

Plea for Courage and Sanity

M. R. Masani, M.P.

IN this Gandhi Centenary Year, I hope the Finance Minister would agree that a test by which we may invite this House to judge his budget proposals should be one that was prescribed long ago by Mahatma Gandhi. I would like to invite this House to test it by the yardstick which Gandhiji had very nobly placed before the people long ago. He said at that time:-

"I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain control over his own life and destiny?"

I think it would not be unfair to judge these budget proposals by its effect on the lowest and the poorest and the humblest of our people. Now, if we accept that test the question is, what are the basic facts against which we apply this test?

A recent National Sample Survey came to the conclusion that only one out of three Indians has one rupee a day to spend on himself. If he lives in a village, his average income is 50 paise per day. While 35 per cent of the people in the towns can afford to spend a rupee a day, only 15 per cent of the rural population can afford to do so. What is sadder is that since 1952, the proportion of the people who do not have one rupee a day has unfortunately not dropped at all. Therefore, applying this test, I am driven to the conclusion that the classes of people to whom I should like to apply this test would be the agriculturist, by whom I mean the small farmer or the landless worker in the villages on the one hand, and the lower middle class and the working class in the cities on the other.

So far as the urban classes are concerned, we can call them the consumers, and what they have gone through in the last 20 years we all know. The lower middle class in particular, who do not have any dear-

ness allowance, have been ground down year after year by increasing taxation and inflation. While the income of this class is relatively fixed, their costs have gone up many times and, by increasing the income tax and the excise duties in this budget again on various needs of life, I am afraid this budget is going to hit the lower middle class of the towns and the cities still further.

The facts about agriculturists, I find from reading newspapers and journals, are not as well known. For generations, under the British and under our own independent government, the rural population has been ground down, neglected and drained of what Karl Marx would have called the "surplus value" of their labour, for the benefit of the urban people. Gandhiji used to say: "We of the towns and cities will do everything for the man in the villages except get off his back". If I may say so, even under the slogans of "socialism" today, we of the cities have not got off the back of the rural population. The parity of prices till about two years ago was unfair to the rural population. While their prices were artificially controlled, restricted and held down by zonal barriers, compulsory procurement and other controls, the prices the agriculturist had to pay in the market were not similarly controlled. He had to pay more and more for the needs of his life and for agriculture.

The farmer has just come out of his troubles after two bad monsoons, which in Bihar and other parts of the country actually led to famine. He is trying to get on his feet and to recoup his loss. Even now he has to pay higher prices for inputs.

The controlled price of fertiliser mixture in India today is Rs. 860 per tonne. The corresponding cost of mixtures from imported fertilizers varies from Rs. 490 to Rs. 560 per tonne. The Administrative Reforms Commission's Study Team on Agricultural Administration gave some very revealing figures. It said, that the quantity of rice an Indian farmer has to find to buy one kilogram of fertilizer is 3.8 kg. of rice in India, while it is 1.47 in the USA, 1.8 in Japan and only 0.85 in Pakistan. In other words, the Pakistani farmer gets his fertiliser at nearly a fifth of the price at which our peasant gets it.

The position is even worse in regard to pumping sets. Government fails to provide irrigation to the larger area of cultivated land in India even today. Pumping sets are a form of self-help, cheap and more economical than large river valley projects, by which the farmer tries to solve his problem and the country's

problem. He, therefore, deserves every encouragement and appreciation for showing that initiative. And yet, the price of the pumping set he is allowed to buy is twice the price he would pay if it were allowed to be imported. An Indian-made oil engine and pumping set of 3 HP for irrigation costs Rs. 2390. An imported German set costs Rs. 1172. A Japanese set costs even less. In other words, we are making him pay even today, before the budget, the price of two sets for one set.

Is this the time to impose any further excise on fertilizer or pumping sets? I ask the Finance Minister, in all good conscience, is this the time? Against this background, is this social justice of any kind? Is this an encouragement to solve the food problem? The amount is not only Rs. 22 crores, as some scribes in our press would have it. Rs. 22 crores is the yield of the excise on fertilizer. There is a corresponding amount of Rs. 25 crores more from countervailing customs duty, totalling Rs. 47 crores. It is a little while back that the subsidy on fertilizers was removed, adding another Rs. 37 crores to the peasants' burden. Therefore, for fertilizers alone, the peasants of India will now have to pay Rs. 84 crores more than they were paying this time last year.

Now it seems that the Finance Minister has evidently yielded to the pressure of those mad men in the Planning Commission who have ruined our economy during the last decade. They, of course, wanted a 15 per cent duty and the Finance Minister, probably fighting a rear-guard battle against these half-baked Marxists whom we have had to suffer from the days of Mahalanobis and others, has accepted ten per cent as a compromise. Even so, I have no hesitation in saying that the duties on both fertilizer and pumping sets are wicked, and shall oppose both of them to the end.

I say that our peasant needs a fair deal for a little while; there will be ample time to tax him then. Let there be some time for the green revolution to establish itself, to assert itself, though I have my own doubts about its success. We all welcome the green revolution; but let there be time for it to establish itself, stabilise itself. Today the peasant is still vulnerable to one bad monsoon. When one bad monsoon can hit him, is this the time to impose taxes and further taxes on him?

There are two other levies and taxes in the Budget proposals which I would like to dispose of before I continue my argument. One is the levy on petrol, which again hits the rural people because we cannot have the Green Revolution unless there are roads, trucks and buses to carry grain into the cities and to carry consumer goods to the villages. So, the levy on petrol and lubricants is another wicked impost in this Budget. The tax on petrol has been raised year after year. The oil companies have charged only 19 paise

per litre of petrol while the tax was 75 paise or 395 per cent of the cost of the petrol that we buy. The current proposal means an additional tax on motor spirit amounting to 3½ p. per truck-mile and on lubricants amounting to 1 p. per truck-mile, that is, 4½ p. in addition. This would mean that the tax will be 430 per cent. The Government takes away more than four times what the cost of the article is. This amounts to 1 p. per tonne mile on goods moved by road.

It is alleged that in the Fourth Plan we are shifting the emphasis to agriculture and that agriculture has obtained priority over industry. I would welcome such a development. But the official figures do not confirm this. Where is the shift so loudly proclaimed? In the Third Plan, agriculture got 20.4 per cent of the outlay of the Plan whereas industry got 20.09 per cent. Let us say they were running neck to neck, which was bad enough because 70 per cent of the people of our country depend on agriculture. The Annual Plan document for 1968-69 (page 13) gives figures that show that while agriculture, community development and irrigation received 20.6 per cent, industry big and small, 24.8 per cent. If there has been a shift, it is in the direction of industry and away from agriculture, not the other way about. About the Fourth Plan, we do not have official figures. But the press reports which probably are authentic, make out that in the Fourth Plan agriculture will receive 20.9 per cent while industry will get 22.3 per cent. In other words, the loudly proclaimed myth that the Prime Minister and the Government have at last learnt the lesson, that agriculture is taking the first place, is not borne out by their own official figures.

The budget fails to meet the challenge posed by our present economic plight. What is the plight? The basic fact in our economic life today is the continuous fall in the savings of the people. The savings of the individual and the collectivity of our people have been going down as a result of the economic policies of this Government. The Economic Survey at pp. 21-22 shows a decline in the ratio of total domestic savings to national income from about 10 per cent in 1965-66 to around 8 per cent in 1967-68.

Now, I would have thought that the basic task of this budget would be to correct this fall in the savings of the people and to give them a lift. In this context, the main task of the budget should have been to stimulate the accumulation of savings in the pockets of the people for investment in agriculture on the one hand and industry on the other. Unfortunately, all that this budget does is to divert yet another Rs. 100 crores from the savings of the people to the sterile coffers of Government where nothing is bred except despair.

Today, already nothing less than 63 to 70 per cent of the investible income of the Indian people is taken

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Notes

Unwise and Irresponsible

Mr. S. S. Dhawan's appointment as the Governor of Bengal is both unwise and irresponsible. The Government of India act many a time in an unwise manner. But nobody could have imagined that they could be so irresponsible as to place at the head of the administration in a vital State like Bengal a person who cannot be relied upon to uphold in a resolute manner the principle of impartial democratic administration.

There can be no doubt about the political colour of Mr. Dhawan. He was for a long time a well-known fellow-traveller of the Communists. For a number of years he wrote in *National Herald* under the pen name "Sanjay" articles peddling the communist line. He has made no secret of his admiration for Russia and China and for the system of government prevailing in those countries.

On the issue of China's invasion of Tibet he wrote in 1950: "The interests of India are not directly involved, and the question of our making a protest simply does not arise. The propaganda about Chinese 'aggression' in Tibet is completely baseless." Continuing he wrote: "I have no doubt that the people of Tibet will benefit greatly as a result of closer contact between Tibet and China. Tibet is one of the most backward countries in the world. . . . All this will change under Chinese rule. Tibet will now share the benefits of civilisation like all the other countries in Central Asia which have passed under Communist rule." These views of Mr. Dhawan have great relevance in the present conditions obtaining in Bengal and adjacent areas. There is no reason to believe that there has been any change in his views since then.

It was on this ground and more particularly on the ground of anti-British sentiments expressed by Mr. Dhawan on several occasions that his appointment as High Commissioner for India in Great Britain came under severe criticism in many quarters. The appointment did not turn out to be particularly useful or successful. And now he is being shifted to a far more important and strategic post.

Under our Constitution and system of government, Governors have a significant role to play. They are the representatives of the President and the Central Government and are charged with the task of ensuring that the rights and liberties of the people are not violated and that the administration is carried on in an impartial, efficient and lawful manner. The task and the obligation become far more important when a party or a combination of parties having little respect for the rules and conventions of parliamentary demo-

cracy come to power in a State. That is what has happened in Bengal. The situation is all the more alarming because of the declared sympathies of the dominant partner of the coalition with the aims, objects and practices of Chinese Communists. In this situation will Mr. Dhawan be able to discharge the duty that he owes to the Constitution and the country as the Governor of a State? There is likely to be a grave conflict between his sympathies and convictions on one hand and his obligations on the other. The Government of India ought not to have placed him in this embarrassing position.

Or is it appeasement of the United Front Government by giving them a Governor, if not of their choice, of a type to whom they are not likely to have any objection? The Government of India should know that appeasement never pays. One concession always leads to another until the whole ground is given away. By the appointment of Mr. Dhawan, they have given away a lot of valuable ground to Communists and their allies. They have denied to the people of Bengal the constitutional protection of impartial administration to which they are entitled. And they have denied to the country the vital check that can be exercised through the Governor on the misbehaviour and anti-national activities of a State Government. The Government of India could not have taken a more ill-advised step.

Will Congress Survive?

It is a pity that, while all and sundry are combining against the Congress to defeat it at the polls and to embarrass and humiliate it thereafter, the Congress is still sitting impassive and indolent, unable to take into account the significant changes that have taken place in the political climate in the country. The various factions in the organisation are merrily carrying on their faction fights and important individual leaders do not think anything wrong in carrying on mud-slinging campaigns against each other. At this rate, the Congress may not survive too long either as a national unifying force or as the premier political party in the country. The situation is still not beyond repair and it is to be hoped that farsighted amongst Congress leaders will realise the impending danger and take steps to avert it.

However, it is high time the Congress realises that it is no longer possible for it to claim a monopoly position in the country. It must be prepared to share power with other parties and groups. It must find out who amongst the various parties and groups are nearest to it and then take steps to forge an alliance with them. It must be an alliance arrived at openly and on the basis of a commonly accepted programme and policy. There is plenty of scope for forging such alliances in the various States and also on the national level. If the Congress adopts this realistic course, it can save itself and also help the survival of democracy.

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away by the Government for relatively unproductive purposes. The State sector's share as a percentage of total investment in the First Plan was 46.4. In the Second Plan it rose to 54.6 per cent, and in the Third Plan to 63.1 per cent. So 63 per cent goes away out of the investible, productive pool. We cannot tolerate this in the interests of our national economy. What follows, therefore, is that if we had the responsibility, we would cut down taxation, both direct and indirect, drastically and restore the balance.

At that point I will be asked: 'how will you meet the need of expenditure?' The answer is: 'We would not, because much of this expenditure should not be met, should not be incurred'.

The real weakness of the budget is on the expenditure side. That is where all the mistakes start. Tremendous cuts can be made. The Hon. Minister's predecessor Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari, once said that Rs. 300 crores could be cut out, but he did not try, nor has anyone else since then. I am sorry to say that the present Finance Minister has made no effort, has shown neither the capability nor the courage to deal with the vested interests in the other spending Ministries who are holding the country to ransom today.

He has permitted an increase of Rs. 91 crores in defence expenditure over last year's budget estimates.

We in the Public Accounts Committee presented a report to this House. The Public Accounts Committee does not want the defence of this country to be harmed by a hair's breadth, but after examining the matter, seeing the work of the ordnance factories and other departments, we said in our Report that a large cut — I myself placed at Rs. 100 crores could be made in defence expenditure, without decreasing the fire power of the effective defence of the country by an iota.

In non-plan expenditure, there is an increase of Rs. 141 crores. Civil expenditure has gone up from Rs. 298 to Rs. 363 crores. According to Dr. I. J. Patel, the plan expenditure is Rs. 100 crores more than last year. The biggest white elephant, Bokaro, has got not less than Rs. 170 crores. The Finance Minister says this is "inevitable". It is not inevitable. If there was leadership in the Government, if there was courage, if there was economic sanity in the Government, nothing of this nature would be inevitable.

—Extracts from a speech in Parliament in the discussion on Budget.



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Pakistan In Turmoil

Adam Adil

THE inevitable has happened. President Ayub Khan has stepped down, martial law has been declared and military rule has returned once again in Pakistan. A new military dictator, General Yahya Khan has taken over.

It was quite obvious that Pakistan was in a state of turmoil. The foundations of the ten-year-rule of President Ayub Khan were being shaken. The Pakistani students had been on the war path. The opposition parties—about eight of them—had combined into a front—the Democratic Action Committee to spearhead peoples' opposition to the Ayub Government. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was out to destroy his former Chief and reverse Pakistan's internal and external policies. Pakistani women, in or out of *pardah* had come in the streets to lend a feminine touch to the anti-Ayub agitation.

When Ayub Khan succeeded Iskandar Mirza over a decade ago, hopes were universally raised that Pakistan would be out of the mess politicians had made of its political life. It was expected that corruption would be a matter of the past and Pakistani public life would be cleaned. It was also thought that Pakistan would have a stable government and there would be closer integration between Pakistan's Eastern and Western wings, with the result East Bengal would no longer suffer from a sense of grievance.

But the ten-year-rule had belied the hopes raised by Ayub when he had taken over. Political life had once again become a mess; although there was what was grandiloquently termed 'basic democracy', people did not enjoy full political freedom. Ayub was still a dictator though not as harsh as Hitler, totalitarian as Stalin. Newspapers were controlled and the freedom of expression and association was restricted. Political opposition to the government was put down with an iron hand. Corruption had returned at all levels of administration. Although President Ayub enjoyed the reputation of being above board, his son, Gauhar Ayub, was known to have "minted" money, not all by fair means. No work could be got done within reasonable time unless officials were bribed; even a sepoy would demand his price to take a visitor's card inside 'Saheb's' cabin.

Apparently, there was political stability, but internal political conditions pointed to the contrary. In West Pakistan, regional sentiments had grown—the Sindhis, Punjabis, Baluchis and Peshawaris looked upon one another with suspicion. The Sindhis who are poor, indolent and less literate (unlike Sindhi Hindus in India) resented Punjabi domination in the West Pakistani administration. The Baluchis and Peshawaris

too had a score to settle with the Punjabis, apart from their sympathies for Pakhtoon movement, led by Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, now in Kabul. Again, the Sindhis, Punjabis, Baluchis and Peshawaris together hated the Indians who had migrated there and now occupied a significant place in industrial and commercial life of Pakistan. The fact that some of the educated Muslim emigrants from U.P., Bombay and other parts of India have distinguished themselves as lawyers, doctors, engineers and educationists was an eye-sore to the original sons of the soil. This mutual suspicion and distrust between various sections of the people living in West Pakistan had led to a total lack of social cohesion and common identity. Therefore, the very purpose for which the former States were abolished had been defeated. It is true that the scramble for power which was intense when the States were existing was now less, but this very fact led to the people's frustration with the Ayub regime.

In addition, the disillusionment of the Eastern wing with the Western wing of Pakistan was a known fact. East Bengal as its name should really be, is more populous than Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and North-West Province put together. The ratio being 56 : 44. East Bengal also contributes greater share to Pakistani exchequer; with its export of jute it earns more foreign exchange. But its share in the administrative services and obviously in the army, was much less than that of West Pakistan. Again, while West Pakistan was being developed economically both in the fields of industry and agriculture, East Bengal suffered from a measure of neglect. It received less share from the central outlay for its development. As a result, in spite of its numerical superiority and its key position in Pakistani economy, East Bengal remained a sort of colony of West Pakistan.

Naturally, this state of affairs was deeply resented by the people of East Pakistan. Some East Pakistanis thought of drastic measures to correct the imbalance between the Western and Eastern wings of the country. They thought in terms of secession and independence from the rest of Pakistan. Others thought in terms of complete autonomy. Yet others desired reunion with West Bengal, even if it meant a return to the Indian Union—those who thought in this way were not, however, appreciable in number.

The movement for secession and independence was not insignificant; it was confined to a wide spectrum of East Pakistani public. The authorities at Rawalpindi were anxious to nip this movement in the bud. Their anxiety was understandable. But instead of adopting persuasive methods to mollify the East Pakistani

public opinion, they took recourse to repressive measures with the result the movement for secession and independence gained new momentum.

One of the ways adopted by the government to suppress the movement for secession was to involve a number of politically important East Pakistanis into conspiracy cases. Most of these conspiracy cases were obviously concocted, and generally the people were not unaware of their real character. This fact added to people's resentment and led to bitterness. A conspiracy case was manipulated in Agarthala against Shaikh Mujibur Rehman. The demand for the withdrawal of the case against him was so strong and insistent that the government had no alternative but to eat humble pie and release him.

The government also tried to seal off East Pakistan from even the cultural influences from the Bengal part of the Indian Union. The literary creations in Bengali by popular West Bengal authors were banned in East Pakistan. Even the presentation of the songs of Rabindranath Tagore were made a taboo on Radio Pakistan. It was only when the government realised that they had raised a hornet's nest by their action that Tagore's songs reappeared on the air.

Naturally, the turmoil that resulted from the discontentment of the people in both the wings of Pakistan found expression in anti-Ayub agitation. Politicians like Zulfikar Ali Bhutto were not found wanting in exploiting the situation. The game of the politicians was not only to destroy the edifice of basic democracy, but to strike at the roots of Ayub's internal and external policies. Firstly, Ayub's pro-Western policies were made the target of attack. Secondly, he was made to appear that he was out to remain in power at all costs. Bhutto in West Pakistan and Bhashani in East were pro-Chinese, and were even impressed by Chinese antipathy towards the Russians. They hated the West and also had no love for the Russians. They spoke highly of Chinese achievements and described Mao Tse-tung as a great Asian leader. Also they disliked India and constantly raised a scare that India was on the verge of grabbing Pakistan by military means. Hence they attacked the Tashkent agreement between President Ayub and late Premier Shastri, which was intended to foster cordial relationship and good neighbourliness between India and Pakistan. It is said that the relations between Ayub and Bhutto began to deteriorate since the time the former signed the Tashkent agreement. Did Bhutto not declare during the Indo-Pak conflict in September 1965 that Pakistan would wage a war against India even for a thousand years? It is these people who keep the Kashmir problem ever boiling in Pakistan.

Ayub had conceded most of the demands of the opposition. He had withdrawn the emergency declared during the Indo-Pak conflict. He had released Shaikh

Mujibar Rehman, Maulana Bhashani and their fellow prisoners and rescinded the Agarthala conspiracy case. He had even declared in a Johnsonian fashion that he would not seek renomination to the Presidency after the expiry of the present term. Opposition was not satisfied by these measures; now he has been forced to step down.

Ayub's steps would be welcomed in this country if he had acted in a true democratic spirit. But if he has acted out of fear of the opposition, we, in India will have to sit up and think about the implications of the course he has adopted. For, in its character, in its ideology and mental make-up and in its political behaviour, the opposition is more conservative, less liberal and increasingly anti-Indian. After Ayub's initial back-out Mr. Bhutto had already confirmed Mr. Swaran Singh's fear expressed in 1965 that with Mr. Bhutto Indo-Pakistan relations could not be normalised. Mr. Bhutto had already thrown a challenge to India's Defence Minister over the Kashmir issue. Lacking in grace, he had declared, "Let Sardarji know that I am coming again." Therefore, it was not the democratic progressive forces which were emerging in Pakistan but the forces of social and political reaction. This is not to suggest that Ayub should have continued. Ayub's policies might have been a shade better, but from the point of view of friendly relations with India, they were still dangerous. Technically, there might not have been much to choose between Ayub and the opposition.

Now, with the declaration of martial law, Pakistan has receded a decade back. Military regime may be able to control the law and order situation, which had reached its lowest in East Pakistan, where murders, arson and loot with resultant chaos, had become the order of the day. But it will not be in a position either to satisfy the political and social aspirations of the people or to put Pakistan on sound economic foundations. The dream of parliamentary democracy is shattered at least for the time being. The martial law will only add to the complications of Pakistani situation and deepen people's frustration and bitterness.

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Crisis In Indian Democracy

M. R. Pai

BASICALLY, there are two ways of governing human societies. One is by counting heads, the other is by breaking them. In the former, through the mechanism of balloting once every few years, people elect a representative government. It can be broadly described as democracy. In the other system, violence is the arbiter of state decisions. It is totalitarianism.

Democracy is obviously the more popular of the two systems. This is proved by the way even totalitarian governments use the prefix "democracy" to describe their regimes. For instance, communist dictatorships call themselves "people's democracy". Former dictator Sukarno of Indonesia described his regime as "guided democracy". According to Marshal Ayub Khan, his regime was "basic democracy".

A line is to be drawn between a real democracy — however imperfect it may be — and dictatorships although the latter may usurp the prefix democracy.

A real democracy has four essential features.

First, is the Rule of Law and its concomitant, an independent judiciary. The Rule of Law means that the supreme power is not the arbitrary will or caprice of any one person, or a group or a political party, but the fundamental law as laid down in a constitution and conventions. Everyone, including those in power and the Government, are equal before the law. Nobody is above the law.

The second feature is guarantee of certain freedoms. Most democracies have a written constitution with fundamental rights guaranteeing freedoms to citizens. Some of these freedoms are those of thought, speech, and press (i.e. freedom of expression) of association and assembly, of religion and worship, of movement from place to place, trade and economic activities.

These freedoms are necessary. First, the citizen surrenders to the state the ultimate power, viz., the coercive authority of life and death over all. Therefore, he has to safeguard himself against any abuse of that power by those in authority by guaranteeing to himself some fundamental rights. Second, freedoms are essential for an individual to fulfil his creative personality and lead a meaningful life. Democracy places the individual as the focal point of all activities. In a true democracy, the state exists for the citizens, and not *vice versa*.

The third feature of a democracy is limitations on governmental power. Since those who wield the reins of power are human, and therefore prone to abuse power, there are certain checks and counter-checks on them. For instance, an independent judiciary is a healthy check. Once again, certain legal procedures

like writs are an essential check. Above all, the written constitution and unwritten conventions are a powerful check.

Finally, another feature of a democracy is the means for smooth transfer of power from one group of rulers to another. This also implies the inherent right and power of a minority to become a majority in course of time through a process of public education. Dictatorships have yet to solve this problem of transfer of power in a non-violent manner. Dictatorships are generally conceived in violence, thrive on violence and flounder in violence.

India has been fortunate in getting a democratic, republican constitution. The founding fathers were far-sighted people, and did their best to give the country an enduring constitution. Since 1950, when it was initiated, the Republic has survived in spite of several strains and stresses both in India and abroad. This is all the more creditable considering the fact that a number of new-found democracies have crumbled in the meantime. The credit goes primarily to the good sense of the Indian public, and to some extent to those who have ruled the country.

Today the Indian democracy faces multiple challenges. Among numerous challenges, the main are:

First, threat of subversion of democracy by violence and through governmental machinery by political parties which do not believe in democracy. Chief among these are the numerous communist parties. It is essential to understand some common characteristics of all communist parties.

(a) Their ideology is weak. This compels them to shun reason (because they cannot convince people through the rational processes) and use coercion and violence to dominate over a majority of people who do not share their views.

(b) Their primary allegiance to foreign communist powers on whom they are known to depend for material and other support. In return, they champion the cause of those countries to the detriment of national interests. Every true communist is a false nationalist.

(c) Their contempt for human freedoms and destruction of those freedoms in numerous ways. Communists are afraid of freedoms as their ideology cannot survive in a free atmosphere.

(d) Monopolisation of state power in the hands of the party and destruction of all other parties and political groups; if destruction is not possible, their effective subordination. Essentially, every communist movement is an organised conspiracy by a minority to seize the power apparatus of the state, to destroy all democracy.

In India we face this danger today very clearly. In Kerala and West Bengal Marxist dominated United Fronts are in power. But effective power is wielded by the Marxist communist party, the other political groups, which have made possible the rule of Marxist communists, merely getting the crumbs of power and in their lust for power sacrificing national interests.

The second threat comes from lovers of freedom who are misguided in their enthusiasm. The move to amend the Constitution to enable Parliament to amend fundamental rights comes from such people. Fundamental rights are something fundamental and cannot be placed at the mercy of a transient majority in a legislature. Parliament is elected by the people but they have not surrendered to it all their power. The Indian Parliament is but a creature of the Constitution, neither above the Constitution nor the people. Only the people have the right to alter or amend fundamental rights through a new constituent assembly or through a referendum. Parliament cannot usurp this power of the people. That will pave the way for totalitarianism. Even Hitler came to power through the legal way. He got the German Parliament pass the Enabling Act which gave him the ultimate power.

The third threat comes from inflation. Except for a happy break towards the end of 1968, for last 13 years the country has witnessed steadily rising prices. This has come about through pursuit of communist model of planning. The fixed income groups like middle classes, the backbone of society, and poorer people are being wiped out by inflation. It has given rise to the monster of corruption. Inflation arises through misuse of governmental monopoly over money supply and destroys people's faith in currency. If people lose faith in currency, they lose faith in the government also.

Breakdown in law and order and social unrest always accompany inflation and precede collapse of democracy unless inflation is curbed in good time.

The Roman Republic, Weimar Republic and Kuomintang China are but few examples of democracies destroyed by inflation.

The fourth threat comes through apathy of the educated and not, as commonly alleged, through the ignorance of the illiterate voters. The basis of democracy is voluntary activity of its citizens. In return for freedoms enjoyed, they have to shoulder certain responsibilities. These consist of undertaking as many activities on a voluntary basis as possible, and actively participating in public life. Incidentally, public life does not mean merely politics, but a number of other areas like education, social service etc. By leaving all these functions to professional politicians and the state, the educated are undermining democracy. To fight one's own battles, to stand up on one's own legs and to serve one's fellowmen in various capacities are essential activities for survival of democracy.

This lacunae in our public life has been responsible for the failure in our democratic system. It has generated an atmosphere of pessimism, cynicism and a "death-wish" for dictatorship. There is a desire, mostly on the part of the intelligentsia, for an "enlightened" or "benevolent" dictatorship. To begin with, a ten or twenty year period is prescribed.

There is no such thing as enlightened or "benevolent" dictatorship. Enlightenment or benevolence depends on which side of the dictatorship one is on. Once you rub the dictatorship on the wrong side, his benevolence towards you ceases.

There are three good reasons why democracy should be made to succeed in India.

First, there is no use moaning that our people are not fit for democracy. As Sir Pherozshah Mehta said several decades ago, in reply to such a desperate comment on the quality of Indians in politics, "we cannot import people". We should make do with the available human material and work in the context of present limitations.

Second, with all its shortcomings, this is the only country we have. We should make it a worthy place for good living for ourselves and future generations.

Third, with all its faults, democracy is better than all other known systems of government.

It is with faith and determination that believers in liberal democracy should work for its success so that India can fulfil her manifest destiny of greatness.

Books Received

The following books have been received for review.

Reviews of some of them will appear in subsequent issues.

1. *Vietnam: Aspects of a Tragedy*, published by N. Samsom NV Alphen Aan Den Rijn. The Hague.
2. *Public Education in USSR*, Mikhail Prokofyev, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow.
3. *Taxation in India*, Edited by M. R. Pai, Forum of Free Enterprise, published by Popular Prakashan, Bombay, Rs. 15.00.
4. *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society Twentieth-Century Bengal*, J. H. Broomfield, Oxford University Press 1968. Price: Rs. 50.00.
5. *In Quest of Freedom*, published by A. G. K. Memorial Committee, Price: Rs. 10.00
6. *Trade Unions and Politics* by V. B. Karnik, published by the University of Bombay, Price: Rs. 3.50
7. *Our Language Problem and Unity of India* by Dr. Minocher K. Contractor, Secretary, Parents'-Students' Association, Surat. Price: Rs. 2.25.

Tensions In Europe And Asia

R. Muthuswamy

RECENT tensions in Berlin, Suez Zone, Pakistan and China, as if forming a 'tension belt' across the two continents, have their own individual dimensions as well as the common feature of Big Power politics.

The opportunity provided by West Germany in calling the meeting of the electoral college for the election of West German President in West Berlin was too good to be missed by the Soviet Union and East Germany, especially in the wake of the U.S. President's re-union and fence-mending mission to the forgotten European friends, under the new strategy devised by his adviser Kissinger. It was not a strange coincidence that the Viet Cong also chose the same time to escalate their activities in Vietnam. Both were intended to be a challenge to President Nixon to dare to fulfil his election promises and embarrass him at home. However the reaction of the U.S. President was decisive and determined. He not only issued a stern warning to the Viet Cong, but also sanctioned the ABM development, in spite of the bitter political controversy it created.

As far as the crisis itself is concerned its threat evaporated the moment it was found that there has been no thaw in the new U.S. regime and it will not hesitate to take firm action where it was called for. Right from the beginning of the probe into West Berlin, the Soviets and East Germans kept their retreat lines clear. There was no open opposition to the meeting of the electoral college in West Berlin. Their blockade, they explained, was necessitated by the military manouvres in this area in which the Soviet Union also participated. In fact a Soviet General was present which kept the world guessing as to the real intentions of the so called military manouvres. Ultimately the delegates to the electoral college were airlifted — as it had happened during past blockades — and the election of the West German President was held as scheduled without any hitch. However, this blockade of a few days had its own anxious moments particularly for the ammunition manufacturers of West Berlin whose products had to go through East Germany. When the election was over, the military manouvres also came to an end and the Soviet General left for his base. So till the next crisis the world can heave a sigh of relief over Berlin.

The Russians could not have their own way all along. What happened in China was in a way an anti-thesis to what the Soviets were doing to the West. The Chinese could not allow the Russians to easily get away with their plan to call the World Communist Conference without China and use it as its own

propaganda platform. It is in this context that the crisis which developed in the small river island called Damansky by the Russians and Chen Pao by the Chinese is to be viewed. The skirmishes which resulted in casualties on both sides of this island were not a new phenomenon. According to some reports, clashes of a more serious nature had happened in the past between Russian and Chinese soldiers in the border area. But for the first time the Russians came out with flash news and photographs, accusing the Chinese of wanton aggression. The Chinese in retort not only came out with their own version but also instigated a mammoth demonstration outside the Russian Embassy in Peking. The events following this incident were of the textbook variety with the Russians demonstrating before the Chinese Embassy in Moscow and both sides exchanging strongly worded protests. The only tangible outcome of the skirmishes this time was the cutting off of Soviet supplies to North Vietnam through Chinese territory. Therefore all is not well with the Soviet Union and North Vietnam and their quota of problems is no less than what they created for the West.

Israel had to face massive criticism from friends and foes alike for its daring attack on Beirut airport in Lebanon. Its feeble protest that whenever it attacked only property was lost while the attacks of Arabs always resulted in the death of innocent men and women did not evoke any response from any quarter. Obviously on account of this criticism Israel refrained from reprisal when one of its civilian planes was damaged in Zurich airport by Arab commando attack. Meanwhile Israel had stated that it would not accept any imposed solution by the Big Four and had also taken decisions of far-reaching consequences with regard to the territories occupied by it during its six-day war with Arab nations. According to reports, it has decided to construct fortified settlements in the interest of its future safety. This action of Israel was the cause for the recent artillery attacks in the Suez Zone, which ended in further damage to Egyptian economy. Egypt had lost not only its Chief of Staff but its oil installations and refineries were also heavily damaged. The mid-east crisis is still eluding solution though the Big Four are making efforts to find one and impose it on the disputants if necessary. Meanwhile it seems Israel has no other way but to keep its aggressive image and counter-attacks in order to survive among its hostile neighbours.

The tension in Pakistan is distinct from the others in that it is in the nature of an internal turmoil.

Report On My Husband

Josefa Slansky

In the fall of 1952, world opinion was shocked by the Prague trial in which Rudolf Slansky, the former general secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and deputy premier, was the main defendant. As the result of the trial, which took place on November 20-27, 1952, 11 out of 14 defendants—all of them high dignitaries of the Communist regime—were sentenced to death; they were hanged on December 3, 1952. The Prague trial had all the horrifying features of the great purge trials initiated in the Soviet Union in the 1930's and transplanted into the satellite countries in the late 1940's.

But this time, a new and striking element was added to the standard pattern: in the case of 11 among the 14 defendants, the indictment specifically indicated that they were "of Jewish origin," and the whole trial was the biggest and most disgusting display of anti-Semitic propaganda ever seen since Hitler's days. The Prague trial was supposed to be a stepping stone to similar anti-Semitic orgies in the Soviet Union itself: since 1950, Soviet Jews had been subjected to systematic discrimination in all walks of life and to mass deportations to remote concentration camps; soon after the Prague trial, the Soviet secret police made its fantastic "revelations" about the alleged "doctors' plot," where almost all the doctors accused of attempting to exterminate political leaders were Jews. Only Stalin's death stopped this new drive which might have brought about the extermination of Soviet Jews.

Last spring, under the heading "Report on My Husband," the weekly of the Czechoslovak Writers' Union, "Literární Listy," published a series of extracts from the memoirs of Josefa Slansky, the widow of Rudolf Slansky. It is a harrowing record of the sadistic way the wife and children of a purged party leader were treated by his former colleagues, who were also her own personal friends.

NOVEMBER 23, 1951 was Klement Gottwald's 55th birthday. We sent him a gift, Rada's Dedice. It was a picture of the village where he was born. We thought it would give him a pleasant surprise.

Gottwald sent word to Ruda (affectionate nickname for Rudolf) that he was sick and could not see anyone. And yet in the afternoon he saw comrade Zapotocky...

But we were invited to spend the evening at Premier A. Zapotocky's. He was giving a farewell dinner for a group of Soviet economic advisors who were returning to Moscow... The new Soviet ambassador, who had arrived a few hours earlier from Moscow, was there too. He spoke very cordially to all the guests, including us.

They seated us in two adjoining rooms. In the main room were our hosts, the Soviet ambassador with his wife, all the Soviet advisors with their wives, Foreign Minister Villiam Siroky with Margit, and others. They put us in the second, tiny, room, where there was only one rather small table. Besides us there were comrade Kliment with his wife, comrade Malek, one of the Soviet advisors and comrade Dolansky with Ilsa...

Ilsa sat next to me. We were old friends and for many years we had met almost every day. Suddenly she began to recall how we had gone on a hunger-strike together when we shared a cell in Pankrac jail.

We rarely spoke about our days together in the Pankrac cell. Why does she think about it today? And why is she being so sentimental? What is on her mind? I feel sorry for her, but I cannot ask her here, can I?

Our table was quite lively, but strangely enough we spoke mainly about our memories.

The Soviet comrades took their leave rather early. As usual at official farewells, we stood in a semi-circle. When they came to us, the Soviet women comrades embraced Ruda and me and they wept. I was surprised; I had not seen them often, only on official occasions.

Comrade Zapotocky asked us to stay a little longer, saying that it was too soon to leave, and now that we had got together...

Comrade Zapotocky showed us little figures made of bread, the artistic products of the time he spent in prison. Then he offered to show me the whole villa, as I had not seen it yet. He led me from room to room, from picture to picture. He showed me even his study. He was unusually kind to me.

His wife was equally attentive to me.

After midnight I urged Ruda to go home. He was still sick, he occasionally had gall-bladder attacks and it was not good for him to stay up late. I asked comrade Marie Zapotocka to allow me to telephone for a car. She offered to arrange it herself.

We drove as usual right into the garden. The garden and the villa were in darkness. I tripped on the steps. Ruda caught me, but he was afraid that something might have happened to me. He sharply asked comrade Sip, one of his bodyguards, to find out why the lights in the garden were out and to get them repaired immediately. Sip left without a word.

And then it happened.

We were coming into the hall. From darkness to darkness. I was first, Ruda behind me. I had hardly made three steps when the light went on and the

stamping of many heavy feet could be heard. At once, someone twisted my arms behind my back.

Now that it was no longer dark, we could see a number of men lined up along the wall, their sub-machine guns pointing at us. One foot forward. Ready to jump.

Other men were pressing Ruda up against the narrow partition between the entrance to the hall and to the kitchen.

He was standing upright, his eyes staring in horror and amazement and at the same time immensely sad.

Literarni Listy, April 25, 1968

Some five months after her husband's execution, Mrs. Slansky, having spent almost a year and a half in internment with her two children, interrupted by long periods of interrogation carried out according to the well-known methods in the frightful Ruzyně jail, was sent to a small place near Ostrava where she had to provide for herself and her family by extremely hard work in a factory where she was subject to police provocations and even her life was threatened. Late in 1953, many months after the death of Stalin and of Gottwald, feeling that, with her health broken by the long mental torture and physical ill-treatment, she could no longer stand the harsh conditions in which she had to live and work, she decided to take the risk of going to Prague. There she asked one of her oldest friends in the party leadership, Deputy Premier Václav Kopecký, to receive her. Unexpectedly kind, Kopecký—affectionately nicknamed Vasek—agreed.

Vasek did in fact receive me.

And it was Little Starling here and Little Starling there. He addressed me by the nickname my friends have used ever since I was a child. "Don't be angry I made you wait a moment, but I am just coming from a meeting of the Party Central Committee and I wanted to settle with them what can be done for you. And I have the decision right here. You and all the other members of your family, and comrade Franková and the others too, can all move wherever you like. But of course not to Prague, you know, that wouldn't be good for you yet, you do see that, Little Starling, don't you?"

He said I would get a letter from Interior Minister Rudolf Barák. I could call upon any member of the Central Committee, they were all ready to deal with me, especially comrade Novotný.

"It was decided that you will get money, too, if you need it."

We spoke together for several hours. As usual, he was the one who talked and hardly gave me a chance to open my mouth. "We did not know, we had no idea. We thought a stay in the country, peace, nature, we thought that would be the best thing for you. Why

didn't you tell us, why didn't you write to us? Little Starling, you do understand that we could not know. . . ."

His secretaries were there. He talked about Ruda, about the old days in the Derby Café, and he kept saying "our Ruda," "our Ruda." He complained bitterly about Gottwald. . . .

I was to dictate a letter to his secretary, explaining the conditions in which we were living and asking for a change of domicile and the return of the things that had been confiscated ("It is terrible, Little Starling, all your things have been stolen, they did not behave as badly to anyone else as to you, you see, Little Starling. And how is it that they did not even give back Obrovský's statue of Božena Němcová, I gave you that myself, you must insist that they give it back, it must be possible to find it"), some money to buy new things and then something about getting translations to do—I no longer remember exactly what else I was to write about and what was in the letter. I believe they did not give me a copy.

After that, she returned to her factory. But a short time later, she was summoned on "official business" to Prague:

Comrade Komárek received us. It was a long, frank, interesting conversation. He assured us that the comrade Minister was trying to repair all the injustices. He promised us money to buy new things, to send me and the whole family to a sanatorium. I could stay in Prague and within a week they would find me an apartment.

I was to come back in a fortnight. But then he did not receive me.

And that "week" without an apartment lasted from December 1953 to April 1958. All that time I slept with Marta on an inflatable mattress on the floor. I did not get a work permit. I was not allowed to take up full-time employment till February 1960!

And obviously the comrades again "knew nothing," "suspected nothing." Kopecký sent me word by his secretary that I was not to try to see him again and that I had to realize that our conversation was strictly private. All the doors were slammed shut again. . . .

And so how could I fail to remember Kopecký's words:

"It was an education for you, a marvellous education, wasn't it, Little Starling? It steeled you, didn't it, well, you know, an education."

And that was the only leader who in all those years—from 1951 until today—ever spoke to me personally.

Literarni Listy, June 6, 1968
—AFL-CIO Free Trade Union News

With Many Voice

Moans round with many voices. Come, ^{"The deep} my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world."
—Tennyson.

The storm signals from Pakistan cannot be ignored except at our peril.

—Thought, March 1.

All the people of the world who want freedom are truly Berliners.

—President Nixon, *Time*, March 7.

The common man is thus left in the lurch. He is easily annexed, if only in a negative, agitational manner, to the opposition to the existing social and political order.

—Basudha Chakravarty, *Swarajya*, March 8.

Parliamentary Democracy is all right. I won't say it has failed in India.

—Vinoba Bhave, *Sarva Seva Sangh*, February 1969.

Nehru told me he had no successor, and Mao told me almost the same thing.

—Andre Malraux, *Encounter*, March 1969.

To the Editor,
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The five socialist countries, with the Soviet Union at their head, should be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for having prevented justly and successfully imperialist aggression in Central Europe.

—Academician Todor Pavlov of the Bulgarian Politbureau, *Swiss Press Review and News Report*, March 3.

The minimum programme of the United Front is simply an agreement that none of them will resign.

—P. Govinda Menon, Union Law Minister, *Hindu*, March 7

Indira Gandhi, who is supposed to head the Congress Party in Parliament, is more anxious to appease the Communists of India than she is to uphold the dignity of her Government.

—Current, March 15.

If Maoist China could possess the audacity to twist the tail of the great Russian bear, had not the Indian cow sufficient reason to be anxious about its own safety?

—Janata, March 9.

The crisis in the public sector in India is essentially a crisis of management.

—*The Economic Times*, March 11.

The Congress still has a role to play. It is strange that it should wish to extinguish itself before its time.

—*Hindustan Times*, March 14.

Any lingering doubts about the depth of Sino-Soviet antagonism were washed away in the blood that stained the snowy banks of the Ussuri.

—Time, March 14.

Mao reminds the Russians of what he did to India. The Muscovites remind the Chinese embassy that they aren't Indians.

—Headlines in the *Economist* (London), March 15.

In his time Mr. Krishna Menon was known as the Defence Minister of China. Now Mr. Dinesh Singh can be called the Foreign Minister of Russia.

—Dharam Yash Dev, *The Indian Monitor*, March 15.