

contribution to urban anthropology. Crafting an understanding of sexual labour that reflects the intricacies of rural-urban migration, the book sheds light on the management of knowledge around sex work, from secrecy to the rehabilitation of “rescued” prostitutes, and shows how spaces occupied by women sex workers have multiple uses and meanings in Mumbai’s contested urban landscape.

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THE FIRST NAXAL: An Authorised Biography of Kanu Sanyal. By **Bappaditya Paul.** New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2014. xiv, 249 pp. US\$68.00, paper. ISBN 978-81-321-1787-2.

For anyone interested in the radical left in India, Bappaditya Paul’s *The First Naxal* is an important book. It is not that the book is an accurate history of the Naxalite movement, or that it is a well thought through sociological analysis of Sanyal’s life and works. It is, however, a sincere attempt to portray the emergence of the Naxalite movement as Sanyal wanted it to be seen towards the end of his life. Paul conducted more than 121 interviews with Sanyal over three years but more significantly we are told that Sanyal personally read and cleared all its chapters except for the last one about his death. As such, the biography itself is an important historic artefact of the Naxalite movement.

Paul covers the span of Sanyal’s life beginning with his birth in Kurseong in the Darjeeling hills in 1929 into a middle-class family (his father was a court clerk) and his initial recruitment as a revenue collection clerk. This early history is interlaced with his enchantment with the radical Indian Congress leader Subhas Chandra Bose, then the banned Communist Party which led to his political mobilization, and subsequently, inspired by Charu Mazumdar, giving up his family and becoming a party “whole-timer” in 1951.

His various stints in jail began a year earlier in 1950 and all of them fascinatingly led to Sanyal meeting different incarcerated communist leaders, intense political discussion, and his political formation. There are narrations of much of the organizational work that Sanyal and his co-workers undertook amongst peasants and tea plantation workers in Darjeeling District, though sadly we don’t get much of an understanding of those communities themselves, the contradictions and differences between them, and the challenges of working with them.

One of the most fascinating accounts of Sanyal’s life history is his trip with three other comrades in 1967 on foot across the Himalayas into China to meet the mystical Chairman Mao, their warm reception by the People’s Liberation Army there, the theoretical and military training they received, and their eventual meeting with the great leader and the advice they received from him. “Forget everything you have learnt here in China. Once back in

Naxalbari, formulate your own revolutionary strategies, keeping in mind the ground realities over there" (130), Sanyal recalled Mao to have said.

Perhaps the most overwhelming theme that comes across is an attempt to correct historical representation of the leadership of the Naxalbari uprisings. Usually portrayed as an uprising of peasants and workers in 1967, here the rebellion is traced back to the organizing that Sanyal and other communist leaders undertook amongst tea plantation workers and peasants in Darjeeling District in the decade before. It is Sanyal that is shown as the mastermind and main force of this grassroots organization, challenging conventional accounts which portray Mazumdar as the architect of the Naxalbari uprisings, with Sanyal being his "lieutenant."

A key rift between Mazumdar and Sanyal, unknown to both their grassroots workers and the "outside" world at the time, is unveiled as having chequered the history of the movement. Mazumdar is argued to have been against nurturing mass organizations, seeing them as "revisionist tools that would weaken the revolutionary zeal of the comrades" (86) and to have focused instead on the formation of small combat groups that would secretly annihilate those they saw as enemies (landlords and high-level state officials). Sanyal, on the other hand, proposed that armed insurrection and annihilation of class enemies should only take place after mass agitations and it is argued that it was this that was crucial to the success of the 1967 uprisings. It is Mazumdar who, however, became seen as the leader of the movement because of the "Historic Eight Documents" he wrote in 1965–1966 against revisionism and because throughout many of the crucial phases of the movement, when Sanyal and others were busy organizing the peasantry "underground," he was bedridden and therefore easily accessible to the world outside, it is claimed. In Sanyal's eyes, Mazumdar "exploited" this opportunity to propagate his version of the strategy and "wrongly projected this as the true spirit of Naxalbari movement, and for obvious reasons this got widely publicized in the news media" (105). Although Sanyal is keen to remove the heritage of Naxalbari from those who today are most visibly seen as bearers of its torch, the Communist Party of India (Maoist) (he discredits them as "left adventurists"), in the context of today's extreme state repression, it is the tension between armed violence and mass organization which plagues today's revolutionary struggle.

Scattered throughout the book are what appear to be the laments of a bitter old man wanting to correct history by sowing the seeds of doubt about the revolutionary credentials of Mazumdar into the potential Naxalite zealot. Mazumdar is portrayed as a "left adventurist," a "dogmatic," someone who willfully ignored and sidelined crucial comrades, and perhaps even had them conveniently jailed in 1966 (this is the suggestion on page 92). Perhaps none of this is entirely out of the ordinary—Sumanta Banerjee's *In the Wake of Naxalbari* (Subarnarekha, 1980) has already presented the rift between them—but what is unexpected is that Sanyal wanted this to be the

central feature of this biography and that he sought instead to be recognized as the “founder” of the movement. This is surprising because, apart from one exception to which I will return, the narrations of Sanyal’s life suggest that—like many of today’s Naxalites—he had sacrificed himself for the cause. This meant not only giving up his family, but also giving up any desire to be personally recognized or credited for his self-sacrifice, erasing the sense of an ego and replacing any individualism with the contentment and pride of being seen as just a point in the making of history.

Why, then, at the end of his life, the desire to wear the trophy of the “First Naxal”? Is this a consequence of the artistic freedom of the author? Or is it the pressures of a publisher to sell the book with a catchy hook? Or is it because, at the end of his life, Sanyal had finally given up on the revolutionary cause? Though he was seriously unwell, Sanyal is shown to have ended his life with an act which today’s bearers of the Naxalbari struggle see as the opposite of sacrifice, the ultimate act of selfishness, the killing of the revolution as embodied in oneself: suicide. Although the Central Committee of his party do not accept it, Sanyal is said to have hung himself from a ceiling fan at his office and home at Sebdella Jote, Siliguri, in March 2010. The irony is that of course in allowing Paul Bappaditya to author his biography as “The First Naxal,” Sanyal has given oxygen to the embers of the Naxalbari revolution that still live on by generating further interest in its revolutionary cause.

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SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION: Non-Traditional Security Crises and Cooperation. *Routledge Contemporary Southeast Asia Series, 67.* By *Naila Maier-Knapp*. London; New York: Routledge, 2015. xvii, 140 pp. (Figures, tables.) US\$145.00, cloth. ISBN 978-1-13-877637-1.

Naila Maier-Knapp raises a set of interesting policy questions in this book on Asian-EU relations: one crucial question is whether the EU contributes to security in Southeast Asia. More generally, the book addresses questions such as the following: Are there crises that lend themselves better to promoting a truly cooperative relationship between regions? Does an engagement in so-called non-traditional security (NTS) increase the visibility of an external actor and change perceptions about it as a security actor? And: is crisis a mechanism contributing to greater integration on an intraregional level? In answering these questions, the book looks particularly at crises that have affected Southeast Asia, how the EU responds to such crises, what kinds of instruments it develops, what motivates its behaviour (instrumental interests or norms) and whether the engagement of the EU in Southeast Asia enhances not only its visibility in Southeast Asia, but also contributes to strengthening