

24th October 1999



5th Issue

SPRING THUNDER

EDITORS

Gaddar, Arun, Kanchan Kumar



Rs. 15

aamukh_mag@hotmail.com

Printed at Capital Offset, Navin Shahdara, Delhi 110032, Laser Typeset by Kamal Laser Graphics, New Delhi 110027 and Published by Kanchan Kumar from U-96, Sharkarpur, Gurudwara Lane, Delhi 110092

SPRING THUNDER

A LITERARY IRREGULAR OF
ALL INDIA LEAGUE FOR REVOLUTIONARY CULTURE



50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
CHINESE REVOLUTION

SPRING THUNDER

ON THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| When the Winter Comes | 3 |
|-----------------------|---|

STORY

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Party Membership Dues | 5 |
|-----------------------|---|

ARTICLES

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Writing for the Revolution | 15 |
| Literature and Revolution | 26 |
| An unforgettable Night in Yenan | 29 |

POEMS

| | |
|--|----|
| Guerrilla Fighting in Southern Kiangsi | 34 |
| Friends Suffering in Jail | 36 |
| The Red Flag | 37 |
| Reascending Chingkangshan | 39 |
| To My Elders in Szechuan | 40 |
| Passing Laoshan Written for Comrades in Yenan | 40 |
| Thanks to the Great Cultural Revolution | 41 |
| Foot Prints | 41 |
| Our people's Commune is Fine | 42 |



| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|----|
| Steadfast and unflinching | Wang Wu-chen | 43 |
| Though I'm Old and Disabled | H Siao San | 44 |
| Studying Marxism-Leninism | Chiang Lien-Ming | 45 |
| Small Fighters | Pang Lien-Yu and Wang Tieh Liang | 45 |

ARTICLES

| | | |
|--|----------|----|
| Woodcuts in China's Old Liberated Area | Hua Hsia | 46 |
| About the Film 'The White-Haired Girl' | Sang Hu | 51 |

MARTYRS COLUMN

| | |
|---|----|
| Our Red Salute to Comrade Belli Lalitha | 54 |
|---|----|

SEVENTH CONFERENCE MATERIALS

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Fight Back Hindutwa Culture | 58 |
| AILRC Resolutions | 61 |

PAPERS

| | | |
|--|------------------|----|
| Culture Industry | Suman Chatterjee | 63 |
| The Rebel Poet Najrul | Khagen Das | 67 |
| Cultural Revivalism to Serve Imperialism | P K Venugopalan | 76 |

EDITORIAL

When the Winter Comes

“The Chinese people have stood up!” With these words Comrade Mao Tsetung announced to the world the establishment of The People's Republic of China on 1st of October 1949 from Tienanmen Square in Beijing.

People wonder how was it possible for a backward peasants army to defeat a sophisticated Japanese Army and also the Kuomintang army of Chiang Kai-shek armed to the teeth by the American Imperialists. Comrade Mao has explained the three magic weapons that made this wonder : the party, the army and the united front. These three magic weapons are in the hands of Indian Communist Revolutionaries and ultimately they will also defeat the Indian Army, however strong it may look today.

Was there any thing beyond them. Yes. The Communist Party of China had another army also—that was the Cultural Army. In the wake of the May Fourth Movement of 1919, a cultural revolution in China started. It was lead by Lu Shun. He was the Chief Commander of the China's cultural revolution. Though he was not a party member, his thinking, action and writing were all marxist. He was an absolute realist and always uncompromising, always determined. Lu Hsun devoted his whole life to polemics against the enemy. He had always inspired young writers and artists. All for fight, all for the revolution was his message to young writers. His fierce attacks on the enemy were hard hitting, vivid, profound and closely connected with real events.

In the villages, the revolutionaries who were organising the peasants needed a new culture to fight and defeat the old feudal culture dominant among the peasantry. Since the majority of them were illiterate, written words were no good for them. Comrade Mao who was very familiar with the oral tradition of China and had vast knowledge of folk songs and

hunting tunes, set lyrics to these tunes. Other revolutionary poets followed this example. They also wrote songs for the people to inspire them. This is why we find many poets among the political leaders of China.

In this issue we are including Chen yi, Kuo Mo-jo, Chu Teh and of course Mao Tsetung here.

In *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art* in 1942, Comrade Mao gave a clear perspective to proletarian writers. We are including a memoir of that eventful night. His *Talk* later inspired people's writers throughout China.

From Yenan not only did the Red Army defeat the Japanese invaders but they also marched to Beijing. The people of China won many victories under the leadership of Comrade Mao but he was always in a minority in the party. During 1965-66, when the 'top party persons in authority took the capitalist road', Mao asked the people to 'Bombard the Headquarters'. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was unleashed.

The Cultural Revolution was unfinished and Comrade Mao died in 1976. The revisionists within the CPC captured power under the leadership of the Deng Clique. They said farewell to the class struggle and took a great leap backward. They took the country on the capitalist road and opened the gates of China to the imperialists for plunder.

Today, we are commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Chinese Revolution—but we are also sorry for the setback the people of China suffered in the hands of capitalist roaders.

We the writers and artists of the Indian revolution, who consider ourselves as the children of Naxalbari are products of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution also. All these global reversals of Socialist Camps in general and China in particular remind us of Mao's constant warning 'never forget the class struggle'.

As cultural activists we must learn from the mistakes of others. We are flying high the red banner of revolutionary culture and the people are looking to us as the only hope of India. We can't afford too many mistakes. We must keep 'politics in command' and not allow the 'gun to command politics' at any cost.



STORY

Party Membership Dues

Wang Yüan-Chien

Whenever I received my special allowance, with which I went to pay my Party membership dues, as soon as my local leader registered the amount under my name on the list, a strong feeling rose from the bottom of my heart. Events of the fall of 1934 suddenly flashed back into my mind.

The year 1934 was just the beginning of a hard struggle for us in the border regions of Kwangtung, Fukien, and Kiangsi provinces. Part of the main Red Army units joined the anti-Japanese vanguard forces and moved to the north; others joined up with the central Red Army for the Long March and left in April. We were part of a tiny force left behind to continue behind-the-lines struggle. Right after the main force's departure, the Nationalist Army assaulted us with their "siege-and-destroy" tactics. In order to avoid unnecessary sacrifice and to continue our struggle, we were forced to retreat into the mountains.

Even though we were in the mountains, we were still the guiding force of the underground struggle in the region. Comrade Wei Chieh, the political commissar of our unit, served also as the district Party secretary. Under his leadership, we attacked enemies whenever we had the chance, and at the same time maintained communication with all the underground Party organizations through clandestine channels. After we had adopted this strategy for only a short while, the enemy realized that they could no longer get the upper hand so they designed their "resettle-residents and combine-villages" policy, forcing all the people in the out-of-the-way small villages near our mountain base area to move to big villages on the plain. This scheme was very effective; it cut off our communication with the masses and paralyzed our underground organizations. We had to regroup to continue our struggle.

Before we retreated into the mountains, I was a scout for our unit. I spent most of my days roving about in enemy territory. Wherever I went, the masses would always take care of me. At every opportunity, we would make a clean sweep of the enemy, often wiping out a small unit of their security force. That was great. But once the enemy initiated its new strategy, my free-roving days were ended. I grew desperate and helpless, not because of personal hardship such as food and shelter, but because I could not endure my isolation from the masses, with whom I had fought and struggled, shoulder to shoulder.

While I was in one of these depressed moods, comrade Wei summoned me to his office. He asked me to be a courier—to go down the mountains and contact local Party organizations.

I accepted this assignment with heartfelt thanks. I knew well that this mission was quite different from my scout days. My mission was to re-establish contact with all the underground Party organizations which had been paralyzed during the "resettlement," to facilitate communication between village Party organizations and the county Party committee—the guerrilla forces in our mountain base area—so that we could mount an organized struggle. My destination was Pa-chiao-yao, a big village not too far from the mountains, a place receiving people forced to move out of several small villages nearby. My contact was Huang Hsin, a housewife in her mid-twenties and a Party member since 1931. During the Red Army Expansion Campaign, she set an example by sending her own husband to join the Red Army. Later he followed Chairman Mao on the Long March. She had only a five-year-old daughter with her at home then. When the enemy started the "village-combining" tactics, they burned her village to the ground, so she moved to Pa-chiao-yao with her fellow villagers. It was said that she had always been a loyal, dependable comrade who actively continued to carry out Party functions even after the move. That was why I was sent to contact her and deliver to her our district Party secretary's directives to gradually develop Party activities in the area.

Commissar Wei had told me all this in his briefing. I actually knew only the general terrain of Pa-chiao-yao, and had never met Huang Hsin. Because of this Commissar Wei specifically instructed me, "You have to remember carefully that Comrade Huang Hsin has a black mole on one of her ears."

I packed a few things, changed into civilian clothes, and went down the mountains as the dusk deepened.

Pa-chiao-yao was about ten miles from our mountain base. Since I had to take winding paths, I arrived there after midnight. I had been to this village but things had been quite different then: a big village like

Pa-chiao-yao in the base areas used to have meetings, classes, drums and gongs, shows and songs all over the place after a day's work. Now everything had changed: there was a deathly silence everywhere, and no lights in the village. It was so dark that it looked more like a deserted graveyard than a village. Only occasionally could I hear a couple of "white devils" yeling half-heartedly, thinking that all the villagers in the base area were kept well in line under their village-combining strategy. But I knew that the darkness of this dismal village concealed sparks of revolution. In time, the sparks'would spread into a huge conflagration burning across the land.

I slipped quietly into the village. Following Commissar Wei's instructions, I began from the east side of the village and counted to the seventeenth shed, then I tiptoed to the door. Strangely enough, even this late at night there was still light inside the shed. But it was covered so that I couldn't see it until I walked up to the door. Someone inside was softly humming a folksong. It sounded like a woman's voice, very low. The tune was so very familiar that I knew immediately she was humming—"Seeing My Love Off to Join the Red Army," a very popular song during the Red Army Expansion Campaign.

Seeing my love off to join the Red Army:
Be brave on the battlefield.
If you die for the cause of revolution,
I'll shoulder all the burden.
Seeing my love off to the Red Army, ..
Please remember what I said:
I am so happy you enlisted,
And don't you worry, I'll till the land.

I had not heard this song for quite some time, and it was heartening to hear it at this moment. I had been correct in thinking that the masses were still with us deep down in their hearts; even during these trying days they were thinking about our Red Army, thinking about those glorious days when our red flag flew and our revolutionary struggle surged. Could she be Comrade Huang Hsin, the person I was looking for? It had to be her; otherwise, how was it that her singing was a little bit off ;tune? Her mind must have drifted miles away with her husband on the Long March, and she was not concentrating on her singing. I stood outside listening, not having the heart to interrupt her thoughts. But it was almost dawn and I could wait no longer. I stood by the door and gave the prearranged signal, knocking three times on the upper part of the door three times on the bottom, and once in the middle.

The humming stopped and I repeated the knocks once more. I heard the footsteps coming, then the door opened.

I entered, and was stunned by what I saw; there were three people there, two women and one old man, crowding around a basket of vegetables, picking leaves from the basket without looking up. They appeared so calm and relaxed that no one seemed to notice my entrance. That made it hard for me, for I could not tell which one was Comrade Huang Hsin. If I made a wrong move, not only would my own life be in danger, which was not my major concern, but our Party organizations would suffer. I hesitated for a second or two, then nimble mind came to my rescue. I said to them, "Oh! Have I entered the wrong house?"

It worked. They all looked up at once. With a quick glance I saw that the woman sitting on the mat had a black mole on one of her ears. In one step walked up to her and said, "Mrs. Lu, do you remember me? Brother Lu asked me to bring this letter to you." The last statement was also prearranged. Ever since the Kuomintang forces occupied this area, Comrade Huang had let it be known that her husband, Lu Chin-yung, was working at an incense shop in another area.

I had to admire the tact and alertness of this ordinary village woman, Comrade Huang. Smiling, she handed a wooden stool to me as though we were old friends, and then said to her company, "Well, that's all for today. You people take the vegetables home and divide them among yourselves; as for salt, we'll divide it among us whenever we get some."

The two looked at me with broad grins, then each picked up a bundle of vegetables and quietly left the house.

Comrade Huang followed them out, probably to see whether everything was all right. From my scout training, I took a good look at the house where this Red Army wife and underground Party member lived: the two-room home was made of bamboo and mud. The bed on the floor by the corner of the north wall consisted of nothing more than a pile of straw. A child slept under a tattered cotton coverlet on the bed. Her quivering little nose showed that she was sound asleep. This was probably Comrade Huang's daughter. There was a sooted earthenware pot supported by three stones at the corner of the wall; that was Comrade Huang's cooking pot. Looking up, I saw a small attic supported by several sticks; a few pieces of broken furniture and some bundles of dried sugarcane tips were stored there.

While I was still looking around, she came back. After closing the door and covering the oil lamp, she sat down opposite me and said, "Those two are comrades. We only met recently." She must have remembered my puzzled look as I entered the room, for she pointed at the hole in the corner of the wall and said to me, "Next time when you come, please

check through the hole first to see whether it's all right to come in, lest something go wrong."

She appeared a little older than Commissar Wei had told me, more like in her thirties than her twenties. Her hair was combed into a round bun on top of her head, but it was so short one could still sense that she must have joined in "cutting one's hair to join the Red Army" not too long ago. Although her face was not robust, her kind, calm eyes were alert and full of energy. Probably she was too touched at the moment, for time and again she lifted a corner of her clothes to wipe tears from her eyes.

After quite some time, she began to talk again. "To lose contact with one's Party is like being a kite separated from its string. It's an awful experience. When I see our people suffer and our Red Army experience problems, I know we should fight back. But how? Now everything is all right. We have reunited with our district committee: we have you and you have us, and we'll surely raise the red flag again."

Before I left the mountain base, Commissar Wei had instructed me to comfort her and I had prepared a lot of nice things to tell her as soon as I saw her. But judging by how strong she was and how she talked about struggle and paid no attention to hardships and problems at all, what was there for me to say? I figured I had better come right to the point.

As I was about to convey Commissar Wei's directives, she suddenly remembered something. "Look at me. I am so excited that I forget everything. I should fix you something to eat." She opened the pot and took out two hard Chinese rolls made of sweet potato strips and vegetable leaves. Getting out another chipped pot, she searched in it for a while and fished out one preserved turnip. As she gave these to me she said, "Ever since the village-combining strategy, the white devils keep a very close watch on us, so we have been unable to send you people anything. You must have suffered a lot there; I have nothing good to offer you, so please eat what little I have here."

After a long night's walk, I was really hungry. Besides, I had not tasted salt for quite some time, so when the preserved vegetable was offered to me, it actually made my mouth water. I gulped the food down without the slightest formality. Although the vegetable was a little sour because it lacked salt, it still tasted fine to me. The flavor of a little salt reminded me of all my comrades in the mountains: I began to see their pale, wan faces—they needed salt badly there.

While I was eating, I delivered Commissar Wei's directives regarding our underground Party activities. The directives included, among other things, getting a clear understanding of the enemy's activities; organizing the anti-rent and anti-land-confiscation campaigns; and some anticipated

problems and their solutions. She nodded as she listened, and she raised questions every once in a while. Finally she said to me, "What Commissar Wei said was right. We do have problems. But I have seen the world. Since 1929, the year I joined the revolution, I have been through several enemy siege-and-destroy campaigns. If I could survive those, I surely can take on any new assignments given me." She showed great resolution and confidence and took the tough assignments on her own shoulders without the slightest reservation.

After we exchanged some information we heard the crow of a rooster. Since this was our first meeting, I could not stay too long; I wanted to get back under the protection of the morning fog. She stopped me as I was leaving. Tearing the lining of her clothing, she pulled out an envelope. In it was her worn-out Party membership card, with the sickle and hammer and the district commissar's seal still in vivid red colors. Inside the card folder, there were two silver dollars; she weighed the dollars in her palms for a while, then handed them to me saying, "Comrade Ch'eng, these dollars were left for me by the child's father before he went to the Front. I have not paid my dues since the enemy put its village-combining strategy into effect. Please take these to the commissar. If one takes care of the pennies, the dollars will take care of themselves, right? Hope these will help the Party a little."

How could I accept these dollars? I had not received any instruction to collect dues in the first place. Secondly, she was by herself and had to take care of her child. With no job and nobody to rely on, she still insisted on working for the Party under such hard circumstances. She needed these dollars badly. So I said to her, "As for dues, I have not received any instruction to collect them. I cannot take these with me. You'd better keep them."

Seeing that I refused to take the money, she thought for a moment and said, "You're right. Under the present circumstances, supplies probably would be more useful than money."

She knew what was needed—therefore she would rather pay her dues in useful goods instead of money. But who could tell then that this was a fatal mistake?

After a couple of weeks, we received information that the enemy had been alerted to all the underground activities after their village-combining strategy. They tried to undermine our efforts by using some of the wavers among the masses. Several of our organizations in the villages had suffered losses. To meet this new challenge, I was sent to Pa-chiao-yao again with new directives.

As I arrived at Comrade Huang's doorstep. I first looked through the hole in the wall to see if everything was all right, as she had told

me to do. I saw that she was busy under the light of the lamp. There were a few piles of preserved vegetables on the floor, the broken pot from which she had taken a pickle turnip for me last time, some preserved cabbages, turnips, and broad-beans, some yellow, others green. She was sorting these vegetables into piles and the putting them into a bamboo basket, while trying to soothe her child by saying, "My darling, you don't want these, do you? Ma is going to sell these. After Ma sells these and gets some money, she'll buy you a big flatcake, buy you anything you want. Tell me you don't, want any of these, tell me."

The little girl apparently could not endure the long hardships; she was even thinner than her mother. Her tiny neck held up her small head, as she leaned weakly on her mother. Probably she had not tasted things like these in the basket for quite some time. With her big eyes staring at the vegetables, her mouth watering, she would not listen to her mother but instead stubbornly grabbed her clothes, asking for some preserved vegetables. Then she crawled over to the empty pot, stuck her skinny arm into it, dipped her fingers into the salty water and sucked them. She finally could stand it no longer. Grabbing a bean-pod she stuffed it into her mouth at once. Her mother, turning her head saw this. Looking first at the child, then at the basket of vegetables, snatched the bean-pod away from her. The poor little child started howling.

The tragic sight propelled me. I knocked on the door and entered. "Comrade Huang. I don't think you're doing the right thing. Even if you want to sell these vegetables, one bean pod won't make that much difference. Don't be so hard on the child, please."

Seeing that I was already there and that I had witnessed the whole thing, she said to me with a sigh, "Old Ch'eng, do you really think I am going to sell these? Nowadays salt is even more valuable than gold, so how could I afford to make preserved vegetables to sell? All these were contributed by our members to send to our comrades in the mountains as our Party dues. We hope these will help a little. I was just trying to put them in order for you."

I suddenly realized that these were the vegetables they had been picking during my first visit here not too long before.

She glanced at me, then at the child, and said, as though to herself, "If we have our Party, our Red Army, millions of children may be saved."

The child stopped crying but still circled around the empty pot. I picked up several bean-pods for the child and said to Comrade Huang, "A few bean-pods won't matter that much even during such hardships. I'd rather, not eat for ten days than to see the child suffer."

The words were still on my lips when I heard hurrying footsteps at the door. Somebody knocked and said, "Comrade Huang, please open the

door; open it quickly, please."

As I opened the door, the woman I saw the first time in the room stood there. She gasped out a few words. "News has been leaked out that someone from the mountain base is here. The white devils are searching for him. Please do something. I have to warn the others." She left quietly.

When I heard this, I said: "I'm going."

Comiade Huans grabbed me and said, "If they are searching for you, they'll surely encircle this place so well that not even a raindrop could get through, won't they? Where can you go? Just try to hide somewhere. Quick!" I could figure this out too, but I didn't want to get her involved. So I tried to pull away from her and walk out of the room. Suddenly she grew very serious, and her face became rigid. Her tender voice changed into a forceful, authoritative tone as she said, "According to our rules for underground operations, you are under my command here. You'd better listen to me. For the Party you have to live and fight." Then she pointed to the attic. "Go and hide there quickly. No matter what happens, don't make a move. Just leave everything to me."

At that moment, there was a commotion on the street—yelling and footsteps were very near. I climbed up into the attic and peeked through the cracks. I saw Comrade Huang cover—the vegetable basket with straws, and hold her child up and kiss her. She then put the child down on the mat, turned toward me and said, "Comrade Ch'eng, since the enemy has already found out, I don't think I can make it this time. Even if the worst comes, our organization in Pa-chiao-yao is still in operation: the anti-land-confiscation campaign has been arranged. I guess we can succeed. From now on, you probably have to make contact with Comrade Hu Min-ying, the girl who just warned us. Remember, she lives on the west side—the fourth shed counting from the north. There is a little banyan tree by her door . . ." She pointed to the basket of vegetables and said, "Please take these to the base. The vegetables are the dues from our members here."

She stopped for a moment and listened to what was happening outside; tenderness returned to her voice as she spoke again: "The child, if you can, please take her to the base or some other place. When our Red Army comes back, please deliver her to Comrade Lu Chin-yung." She was overcome by emotion for a moment and then continued: "Remember, last time I asked you to turn in two silver dollars as dues? I used one of them to buy salt; the other one is in the pot. Please take that one and my membership card with you. Don't forget".

The white devils rushed up to the door as she finished her reminder. Holding her child, she turned back and sat down, leisurely straightening her child's hair. As I looked through the cracks again, she appeared very calm and serene, exactly the same as when I saw her the first time.

The white devils were knocking at the door. She slowly walked to the door and opened it. Several of them rushed in and grabbed her clothes at the chest, asking, "Where is the man from the mountain?"

"I don't know," she said, shaking her head.

They searched all over the place and were very disappointed at not finding I anything. As they were about to give up, one of them suddenly saw the basket of preserved vegetables. He kicked it over and the vegetables spread across the floor. He used his bayonet to poke around the vegetables and sensed something wrong, so he asked, "Where did all these vegetables come from?"

"I made them," she answered.

"You made them! Why are they so neatly arranged by color? Haven't you collected them to send up the mountain?" He looked around the room, then ordered the others. "Turn this place upside down."

With such limited space, if they really meant it, they surely would get to the attic wouldn't they? At this very moment, Comrade Huang yelled out: "Since you know everything, why bother asking any more questions?" She broke away from their grasp and ran to the door, where she called out, "Comrade Ch'eng, run to the west!"

Two of the bandit soldiers ran out and headed west, the remaining two seized her and forced her to walk to the door.

At first I thought everything would turn out all right. But now that they had arrested her, how could I let her suffer for me. I had to face them. With my strength, I could at least get even with them. As I was about to jump down, she turned her head back, her eyes looking straight at her frightened child and said to her, slowly, "My child, do as Ma told you." That was the last time I heard her.

Her last words reminded me of what she had said to me before the soldiers had entered her house, and I held myself back. I was probably the only one who could figure out their real meaning: do as Ma told you; Ma was the Party organization.

After everything quieted down that evening, I managed to stop the child's crying, collected all the vegetables from the floor, and got Comrade Huang's membership card and dollar from the pot. Then I put the child in one basket, the vegetables in another, and carried them with a bamboo pole back to our mountain base area.

Commissar Wei held the child in his arms and heard my report. After a thorough examination of the situation at Pa-chiao-yao, as usual, he neatly wrote down in his notebook: Comrade Huang Hsin, October 21, 1934, turned in her dues. . . .

He could write no more. With the pen still in his hand, he stopped. An unusual solemnity appeared on his face as he rubbed the child's head.

He glanced at Comrade Huang's membership card, then at the preserved vegetables. He took out his handkerchief, dabbed it with some dew from the grass, then tenderly wiped off the tear streaks on the child's face.

He had not put down the amount under Comrade Huang's name.

Sure, a basket of preserved vegetables can be measured, but how can anyone measure the value of a party member's affection for his party? How indeed can anyone count a party member's devotion and sacrifice?

Translated by George Cheng



LITERARY CRITICISM

Writing for the Revolution

Li Hsi-fan

An Appraisal of Lu Hsun's Essays

Lu Hsun (1881-1936) was not only a great literary figure but also a great thinker and revolutionary. Chairman Mao in his glorious works has repeatedly made high appraisals of Lu Hsun's revolutionary activities and his revolutionary writing.

Chairman Mao has pointed out that Lu Hsun was "the chief commander of China's cultural revolution... Lu Hsun was a man of unyielding integrity, free from all sycophancy or obsequiousness; this quality is invaluable among colonial and semi-colonial peoples. Representing the great majority of the nation, Lu Hsun breached and stormed the enemy citadel; on the cultural front he was the bravest and most correct, the firmest, the most loyal and the most ardent national hero, a hero without parallel in our history. The road he took was the very road of China's new national culture".

Lu Hsun battled all his life in the old semi-feudal, semi-colonial China. Towards the end of his career especially, after he had become a Marxist, his writing for the revolution was constantly slandered and attacked by the Kuomintang reactionaries; but for the liberation of the proletariat and the Chinese people he launched courageous assaults against all enemies of the revolution. His rich experience of class struggle and the struggle between the revolutionary line and the opportunist lines on literature and art found full expression in his essays which are remarkable for their militant style.

In 1927, owing to Chiang Kai-shek's betrayal and Chen Tu-hsiu's Rightist opportunist line in the Chinese Communist Party, the First

Revolutionary Civil War¹ which had started so promisingly ended in failure. But the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people were neither cowed nor conquered nor exterminated. They picked themselves up, wiped off the blood, buried their fallen comrades and went into battle again. A single spark can start a prairie fire. In October 1927, tens of thousands of workers and peasants led by Chairman Mao raised high the red banner of armed struggle in the Chingkang Mountains in Kiangsi and built up the first revolutionary base in China's countryside.

During this period, Lu Hsun was convinced by harsh facts that "the future belongs only to the newly emerging proletariat". Undeterred by the White terror in Shanghai, then dominated by the Kuomintang diehards and foreign imperialists, he raised the battle call, fearlessly took the field and created a militant Left-wing literary front, using "new armour and new weapons" — the communist world outlook and the theory of social revolution — to attack imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism represented by Chiang Kai-shek. The storm of revolution which swept the country terrifies the Kuomintang reactionaries, who carried out frenzied "encirclement and suppression" campaigns² both on the military and cultural fronts. Just as they mobilized all available forces on the military front, on the cultural front they enlisted the services of all their bourgeois scholars and writers and other reactionary intellectuals. Protected by the warlords, these flunkies hung up trade-signs of every kind and adopted different disguises to attack the revolutionary literature of the proletariat. Some of their main targets were the relationship between literature and revolution, the class nature of literature and art, the relationship between literature and politics.

As soon as the Kuomintang reactionaries headed by Chiang Kai-shek had betrayed the revolution and begun to arrest and slaughter Communists and other progressives, Professor Liang Shih-chiu³, a member of the Crescent Moon Society, raised the black banner of "the literature of human nature". He vociferously peddled the theory of human nature of the landlord-bourgeois classes in order to attack the Marxist class theory. Liang Shih-chiu denied the class nature of men and the fundamental difference between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, arguing that literature had no class character. He bleated: "A capitalist and a labourer are alike as regards their human nature. Both feel the transient nature of human life, both grow old, fall ill and die; both are able to feel pity, both have a sense of morality; both seek carnal and mental pleasure. Literature is the art which expresses this basic human nature." Starting from this false assumption which transcends class differences and claims that "human nature is the only criterion for literature", Liang Shih-chiu alleged that literature transcends the age and that it has nothing to do with revolution. He blethered: "Great

literature is based on unchangeable, universal human nature... Its relationship to the current trends of the age, the influence on it of the times, its influence over that period, its accord with revolutionary theory or its restriction by traditional ideas — these are quite irrelevant".

Does this "eternal", "unchangeable, universal human nature" touted by Liang Shih-chiu really exist? Is literature really an art to "express this basic human nature"?

Lu Hsun in *Literature and Sweat* uses the most general examples from the evolution of man to debunk this fallacy spread by the landlord-bourgeois classes. He points out: "Anthropoid ape, ape-man, primitive man, ancient man, modern man, the man of the future.... If living creatures can indeed evolve, then human nature cannot remain unchanged". In another essay *"Hard Translation"* and the *"Class Character of Literature"*, Lu Hsun used other everyday examples from life to refute Liang Shih-chiu's fallacies. Thus he wrote with biting humour: "Literature without human characters cannot show man's 'nature' either. But once you use human characters, especially in a class society, you cannot get round their inherent class character. This is not a question of superimposing class 'fetters' — it is something inevitable. Of course, 'it is human nature to know joy and anger, but the poor are never worried because they lose money on the stock exchange, and an oil magnate cannot know the trials of an old woman collecting cinders in Peking. Victims of famine will hardly grow orchids like rich old gentlemen, nor will Chiao Ta in the Chia Mansion fall in love with Lin Tai-yu'.... If we consider the literature which portrays the lowest common denominator of human nature as the highest, then descriptions of the most basic animal functions — eating, breathing, moving and procreation — must be even better. Better still would be those which dispense with 'movement' and just describe biological nature. If you say we must describe human nature because we are men, then workers must produce proletarian literature because they are workers."

Some well-meaning but naive people argue in favour of the bourgeois theory of human nature by contending that descriptions of natural scenery, flowers and birds, insects and fishes can be appreciated by everyone, and such literature at least is universal. Actually this argument was one of those used by Liang Shih-chiu to deny the class character of literature.

Thus Liang Shih-chiu demanded: "When one sings of the beauty of mountains and streams, flowers and herbs, are there differences of a class character?"

This sounds rather plausible. Many old Chinese poets sang of the beauty of nature, and some won fame for their fine depictions of natural scenery. But poor peasants groaning under the cruel yoke of the landlord

class could never share the aesthetic pleasure of such idle poets as Meng Hao-jan of the Tang Dynasty, who wrote the lines:

In spring I sleep long, oblivious of the dawn;
Everywhere I hear the twittering of birds;
During the night there were sounds of wind and rain;
I wonder how many flowers have shed their petals?

Even the same phenomena, such as natural scenery, wind and snow, flowers or the moon, arouse quite different reactions in different classes. For as Chairman Mao has pointed out: "**In class society everyone lives as a member of a particular class, and every kind of thinking, without exception, is stamped with the brand of a class.**"

Does literature really have nothing to do with its age, with the revolution?

The fact that Liang Shih-chiu raised such a ballyhoo to hawk his theory that literature transcends classes and transcends the age shows that he was serving the interests of the bourgeoisie, conforming to the fascist politics of the Kuomintang and trying to make people forget their class hatred against these reactionaries. This was one of the tactics used in the "encirclement and suppression" campaigns against revolutionary writers.

Liang Shih-chiu blatantly clamoured: "Private property is the foundation of civilization.... Men of real talent and ability... will ultimately acquire considerable property... The theory of classes is used to unite the workers and incite them to struggle... then they will break the conventional rules, seize political and economic power and establish themselves as the ruling class".

What a fine self-exposure! This shameless flunkey of the bourgeoisie posed as a champion of the truth to sell his literature transcending classes and transcending the age. His claim that "literature belongs to the whole of humanity" is sheer hypocrisy, an out-and-out lie. As Lu Hsun shrewdly observed, "the concept of private properties the basis of civilization and the poor as the scum of society" was a weapon used by the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. "Proletarian literary critics consider that literature which claims to speak for all men to transcend classes is of service to the capitalist class. Here we have a clear case in point."

Lu Hsun's essays are like bullets aimed dead on their target, annihilating such theorists of the landlord-bourgeois classes as the members of the Crescent Moon Society who preached "human nature", and exposing the true colours of lackeys like Liang Shih-chiu.

Under the guidance of Lu Hsun and in close conjunction with the armed struggle led by Chairman Mao, the Left-wing literary movement

finally stirred up a tempest to sweep away the filth in the Kuomintang-dominated area. The reactionaries tried to counter this with bloody repressive measures. On January 17, 1931, Yin Fu and other Left-wing writers were arrested. They were executed secretly, at night, on February 7. Lu Hsun's grief and anger at the death of these young comrades found expression in his celebrated essay *The Revolutionary Literature of the Chinese Proletariat and the Blood of the Pioneers*. With revolutionary pride he wrote : "The revolutionary literature of the Chinese proletariat, coming into being, as today passes over into tomorrow, is growing amid slander and persecution. Now at last in the utter darkness its first chapter has been written with our comrades' Blood."

But while these butchers were engaged in slaughter, Hu Chiu-yuan⁵ who claimed to be a "Marxist" writer and a "free" man above politics, accused the revolutionary literature which served proletarian politics of "lowering art to the position of a political gramophone" and of "betraying art". He raved: "The highest aim of literature is to eliminate all class prejudices among humanity.... Literature and art are free even unto death". He opposed the "invasion of literature" by politics. At a time when the reactionaries were suppressing Left-wing literature, closing bookstores, banning books and secretly murdering writers; at a time, moreover, when these assassins were gloating over their crimes while revolutionaries were shedding their blood, this self-styled "Marxist" Hu Chiu-yuan slandered Left-wing literature and alleged that proletarian revolutionary writing deprived writers of their "freedom".

Lies written in ink cannot hide facts written in blood. With a few words Lu Hsun stripped off the renegade's mask. In his essay *On the "Third Category"* Lu Hsun pointed out that Hu was simply one of those theorists "protected by the commander's sword who call themselves 'Left-wingers' and find arguments for the freedom of art in Marxism and for exterminating 'communist bandits' in Leninism".

Others like Su Wen⁶ worked in co-ordination with Hu Chiu-yuan but adopted different disguises and called themselves the "third category" or "neutrals". Su Wen attacked Left-wing writers for their criticism of bourgeois reactionary literature which intimidated "neutrals... who cling to literature for dear life" so that they had to give up writing for fear of being branded as "flunkeys". Although they knew the truth "they dare not speak" and had to lay down their pens.

Lu Hsun in the same essay made short shrift of this play for sympathy by a full exposure of the true nature of these writers, who were very far from unbiased. "To live in a class society yet to be a writer who transcends classes, to live in a time of wars yet to leave the battlefield and stand alone, to live in the present yet to write for the future — this is sheer

fantasy. There are no such men in real life. To try to be such a man is like trying to raise yourself from the ground by tugging at your own hair — it can't be done. You may fume, but it is not because others shake their heads that you stop tugging".

In another essay Lu Hsun wrote: "The so-called third category claim that they are the only writers 'loyal to their art'. This is another old trick to fool people; for no matter to what class they belong, all writers have their individual identity and are members of their class. To be loyal to one's own art is to be a writer loyal to his own class. This applies to the bourgeoisie and also to the proletariat".

The battle waged by Lu Hsun with the Crescent Moon writers, the advocates of "freedom of literature" and the third category even today afford us much food for thought. People who seem to stand outside the struggle, oppose the subordination of literature and art to politics and want them to stand aloof may hoist up all manner of banners and wear all manner of masks, but actually they are simply defenders and spokesmen of bourgeois politics. Chairman Mao has correctly pointed out: "In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines. There is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes or art that is detached from or independent of politics". History has also proved that men like Hu Chiu-yuan who advocated the "freedom of literature and art", or Su Wen who styled himself the "third category", hung up banners of every colour simply because they had sold themselves to the Kuomintang reactionaries. Before long the true colours of these flunkies were revealed.

Lu Hsun not only tore the masks off all bourgeois writers who advocated a literature transcending classes and transcending the age, showing them up as counter-revolutionaries, he devoted his whole life to polemics against the enemy, serving revolutionary politics and soldiering on till the very end of his life.

Lu Hsun earnestly taught the young writers of his time: "A revolutionary writer must at least share the life of the revolution or keep his finger on the pulse of the revolution".

All for the fight, all for the revolution — this is the glorious example Lu Hsun set future revolutionary writers in his literary career.

However, Lu Hsun the writer is inseparable from Lu Hsun the revolutionary. After the Opium War of 1840⁷, foreign imperialism shamelessly invaded China. The Ching Dynasty clung to its feudal rule and exposed its rottenness completely by kowtowing to the imperialists, adding humiliation to humiliation. So progressive Chinese found the situation intolerable. As Chairman Mao has said, they "went through untold hardships in their quest for truth from the Western countries". From

the second half of the nineteenth century to the twenties of this, Chinese patriots eagerly sought a way out for the nation and a way to make revolution. Lu Hsun's whole life and all his literary work were a fervent search for revolution. His collection of short stories *Wandering* bears on the title page these lines from the ancient poet Chu Yuan:

Long the road stretching ahead;

I shall search above and below.

This reveals Lu Hsun's dedication to the quest for truth...

Lu Hsun's choice of literature as his life's work was the outcome of his search for weapons to save his country. He has described how in his young days he went to Japan to study medicine in the hope of curing "patients like my father who was killed by charlatans". He longed to help his fellow-countrymen to overcome their backward ways and modernize the country; but he soon discovered that medicine was not a weapon which could save China, and so he chose literature instead in the belief that it could change men's outlook. His view of the task of literature at that time is explained in his essay *On the Power of Poetry of Revolt*. "The poet does all in his power to oppose society and propagate the idea that all men are born equal. Unintimidated by authority, uncorrupted by the lure of gold, he pours out his hot blood in his poetry".

Having taken the decision to write, Lu Hsun determined to fight and arouse "the labouring masses of China" of whom he had a clear mental picture, the masses "who underwent life-long oppression and suffered fearful pain". In Lu Hsun's eyes, the task of literature was to serve society and it was also necessary to change society. During the May Fourth period,⁸ long before he became a Marxist, Lu Hsun declared himself proud to "take orders" from the revolutionary vanguard in his writing.

Lu Hsun not only accepted the call to revolution himself but urged younger writers to take the revolutionary path. He proclaimed passionately: "Anyone who tries to obstruct the way forward... must be trampled underfoot."

A great writer must stand at the forefront of his age and act as a spokesman for the progressive classes of that historical period. Furthermore, a great writer will always choose the literary form most suited to the demands of the revolution to express his views of his age and evolve his own distinctive style. During the May Fourth period, Lu Hsun started his revolutionary literary career with his short stories which have profound social themes and incisive critical impact. As the short essay form became his main weapon. When certain scholars and writers advised him not to waste time on such short polemical articles, Lu Hsun answered firmly: "I am very grateful for their concern and I know that writing stories is important. But there comes a time when I have to write in a certain way.

And it seems to me, if there are such troublesome taboos in the palace of art, I would do better not to enter it, but to stand in the desert and watch the sandstorms, laughing when I am happy, shouting when I am sad, and cursing openly when I am angry. The sand and stones may bruise me till my body is torn and bleeding, but from time to time I can finger the clotted blood and feel the pattern of my scars; and this is not less interesting than following the example of the Chinese literati who eat foreign bread and butter in the name of keeping Shakespeare company."

This is the battle-cry of a revolutionary and a lively explanation of Lu Hsun's choice of the short essay from as his main weapon, especially in his later years. The essay is for polemics. Compared with other literary forms, the short critical essay is a dagger or javelin, trenchant and quick to draw blood. In those dark days the essayist could "react immediately to anything harmful and do battle against it. Sensitive as a nerve and swift as a limb that responds by reflex action to attack", the essay could be used to "fight a way out" for the author and his readers.

"Only those who can kill can preserve life, only those who know hatred can have love; only those who want to preserve life and have love can write literature." This was Lu Hsun's principle for writing. During those critical years when China's revolution was rapidly gathering force, Lu Hsun did not concentrate on writing monumental works but, obeying the call to revolution, used his dagger and javelin, his critical essays, to attack all the reactionary forces and reactionary culture of old China which oppressed, deceived and poisoned the minds of the people. Thus he served the revolutionary struggles of his time. This reveals Lu Hsun's noble revolutionary character and spirit.

Lu Hsun declared modestly that his essays "are certainly no treasure-chest belonging to some hero which when opened reveals objects of unparalleled splendour. I am only a pedlar who displays his wares on the ground late at night at the corner of the street. All I have are a few nails and some earthenware dishes, but still I hope and believe that some people may find something useful among these things." The result was that Lu Hsun left us with sixteen collections of essays — more than seven hundred essays in all — which with their distinctive style and form constitute a magnificent monument of proletarian revolutionary culture in China's modern history.

Regarding the characteristics of his essays, Lu Hsun said : "What I write about in these essays is often just a nose, a mouth or one hair; but when put together they make up a more or less complete character." Again, the characters which he depicted were not isolated individuals but typical examples of a specific class of groups with specific political affiliations.

Lu Hsun lived through more than half a century of struggles between revolution and counter-revolution during the period after the Opium War when China was a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country. Never a bystander, he always stood at the forefront of the fight, representing the majority of the nation and charging bravely against the enemy forces. So his essays, although short, embody rich experience of class struggle and the struggle between two lines in literature, as well as profound knowledge of men and society and many typical portrayals of the sickness of old Chinese society. They help us to understand the laws of class struggle, to see the class nature and special characteristics of enemies of various kinds. Keeping closely in step with the revolutionary struggles of his time, Lu Hsun used his mordant humour and cutting satire to scourge all manner of typical characters thrown up by imperialism and feudalism. Like a skilled portrait painter, Lu Hsun in his essays has given us a whole rogues' gallery. He presents reactionary warlords of the May Fourth period who made a cult of Confucius and were terrified of the "Reds"; the despot Chiang Kai-shek and his gang who bloodily suppressed the Chinese people but bowed before the Japanese aggressors; stooges of the foreign imperialists who preened themselves on being an intellectual elite; diehard who clung to ancient feudal relics; fine gentlemen of the Modern Critic group who held forth on "justice" but attempted to use lies written in ink to disguise facts written in blood; hired hacks of the Kuomintang reactionaries who advocated "nationalist" literature while actually peddling fascism; Professor Lin Yu-tang who preached a comprador philosophy; Chou Yang who posed as a Marxist but was in fact a political swindler, and so forth. Lu Hsun's short essays mount fierce attacks against such enemies. Hard-hitting, vivid, profound and closely connected with real events, they carry all before them.

Lu Hsun's essays not only voice his deep hatred and fiery anger against the enemy, but also embody his fervent hopes, his encouragement of the people, his joy at the victories of the revolution. Some of his short literary works express his feelings, others contain theoretical arguments; some are written in the form of a diary, others as correspondence with friends, as sketches or even as fables. Lu Hsun did not restrict himself to existing literary genres but chose forms according to the requirements of his content. He wrote easily and naturally, but all his work was geared to the revolutionary struggle and had its distinctive literary style.

The short essay has a long history both in Chinese and foreign literature. Lu Hsun's special contribution to this form was raising it to greater heights of artistic perfection and ideological profundity. Lu Hsun's essays combine polemics with poetry, drawing their vitality from and serving the needs of the struggle. His life-long participation in fierce class

struggles steeled him and sharpened his perception. And towards the end of his career the communist world outlook and philosophy of social revolution illuminated his rich fighting experience and gave him additional strength, so that he became a veritable "tiger with wings". As Chairman Mao comments : "Lu Hsun's later essays are so penetrating and powerful and yet so free from onesidedness precisely because he had grasped dialectics by then."

As we have seen, Lu Hsun had nothing but contempt for the hypocritical advocates of "the art of human nature" and "art for art's sake". He openly proclaimed that the fight on the cultural front was only "one battleground of the proletariat's struggle for liberation", that he was glad to serve as a "pawn" or "a vanguard scout" of the revolutionary forces. He warned young writers : "If there is no change and we ourselves swim with the tide, it means making no contribution and given no help to the age". "We may be unable to express the most far-reaching changes, but this need not discourage us. Even one aspect. The most monumental buildings are constructed of planks of wood and bricks. Why should we not be a plank of wood or a brick?"

Lu Hsun made this impassioned call : "There should already be a brand-new tilt-yard for literature, there should already be some swift-charging vanguards." He affirmed : "Writers in the present resistance are fighting for the present and the future; for if we lose the present, we shall have no future."

This is how Lu Hsun battled all his life, and this is how his essays were produced. As Chairman Mao points out : "All Communists, all revolutionaries, all revolutionary literary and art workers should learn from the example of Lu Hsun and be 'oxen' for the proletariat and the masses, bending their backs to the task until their dying day." Since essays were the chief weapons used by Lu Hsun against the class enemy, Chairman Mao has on several occasions urged all revolutionaries to make a serious study of Lu Hsun's essays.

Writing for the revolution, choosing the best weapons for the revolution — this is the most significant feature of Lu Hsun's writing.

NOTES

1. The war against imperialism and feudalism waged by the Chinese people during the period of co-operation between the Communist Party of China and the Kuomintang, 1924-1927. In the earlier stage the revolutionary forces developed rapidly and the imperialist and feudal forces suffered severe setbacks. Towards the end of the period, Chen Tu-hsiu who was General Secretary of the Communist Party carried out a line of capitulation. He voluntarily gave up the Party's leadership of the peasant masses, urban petty-bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie and in particular relinquished the leadership of the armed forces. As a result, on April 12, 1927 Chiang Kai-shek in

collusion with imperialist and feudal forces staged his counter-revolutionary coup d'état, massacring Communists as well as the revolutionary masses so that the First Revolutionary Civil War ended in defeat.

2. The counter-revolutionary military attacks against the soviet areas led by the Communist Party and the brutal suppression of revolutionary culture in areas under Kuomintang rule launched by the Kuomintang reactionaries during the early thirties.
3. Liang shin-chiu, Hu shih and Hsu Chih-mo were members of Crescent Moon Society, a Cultural and political organisation of the comprador-bourgeoisie founded in 1925, who advocated reactionary theories and attacked the Left wing writers headed by Lu Hsun.
4. Chiao Ta and Lin Tai-yu are characters in the 18th-century novel *Dream of the Red Chamber*. Chiao Ta was a servant while Lin Tai-yu was a young lady of the house.
5. Hu Chiu-Yuan, a Trotoskyite. He posed as a Marxist and along with Su Wen, these two comprador-bourgeois men of letters posing as "free" man and members of the "third category", published articles lauding the bourgeois theory of freedom in literature and art and so-called eternal art transcending classes. Later Hu Chiu-yuan and Su Wen became agents of the Kuomintang.
6. Su Wen opposed the work of popularization, such as the production of serial-picture stories, carried out by Left-wing writers for the workers and peasants. In one of his essays he wrote ; "This will doubtless be opposed by all those who cling for their life to literature."
7. In 1840 in order to dump opium on China, the British imperialists invaded China. The Chinese people and armed forces waged a stubborn resistance and dealt severe blows at the British invaders.
8. The anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolutionary movement which started on May 4, 1919 later turned into a sweeping revolutionary cultural movement with the spreading of Marxism-Leninism as its main trend.



Literature and Revolution

April 4, 1928

Dear Mr. Tung-fen,

Not being a critic I am no artist either, for nowadays to be any sort of specialist you have to be a critic too, or have a friend who is one. Without backing you are helpless, on the Shanghai Bund today at any rate. And not being an artist I have no special veneration for art, just as none but a quack doctor will give a boxing exhibition to cry up his wares. I regard art as merely a social phenomenon, a record of the life of the times. And if mankind advances, then whether you write on externals or on the inner life your works are bound to grow out-of-date or to perish. But recently the critics seem terrified of this prospect—they are set on immortality in the world of letters.

The outcrop of different "isms" is an unavoidable phenomenon too. Since revolutions are constantly taking place, naturally there is revolutionary literature. Quite a number of the world's peoples are awakening and, though many of them are still suffering, some already hold power. Naturally this gives rise to popular literature or, to put it more bluntly, literature of the fourth class.*

I am not too clear, not too interested either, regarding current trends in China's literary criticism. But from all I hear and see, different authorities seem to use a great variety of criteria: Anglo-American, German,

This essay was Lu Hsun's reply to a letter from Tung-fen, a Peking University student. Here Lu Hsun uses the dialectical-materialist viewpoint to deal with such problems as literature and revolution, literature and propaganda, and the content and form of literature and art. He strongly criticizes the current trend "Left" in form but Rightist in essence in the theory and practice of certain literary art groups. He also attacks the theory of human nature of the landlord — and bourgeois classes, which was propagated by reactionary men of letters.

* Before the French, bourgeois revolution of the 18th century, French society was divided according to this system of taxation, corvée and special feudal rights into three estates: the clergy; the nobility; and the third estate comprising the peasants, shop-keepers, artisans, urban poor and the bourgeoisie. Later, on the basis of this, using an unscientific formulation, some people called the proletariat the fourth class.

Russian, Japanese and of course Chinese, or a combination of these. Some demand truth, others struggle. Some say literature should transcend its age, others pass sarcastic remarks behind people's back. Yet others, who set themselves up as authoritative literary critics, are disgusted when anyone else encourages writing. What are they up to? This is most incomprehensible to me, for without writing what is there to criticize?

Let us leave aside other questions for the moment. The so-called revolutionary writers today profess themselves militants or transcendentalists. Actually, transcending the present is a form of escapism. And this is the path they are bound to take, consciously or otherwise, if they lack the courage to look reality in the face yet insist on styling themselves revolutionaries. If you live in this world, how can you get away from it? This is as much of a fraud as claiming that you can hoist yourself off this earth by pulling on your ear. If society remains static, literature cannot fly ahead on its own. If it flourishes in such a static society, this means it is tolerated by the society and has turned its back on revolution, the only result being a slightly larger magazine circulation or the chance for publication in the journals put out by big commercial firms.

To struggle is right, I believe. If people are oppressed, why shouldn't they struggle? But since this is what respectable gentlemen* dread, they condemn it as "radical", alleging that men the world over are meant to love each other and would do so were they not now corrupted by a gang of bad characters. The well-fed may quite likely love the starving, but the starving never love the well-fed. In the days of Huang Chao,** when men ate each other, the starving did not even love the starving; however, this was not due to trouble stirred up by the literature of struggle. I have never believed that literature has the power to move heaven and earth, but if people want to put it to other uses that is all right with me. It can be used for "propaganda" for example.

Upton Sinclair of America has said: All literature is propaganda. Our revolutionary writers treasure this saying and have printed it in large type, whereas the serious critics call Upton Sinclair a "shallow socialist". But I, being shallow myself, agree with him. All literature becomes propaganda once you show it to someone else. This applies to individualist works, too, as soon as you write them down. Indeed, the only way to avoid

* This refers to members of the Crescent Moon Society, a cultural and political organisation of the comprador-bourgeoisie founded in 1923 and having as its chief representatives Hu Shih, Hsu Chih-mo and Liang Shih-chu, who advocated reactionary theories and attacked the Left-wing writers headed by Lu-Hsun.

** Leader of peasant revolt at the end of the Tang Dynasty (618-907). At that time the cruel exploitation of the feudal rulers had reduced the peasants to utter destitution resulting, it is said, in cases of cannibalism.

propaganda is by never writing, never opening your mouth. This being so, literature can naturally be used as a tool of revolution.

But I think we should first try to achieve rich content and skillful technique, and not be in a hurry to set ourselves up as writers. The old trade-marks Tao Hsiang Tsun and Lu Kao Chien* have already lost their appeal, and I doubt whether a firm called itself "The Dowager Empress Shoe Shop" could attract more customers than "The Empress Shoe Shop". Revolutionary writers bridle at the mere mention of "technique". To my mind, however, though all literature is propaganda, not all propaganda is literature; just as all flowers have colour (I count white as a colour), but not all coloured things are flowers. In addition to slogans posters, proclamations, telegrams, textbooks and so forth, the revolution needs literature—just because it is literature.

But China's so-called revolutionary literature seems to be an exception again. The signboard has been hung up and our writers are busy patting each other on the back, but they dare not look unflinchingly at today's tyranny and darkness. Some works have been published, true, but often more clumsily written than journalese. Or it left to the actors is a play to supply the stage-directions, such writing being regarded as "out-of-date". Surely, then, the ideological content left must be most revolutionary? Let me quote you the two superb last line of a play by Feng Nai-chao!**

Prostitute: I no longer dread the darkness.

Thief: Let us revolt!



Lu Hsun

* Two well-known delicatessens.

** Member of the Creation Society, a progressive literary organization.

An Unforgettable Night in Yenan

Huang Kang

When the First Star Glimmered in the Night Sky....

Thirty-five years have passed since that unforgettable night in Yenan.

In May 1942 in Yenan, a forum on literature and art was held under the guidance of Chairman Mao. In the afternoon of the 23rd, before the end of the third session, we were thrilled by the announcement that Chairman Mao would come in person that evening to conclude this forum.

We could hardly wait for the evening to come.

May in Yenan is enchanting. Summer is drawing near but there is still a trace of spring chill in the air. There was no wind at dusk. As the blue sky gradually darkened, the evening star appeared over the far horizon....

The site chosen for this meeting was a flat stretch of ground in front of some loess cave-dwellings on the west side of Yangchialing. Earlier on we had met in the half-finished assembly hall at Yangchialing where the Seventh Party Congress was to be convened in 1945. At the time of this forum on literature and art, the doors and windows were just being fitted and the walls had not yet been whitewashed. The hall was lined with long benches. Here the writers and artists of Yenan held heated discussions, the third session being just as heated as the first two.... Outside this assembly hall still under construction, from the foot of the slope to its south rhythmic hammering could be heard continuously as masons quarried rocks. All this made me feel that it was not ordinary assembly hall that the people of Yenan were constructing but the new China of the future, and they were racing against time, seizing every minute and second. This was the atmosphere those days in Yenan, headquarters of the Chinese Communist Party during the War of Resistance Against Japan.

In the afternoon of the 23rd, Commander-in Chief Chu Teh gave us an important talk. He warmly affirmed the splendid achievements of our Party and the Eighth Route Army and New Fourth Army under its leadership, and sharply criticized those who professed themselves "unwill-

ing" to sing the praise of the proletariat and the working people. These were the individuals referred to by Chairman Mao that same evening when he said: **"Persons of this type are merely termites in the revolutionary ranks; of course, the revolutionary people have no need for these 'singers'"** Chu Teh in his speech urged literary and art workers to go to the front and to the countryside, to pay more attention to new writing and reportage, and to make all forms of literature and art serve as weapons in the war.

In the open space in front of the loess caves, wooden props had been fixed up for the acetylene lamps to be lit that evening, and many of us gathered there well ahead of time. Suddenly clapping burst out from one corner of the meeting-place. The clapping came closer and closer, accompanying a group of new arrivals....

These were Chairman Mao, Commander-in-Chief Chu Teh and other members of the Party Central Committee. With a spring in his step Chairman Mao strode to the small rectangular table in the centre of the crowd. There, under the dark blue night sky of Yenan in early summer, in this simple, open-air meeting-place, he delivered the conclusion of his famous *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art*, now known as an epoch-making Marxist-Leninist classic.

After their arrival we all sat down and waited in silence to hear Chairman Mao's conclusions.

Before speaking, Chairman Mao looked round with a smile at all of us waiting there with rapt attention. Then he said that comrades had set him a test, and the title of his talk that night was "The Conclusion".

At this point acetylene lamps were hung on the props in the four corners, making the whole place brightly lit and giving us a clear view of Chairman Mao's magnificent figure and the sheaf of notes in his hand.

All the cadres in Yenan knew that Chairman Mao had talked to many comrades in the literary and art circles in Yenan and made a deep study of the problems of literature and art for this forum, and had prepared these concluding remarks with great care. He opened them by demanding gravely and forcefully: **"What then is the crux of the matter? In my opinion, it consists fundamentally of the problems of working for the masses and how to work for the masses."** **"My concluding remarks will centre on these two problems and also touch upon some related ones."**

Scientific Foresight—Clear Demarcation of Epochs

Even now I remember clearly Chairman Mao's resolute expression and forceful tone as he predicted explicitly in his Talks the direction in which Chinese history would progress.

The *Yenan Talks* was born in the midst of a fierce struggle between

two lines. However, that evening, as on other important occasions when Chairman Mao made speeches, he looked perfectly calm and relaxed. Sometimes, but not very often, he made simple gestures to reinforce his profound analysis. Though he had an outline of his speech in his hand, he gave us the impression while speaking that he was following through his profound line of thought. At one point he swung his arm forward in a swift, incisive and impressive gesture, as if to convey that the darkness of the past had been swept away and the brightness of the new society was being ushered in.

This was when he asserted: "The past epoch is gone, never to return." This categorical statement showed his conviction, just as his clear and ringing delivery expressed his unshakable determination, bringing home to us the tremendous strength of the Chinese Communists who meant to make a thorough break with traditional ideas.

Chairman Mao based this pronouncement on his historical analysis of the Chinese and the world revolution and on the existence of the resistance bases built up by our Party. As the great leader of the Chinese people, the revolutionary teacher of the proletariat, he was announcing the birth of a new age and the certainty of victory.

It was during the Second World War, when mankind was approaching a turning-point in history, that Chairman Mao reached this brilliant scientific conclusion that Chinese history had entered upon a new age. At that time many people deluded by the savage attacks of the fascists could not see that the enemy was about to collapse; nor could they see that the people's strength was increasing in the anti-fascist camp while the enemy's was on the wane. However, Chairman Mao was announcing in no uncertain terms to the whole world: "China is moving forward, not back, and it is the revolutionary base areas, not any of the backward, retrogressive areas, that are leading China forward." "To come to the revolutionary bases means to enter an epoch unprecedented in the thousands of years of Chinese history, an epoch in which the masses of the people wield state power."

In other words, even in those days when the German, Italian and Japanese fascists and the reactionary forces in China were rampant, when China was plunged in the darkness before dawn, we were in the ascendant and the revolutionary forces led by our Party showed the direction in which Chinese history was advancing.

Soon after this, irrefutable facts proved the validity of Chairman Mao's scientific predictions based on Marxist-Leninist thinking.

We Are Called Upon to Integrate Ourselves with the Masses

Without any sign of fatigue Chairman Mao spoke on. It was already

midnight. The moon overhead made the night as bright as day. Under the moon and the stars, hills nearby and distant were darkly silhouetted. Not far away the Yenho River flowed merrily, its surface shot with silver....

At the start of Chairman Mao's speech I had noticed that everyone present, including members of the Central Committee, had notebooks to take notes. The leading comrades of the Central Committee were seated at long wooden tables behind Chairman Mao, with most of the rest of us around them and Chairman Mao. Some people sat on the ground on the padded jackets which they had brought along, their notebooks on their knees as they wrote with concentration. After midnight the environment became even quieter—we could hear the scratch of pens on paper.

"We must integrate ourselves with the new masses without any hesitation." This was Chairman Mao's great call to us on that unforgettable evening, in those days when foreign aggressors were trampling on our land and class enemies were rampant in many parts of China.

This was a mighty call to advance in our revolution in literature and art for the proletariat.

Chairman Mao's answer to a series of questions regarding whom our literature and art should serve were based on the characteristics of this age when capitalism is doomed to extinction and socialism is definitely on the ascendant. They were linked with his far-sighted judgment regarding the direction in which China must advance. He stressed: **"This question of 'for whom' is fundamental' it is a question of principle."** The workers, peasants and soldiers are the central figures in this new epoch of the masses and decide the direction our country is to take, so our literary and art workers must move their feet over to the side of the proletariat by going into their midst, into the thick of mass struggles, and by studying Marxism and society. **"Only in this way can we have a literature and art that are truly for the workers, peasants and soldiers, a truly proletarian literature and art."** This was the first time that a Marxist-Leninist solution was formulated for the problem of the relationship between the writers and artists of the proletariat and the people they serve.

For the last thirty-five years, political and cultural developments in China have proved that the *Yenan Talks* can serve as an irresistible weapon for the proletariat to criticise bourgeois ideology in the struggle between two antagonistic classes and two antagonistic lines. While thoroughly debunking various manifestations of the bourgeois world outlook the *Yenan Talks* makes clear the essence of the struggle between two lines on the ideological front, pointing out that this involves the important problem: in the image of which class should the Party and the world be remoulded?

"The Direction Pointed Out by Comrade Mao Tsetung Is the

Direction for the Chinese Communist Party”

The dawn of the 24th slowly approached.

The Yenan Forum on Literature and Art concluded before dawn this day.

For many who attended it, the memories of this forum are merged with memories of those arduous war years and stormy mass struggles.

It was not until we had been steeled by the flames of war, by tempestuous mass movements and by stormy class struggles, which taught us profound lessons, that we began to understand more fully the truth of Chairman Mao's injunction: We must shift our stand and move our feet over to the side of the masses. The *Yenan Talks* is a mirror reflecting the inevitable laws of class struggle, especially in the ideological sphere. It is valid as a guide for us for all time.

Early that morning after the forum ended, I returned to the office of the *Liberation Daily* where I worked as a reporter with Chairman Mao's instructions fresh in my mind. Inspired by them, my thoughts flew to the fighting front. Chairman Mao had said in the concluding part of his speech: “I am confident that comrades here are determined to move in the direction indicated.” Only a few hundred li from Yenan, on the east bank of the Yellow River still occupied by the Japanese, enemy guns could be heard. There the local people and militiamen co-ordinating closely with the Eighth Route Army were harassing the enemy from very ditch graveyard, cottage, pine forest and roadside, attacking both their strongholds and sentry posts. With their lives and blood they were writing a glorious page in our history.

This was no ordinary day in the unprecedented struggle of a great nation of several hundred million led by our Party, a day which would shine for ever in the history of revolution. From this day onwards, hundreds and thousands of literary and art workers in our revolutionary bases found a new weapon in the *Yenan Talks*. Their minds liberated, they determined to go among the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers, into the heat of the struggle, to blaze a new trail in literature and art.

Two years later, early in the autumn of 1944, Comrade Chou En-lai who had just returned from Chiang Kai-shek's wartime capital Chung-king invited some of us literary and art workers in Yenan to the Yang-chialing assembly hall which had now been completed. He told us about the profound and nationwide influence of the publication of the *Yenan Talks* and how progressive writers and artists in Kuomintang-controlled areas and many Party sympathizers there supported the idea that literature and art should serve the workers, peasants and soldiers.”

□

POEMS

Guerrilla Fighting in Southern Kiangsi

Chen Yi

Towards dawn
Our men wake early;
Dew-drenched clothes and bedding even in summer are cold;
In the trees cicadas shrill;
Grass clings to our uniforms.

Towards noon
Bellies rumble with hunger;
Three months we have been cut off from supplies;
We can count the grains of rice left in our bags;
Our meal is a mess of herbs.

As the sun sinks in the west
We meet to plan our next action;
There is no news yet of the scout sent out this morning,
His return is overdue,
At once we pull out.

Marching at night is hard;
For ten days we press on through pouring rain;
Bivouacking in the open,
Sheltering below tall trees till dawn,
Dozing off only to wake again.

When the weather clears
We camp out under the moon;
The gentle breeze brings sleep,
The host of sombre pines seem serried clouds;
We dream of the enemy's movements.

No joking now!

We keep our voices low;

Beyond the forest lurk enemy scouts;

Last time coughing betrayed our position;

We must learn from our mistakes.

We are short of grain,

It is three months since we tasted meat.

In summer we feed on berries, in winter bamboo,

Chasing wild boars over the mountains,

Catching snakes till midnight.

The enemy combs the whole mountain,

Trees and grass are scorched and charred;

Never before was such slaughter,

But it only fires our people to resist.

We clamour to given battle again.

Our strategy

Is to angle for our fish:

When the enemy wants a battle we won't fight,

When he's off his guard we strike.

We've got him hooked.

Our trust is in the people

Their support we'll never forget.

They are our second parents,

We, their good sons in the fight,

Forging strength in the revolution.

We must study hard

For to fall behind would be bitter;

A good foundation laid today

Will bring victory in battles yet to come;

Then let us advance undaunted.

With no word of complaint

Each year we'll march steadily forward;

Traitors have let wolves overrun our land,

But our great army has crossed the Goidal Sand River,

The Iron Tree will burst into flower!

Friends Suffering in Jail

Kuo Mo-jo*

Friends in Misery, crowded together
in prison — for indeed are sub-rented
rooms in Shanghai prisons, where never
a single green tree may be seen, nor
the song of a single bird be heard; just
walls, and more walls, closing off
the winds of heaven, leaving to us
a little sky, seen
as from the bottom of a well,
to mock at us;

friends in their sadness and in
their confinement; shut in until
the restrictions of these places seem
the limits of the horizon; are not we
all becoming people
with a jail mentality?

For we live as though in a dense
fog, as though being poisoned continually
in the court of the money-god
his throne, heavy with gold,
stands over our heads
and we dumb, not daring to move;

ah, ah!

so are we dumb and not daring to move!

Let us be up and go to the front
with our soldiers! Stand with
our people!
friends!

to be sick of suffering is of small use
and many words
are useless also.

* Kuo Mo-jo was a poet, historian, political figure and fighter in the peace movement. He was Vice-Premier of the Government and President of Academia Sinica. His historical play, Chu Yuan, was produced in 1953 in China and the Soviet Union.

The Red Flag

AI Ching

Red fire,
Red blood,
Red the wild lilies.
Red the azalea blooms, a red flood,
Red the pomegranate in May.
Red is the sun at the birth of day.

But most beautiful of them all,
the red flags on forward march!

The red flag
Born behind prison walls, a thousand years old.
Fighting for Truth
Sickles shining like gold
Hammers shining like gold,
Proclaiming the laborer's glory
and the victory of united workers and peasantry.

In the dark and long night,
in stifling darkness a thunderbolt has struck—
“Proletarians of the world, unite!”
Then,
Following lightning flashes in the sky, many miles long,
The red flag ascends the stage of history.

The red flag is fire,
The fire of the revolt of the oppressed,
The fire of the anger of the exploited,
The fire of all suffering ones under the sky,
Now striving for freedom and liberation.

Dancing fire,
Galloping fire,
Blazing fire,
Fire that destroys the private property system

Symbolizing the ideal,
Signaling a faith,
A summoning battle cry,
An unconquerable drum call,
With it we stay victorious forever.

Its undying glory
Matches the red clouds at dawn;
Bullets may pierce it but
Can never knock it down.

Alert, responding quickly, and resourceful,
It stands ready to do battle,
Always prepared, always awake,
Even during moments of complete quiet.

A war mount shaking its mane,
It waits for the bugle call
To leap from the trench instantly
And dart toward the smoke-covered battlefield ahead.

The red flag flutters on forward march—
Forward, assault!
Sweep aside all obstacles;
Forward, assault!
Blast all the stubborn field defense;
Forward, assault!
Take all the strategic heights;
Forward, assault!
Occupy all the enemy's territory.

Red flags, thousands upon thousands,
Red waves in the sea,
Unfolding in front of us, always
Leading us
to dash toward communism
shouting victory cheers.

Reascending Chingkangshan

Mao Tse-tung

to the tune of *Shui Tiao Keh Tou*

May 1965

I have long aspired to reach for the clouds

And I again ascend Chingkangshan.

Coming from afar to view our old haunt,

I find new scenes replacing the old.

Everywhere orioles sing, swallows dart,

Streams babble

And the road mounts skyward.

Once Huangyangchieh is passed

No other perilous place calls for a glance.

Wind and thunder are stirring,

Flags and banners are flying

Wherever men live.

Thirty-eight years are fled

With a mere snap of the fingers.

We can clasp the moon in the Ninth Heaven

And seize turtles deep down in the Five seas :

We'll return amid triumphant song and laughter.

Nothing is hard in this world

If you dare to scale the heights.

To My Elders in Szechuan*

Chu Teh

We're resting our cavalry horses in the Taihang Mountains
Where early November snows have whitened the landscape.
Every night, wearing their summer uniforms,
Our men swoop down to attack the Japanese invaders.

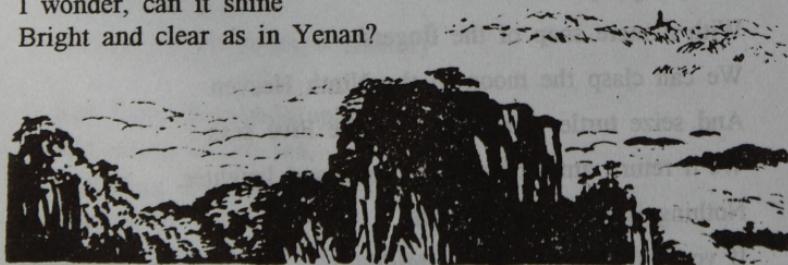
1939

Passing Laoshan**

Written for Comrades in Yenan

Tung Pi-wu

Pale yellow, deep green, patches of red;
The sunlit autumn hills appear.
Following the trail of departing wild geese,
Together we journey southwards.
As we make our departure, our eyes
Turn once more northwards.
Only a brief time we shall be gone,
Yet there is a sorrow in my heart
That words cannot express.
This night we shall see
The moon gleaming in Fuchow.***
I wonder, can it shine
Bright and clear as in Yenan?



* Szechuan was Comrade Chu Teh's home province.

** Laoshan is south of Yenan in Shensi. Comrade Tung Pi-wu passed by there on his way to Chungking in 1940.

*** Fuchow is an ancient town in central Shensi.

Thanks to the Great Cultural Revolution

Wang Hsin-min*

The rising sun crimsoned the dawn clouds,
Green willows and red banners dance in the wind.
An emerald sea stretches to the far horizon,
Rippling wheat fields flow on and on.

A red tractor weaves through a tapestry of green,
A blue water pump unleashes the tamed dragon,
Criss-crossing ditches cast a silvery net,
Like golden stars deep wells dot the fields.

Our girls work busily with their hoes,
Each a red flower on the green carpet,
Pretty as a picture is life in our commune,
Thanks to the Great Cultural Revolution.

Footprints

Ting Ming

On their way to the well
In the morning mist
Our villagers stop in surprise,
Empty buckets dangling
From their carrying-poles;
For the paddy fields
Yesterday so parched and dry
Are brimming with water today.
Last night there was no rain,
None of us came—
Whose doing is this?
A miracle, it seems!
But look! The rope over the well
Is sopping wet,



*** Wang Hsin-min is deputy leader of Team One.

The path between the fields
Is dotted with footprints.
A smile dawns on grandad's face.
"Well I know this of old," he says.
"Many years ago
When the Red Army passed this way
In pursuit of the enemy,
They watered our fields, cleaned our wells—
One night, unknown to us,
They camped near by;
When we woke next day
Red slogans met our eyes.
Last night the PLA
On field manoeuvres
Must have passed through our village
They are carrying on
The tradition of those days."

Our People's Commune Is Fine

Chou Ke-chou

New earth, new sky: this brave new world of ours
Has filled our commune members' hearts with pride
As singing revolutionary songs
Together to the threshing-field we stride.

Our people's commune is a splendid sight,
Tachai's red banner floating in the air;
Our fields and villages are filled with song,
Our countryside is fair beyond compare.

New earth, new sky: this brave new world of ours
Has filled our commune members with delight,
And striding to the singing contest now,
Brimming with energy, we're full of fight.

A competition this for the best song,
With hearts afire our commune members sing
Praise of the glorious Cultural Revolution
And this new spring which we are hastening!

Steadfast and Unflinching

Wang Wu-chen*

Stars twinkle,
The moon shines bright to signal out the heroes who show their
With fiery zeal,
With iron hands,
And the morning sun in our hearts,
We go into battle.

We brave wind and rain,
Ignore snow and ice,
However great the difficulty
We remain unbowed.

We're not afraid to sweat,
We're not afraid of freezing,
We're not afraid of being soaked in grease;
we shall aim high and go all out for socialism.

Acid, savage as a tiger, we shall conquer,
Then hasten on to capture the oil dragon,
We care not that our skin is flayed or flesh torn
So long as the oil comes gushing up.

Let the oil from a thousand meters underground
Add fuel again and again to our locomotive;
Raise high the red flag and follow the Party,
Steadfast and unflinching in the revolution.

* Wang Wu-chen is a model worker of Taching and honoured with the title of "steadfast fighter on the oil front."

Though I'm Old and Disabled

Hsiao San

Though I'm old and disabled,
My will remains young and strong,
The thoughts of Marx, Lenin, and Mao
Have given me strength and force.
After forty years I know where to go,
My heart at peace and carefree.
I've rushed the enemy camp before,
Where swords gleamed in the light of flames.
What's left of me will be applied
To making truth prevail all over.
My bullets are now my short verses,
And in combat I rely on my prose.
Maybe it's just a glowworm's glow,
Flickering feebly in space;
Maybe it's only drops of water
Dripping into the immense ocean.
Be it a high note or low,
All can join in a great chorus.
Having been born in this great era,
My red heart shall never wilt.
Say not that time defers to nobody;
The spirit of revolution persists!
Happy to be a beast of burden,
Willing to toil and die for children.
But I frown at the thousands of foes,
To extend the right and expel the wrong.
The load is heavy, and the road long,
I steel myself without stop or rest.
Though I'm old and disabled,
An old horse lying in stable
Still dreams of the open space....



Studying Marxism-Leninism

Chiang Lien-Ming

Stars twinkle,
The moon shines bright,
My big sister's studying Marxism under the light,
The breeze knocking at the door brings warmth of spring,
Tick-tock, the clock approves: Quite right, quite right.

Line after line,
Page after page,
Sis writes notes on what she's read.
The moon grows tired and, peeping through the window,
Urges her: Hurry up and go to bed!

Pulling a face
Sis sits tight,
Making the moon sink west in shame and fright.
My sister never tires of studying,
She's going to sit up working hard all night,

Small Fighters

Pang Lien-Yu and Wang Tieh-Liang

A small square blackboard underneath a tree
Is where we battle with the enemy.

We small red soldiers, full of fight,
With chalks as weapons strike with all our might.



Woodcuts in China's Old Liberated Areas

Hua Hsia

To celebrate the 35th anniversary of the publication of Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art*, a fine arts exhibition was recently held in Peking. The central hall displayed pre-Liberation works, mostly woodblock prints produced in the liberated areas, which daily drew huge crowds. Some veteran revolutionaries seeing these exhibits felt as if this was a reunion, after many years, with their close comrades-in-arms while young people seeing them for the first time were deeply stirred and thrilled. This was because these woodblocks were geared to the revolutionary struggles of that time, imbued with the artists' devotion to the workers, peasants and soldiers, and true to life.

A young friend asked me: "How come such splendid woodcuts were produced in the liberated areas?"

I told him that this had not been the case at first. Good woodcuts had only been made after the publication of Chairman Mao's *Yenan Talks*, when the artists set themselves to serving the workers, peasants and soldiers.

China's revolutionary artists were active throughout the long revolutionary war. In the '20s Red Army propagandists painted cartoons and posters on the walls showing peasants denouncing local tyrants and sharing out their land. Later on there appeared woodblock prints sometimes in serial form as well as mimeographed or lithographed pictures. After the outburst of the War of Resistance Against Japan, many intellectuals from Kuomintang-ruled or Japanese-occupied areas went to the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia revolutionary base and other liberated areas. Among them were some wood-engraving artists whom Lu Hsun had helped to train. Under their influence a contingent of wood-cutters was gradually built up in the liberated areas. At first, however, their woodcuts were not well received because the artists had not integrated themselves with the workers, peasants

Woodcuts in China's Old Liberated Areas

Hua Hsia

To celebrate the 35th anniversary of the publication of Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art*, a fine arts exhibition was recently held in Peking. The central hall displayed pre-Liberation works, mostly woodblock prints produced in the liberated areas, which daily drew huge crowds. Some veteran revolutionaries seeing these exhibits felt as if this was a reunion, after many years, with their close comrades-in-arms while young people seeing them for the first time were deeply stirred and thrilled. This was because these woodblocks were geared to the revolutionary struggles of that time, imbued with the artists' devotion to the workers, peasants and soldiers, and true to life.

A young friend asked me: "How come such splendid woodcuts were produced in the liberated areas?"

I told him that this had not been the case at first. Good woodcuts had only been made after the publication of Chairman Mao's *Yenan Talks*, when the artists set themselves to serving the workers, peasants and soldiers.

China's revolutionary artists were active throughout the long revolutionary war. In the '20s Red Army propagandists painted cartoons and posters on the walls showing peasants denouncing local tyrants and sharing out their land. Later on there appeared woodblock prints sometimes in serial form as well as mimeographed or lithographed pictures. After the outburst of the War of Resistance Against Japan, many intellectuals from Kuomintang-ruled or Japanese-occupied areas went to the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia revolutionary base and other liberated areas. Among them were some wood-engraving artists whom Lu Hsun had helped to train. Under their influence a contingent of wood-cutters was gradually built up in the liberated areas. At first, however, their woodcuts were not well received because the artists had not integrated themselves with the workers, peasants



Autumn Harvest in Nanniwan by Ku Yuan

and soldiers, their works were isolated from reality and the style remained somewhat foreign. In 1942, Chairman Mao delivered his famous *Yenan Talks* pointing out that serving the workers, peasants and soldiers should be the orientation of literature and art and that the basic problem is how to serve them. In line with Chairman Mao's teachings the artists in the liberated areas plunged into the fiery struggles of the workers, peasants and soldiers to acquaint themselves with the masses and their life and as a result their creative work was transformed.



New Judge Ma Hsi-wu Settles a Marriage Dispute by Ku Yuan

Following Chairman Mao's instructions the artist Ku Yuan went to the countryside of the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia border regions and worked as a secretary of a village government. After living there for a period he became one with the peasants and his outlook and feelings underwent a great change. His new grasp of village life and of different kinds of people enabled him to produce such outstanding woodcuts as *The Masses Fight to Reduce Rent* which shows angry peasants settling accounts with a landlord and *Autumn Harvest in Nanniwan* which reflects the great production drive in which the army and people of Yenan took part. The story of his *New Judge Ma Hsi-wu Settles a Marriage Dispute* is interesting. This woodcut, taking as its theme a new facet of the democratic life in the liberated areas, vividly shows how Ma Hsi-wu, commissioner of a prefecture, solved the dispute by relying on the masses. The story goes like this: A young couple fell in love and were engaged secretly, but the girl's father schemed to marry his daughter to a rich merchant. When the young man heard this news he carried the girl off one night and they got married. The old man went to the country government and accused the youngster of abducting his daughter. It appeared a hard case to solve. Commissioner Ma got to know of this lawsuit when he went to the countryside to make investigations. By means of relying on the masses and reasoning things out, he finally persuaded the muddle-headed father to agree to his daughter's marriage. On the other hand he pointed out that the accused had been wrong to take the girl away by force, and the young man accepted the criticism. Thus the case was satisfactorily settled.

Ku Yuan's coloured woodcut *The Bridge* shows a splendid episode from the Huai-Hai Campaign in 1948. To enable the south-bound army to cross the Huai River in hot pursuit of Chiang Kai-shek's fleeing troops, ten PLA fighters jumped into the icy water to serve a piers. They laid planks over their shoulders to make a bridge across which the other fighters dashed to rout the enemy.

Li Chun, Yen Han, Wang Shih-kuo and Li Shao-yen were also famous woodcut artists of the liberated areas. Li Chun's *Labour Hero Chao Chan-kuei* eulogizes a model worker. Yen Han's *Voting with Beans* and *Storming the Feudal Fortress* present a democratic election in the liberated areas and a fierce struggle during land reform. *No Grain Will Be Taken by the Enemy*, another of his graphic woodcuts, portrays people of the Yaihang Mountains using pitchforks and sickles to drive away Japanese invaders and traitors and seize back the carts of grain which they had looted. Wang Shih-kuo's *Remoulding a Loafer*, Li Shao-yen's *Under Reconstruction*, Lo Kung-liu's *A Dauntless Mother*, Hu Yi-chuan's *The Labour-Exchange*

Following Chairman Mao's instructions the artist Ku Yuan went to the countryside of the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia border regions and worked as a secretary of a village government. After living there for a period he became one with the peasants and his outlook and feelings underwent a great change. His new grasp of village life and of different kinds of people enabled him to produce such outstanding woodcuts as *The Masses Fight to Reduce Rent* which shows angry peasants settling accounts with a landlord and *Autumn Harvest in Nanniwan* which reflects the great production drive in which the army and people of Yenan took part. The story of his *New Judge Ma Hsi-wu Settles a Marriage Dispute* is interesting. This woodcut, taking as its theme a new facet of the democratic life in the liberated areas, vividly shows how Ma Hsi-wu, commissioner of a prefecture, solved the dispute by relying on the masses. The story goes like this: A young couple fell in love and were engaged secretly, but the girl's father schemed to marry his daughter to a rich merchant. When the young man heard this news he carried the girl off one night and they got married. The old man went to the country government and accused the youngster of abducting his daughter. It appeared a hard case to solve. Commissioner Ma got to know of this lawsuit when he went to the countryside to make investigations. By means of relying on the masses and reasoning things out, he finally persuaded the muddle-headed father to agree to his daughter's marriage. On the other hand he pointed out that the accused had been wrong to take the girl away by force, and the young man accepted the criticism. Thus the case was satisfactorily settled.

Ku Yuan's coloured woodcut *The Bridge* shows a splendid episode from the Huai-Hai Campaign in 1948. To enable the south-bound army to cross the Huai River in hot pursuit of Chiang Kai-shek's fleeing troops, ten PLA fighters jumped into the icy water to serve a piers. They laid planks over their shoulders to make a bridge across which the other fighters dashed to rout the enemy.

Li Chun, Yen Han, Wang Shih-kuo and Li Shao-yen were also famous woodcut artists of the liberated areas. Li Chun's *Labour Hero Chao Chan-kuei* eulogizes a model worker. Yen Han's *Voting with Beans* and *Storming the Feudal Fortress* present a democratic election in the liberated areas and a fierce struggle during land reform. *No Grain Will Be Taken by the Enemy*, another of his graphic woodcuts, portrays people of the Yaihang Mountains using pitchforks and sickles to drive away Japanese invaders and traitors and seize back the carts of grain which they had looted. Wang Shih-kuo's *Remoulding a Loafer*, Li Shao-yen's *Under Reconstruction*, Lo Kung-liu's *A Dauntless Mother*, Hu Yi-chuan's *The Labour-Exchange*

Team and Hsia Feng's *Target Practice* were other woodcuts popular at that time. Chang Wang, Shen Jou-chien, Chi Tan and Niu Wen produced good woodcuts too.

All the woodcuts on display showed that after studying Chairman Mao's brilliant *Yenan Talks* woodcut artists in the liberated areas deliberately chose themes from the life and struggle of the workers, peasants and soldiers. They generalized these themes and refined them to produce work on a higher plane and more typical than actual everyday life so as to achieve the unity of content and form. At the same time they assimilated good features of folk art and freed themselves from foreign influences, giving their woodcuts a distinctively Chinese flavour which made them loved by the broad masses.

It was not easy to produce woodcuts in war time conditions. Because of the enemy blockade of the revolutionary base areas, even a sheet of paper or a pencil were hard to come by and they had to make their own engraving tools and other materials, sometimes with the help of a blacksmith. At times they had to carry the blocks with them on the march. It was under these very difficult conditions that so many fine woodcuts were produced. They opened a new page in the history of China's fine arts and played an important role in the liberated areas "for uniting and



Voting with Beans by Yen Han

After Mao's instruction the artist Ke Yuan went to educating the people and for attacking and destroying the enemy". In addition their influence extended to the enemy-occupied areas. For with the help of the armed working teams some artists distributed their works behind the enemy lines, some even pasting block-printed posters on the walls of enemy blockhouses, thus educating the people there and boosting their morale.

Because wood-engraving in the liberated areas was the earliest art form to embody the spirit of Chairman Mao's *Yenan Talks*, it has been respected by Chinese artists as the forerunner of new China's fine arts. The experience of thirty-five years since the publication of Chairman Mao's *Yenan Talks* has proved that only by going among the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers and going into the heat of the struggle as did the woodcut artists in the liberated areas, can we produce works of art serving the workers, peasants and soldiers which will be welcomed by them. □



THE MAKING OF A FILM

About the Film

"The White-Haired Girl"

Sang Hu (Director)

The legend of the White-Haired Girl was widely known in the Hopei countryside during the War of Resistance Against Japan. The story is as follows: In a village in north China live a poor tenant peasant Yang Pai-lao and his daughter Hsi-erh. Just as they are preparing to celebrate the New Year, the despotic landlord Huang Shih-jen comes to demand payment of a debt and seizes the daughter by force. Her sweetheart Wang Ta-chun, a poor peasant living in the same village, flees with hatred in his heart to join the Eighth Route Army led by the Communist Party. Later Hsi-erh runs away from the landlord's house and hides herself in a dark cave in the mountains. Years of hunger and cold, of exposure to wind and rain, turn her hair white. When the Eighth Route Army liberates this village, Wang Ta-chun and some others discover Hsi-erh in the cave. Then, together with the masses, they punish the landlord.

The past stage versions of the White-Haired Girl depict the cruel exploitation and oppression of the peasants at the hands of the feudal landlord class, but contain serious defects, the main one being an inadequate portrayal of the rebellious spirit of the poor and lower-middle peasants. For example, after the landlord forces Yang Pai-lao to put his finger-print on a deed of sale of his daughter in lieu of paying his debt, Yang returns home and kills himself in despair. This makes the old peasant appear weak and helpless vis-a-vis the landlord. Another defect is the prominence given to the love between Hsi-erh and Wang Ta-chun. After the liberation of the village by the Eighth Route Army and punishment of the wicked landlord, the lovers are happily re-united and there the story

ends, giving the audience the impression that the revolution has reached a successful conclusion.

Although the revolutionary modern ballet *The White-Haired Girl* is based on the same story, both the central theme and the characterization are handled in a totally different fashion. This ballet underscores the unyielding opposition of the poor and lower-middle peasants to the landlord class. Yang Pai-lao is no longer a timid old peasant but a rebel who defies Huang Shih-jen and raises his pole to strike him when the traitor landlord tries to drag Hsi-erh away. Again through her resistance to the landlord when he insults her, Hsi-erh is shown as a spirited girl full of grit and determination, with nothing servile in her make-up. The creation of heroic characters such as Hsi-erh, Wang Ta-chun and Yang Pai-lao in this ballet truthfully reflects the revolt of millions of poor peasants against the landlord class in old China. And here emphasis is placed not on the love between Hsi-erh and Wang Ta-chun, but on their deep comradely class feeling. When young Wang joins the Eighth Route Army, he is not thinking of avenging Hsi-erh alone, but of liberating thousands and tens of thousands of women from Hsi-erh's fate. The conclusion of the ballet is also new. Although the village landlord has been overthrown, imperialism still exists, Chiang Kai-shek's reactionary gang still exists, the whole country is not yet liberated. A hard struggle still lies ahead. Faithful to the historical truth, this ballet makes Hsi-erh take up arms and join the Eighth Route Army, vowing to carry the revolution through to the end under the leadership of Chairman Mao and the Communist Party. This exemplifies Chairman Mao's glorious Marxist concept of continuous revolution. The whole ballet lays stress on the central theme, on class struggle, armed struggle and Party leadership.

Following Chairman Mao's instructions to make the past serve the present and foreign things serve China, *The White-Haired Girl* Group of the Shanghai School of Dancing has persisted in meeting the requirements of the revolutionary content the characters of the ballet and the demands of the worker-peasant-soldier masses by introducing bold innovations in the western ballet form. While preserving the characteristic dance movements of the traditional ballet, they have incorporated, classical Chinese dancing, folk dancing, Chinese boxing and the acrobatics of Chinese opera to make the dance movements more vigorous and spirited and adapt this art form to express revolutionary content. They have also broken with the western convention by incorporating singing; for the combination of singing and dancing has always been a special feature of the Chinese theatre. The songs in the ballet *The White-Haired Girl*, which effectively convey the thoughts and feelings of the characters and heighten the drama, are widely popular.

After years of practice, the drama groups producing the revolutionary model operas have summed up their experience in creating heroic characters of the working class. They have formulated the principle of "triple emphasis". This means putting the chief emphasis on the positive characters, putting the chief emphasis on the heroic characters among the positive characters, and putting the chief emphasis on the main hero or heroine among the heroic characters. In making this colour film *The White-Haired Girl*, we have also gone by this principle and have on the whole succeeded in conveying the atmosphere of the original ballet, transferring to the screen the revolutionary feelings of the heroic characters and other strong points of the original. What is more, by making use of cinematographic techniques, we have in some respects improved on the images of the revolutionary heroes, overcoming the restrictions imposed by a stage performance.

In past film making the director's word was law. All decisions were up to him. But during the cultural revolution we debunked this lack of democratic discussion and adopted the system of democratic centralism. We explained beforehand to the actors and cameramen what we were aiming at in the way of directing, filming and stage effects, so that they could discuss these problems. We consulted them too at every stage, sometimes making alternations or additions on the base of their suggestions. The film director must listen to, analyse and study ideas from all sides. He must know how to sum up these ideas and have the courage to do this. Carrying out this mass line raised the quality of our film *The White-Haired Girl*. In addition, we received valuable assistance from all sides which enabled us to overcome the difficulties encountered regarding art, technique and equipment while making this film.



Our Red Salute to Comrade Belli Lalitha

The gruesome murder of Belli Lalitha, a popular singer and a leader of Telangana Kala Samithi, on May 26, 1999, is a part of the covert war unleashed by the hi-tech police state of AP headed by the World Bank stooge Chandrababu Naidu against the revolutionaries and their sympathisers. Earlier, murders of some leaders and activists of the PW were organised by sending infiltrators into the squads here and there. Some of the leaders of open mass movements were attacked by hired assassins as seen in the case of the attack on Com. Gaddar two years ago. Today, the police is luring its assassins even from those inside the jails.

The modus operandi is simple : select a weak element from among the imprisoned revolutionaries and lure him with the promise of freedom if he agree to do as dictated by the police. In the case of Lalitha, the agent selected for conducting the operation was one Nayeemuddin who was involved in the annihilation of a police officer six year ago. To buy his freedom he was asked to organise the murder of a top leader of Nalgonda district of the CPI (ML) [People's War] through his brothers outside. These two brothers were already notorious for killing two people in the past one year : one was Eedanna, husband of an ex-PW squad member Hussain Bee and the other was one Balraj. In both cases the bodies were cut into pieces after the murder to create terror among the sympathisers of the revolutionaries as well as mass leaders. Comrade Lalitha is the third victim in a row in a single year committed by the very same mercenary gang employed by the Home Minister Madhava Reddy.

In all the three incidents that took place, the victims belonged to Bhongir in Nalgonda district of South Telangana which falls in the



Com. Belli Lalitha

constituency of the Home Minister. It has now come to be accepted by the people of Nalgonda as well as by those of the entire state that these murders were committed at the direction of the Home Minister as part of his covert war against the CPI (ML) [People's War].

The latest murder had sent shock waves among the democratic and progressive sections of the people in the state. The sheer brutality of the incident is horrifying and indicates the depths of sadism and the bestiality of the rulers hiding behind hi-tech jargon. Comrade Lalitha was first kidnapped on May 26, her body was cut into 17 pieces and strewn into different wells. From day one, the police top brass and ruling TDP ministers tried by all means at their disposal to mislead the people by floating one story after another : initially, they denied that the body parts found in the wells were Lalitha's; they then floated another story that she might have gone to areas of armed struggle led by the PW; what was even worse they fabricated a story that she had run away from home, furstrated and shocked, by the betrayal of a district leader of PW; and so on and so forth. They even forged a letter purported to have been written by her to the newspapers which stated that the leader of PW who is a district committee member of Nalgonda, had physical relations with her and promised to marry her but had ultimately gone bad on his word, charging her with having AIDS and that hence she had run away unable to bear the stigma.

What is most disturbing and horrifying is the audacity with which the rulers in AP floated such a story to malign a woman, that too after she was dead. True to their male-chauvinist nature, the police officials and the Home Minister thought that by projecting a woman as having illicit relations with other men, the murderers could gain legitimacy for the murder and be exonerated from the crime. One is astonished by the crudeness of the hi-tech rulers who forged a letter in the name of Lalitha after they themselves had killed her in order to malign her and the leaders of PW. When an enterprising news reporter compared the hand writing in the letter with another of hers and declared that it was a case of forgery, the police too had to admit at last that she was murdered. As protests began to gather momentum and demands for the resignation of the Home minister and for a Judicial enquiry into the incident were put forth, the police had to beat a hasty retreat and arrest the two brothers of Nayeemuddin since their role in the murder had become crystal-clear by then. The arrests were meant only to appease the people. Earlier these murderers were let off within days after killing Eedanna and Balraj. The AP government has a notorious record of encouraging the killing of revolutionaries and holding press conferences along with those very killers and even giving cash rewards and jobs in the police department.

Why was Lalitha murdered so gruesomely in the first place ? To understand this, one has to understand the political situation in the state of AP. The government of Chandrababu Naidu is in deep crisis. It has been implementing every instruction of the World Bank and the various imperialist countries most loyally. In his four year tenure as a Chief minister of AP, Naidu fulfilled most of the targets placed before him by the imperialists and received a big pat on his back for measures such as: lifting of prohibition, increasing the water cess and power tariff for the peasants; scrapping or slashing of subsidies such as the Rs. 2-a-kilo-rice scheme etc. The wrath of the people has been rising in the past four years against these policies of the state government. It is during Chandrababu Naidu's regime that over 300 peasants committed suicides due to low crop yields and unremunerative prices for their produce. The working class too is seething with unrest due to the closure of some PSUs under the control of the AP state government and the threatened closure or privatisation of several other industries. And, most important of all, the "law and order" demanded by the World Bank was sought to be established by murdering around 300 people associated with the revolutionary movement in just one year; 1998.

Besides, with the influence of the revolutionary movement that has been raging for the last two decades and more, several sectional movements have come to the fore. Despite the re-imposition of a ban on the PW and its mass organisations in July 96, people are coming into the streets under different banners in a big way and are also forming broad joint action committees against the anti-people policies pursued by the TDP government. A movement for separate Telangana has come onto the people's agenda. And with it the government too took up its own agenda of crushing all opposition. A student workshop organised by the Telangana Students Front (TSF) was attacked by ABVP-RSS goondas along with the police in civil uniform. Massive repression has also been let loose on those demanding a separate Telangana.

Lalitha became a target as she became a popular mass leader in the Home minister's constituency. As a co-convenor of the Telangana Kala Samithi, an organisation that is affiliated to the Telangana Jana Sabha which is spear-heading the movement for a separate Telangana, she had become an eyesore for the rulers especially for the Home minister. She was also a leader of 'Dol Debba'—an association of Yadavas. She was actively involved in organising the workers in a textile mill in which she herself worked. She propagated the demand of separate Telangana through her cultural performances and acquired popularity among the masses through out South Telangana. It is this growing popularity of Lalitha that earned the wrath of the rulers. Elimination of leaders was an essential

component of their strategy to suppress the movement.

As police arrests would lead to massive protests from the people and place the government in an adverse situation, it chose to engage such assassins to murder the leaders and activists of the mass movement. Assaults by murderous gangs, the ruling classes assumes, will create terror among the leaders and thereby weaken the movements. By committing such a ghastly murder as that of Lalitha, the state aims at keeping the intellectuals and others away from the movement. Anyone associated in any manner with PW or engaged in militant movements against the government would be eliminated — such is the message the government wants to send to those who are engaged in building mass movements.

For, has not Naidu assured the World Bank of maintaining Law and Order in AP so that imperialist capital may flow freely into the state. Starting from the secret document entitled 'Andhra Pradesh : Agenda for Economic Reforms' prepared by the World Bank in September 96 (incidentally coming within 2 months after the re-imposition of the ban on PW) to Vision-2020, the AP government has been goaded on continuously by the World Bank to ensure peace and stability even if it be the peace of the grave-yard. While huge police and para military forces are engaged in the operations against the CPI (ML)[PW] and its armed squads, the Naidu government is not sure of achieving stability and peace. Those who question the privatisation, liberalisation and other policies of the government, and those who aspire for people's political power should be eliminated. By murdering Lalitha, that too in the most bizarre manner the government wants to create terror and silence all such leaders.

The AP state government is maintaining private armed gangs for this purpose such as the Black Tigers, the Green Tigers, the Kranti Sena and so on. All these outfits created by the police often issue press statements threatening those who associate themselves with the revolutionaries, destroy the houses and property of the activists involved in the movement and conduct attacks as directed by the police. These gangs move with license to loot and kill at will; they are given arms and rewards whenever they eliminate important cadres of the PW.

Lalitha's murder, instead of creating terror among those who oppose the imperialist-dictated polices and moves of the TDP government, has infact, further united the various scattered forces galvanizing them into a mighty force. Thousands converged at a rally in Bhongir to protest against the killing. The wave of protests that have been sparked off due to the brutal murder of Belli Lalitha are bound to assume the form of a torrent to wash away the sadist, fascist government of Naidu's TDP that is acting as a stooge of the World Bank in AP.

Fight Back Hindutwa Culture !

*Call to People by the 7th Conference of
AILRC, April 22, 23 Calcutta*

The 7th conference of the All India League for Revolutionary Culture (AILRC) was held in Calcutta on April 22nd and 23rd in Com. Arun Sanyamat Hall. The two-day conference focused on the need to build an alternative people's cultural movement against the fascist culture of the Sangh Parivar, particularly after the demolition of the Babri Masjid and since the BJP's coming to power at Delhi. The BJP, after coming to power, at its National Executive in Ahmedabad, declared its intention of implementing an agenda for National Culture. This, of course, is nothing but Hindutwa culture. That's why the keynote paper presented by AILRC was a call to people to resist the Hindu fascist culture which is promoted in the name of a national agenda for culture.

All the constituent units of the AILRC, from Kerala to Delhi and Punjab to Assam (except Jana Kala Mandali, Karnataka), attended the conference, in teams and with their cultural troupes. The conference was inaugurated by Com. Paresh Dhar a veteran singer and composer, who represents the 60-year-old people's cultural tradition, from the days of IPTA and the Progressive Writers' movement, upto Naxalbari and the current Andhra, Dandakaranya, Bihar people's cultural Struggles. A 90-year-old Freedom Fighter, Sachidanand Tiwari, from UP also participated in the conference and paid homage to the martyrs taking pledge to continue the struggle till the NDR is achieved.

There were messages from fraternal delegates. Significant among them was that from the Nepal's People's Cultural movement, delivered by Comrade Shakti Lamsal.

All the constituent units paid homage at the martyrs column and the immortal song of Panigrahi, 'Kashta Jeevulam Memu Communistulam' (We are toilers, we are communists) was sung in collective chorus in all Indian languages.

After the secretary Varvara Rao's report on the activities of AILRC

since the Chennai conference (August, 96), Com. Sherif (VIRASAM) presented the keynote paper on behalf of AILRC.

Comrade Suman Chatterjee, the well-known people's singer and composer from Bengal, presented some of his songs and emphasised the urgent need to fight back the imperialist cultural onslaught.

In the afternoon session on 22nd April Com. P.K. Venugopalan of Jana Keeyaa Kala Sahitya Vedi, Kerala, presented a paper on the imperialist connivance in promoting Hinduthva culture in the name of national culture; tracing the colonial rulers' ties with the feudal system right since the 1857 independence war.

Com. Suman Chatterjee presented a paper on the culture industry, saying that the exploitative culture of the ruling class is trying to vulgarly grow into a monopoly industry crushing the heterogeneous cultures of different nationalities, ethnic groups and democratic forces. He emphasised that the cultural workers should take up cudgels against this industry just as the political activists take up direct action against imperialism.

On 23rd morning there was a long session about representatives of the people's culture from around the world, since the 1930s. Com. K.A. Mohan Das presented a paper on Bertolt Brecht; Com. Chalasani Prasad on Lorca; Com. Khagen Das on Nazrul Islam and Com. Raj Kishore on Prernchand. Com. Kanchan Kumar's paper on Paul Robson, though ready could not be presented because of the time factor.

In the inaugural session itself Com. Gaddar released the cassette of Com. Vilas Ghogre's songs in his voice brought out by the AILRC with the help of Aavhaan Natya Manch, Bombay. Com. Gaddar spoke about Com. Vilas Ghogre's contribution to revolutionary people's culture and to the ANM and AILRC.

Com. K.A. Mohan Das released the English collection of Com. KVR on 'Modern Trends in Telugu Literature' and paid tributes to him for the services as the founder general secretary of VIRASAM and AILRC. He said that Com. KVR will be remembered in the people's literary movement as one who continued the tradition of Prernchand and Sajjad Zahir in uniting the anti-fascist democrats with the revolutionary forces.

Com. I.V. Sambasiva Rao's writings in Telugu and memoirs on him in Telugu, were released by Com. Gaddar. As a founder member of VIRASAM, the architect of AILRC, his role was recalled and he was described as one who laid down his life for the NDR in the noblest tradition of Subbarao Panigrahi, who has taken the gun also with the pen to realise the cherished dream of New Democratic Revolution.

The Hindi translation of 'Rago' by Com. Sadhana was released by Com. Megharaj. Rago is a novel about a tribal woman revolutionary in Dandakaranya which has become a milestone in Telugu literature. Com.

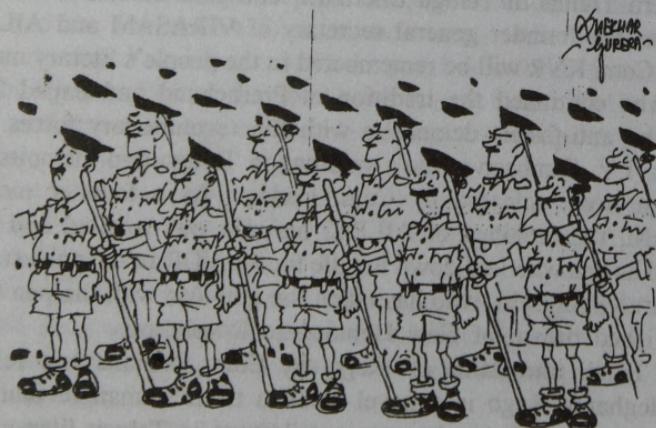
Robert Fertado realised the Hindi translation of J.N.'s street plays, *Abhi Raat Baki Hai*. J.N.'s an executive member of VIRASAM and his street plays in Telugu on every exploitative aspect of imperialism are very popular. With this Hindi translation it will go all over India.

Com. Sundar's Santhali poetry collection was released by Com. Susheela, an activist of Mahila Sangharsha Morcha, Bihar. 'Lal Kiran' the literary organ of KBS and KSS, Bihar also was released on this occasion.

During the two day conference there were inspiring cultural programmes in between the deliberations and discussions and in the evening and night of 22nd April.

A long rally was conducted from Binani Bhavan to Esplanade — an eight kilometre route. Slogans, songs and cultural performances rent the air, which culminated in a public meeting at Com. KVR Nagar, in the Shahid Minar Maidan. Com. Gaddar, the newly-elected General Secretary of AILRC, presided over the public meeting. Comrades Varavara Rao, Raj Kishore, Karthivaran, Janardhan Thapa and Khagen Das spoke in the public meeting stressing on the need for a broad-based united cultural movement against the imperialist onslaught on people's culture with the active collaboration of Hindutwa culture propagated by the Sangh Parivar.

The cultural performances by all the units of the AILRC, particularly from Assam, Nepal, Bengal, Jharkhand, Pala from Tamil Nadu; the ANM, Bombay; the Jan Sangharsh Manch, Chattisgarh, the Krantikari Sabhyachar Kendra, Punjab, Vikalp, Delhi; and of course JNM, AP; were all very inspiring.



AILRC Resolutions

The General body of All India League For Revolutionary Culture met at Comrade Arun Sanyam Hall Binani Bhavan, Calcutta on 22nd & 23rd of April on the occasion of its 7th conference and passed the following resolutions.

1) AILRC Condemns the brutal repression unleashed by both state and Central Govt. on the peasant struggles of Andhra, Bihar and Dandakaranya. As a consequences of the implementation of New Economic Policy by the central and state governments, people of different sections, except the comparator classes, are undergoing untold miseries. As the people started organising under the leadership of Revolutionaries, especially in Andhra, Bihar and Dandakaranya, both of State and Central governments has started unleashing inhuman terror on the fighting massess for implementation of World Bank and IMF policies.

2) In Bihar, the law of jungle, is prevailing. The previous feudal senas like Lorik Sena, Brahmarshi Sena failed to contain the rapid growth of peasant struggle for land to the tiller and power to the people. Now, the state sponsored feudal lords' 'Ranvir Sena' with the connivance and coordination of the state and central governments is massacaring the poor peasants, who started questioning their hegemony. The ghastly killings of Women, Children and the old aged in Laxmanpur Bathe and Narayanpur in Gaya district by Ranvir Sena reveal that BJP Combine, RJD and the Congress parties are hand-in-glove with the Ranvir Sena in terrorising poor peasantry, AILRC condemns the state sponsored Ranvir Sena's killings, it is also sure that the upsurge and marching forward of Revolutionary movement in Bihar would wipe out Ranvir Sena in near future.

3) The Kerala govt., under the leadership of the so called left, is permitting the establishment of self-financed colleges. This policy deprives the poor and even the middle classes of their right for higher and technical education. AILRC severely condemns this anti-people policy.

4) The sudden death of com. Charu Majumdar, the so called missing of com. Saroj Dutta, of West Bengal, and the murder of Appu, Balan, Pachiappa and Kannan in Tamil Nadu in 70's are nothing but unlawful killings of the police of those states. AILRC demands a thorough enquiry into the deaths of those comrades and punishment of the guilty officers.

5) AILRC condemns the attack of Nato, under the leadership of the 'world gendarme', U.S.A. on the people of Yugoslavia. It demands the immediate stoppage of the bombing by Nato. It also supports the just struggle of Albanian people.

6) AILRC condemns the state repression on cultural team including 3 women in Bihar. It demands the immediate release of all those cultural activists, who were arrested on 12th Feb. '99 at Birni thane of Giridih District.

7) AILRC condemns the genocide committed by the Govt. of Nepal, under the leadership of Girija Koirala. In this genocide almost 700 people were killed within the last three years. The Govt. of Nepal did not spare even progressive artists including Masta Bahadur Bisthy, Chayangba Lama, Nirmala Devkota. AILRC demands all the political prisoners and artists, Journalists, authors and poets including Ganga shrestha, Prof. Suresh Abey Magar should be released immediately.

8) The West Bengal Govt., not satisfied with its inhuman terror on the struggle of the masses, started even censoring the activities of cultural activists. It banned the cultural programme of Nepali Jan Sanskrit Manch. The police implicated 16 artists in false cases. AILRC demands the immediate release of those artists. It also condemns the police on slaughter on the cultural programmes of the progressive artists.

9) The Sangh Parivar, emboldened by the presence of BJP Govt. in the centre started unleashing terror on the Christian minorities. They burnt churches, houses and even killed missionaries in M.P., Gujarat and Orissa. The central govt. and the leaders of BJP combine shamelessly gave a clean chit, even before the judicial enquiry started functioning. AILRC condemns the Sangh Parivar's attacks on Christian minorities and demands stringent punishment of guilty.



Culture Industry

Suman Chatterjee

*"King Midas has turned everything he touched into gold :
capitalism turned everything into commodity".*

-Ernst Fischer (The Necessity of Art)

I wonder who it was : the first human to think up a single line of melody which she or he sang out, may be to someone else, may be in utter solitude. And when was it ? How many millenia ago ? And where ? Was it somewhere in Africa, our common, old ancestral home ? So many unanswerable questions. But one thing is almost certain : the first human to sing a song of some sort could not have foreseen that someone would speculate about that in the year 1999, the last year of a century that has seen the rise of Culture Industry.

It is interesting to note that the same species that can create a plethora of memorable melodies that touch the human soul, can also produce a system which technically reproduces and markets those same melodies with the sole intention of making profit. It is even more curious to observe that as this particular system gets stronger through capital generation and accumulation, the profit-making enterprise tends to outweigh the aesthetic demands of the human soul. A time comes when we get to hear or see or read only what has appeared or remained in the market by virtue of being a commodity that is either an established or, at least a potential seller. In other words, the various expressions of human culture, in order to gain currency, must graduate at different levels of the Culture Industry which, for sheer survival in a capitalist society, puts its trust ONLY in the 'exchange value' of any cultural expression or form.

The French philosopher Desecrates is remembered even by those not enamoured by philosophy for his statement : "I think, therefore I AM." The peddler in any society could only claim : I SELL, therefore I AM. It's a fact of life that in capitalism even the most inspired artist is reduced to the state of any common peddler if she or he has to live by her or his art. The professional artist is a producer as well as a seller of artistic creations: paintings, songs, musical composition, novels, poems, plays and

films. If the artist has to survive, her work must sell, or, in other words, it must acquire an 'exchange value'. Capitalist mode of production and marketing has no need for the 'use value' of, say, a song, even if some people would swear by it, if it doesn't sell to the many. Many and most are the magic words. Culture Industry survives on the clientele of the many and not of the few. But artistic creation and expression does not always depend on the multitude. Mankind has known artistic expressions which only a relatively small number of people have registered and enjoyed.

For the Culture Industry, however, the bigger the number of NOT people BUT consumers, the better. This is yet another interesting feature of capitalism : it is prepared to take an individual seriously ONLY when she or he CONSUMES, i.e. buys the products of capitalism. It's the same way that bourgeois democracy thinks : an individual gains acceptance to the system ONLY as a voter who is willing to perpetuate a meaningless system by casting a vote. The candidate stoops even to the unknown man-on-the-street and woos him almost to the point of being physically vulgar ONLY to ensure a vote. Should this particular voter ever approach the candidate after the candidate's victory, it is doubtful if the candidate would recognize the voter again. So much for the human side of a system that proudly proclaims : government for the people and by the people.

Capitalism and its Culture Industry hold their "voters" or consumers in the same esteem. The consumer is important only as long as they buy the product of the Culture Industry. Similarly, what this industry produces and markets is important to the owners of the industry and to the system as a whole as long as it sells in considerable numbers.

For the Culture Industry and its consumers, what matters is ENTERTAINMENT that readily sells. Cultural entertainment can also be of serious nature. A film like Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali* or Ustad Amir Khan's rendition of the raga Marwa are entertaining too. But that's serious entertainment that presupposes developed taste. It also calls for serious involvement on the part of the person who wants to be entertained. Alfred Hitchcock's thrillers demand attention. You cannot casually enter the movie theatre with a packet of popcorn and sit through Hitchcock's 'Rear Window' or 'Psycho', munching away absent-mindedly. Serious entertainment is demanding.. It assumes that the audience or the readers are ADULTS who are naturally endowed with the capacity to think and who are not mentally retarded, but people whose minds are growing. The moment one assumes that the audience consists of people who are conscious and thinking individuals, one must also consider the possibility that these individuals might also QUESTION what they are being given as entertainment. People who question are a threat to all who want to take them for an easy ride. They are a threat to the ruling classes as well,

since questions could shift from entertainment to politics. Frankly, questions regarding entertainment are basically political questions which are aimed at the people or institutions that own and control various branches of the entertainment industry.

People who own the Culture Industry, like the people who run the governments of most, if not all countries of the world, look for mindless consumers who are ready to accept even the most painfully ridiculous trash as long as it glitters. Lack of critical faculty is what any authoritarian system would love to see, promote and perpetuate among the ruled. Rampant vulgarity and endlessly repetitive patterns of stupidity constitute the broth that the owners and the agents of Culture Industry cook and serve in order to keep the existing order of things intact.

What is interesting is the extent to which mindlessness, in the shape of so-called "popular" entertainment, can cut across class barriers in any given society. In a country like India where not the wealth but the poverty of the masses has to be shared by all, should our day-to-day existence look more-or-less human, astronomical amounts of financial capital are invested every year in the film industry that routinely produces an endless series of cliches, plots that have essentially remained unchanged over the last five or six decades, an ever-increasing menu of mindless violence, vulgarized idiotic romances, strongly misogynist display of the female body and other forms of regressive taste. Any normal individual should be baffled by the crying contradiction that a people whose mythologies extol and idolize the virtuous characters of Sita and Savitri, should derive entertainment out of rape and other forms of sexist portrayals of man-woman relationship in most of the popular Indian movies. One might even get frustrated to the point of losing faith in humanity when one considers the amount and extent of mindless vulgarity, barbaric cruelty and ceaseless acts of stupidity that millions of subcontinental have uncritically, consumed over the past decades.

It is questionable how far the minds of a people, fed on the hideous products of the subcontinental film and culture industry for such a long time, could function normally. It is arguable NOT TO WHETHER BUT TO WHAT EXTENT the minds of the countless consumers of the culture industry have been *pathologically affected*. Any conscious individual, convinced of the necessity of radical change in our society and in the whole world for that matter, should do well to seriously consider the extent of damage that the Culture Industry has been doing to the minds of the masses who have to be mobilized to change the existing system.

Just as, most of the aspects of the existing social, political and economic order cannot be adequately addressed, and removed through political means alone, but through military options as well, the Culture

Industry on the Indian Subcontinent has to be violently attacked and neutralized. The option of violence should be justified in this case since the Culture Industry has been waging its war, supported with massive financial capital and a carefully woven network of rich distributors and producers whose close links with the criminal underworld have long been established. The capitalists and the Culture Mafia have been waging their own imperialistic war on the minds of the masses who are, rendered defenceless in an age in which public entertainment must necessarily be industrially, i.e. mechanically and electronically processed for large-scale consumption. Film is a highly developed industrial medium. Small-scale dissemination or highly localized viewership cannot justify its making any more, unless it is funded entirely by the state. Where the state itself is intent on keeping its people eternally class-divided and throwing the minds of 'the masses into carefully planned dungeons of uncritical acceptance of whatever decorated filth is hurled into their faces and even extracting a price for this insult, since most of the products of the popular entertainment industry is nothing but an insult to basic human sanity and dignity, the state cannot be expected to sponsor any form of art and culture that would treat the common people as intelligent individuals, capable of shaping their own lives and the structure of the society they live in and toil for. Any revolutionary view of human culture has to consider these points seriously and take necessary steps to combat the Culture Industry in the Subcontinent. It would be futile to blame Western Culture Industrialists *alone* for the endless vulgarization of the public mind that is being brought about by the Indian capitalists. It would be unreasonable to blame the Columbia Pictures or Universal Pictures *alone* for the typically Indian atrocities and inanities which only Indian or Bangladeshi producers and directors can generate. A radical critique of popular culture and the capitalist modes of its production should be able to locate the sources of evil everywhere, and not in any particular part of the world selectively, and look for the points at which the ruthless profit motives of capitalists of all countries join hands and colonize the minds of the people of this unhappy planet in the name of popular entertainment and culture. The point is to decolonize the minds of the people of the entire world through cultural actions that take a critical view of the human existence, cultural, creations that respect the audience, viewers and readers as adults capable of shaping their own lives and the course of events that take place in the society and in the world they live in, through resistance to the entertainment industry which is funded by financial capital and, if necessary, through violent attempts at destroying a system that has long been but to destroy the minds of the people.



The Rebel Poet Nazrul

Khagen Das

In this centenary year of Nazrul we must offer our tributes to the rebel poet through discussion of his literature, particularly his poems and songs.

Nazrul created his literature in the period of anti-British movement which facilitated him to compose rebellious poems, indeed he was rebellious against political slavery, social conservativeness, bigotry, communalism, poverty and inequality. And the poet was uncompromising against all these evils which were deterrent to human progress of India. He not only fought with pen, but actively participated in progressive, secular, national and fighting organisation and struggles. The struggle which he reflected in literature was not imaginary or theoretical. It was created from Nazrul's actual experience, and for that reason his realistic poetics and songs had been capable to rouse unprecedented stir for a pretty long time in the political and social life of Bengal.

His literature is not isolated from his life, for this reason also Nazrul's role to introduce different tastes in contemporary poetics is especially effective. In the language of Buddhadev Bose, Rabindranath's ascendancy in poems is so much all-devouring that to overcome his amazing fascination Bangladesh had to pass two-three decades. This in-between period is the period of Satyendra group, they resisted Rabindranath's first and tremendous thrust, so to say, helped the posterity to resist..... until Nazrul Islam appeared in the scene with fanfare of flying the flag of poems of "revolt". That was the first occasion when Rabindranath's irresistible power of the sensory world broke down. (English translation mine).

Really, Kazi Nazrul made a rupture with the old tradition.

The first World War brought about a change in the prevailing concept of value, ideas and thinking, the post-Rabindra epoch in Bengali poetry also commenced.

Again in the language of Buddhadev Bose, Nazrul gained his characteristics in concrete distinction of the background of his life. Though Muslim, he made Hindumindset as his own—not by continuance, but

naturally since his environment was different, and a little wild type, and since that environment not only did not oppress him, on the contrary made his natural instincts stronger, for that reason, without taking any literary preparation he was able to escape from the grip of Rabindranath only on the force of his own nature.... At least he proved that the other path except the path of Rabindranath was possible in Bengali poetry.

Najrul played more active role in the first World War than any other poet of this land, but the far-reaching change in the subjective field of the world brought about by the First World War was not imbibed theoretically by Najrul. As a result of the First World War the reaction manifested in Rabindranath and the revolution in English literature has touched Najrul in different way. Najrul is also production of this epoch, he has fulfilled the demands of this epoch and he has created new era and new concept of value, and that concept of value is creation of contemporary social reality. From that Najrul can be called the first Social Democratic poet of Bengal.

There is no doubt that Najrul was not a full-fledged modern poet. Yet, in application of proverbs, prevalent words, village and folk words and foreign words, in free use of language Najrul is the forerunner of the modern poets.

In the history of Bengali literature no other poet could collect ingredients from the main two trends of Bengal—Hindu and Muslim—so skillfully like Najrul and was able to weave and blending them in literature. And from that aspect he is unparalleled and it will be no exaggeration if he is called the first and last genuine 'Bengali' poet.

The poet Najrul did never believe in "Art for Art's sake". His creative literature is a sharp manifestation of realities consciously avoiding subjectivism of any sort as he was never alienated from the masses of the people.

The cooly, labour, workers, fishermen, prostitutes, storm, tempest, graveyard, burning-ghat, revolt, revolution, death etc. have occupied major place in his perspective of creation. In fact, social as well as communist consciousness is one of the main trends and in Bengali poetry he is the pioneer in this trend. Yet he is emotional to a great extent. He has not rejected religion, even though he has been inspired with communist consciousness for eradication of miseries of human beings.

Najrul, a Rebel

Najrul was *ab initio* a rebel—his revolt against prevalent social system, religious intolerance and bigotry, revolt against the sophisticated and loyal to the British rule, above all, revolt against the foreign rulers. Thus by his creation of rebellious poems, particularly against the British imperialist he created revolutionary sensation among the people of Bengal which

The poet directly addressed the youths of Bengal. He was unprecedented as no poet in Bengal before and after Najul was able to rouse the youths for fighting against the imperialists.

Now it is a history how he stirred the youths of Bengal and roused them from slumber. He had the capacity to express very forceful language through style understandable by all distinctly. The appearance of 'Vidrohi' brought a complete newness in post-Rabindra Bengali poetry and created a wide-spread stir in Bengal.

Such a high popularity and appealing attraction of Najrul's 'Vidrohi' is not only for its theme and subject-matter but also for its artistic excellence and uniqueness. Persian poets inspired Najrul to revolt as well as to become romantic. The reading of Bengali poetry made his consciousness of experience and realisation more pervading and deeper.

Has any poet of Bengali literature said keeping his head high with such audacious declaration :

Bala Bir

Bala Unnata mama shir

Shir Nehari, amar natashir oi sikhar himadrir.

The poet is not ready to bow his head to anyone, his head always stands erect. Thus he gave a call to the youths of Bengal to fight boldly against not only the Britishers but against all evils, all injustices remaining unmoved before any stronger enemy.

No literature and art can be judged excluding contemporary environment and prevailing feeling and thinking, because literature and art are the products of the pains and strains of the age. Najrul has depicted realities and problems of his period and endeavoured to break down all British-made rules to exploit and suppress the people of India.

So Najrul has voiced with thunder in the poem 'Vidrohi':

Aami durbar

Aami Bhenge kari sab churmar

Aami Aniyam Vchhrinkhal,

Aami dole jai jata bandhan,

jata niyam kanun shirnkhal,

Aami mani na ko kona aiin.

Thus his revolt was against all prevailing rules, laws and customs.

In the very beginning of 'Vidrohi' Najrul profusely mentioned stars and planets of the universe invoking furious image of the Nature which symbolised the imminent storm of revolt against the British imperialist.

In the same poem Kaji Najrul declares with firm self-determination that he is not ready to salute anybody whatever great he might be, and he salutes only himself. So he is the pioneer of destruction of all hindrances to achieve his goal of human liberation as he thunders :

*Aami bednin, aami chengis,
Aami apanake chara kari na kahare kurnis!*

Again the poet shouts like thunder:

Aami uttal, aami tunga, vayal, mahakal,

.....
*Aami mukta, aami satya, aami bir vidrohi sainya
Aami dhanya ! aami dhanya !!*

The rebel poet is on the long march, he will not rest until his mission is fulfilled. His fight will continue uninerruptedly however tired, he is of war of liberation. At the end of 'Vidrohi' Najrul declares :

*Maha-vidrohi rana klanta
Aami sai din habo santa,
Jabe utpiriter Krandan-roal akase batase dhwanibena,
Atyacharir kharga kripan vim rana-vume' ranibe na
vidrohi ranklanta
Aami sai din habo santa !*

That this resolution is not sheer declaration or romantic luxury has been abundantly proved in his life and literature, just at this moment (also in the period of Najrul) a few people will be found who are voicioferous in words but not in deeds. But Najrul practiced what he uttered.

Najrul composed 'vidrohi' only at the age of 21. Before him none at such young age could make any remarkable contribution to Bengali literature. According to Premendra Mitra, indeed in the poem 'Vidrohi' itself Najrul Islam realised his recognition forcibly from the entire literary world.

No other Bengalee poet has challenged in such a forceful determinant language against tyranny, against suppression, against oppressors before Najrul. The ruling British power naturally became terrorised with very publication of this poem, who has roared in such a language against the oppressive imperialist royal authority.

Many, including Rabindranath criticised Najrul's poetry for lack of art. But Najrul never bothered about art of his poems, as common people exploited people, miserable were uppermost in his mind. Hence his straight forwarded reply to Mohitlal Majumdar's attach on lack of art in his poems was like this:

*Oi sono aaj ghare ghare kata uthiteche hahakar,
Vudhar-praman udare tomor ebar paribe mar!
Tomar arter bansareer sure mugdha habe na ora,
Proyojan-bass tomor arter artshala habe nera.*

The artists of today consider literature and art as the invincible weapon for realisation of demands and rights of men. Kaji Najrul was a poet like this, may, he was the pioneer of this group of literary persons.

The poet directly observed the ghastly fury of the first World War, recession of market after war, economic crisis, suicides of hundreds of youth shattered with unemployment problems, tremendous domination of the comprador bourgeoisie, bureaucrats, contractors, black-marketers, unlimited greed for empire, humiliation of human spirit, indignity of women, chastity of mother-sister being sold to beastly power for a paltry money all these events of the era created a warm sensation in Najrul and made him people's poet, a revolutionary poet and singer.

His dream of beauty has been shattered at the cruel whipping of poverty notwithstanding beckoning of the beauty again and again. Hence in poem "Daridrya" Najrul has become sad and lamented:

*Soukha dahane taba he darpi tapas,
Amlan swarnere mor karile binas.
Akule sukalo mor rupras pran!
Sheerna Karpurtrari, sundarer dan
Jatabar nite jaie—hea burukshu, tumi
Agre aasi kara pan, sunya masunmi
Heri mama kalpalok. Amar nayan
amari sundare kare angrie barisan*

In such a state of mind the poet could not deal with luxury of art. Azaruddin has very rightly said: His poetry hit at the roof of the prevailing state-rule, social system, superstitions, for resolute opposition against injustice—he is the progressive as well as popular poet. That the poet was a man of earth was also observed by the then bourgeois patriot, Bipin Pal as he correctly remarked:

Acquainted with his poems I found—he is not an ordinary one. He has come out of genuine earth..... in his poems I smell the odour of village, odour of earth.... there is no polish in it but has song of plough, song of the peasants.... Najrul Islam is the poet of the new era.... the plough has come to the life of the nation.

The greatest allegation against Najrul was, and, is that he is the poet of a particular era—his poetries are not above age and would not reflect for eternal appeal. Consequently with the solution of prevailing problems the appeal of his literature will wither away. So said many critics.

Where is that eternal message as generated by the hands of Rabi?

To answer that what Najrul has said does not need any explanation and analysis—

*Rabir Kiran chariye pare desh hate aaj deshantara
Sekar tabu pasilo na ma bandha karar andha ghare,*

In 'Amar Kaifiyat' the poet narrates cursing the people's enemies with venom:

Bara Katha bara rab ase na ko mathay brandhu, bara dukke

*Amar kabya tomara likhio bandhu jahara acha sukhe
Paroa kari na, banchi ba na banchi juger hujug Ketagale
Prarthana Karo,—jara kere khay tetrisht kotir mukher graas,
Jena likha hoi amar raktalikhay tader serbanash.*

For want of integration with the peasants, workers, that is, common people, what a sharp repining of Rabindranath himself :

*Amar kabita jani aami
Geleo bichitra pathe hay nai se sarbatragami
Krisaker jibaoner sainik je jan,
Karme O Kathay satya almiyata Karechhe arjan
Je achhe matir kachhakachhi
Se Kabir banir lagi kan pete aachhi*

Najrul is Rabindranath's desired "matir kachhakachhi" poet for whom Rabi 'Kan pete aachhi'. Here is the greatness, here is the fulfilment of Najrul's poetries.

Regarding responsibility and duty of the artists Roma in Rolland has said more splendidly. The intellectuals must brighten the path what the workers are building. They are two different groups of labour but the aim of the work is the same—the intellectuals have no other great task than to be great fighters of the struggle which is creating the new world. Najrul understood this fact very well and for reason of this understanding he engaged in and sacrificed himself in this struggle.

The hero of his novel 'Kuhelika', Pramatta quite rightly ventilates the greatness of Najrul (while he says: Oh Anim, my India is not the India of a map. My India means India comprising thirty three crores of mute-poor, hungry, trampled-under-foot men of India! My India is a crying place of pilgrimage of human spirit of the men oppressed through ages, oh! this India is not the India of your mandirs, not the India of Muslim's mosque, this is my men's—greatmen's India.

In a word Najrul's heart always throbs for the oppressed people irrespective of caste, community and religion. His mission is to liberate men from all miseries and tyrannies. In the poem "Samyabod" Najrul sings:

*Gahi samyergan -
Jekhane asia ek haya gechhe sab badha - byabadhan,
Jekhane mishechhe Hindu-Buddha-Muslim-Christian.*

Our poet is genuine humanist as well as great internationalist. In his poem 'Kuli-majur' he said:

*Sakal Kalber sakal desher sakal manus aasi
ek mohanay darie sono ek milaner bansi
ekjan dile byatha
samam haiye baji se bedana sakaler buke hetha.
Ekr Asamman*

nikhil manab - jatir lazza — sakaler apaman.

Najrul has been wounded most for indigritiy of men. So he sang:

Gagi samyer gaan —

manuser cheye bara kichhu nai kichhu mahiyan!

nai desh-kal-patre'r ved, aved dharma jat,

sab deshe sab-kale, ghare ghare, tini mansusr grati—

And in "Kandari husiar" poem he said:

Hindu na ora muslim? Oi jignase kon jan?

Kandari! bala, dubichhe manus, sanatan mor mar!

Many people think that Najrul has sung only songs of destruction as he thundred:

Karar oi lauha kapat

Venge fal, kar re lopat

rakta-jamat

Sikal-pujar pasan bedi !

Ore a tarut Isan!

baja to praloy-bisan!

dhangsa-nisan

Uruk pracheer pracheer ved!

In fact, without uprooting the present colonial (in his time) and semi-feudal society democratic socialist society cannot be established—this was the fundamental theme of the poet's poetries, songs including other writings.

It is Kari Najrul who first made the Bengali literature people's orientated. The poets before Najrul were infatuated with their own aristocracy. In fact they were very afraid of losing their prestige by creating literature and art for the common people. What a lamentation of Rabindranath as he could not come out of the circle of this aristocracy as he reveals his incapability to become the poet of the people :

*Majhe majhe geehhi ami oparer pranganer dhare,
vitare prabes kari se sakti chhilo na ekebase!*

Hence until injustice, oppression, repression and inequality are removed from the earth the appeal of Najrul's poetries, songs and other writings will also not exhaust. When Najrul's contemplated and desired society bereft of division of caste, nationality, religion, class, nonexistence of violence, malice, greed, jealousy will be established, then we shall have no objection if the appeal for Najrul's literature also exhausts. But those days have not come even in his centenary year.

It is true that Najrul did not grasp adequately the theory of Marxism and Lininism, but the poet realised the essence of communism well. This has been manifested in his poetries, songs, essays and different speeches. For sometimes he lived with Muzaffar Ahmed, one of the founders of

the Communist Party of India. He had intimate relation with Ahmed who helped him in different ways—literary and economic.

Today the so-called communists—the rank opportunists and renegades have abandoned the path of revolution and taken shelter in aircondition parliament and assemblies. That is why the revolutionary poet has warned us:

*Durgam giri Kantar maru dustar parabar
Langhite habe ratri nishithe jatrira husiar*

The poet means to say that the revolutionary path is full of risks and dangers, still the real revolutionaries must strive to overcome those.

Jasimuddin has said: So long the poet used to speak of patriotism. But later on he told of message of communism.

While the poet rousing up peasants, the inhabitants of earth holding highly the plough (Uthre chasi, jagatbasi dhara kase langal), or 'Amra sramikdal, ore amra sramikdal' (we are labour-group, oh we are labourgroup) etc. was singing, then the assembled crowed had been overflowing with emotion with poet's wave of feeling. At last the poet recited his famous poem 'Samyabadi'.

Najrul became a great journalist and published and edited the then stormy newspapers 'Nabajug' and 'Dhumketu'. The poet mainly published news and editorials about working class people in the 'Nabaging' which distinctly proved his great affinity to peasants and workers.

The poet not only declared economic and political equality, he also exhorted gender's equality, equality between men and women. Thus he loudly declared:

*Se juge haycchhe basi,
Se juge purus chhilo na Kono nariora Achhilo dasi !
Bedanar jug, manuser jug, samyer jug aji,
Keha rahibena bandi kaharo, uthiechhe danka aji.*

How revolutionary Najrul was ! In the first issue of 'Dhumketu' Najrul interalia wrte:

*Tai bidhi O niyame lathi mere, thuki buke bidhater haturi!
Ami jani jani oi vuyoiswar dia ja hayrie habe nao!
Tai biplab ane, bidroha kari....*

The poet brings revolution, he revolts. Najrul foresaw the revolutionary activities of Bihar-Andhra. Dandakaranya where the peasant masses are marching forward by kicking out the rules and regulations (bidhi O niyame).

In conclusion I like to say that some of my intellectual friends have raised a question of writing on Najrul who appeared as a Dhumketu and banished as a Dhumketu. Because Najrul in his later life stopped all his inspiring writings, even began to deal with decadent culture and wrote

poems and songs which were quite contrary to the theme 'vidrohi' and 'samyabadi'.

But Freiligrath became in 1848-49 one of the classics of German revolutionary poet thanks to Marx's and Engel's' influence on him. It is no coincidence that Freiligrath's importance as a poet began to decline as soon as he moved away from Marx and Engels. We may also presume that Najrul's importance as a revolutionary poet began to decline as soon as he moved away from freedom-struggle and the communist party of India.

Hence in this centenary year of Najrul it is our responsibility to highlight the positive aspects of Najrul's poetry and literature and his struggling life disregarding his later days' aberrations.



Cultural Revivalism to serve Imperialism

P.K. Venugopalan

The culture and politics of revivalism try to gain ground in India as in other parts of the world with the help and support of the forces of imperialism. The ideology of all kinds of revivalist forces like that of religion, ethnicity, race, caste has nothing to contradict with that of imperialism and instead it is being supported and nurtured by the imperialist forces.

As the Hindutwa politics propagated and practiced by Sangh Parivar tries to bring back and establish the past glories of socalled Hindu raj, all the political and cultural outfits related with fundamentalist forces try to reestablish the power and prestige of their so called past glories. They absorb their ideological strength from the flase and artificial interpretation of history. This is the case with all revivalist forces of culture and politics in all parts of the world including Hindu, Islamic, Sikh, Christian and other fundamentalist or racist forces.

They create an imaginary world glorified with mythical interpretation of history and claims that all objective problems related with life will be resolved in that imaginary world. All the cultural constructs of revivalism of all hues have a base on this artificial world. Actually this revivalist culture itself is a colonial construct.

Even when these forces and their leaders swear by religion or dharma, clinical order or hierarchy or their specific identity in the realm of culture and belief, the core of their politics or culture is the unquestioned loyalty to capital. The religion, the fundamentals of which are to be brought back to social life according to them is not the religion of years or that among the people but a politicised religion constructed accroding in the necessities and interests of capital. Actually what they are concerend about not the questions related with dharma or aadharma, heavan or hell, virtue or sin but those related to political power. They simply make use of the symbols or images related with religious practices and rituals to ensure their ascendence to power which is intimately related with the global imperialist system.

The identity politics which is got expressed in different forms as in various countries or regions of the world has its own history. An evaluation of it will show clearly that it is intimately related with the politics and culture of capitalism. The most atrocious form of identity politics in recent history can be seen in Nazi politics of Germany which got developed in 1930s. Hitler and his party propagated that supremacy of Aryan race was to be reestablished as it is the only race capable to rule the world. It urged Germans to rediscover their identity as the only race with power, prestige and capability to rule over all other races and societies of the world and to use all methods including that of coercion to bring others to submission. Similar was the case with facists of Italy led by Mussolini. Comrades Stalin and George Dimitrov analysed the politics and culture of facism in details and exposed the relation between the politics and culture of capitalism and those of German racism. The politics of Hitler and Mussolini which were presented as the culture of racial supremacy over all other so called inferior races was actually a form of degenerated capitalist politics which accumulated dictatorial political powers at its centre and refused to abide by all democratic norms. The culture of racial identity propagated by Hitler and others was one of its means to achieve power and to establish the inhuman dictatorship of capital.

Eventhough the democratic and socialist movements all over the wrold led by communists and other progressive sections could defeat the above said revivalist and fascist efforts in 1940s at least temporarily, as capitalist restoration took place in Soviet Union and other socialist countries of Europe during the decades immediately following the death of com. Stalin the struggle against capital and its various cultural expressions faced severe setbacks. The imperialist forces who have already started its neocolonial mode of exploitation out again started to employ all kinds of characteristic, divisive and revivalist political and cultural forces to disunite and fragmentist the organised political movements of looking masses against it and to perpetuate its hegemony over the world. This trend has got intensified as the crisis of capitalist-imperialist economy has become severe and severe.

As we can see from the experiences of recent history all kinds of reactionary identity politics were used by imperialists and their stooges of all countries for this purpose. The catholic church and papacy were effectively used by world capitalist forces to undermine the revisionist power structure in Poland during late seventies and eighties. The Catholic Church and the religiosity related with it were projected as the saviour of people from the repressive regimes of Jaruzelski and other leaders of the so called Communist Party there. The 'Solidarity' the trade union launched under the leadership of Ivalesa with all blessings from Rome

and assistance from imperialist centres used the image of cross and the ideology of Christian revivalism to establish a full fledged capitalist rule in content as well as forms. Similar was the tactic used by imperialism in all East European Countries in order to destabilise the power structures there and to replace them with their own men and machinery. They propagated the German identity in East Germany. Revived the Czech and Slovak identities to bifurcate Czechoslovakia, utilised the sense of marginalisation among various ethnic groupings of Yugoslavia to fragmentise it, inculcated religious and ethnic feelings among peoples of former Soviet Union to get it dismantled and at last a situation of total chaos distrust, enmity and of fratricidal genocides were created. It is true that the political forces and structures prevailed in those countries from late fifties under the name of socialism but without any content of it and leaders who ruled those countries contributed much to these unfortunate developments. Anyhow the capitalist - imperialist forces have won the race at least for the time being. What is happening in East Europe what is happening in Balkans, what is happening in Lebanon or Israel and what is happening in Chechnya or Azerbaijan betray the clandestine association between religious fundamentalists revivalist, social, ethnic or other identity politics and forces of capitalist-imperialist system. Same thing we can see behind the neo-nazi forces trying to gather strength in imperialist countries also.

We have to bear in mind that the revivalist politics or culture is going to revive nothing. Even when they claim to revive and re-establish the past glories it is a plain truth that no past can be revealed. What they can establish is a political power of imperialist forces amalgamated with the or ritualistic imagery attributed to religion, race or caste. The economic and political content of that should invariably be capitalist or imperialist. The Taliban political power of Afghanistan, Zionist power of Israel, the so called Islamic power of Saudi Arabia or Iran, the Hindutva rule of BJP in India and political and cultural forces with their own brand of identity politics aspiring power in various countries bear testimony to this. It may seem that some of these forces are anti-imperialists at least in words. They may be against a particular imperialist power for a particular time in a particular content because of immediate political compulsions also. But they never deny capitalist-imperialist system as a system of power or socio economic hegemony of it.

When we come to the history of forces of cultural revivalism or communal politics in India also we can this intimate relationship between them and the imperialist forces from the very days of formation of those organisations. The Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League formed in the first decade of this country had a political aim of disruption of the anti-imperialist unity of Indian people. They tried to propagate the pro

imperialist communal politics and to weaken the natural liberation movement using the tools of communalism. While the Hindu communalists urged their followers to dissociate from Congress and to fight against Muslims, the Muslim league tried to organise their fellow believers. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar the formulator of the very term 'Hindutwa' had pledged before the Governor of Bombay to keep away from any political activity against British imperialism and he kept his word too. The RSS formed in 1925 as a cultural organisation also did its best to divide the people on communal lines and to made the freedom movement weak. Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar who led the Sangh Parivar after Hedgewar identified his enemies as muslims christians and communists and he never considered British imperialism as the enemy of the people of this country. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, the founder leader of Janasangh the predecessor of todays BJP came forward openly to support British colonialists in 1942 joining as a ministers in the provincial government of Bengal. In the post 1947 period also the revivalist forces of Hindutwa were very much keen to support the imperialists and their ideology and the rule of capital. By creating artifical division among peoples of various religious faiths they tried to weaken the united fight of people against capital. The history of Islamic communalist forces is not different.

In recent history also we can cite a lot of incidents like that of Gulf War in 1991 when all kinds of revivalist forces came foward unanimously to support imperialist positions openly. Irrespective of all their differences Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian and all other fundamentalist foses joined hands to justify and support US aggression against Iraq. Even now the Hindutwa forces who are very much vocal about 'swadeshi' are serving imperialist political and economical interests loyally. All the policies pursued by them to promote globalisation, liberalisation, privatisation and to open all spheres of human life icluding culture and education for exploitation of MNCs serve the interests of imperialism. They are very much eager to impliment the World Bank sponsored primary education programme under the name 'Saraswathi Vidya Programme'. As it is said in one of the letters sent by RSS chief to US President Bill Clinton they are ready to respect him as the people of India respects Rama and Krishna. As I said already, the revivalists amalgamate with imperialist political ideology.

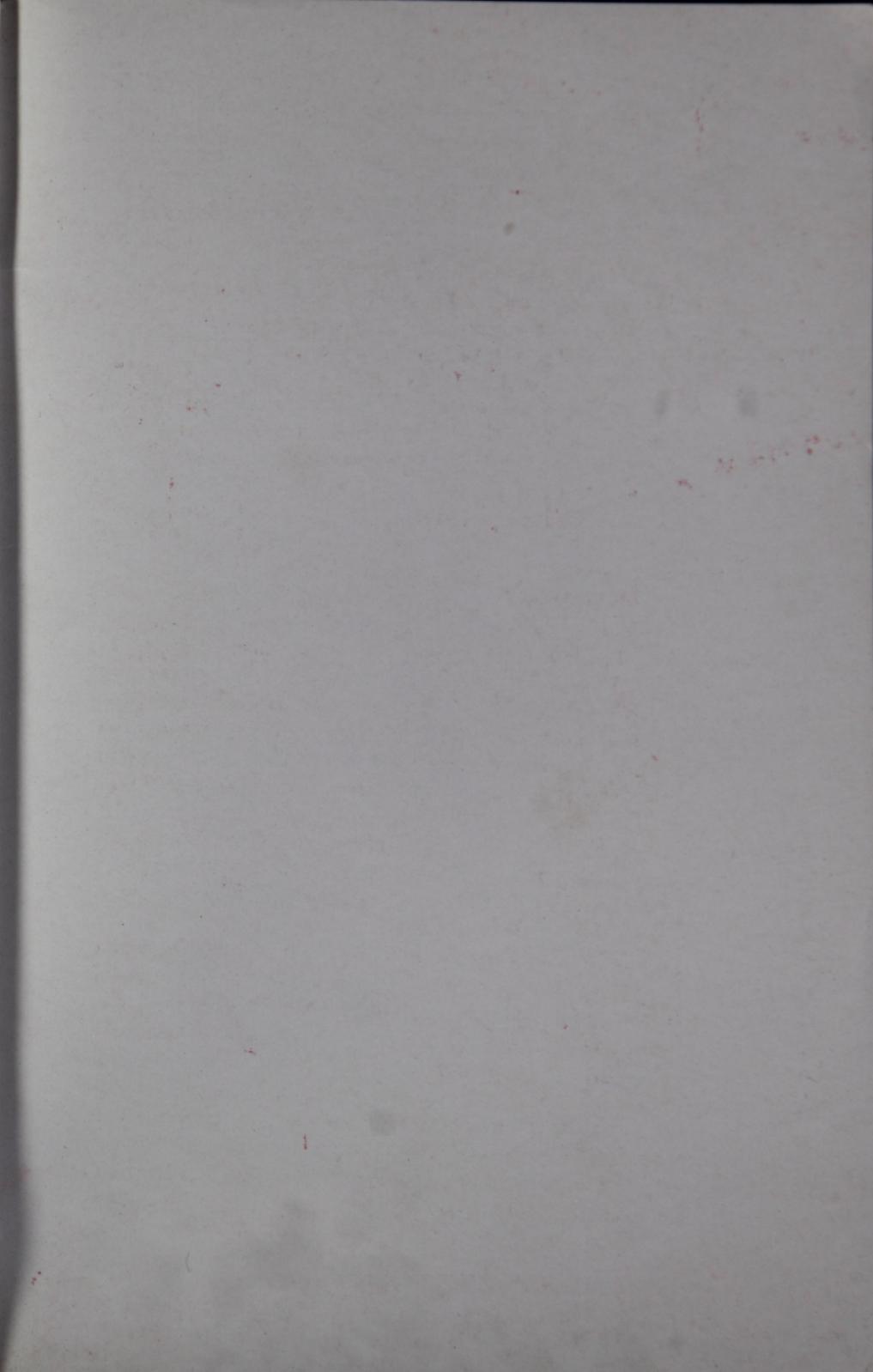
We can see that the revivalist political forces are not to revive any of the past glories or to bring back the hegemony of religious values as created in their artifical world of imagination but to serve imperialism. Religious images, symbols, emotions and mythified history and unreal interpretations are used to perpetuate the rule of capital.

Many people think that the revivalist and communal culture and its

politics have a genuine connection with religious values. And as religion is associated with feudal culture and power system, they think that revivalism can be defeated by fighting against feudalism. It is a fact that feudal forces are very much active in many parts of our country. But this feudalism itself has got transferred in past decades, imperialism is not depended upon their old feudal base any longer to perpetuate their exploitation but they have transformed it to suit its necessities. As in all other parts of the world here in India also the forces of capital make use of the existing feudal, tribal and other pre-capitalist relations in India along with developed capitalist and neo-colonial relations. Today religious fundamentalists or revivalists do not require feudal forces as their only ally. They are taking orders directly from imperialist centres. They identify the urban middle class as their reliable base rather than rural gentries or feudal classes. This urban middle class is the section most vulnerable to the imperialist cultural aggression also.

We can see that the capitalist imperialist system is very much in the midst of an ever intensifying crisis. It has formulated the policies of globalisation and liberalisation in order to find out a way out of this crisis. The monetarist policies being imposed worldwide is a part of this crisis resolving package. Side by side with this economic policies they have formulated this cultural and political programmes to make the peoples forces fragmented. That is why they keep the people divided by promoting all kinds of divisive ideologies like that of ethnicity, religion, race, caste etc. They make use of the Hutu-Tutsi conflicts in Africa. Islamic non Islamic differences in Algeria, Indonesia, Hindu-Non Hindu differences in India, Ethenic and cultural diversities in East Europe and former Soviet republics and Balkans and similar differences in other parts of the world. Thus they think that the democratisation of these societies can be curtailed and their exploitation can be continued unopposed. All the divisive forces subscribed to identity political and cultural ideologies of their own brand are used as the tools of imperialists forces.

The revivalist forces are not for transformation of the existing in human system. They try to make an imaginary world in which they claim that the perils of present day world can be resolved. By creating such an unreal image they try to lure people who are fed up with the evils of the capitalist-imperialist system. Hence it is the duty of revolutionary progressive and democratic forces to expose the real control of this revivalist culture and politics, that it is actually a cultural construct and to rally people to struggle against. No struggle against revivalist forces is going to win, either in cultural or in political front unless it is correctly linked with the struggle against imperialism. □



24th October 1999



5th Issue

SPRING THUNDER

EDITORS

Gaddar, Arun, Kanchan Kumar



Rs. 15

aamukh_mag@hotmail.com

Printed at Capital Offset, Navin Shahdara, Delhi 110032, Laser Typeset by Kamal Laser Graphics, New Delhi 110027 and Published by Kanchan Kumar from U-96, Sharkarpur, Gurudwara Lane, Delhi 110092