

in the September/October "Mediafile" shows a woman cowering in the face of threatening advances from a man, as published in Unicef's *The Progress of Nations* 1997.

The image was part of a series, by a male Bangladeshi photojournalist, documenting the lives of a group of prostitutes in Dhaka. Ironically, your derisive suggestion - that the woman is shielding her face with her hands in response to off-key singing by the man - underscores the very message of the essay that the photograph illustrated: Violence against women, the most pervasive human rights violation in the world today, continues because women are so undervalued that society is largely blind to violations against them. And when society does take notice, its response is often to blame or belittle the victim.

Your piece illustrates just how far we have to go: If the enlightened editors of a publication dedicated to analysis of social issues don't 'get it', what hope is there for the masses?

*Catharine Way, Editor*

*The Progress of Nations 1997  
Unicef, New York*

Himal's editors certainly believe that violence against women is heinous. The point being made by columnist Chhetria Patrakar was that Unicef printed the wrong picture to depict



the subject. In fact, we have come to know reliably that the woman in the picture was turning her face away from the camera, not cowering before the man in right frame.

### **Don't pick your nose**

Anyone coming to Nepal these days is overwhelmed by the amount of literature intended to publicise Visit Nepal '98. While not delving into why there should be so much publicity within the country about the event, since tourists who are in Nepal are already "visiting Nepal", I would like to share with your readers the contents of a leaflet which left me flabbergasted.

Titled *Nepal Bhraman Barsha* (Visit Nepal Year) and in the Nepali language, the leaflet is meant to tell Nepalis how they should comport themselves when foreigners are around. I paraphrase: "Please don't pick your nose and ears in front of foreigners"; "Do not spit everywhere, and hawking is disgusting; the noise is disturbing to others"; "Let us not show the uncultured behaviour of urinating and defecating in public when we need to observe the call of nature"; "Let us not covet the goods of others, nor stare at the tourist so that it is difficult for him"; "Don't displease the tourist you have just met by asking him about his income and domestic affairs".

Just a few more: "When talking with a foreigner, do not touch his body", and "Do not hasten to shake the hand of a female traveller until she has offered hers". And finally, as if any Nepali villager has to be told this, "When you see a tired and fatigued traveller, bid him sit down and make him welcome".

I do not wish to make any comment other than to point out that Nepal is more civilised and sensitive than the writer(s) of the booklet understand, and foreigners too are more adaptable than are imagined by those who seem to be managing Visit Nepal '98.

*Mark Turin*

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## Marx, Mao and the Maulana

*About Maulana Bhashani, writes  
Contributing Editor from Dhaka,  
Afsan Chowdhury.*

In "How the Pakistani Left Missed the Bus" (September/October 1997), Mazhar Zaidi has presented some facets of pre-1971 Pakistani Left politics which are not generally known in Bangladesh. I would, however, like to add some notes on Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani which may illuminate some of the points Zaidi makes in his article.

Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani was a peasant leader and the link between East and West Pakistani Leftists from the late 1950s and later, when the Moscow-Peking split occurred, between the Maoists. But he was not an ideologue. In fact, his leaning was more towards the anti-British Wahabi movement that swept Bengal and parts of India in the middle of the 19th century. (This was the unsuccessful revolt in which half-literate peasants built a massive rural network and support base.) Bhashani's alliance with the Left in Pakistan was more of a reaction against the elite class and the establishment. It was a marriage of convenience, and it did not work out in the end.

### **Peasant leader**

Bhashani became prominent by championing the cause of migrant and local Muslims during the "anti-demarcation line movement" in Assam during British rule. He was responsible for holding a referendum in Assam which led to the addition of Sylhet district to what became East Pakistan. But the one meeting this lungi-clad peasant leader had with M.A. Jinnah didn't go