

DECEMBER 1954

Thoughts Arising From An Incident

by Stephen Spender

Mr. Stephen Spender, has just completed his tour of Australia and India. In this country where he spent the month of November he met scores of people in all intellectual centres and addressed hundreds. His charm, gentleness and transparent sincerity have won many friends for him and for the movement for cultural freedom. Here Mr. Spender tells the story of an incident in his Australian tour.

THIS is a rather personal comment on one small aspect of my trip to Australia. It is to do with my meeting with some Communist writers at a dinner given to me by the Meet Your Writers Club in Melbourne.

The first thing I want to explain about this (for the benefit of the very kind friends who resented it on my behalf) is that I asked for whatever unpleasantness happened. I asked for it because it was at my request that the Communist writers were invited. I asked them, because I wished, when I was in Australia, to meet with writers of all parties on the plane of writing. However, doubtless it is optimistic to hope that one can choose one's ground of meeting; though it would also be very pessimistic to conclude from my Melbourne experiences that artists in different camps can find nothing in common in their art to discuss.

A prelude to the 'unpleasantness' was provided by my being sent a poem by Mr. David Martin, in which he described meeting me when I was a 'boy with a lyrical streak' on the road behind the front lines in the Spanish Civil War. The poem drew attention to the fact that Mr. Martin was a front line fighter, and that besides being a 'civvy' I was now a traitor to the cause of the Spanish Republicans.

I am not going to invoke ghosts of the London Blitz (in which, in fact, I played a very undistinguished part) against Mr. Martin's heroism of twenty odd years ago. In a way Mr. Martin's poem provided me with my apologia. One cannot be everything. Having

been some hundred yards ahead of me perhaps excuses Mr. Martin for not being a better poet; while some of my poems may excuse my laggardness.

Mr. Martin is from Hungary, and if I was as determined in probing his career as he is in mine, I would suggest that having had no doubt the courage to go to Spain, though a communist he seems to lack the resolution to live in the Hungary of Free Democracy. If he did live there, he might think twice before calling people traitors: for only today are the traitors of yester-year being rehabilitated, while their accusers are discovered to have fabricated evidence against them. The question really to consider is whether a person is a traitor if he protests against the fabrication of evidence to support a cause which he himself has once supported? Since, in 1937, I went to Spain because I hated Hitlerism and Fascism, am I a traitor because in 1939 I detested the Soviet-Nazi pact? Is Mr. Martin loyal to a picture of himself in the trenches of Madrid, or is he loyal to those Republicans who, after the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, were handed over by the Russians to the Nazis for their Concentration Camps?

I raise these questions because I think the least the intellectuals of the world can do is to assume that whatever their disagreements, they do as "clerics" support causes out of good faith. If we cannot assume this, we not only are in different camps, but we are destroying the possibility of there ever being a common language. Myself, I think that people who sign Peace Manifestos are mistaken, and I agree with a line of D. H. Lawrence: "Loud peace propaganda makes war seem imminent." But because—very regretfully—I think this, I do not imagine that all the writers who sign such manifestoes are acting in bad faith.

There were a good many interruptions from other Communist writers at the meeting I have mentioned. They were all of the same kind—all accusations of bad faith.

The basis of these accusations is, of course, the work of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. One ought

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Stephen Spender In India

MR. STEPHEN SPENDER, the renowned British poet and critic and the Editor of *Encounter* arrived in India on 28th October. The first place that he visited was Madras, where he had a busy programme for four days. He addressed a public meeting on the 28th under the auspices of the I.C.C.F. and Y.M.C.A. The next day he visited the Central College of Karnatak Music and the Christian College at Tambaram and spoke at a meeting under the auspices of the British Council on "Recreating the English Language." On 30th October he visited Kalakshetra and the Theosophical Society and addressed a meeting under the auspices of the South Indian Journalists' Federation. The next day Mr. Spender went to Chidambaram where he visited the Annamalai University and the famous Nataraja Temple. An address was presented to Mr. Spender at the University, after which he spoke on "the Place of the Poet in Society." At the end of his speech, the Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University announced the institution of an annual prize of Rs. 500/- to the best student of the year to be named the Spender Prize.

In the course of his stay in Madras, Mr. Spender visited the Gemini Studios where he had interesting discussions with Mr. S. S. Vasan, the proprietor of the Gemini Studios and the President of the Film Federation of India. Mr. Spender also met during his stay a number of Tamil writers and poets and other public men of Madras.

From Madras Mr. Spender went to Ernakulam and Trivandrum where he addressed crowded meetings of students and the intelligentsia. His next place of halt was Bangalore. In Bangalore, Mr. Spender addressed a public meeting under the auspices of the Indian Institute of Culture. He also held meetings with distinguished public men and Kanarese writers and poets.

Mr. Spender arrived in Bombay on 6th November. Immediately on arrival, he addressed a press conference which was very widely reported. On Monday 8th November he spoke at a very largely attended public meeting held under the auspices of the I.C.C.F. Sir Rustom Masani presided over the meeting. The next day he spoke on "Poetry and Politics of the 30's" at a meeting held under the auspices of the P.E.N. and the Indian Institute of Educational and Cultural Co-operation. His Excellency G. S. Bajpai, Governor of Bombay was to preside over this meeting but he could not do so on account of his sudden illness. In his absence, Mr. M. R. Masani took the chair. The other public meeting Mr. Spender addressed was a meeting of students held under the auspices of the Bombay University. Principal Bannerjee of the Ismail College presided.

Apart from these public functions, Mr. Spender attended a number of private and semi-private functions. The I.C.C.F. gave him a reception at the Taj on 10th November, where a large number of distinguished citizens of Bombay came together to meet the

famous poet. The Time and Talent Club, The Theatre Centre, the Screen Writers' Association and the Indian Motion Picture Producer's Association held receptions in honour of Mr. Spender at which he delivered short speeches dealing with various aspects of arts and culture. Mr. Spender also visited an exhibition of Mr. Raval's paintings.

On 11th November Mr. Spender went to Poona where he delivered a lecture under the auspices of the Poona University. The Poona group of the I.C.C.F. organised on the occasion an informal discussion at which Mr. Spender spoke on "the Role of the Writer."

From Bombay Mr. Spender went to Calcutta where he spent four days from 16th to 19th. He delivered three lectures in the city, the first being under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, the second under the auspices of the Calcutta University and the last under the auspices of the British Council. Mr. Spender also attended several receptions, the most prominent amongst which were those organised by the PEN Calcutta group and the Banga Sanskriti Sammelan. Mr. Spender also visited the Presidency, Scottish Church and the City Colleges, where he gave short addresses and recitation of his poems. He also met the members of the Left Book Club at an informal discussion.

From Calcutta, Mr. Spender went to Banaras and then to Lucknow. In Banaras and Lucknow, he delivered lectures under the auspices of the Banaras and the Lucknow Universities. From Lucknow, Mr. Spender went to Delhi where he stayed until 28th morning when he left for Karachi. In Delhi he spoke on "Cultural Freedom" at a public meeting held under the auspices of the I.C.C.F. On 25th November, he gave an address on "the Conflict of Minds" to the students of the Delhi University.

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Notes

The Welfare State and its Limitations

IN a Welfare State there is always the tendency to concentrate more and more power into the hand of the executive government. The tendency is growing in the country and more and more laws are being passed ousting the jurisdiction of the courts. The President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, drew pointed attention to this tendency in the course of the speech that he delivered while laying the foundation stone of the Supreme Court building and advised against the legislature or executive usurping the function of the courts. It is to be hoped that the Government will keep in mind this sound advice of the Head of the State.

On another occasion the President warned against the danger of the State encroaching upon and monopolising the field of social welfare. He advised the first conference of the Chairmen of State Social Welfare Advisory Boards: "The idea of a Welfare State is good. But just as in the field of economics, more so in the field of welfare, it is necessary to pursue a mixed welfare policy." Welfare services, pointed out the President, "require a human touch which voluntary social workers alone can bring to bear upon them." It was necessary therefore, he urged, "to demarcate the respective fields of operation for voluntary and state agencies."

The R. S. D. Rally at Hadapsar

THE Rastra Seva Dal rally of about three thousand volunteers held recently at Hadapsar, near Poona, under the guidance of Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, was an inspiring sight for all those who look forward to the reconstruction of society through self help and voluntary labour. These volunteers gathered together not with the customary lathi but with a spade or a pick-axe in order to build a bund for a co-operative farm. The Rastra Seva Dal came into existence along the lines of a traditional national volunteer corps. In the pre-independence days it performed a great service in fighting the canker of communalism among Maharashtra youth. But unlike many other nationalist youth organisations it did not dissolve into listlessness after the attainment of independence. Under the creative leadership of Mr. S. M. Joshi it started organising 'voluntary labour' squads in the villages—and by building roads, digging wells, cutting canals and such other activities has been creating what may be described a psychological revolution. Our villages have so stagnated over hundreds of years that they have become a sort of lumber-room, which symbolise decay, dust, lethargy and helplessness. Such a condition suits the totalitarians who can go to the villages and promise them all kinds of things only if they put the totalitarians into power. But democracy is truly and squarely based on the awaken-

ing of the citizens; and, since India lives in the villages, it, in India, means awakening of the villagers. The Rastra Seva Dal is performing a task of fundamental importance.

First Fruits

IT had been hoped by many in India that the commitments made by the Chinese communist spokesmen to the "Five Principles" and in particular to "non-interference in domestic affairs" could in time be translated into concrete abandonment of fifth column activities in the free countries of Asia through the Communist Party and local Chinese residents. The first fruits of the Sino-Indian talks in Delhi and Peking are, however, already turning out to be somewhat bitter. While traitors like K. I. Singh and Pridi still bide their time in Peking as guests of the communist dictatorship, pressure is apparently being applied on the Indian Government to resort to acts which reflect poorly both on the love of freedom and the honour of this country.

A P.T.I. message from Calcutta of November 19 reveals that a respected leader of the large Chinese community in that city, Dr. C. S. Liu editor of the *Chinese Journal of India*, has been asked by the Indian Government to leave this country by November 30. Just in case it is thought Dr. Liu had indulged in activities subversive of this country, the message proceeded to explain that the offence for which Dr. Liu is being expelled is that his journal had published the proceedings of a meeting held in Calcutta on November 7, the Chinese National Day, at which Chinese Nationalists had made speeches expressing the hope that their unfortunate country would some day be freed from its present tyrants. This then was Dr. Liu's offence—that he dared to give expression to the patriotic feelings of his compatriots in exile on free Indian soil.

As is well known, an attempt has been going on for the last year or so on the part of Chinese Communist representatives in Calcutta to browbeat local Chinese residents who, like overseas Chinese elsewhere, still refuse to bow before the Peking dictators and go through a process of brainwashing. This act of the Indian Government will undoubtedly facilitate this nauseating process. It is obvious that the hospitality of Indian soil is now increasingly to be denied to those from other lands who love freedom and will not bow to totalitarian terror.

After this supine surrender to communist pressure, one ceases to be surprised at reading another Calcutta press message to the effect that Mr. Ferencz Nagy, Vice-President of the International Peasants Union and the last Prime Minister of free Hungary, who is at present in this country at the invitation of Professor N. G. Ranga's Krishikar Lok Party, is being given the official cold shoulder by New Delhi and that State Governments have been warned not to take "any official cognizance" of his presence. This is justified on the ground that Mr. Nagy is *persona non grata* with the present Soviet Satellite regime in his enslaved country. It will be recalled that Mr. Nagy won the last free elections in Hungary as the

leader of the Smallholders (Peasant) Party and was Prime Minister till the communists, with Soviet support, seized power by force and fraud. The story of their coup has been told with rare frankness by Matyas Rakosi, the communist chief, and has been published in this country by the Democratic Research Service in a brochure entitled *How We Took Over Hungary?* with a foreword by Jayaprakash Narayan.

Unfortunately, the Indian Government in a vain attempt at appeasement is today fraternising with the Rakosis and Mao Tse-tungs and turning its back on patriots and peasant leaders alike. One wonders how some of those in Delhi would feel if one day they were ousted from this country by a treacherous *coup d'etat* and other democratic countries were similarly to turn their backs on them and deport them from their soil for daring to salute the Indian National Tricolour on January 26?

Who Rules Kashmir?

THE cowardly attack on Mr. Asoka Mehta and his colleagues in Srinagar, while they were out for a walk in the town, throws a flood of light on the situation as it exists in the State of Kashmir and Jammu. Mr. Mehta was in the State to help the development of a socialist party in Kashmir. He went to Srinagar after visiting Jammu where he presided over a conference of socialist workers held to form a Kashmir State branch of the Praja Socialist Party. In Srinagar also it was his idea to hold a couple of meetings to popularise the aims and ideals of his party. These activities of Mr. Mehta were not to the liking of the National Conference, the ruling party in the State, and more particularly, of the communist elements who are entrenched in strong positions within it. The leaders of the National Conference and their communist supporters have established in the State a one-party rule which cannot tolerate opposition and will not permit any civil liberties to the people. At a public meeting in Delhi held to condemn the incident, Acharya J. B. Kripalani characterised the National Conference rule as a reign of terror, where the people lived in fear of the ruling party. This is a thing which inevitably happens whenever communists get control over a government. Communist domination of the government of Bakshi Gulam Mohammed was evident since long to keen observers of the events that are taking place in that State. The treatment meted out to Mr. Asoka Mehta and his colleagues for daring to raise a voice of opposition should now open the eyes of even the purblind. It is not Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed who is ruling in Kashmir but others who have quietly occupied all positions of real power.

Student Sagacity

MANY delegations go to Soviet Russia and return after enjoying the lavish hospitality provided by the State. Many who go are so much overwhelmed by the hospitality that they return as enthusiastic propagandists of the Soviet system. Some are, however, able to see below the surface and give on their return

a more truthful account. The number of such persons is now increasing.

A few days back returned a delegation of university students and teachers who had gone to Soviet Russia on the invitation of the Moscow University. The delegation contains its usual quota of persons who have returned to praise Soviet Russia to the skies, but there are a few who are very critical of what they saw and were shown. The information supplied by them throws revealing light on the condition of Soviet students and Soviet methods of teaching.

Mr. Satya Dev Sharma, leader of the students' group of the delegation, found that dialectical materialism governed all aspects of education and students were denied the opportunity to study anything that did not conform with that philosophy. Students, he said, could not travel from one city to another without intimation to, and permission of, the police. Students' unions were called trade unions and were, he pointed out, rigidly controlled by the Communist Party.

Another member of the delegation, Mr. D. N. Panigrahi, has corroborated Mr. Sharma's statements and further pointed out that students were not given any opportunity to think otherwise than what the State desired them to think.

These statements of Mr. Sharma and Mr. Panigrahi have thrown local communists into panic and they are busy trying to repair the damage done by condemning them as mischievous slanders.

Selective Service

WHILE politicians are scraping the barrel of bright ideas to find ways of combating unemployment, the Calcutta police have launched an experiment to cure "amateur" rowdies with offers of employment and have secured the co-operation of forty commercial firms in this schemes. In Calcutta, where anything from a decrease in fares to an increase in wages may be obtained by throwing stones and burning an adequate number of tramcars, the advantages of employing "amateur" rowdies should be obvious to all except a small uncharitable minority of unemployed, law-abiding, double graduates who are never satisfied anyway. No wonder, then, that the Deputy Commissioner of Police finds the results of the experiment "unexpectedly encouraging!"

However, the subtle distinction made between "amateur" and "professional" rowdies raises a few problems which the Calcutta police do not seem to have foreseen. Who, for instance, will decide on the "amateur" status of a particular rowdy? Again, would not an "amateur" rowdy obtaining employment because of rowdiness, be dangerously near becoming a professional?

But there is no need to be unduly discouraged. An Amateur Rowdies' Association can be set up which can regularize questions of status. Naturally it will also be necessary to reassure the professional rowdies that this scheme is in no way intended to discriminate against them in matters of employment. In the meanwhile there are enough trams in Calcutta to keep everyone in trim.

The Case Of Comrade Adib

by Nissim Ezekiel

DURING the past month or so, there has been a marked change in the political view-point of *The Times of India*. It is apparent that the present policy is a more faithful reflection of the paper's editorial mind than the one which, for some time previously, tended to usurp it. Critical comment is no longer confined to the shortcomings or deplorable decisions and acts of the democracies but is extended to countries behind the Iron Curtain. Indignation against social injustice is not reserved in favour of American minorities or the coloured peoples of the world but recognises the fact that the most highly organised social injustice exists today in the communised countries.

It is good to see that colleagues of the one communist in *The Times of India* have asserted themselves and restored to its columns fair criticism and integrity. This does not mean that democrats now agree with everything the *Times* says. It only means they can respect it.

Freedom First has in the past taken the *Times* to task for the communist bias in its views. It is only fair that it should note the present change and welcome it.

It is no secret that Adib is the pen name of Mr. Sham Lal, an assistant editor of the *Times of India*. In that national daily, published in Bombay and Delhi, he writes a regular literary-cum-political feature under the innocuous heading, "Life and Letters." His articles are generally book reviews; essentially, at any rate, each one mentions a recent publication and purports to criticise it. Adib has also occasionally written dramatic and art criticism, and has propounded his views on serious works of history, economics, sociology and philosophy. On all these subjects he maintains a uniform tone of authority.

In communist circles he is well known as an invaluable propagandist without whom the remaining fellow-travelling air of *The Times of India* would become much thinner, if it did not disappear altogether. In non-communist circles, opinions on him are varied. The politically innocent regard him as a literary columnist who is "entitled to his own ideas," which puts him in the same class as all other columnists. The intellectual innocents challenge you to deny that he is a "learned man", whatever his political inclinations. Those who can distinguish between communists and non-communists recognise his affiliations but do not cross swords with him.

Since the inception of *Encounter* Adib has made six or seven virulent attacks on articles appearing in it. When I wrote to the Editor, protesting against this planned communist propaganda campaign directed at a single journal, the letter, clearly marked for publication, was not published. Neither did the Editor reply personally to the protest. He is probably so sincere in his belief that the communist must enjoy the fullest freedom of speech in a democratic

society that he is willing to stifle any protest against the communist's misuse of freedom of speech.

Adib never misses a chance to attack members of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. When Salvador de Madariaga's *Essays With a Purpose* appeared recently, I read it with the closest attention, expecting Adib would damn it. I was not disappointed. In his column he published what purported to be a review of the book. As his approach to it is characteristic, the review is worth an analysis.

Readers of Adib's review would never suspect the variety of content in Madariaga's book. Adib does not tell them that it includes four essays on Spain, three on the written and spoken word, and three in a homely and familiar style on general subjects. Adib is interested only in the author's politics and he wants to score a kill. Of the five essays on political themes he concentrates on the first, the half a century survey, which consists of 14 pages. Adib says 20 pages, and the error is a sign of the casual way in which he read the essay. There is no indication that he glanced at the rest of the book.

Of the four half-columns which the review takes up, one is devoted to preparing the smear, the rest to spreading it thickly upon *Essays With a Purpose*. Here is the mixture from Adib's communist workshop: "It is said of Sartre's women that they cannot go to bed with anyone without discussing man's anguish, despair and aloneness. The disease which makes these minxes probe the mysteries of the human situation—*la condition humaine*—also afflicts many a respectable professor. They too suffer from the itch which makes them ask basic questions about the despair and the anguish that fill the minds of so many today. And the answers they give are by no means pedantic. They are as pert as the answers given by Sartre's women. Their pertness is easily explained. The answers are meant to be sold. Sales promotion demands simplification..." and so on. In many of his reviews, Adib introduces an imaginary sophisticated woman, who accepts gratefully the ideas Adib is so courageously rejecting. In attacking Madariaga, he brings her in again.

"One can almost see the customer putting the neatly packaged idea into her handbag. 'How awfully simple, my dear, I did not know until this moment that the bath-tub symbolised the human condition.'" This after quoting the joke about existentialism, "No one can take a bath for you."

It is obvious that Adib has no talent for fiction. His sophisticated woman is a moron, but even so she would not talk like that. Nevertheless, the despicable associations have been established and that is the point. Sartre's women going to bed with someone and talking of man's anguish, the respectable professors suffering from the itch to ask basic questions, the pert answers "meant to be sold," and Salvador de Madariaga's half-century survey.

Madariaga is quoted, after more sneers than can be counted, as stating that human nature is reacting "against the exacting claims made upon it by reason and by liberty during the nineteenth century. . . Reason and liberty are precisely the two martyrs of our age." In the original paragraph, the second sentence comes first, but that does not matter. The general meaning is clear enough. If exacting claims are made on human beings by reason and liberty, these entities can only be exaggerated and distorted in the process. Madariaga does not share the nineteenth century view of reason and liberty. That is why when he develops the argument he puts both words in inverted commas: "Both 'reason' and 'liberty' as understood in the nineteenth century had been severely shaken by the first in date of the three great Jewish prophets of our day before the other two came to complete the work. Marx, Freud and Einstein are the three prophets of the gospel of the nineteenth century. Between them they have radically altered world views on the three vastest domains of man: collective life, personal life, cosmic life."

It is interesting to note Adib's treatment of this statement. He begins with a smirk on his face: "That's too bad, Senor. Who killed this estimable couple?" And then after quoting the statement above: "Isn't that horrible, Senor? How could they do it? What did they say?"

The technique is slimy. If we compare Madariaga's statement with Adib's quotation, we will find that Adib has quietly removed the inverted commas from the words "reason" and "liberty," as used by the former. Even though the phrase "as understood in the nineteenth century" is retained, the force of Madariaga's own conviction in the matter is considerably weakened. It appears from Adib's quotation that Madariaga is complaining Marx, Freud and Einstein killed the reason and liberty in which he believed. Adib's mocking questions are meant to create a thick fog of distrust, suspicion and contempt, so that readers of *The Times of India* may not know the author's real ideas.

Having made a basic distortion of the point of view expressed in *Essays With a Purpose*, Adib is able to attack at all points with a certainty that his readers, the majority of whom are not likely to see the book, will be carried along with him. If an idea is asserted in it with which Adib agrees, he first attributes a reluctance to the author in "admitting" or "confessing" it, before he quotes. In this instance, he says: "Senor Madariaga is discreetly silent about this cruel assault on liberty by the spokesmen of liberty. But even he is not unconscious of the contradictions of the nineteenth century liberal's position." The "even he" is disgusting in view of the fact that the quoted idea, with which Adib agrees, is fundamental to Madariaga's thesis. He criticises in his book the "naive belief" of the nineteenth century liberal that the self-balancing virtues of liberty can work in a society which is not organic. Here again we have an example of Adib's slimy method in dealing with his political opponents. One day I shall contrast this with the tone of deference he uses when dealing with books by communists and fellow-travellers.

A feature of Adib's articles is the long quotation, which he employs with reckless pedantry. The object of quoting from one source is to discredit another. It also no doubt helps to create the impression that he is a "learned man." In his criticism of Madariaga he quotes the Reverend R. V. Larmour. The quotation is not enlightening—it is either an insidious way of flattering his readers, or an attempt to mystify them still further on social questions. "The content of truth," says the Reverend Larmour, "emerges in any given society as a cluster of presuppositions which appears to members of that society, whilst it remains stable, as intuitive certainties—the things which any reasonable man will 'see'—but which are in large part, the rationalisations of certain specific stresses and strains in the economic set-up of that society."

One can now conjure up for Adib the sophisticated lady he is so fond of and make her say: "How true, my dear. I always suspected my husband's intuitive certainties were really rationalisations of his economic set-up, and his cluster of presuppositions the result of certain specific stresses and strains in our stable marriage."

If, at the end of Adib's spitting and scratching, one looks for his own ideas, what one finds is an astonishing intellectual poverty. He is compelled to express his views in a few paragraphs, sometimes in a few sentences. He is unable to develop and expound his ideas in a simple sequence without quotations. When he does so, the material becomes startlingly thin. Most of the time he appears to fill in gaps between one quotation and another, with bare, trite comments. For instance:

"This does not mean that every diagnosis of the social ills that afflict present-day society is equally valid." Profound?

... "neurosis is but an inner reflection of the chaos outside." Profound?

"No tabloid philosophy, however attractively packaged, can convince the victims of starvation and unemployment that the elite are competent." Profound?

These nuggets of wisdom are all that Adib can produce in contrast to the authors whom he attacks.

After "demolishing" Madariaga, Adib took on Hemingway, Bertrand Russell and Mr. John Masters. The last named was easy meat, but it is worth noting that, in scratching his face, Adib found it necessary to invoke the names of Henry Miller, D. H. Lawrence, James Joyce, Jean Cocteau and Gertrude Stein. For one who is not above an occasional cheap joke at the expense of the highbrows, this is a complete sell-out.

With Hemingway and Russell, Adib attempts dialogue. Since he has no talent for fiction, as I have said, the results are disastrous instead of being devastating. He has not the foggiest notion of how Hemingway and Russell probably talk. He makes them talk like idiots, so Adib wins an easy victory; but is it worthwhile proving oneself superior to idiots? In Adib's hall of distorting mirrors, Nobel prizes are not

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Ilya Ehrenburg And Soviet Literature

by "Ashad"

MUCH ado was made by Russophiles in Bombay about Ilya Ehrenburg's article entitled "The Writer and His Craft" when it appeared some months ago. A discussion was held on it and speakers usually not associated with the cultural activities of communists were invited to participate in it. Altogether it was made to appear as if something epoch-making had happened in the domain of literature and literary criticism. Ilya Ehrenburg is so important a personality in contemporary Russian literature that anything coming from him is naturally considered an event, and although this article of his contains many truisms and common-places, naive statements and irreconcilable remarks yet it also tries to explain and analyse the present poverty of Russian literature. It is a different thing that even this analysis does not go to the root of the matter.

But Ehrenburg is now branded deviationist and is seriously criticised for the "gloomy background" of his recent story "The Thaw." And criticism in Soviet Russia, even literary criticism, amounts to condemnation. It would be interesting to know what the Russophiles are now saying about him and his article. The critic who condemned Ehrenburg was no other than Konstantine Sivonov, Deputy Secretary General of the Union of Soviet Writers and a Stalin prize-winner. It was the same Sivonov who, at the meeting of the Soviet Writer's Executive in October 1953, had declared that more realism is needed in literature and had demanded that the many conflicts which still existed in Soviet Society, and which for some time would continue to exist, should find their reflection in novels and plays.

Among those who have been condemned recently is Mrs. Vera Panova whose novel "The Seasons of the Year" graphically described "some of the many conflicts which still existed in the Soviet Society and which for some time would continue to exist." In the brief spell of relaxation that appeared after Stalin's death there appeared many works that depicted the life of the people in Russia, and criticised the dictatorial manner of the party personnel. These works could not have appeared a few years earlier. In fact some of them had to wait being published for some years. In October 1953 Ilya Ehrenburg could write that "even writers living under the Tsar had a better time of it." Poetess Vera Inber could say "there is no joy in our poetry. No one reads it. They reproach us poets for copying each other. The same steam shovel, the same dam, the same highways!" Tvardovsky, the famous poet and editor of the literary magazine *Novi Mir* dared to say "there had been fear in Soviet writer's mind."

These and many others have now been either ex-

pelled from the Union of Soviet Writers, condemned or severely criticised.

This criticism of Soviet Russian literature is not confined to the circle of writers and critics. Even the common readers feel the same. This article of Ilya Ehrenburg's opens with a complaint from a young Leningrad engineer that Russian literature today is paler than life, that there are no great books written today as there were in Tsarist Russia, so that there is something missing in them. Ehrenburg's article is an attempt to examine this complaint and to explain and analyse the present situation in Russian literature.

When he deals with the specific complaint of the young Leningrad engineer Ehrenburg admits that the weakness of much of the present day writing in Russia arises from too much emphasis on the public and external aspects of the life of the characters. There is too much of their profession, of their work in the field and the factory, of tractors, and steam shovels, dams, canals and too little of the personal and the intimate problems of the characters, of their loves and jealousies, their hopes and frustrations etc. This, according to him, is the main cause of the weakening of Russian literature.

Ehrenburg has tried to console his Leningrad engineer by saying that matters are much worse in the West. According to him "the twilight of the West has passed. Now the darkness of night has fallen there." He says, "modern Western literature amazes one by its poverty; that even well-meaning critics in France, England and the United States say so."

He goes to tell us that, "between the two wars writers of bourgeois Europe—Mauriac, Deoblin, Jules, Romains, Moravia, Joyce, Rob and others portrayed in novels of merit the exhaustion and wasting away of capitalist Society. Books like that are no longer written in the West." It is difficult to reconcile this with what he says a little further down viz., "But in the bourgeois countries there are excellent authors whose books move the reader and instil in him what does not exist in either the poor or the rich countries of the West—Hope."

Today things have changed in Russia, or so Ehrenburg thinks. For he says: "The Writers of my generation worked in a period difficult for literature. Today it is easier for writers to give a faithful and profound reflection of the Soviet Society that has taken shape and of Soviet People."

Is it? From the way in which Ehrenburg himself and authors like Mrs. Vera Panova and Leonid Zoria are condemned for giving a faithful and profound reflection of Soviet society and Soviet people it does not appear as if the time has come when this can happen.

It may be doubted if the time will ever come under a system where "politics presides over the destinies of literature;" where the men in power, according to their policy, tighten or loosen the grip over writers and writing; where literature is expected to "reflect the great wisdom and heroism of the Communist Party."

In the bourgeois capitalist world the author has the freedom to stand up against authority, against the society in which he lives, against what he thinks is ugly, inhuman, oppressive, against life itself if he has a quarrel with it, and he may produce very powerful work. The author in Soviet Russia can never stand up against the society in which he lives, against the system under which he may suffer. It will not do for the writer in Ehrenburg's country to suggest, or to say anything that might suggest that the leaders entrusted with the confidence of the people may become corrupt just because they are leaders. It will not do to suggest that misuse of power may not be a survival of the past but concomitant and consequence of the present social system. He must always support the system and the people in power, for that is how he fulfils his appointed role in the progress towards the Communist El Dorado.

Now as a writer Ehrenburg, who says that an author cannot write to order, must know that just as the author must share the feelings of the people, he must be free to disagree and differ. Even if Ehrenburg knows it, he probably is not free to say it. He is obviously torn between what he, as an author, feels and knows, and what as a Soviet subject he must say. He is forced to say strange things which go against facts. He claims freedom for the writer and yet ties him down to the party line.

We know however, that when the least little freedom is given to Russian authors they do produce work that probes into the hearts and minds of the characters, and depict things and people in Russia as they find them. And Ehrenburg himself should know this.

Unfortunately for Russian literature and for the Russian people this cannot happen under the present system, and for all that Ehrenburg might say, things will go on in literature, not as the writers want them to, but as those in authority want them to.

(NISSIM EZEKIEL—from page 6)

awarded, they are "bagged", a philosopher does not have the gift of lucid expression, as Russell has, he simply takes ideas, "strips them bare... makes them run... he even makes them stand on their head". This is one way of saying that Russell is not a communist.

The Hemingway dialogue is interesting for only one reason. Adib gives an autobiographical hint of which much may be made. Hemingway is made to ask, "You are not a radical by any chance?" and Adib replies in the words of a Hemingway character, "I ain't no radical, I'm sore. I been sore a long time."

That's the truest thing Adib has ever written.

(STEPHEN SPENDER—from page 1)

perhaps to point out that such attacks are on ground ill-chosen, because it assumes that the Congress is an association of people all of whom agree to carry out a programme which has one and only one purpose—anti-Communist propaganda. A glance at the names of the people on the International Executive Committee should really show that this idea is an illusion. With M. Raymond Aron, M. David Rousset, Signor Ignazio Silone and myself all on one committee it should be evident that the Congress is not a one-plank platform—it is a debate carried on over a broad area of agreement. Certainly we have agreed, since the Congress was founded, that Communism is a threat to individual freedom. And I do not quite see how even Mr. Martin, if he reflects on the curious case of the Nine Russian Doctors, or even of Dr. Rajk, will be able to deny that, retrospectively at least, the Congress has been doing a great service in pointing out that individual freedom can be destroyed in totalitarian societies. Should not the West keep this idea alive for the East?

But the Congress is also opposed to McCarthyism and—from my point of view—it has a positive side far more important than this defensive, sometimes rather negative, one. We have, through the Festival of Twentieth Century Masterpieces, held in Paris in 1952, through the performances of new works by contemporary composers held in Rome in March 1953, and through meetings such as that held in Hamburg in September 1953 to discuss the attitude of scientists to the modern world—we have, in these and other ways, done something to stimulate the vitality and the responsibility of intellectual life in the West.

And, in so far as this is feasible, I would like us to contribute to the freedom of intellectual self-expression, wherever we are—partly by defending it when it is threatened, but partly (even more partly, I was about to write) by helping it, through publications like *Encounter*, to self-expression. I believe that a vital artistic and thinking life is inseparable from freedom, and that therefore, when this is encouraged, it creates its own free environment and conditions.

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The Past and Future of Indian Communism

by Principal G. R. Dalvi

IT is paradoxical that a history of the Communist Party of India should be written by a non-communist. This has, however, an advantage. It lies in getting information about the communist movement based on facts which are not tampered with or processed. A communist or a fellow-traveller giving an account of the communist movement is likely to suppress inconvenient facts and resort to fabrication. That is a communist method of writing history, more particularly of writing history of communist parties. Mr. M. R. Masani's well-documented narration* of the history of the Communist Party of India has the advantage of being free from that untruthful methodology.

The material is divided into eleven chapters of which the IX which explains the current functioning of the Communist Party on various fronts and the XI which gives the author's visualisation of the outlook and the perspective are more important. Chapters I to VIII narrate the story of the Communist Party of India since World War I, developing through different stages till the General Elections of 1951, when the Communist Party apparently emerged as a significant force in the political life of the country. Chapter X deals with the recent strategy, tactics and internal life of the Party as based on the decisions and happenings of its Third Congress held at Madurai in December, 1953. Mr. Guy Wint has written a thoughtful introduction. There is no doubt about the usefulness of a well-documented exposition of the growth of the communist movement in a country like India. As Mr. Guy Wint suggests in the introduction a comparison between India and China of the post-war era appears to be inevitable in a study of contemporary history. As China is now decisively launched on the communist way, the question of India's choice and future appears to acquire a dramatic significance, particularly in the context of her current foreign policy which, based though it is on principles of neutrality and non-involvement, is quite outspokenly friendly to China and to Asian communists in anti-colonial garb. Therefore, an assessment of the strength of the Indian communist movement on the basis of a realistic study of its history should help a critical observer to visualise the perspective of the political developments in India and to meet effectively the threats to nascent Indian democracy and to the Rule of Law.

But a history of this kind may have its limitations too, unless facts are analysed and interpreted. And that may require much more than a study of the history of the Communist Party. A critical examination of the programme, principles and philosophy of the Party as well as the psychology of persons who are

drawn into it or its orbit becomes necessary. While Mr. Masani has very ably narrated the factual story of the Communist Party of India, he has done little to examine critically the philosophy which guides the Party or the factors which contribute to its ability to influence the political life of this country. His limited endeavour to do that, as expressed through chapters IX and XI, would not help the average reader to understand the dangers of communism. Indeed, if this book falls into the hands of an impressionist young man or woman—and there are hundreds of them in this country—he or she may read it to turn into an admirer or sympathiser of communism. There is not much in the book to counter that possible danger, although this does not detract from the utility of the book to discriminating students of contemporary history and to persons who are intellectually mature.

Chapter IX describes broadly the manner in which the communists function in public-life. They build up innocent-looking cultural, labour, social-welfare organisations as propaganda-cum-recruiting centres of the Party and shift their pressures according to the needs of the Party and the dictates of their international guides and patrons. The achievements of this technique, given the appeal of philosophy and the psychology of persons belonging to different stations in the community, are in the long run formidable and dangerous. Contradictions and inconsistencies of communist professions and practice are nonchalantly glossed over by the faithful. The net result is an increase in influence of the Communist Party, consolidation of its organisation and general boosting up of the morale of the Party-members and fellow-travellers.

The causes of such successes ought to be found out for meeting the threat of the rapidly spreading influence of communism. Mr. Masani should have added a chapter or two to discover and analyse them. Exposition of his views on the 'Outlook' as given in chapter XI, therefore, becomes inadequate. He estimates correctly when he says that the danger of communism is growing, that "taking the country by and large, the tide among the intelligentsia still definitely flows in favour of the communists and the long term prospects for the Party can, by no means, be considered bleak." Mr. M. N. Roy's conclusion, approvingly retold by Mr. Masani, is that what is decisive is not the economic factor, nor the poverty, nor even the illiteracy of the people. What are decisive are the psychological and emotional factors and these largely comprise to help the communists. These could undoubtedly be counteracted by "inspiring and dynamic leadership" based on mature judgment and sound analysis. The author is right when he observes at the end of the book that "in the final analysis, it is in the hands of non-communists that the destiny of India rests."

But who are the non-communists and what do they

* *The Communist Party of India — A Short History* by M. R. Masani. Published by Derek Verschoyle, London. 1954. Pp. 302. Rs 9/8.

offer? Among the forces and factors opposed to communism, the author lists the following: Religion, the socialists, the Five Year Plan, Gandhi and Bhoodan Yagna. The author concedes that "consistent ideological opposition to communism has hitherto been negligible. Confirmed anti-totalitarian groupings are as yet confined to small sections of the intelligentsia." In view of this, it would be purile to rely, as opposition to communism, upon authoritarian forces such as religion, Gandhism and nationalism or of socialism which move within the thought patterns developed by Marxism, or upon factors like Five Year Plan or Bhoodan Yagna which are based on confused ideas and are likely to create popular disappointments helpful only to communists.

For building up effective opposition to communism, non-communists must themselves be true democrats bent on radicalising democracy and democratising the economic and social systems and must be prepared to go beyond the prevailing social philosophies in search of a new philosophy based on an integral and a scientific view of nature, society and man. Even the staunchest opponents of communism are crippled in their ideas by the overpowering influence of the Marxian categories of thought. Communism is a social philosophy—a set of ideas—and must be combatted with a superior social philosophy if non-communists who are loyal to the values of freedom and democracy want the defeat of communism in the realm of ideas, the latter's collapse in the realm of human affairs will be hastened and assured. Humanism enriched by modern, scientific knowledge can alone offer the ideological and institutional apparatus for meeting the challenge of Communism. Opponents of Communism having faith in democracy should think out their ideas to their logical conclusions. They will be able to ward off the grave menace of communism only by ushering in a new Renaissance and a humanist revival.

Review

A Window on Red Square

by Frank Rounds, Jr. The Riverside Press, Cambridge, U.S.A. \$3.

BEFORE the present spate of Russia-bound delegations it was difficult to find anyone who had been to Russia. It is still difficult to find anyone who had lived in that country and can give an account of its people and their day to day lives with a reasonable amount of objectivity. The importance of this book lies in the fact that the author does just that. Frank Rounds spent 18 months in Moscow as an attache in the American Embassy. He describes, in this book, everything he saw, felt and heard during that time.

Obviously, one does not expect top diplomatic secrets in such a book. But in this particular book at least one does learn a great deal about everyday things; what kind of houses the Russians live in; what kind of clothes they wear, what their shops, their

roads, their barns are like. That, ultimately, should be the test of all political doctrines—how their practice affects the lives of ordinary people. No doubt Mr. Rounds tries to be fair, but his picture of this is not very attractive. The most unpleasant part of it fortunately is the feeling of being continuously watched; and the most unpleasant part of it, for the people of Russia is the fact that they are, for almost 24 hours of the day, exposed to the propaganda machine of the U.S.S.R.

LAEQ FUTEHALLY

Rama Retold

by Aubrey Mennen, Chatto & Windus, London 1954, Price 12s.6d. Pp. 247.

THE desire to be profane is a well-known psychological phenomenon; its most harmless form is the tendency to embellish a variety of walls and its most embarrassing form (from the point of view of the sufferer) is perhaps an irrepressible urge to utter profanities in solemn surroundings. Occasionally the malady takes the form of the written word masquerading as literature.

Mr. Aubrey Mennen wanted to write a book giving us the quintessence of his wisdom on politics, philosophy, history and morals. The literary effort could have taken one of the several forms, it could have been a serious novel, a series of essays or a number of short stories each with a moral to point out. Instead, he has produced a 'burlesque' version of the *RAMAYAN* interspersed with 'morsels of wisdom' called 'Tales of Valmiki' and ending with 'A note on the Indian Enlightenment' which attempts to encapsulate, in twelve pages, Indian thought from pre-history to Gandhiji—needless to say the effort is anything but successful.

The morals suggested by Mr. Mennen are that questions of right and wrong are purely academic—power is really what counts, that virtue is something quite comic and should not be taken seriously, and that a full stomach and low cunning are an adequate substitute for knowledge. To anyone who regards 'burlesque' as a serious art form these conclusions will no doubt seem like serious thinking.

Mr. Mennen (originally spelt Menon) is of Indo-Irish extraction and has been trying very hard to live down the Indian part—that alone could be the explanation for 'Rama Retold'. He has taken what he calls 'the bare bones of history' and given them a 'jolly good rattle,' let us hope that he at least finds the result edifying.

FAIZ NOORANI

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In Memoriam

ANDREI YANOURIEVITCH VYSHINSKI was undoubtedly one of the very few old Mensheviks who had the advantage of dying at his desk i.e. not facing a firing squad, or the walls of a jail cell or exile. This 'comfortable' death was well earned by Vyshinski for he had been for over 30 years an excruciatingly faithful servant of his former party opponents, the Bolshevik bosses of Russia. He served them in many guises, following obediently and articulately the intricate zig-zags of their party-line.

Like Commissar Felix Dzerjinsky, the founder of the Cheka, the terrorist agency of the first Bolshevik Government, which later blossomed into and still functions as the M.V.D., he was of Polish descent though thoroughly Russianized and like his immediate boss, Viacheslav Scriabine, alias Molotov, he was born into a fairly well-to-do middle class family. But whereas young Molotov probably following his cousins, the composer Alexander Scriabine's example was preparing himself for a musician's career and busily playing the cello (which, alas, he abandoned at the age of 16), Andrei Vyshinsky was studying law and preparing himself for the Bar at the University of St. Petersburg.

In the first decade of this century he joined a respectable bourgeois law firm and started quite successfully practising law. He also participated in the activities of the local S. D. Menshevik group, which he had joined while at the university. He quit the Mensheviks only several months after the Bolshevik Coup d'état of November 1917, once their power appeared consolidated. But he had to wait several years before being accepted as a member of the Communist Party. Possibly in order to accelerate this acceptance or perhaps for other more 'congenital' reasons as soon as he quit the Menshevik party, he started denouncing his former Party colleagues and helped the Cheka to locate and 'liquidate' or exile them. This is why Maxim Gorky in private conversation referred to him as the regime's most wicked police sniper.

He became known to the world in the mid-thirties as the relentless and wily prosecutor of the Old Bolsheviks during the famous and infamous trials that followed the murder of Kirov. As such, he was instrumental in sending to death and murderous exile most of Lenin's and his own colleagues. His name was now synonymous with the regime's implacable terror and inspired fear and horror to his countrymen. Let it be admitted that it is largely due to the talents of Vyshinsky that the new and more "progressive" method of prosecution and public trial was developed which once and for all dismisses such decadent bourgeois concepts as "truth," "lie" and even "pragmatic fact" and substitute them with "public admission" of

"errors" and with crimes invented by the prosecution itself.

Even so, Stalin did not seem to appreciate sufficiently the services rendered to his regime by Vyshinsky for he never admitted Vyshinsky to the inner sanctum of the Politbureau.

During the trials, as a prosecutor, Vyshinsky wore a thickish awe-inspiring beard and the semi-military jacket, the habitual garment of Stalin, Malenkov and Mao Tse-tung. Then, some time in the forties, he suddenly appeared as a diplomat, clean shaved and clad in slightly oversized Western clothes. From then on, his career is an open book. Everyone remembers his prolific oratory, his acid and flamboyant denunciation of Western capitalism, imperialism, warmongering, etc. Everybody knows him as an intrasigent negotiator, has heard or read his bombastic speeches, can count the number of vetos he has put in and the amount of "nyet's" (no's) he has uttered.

But his activity as a diplomat and as an ambassador of the Politbureau to the U. N. Assembly has been of little interest to the Russian people. To the masses in Russia, the memory of A. Y. Vyshinsky will remain closely linked with the gruesome events of the mid-thirties, to the purges of those years, when thousands, nay millions, of people found their death in gaols, in concentration camps and through the firing squads of the G.P.U.

NEHRU'S VISIT TO PEKING—AS MR. LOW SEES IT



Indians ... Chinese ... All the same you see?

The New York Times

With Many Voices

“The deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
’Tis not too late to seek a newer world.”
—Tennyson.

Elections in Russia and China were guided by the Government. In China, there are people who are not even eligible for election, and yet we hear constantly of the People’s Government there. In India the Government is truly a people’s Government, based on free and democratic elections. But we talk and act as if the people and the Government are opponents.

—Indira Gandhi, *The Times of India*, November 21, 1954.

Perhaps the most revealing “discoveries” which Mr. Nehru has made are that the masses of the Chinese people are being deliberately fed on a diet of misinformation. Such a policy of keeping the people in a state of ignorance is a feature common to all totalitarian systems.

—Surveyor, *Times of India*, November 8, 1954.

The Portuguese pretension that their political power in Goa is essential to the cause of Christianity in India must be taken not with a grain, but with a bushel of salt.

—Principal F. Correia-Afonso, *Times of India*, November 10, 1954.

Mr. Krishna Menon in the U.N. acts and speaks more like M. Vyshinsky’s deputy than as the leader of India’s delegation. By so doing Mr. Menon is making nonsense of Mr. Nehru’s foreign policy and adding rapidly to the number of India’s friends in the free world who find it impossible to defend the Indian position.

—*Thought*, November 6, 1954.

We do not regard Communism as a movement of Left; it is on the Right, reactionary. It would take us back to a tyranny worse than that of the Middle Ages, just as the Soviet dictatorship is more efficient and even more terrible than that of the evil and incompetent Tsarist autocracy.

—Mr. Herbert Morrison, in the *New Leader*, October 18, 1954.

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The avowed Communist gives less assistance to the Communist cause than the anti-Communist who, fine as his expressed sentiments may be, does not in fact work with energy and integrity.

—Prof. J. S. Turner, *The Statesman*, November 18, 1954.

The Chinese had assured him they were very much opposed to Communist interference in the governments of Burma, Thailand and Indonesia. But no one can guarantee the future—obviously.

—Prime Minister Nehru in a Press Conference at Saigon, *Free Press Journal*, November 1, 1954.

When a man offers me millions of books that would cost five rupees each for nine annas, I am a little suspicious.

—Dr. Katju, *Social Action*, November 1954.

Flying saucers are inventions of imperialist war-mongers.

—Budapest Radio as reported in *Bombay Chronicle*, November 1, 1954.

Politics is a public duty and not a license to suspend the Ten Commandments.

—Governor Dewey, as reported in the *New York Times*, October 10, 1954.

To the Kremlin dictators “coexistence” means only no existence for the democracies.

—Mr. George Meany in the *New Leader*, October 18, 1954.

✓ It is well to keep an open mind, but the open mind easily degenerates into an empty mind if it has no principles to sustain it.

—*New Leader*, November 8, 1954.

We have been assured by Marshall Tito that he is convinced that his firm stand against Moscow was the turning point in the fight for the soul of Europe.

—Special Correspondent, *Bombay Chronicle*, November 2, 1954.

The deficit financing undertaken by the Government of India to carry out the Five-Year Plan is the best subsidy to Communism.

—Dr. B. R. Shenoy, *Times of India*, November 6, 1954.

The Soviet Union is advancing the Trojan Horse of co-existence only for the purpose of gaining sufficient time to accomplish what we may term “atomic stalemate.”

—Mr. Knowland, *The Times of India*, November 17, 1954.