

Communism Without Dictatorship

by Philip Spratt

ON Monday, June 29, a one-day strike was called in Kerala. In the state capital, Trivandrum, I saw a procession of some thousands of workers, some carrying hammer and sickle flags, shaking their fists against the Communist Government. Two days later in Kottayam, a small town towards the centre of the state, I saw a procession of two or three hundred men with Congress and Socialist flags marching to the government offices, where they were to "picket" and get themselves arrested. In several places I chanced upon traffic blocks caused by pickets obstructing state buses. People told me that such enthusiasm had never been seen before, even during the great national struggles.

It is Hungary or East Germany over again, without the iron curtain and without the repression which held in the people's anger till it exploded. But there are other differences. Though the trade unionists struck and paraded, they are not the leading group in the opposition. The most active are the Catholic and Nair communities, and the three political parties, Congress, the Praja-Socialist and the Revolutionary Socialist Party. But almost all organised groups other than the Communist Party and the unions it dominates are in opposition. On the other hand the communists also have the support of the hitherto unorganised rural labour and the low castes. In this economically backward society organised labour is part of the privileged class. The communists have aroused the opposition of nearly all the educated and better placed, but they have the backing of the real proletariat.

Even without the communists, Kerala would have been a trouble spot. It is enormously populated, and also uncommonly literate (about 70%) so that it swarms with educated youngsters who can live on the family but have no outlet for their energies. It is a museum of antiquities, Christian and Jewish as well as Hindu. The Nair community has supplied anthro-

pology with the name of a certain type of polyandry. Its caste system was embellished till recently with such picturesque items as unseeability. Whereas in all other states Hindus are 90% of the population, here Christians and Muslims add up to 40%.

Politics at the state level is concerned only in a secondary way with budgets, plans and reforms. Its main interest is the interplay of caste and community, and the jobs, loans and contracts that go therewith. From the time of its emergence into democracy as the Travancore-Cochin State in 1948, Kerala played this game with zest. The first legislature had a overwhelming Congress majority; nevertheless the government fell within a year. By 1957 the state had had five governments, and in addition a period of President's rule, when nobody could muster even momentary majority. In the election of that year over a third of the voters were willing to give the communists a chance.

This tolerance pushed to the point of suicide is typical of the Hindu and has been the main cause of their troubles through the ages. It is part of traditional wisdom that no doctrine is wholly false, and that every man must find his own path to truth. Let the youngsters learn by their own experience. Mr. Mannath Padmanabhan, the leader of the present campaign to oust the Communist Government, told me that several members of his family voted communists.

In April 1957, the first elected Communist Government in history took office. The Assembly Party unanimously elected as leader E. M. Sankaran Nambudiripad. It was the obvious choice, and a popular one. Early in his career he had been a Gandhian, and he has contrived to retain a certain saintly aura. On entering the Communist Party, he donated, it is said, some 6000 to the party. Sankara, the great Hindu philosopher and evangelist was born in his caste some 1200 years ago, and the party propagandists discreetly exploit the parallel.

Yet he is a veteran communist, continuously on the Politburo for over twenty years. A former close associate told me that Nambudiripad is never to be found in a minority. He has charm and diplomacy, the aforementioned associate preferred to put it rather differently — in all their years together he had never known E.M.S. tell the truth.

The Ministry started with assurances that it would work within the constitution and that it would strive for the peace in industry. The effort was in every way to create an impression of level-headed moderation. It was especially anxious to avoid the corrup-

tion which has been the main cause of the decline of support to the Congress everywhere. It has always claimed that its legislation is consistent with the Congress programme, and that its work differs from that of Congress ministries only in being more honest and vigorous.

However, the new men also courted their special public. They released prisoners, some of whom had claims to rank as class-war heroes. They raised the pay of government employees of the lower grades, including primary school teachers, and cancelled increases in the pay of high officials. Most spectacular of all, they instructed the police not to interfere when workers on strike held meetings or processions, but to take action only when damage to life or property was reported.

A year after they took power in Kerala, the Communist Party of India in its full sessions at Amritsar adopted the new policy of the international communist authorities who now proclaimed the possibility of using the machinery of bourgeois democracy to install the power of the proletariat. The Congress under Nehru, a very indulgent opponent, was now even less likely to use the overriding powers of the central government to hamper the Kerala communists. It was therefore the general expectation that they would win over the poorer classes and gain support even among the middle classes by their efficiency and freedom from corruption, and would thus make Kerala an impregnable stronghold, from which communist power would eventually spread over India.

The plan has gone wrong. The Kerala Government have provoked the educated class into open resistance which has now continued with increasing vigour for a month. The Congress Parliamentary Board has asked them to dissolve the Assembly and hold new election. This request is of course not an order, but the Congress can hardly stop there. It seems probable that the Kerala Government will be dismissed within a short time.

Some believe that the party leaders meant to pursue the parliamentary policy faithfully, but were unable to control their young hotheads. The truth seems rather to be that the leaders wanted to maintain the appearance of democratic correctness, while infiltrating the official administration and building up a parallel state apparatus, and also diverting large sums of money into the all-India party treasury; but failed to realise that this sort of thing cannot be kept secret and that the local party units were bound to throw their weight about and provoke hostility.

It was the license to strikers to riot which first brought the affairs of communist Kerala to the notice of other states. In the summer of 1957 there were strikes in some of the plantations, and with the police observing neutrality, the workers mobbed owners and managers, blockaded them in their houses, and so forth. It was an inter-union dispute, and the opposition unions fought back, so that it had in the end to be settled by reference to a board of arbitrators. However, the strikers appreciated the new freedom to

riot, and the result was added popularity for the new government among the working class.

This phase of popularity for the regime reached its climax in the Devikolam bye-election in May 1958. The voters are mainly plantation workers. The Congress brought in a number of important leaders from Madras—many of the workers are Tamils—and altogether staked a great deal on it. Yet the communist candidate won by 7,000 (55,000 to 48,000). The impact of this victory is diminished when we learn that for its part the Communist Party brought in, without fanfare, nearly a thousand propagandists, including Politburo members, from the Madras Party organisation, and that a day or two before the polling the Kerala Government remembered that it owed substantial sums of money to those workers and promptly liquidated its debt.

Nevertheless it was a big victory, and the prestige of the Namboodiripad Government was high throughout India. But after that a succession of misfortunes befell it, some through its own fault, and some just the whim of fate. The petty but angry dispute over boat fares, which led to a state-wide strike of students in the summer of 1958, belongs in the latter category.

So does its failure to win over organised labour. It has done something substantial for the lower grades of labour, but has had little to offer the better paid and better organised trades. Still, the power of a government is not to be despised, and it has been exerted to the full. The Minister for Labour will personally get on the long distance telephone to press an employer to reinstate a communist worker who has been sacked, but will ignore a non-communist who was sacked with him.

However, the job is formidable. The unions are a world of their own, in which the embattled leaders fight for better conditions for their members, and jobs and power for themselves. Most of the organisable areas were staked out long ago, and the surviving stake-holders are tough. The biggest rival to the communist-led unions is the Indian National Trade Union Congress group, organised by the Congress. Congressmen, with their leaders in real power in Delhi, were not going to be overawed by a mere state government in power on sufferance. No less of a nuisance is the group of unions led by Mr. Srikantan Nair and the Revolutionary Socialist Party. Srikantan Nair differs from Namboodiripad as Trotsky differed from Stalin. R.S.P. units and unions wave the hammer and sickle flag, and their boys throw themselves into union work not merely for jobs but with the revolutionary fervour. They have a powerful union empire in Kerala, and two years of communist rule have not won a minor province from it.

This lack of success with organised labour may also have been due to a general failure of the ministry to get ahead in any striking way with food production and economic development. Probably nobody else could have done better; other state governments have little to boast about. But a party which arouses high expectations and fails to fulfil them must suffer. Oddly

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Swatantra Party

by "Apaksha"

THE tremendous public enthusiasm which greeted the formation of the Swatantra Party, and the reception its leaders received in certain places, are obviously an indication that the people of India are deeply convinced of the need for a democratic alternative party. It is no secret — and even Congressmen are aware of this fact — that people, by and large, are disappointed with Congress Governments. Most of the Congress promises have proved tall-talk, or at best merely catch-words for electioneering. The rising cost of living, the increasing bureaucratisation of the administration both as a result of the indiscriminate nationalisation of industries and official acceptance of the cult of statism, imposition of taxes out of all proportion to the people's capacity to pay, the rigidity of government's approach to many a pressing problem of the day, the discouragement of individual initiative and enterprise in industry and agriculture on the plea of creating a socialistic pattern of society, enforcement of discredited and out-of-date economic theories and dogmatic industrial policies — all these have created a distrust in the ability of the Congress to create a welfare state and ensure people's happiness and progress.

The formation of the Swatantra Party, therefore, fulfils a long-felt need. The inane acceptance of socialism by almost all existing political parties as the only logical creed or ideal for India to the exclusion of even thinking of other possible alternatives to socialism had resulted into the closing of minds. Even a remote suggestion of an alternative to socialism evoked a violent reaction.

The acceptance of socialism by all political parties generated colossal confusion with regard to the content of socialism. Nobody knew for sure what the picture of a socialist society would be. With the result that all kinds of contradictory ideas passed into the framework of Indian socialist thinking. Often one socialist denounced the ideas of another socialist and no love was lost between various political parties professing socialism.

Obviously people in general failed to be convinced of the efficacy of socialism. The results of forty years of socialist revolution in Russia and the misery the communist regime in China has imposed on the Chinese people in the name of socialism and the awareness that the Government of India was doing no more than copying the economic policies of communist countries, as has been evident in its stress on heavy industries at the expense of the consumer industries, helped to undermine people's faith in socialism. What the people wanted, in fact, was real economic progress combined with increasing political freedom.

The Swatantra Party, at the very outset of its formation, has been bold enough to expose the weak-

ness of, or rather dangers involved in, socialism. It has at the same time adopted a more or less clear-cut programme although it cannot be said with confidence that its policy-statement has no weaknesses of its own. Further, its programme is such as to appeal to all sections of people. Although it has not excluded the businessman from the purview of its service, it seeks to serve especially the "middle class and small man" and the peasant. It stands for "the freedom of man, freedom of the farm and the family as against the attacks of totalitarianism on the freedom of everybody." It emphasises individual initiative. It is pledged "to replace by spiritual values the materialistic philosophy of life that has resulted from the efforts merely to raise.....the standard of life." To make this explicit, it suggests that the party will aim not only at raising the standard of life but also at something more: at upholding of spiritual values and uplifting the cultural, intellectual and moral standards of the people. In other words, it seeks to create not truncated and atomised individual — a peculiar phenomenon of industrial society — but an all-round personality. Its opposition to totalitarian tendencies and statism is indeed relieving in view of the fact that the existing governments have shown callous disregard for individual rights and privileges. Its anti-statist attitude is not, however, anarchist rejection of the state. The Swatantra Party recognises the need and the role of the state in the affairs of man. Being a constitutional party, it will neither abolish the state nor reduce it to a position of ineffectiveness. On the other hand, it will assign it a reasonable function. That function will include "the prevention and punishment of unsocial activities where called for" and giving the citizens "facilities for a proper decentralised distribution of industry." The state will indeed retain its coercive apparatus, but more for creating a climate of freedom than of unfreedom as is the case today. The state will guide, regulate and coordinate institutional activities rather than order people about.

Again, the leaders of the new party are known for their integrity, courage of conviction and strength of character. Rajaji, an elder statesman and trusted colleague of Gandhiji, in his answer to the criticism that the Swatantra Party was the party of big business, has challenged them to prove that whenever he was in power, he had helped a single wealthy person. Professor Ranga and Mr. Masani are known for their courage of conviction and willingness to go into wilderness for the sake of a principle. Mr. V. P. Menon, Mr. S. Y. Krishnaswamy, Mr. Narahari Rao and General Cariappa are former administrators of repute whose record, in respect of integrity, has been crystal clear. Mr. H. P. Mody even while associated with big business is known for an enlightened outlook on economic affairs and labour-management relations.

The Swatantra Party, however, suffers from some serious drawbacks. Although it would be unjust to brand it as the "political projection" of the Forum of Free Enterprise, it cannot be denied that it has so far failed to explain to the common man his place in its scheme of things. Apart from the fact that some of its leaders have declared that it is also the party of the small man, no attempt is made to indicate how the Swatantra Party will assist the common man to tide over many an economic problem he is faced with nor is he assured, in a definite positive way, of protection from exploitation by irresponsible businessmen and industrialists. In its solicitude to secure the support of the big business as well as the small man at the same time the party has shown its inability to grasp the clash of interests between the haves and the have-nots. The Party's over-emphasis on the principle of private property has made it appear typically immune to the needs of those who are not so fortunate as to be property-owners. With the result the common man almost becomes a "forgotten factor" in the framework of its economic and social policies.

The Swatantra Party's statement of principles is rather too abstract and is likely to invite variety of interpretations—even contradictory ones. Except that it displays a spirit of opposition to socialism, in no way does it seek to indicate clearly the content of what it considers freedom, progress, or for that matter, welfare. The statement of principles is such as can be accepted by other democratic parties too; it has no definite feature which distinguishes this Party from other democratic parties. This is rather strange especially in view of the fact that the statements of some of the Swatantra Party leaders have sought to enunciate certain clear-cut programmes and thus evoked the confidence of the people in general.

The Party suffers from a lack of homogeneity; on many questions its leaders have spoken with different voices. To cite one instance, while Rajaji declared that the first task of the Swatantra Party would be "the creation of public opinion against the policies of the present Government" and that "the new party would first concentrate on the work in the country before going to the polls", Professor Ranga observed "we are not much bothered about the manner in which the present legislatures are constituted. What we are concerned about is the next elections. As a true democratic party we will prepare our programmes and place them before the electorate so that they can make the choice". It is true that Mr. Masani, later, in his statements in Bombay, tried to correct the position; but one cannot be sure that the party leaders have attained a measure of homogeneity in their outlook. They also have shown a clear divergence of opinion on the recent events in Kerala and foreign policy.

In the formulation of its economic policy, the Swatantra Party has tried a synthesis of the principles of the Forum of Free Enterprise and those of Sarvodaya. This is, in itself, a serious drawback, for, a synthesis of this kind is well-nigh impossible. Or, is it something like a Marxist attempt to synthesise a

thesis and anti-thesis? It appears as though while popularising the ideals of the Forum of Free Enterprise, the Swatantra Party wants to win the goodwill of the people by speaking of Sarvodaya. The theory of trusteeship as enunciated by Gandhiji is indeed worth a trial in a world stricken with an exhortation to class-war. But the root question in the context of India is whether the big business in India is so morally upright as to be relied upon to practise, in letter and spirit, the theory of trusteeship. According to Gandhiji's own statement, only one big businessman of his time—and that too his own close friend and colleague—could, to some extent, implement the theory of trusteeship. All other big businessmen, in spite of the tremendous influence Gandhiji wielded over them, remained callously indifferent to the theory. If that was Gandhiji's own experience, it would be presumptuous on the part of the Swatantra Party to believe that it would effectively persuade the big business truthfully to implement the trusteeship idea in practice. Profiteering at any cost is a normal feature of Indian businessmen. This is quite evident from the artificial scarcities and the thriving black market which we experience at present. Rajaji, therefore, was realistic enough to warn the businessmen that unless they play their game in a proper manner, the Swatantra Party will not be able to deliver the goods.

Yet, it has to be admitted that the Swatantra Party holds out great promise and possibilities. So far, due to the inability of the Praja Socialist Party and other democratic parties to be effective, the general discontent against the Congress was channelised by the Communist Party and used for its own ends. With the emergence of the Swatantra Party, most non-communist elements will find an effective democratic platform to voice their grievances and secure their redressal. If it could basically tune its economic policy to the needs of the common man—that is, place the common man in the centre—and throw up a really enlightened labour policy, the Swatantra Party is bound to go ahead and soon be a democratic alternative to the Congress. Every democrat will, therefore, wish it every success and a bright future.

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The Right To Property

by A. Ranganathan

ESSENTIALLY the Indian Constitution" wrote Sir Ivor Jennings "is an individualist document. Its prophets are Burke, Mill and Dicey; yet some at least of the members of the Constituent Assembly thought in collectivist terms. The result is a curious dichotomy. On the one hand the individualism of the nineteenth century has sought to limit the powers of the government in the interest of liberty; on the other hand the collectivism of the twentieth century has sought to expand the powers of government in order that the state may regulate economic life and incidentally restrict liberty." Indeed, since Indian Independence there has been a gradual but sustained effort to increase the powers of the executive at the expense of the courts. Pandit Nehru had opposed the idea of the Supreme Court being the final arbiter on the quantum of compensation, on the plea that the Supreme Court of India ought not to make itself a "third House of Parliament".

It is well known that the Due Process Clauses of the Fifth and Fourteenth amendments to the American Constitution constitute a source of reserved power for the judiciary, to act as a restraining influence on legislative and executive bodies when they tend to limit the freedom of the individual. While there is no Due Process Clause as such in the Indian Constitution, the Indian Judiciary became empowered to regulate property rights in India.

The "Right to Property" was originally guaranteed by article 31 of the Indian Constitution. According to the original provision in Article 31(1), "No person shall be deprived of his property save by authority of law." And Article 31(2) stated: "No property, movable or immovable, including any interest in, or in any company owning, any commercial or individual undertaking, shall be taken possession of or acquired for public purposes under any law authorizing the taking of such possession or such acquisition, unless the law provides for compensation for the property taken possession of or acquired and either fixes the amount of the compensation, or specifies the principles on which, and the manner in which, the compensation is to be determined and given." However, on April 27, 1955, an amendment was introduced which substituted for Article 31(2) the following clauses:

"(2) No property shall be compulsorily acquired or requisitioned save for a public purpose and save by authority of a law which provides for compensation for the property so acquired or requisitioned and either fixes the amount of the compensation or specifies the principles on which and the manner in which, the compensation is to be called in question in any court on the ground that the compensation provided by that law is not adequate.

(2A) Where a law does not provide for the transfer of the ownership or right to possession of any property

to the State or to a corporation owned or controlled by the State, it shall not be deemed to provide for the compulsory acquisition or requisitioning of property, notwithstanding that it deprives any person of his property." Commenting on it, Mr. Justice Douglas has remarked in his scholarly work "We the Judges" that "India has broken with one tradition of the law of eminent domain". He has pointed out that "the 1955 Amendment casts a shadow over every private factory, plant or other individual enterprise in India. The legislature may now appropriate it at any price it desires substantial or nominal. There is no review of the reasonableness of the amount of compensation. The result can be just compensation or confiscation—dependent wholly on the mood of the parliament" It would be difficult to deny that this amendment which vested this power in parliament has made great inroads into the domain of the individual. This new power of fixing the amount of compensation is theoretically vested in parliament, but in actual practice will have to be delegated to the ruling party and finally administered by the executive officers. It is clear from the foregoing analysis that while the amendments to the American Constitution have safeguarded the rights of the individual, the amendments to the Indian Constitution have played havoc with individual rights in India. The situation is particularly gloomy if viewed in the light of various measures which have followed in the wake of the 'Socialistic Pattern of Society'—Wealth Tax, Expenditure Tax, the Nagpur resolution on 'cooperative farming', nationalization of the insurance, State Trading etc.

The Nagpur resolution on 'cooperative farming' is an innocuous resolution at first sight; but upon serious reflection, its sinister implications are obvious. This confusion in thinking arises from a failure to view the two sectors, private or public, whether in agriculture or industry in their proper economic setting. What is needed is an overall awareness of the progress of the national economy as a whole, rather than a misplaced faith in the supposed infallibility of the public sector. Many years ago, a distinguished British jurist pointed to the dangers of what he termed "the new despotism" of those in authority who are allowed to dominate the private sector. This aspect of the problem assumes a new sense of urgency in view of the Congress Working Committee's latest idea of "controlling" profits in the private sector.

In the final analysis, the "Right to Property" is linked with individual freedom. As argued by Professor Massimo Salvadori, Karl Marx was correct when he said that those who owned property were free and those who did not were unfree, but was wrong when he deduced illogically that greater freedom would be

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Chinese Communes And Mao Tse-tung

by Robert Guillain

WHO did it? Who invented the communes? That is the question everyone was asking when the movement began. When it ran into trouble they enquired more pointedly: "Could it have been Mao Tse-tung?"

The official texts give no answer: their silence might tempt one to suppose that Mao had taken no special part in the affair. It was the Central Committee who "signed" the first public decision in favour of communes, on August 29, 1958. In principle, of course, all important decisions of the regime are made collectively. Moreover, various texts explain that in this case the Central Committee itself did no more than endorse an irresistible movement towards communes arising spontaneously from the people themselves.

However, if one takes the trouble to study the enormous documentation that Peking has published about the communes, the abundant articles of the last six months, the reports, speeches, etc., no doubt whatever is possible: Mao Tse-tung's "paternity" is clear. It is particularly affirmed by the Central Committee's review, the *Red Flag*, in an article that appeared in July written by its Editor-in-chief Cheng Po-ta, who is the President's spokesman and confident. On the basis of these documents it is now possible to reconstruct the course of events.

The idea of the communes had long been gestating in the mind of Mao Tse-tung. From the end of 1956 he was pointing the way in that direction by encouraging the progressive fusion of the smaller kolkhozes (called in China "producer co-operatives") into large-scale kolkhozes. One of his writings of that date—the preface to a work on the *Rise of Socialism in the Countryside*—already advocated this.

During the winter of 1957-8, we find armies of peasants employed on great public works. The communes were to grow out of these; and Mao toured the provinces to watch the experiment. In the spring it was he who, by means of a personal directive, started the trial communes in a pilot province of his choice—Honan. This directive is still secret, but several other documents refer to it.

The decisive step was taken in May, when Mao made his great idea known, in secrecy, to the national congress of the Party convened in Peking (the 2nd Session of the 6th Congress). The calling of this congress was an event since it had not met since the autumn of 1956. The communes, as we know chiefly from Cheng Po-ta, were the central topic of a long speech delivered there by Mao Tse-tung, and which recommended the new line of policy to the Party. This speech has also remained secret, but from the day after the congress a whole series of new ideas attributed to Mao Tse-tung began to appear in the press and in communist documents: rural industries, the mobilization and militarization of the people, a

great acceleration of the pace of production, women to be set to work, and the shortening of the road to communism. Had the President requested or received the congress's assent to the commune system? If so, no one was in a hurry to publish the fact, for neither the word "commune" nor what it stands for was mentioned in the reports of the congress, although these were abundant and important.

At the beginning of August, Khrushchev suddenly arrived in Peking. China was about to start the bombardment of Quemoy (August 23) and, at last, to publicly proclaim the setting-up of the communes on a national scale. It is clear that in his private parleys with his Russian colleague, the Chinese President cannot have been silent about the "bombshells" he was about to explode. Everything indicates, as we shall see, that Khrushchev's reaction must have been more than reserved.

However, he had no sooner gone than Mao again showed all his personal interest in the movement. He went all over Hopei, Honan and Shantung, radiating exhortations and instructions in support of the communes. So there it was: the movement was launched, and launched by him, before the Central Committee had yet taken responsibility for it.

He inaugurated the communes by a repetition of almost the same manoeuvre. Again, there was opposition from the right, and Mao, that highly impetuous revolutionary, meant to go still further "to the left" by changing the kolkhozes into communes. Once again then, he launched the movement himself, and now that this has become official Party policy, they will keep silent about his action. It is very necessary to mask the internal divisions in the Party, and it is even more necessary not to expose the President to any risk of unpopularity by presenting him as chiefly responsible for a policy which provokes resistance in the Party and the country, and is not sure to succeed.

In the provinces there is such resistance from the cells that it is necessary to carry out severe purges before the communes can be set up, and the objectors are just those who previously did all they could to impede the kolkhoz movement. A striking example is that of Honan. This was to be the model province for the communes, but before it could become so, there had to be a drastic purge to eliminate some highly placed Party members in the provincial hierarchy—an arduous battle, of which many details have been published. The purge also struck several other provinces after May—Hopei, Shantung, Kwansi and Yunan—and in October, Liaoning, a province of Manchuria.

On August 15—the eve of Quemoy and shortly before the final decision about the communes—the *Peoples' Journal*, the official organ of the regime, published a remarkable editorial full of insinuations and threats against "certain leaders" in high positions, who were not named. It said that:

"The circumstances brought to light in some sectors of the central organizations of the State show that divergences of opinion between certain leading groups of these organizations upon certain major questions, have led to a long-standing disunity between them."

This was the first time one had heard such language. The text goes on to specify that the persons in question are guilty of "serious deviations to the right" and repeats that they are to be found among the leading groups which are "heads of the Party and of governmental personnel". It adds that "many organs of the government have done only second-rate work, simply because their brains were addled".

The communes policy has become the policy of the Party. This means, first, that Mao Tse-tung, in acting as he did, must have had the approval of the majority of his colleagues in the council of leaders. Secondly, it means that if the experiment should come to grief, Mao himself cannot be blamed for it. The text of August 29 makes no mention of him and that is a way of protecting him.

The precaution was justified, for difficulties sprang up from the beginning of the movement. In September and October, reports from the provinces were alarming, chiefly centering on confusion in the communes, crisis over the blastfurnaces, the exhaustion of the workers, and the disorganization of the system of exchanges. We should add to all this that it became clear after the middle of September that the Quemoy affair had turned into a fiasco for communist China.

The crisis was so grave that the beginning of November saw the opening of a series of deliberations which was to go on for nearly forty days. An unusual feature was that these were held far away from Peking. The discussions started at a conference of persons chosen by Mao personally to meet him at Chengchow, capital of Honan, from the 2nd to the 10th of the month. It turned itself into a second conference at Wuhan, otherwise called Hankow (Wuhan is a name that covers this town and two towns adjoining it on the banks of the river Yangtse in central China). Mao was surrounded by only part of the general staff of directors — perhaps a sign of disagreement, or of haste. However that may be, after the 28th, when everybody had arrived, this reunion finally transformed itself into a session of the Central Committee, which lasted until December 10, the date of its concluding resolution.

Th decisions arrived at in Wuhan, which were of major importance, can be summed up in three points: (1) communes were to continue; (2) the speed of the movement was to be moderated, and (3) Mao Tse-tung, in his capacity as President of the Chinese People's Republic, was to be replaced, but to remain the President of the Party.

The communes remain, so Mao and the majority following him had won on their essential point. The resolution of December 10 proclaimed that the policy being followed was correct. Mao was once again protected.

The brakes were put on, nevertheless. In that respect it seems clear that the right scored some points: the restraining hand was not Mao's: if it had been, he would have taken credit for it, as in the "rectification" of 1957. He would have said, very much as he did on that occasion: "your leaders are driving you too hard. For my part, I want to relieve the people, so I have asked them not to go so fast." Instead of this he said nothing. The right, however, got at least three concessions: the drive for village blast-furnaces was to stop; a certain number of rightists condemned in 1957 were to be rehabilitated; and lastly, the system of communes was not to be extended to the towns.

Finally, there was the decision that caused the greatest stir in China and abroad — the "departure" of Mao Tse-tung; or more precisely the decision that he would not stand for re-election to the Presidency of the Republic at the end of his 5 year term.

What was the reason for that decision? The official answer was that Mao found the burdens of a chief of state onerous and fatiguing, that, relieved of them, he would have more time for the leadership of the Party, of which he remains President, and for his indispensable work of socialist teaching and reflection.

Are these explanations valid? A great part of the Western press has cast doubt upon them and has preferred to maintain the hypothesis that Mao was blamed and given a post of less power as the first step to his being "retired." That hypothesis does not appear to cover the facts.

Moreover, we now know that the idea of quitting this post was originally mooted by Mao himself, and that was two years ago. At the beginning of 1957, before the supreme council of state that he convened to initiate the "rectification" movement, he gave the Party a kind fore-warning, by asking them to find between that date and the end of his official term, a candidate for the succession.

The official explanations are therefore plausible enough; but this does not mean that they are complete. They certainly do not dispel the impression of a crisis, and they leave plenty of questions unanswered. Why did Mao remain perfectly silent, instead of himself explaining his reasons to the Party and the country? Why did the Party fail to prepare public opinion, and allow the news to burst out and produce a general shock of surprise—and at such an unfavourable moment? And why prolong the mystery about the successor? Why was not the latter elected by the national assembly in January as expected? Why did the assembly defer this until March, and then again until April?

The mystery of Mao's successor was solved only in May 1959, when Liu Shao-chi was clearly cast into the role of Number Two man of the regime, probably as a result of a compromise with Chou En-lai and his followers. Liu Shao-chi is one of the die-hards who gradually acquired the position of doctrinal interpreter second only to Mao himself, and who has made some of the most important statements about the People's communes on his travels through China.

Co-operative Farming

by Hemalata Acharya

(Concluded from the last issue)

Talking of the individual farms, there is some evidence in their favour too. A controlled experiment was conducted at the Agricultural Institute, Anand (*Vide, Study of Economic Potentialities of Five Acre Family Farming in Charotar Tract of Gujarat, Bombay State, March 1958. Bulletin 4*), of four 5-acre family farms and their performance was compared with the commercial farm of the Institute about 100 acres in area. It seems that with all the disabilities removed which necessarily fall to the lot of the sub-marginal farmers and all the facilities provided that are easily accessible to large farmers, a family farm is as well suited to or more perhaps (because of its psychological advantage) to be an efficient unit of operation. This assumes that the owners are familiar with crop rotation practice and are willing to experiment with new technique. The study is concluded with revealing observation. To quote "the investigation shows that the family farming is *not all problems and no possibilities*. There are definite economic potentialities in family farming, such as higher per acre yield and earnings, greater volume of employment at the increased rate of receipt per labour unit employed, *if it is not fettered by organisational and technical handicap*. Besides, these can be realized without high degree of co-operation and mechanization, the oft repeated popular panaceas for farmers' economic ills" (italics ours) (*ibid* p-30). More studies and research of this nature would help us avoid hasty generalization which has become a bane of our political life.

In June of 1957, the present writer got an opportunity to visit four co-operative farming societies in Nasik District. Out of these, three happened to be co-operative collective farming societies and one co-operative Tenant Farming Society. Three Societies were located in the Niphad Taluka and one in the Dindori Taluka. Of the former two, one co-operative collective farming and another co-operative Tenant Farming Societies were functioning in one village only. These were on the land near the river-bed and could be cultivated only in winter. The Tenant Farming Society was comparatively successful as its members had land elsewhere and they were not economically badly off. The Society redistributed land to members every year, paid rent to the Government. It owned farm equipments which it rented out to members and thus collected a decent amount. It owns its office building, it has built approach road and has installed diesel engine to supply water to the members' farms. The other co-operative collective farming society of which the members were the landless labourers was on the point of dissolution. The members were contemplating to reorganize it into a Tenant Farming Society. The co-operative Collective Farming Society at Savargaon was on the road to success, though it lacked irrigation facilities, godowns,

credit and marketing institutions. It had double cultivation. Its production was not too low and some members were hard working. The co-operative collective farming Society at Ambegaon in Dindori was almost a failure. Its plots were scattered, the members belonged to two villages and they did not show any interest. The farm could be cultivated only during Khariff season. Members had no other means of livelihood and no resources of their own.

Therefore, it may be said that the success of the co-operative Tenant Farming Society may be attributed to the members' economic strength, while the failure of the co-operative Collective farming societies must be explained in terms of their economic weakness, which engendered the vicious circle of inefficiency, low production, distrust and poverty. In these Societies, wages were high and output low. The Savargaon Society fared better, but still all was not well with it. All production requisites had not been supplied and it was short of productive finance. Some of the members were irregular and the manager not very experienced. In short, all the three co-operative Collective Farming Societies seemed to the writer, essentially a social security programme, where production had no relation to investment, output and input remained disjointed and man-land ratio unfavourable. They were isolated attempts to resettle landless labourers without co-ordinative actions with rural development programmes.

It is not argued that all co-operative societies are under the same predicament. These case studies are suggestive, other studies may contradict the findings of these studies. The writer would be too happy to be corrected if any exaggerated account has crept in.

When facile generalizations are substituted for scientific investigation, the best remedy is to resort to empirical research. Its value is beyond doubt. It cures society of the disease "fools rush in where angels fear to tread." Before recommending any revolutionary change, we should sit down quietly in a corner and study the reactions of what so far has been legislated upon.

The issue is crystal clear. Like the curate's egg co-operative farming is good in parts. It cannot be cure-all. Those who favour it are blinded by their own doctrinaire approach. To-day, they wield power. In their rush to bring good results and to cover their failures, they might go to extremes. In that case, they will do more harm than good to the cause of freedom. Co-operative farming is recommended for raising production and generating employment. Even if production increases, the mobilization of surplus will necessitate the use of force, for immediately this additional production is bound to be consumed by the earstwhile under-nourished members of the farm. As to employment, by no stretch of imagination one can say that co-operative farming will absorb more people

on the farm work. Other avenues of employment must synchronise with any change in the rural sector. Co-operative farming would turn disguised unemployment into open unemployment if production of the farm is rationalized. In case it maintains this large labour force on the farm, for long time to come, the average income will remain low. There won't be any incentive left for members to continue as members of the farm, as their standard of living will not improve much. Co-operative farm may create employment in developmental work, like bunding and ancillary services. But such employment opportunities could be broadcast even under individual farming.

Therefore if co-operative farming is to do what is expected of it, that is to mobilize surplus, this cannot be done without exercising control on farmers' consumption. The organization of co-operative farms will commence in the atmosphere of threats, discrimination and fear. If these fail, the whole rural structure will be disintegrated and in the place of stability, we shall face crisis on the economic front. Instead of taking the next step hastily before the land reforms have been fully implemented let us find out as to why land reforms have been circumvented. It is no use multiplying co-operative credit societies, if small farmers are kept outside their orbits. When institutional innovations bogged the path of progress, is it advisable to have still more institutions? They crush the people under their burden. In India villagers are more community minded than the urban folk. With the education in co-operation and establishment of co-operative institutions, perhaps villagers themselves would realize the value of co-operative living. In the Gramdan villages this may take place soon. This springs from the intellectual comprehending of co-operation. In Germany Raiffeisen pioneered in this field. It was voluntary. Co-operative spirit cannot be forced. It does not remain co-operative though it may have its advantages.

Yet one does not share the fear of those who are opposed to co-operative farming for they see in it ultimate defeat of human freedom. As pointed out above, if stage by stage farmers voluntarily see the utility of joint cultivation and accept it in one form or another, co-operative farming may not be so disastrous as it is made out to be. A pragmatic and not a doctrinaire approach is recommended. Every region, every district, every village has its particular ethos and no one solution may be fruitful. That is where decentralization of power and processes must have precedence over control and co-ordination.

Freedom has its own tenacity. It has survived many falls. It seems quite certain in the age of nuclear energy that socialism and communism are far behind the times. Democracy and freedom have lost their old glamour. No country stands alone, though it may try to do so. Annihilation of human race is easy but its survival will demand of us all a rethinking on all issues. Sociologists have diagnosed the present malaise as due to culture-lag i.e. nations seek power while the world has become one. Simply put we are neglecting man by institutionalizing him.

He can't survive alone, but he feels, isolated. He has become a maniac. It is this fear-complex that rules the world. In this race of doing everything in short time, if one boldly stands for 'go slow' one may be dubbed a reactionary, but training in democracy goes on at a snail's pace. It must follow value building. Democracy of tomorrow will be a world conscious democracy. It should be.

Co-operative farming is a test case. It has awakened us to our duty. The answer to co-operative farming is an alternative, that eliminates food shortage, precipitates the rate of economic growth and at the same time reeducates man in the ideals of freedom and democracy. Poverty is degrading and it is a defect of human spirit. We have to strive after eradicating poverty. Let all those who cherish freedom, come together and work out a plan that does not jeopardize all that they stand for. No individual alone can do that. For this we may not form a party, nor should we care for an audience. Every individual should do a bit of heart searching and intellectuals a good lot of open thinking. All 'isms' so far have thought of reordering society. The stage is set for remaking of man. Economics has created a vacuum. Science has upset the apple cart of man's expectation. It is only Sociology that can bring together Science and Society. But it is no use to be too optimistic. All that can be said in the end is, we must see ahead and not behind and learn from the failures of the past, about the follies of man—and at the same time we must never lose faith in man's capacity to save his soul amidst all that is done to throttle it. A critical reader may impatiently cry out that his question 'what does co-operative farming convey!' is unanswered. But it means all these and many things more. He must find his own answer. It is enough that he has raised the same question at the end. The purpose of this essay is half fulfilled !!!

(RIGHT TO PROPERTY—Continued from page 5)

achieved through the abolition of private property. Liberal philosophers like Locke, Turgot and Jefferson have clearly shown that the owning of property strengthens individual freedom; And it is this concept of individual freedom, which gives democracy, its distinctive profile. The belief of our New Delhi Planners in Socialism (which makes them think in terms of constitutional encroachments into the domain of the individual) is based on the pathetic assumption that Socialism signifies materialism, a higher standard of living. Actually, the so-called materialism of the Socialist way of life is an inverted kind of materialism finding its scope in gigantomania by building colossal structures and voicing the usual slogan of production and more production at the expense of urgent consumer needs and dismissing informed criticism as "reactionary or lacking even a grain of intelligence". It is high time we put a stop to this remorseless process of divesting the people of their property rights, if we are to preserve the spirit of democracy as distinguished from its outer trappings.

COMMUNISM WITHOUT DICTATORSHIP — *Cont'd. from Page 2*

enough, its one serious effort to set up a big industry brought it only opposition. It opened negotiations with the northern firm of Birla, which despite some Gandhian associations has come to stand, in the eyes of the left, for the capitalist enemy in its most obnoxious form. The R.S.P. were horrified, and it is believed that many communists protested.

Next, there broke a series of financial scandals about the party leaders. The public were all the more willing to believe these because of the ascetic claims made on behalf of the ministers. E.M.S. was a red saint, and all his colleagues were going to show their proletarian integrity by riding to the Secretariat on bicycles. In fact the communist ministers go about in cars and draw pay and allowances at a somewhat higher rate than their Congress predecessors. There are persistent stories of dubious business deals and of subtle legal devices to avoid the nationalisation of leaders' landed estates. The bloom of innocence has definitely been rubbed off the Kerala Communist Party.

Though they do not like it, the public are accustomed to individual corruption. This regime, however, began to be accused of corruption of a new kind—corruption for the party; and since the sums involved are very large it is distinctly more shocking. It was announced at the Amritsar Party Congress that within a year the Kerala unit had collected Rs. 25 lakhs (£175,000) for the party fund. It is obvious that such a sum was not collected by legitimate means.

There can be little doubt that one of the illegitimate means was the notorious Andhra rice deal. In the summer of 1957 the Kerala Government bought some 20,000 tons of rice from Andhra through a hitherto unknown firm strongly suspected to consist of party members. The usual precautions about tenders were evaded, and the price was unduly high. So great was the protest that the government had to submit the matter to a judicial inquiry and on the very incomplete material before him the judge found that more than a lakh (£7500) had been wasted. Almost all those I met were convinced that the Kerala Government had transmitted large amounts of public money to the all-India Party.

The opposition became an organised campaign of resistance when the Education Bill was passed last year. The controversial sections of this Bill provide that in privately managed schools receiving state grants, instead of the manager the state will henceforth collect fees and pay the staff; sums necessary for upkeep will be granted on application by the manager; and staff will be appointed, not at the discretion of the manager but by the state public service commission. Such provisions are not revolutionary and have been accepted elsewhere. But Kerala is exceptional in that a great majority of the schools are privately managed. The managing bodies are mostly Christian missions and Hindu social service organisations. The number of schools involved is large (about 7000) and despite some admitted abuses they have done fine work. The Act substantially deprives

these enterprising bodies of their educational functions, endangers school discipline, and (most feared of all) opens the way to invasion of the staffs by communists. The teaching of communist doctrine in the schools has already begun through the prescribed text-books.

The Christian school managers objected from the start. The main denominations formed a joint committee of bishops, and this was soon joined by the Hindu managements, in particular by the Nair Service Society. They negotiated for more than a year, and the Bill went to the Supreme Court, but it was passed in a form which was still so objectionable to them that the private schools almost unanimously resolved to remain closed when the new term began on June 1 this year. All the other protesting groups joined in, and from a series of agitations against specific acts it became a "liberation war" (*vimochana samara*) aimed at compelling the Government of India to remove the Kerala Ministry. Direct action began on the 12th June.

When I visited Kerala I had heard of the party cells, but I was surprised to find that they and their misdeeds cropped up in nearly every conversation. As the leaders told me, the tyranny of the cells had pushed the more specific grievances, even the Education Act, into the background. This apparatus of cells began to be formed soon after the ministry took over. It has been guilty of a good deal of violence; one important opposition leader said emphatically, "at least a score of murders" and I heard higher estimates. All admitted that there had been some hitting back, but insisted that the communists had begun it. The government backs the cells to the full. Police and judicial officers who take action against communists are transferred, and sentences upon communists are cancelled. Partisans of the government are thus practically licensed to do as they please.

The cells are not only an apparatus of violence. They have extended their function until, as everybody assured me, outside the big towns it is impossible to get official business done except through the cells. The ordinary administration and the police are helpless, since unless the appropriate cell gives its approval, their decisions are countermanded from above. Several of those whom I talked to used phrases like "a parallel administration."

The cells of course demand fees for their services. Worse than the scandals about the leaders it is state-wide scandal of the rank and file of the party busy making money, and good money too, mostly for the first time in their lives. Power and affluence have of course gone to their heads, and they make themselves generally hated. Two of my informants referred to Dijas's book *The New Class*. I do not doubt that the reports of oppression and extortion I heard were true, but, it was also possible to detect the dismay of hitherto privileged and respectable at the presumption of the lowly suddenly exalted.

The party has other business. That which one hears most of is the labour cooperatives. At least over large

areas they have established a tight organisation of rural and even urban unskilled labour. They have a monopoly of the lucrative toddy business, for example. Public and private employers are compelled to take labour from the cooperatives, observe their conditions, and pay wages and fees to them. How far the actual worker profits is questionable; certainly much of his earnings is channeled into the pockets of the secretaries and the party. Scandals have been brought to the Assembly and large sums have been mentioned. But the hitherto despised low-caste worker gains in status and gets protection, and his class seems to be faithful to the labour cooperatives. Probably these organisations will be the main support of the party in the next election.

Since Jinnah's successful campaign in the 1940's to mobilise Muslim sentiment against the Congress, the exploitation of any kind of sectional feeling has been called communalism and in the official view it is the ultimate political sin. But India is a multiple society of castes and sects. In practice it is impossible to escape communalism, and very few in any party make any wholehearted attempt to do so.

The communists argue that the opposition is communal: it expresses its sectional interests and sentiments of the Catholics and the Nairs. It would be equally just to reply that the communists exploit the sectional sentiments of the lower castes. They have given specific educational concessions to the Ezhavas, the largest of the formerly untouchable castes.

The agitation against the Education Act is not a monopoly of the Catholics. All the other Christian bodies take part. The foreign reader will perhaps be best convinced if I mention the Church of South India, a recent fusion of the Anglican, Methodist and some other Protestant Churches, with a marked inclination towards pacifism and the political left. This body supports the movement as firmly as the Catholic Church itself.

The Nair Service Society is in a sense a communal body, but its spirit is not narrow. Its leader, Mr. Mannath Padmanabhan, a venerable man of over 80, told me that he founded it 44 years ago, and that he has collected from the Nair community some 3 million, to found dozens of schools and about eight colleges, all open to all communities. Though he works in the name of the Nairs, a comparatively prosperous caste, he claims to befriend all communities. He applauds intermarriage, and looks forward with approval to the eventual disappearance of caste. He spoke of his high regard for the late Sri Narayan Guru, a saint who was born in the Ezhava caste, and he has named one of his colleges after Mahatma Gandhi.

These deep-rooted feelings do of course come into play, but the main disputes have no relation to caste or religious sect. Christian bishops of different denominations, and the Nair leader, told me that the movement had developed quite beyond the protest against the Education Act into an agitation against the communists' parallel administration and terrorism and the government denial of justice.

The Christian leaders knew, at least abstractly, what to expect from a Communist Government, and do not seem greatly surprised at what has happened. The Nair leader, who until two years ago had taken the communists' promises more or less at their face value, showed a real revulsion. These men, he said to me, do not know what truth is. They have no sense of justice. Even the British rulers respected the judgements of law courts: these men just disregard them. They are not fit to rule. There can be no compromise: they must go. I think I am justified in taking this as a representative sentiment. The educated people of Kerala have had their eyes opened. They know now that communism is not just another political or economic policy.

It should not be assumed, however, that the communists' opponents would necessarily win a fairly conducted election. There has been a revulsion of feeling among the educated. On the other hand, the communists have probably gained support among the poorest and hitherto most oppressed people. The demand of the opposition within Kerala is for an early election. The all-India Congress leaders hesitated for a long time before endorsing this demand, which suggests that they are not convinced that an election could be won. The communists also oppose it, which suggests that they are not sure of success either.

Some realisation of the truth is at last spreading beyond the state. At first the press and the leaders of opinion outside Kerala were almost uniformly hostile to the direct action movement. But it has continued now with growing strength for a month; a thousand or more people are arrested every day, and quite a number have been killed. The followers of Gandhi cannot pass by on the other side, or tell their fellow-citizens in Kerala to rely on the constitutional remedy and wait for the election in 1962. They are beginning to see the force of the Kerala leaders' reply, that if the communists remain in power another three years they will make a fair election impossible.

These events are instructive for students of communism. Here was the first practical test of the new parliamentary policy. Of all Communist Parties the Indian was the most likely to try it out honestly. Nambudiripad gave all the assurances that could have been asked for, but he went ahead building up a totalitarian apparatus which would have completely falsified the promises made at Amritsar that Communist Government would allow full liberty of opposition.

It is impossible to set up a communist state without dictatorship. The parliamentary policy has broken down, and it has done so not only because Nambudiripad could not exercise terror against his opponents, but because he could not exercise terror against his followers. It is not so much the policies of the cabinet as the corruption, rapacity and insolence of the party rank and file that have provoked the present mass resistance which will in all probability soon bring the Communist Government of Kerala to an end.

With Many Voices

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

—Tennyson.

We are being driven to the point where we owe it to our self-respect to ask the question whether we can be friends with China on any terms except their own.

—*Hindustan Times*, July 13.

For the Prime Minister it is a period of confusion as well as anguish because the two foundations on which his foreign as well as defense policies are based have begun to sink in the rising subsoil water of Tibet—friendship with China and co-existence with communists both at home and abroad.

—Dr. Krishnalal Shridharani, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, June 30.

Nehru, sitting on his tall fence, prefers to be thought of as a fair and impartial Prime Minister of India, rather than as a member of a party which always has opposed communism.

—Sharokh Sabavala, *New Leader*, June 8.

Mr. Nehru was keen on banding the Afro-Asian countries together against Western imperialisms at the Bandung Conference, but he seems to be unwilling to band them together again, as Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan is trying to do, against an Eastern imperialism when the victim of this imperialism is itself an Asiatic country.

—*Civil Liberties Bulletin*, July 1959.

China has prepared a secret plan or a blue print for establishing a Himalayan federation consisting of Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan and the North-East Frontier Agency under her suzerainty.

—H. V. Kamath, *Times of India*, July 20.

If Tibet is an internal affair of China, how does apartheid in South Africa become the close concern of India?

—Frank Moraes, *Indian Express*, July 4.

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If the Chinese have not started yet to say something about Shri Nehru's action in Kerala, it is only because they have been advised that such a move would not pay, otherwise they are only too anxious to score up Kerala against Tibet.

—Dr. Krishnalal Shridharani, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, June 30.

Some people charge that the Soviets are interested in taking over India. India has too many problems of her own.

—Nikita Khrushchev, *Evening News of India*, July 8.

In fact, today, it is Mr. Namboodiripad and the Kerala communists who are providing the Congress with a model of democracy and example in non-violence.

—R. K. Karanjia, *Blitz*, July 10.

What the Communist Government in Kerala has done in 30 months is what the Congress has been promising to the people of India since the turn of the century.

—Mrs. K. R. Gowri, Kerala Revenue Minister, *Times of India*, July 19.

Mr. Namboodiripad recently stated with pride that the Section 144 has been applied in Kerala only at two or three places. He is right; Section 144 is applied as preventive action and the communists are not interested in prevention. The work of striking terror is now being left to the goondas.

—K. M. Munshi, *Hindustan Times*, July 19.

Mr. Mannath Padmanabhan, the 82-year old leader of the Kerala Liberation Movement, asked the Centre to take a lesson from the Kerala events and prohibit the communists from contesting elections in other parts of India. In fact, the Communist Party should be driven out of the country, he demanded.

—*Times of India*, July 20.

Let us not forget that the Constitution is for the people and not the people for the Constitution.

—Mrs. Indira Gandhi, *Times of India*, July 26.

Parties may come and parties may go, but the Congress will live on for ever.

—N. Sanjiva Reddi, Chief Minister of Andhra, *Hindustan Times*, July 19.

Socialism in a poor country can only mean that it will remain permanently poor. Instead of producing wealth in the real sense it may equalise poverty.

—Prime Minister Nehru, *Malabar Herald*, July 18.