

critical success that one observer wrote, "It is the event that opened the golden age of Saint-Germain-des-Près . . . to the drawing rooms of Paris and of France."

No sooner was the war over than Sartre and Beauvoir became "political." They had taken no part in pre-war anti-fascist movements and had been passive, to say the least, during the Occupation. But now that they had friends in power, "politics became a family affair and we intended to be involved," Beauvoir explained. The guiding principle of their politics was anti-Americanism. At first, they went through various "positions" to maintain their "independence" from the Communists, but in 1951, Sartre abandoned any such subtleties and the former collaborationist became a full-fledged hero of the Stalinist order. In 1952, he published *The Communists and Peace*, and was the hero of the International Peace Congress organized by the Soviets in Vienna.

Pablo Picasso, another god enshrined in the Left Bank's Pantheon, had a similarly sordid political career. He lived in Paris throughout the Occupation. It was said of him that "he never turned away an art-lover in uniform." Indeed, Lottman notes that "his studio became an obligatory port of call for cultured German officers, as well as French admirers, and it got so crowded at times that he could not work." That he was an institution protected by the fascists is shown by the fact that his vast personal collection of paintings remained undisturbed in the vault of the Banque de France.

In return, Picasso never engaged in political activity, never uttered a political thought. The sole exception, and a bland one at that, is that he signed the petition to free the surrealist poet Max Jacob, who, although a converted Catholic, was born a Jew and was therefore carted off to a concentration camp. When asked to intervene directly with his German friends, Picasso replied sanguinely, "Max is an angel, he'll fly over the wall," and returned to his lunch.

Some weeks after the liberation of Paris, Picasso joined the Communist Party, whereupon the party newspaper *L'Humanité* produced the following headline, "The Greatest Living Painter of Today, Picasso Has Joined the Party of French Resistance." The closest brush with resistance Picasso ever had was when he was fined for eating in a black-market restaurant.

Picasso, like Sartre, became an icon of the "peace movement." In 1946, he designed the dove of peace that became the world-wide symbol of the communist-organized postwar disarmament movement. Picasso remarked cynically that the dove was known to be a most warlike bird.

Finally, what of André Malraux, that exemplary figure of a left intellectual, who, like Jacques Soustelle, wound up in the Gaullist camp? During the war, he abandoned his Jewish wife to live in luxury on the Riviera in the villa of Dorothy Bussy (the sister of the British appeaser Lytton Strachey, and herself the translator of Gide). There he lived with his anti-Semitic mistress, attended by a butler. When asked to join the Resistance he promised to do so—as soon as the Americans had landed.

Security emergency

by Susan Maitra in New Delhi

During his recent visit to Tripura, Indian Home Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao urged the CPI-M-ruled Tripura government to rise above petty partisan politics and deploy the army to counter the insurgent activities in the tiny state bordering on Bangladesh. New Delhi's subsequent decision to send a high-level team headed by an army major general to Tripura to evolve a plan to stamp out the tribal insurgency is a clear indication of its concern over the developing situation.

Tripura is the stronghold of the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M), which came to power with a sweeping mandate in 1978. The Left Front headed by the CPI-M won 56 of 60 seats, wiping out the nationally ruling Congress (I) Party in the process. In the next Assembly elections, held in January 1983, the strength of the Left Front was somewhat reduced; the Congress (I), which had no representation in 1978, secured 12 seats and the Tripura Upajati (TUJS), a party consisting of Chakma and Jamatia tribes, won six seats leaving the rest to be won by the Left Front.

But six years of significant electoral majorities have not helped the CPI-M government stabilize the state. Instead, insurgent raids have become endemic, and law and order within the state has continued to deteriorate.

Increasing insurgency

In recent months, many incidents have been reported by Indian papers, centered on the insurgent activities of the Tripuri National Volunteers (TNV), led by one Bijoy Hrangkhah. Ambushes, raids, and murders were perpetrated by the TNV even before the Panchayat (Village Council) elections held in June of this year, but since then, the frequency of the TNV raids has increased.

The TNV came into existence in 1978 when Bijoy Hrangkhah, a Baptist educated in Christian schools, broke away from the TUJS and formed the militant underground arm of the tribals. His purpose: to fight the "domination" of the Bengali settlers. A small princely state during the British Raj days, Tripura is now a victim of violent tribal reaction to the influx of new settlers from outside. Tripura is surrounded on three sides by Bangladesh, and is linked to India only by a tiny border with Assam and Mizoram. The trickle of immigrants from East Bengal in the pre-partition days swelled to a flood after 1947, when hundreds of thousands of Bengali Hindu refugees from then-East Pakistan (Bangladesh) fearing persecution crossed over into Tripura. Before the 1947

in India's Tripura

partition, Tripura's population stood at 0.51 million, of which 78% were tribals; today, the population is close to 1.8 million, of which 25% are tribals.

The tribal campaign

The influx of Bengali refugees eager to make a better living posed a serious challenge to the tribal groups, who suddenly found themselves the minority in their own territory. Under the leadership of the TUJS, the tribals sought recourse in the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, which contains a special provision for such ethnic minority groups, giving them powers to set up their own district councils and district courts, with full powers to make their own laws. When the CPI-M government led by Nripen Chakraborty came to power in 1978, it made an effort to meet the tribals' autonomy demands. Interestingly, Chakraborty, an "outsider" himself, had been sent from Calcutta in 1950 by the then undivided Communist Party of India to set up its Tripura unit. Chakraborty introduced legislation to set up a Tripura Tribal Area Autonomous District Council (TTADC) in 1979, and it was enacted in 1982. Still there was no let-up in TNV-led insurgency activities.

The TNV does not have a mass base in the state, but it has hooked up with other rebel tribal groups operating along the Tripura-Mizoram border areas. There are also allegations that the TNV is being trained inside Bangladesh, where similar tribal groups are also involved in undermining the authorities in Dhaka.

Many of the TNV members have embraced Christianity—a not too uncommon feature in that part of India—and, with the help of "missionaries," have studied in missionary schools and colleges. They have learned to translate the resentment and backwardness of their benighted tribal brethren into a marketable political currency. They intend to gain political power by propagating the "suffering of the tribal people" at the hands of the Bengali settlers, who have taken away their lands, reduced them to a minority in their own land, and have been dominating them socially, culturally, and politically.

At the other end of the spectrum are some of the Bengalis who have formed a reactionary, fascist bloc called "Amra Bangali" (We Bengalis). Amra Bangali was formed in 1979 by prosperous traders and landowners. Over the years, the organization has held a series of anti-tribal demonstrations,

many of which led to violent clashes with local tribal groups. The Amra Bangali is closely identified with the Ananda Margis—a death-worshipping homosexual cult which has recruited heavily in eastern and northern India, West Germany, Australia, and the United States. Prone to violence and linked up with international assassins, Ananda Margis is watched carefully by intelligence communities worldwide.

While it is evident that the ethnic trouble between the tribals and Bengalis is being fueled by such subversive elements as the "Christian" missionaries and Ananda Margis, the political parties in Tripura are milking the conflict for their own petty gains. Congress (I), which is rife with factional infighting, depends significantly on Bengali votes. Unlike in West Bengal, the Bengalis in Tripura have been the traditional supporters of the Congress, a direct result of CPI-M's championing of the tribal cause. Following the 1980 riots, then-Home Minister Zail Singh had accused Chakraborty of inciting the tribals in the state.

The CPI-M, on the other hand, puts the blame on the military rulers of Bangladesh for training the TNV activists for the purpose of destabilizing Tripura. It is by no means clear why Bangladesh, a tiny nation compared to India and itself plagued with massive economic problems, would become involved in such a misadventure. Nonetheless, the Tripura Left Front, with full support from India's left lobby, has even accused Bangladesh President Ershad of meeting Hrangkhal surreptitiously in the border areas. The accusations have since been refuted by the Bangladeshis.

The left lobby in India has also periodically accused the Chinese of arming the TNV and other rebels in the region as part of a plan to carve out a corridor connecting China with Burma which would run through the Indian states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and Mizoram.

It is evident that the TNV moves freely in and out of the bordering areas of Bangladesh. The rough terrain of the Chitragong Hill Tracts, which sits squat along the Tripura-Bangladesh border, is too difficult to be patrolled by either the Indian or Bangladeshi border forces. The Tripura government has yet to provide any concrete evidence of the Bangladeshi involvement. It is generally conjectured here that the CPI-M, eager to hide its own politicking and subversive role, is merely diverting attention.

Within the Left Front itself, reports of infighting are not uncommon. One of its constituents, the CPI, went its own way during the Panchayat elections in protest against the CPI-M's rigid stand on seat distribution.

New Delhi is aware of the potential dangers in such a sensitive border area, and has been pressing the Tripura Left Front government to recognize the gravity of the situation and allow the Indian regular army to be deployed. The units of the Border Security Force and the Central Reserve Police are too thinly spread to monitor the border effectively. But so far, the CPI-M government, busy manipulating the festering conflict for its own political gains, has not relented to New Delhi's pressure.