

Danger! Democratic Regiment Ahead!

Mudrarakshas

Note: Amrit Ray is a son of Premcand. He has written a biography of his famous father and entitled it *The Soldier of the Pen*. Ramesh Kuntal Megh is a member of the CPI (M) and is a Marxist literary critic. Mathura is the home of Savyasaci, General Secretary of the Democratic Writers Union. Karan Singh Chauhan and Sudhish Pachauri are Marxist literary critics whom, recently, the CPI (M) have expelled from their party. *The Disaffected People* is a novel by Rajendra Yadav, who is currently the editor of the literary magazine *Hams*.

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These days the Democratic Regiment is all the rage, which means that a concerted effort will be made, in books, to protect the lower classes. There are no requirements for becoming an author; you can even get a break on your age.

In a fit of Democracy Amrit Ray once made Premcand the soldier of the pen. We're going to carry the tradition of Premcand even further. It's no longer good enough to be just a soldier. We're going to turn writers into Havildars, Majors, and Superintendents of the Poor.

Let me explain the great advantage of this "policifying" of literature. Nowadays writers and authors run off to conferences. In the future we'll go out on rounds. And out on his rounds Ramesh Kuntal Megh will ask you, "Who are you? What're you doing here? Get over here so I can see you!"

Don't make the mistake of thinking he's the Police Superintendent. He's just a Sub-Inspector. The camp office of the Chief Superintendent is in Mathura. The location of the HQ is secret.

Don't think this Force is weaker than the CRP, the Central Reserve Police. A lot of forethought went into its organization. The Democratic Regiment even has its own Signal Corps, but all its vacancies have been filled. Sending in your re(aigu)sume(aigu)s won't do any good. Karan Singh Chauhan and Sudhish Pachauri are in charge. They'll signal you with flags for all to see while sending messages to Savyasaci in secret code. They'll even converse in code. For example, when they say that we must get rid of the Capitalist System, then you better have your wits about you, because what they will mean is that the fight has started, not against the big businessmen, but against poets and authors. If you don't take precautions in time, then guerilla books will be dumped on your head.

You would be wise to be afraid of guerilla literature. Whenever you hear a lot of hullabaloo nearby you would be safe in assuming that either guerilla literature will be there or someone's built a temple on government property and has begun singing devotional songs.

This Democratic Army will operate on many levels. Just as it will direct the traffic of literature, so it will certainly bring a case against Kunvar Narayan, maybe not against his cars, but certainly against his poetry. This Army's inspectors will perform random inspections of stores. They might even seize samples from the store of Kamaleshwar and of Mahip Singh. And they can even make guerilla raids. To give them the slip you may have to disappear into the crowd, like Rajendra Yadav. In such a situation Ramesh Kuntal Megh might conduct a raid and seize *The Disaffected People*. By no means will anyone have permission to own a work written without the proper license.

Nor should you think that just because you've got your writer's license you can just go about writing whatever you please. The Government puts the stamp of the Indian Standards Institute on those products it has inspected and approved, and you don't buy ghee in a container that is not marked with that stamp. The nautanki plays printed in Hathras now come with the warning label—any book without this stamp should be understood to be stolen goods.

Your book, too, will have a stamp on it for sure. Or you could arrange for an exemption at your own risk. If you can manage to convince the stampwallah, then you can easily fend off Megh ji's objections. And we have long-standing, traditional means of bringing people around, so you needn't worry. The following methods, for example, are the most

traditional. You just have to get into the habit of praising people. The Democratic manner of praising is real easy. Just learn the words “therefore” and “in”, two complete names, and three long words. For example, suppose you have to praise one Papat Lal. First of all, don’t ask what Papat Lal is or what he’s written. He’s a Democrat, that’s all that matters. The Democratic praise of Mr. Papat Lal, then, would go something like this:

Premcand was the leader of the peasants and workers. We must carry on the traditions of Muktibodh. In our writing we must continue the attack on capitalism, imperialism and revisionism. Therefore, Papat Lal will be remembered in history.

The Democratic Regiment also has a swat team. It’s very furtive; you never know where, when and in what form it will appear. Sometimes you’ll experience such a sense of tranquility that you’ll think there couldn’t possibly be a writer anywhere in the vicinity, and you’ll want to take a long breath of relaxation and contentment, when right in front of you their swat team will show its stuff. It’ll dump a few guerilla poems on your head and then disappear.

If you’re finding it a little difficult to gain entry into the realm of Literature, you can become a candidate for the swat team. To the members of that team training is given in the propagation of guerilla literature. To gain acceptance you’ll have to send in two or three letters of reference. One reference letter should concern itself with the harsh atrocities you have suffered at the hands of the Government, for example, the Government turned you down for a good position. Another letter of reference you should always take around with you. Then in the middle of your buddies in the coffee house you should light it up and smoke it like a cigarette. That’ll leave an immediate impression. To get a particularly high position in the swat team you should be seen walking around with a hippy girl. That’ll increase the guerilla quality of your writing.

The Democratic Army believes that guerilla literature is a weapon. This is true. But it’s the kind of weapon that, after its use, the soldier must immediately curse a blue streak. Without that, the weapon loses its power. In fact, the effect of the curses is just like the solid fuel of a rocket. Still it’s not necessary that the curses be directed at the very person at whom the guerilla literature is aimed. Even if you fire your guerilla liit-

erature at Dharmavir Bharati and direct your curses at Phanishvarnath Renu, the job will still be accomplished.

The East India Company sometimes gave its soldiers cartridges that they had to break open with their teeth before loading. The situation with guerilla literature is a little better than that. First, you fire off your guerilla literature, and then you wait. If that has no effect on the enemy, then, instead of a cartridge, you go and bite Jainendra Kumar.

Already in this land we've seen guerillas able to hijack a plane merely by showing people a guava. Guerilla literature hasn't gone that far yet. Displaying guerilla literature won't even help you steal a bicycle, let alone an airplane. So you shouldn't try it.

But the organization of the Democratic Regiment continues, and it will soon begin to fulfill its work. Its sole occupation will be to bring suits against people any time and all the time. That way great campaigns can also be carried out. For example, on the occasion of a devastating famine or drought the Regiment can hold a seminar, and in such Emergency Seminars, after expanding on the tradition of Premcand a little more, they can then solemnly decide to hold a Conference.

The class enemies are so strong that nothing less than a Seminar or a Conference can defeat them. Actually, the traition of Premcand and Muktibodh is deathly afraid of class enemies, and if the opportunity to lead the peasants and workers should escape Indira Gandhi, it will fall into the hands of Charan Singh. And when that happens, the Democratic Seminarians will stampede into the tent of the enemy, of that there can be no doubt.

The Democratic Regiment is on guard against this danger: foreign imperialist forces are working continually to crush the widespread People's Movement. They have conspired to splinter the Leftist Movement. In no manner at all will the Democratic Regiment allow that conspiracy to succeed. It will oppose any Democrat who is not a member of the Regiment.

I'm sure you know that every Regiment has its own flag and motto. The flag of the Democratic Regiment is a little confidential. The flag is flown, but it is taken down before the start of a Seminar. After that, the Regiment only uses a bamboo cane to carry out its work. It has not been determined yet to use the motto "Gang of Four", referring not to the Chinese Gang of Four, but to the Indian one, i.e., _____, but let's leave it. It's no concern of mine. If, after considering your situation

and possibilities, you want admittance into the Democratic Regiment, there's still time.