

across the border in Afghanistan at the time of the April 27 revolution last year which put an end to President Mohammed Daud's life and rule (Daud was in dis-favour with Moscow for his attempts to solve border disputes with Pakistan),

**R**ecently arrived in Islamabad is Yuiry Trushin, the new Tass correspondent. Trushin was expelled from Thailand in 1958 for his clumsy attempts to bribe a Thai journalist for political information, and has in the meantime been posted to Laos and Egypt. Local pressmen are wondering when they will be the subject of Trushin's advances.

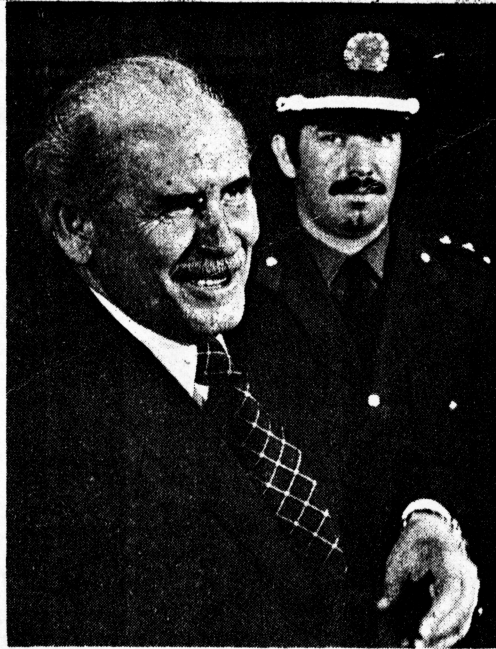
At the Karachi consulate, Consul-General Volkov had to leave for Moscow primarily because of his failure to maintain discipline among his hard-drinking, brawling staff. The first job of his successor, Anatoli Pripisnov, was to restore discipline. The KGB chief in the consulate is G. G. Vassilyev, currently in his second term in Pakistan. The other known KGB officer at the mission is N. F. Berezentsev, who organises film shows at Friendship House. With a van and the excuse of promoting Soviet-Pakistani friendship through films, he often journeys into the interior of Sindh, maintaining his contacts with local Soviet-oriented communists.

China could be another of the local Soviet targets. One of the top Soviet experts on China, V. F. Yushin, is in the Islamabad embassy as a minister. However, some argue that Yushin may actually be no more than he should be, and may have no direct link either with the KGB or GRU.

So far the Soviet intelligence machine has gathered information, recruited local agents and indulged in subversion with some caution — marred only by the brash rudeness of certain individuals. However, the reorganisation of the team has caused many Pakistanis to wonder whether, in view of the situation in Kabul, the velvet glove is due to come off.

► *A Correspondent in New Delhi adds:* The KGB continues its ham-handed operations in India, though less blatantly than it did during the premiership of Mrs Indira Gandhi. In March, the day before Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin arrived in India, *The Indian Express* ran a front-page story reporting that two Soviet diplomats had been expelled following the arrest of a former Defence Ministry official in New Delhi and a businessman in Calcutta. The newspaper alleged that the official (who was reportedly born in the Soviet Union) was passing secrets to the businessman, who was relaying them to the Soviets on his frequent trips abroad.

This story was denied, only hours before Kosygin landed, by the External



Taraki: Under pressure.

Affairs Ministry, which declared simply that there was no truth in the report that any diplomats had been declared *persona non grata* or expelled from India.

But the *Express* was not to be put off, and the following day (March 11) it admitted that it had been in error in reporting the diplomats' expulsion, because "technically speaking" they had not been expelled: New Delhi had in fact requested Moscow to withdraw the pair. The *Express* went on to name the diplomats in question as Leonid Adreyevich Zhernov, a member of the Soviet

Trade Commission in Calcutta (who was among the 100-odd Soviet spies expelled from Britain in 1971), and Yuri Razzhivin, Third Secretary at the Soviet Embassy in New Delhi. The *Express* also named the Indian nationals, who had been arrested and remanded in custody.

Subsequently, the Indian magazine *This Fortnight* commented on the incident: "Except for some red faces in South Block, there was little public response to the going-ons, something for which the well-greased Soviet machinery in India can take justified pride in. About three months back, according to sources, five Soviet diplomats were called to the External Affairs Ministry and warned for travelling and meeting people within the country, particularly for attending meetings of blatantly political nature organised by the Communist Party of India and Mrs Indira Gandhi's Congress."

The original report in the *Express* claimed that efforts by the Indian Intelligence Bureau to break the Soviet spy network, culminating in the arrest of the two Indian citizens, occurred when Foreign Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee was attending the Afro-Asian Foreign Ministers' Conference in Maputo. Thus the file went not to him but straight to Prime Minister Morarji Desai, who took immediate action not, as it turned out, by expelling the KGB agents but by requesting their withdrawal. □

## Gaining and losing ground

The unpopularity of Burma's army helps the communists but they have problems themselves

By John McBeth

**Bangkok:** Almost despite itself, the Burmese Communist Party (BCP) has entered a period of renewed growth. In the past year, particularly in the past three months, the number of new recruits to BCP ranks has increased significantly in Kengtung and Kachin states and as far west as the upper Chindwin area. Intelligence sources, who were putting the armed strength of the BCP last year at little more than 6,000, now say it is closer to 10,000.

The reason, they say, is not so much a concerted recruitment campaign, but the Burmese Army's heavy-handed approach towards the civilian population. "Relations between the army and the Shan youths are extremely hostile," says one experienced observer. "Anyone who is a teenager or above is suspect as far as the army is concerned and that

is why a lot of them have been driven underground."

But the BCP, led by its ailing China-based chairman Ba Thein Tin, does not rate highly in the popularity stakes either. "The BCP has a well-earned reputation for being racist because of its insistence that ethnic Burmese must form the leadership," says one former Shan leader familiar with the tangled politics of northeast Burma. "There is a lot of internal dissent, too. They are very dogmatic and will argue over even the smallest ideological points."

Ba Thein Tin, who is from Tavoy, southern Burma, took over the leadership after former chairman Thakin Zin and most of the main faction of the BCP were killed by Burmese troops in the Pegu Yoma mountain range in 1975. Now in his 70s, he has a lung disease which often confines him to an oxygen tent and which leaves many of the decisions in the hands of general-secretary Tin Yi and defence chief Zau Mai, a Kachin communist.

The BCP is substantially pro-Peking, a

stance emphasised by a June 1 commentary by the clandestine radio station Voice of the People of Burma. "The far-reaching territorial expansion strategy of Soviet social-imperialism has also reached Asia," said the radio station. "It has already created a 'Cuba in Asia.' With the support and encouragement of the big hegemonist, the small hegemonist is waging a war inside Kampuchea."

The broadcast went on: "Taking advantage of the political, economic and military setbacks of its rival, the United States, Soviet social-imperialism is expanding the activities of the KGB in Asia. Today, KGB conspiracies pose a grave threat to Asian countries."

But rebel sources anticipate attempts by the Vietnamese to penetrate the BCP through western Laos, where Peking's influence will probably wane following the recent expulsion of Chinese road-building engineers from the area. That view, they say, took shape about two months ago when Soviet diplomats made unsuccessful efforts to establish contact with the communist underground in Rangoon.

The BCP has a history of setbacks, starting with its failure to seize the initiative after Burma was granted independence in 1948. But a more recent case in point was its move last year to assume greater administrative control of an established Shan State Army (SSA) liberated area in southern Wa state on the Chinese border, an enclave roughly 30 miles wide and about 50 miles long which Burmese Army units have been unable to penetrate.

The SSA — Burma's biggest rebel group, with a standing army of 8,000 men — responded by announcing it was suspending direct links with the BCP. What happened, however, was a compromise under which the communists were allowed to use the enclave as a staging area in exchange for a continued flow of Chinese-supplied weapons.

The SSA came to rely almost entirely on Chinese arms after the Indochina War when the flow of smuggled weapons through Thailand began to dry up. Pictures reaching Bangkok show Shan soldiers carrying drum-fed Chinese light machine-guns, AK47 automatic rifles, B40 rocket grenades and even Chinese-made recoilless rifles based on an American design — the same weapons carried by BCP guerrillas.

Under the new arrangement, the SSA also made it clear that, while it would fight alongside the BCP on the east side of the Salween River, it would operate independently on the west side of the waterway. The SSA is not pro-communist. "It is certainly no secret that the Shans are maintaining their links with the BCP only to ensure a continued supply of Chinese arms," says one



Shan troops: *Compromise.*

source. "The BCP knows this of course, but it also realises the benefits work both ways."

Analysts say that by attempting to usurp a greater share of the power in SSA-controlled areas, the BCP appeared to be going back on a promise made several years earlier to stop imposing its will on non-Burmese rebel groups.

"The political strategy of the BCP until 1976 was to conduct armed strug-

ing the essence of their own revolutions."

The SSA maintains that the BCP needs the cooperation of indigenous ethnic rebel groups to infiltrate the Burmese lowlands and its old base areas in the Pegu Yoma range, where it could expect to find a reservoir of popular Burmese support. But Shan leaders also outline a game plan under which "the forces of democracy and nationalism" would be in a better position to thwart the ascendancy of the BCP as well as to accelerate the deterioration of President Ne Win's socialist rule.

Despite the infighting which precipitated last year's upheaval, there has been no apparent let-up in the skirmishing and pitched battles that have swirled across the northeast for the past 20 years. Battlefield reports are sketchy at best, but independent sources say combined SSA-BCP forces continue to apply pressure in the hills above Mong Ping, a valley town lying astride the vital road between Taunggyi and Kengtung, the state capital and headquarters for the 88th Light Infantry Division.

BCP guerrillas, operating alone, are also active on the approaches to Muong Yang, 18 miles north of Kengtung, which the communists held for several months in 1973 when they were at peak strength. West of the Salween, SSA units criss-cross the high plains country around Namsang, a heavily-fortified war veteran's resettlement area surrounded

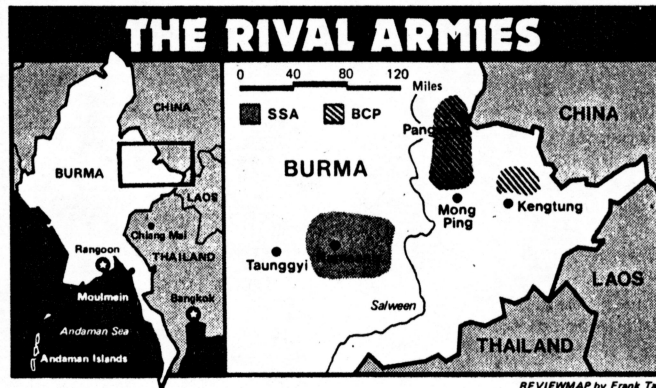
by a series of defence perimeters.

Weapons for the insurgents flow from China into Pangsang, a border town in the SSA-controlled enclave which contains the headquarters of both the SSA and the BCP. From there, they are loaded on to mules for transport into the interior.

The Burmese

Army, for its part, has been engaged in a six-month offensive in the northern Shan states in a concerted effort to drive a wedge between the BCP and the civilian population. The operation is being carried out by the Lashio-based 99th division and is in the same general area where both sides took heavy losses during a major battle in late 1977.

Further north, an estimated 3-4,000 BCP insurgents have made deep inroads into Kachin state, skirting Indaw Lake — the biggest in Burma — and penetrating into the upper Chindwin valley. Sources say there is almost daily harassment of the northern stretch of the 250-mile railway between Mandalay and the remote northern outpost of Myitk-yina. □



gle against the central government and, on the other hand, to impose its hegemony over various non-Burmese nationalist revolutionary forces through political pressure and blackmail," said the SSA in a little-known statement issued at that time. "If that strategy seemed over-ambitious and cocky, it was also partially impractical and, on whole, naive.

"The non-Burmese rebel groups fight for national freedom, while the BCP fights for national power. The two aims are not only opposites, but they are also in direct conflict. If the non-Burmese groups yield to BCP political pressure and blackmail and allow themselves to be absorbed into the BCP, they will in fact be selling out their aims and negat-