



AN EXPLORATION OF THE TROPES OF INSURGENCY IN DILIP BORA'S NOVEL '*THE RISING SUN*': A STORY RETOLD

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ABSTRACT

Dilip Bora's novel 'Apaharan', translated for the first time in English as 'The Rising Sun' throws light on a turbulent phase of Assam involving the demand of political sovereignty. In the build up to this crisis was a long period of agitation in the state demanding the safeguarding of the traditional values and culture of the indigenous people of the state, which were deemed to be at a risk due to the constant influx of people speaking other languages, viz. Bengali and Hindi in particular. The Assamese culture was threatened by the growing numbers of outsiders in the state which resulted in people from different spheres joining hand in a protest. In this period of agitation, student leaders took the front seat while the movement got widespread support across the state.

INTRODUCTION

After a period of six years of agitation, an accord was signed between the Central government and the student leaders, who thereby formed the ruling political party of the state. However, owing to their lack of experience, they could not rule in harmony and chaos ensued thereafter. There were frequent news of explosions, train accidents etc. coming from various places of the state rendering the situation more oppressive day by day. The youth of the state was misled and misguided to form insurgent groups which demanded the independence of the state. Cases of kidnapping and demand for ransom increased for the financial support of such

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groups to purchase arms and ammunitions. Armed rebellion was aimed at overthrowing the existing rule and the creation of a sovereign state. Such rebel groups got both active and passive support as they vowed to restore the values of the Assamese community and traditions.

An intensely socio-political novel, 'The Rising Sun' features a free-flowing plot and covers a wide range of characters, from students to political leaders and from policemen to businessmen. The novel is divided into twenty nine chapters within which a number of incidents are described in detail in their relation to the chief theme of insurgency. The central character around whom the novel moves right from the beginning till the end is Rahul Barua, a Degree student of the most renowned college in the capital city of the state. Hailing from a rural background of Tihu, Rahul is a bright student who manages to secure a seat in the most famous college of the city due to his merit. As the title suggests, he is a rising sun, a shining prospect. As a student, he stands out also due to his leadership qualities which enables him to contest the college elections and earn the prestigious post of the General Secretary of the Students' Union. He becomes instantly popular and widely respected. However, his extraordinary talent attracted the attention of another section of people, the group that had taken oath under the flag of the rising sun and taken up arms to liberate the multitudes of the state from the bondage of the rulers in the capital of the country. The Organization had vowed to bring in a new dawn in the lives of the people in the state and their ideals attracted Rahul. Under the new identity of Pradipta Chetia, Rahul joined the Organization. During the Puja break, Pradipta Chetia spent two weeks at the Organization's camp and was introduced to the high ideals of revolutionary leaders like Che Guevara, Mao Tse Tung, Fidel Castro and Ho Chi Min. The Organization initiated a massive drive to recruit new members. The entire state was divided into zones and some selected youth leaders were given additional responsibilities. School and College dropouts were drawn towards the golden opportunity. Arms and ammunitions came in bulk from China, Pakistan and Myanmar. Bank loots, kidnappings, extortions of industrial executives and executive businessmen were organized to collect funds. Pradipta Chetia was given the charge of the city unit. The number of visitors to Rahul's room throughout the day increased and his servant Ramu became his trusted aide. The Organization received media attention and they targeted the corrupt officials and businessmen. The Organization got due honour in foreign soils as well which had been bitter enemies to the country all along. Rahul Barua shifted from his college hostel to a new house beside the Brahmaputra in order to start an office of the 'Rising Sun'. However, its name was not displayed anywhere. Incidents of kidnapping and extortion by Rahul's Organization increased. Tea garden owners, businessmen and entrepreneurs received demand notes on the Organization's letter heads with the symbol of the 'Rising Sun'. Tension prevailed everywhere and there were newspaper reports that many of those people had gone away from the state. Managers and employees of businessmen were being killed. Rahul's new den saw an increase in the numbers of new visitors.

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Rahul became involved in a romantic relationship with a girl from his college named Rashmirekha Choudhury. Rahul used the girl to satisfy his own needs. On his instructions, Rashmi even stole sulphuric acid and nitric acid which Rahul handed over to his Organization for preparing bombs. The first instance of terrorism mentioned in the text was the explosion that took place at the railway station. The condition was indescribable. Organs of human beings were scattered around, fragments of burnt flesh were stuck to the carts selling tea, blood flowing out from the dead and wounded thickened on the heaps of cloths thrown out of the ripped suitcases. There was accumulated blood in the hole on the platform caused by the explosion. To tackle the deteriorating law and order situation, CRPF and forces were brought in from outside. Police were patrolling on the streets for several days. However, there is no mention that this explosion was caused by Rahul's group. Pradipta Chetia got involved with the chief editor of 'Dainik Jugadhdhani' Nabin Duarah, who was a senior member of the Organization's Central Committee. Several journalists, politicians and even policemen secretly joined the Organization.

The major instances of insurgency of the Organization were the demand letters for ransom handed to one engineer Partha Goswami and another businessman Mahavir Jain. The plan was to kidnap both of them and extract the money. While Partha Goswami was successfully abducted by Pradipta Chetia's group at the behest of Nabin Duarah, Mahavir Jain's case was mixed up. Rahul's servant Ramu was sent to inspect Mahavir's building when in the turn of incidents, Ramu shot down Anita Jain, Mahavir Jain's wife. Following the two incidents, police began taking strict action. Every vehicles and even pedestrians were searched. However the culprits could not be nabbed. Even though Ramu was eventually caught at the railway station and from his statements, it became clear that the student leader Rahul Barua and the rebel Pradipta Chetia are the one and same person. Rahul managed to get away. Police action became ineffective and the case could not be closed. Even Nabin Duarah's link with the Organization could not be traced. Hence, the investigation could not go on track for long, despite a special investigation team being formed. The fact that Rahul Barua was also a top ranking and influential leader of the Organization, demanding independence and sovereignty for the state, made many in the country sit up and take notice. Heated discussions took place amongst the so called intellectuals and socio-political theorists on the very influential role played by the student organizations in the state politics. The common people, though didn't express it openly, seemed to have supported the Organization in both the cases. They opined that most of the money allotted for the development of the state were cornered by the highly corrupt officials like Partha Goswamis and hoarders and black marketers like Mahavir Jains. In their opinion whatever had happened was just retribution for their unpardonable sins. They quietly expressed their satisfaction that Rahul Barua aka Pradipta Chetia managed to expertly get away.



The state was burning as fresh incidents of violence were taking place here and there. Other than Rahul's Organization, few more insurgent organizations were springing up in different parts of the state. Total chaos reigned in those areas. Frequent incidents of explosions, attack on buses and trains, abductions etc. were reported. In time, the Organization changed its character. It was realized that it was quite impossible to run the struggle for independence living in foreign soil. Besides arms and ammunitions, a lot many things were required. The funds collected earlier dwindled under pressure from the Central government. To quell the rebellion, army and central para military forces were deployed and the draconian Armed Forces Special Power Act was promulgated in the state. That put a stop to the Organization's source of funds. Further rift was caused in the Organization and the support for it dwindled. Rahul gave up his dream of making the state independent and got in touch with Duarah for an honourable return to the mainstream. Duarah brought the proposal of Rahul's surrender to the CM. Pradipta Chetia surrendered with fifty of his colleagues to the government in the presence of the Home Minister and the CM. The ordinary citizens who had to suffer long for the violent situation of the state, felt relieved that some kind of peace would be possible after the surrender of such a large group of rebels. Rahul Barua took charge of the post of General Secretary of the ruling party. Finally, the scheme of true democracy and great development was ushered in.

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