

of Mr Siddhartha Shankar Ray's cabinet, Mr Jainal Abedin, as the man who "manufactured a dying declaration" to implicate falsely Kalua, the principal accused. According to the defence case, as summed up by the judge, Mr Abedin bore Kalua a "grudge".

At the time of the dacoity when the dying declaration was "manufactured" Mr Abedin was not a minister because the Marxist-dominated United Front was in power. But he was then, as now, a senior Congress leader in the state.

The local correspondent of a national news agency duly filed a report on the Balurghat judgment. But, for reasons which remain obscure until today, it never saw the light of the day.

On the political grapevine of West Bengal, however, the news travelled fast. But rather than believe political gossip we decided to obtain a certified copy of the judgment from west Dinajpur. This has since been done at great effort and some expense.

The strictures on Mr Abedin are shattering. But such are the standards of political morality these days that he sits pretty both as a minister and as a vice-president of the Pradesh Congress.

(From A Times of India Notebook).

Letters

Peking And CP (ML)

Arani Ghosh (December 2) doubts the authenticity of the document attributed to Kanu Sanyal and five other CPI (ML) leaders (November 4).

1. He questions the accuracy of the reference to Charu Mazumdar as the party's general secretary and not as its chairman. The fact is Charu Mazumdar was always its general secretary but his detractors nicknamed him "Chairman Charu" after his famous article "China's Chairman is Our Chairman". If a letter is to be faked, no one would commit such a stupid mistake.

2. He contends that the Chinese could not have said what the letter attributes to them on guerilla warfare and that Kanu Sanyal could not have endorsed such views on guerilla warfare. Arani Ghosh is entitled to his subjective opinion on this.

3. Then, as to the date of the letter. It does make a reference to the "split into groups and factions" as a result of the left adventurist deviation and suggests that Sushital Roy Chowdhury's death had much to do with this. The letter also says the signatories have nothing to do with any group or faction and want that relationship with groups and factions within the party and outside should be a non-antagonistic one. The reference to the split in the CPI (ML) may not be specific but is there nevertheless. Reference to Bangladesh developments would have been irrelevant in a letter of this kind.

4. How could the leaders get together? With police connivance? Arani Ghosh should know that all the six signatories live in the same prison and the letter could have been written only after all of them were in the same Visakhapatnam Central Jail to face trial in the same conspiracy case. Where is the question of police connivance? And who says the lawyers cannot meet their clients?

The letter first appeared in Telugu, in the CPI (M)'s journal *Prajasakthi*. A news item on the letter was put out by UNI several weeks before the text was published by a New Delhi weekly, *Mainstream* and in *Frontier*.

One of the signatories to the letter, Mr Kellan Venkiah, was out on bail some time ago, when the letter had already been published in Telugu.

From the Telugu journal, *P. Lupu*, I find Kellan Venkiah could write a letter from jail correcting a minor inaccuracy in an article on Telengana in the journal. He would certainly have issued a statement from jail, or from outside when he was on bail, disowning the letter to which he was alleged to have been a signatory.

Well, any of the six leaders could

have made declaration disowning it if it was fake.

I wish Arani Ghosh had based his doubts about the authenticity of the letter on mere credible arguments than insinuate "police connivance" and role of "foreign and domestic ruling classes" and the "numerous factions and faction leaders among the Naxalites who are determined at all costs to bolster up their own line(s) even by tampering with facts". And I wish Arani Ghosh had been a little more sure of his facts.

MALLIKARJUNA RAO
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When ?

While the Secretary of the Communist Party of India, Andhra Pradesh, stated that Mr K. G. Sathyamurthy and Mr Kondapalli Seetharamayya (CP-ML leaders) were arrested at Vijayawada earlier, and issued a press statement, it was announced on 30-11-72 at 6-05 p.m. in the regional news from Hyderabad that Mr Sathyamurthy had been arrested on the night of 29-11-1972 at Hyderabad. It is unimaginable that the Secretary of the CPI would issue a statement anticipating the arrest of leaders. Therefore it creates a reasonable suspicion that the police have no respect for the rule of law or the Constitution which says that the arrested person should be produced before the Court within 24 hours of his arrest. It creates apprehension of foul play. We demand an immediate judicial enquiry by a High Court judge.

It is learnt that Mr Mallikarjuna Sarma, B.E. student, was arrested at Nalgonda on the night of 14-11-1972 and handed over to the Superintendent of Police, Nalgonda the following day. So far the said person has not been produced before any Court.

P. VENKATESWARLU
Conveñer
Civil Liberties Committee
Hyderabad, 30-11-72