before the wards are locked up is held to be the meal for the night.

Most of the days the prisoners get boiled *chhola* (gram) for breakfast; without any trace of oil or spices, at times without salt. Copiously mixed with the *chhola* are gravel, dirt of a wide variety, including the droppings of mice and cockroaches, and dead worms. At times a kind of hard, dry, unchewable *muri* is served; on other occasions a kind of stinking *chira* (*chura*) with a proper admixture of dirt, gravel and paddy grains. With it is given a few drops of the coarsest and filthiest molass, half of which is made up of jute fibres and, of course, pure earth. On some days is served the famous *lapsi*, a nauseating hotch-potch of boiled broken rice, wheat and other cereals with a dash of salt and turmeric powder and all sorts of dirt. If the quantity is found inadequate, a few buckets of water are simply poured into the stuff. Yet, in a desperate bid to get a little more even of this filthy broth, the hungry prisoners almost fight each other because they had their last meal 14 or 15 hours ago—at 5 or 6 on the previous evening. Breakfast for Grade II classified prisoners (MISA-B or Undertrial-I) is supposed to consist of a slice of bread-and-butter, a banana and tea. The tea has a filthy taste and a stink which makes it practically undrinkable; the banana is either "unavailable" or, if available, is no bigger than the human thumb; and the butter provided could put out a good sized fire, so full of water it is. Not that good quality stuff is not provided but it is all transferred to the quarters of the "good" people.

Then, at about 12 noon or 12-30 comes the midday meal—supposed to consist of rice, dal and curry. But the quantity of rice is not enough even to appease the hunger of a ten-year-old child. The rice is spiced with all the usual items—paddy seeds, gravel, dead worms, etc. Since the recent cut in the rice ration, the quantity has further gone down. The "rules" in this respect provide that the cut in the rice is to be made up with potatoes or some such stuff. This rule is followed by supplying two tiny pota-

toes (one, if bigger) to each famished prisoner. Of these potatoes most are rotten; but many of the desperately hungry prisoners can't even leave these off, and there is no dearth of prisoners who are only too eager to gobble down the rotten potatoes discarded by others. The *kalai dal* (pulse) served almost everyday is of incredibly wretched quality and abounds in worms, gravel, excreta of cockroaches and rats and cockroach's eggs. The vegetables provided are the most wretched and rotten available in the market. All these stinking vegetables are put into the curry with their rinds and stems intact: the latter are supposed to be part of the prisoners' "diet". Fish and meat are supposed to be served once a week each. These often get dropped from the weekly list. When provided, the fish pieces are of such a size that a couple of them (served to two people) could be easily packed inside a match box. The quantity of "meat" served to a person gets "lost" if it is poured from one bowl into another. In the dal and the curry are sometimes found good-sized bits of high-protein stuff—boiled cockroaches. They are usually removed from the curry before being brought to the wards. (That is why one often finds dead cockroaches scattered about the kitchen floor). On occasion when, by oversight, the curries are brought with the dead cockroaches in them, the prisoners refuse to accept the food, the stuff is simply taken back to the kitchen, and after the cockroaches are removed, is brought back as "fresh" stuff. Well, how is it possible to cook it all again? And supposing that is done, what is the guarantee that there won't be cockroaches in that too?

In the late afternoon (but meant

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for the night) is served a meal of three rotis plus the same dal and curry. Because of the recent cut in the wheat ration the number of rotis per head has come down to two. The rotis are made of a mixture of besan, milo etc. with a little (wheat) ata added. The paste for the roti served in the evening is prepared at 10 a.m. All stale left-overs are mixed up with the fresh paste, often making the rotis stink. Since the reduction in the number rotis a supplementary item of boiled chhola, gravel and dead worms is being served.

But even for this normally inedible food the prisoners (at least the great majority of them) tensely wait like starved animals in cages. Long before the food arrives they file up with their plates and bowls in their hands. Quite often the lordly sepoys make abundant use of their lathis to maintain order. But at this hour not even the dreaded danda can make the prisoners budge an inch from the food-line. If, accidentally, there is some dal left over, there is a pitiful scramble for it. The fortunate ones who can get some extra dal instantly drink up the tasteless filthy stuff.

There are days when the midday meal arrives two or three or even four hours late. Unable to stand the hunger some of the prisoners at times go up to the Chowka to enquire, and receive a few blows from the sepoys' dandas for their pains. Then at 4 or 4-30 p.m. the prisoners might find their midday and evening meals arriving simultaneously. Extreme disorder prevails as almost every one of the starved prisoners tries to get his food first. To add to the confusion, time is short since, according to regulations, the wards are to be locked up for the night within half an hour or so. A horrible, nerve-racking chaos prevails.

The authorities are perfectly aware of the nature of the food served in the jail. That is why they take utmost care to see that not a scrap of prison food can be taken out of the jails.

(To be continued)

The Communist Movement In West Germany—II

HERBERT RHEINDOR

FROM among the old student groups only the last transitional forms still existed as university organizations. The ideological differences between the groups widened; Trotskyist, Anarcho-Syndicalist and Marxist-Leninist lines emerged and initially often lasted for very brief periods. Besides, there were tendencies in the direction of the DKP and also of the KPDML. A national ideological dispute came afterwards; and when it came it did so through and together with the struggle that was concerned with national tasks.

While the majority of the Turfrunden (wage-scale disputes) of 1970 ended in quick compromise without strike—as accepted by the trade union leadership—in 1971 bigger disputes and struggles were seen. In summer, during the strike of the workers in the chemical industry, the police—for the first time in many years—were hurled on strike-poles. In late autumn of the same year workers in south Germany struck work over the metal workers' wage dispute, defying the trade union leadership. During the second half of 1971, and especially on the issue of the metal workers' wage dispute, a number of propaganda circles could for the first time agitate decisively and were able to successfully voice and systematize the workers' demands.

In these cases the question that was asked was: after and in spite of acceptance by the trade union leaders of power and reduced demands as the basis for a position of negotiation, under what conditions could communist organizations propagate and maintain higher wage demands?

The number of foreign workers in the FRG is growing; they are the lowest paid workers; in the sphere of no

DECEMBER 8, 1971

sumption, that is living quarters etc) they suffer especially severe exploitation. The Aliens Law—the right to discipline foreign workers—is mainly concerned with preserving the status quo for the capitalists. Propaganda was set in motion in the summer of 1972 against these laws. This campaign—in which the DKP did not participate—acquired its supreme relevance when, after the incident at the Munich Olympic Games, the Government started deporting countless Arabs. This campaign ended on October 8 with a protest demonstration of 10,000 people in Dortmund.

Solidarity with Vietnam

Soon after solidarity with the people of Indochina began to be even more intensively propagated in the entire FRG in view of the American bombing and the approaching victory of the people. In many cities and villages committees were formed on the basis of solidarity with the people of Indochina (solidarity that is not merely a record of sympathy for the suffering people but solidarity with the people in their struggle for independence and progress). Many local and also regional demonstrations were organized. Building on this, a sharp reaction against the American bombing before the New Year was possible. The suggestion of local communist groups for unity of action and for organizing a national demonstration in Bonn was accepted. The political substance of this demonstration was to be the demand for implementation of the nine-point agreement and for ending the FRG's support for the U.S. and Thieu. On January 14, 1973, 25,000 people—with these slogans—demonstrated in Bonn. Only the DKP and social-democratic organizations did not take part; they maintained that it was indispensable to preserve their general slogans for peace which did not form the basis of the Bonn demonstration. They thus showed that they were not really prepared to work together with communist organizations. They staged their

own demonstration in Dortmund on January 21 with about 20,000 people.

Another reason behind numerous demonstrations and founding of committees in 1972 was the removal and exclusion of so-called radicals from public service. Here public service includes schools, universities, railways, postal and health services etc. Professors, teachers, hospital doctors and many others are Beamte (civil servants). In these areas the bourgeoisie very painstakingly saw to it that the State continue to remain unhampered as their instrument for suppressing the people. Thus we see again and again waves of purges in the public services; there were the laws for the re-establishment of the elite civil service, the decree of the FRG Government over participation in politics of public servants against the 'fundamental democratic principles' of 1950, and also the "principles on the question of anti-constitutional elements within the public services" evolved out of the conference of the chief ministers of the FRG in 1972.

These purges have always been directed against all democratic forces; thus a teacher was fired because he had written in a letter to his trade union that resistance to undemocratic laws is legitimate. This purging is sharper in those provinces where the SPD is in power than in those where the CDU rules. The communists are being increasingly successful in turning their struggle against purges into a fight for the abolition of deprivations in the public services, against the ban on strikes by civil servants and against the planned extension of the same to all public servants.

The trade union leadership during 1972-73, for instance over the wage disputes of the metal workers, once again settled for very small pay increases. As a result of this the trend that had existed for several years—namely a steady sinking of the real wage—was allowed to continue. In 1973 all the instruments with which the bourgeoisie suppresses the people appeared with renewed vigour; com-

pulsion towards greater labour intensity, rise in taxes and social deductions (health, insurance etc.), rise in prices at an average rate of 8%—for food items more than 10%—, and such others. In early summer some of the better paid workers—namely in the printing industry—reacted with a strong strike. Something else happened that astounded the bourgeoisie—in many factories all over FRG the workers struck without the prior consent of and legalizing through the trade union leadership. The demand was for pay rise at factory level (that is, for a rise over and above a rise that could be implemented only after a nationwide agreement between the trade unions and the capitalists). The most important roles were played by workers in the large metal concerns—Hoesch, Mannesmann and Volkswagen; but there were equally big strikes in the smaller ones—Karrmann (Osnabruck), Harvester (Heidelberg), John Deere (Mannheim), Vulkan, Werft (Bremen), Klockner (Bremen), AEG (Ollenburg).

This strike movement was of the highest importance because it was clear that the strikes could not have materialized without the organized participation of communist cells and because this was the first time that communist organizations had the leading role. The factory newspapers of the communists were the organizers and the mouthpiece of the workers. Here is a new factor that the bourgeoisie will have to deal with. The answer of the capitalists was premeditated, restrictions on the suspected leaders of the movement (which however were almost all—under pressure—nullified). Expulsion from trade unions also followed. The SPD organization in Bayern (Bavaria) declared that taking part in wild strikes is irreconcilable with the conditions of membership in the SPD.

Alongside the wage struggles there are numerous other movements against house rents that are often exorbitant, rises in tram fare, against illegalizing abortion, against the extreme noise of highways and military

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airfields, and also against Portuguese colonialism. By far the strongest of all these movements is in the universities; here, since around 1968, there have been only a few student's union that are not under the control of progressive students. The struggle here results from the fact that the bourgeoisie's "self-regulation process" cannot function together with wide autonomy for the students; the students have a position too critical against the bourgeoisie for this to be successful. For example, such autonomy means high ineffective expenditures for the State; such autonomy would imply that, say, a student can study one subject for sometime and then change if he desires; this, however, would mean an utter waste of money for the State since the State is always looking for the best return for its investments. Thus sciences hostile to the people must there be in the universities. The freedom of criticism during lectures is largely curbed; even questions put by students can result in jail terms and rustication if the professor concerned feels that such questions make it impossible for him to continue his lecture. He can impose this punishment whenever he feels like it—for example, if he is forced into discussions alien to the contents of his lecture. There have recently been instances of police being posted around lecture halls so that the professors in dissolving their lectures can — if they wish — point out to the police those students they wish to see in jail.

All these struggles indicate that the workers and the people in general are ever more on the offensive because they are even more freeing themselves from all types of reactionary ideologies. However, the struggles are still scattered. Although the communists have succeeded in seizing the leadership in a number of cases, the communist programme of struggle is not rooted in the different movements and therefore cannot unite the various movements. In so far as the communists are successful in achiev-

ing this, they will also be able to bring about their own unity and reorganize themselves into a communist party.

APPENDIX

The DKP

One main problem of the communists is their relation to the DEP. The DKP has in it a great many of former cadres of the banned KPD; these elements are to be found especially outside the universities. They constitute the core of the DKP. The membership numbers 40,000, the weekly newspaper of the party sells 30,000 copies, and in elections the party secures about 1% of the votes. Especially the stagnating number of copies of the newspaper sold, and the election results show that the DKP is incapable of carrying through an independent political build-up. The DKP seldom criticizes the SPD policies, never its role in the party system and uncritically yields to SPD trade unionists for the sake of "trade union unity". The party advocates capital export in order to keep the jobs of the workers secure. The party offers itself to the people as a kind of "better SPD"—something, the masses, over and above the SPD, do not need. No remarkable success has till now been registered by the party; consequently the party finds itself in a defensive stance. In summer 1973 the strongest local branch left the party. The DKP is nevertheless strong in the universities, where together with the social democrats they control a majority of the student unions. These SPD-DKP coalitions concentrate in their programmes on a demand for participation of students in the affairs of the university. The party's defensive stance is shown by its general policy. The party rules out the possibility of any unity of action with the Maoist groups, in spite of the fact precisely that such unity is seen ever more frequently among progressive organizations and communist groups without the DKP. (eg. Vietnam, the purges in public service).

Communist Circles

To the left of the DKP a great disunity rules—although overcoming of the differences with growing experience is something that appears certainly within reach. In spite of the publicity they receive anarchist groups are of no relevance. Small Anarchist Syndicalist groups are to be found in Berlin, Frankfurt and Munich. The Trotskyists are weak and steadily losing importance; among them the Fourth International (United Secretariat) is the largest group.

Marxist-Leninist organizations are already and increasingly dominating:

1. Communist Bund (League) Hamburg, Communist Workers Federation-Stuttgart and Worker's League for Rebuilding the KPD—Munich. These are the three groups that have to a certain extent similar policies and are in their respective regions relatively strong. For these groups the economic struggle and the local movement stay in the foreground. Thus they have not always taken part in national demonstrations (eg. Vietnam, Aliens Law etc.). Their members at times forego a public stance as communists; they prefer to appear as dedicated trade unionists. Some of them often fail to engage in parallel independent propaganda when participating in a unity of action with other groups. In their politics they stress the danger of fascism. Some refuse propaganda work criticizing the Soviet Union. They have apparently no plans or suggestions for the unity of all communists. The newspaper of the Hamburg group sells nearly 20,000 copies. None of the groups is strong in the universities.

2. Der Kommunistische Bund Westdeutschland (KBW—The Communist League of West Germany)—was founded in the summer of 1973, having arrived at a programme and a statute after long, public, ideological debates between various local communist groups. The KBW works in the trade unions on its

Artists Of West Bengal—VIII

SANDIP SARKAR

Gopal Ghose

Biographical Note: 1913 Born in Calcutta. 1918 With father in Simla. 1924 His father lives in Benares after retirement. Read up to Intermediate at the Anglo-Bengali College, Allahad. Could not complete studies owing to the civil disobedience movement. 1931-35 Jaipur School of Arts, stood 1st Class 1st. 1935-38 Madras Art College where Debiprasad Raychoudhury was Principal. Paritosh Sen, Prodosh Das Gupta, Kali Kinkar Ghose Dastidar were his fellow students. Stood 1st Class 1st. Toured India on cycle. 1938 Return to Calcutta. Wrote an illustrated travelogue for *Bangshree*. 1939 Taught at the B.T. Department, Scottish Church College. 1943 Founded the famous Calcutta Group. Worked as part-time visiting lecturer in architecture, B.E. College, Shibpur. 1951-52 Taught in the Government College of Art and Craft, Calcutta. Gopal Ghose is married, has a daughter and a granddaughter. *Exhibitions:* 1931 first one-man show in London organised by John de La Valeda. All sold out for Rs. 2,000. 1935-36 Madras. 1937 Gumkum Bungalow, Madura. Since then over 30 shows in Calcutta, Delhi, Bombay, 1963 toured America and Europe.

The Interview

I went to Gopal Ghose's house in Haripada Dutta Lane, Tollygunj. I found him in a nearby stationery shop, squatting on his haunches and chatting with the people of the neighbourhood. As he saw me getting down from the rickshaw, he stood up to take me home. He showed me his small garden which has mangoes, lemon and several other trees and a beautiful cactus. His room was overfull with furniture,

books, note-books, water-colours and two nearly finished canvases done in oil. The room did not have anything of affluence in it, but there was enough proof that the artist is very hard-working. We had been nodding acquaintances for some time and so it did not take me long to build up a rapport.

With each individual it takes some time before the interviewee can communicate what he is after. There are times when he can never get this through and the interviewee takes over. The interviewer tries in vain to probe, but as they are not on the same wave-length, the interviewer looks on helplessly as the interviewee goes on. This is exactly what happened to me with Gopal Ghose. He was reacting in the same way as he would in a journalistic interview telling me stories and anecdotes, which although very interesting were not what I was after. I gently tried to steer the conversation along the proper course, Gopal Ghose wandered off the track, told absorbing stories, reminisced, was bitter. His diatribe against certain artists like Debiprasad Raychoudhury and poets like Bishnu Dey I found quite interesting. He had some very interesting stories to tell about his student days, his struggle and tour abroad.

He handed me a photograph of his father and lovingly told me that his father, an army captain, had inspired him to paint and provided for him when he was in the Art College. Evidently he not only strongly identified with his father but also his feelings for him verged on adoration. Not a single word did he utter about his mother. However, it seemed strange that he, an artist, had not painted a portrait of his father. He also showed me photographs of his daughter and her husband. Even told me how Bishnu Dey had been instrumental in his marriage. He talked about days he had lived together in Madras sharing a flat with Paritosh Sen as students, how C. R. Rajagopalachari had taken a fancy for him. Sketched out the

communist programme. It desires and is keen on unity of action which is the unity of the masses. Unity of action with other organizations is always a possibility, the only criterion being that such unity should serve the unity of the masses. In the sphere of propaganda the Soviet Union is criticized but no national demands are voiced against it (demands for example for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the GDR are typical of the FRG attitude towards Russia). The KBW considers itself only a part of the entire communist movement and rates its own founding accompanied by the debate that preceded it as being only another step forward towards achieving unity.

The paper of the KBW (fortnightly) sells under 50,000 copies. It is the only group that did play a decisive role in the strikes of summer 1973. The student organization of the KBW after the DKP and the Social Democrats forms the strongest group in the universities.

A KPDML and KPD. The KPDML was formed in 1968 out of smaller groups from the old KPD. The new KPD was formed in 1970 out of several groups from the student movement in Berlin. The present KPD is in no way connected with the old KPD. Both KPD and KPDML claim to be the vanguard of the proletariat in Germany—including the GDR. Hence the rather strong attacks of the party against the Soviet Union.

Both advocate the founding of independent, alternative trade union organizations; the KPDML wants to do this outside the present unions whereas the KPD—for the time being—within the unions. Both projects are still very much at the initial stage. Both refuse principally to work together with the DKP on any point whatsoever. For them the basis of any unity in struggle can be reached only through an understanding of the necessity of socialism.

It is not known how many copies of their papers are regularly sold. In the universities the KPD has a national organization.

personalities of Prodosh Das Gupta and Kalikankar Ghose Dastidar—his contemporaries in Madras Art College.

Gopal Ghose finally got my point. He said that one ought to learn how to be still in oneself. This was the greatest problem that Indian artist faces. Urbanisation unsettles him the speed and change and all that. He looks outward, instead of inward. He must work hard every day. He must not beg for the good things of life. He must not run after fame or money. He must hold his head high. On the other hand, he must learn his trade— anatomy, drawing, geometry—whatever is essential for painting. He need not go to Europe. The art treasures of India, the life, climate and people are more than enough for finding a point of departure. One cannot be an artist by imitating. Look at the Paris returned artists—they smear their canvases. They learn the art of living in affluence and wearing European clothes.

Gopal Ghose began to recount his travels abroad. He could not forget the impression that the works of ancient and modern masters made on him. He felt, however, that they could not and should not be aped, for their life-style and climate were different. The social conditions that had influenced them was dissimilar to those of India. The Indian sun was different from the sun that shone in Paris. The trees, flowers, people and rivers of the sub-continent were different. Each season was different from the seasons elsewhere in the world.

Yet there are things that we can learn from European masters, things like discipline, putting in hours of hard work, overcoming impatience, earning one's own livelihood, not depending on others for bread, love of liberty and the art of being one's own master. These are the basic qualities of great European artists. We must learn to suffer, accept even defeat, for our artistic integrity.

From India one must imbibe the

tradition of its great art, not as something to be revived but as something to be integrated in one's own soul. Learn to work without expecting reward. Learn to persist and strive for one's vision stubbornly, being ready to die for it. An artist must believe that he has a goal, but he must be humble enough to admit that he does not know the road. He must have the explorers' temperament. He must be aware that however unconventional his work is, he has to abide by certain rules of flexible artistic grammar. Today the critics are afraid to criticise gimmicks, idiosyncracies that pass in the name of art. People have forgotten the difference between good art and gimcrack. Therefore, the true artist must suffer not only economic hardship but also mental and spiritual agony to be creative. He must learn to sit and be still and contemplate. Abanindranath's "Bharatmata" was the first work of such contemplation. Gopal Ghose was angry with a friend who had subtly denounced the works of Abanindranath, Ramkinkar, Benode Behari and Amrita Sher-Gil. He did not agree with the tone of the article. He believed the ground was being prepared for the advent of great artists. His only advice to the young artist was to be true to the spirit of India, to the brightness of its sun to themselves. When in doubt they should bring a child near the painting and study how the child reacted for the main business of painting was communication of ideas. Whether this was done properly, rightly, or in style were after-thoughts and did not help creativity.

His Art

Probably no artist in India has loved the Indian landscape as much as Gopal Ghose. No one has been able to point out its majesty and grandeur as he has. For this he has handled water-colours and pastel with unusual mastery. Pity that he did not try his hand in oils when he was in his prime.

Gopal Ghose is basically a romantic who has been unable to surrender himself to the complexities of urbanisation brings. Cuthroat competitiveness, corrupt values and breakdown of established norms have upset him. He has fought against this and gone back to nature. His approach to it might remind one of Wordsworth: But it is studies his paintings closely one sees that he is not a pantheist who believes in mechanical determinism. Rather he is a Tagorean who wants to be one with nature.

Trees, birds, mountains, the valleys, clouds have all attracted him and he has lovingly tried to capture nature's various moods—the light and shades, the change of seasons, the atmosphere. His lines are aflame with nuances of its beauty. Even when in America it is the Rockies the prairie, the lonely sunset that caught his attention. He has identified with the grandeur of the expansive American country. Strangely enough, he has no comment to make about the American people or their culture. Gopal Ghose's paintings make it almost seem that India or even America does not have people. Herein lies his tragedy. Most of the time it seems to have deliberately left men and beasts. His bonnet kingdom seems to lack human warmth. Devoid of human emotion, conflict and compassion it is a search for some kind of mystical. Structurally this has made his work ethereal and to some extent repetitive, and finally forced him to be somewhat repetitive.

Yet in spite of his many artistic faults, one must acknowledge that before Gopal Ghose, no one had studied the Indian landscape with singleminded tenacity. It was with a highly stylised backdrop behind which the human or divine characters acted out their parts or in more recent times an artistic exercise done half seriously. It is Gopal Ghose who explored the possibilities of painting the variety of Indian landscape.

Subtle Comedy

MRIGANKA SEK HAR RAY

THOSE who are normally fed on the Mastroianni-Loren brand of Italian comedy, loud, rumbustious, openly erotic, sometimes a little gross in its blatant humour of Germinio, might find Polidaro's charming film *To Bed Or Not To Bed* slightly disappointing. The fun here is completely subdued, the humour gentle, almost Chekovian in its subtle nuances, and the accent is more on a complex interplay of characters and moods than on creating comic situations or planting the familiar gags.

Alberto Sordi plays an Italian merchant on a visit to Sweden with a mind to mix business pleasure. The business is the fur auction with which he succeeds, the pleasure is the Swedish women with whom he falls. Nourished on false notions about the sexual proclivities of Nordic women, who, our hero is told, never miss an opportunity to chuck up with virible males, Sordi is on his amorous expedition right from the moment he touches the Swedish soil. The affairs are ticklish, funny and often bizarre. A teenage drop-out gives him a patient hearing but nothing else. An intellectual socialist inspires him with her exciting dissertation on free love, but when it comes to the thing itself, the woman just slips off, leaving Sordi to the tender care of a tentatling linguist who lures him into a nudist colony, but ultimately leaves Sordi in the lurch jumping into the arms of her boy-friend. Sordi's retribution is complete when he is wheedled across an ice-covered lake in a hectic car-chase with a real femme fatale who uses this simple Latin lover as a dupe for a mocking of her own fiancé. As the

ice beneath starts cracking and the woman promptly vanishes into a rescuing helicopter, Sordi's rosy, romantic visions turn into a nightmare. He goes back home a sober, experienced and perhaps a sad man.

The avoidance of the usual comic tricks has inevitably led the director into a tougher task—the build-up of humorous moments in which he, has been eminently successful. The protagonist is the typical average man who so cheerfully hugs the delusions of "romance" denied to him in real life and Alberto has so brilliantly wrapped himself up in this archetypal image that his ambitions and frustrations become our own.

Letters

'Special' Treatment

On November 15, I met Ajitha for the first time after a break of nearly one year. She was at the Cannanore Jail but the Superintendent there concocted charges against her and transferred her to the Trivandrum Central Prison.

I had an interview with her for half an hour in the presence of the jailor, surrounded by most of the jail staff. She is in high spirits in spite of the enhanced life sentence given by the High Court. But her living condition is gruelling. She is completely isolated from the other jail inmates numbering 25 and odd. Moreover, she is under strict watch, so much so that even if she goes for washing or to the toilet, she is followed. She is not given any physical work. Mainly she spends her time reading. But books—by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tse-tung (the uninflamable ones) and journals are delayed. Her morning food comprises steam-boiled wheat balls, very hard to digest even for a healthy person in a normal condition, not to speak of one who cannot have any physical exercise. Her face was swollen due to pittam (bile) and I could presume that her health must have been

shattered. I believe that comrades at the Cannanore Central Jail must be experiencing the same cruel life.

Why such treatment? In its own interest this reactionary and counter-revolutionary government has adopted the ambivalent policy of sometimes considering them as political prisoners and sometimes as criminals. From this one can conclude that the powers-that-be are mortally afraid of the new force which is getting deep-rooted among the people. They may be able to crush our comrades but they can never crush Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung thought which is the guide to action for the new force rising on the horizon of our country.

I am writing this to keep you informed about the "special" treatment given to Ajitha, one of the best proletarian daughters of Kerala as well as Gujarat. I am writing this not only as the mother of Ajitha but as her proletarian mother.

MANDARINI NARAYANAM
Calicut, Kerala

CORRECTION

Owing to machine trouble many corrections could not be carried out in last week's *Frontier*. At places sentences were dropped. One of the victims was Prince Sihanouk. He said in a recent letter to *The Far Eastern Economic Review* that GRUNK was no longer a government in exile, that all GRUNK members who were on diplomatic mission abroad, had transferred their portfolios to the head of the internal resistance in Cambodia.

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Legal Aid

There are nearly 20,000 political prisoners in West Bengal alone, not to speak of the rest of India. About 1,000 have so far been given the life sentence, including Miss Ajitha in Kerala and 12 sentenced to death, including Nagabhusan Patnaik, Ashok Das etc.

Nearly 1,000 political prisoners in West Bengal wanted aid from the Legal Aid Committee. The Committee has so far moved about 200 bail petitions in different courts. Of these 135 are under-trial and 52 are MISA cases. Bail was granted to six under-trials and 46 MISA detenus. Only six persons have been released so far.

The Committee filed 50 miscellaneous petitions and attended 35 sessions trials. Out of these 27 accused have been acquitted.

The Committee filed 20 appeal cases in connection with life and death sentences at the High Court for special leave to the Supreme Court. Appeals filed before the Supreme Court number two.

In three session cases altogether 15 people were re-arrested after their release by the Court.

Many problems confront the Legal Aid Committee.

The authorities do not allow it to contact the prisoners even on legal grounds.

Papers to defend them are inadequate. These are available neither from the Government nor from the prisoners. Communications with the prisoners are frequently disrupted for unknown reasons—mainly by the authorities.

We appeal to all democratic minded and progressive people and institutions to come forward and help the Committee.

JAYASHRI RANA
Legal Aid Committee
Calcutta

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