

a sober note with which I would like to conclude, He quoted the black American writer Richard Wright who said "black American writing is a war over the nature of reality. Describing the world in our terms is the first step towards changing it". The admittedly intellectual and academic convictions expressed in the Seminar make such a war in the context of India untranslatable in simple terms. Can the English be equated with socio-economic power as the term 'white' can be? Should English be relegated to the status of a tool language so that creative effort in the future is more an individual effort and less the

product of a group? Rushdie suggested that the politician and the writer are natural rivals. A chauvinistic re-definition of terms with writer and politician as allies could create an internal colonialism to protect vested interest. The academic/political games of power need to give more thought to the fundamental changes needed for creative effort for the voice of modern India to be heard.

Word its meaning. Its connotation must aspire to the breadth and depth of India's cultural heritage. Sadly, the full potential for constructive discussion was not explored except in the individual contributions quoted.

firs! volume of poems (in 1965), certainly reads like an existentialist tract ("in the midst of all these social and natural preoccupations, in the midst of all the thousand mask-faces you have cut up yourself into, in the midst of the restless life-struggle, you are always alone, a (lone) soldier in the struggle of life and death"). Their poems also repeatedly call upon the reader to get rid of his social masks and look at himself in all his nakedness. They shower contempt on the banal concerns of common men:

Tell me, was there a day
when you did not weep?
Your smoke-scarred face
reminds me of coal-mines

(Nikhileswar).

OBITUARY

Cherabanda Raju

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CHERABANDARAJU is dead.

A tireless and totally dedicated fighter for the people, he was hunted for nearly ten years by a state whose cruelty towards poets who can write for the people in the language of the people is matched by its cruelty towards tribal and peasant revolutionaries. But unlike his mentor Subba Rao Panigrahi, the Srikakulam poet-revolutionary, he was not killed by the state, but by brain tumor, to which his repeated sojourns in jails contributed more than a little. He was arrested under the Preventive Detention Act in 1971, under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act in 1973, he was implicated in the infamous Secunderabad Conspiracy Case in 1974, and of course like most other revolutionary writers in Andhra he spent most of the Emergency in jail, though he was at that time suffering seriously from duodenal ulcers (the brain tumor was to come later). To his friends he was 'Chera', a peculiarly appropriate endearment since the word means prison in Telugu.

Born as Baddam Bhaskara Reddy 38 years ago in a poor peasant family of Ankusapuram village (then in Hyderabad district), he took a degree in Oriental Literature and taught Telugu at a government high school in Hyderabad. He shot into prominence in the late sixties in the company of five other poets who together described themselves as 'Diganibara' (naked) poets. They took on fantastic names (Cherabanda Raju, Nikhileswar, Jwalamukhi, Nagnanmni, Mahaswapna and

Bhairavayya) and wrote quite fantastic poetry. It was essentially an iconoclastic movement which respected neither individuals nor ideologies and expressed itself in the most violently obscene language imaginable (they took most of their images from deformed and de-praved sex). But then the world in those days was such that there were few individuals or ideologies ('actually existing!') worth respecting. Those were the days when Revisionism riding battle tanks trampled on Czechoslovakia to make it safe for 'socialism' when angry young students in France could find nobody worth listening to except a maverick like Sartre, when a whole generation of Western youth turned to anarchic and anti-social fads, when, back at home, Naxalbari had not yet discovered its full significance in Srikakulam, when the world had not yet understood the full meaning of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of China, and the rich originality of Mao's thought. And so, while the senile keepers of what Kosambi once contemptuously described as OM (Official Marxism) dismissed the Digambara poets as 'petty-bourgeois anarchists', it was the honest quality of their angry obscenity, and not the commercial bawdiness of OM-consecrated 'progressive' poets thriving on Madras film sub-culture, that attracted young and questioning minds. For though the Digambara poets were anti-ideology and opposed all organised politics, they were far from being indifferent to social and political problems. Their first manifesto, which accompanied their

Rut even in those days the 'self which They wanted to be seen in all its nakedness was as often the brutal evil of a corrupt society as the 'inner essence' of man, and the mask they wanted to tear away was also as often the dishonest garb of democracy, peace and progress hung on it by deceitful politicians and ideologues, as the false mask of respectability worn by civilisation. This was particularly true of Cherabanda Raju, Nagnamuni and Nikhileswar. Indeed, with Cherabanda Raju, it was invariably social hypocrisy that was the target and not, as with some of the others, social being itself, which they perceived as hiding the 'naked essence' of man.

In any case, in their second manifesto (written about a year later) they proclaimed that they "yearned to root out the present evil society and bring in an ever-new and noble society". The following lines are representative of Cherabanda Raju's poetry of those days:

Licking the boots of
barons of opportunism
you have built mansions
in their shade
Before their foundations crumble
I want to send you.
not to the prison, no,
but to the butcher's shop.

In their third manifesto, issued in 1968, their concern is even more explicitly social; true, they continue to be anti-ideology, but they did recognise that "so long as poverty and hunger are widespread in the world, no one has the authority to challenge Marxism", From this primitive understanding of Marxism as an unpatented remedy for poverty, at least four of them grew into Marxist-Leninist writers when the time came for the formation of the

Revolutionary Writers' Association ('Virasam' is its better known Telugu acronym). In an age when communism turned revisionist it was natural for protest to turn nihilist but honesty of purpose and ideological anarchism cannot co-exist for long; sooner or later one of them has to prevail over the other and in the case of four of the six Digambara poets it was the former that won (of the other two, one has subsequently become a bhakta of Acharya Rajneesh and sundry other babas). Inspired by Naxalbari and Srikakulam, these four and certain other writer like Sri Sri, Kutumba Rao, Varavara Rao and Ramana Redely formed Virasam on July 4, 1970. Cherabanda Raju, of course, was one of the four. He remained in the organisation till his death as an Executive Committee member and was general secretary during 1971-72.

As I said earlier, even as a Digambara poet Cherabanda Raju was the most socially conscious of the lot. By the time of the third volume issued by the Digambara poets, his poetry is already recognisable as potentially revolutionary, though the indiscriminate contempt remains and the language continues to be more shocking than moving. In a poem entitled 'Vandemataram' he addresses Bharata Mata, perceived as whore:

Yours is the beauty that has
mortgaged each limb in the
international market
Yours is the youth that is
lying blissfully in the
arms of the wealthy

(Long after, during the Emergency, when he recited this poem in jail, he was assaulted by a prominent RSS leader for the blasphemy!)

But after becoming a revolutionary writer Cherabanda Raju gradually shifted away from prose-poetry to songs as the form of poetic expression. Though the eight volumes of poetry published by him during his RWA days include both prose-poetry and songs, he was one of the writers who recognised song as the right form if poetry was to convey political ideas to the large mass of illiterate and semi-literate toiling people. In this he had the great Subba Rao Panigrahi before him and poets like Sivasagar with him. Together they constituted a bridge that linked leftist prose-poetry of early days like that of Sri Sri whose language and imagery were thoroughly middle class, notwithstanding the fiery quality of the message and mode of expression, with present-day writers and singers (they are both)

of Jana Natya Mandali like Gaddar, who write exclusively songs and that too in the dialect of the local people and sing them to the tunes of so-called folk-songs popular among the people.

This Quality of Cherabanda Raju, which made him one of the trend-setters in post-Naxalbari Telugu leftist poetry, was also the most disagreeable from the point of view of the state. A poet who could sing

We have broken hills
We have powdered boulders
We have built projects with
our blood as granite
Whose is the toil
and whose the wealth?

and that too in a language intelligible to the poorest of the toiling people, was certainly a dangerous person from the point of view of the guardian of the interests of the beneficiaries of those projects.

So Cherabanda Raju was harassed as few have been. In 1971 he was jailed under the PD act for 50 days (along with the other three ex-Digambara poets), and in 1973 he was jailed for 37 days under MISA. Both times the accusation was that he was inciting armed rebellion through his poetry and urging youth to take to armed struggle. Because of his implication in the Secunderabad Conspiracy case he was suspended from his job as school teacher in 1974. He was taken back after he came out from jail after the Emergency, but three days later was again suspended by the DEO who received a telegram from the DIG (Intelligence) upbraiding him for having reinstated Cherabanda Raju. Finally, in March 1980 the state Education Minister (who is the present chief minister) announced on the floor of the assembly, in answer to a query by a Teachers' MLC, that he had been removed from service. He was nominally taken back only a few weeks before his death, when he was lying unconscious in the hospital.

There is a fine poem that Cherabanda Raju once wrote about the persecution he suffered:

If, perchance and in all innocence
I happen to look at the sky
They will measure the elevation of
my sight
The mud in my foot-prints
they will get tested in a laboratory
to uncover the pattern of
the lines of my songs

In the meanwhile he contracted cancer, was operated upon thrice, lost his eye-

sight, and finally died on July 2 after prolonged coma.

It is commonly said that revolutionary poetry is mere slogan-mongering. Setting that accusation right-side up, it can be said that Cherabanda Raju's poetry was good enough to provide plenty of revolutionary slogans (and, as a critic recently pointed out, that is no mean achievement). He will be remembered for ever by those whose thoughts reverberated to his poetry and by the walls of Telangana towns which are plastered with slogans, taken mostly from his poetry and that of his comrades like Gaddar, Sivasagar, Sri Sri, etc.

Investment in Plant and Equipment in US

US INVESTMENT in plant and equipment, in current dollar terms, by firms in the non-farm business sector is projected to rise by 2.2 per cent in 1982, compared with earlier projections of an increase of 7.3 per cent and with an increase of 8.7 per cent in 1981, according to the latest survey of capital spending plans conducted by the US Department of Commerce. The revised spending plans of firms in the manufacturing sector envisage outlay increases of 0.4 per cent for 1982, compared with 9.5 per cent in 1981, reflecting a 1.8 per cent increase in outlays by manufacturers of non-durables that will more than offset a 1.1 per cent decline in outlays by producers of durable goods.

The survey indicates that, in the non-durable goods, sector, increases in investment in plant and equipment are planned by producers of rubber, petroleum, chemicals, apparel, tobacco, leather, as well as in printing and publishing, while investment declines are projected by the textiles, paper, and food and beverage sectors. In the durable goods sector, the iron and steel electrical machinery, and non-electrical machinery industries project to increase Outlays for plant and equipment, but these increases will be more than offset by lower investment outlays by producers of motor vehicles, stone, clay, and glass, non-ferrous metals, aircraft, fabricated metals, lumber, furniture and instruments. The survey also shows that investment plans of non-manufacturing firms provide for an increase in outlays of 3.4 per cent in 1982, compared with an increase of 8.3 per cent in 1981.

Lessons of the Iraq-Iran War

THE significance of the war between Iran and Iraq cannot be measured without reference to a number of factors which set the stage for its outbreak. The geopolitical transformations that are presently occurring in West Asia are not only repercussions of the Iranian Revolution and the Camp David Treaty but of the systematic manipulation of national and regional upheavals by the imperialist powers, notably the United States and its West European allies.

TWIN PILLAR POLICY

During the early seventies, burdened with the war of liberation in Vietnam, the US was formulating its 'Twin Pillar Policy' which, following its experience in Vietnam, would rule out future direct military intervention in its spheres of interest, in this case, West Asia. Devised under Nixon it was based on co-operation with two of the most conservative monarchies in the area (Saudi Arabia and Iran) which were to police the strategic Gulf area on its behalf. As eager clients they would be the recipients of sophisticated military technology, training and advisers. This acted as a precedent to, and was to be reinforced by, Kissinger's 'step by step' diplomacy which in the aftermath of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war aimed at expanding the clientele through providing substantial economic and military aid to the 'moderate' and repressive regimes in the area.

The Iranian revolution and the downfall of the Shah (which was becoming evident from as early as 1976, when sporadic violence which eventually was to lead to the downfall of the Shah, began) led to the collapse of the 'Twin Pillar Policy' and the regeneration of the idea of direct intervention from bases in the region and the use of a highly sophisticated rapid deployment force. This policy is now being systematically put into effect. Among the expanding clientele are Egypt, Kenya, Oman, Somalia, Sudan, Morocco and Saudi Arabia who have granted the US military bases for the use of the now formalised Rapid Deployment Force. Particularly important is Saudi Arabia which, second to the US's main ally Israel, forms the cornerstone of this policy. It is not out of generosity that the latter is being stockpiled with sophisticated military hardware (between 1975 and 1981 Saudi Arabia bought over \$10

billion worth of military hardware from the US alone) but because it is a necessary sequel to the presence of thousands of US military personnel in the kingdom. Saudi Arabia does not have the trained manpower to utilise the sophisticated weaponry that it is obtaining resulting in its fast becoming the most powerful US base in the region. Relative to the Saudi population, the US presence in the Kingdom is about seven times as large as the US presence in Iran during the heyday of the Shah. The primary aim of the new aggressive interventionist strategy, apart from protecting US economic and political interests in the Gulf, is to shift the political arena from the Palestinian struggle to liberate their territory from the Zionists, to an obscurantist red scare in the region of the Gulf.

SADDAM'S MISCALCULATION

The more immediate reasons for the Iran-Iraq war were the aspirations of Saddam Hussein of Iraq for regional leadership. The regime in Iraq intended to step into the power vacuum created following the collapse of the Shah and make up for its long diplomatic break with the US. Iraq had also greeted the Iranian revolution with suspicion and hostility; the poor Shia peasants, constituting almost 40 per cent of Iraq's total population and concentrated in Southern Iraq, are not only sympathetic to the Islamic revolution in Iran but have been periodically called upon by Ayatollah Khomeini (having his own scores to settle with Saddam who had ejected him from Iraq, after a 15-year stay there as an exile) to rise against the regime and form instead an Islamic Republic. Saddam Hussein, who had in the previous years successfully liquidated all opposition within Iraq (Communists, Nasserists, other Baathists and Kurds) expelled thousands of Iraq's Shia's to Iran, during the first year of the Iranian revolution.

During the struggle for political power in the Iranian revolution, Iraq had actively supported Shahpur Baktiadj, the pro-Western, pro-American candidate. When it appeared that the clergy were assuming the dominant role in Iran, Saddam decided to act. What had previously been recurrent skirmishes (since spring 1979) broke out into full scale war at the end of September 1981. What Saddam hoped for and openly claimed was a quick

and decisive war which would not only establish Iraqi regional dominance but overthrow the regime of Ayatollah Khomeini; Shatt-al Arab was only an excuse.

Saddam's dream of a ten day victory lies shattered. The Iraqi army, after announcing daily retreats, now stands defeated. Bombing has seriously disrupted oil production and distribution in both the countries apart from affecting other sector of the economy.

The Gulf countries actively supported 'rightful' territorial claims of Iraq and aided it to the extent of \$17 billion. The Sheikdoms were in fact hoping also for a quick defeat of Iran — for good reason, since not only are many thousands of Gulf nationals of Iranian origin but a large number of the poor and oppressed workers of these countries are Shias from Iran. The clergy in Iran, the arch preserve of conservatism, were well aware of this fact, and could use it to their advantage.

Iraq also received arms, ammunitions and men from Jordan as well as arms from Egypt (during the time of the so-called Arab boycott of Sadat). Iran received little financial aid, but it did get some arms and ammunitions from Syria and Libya as well as medicines. It also bought spare parts for its US military equipment from Israel through third parties.

DIVIDED ARABS

Now that Iraq has lost the war, Iran has demanded \$150 billion in war reparations, repatriation of all the Iraqi Shias who were deported and, acknowledgement of Iraqi guilt for being the aggressor and initiator of the war before if can agree to any negotiations. Iran has also called for the overthrow of regime of Saddam Hussein. These demands strongly suggest that the Iranian clergy envisage holding a sectarian Shia card over the Gulf countries, knowing well its ideological hold over many of the poor in the Gulf.

With the defeat of Iraq, the Gulf Sheikdoms have become obsessed with their own security. Zionist expansion and the Palestinian struggle is now reduced to a secondary, if not minor, political issue. The Arab World stands further divided into insignificant, squabbling tribe-like entities. But while the struggle against imperialism and Zionism appears to have almost been given up, the positive feature of the situation is that the Palestinians are being forced to realise that their return to their homeland cannot be achieved without the 'complementary' liberation of the Arab countries themselves.