

The Need for an Alliance

S. V. Raju

THE leadership of the Ruling Congress and Mrs. Indira Gandhi in particular must be chuckling with delight. For, the Congress(O) is finding itself at sixes and sevens over the issue of cooperation with democratic opposition parties. To add to its confusion is the revival of that red herring — Congress unity. There appear to be three distinct pulls in the Congress(O). Those who are in favour of a "grand alliance" or "consolidation" of nationalist and democratic parties and groups; those who favour a kind of nebulous, amorphous grouping in the nature of an S.V.D., and those who would like to see the two Congresses reunited minus perhaps the controversial leaders in both the parties. But there is hardly any one in the Congress(O) who thinks in terms of going it alone.

The Congress(O) Working Committee's resolution of November 12 authorising its President to evolve the necessary mechanism for "achieving the maximum understanding for united action by all democratic parties to meet the challenge to democracy" is naturally neither fish nor fowl. As the Special Correspondent of the *Hindu* (November 13) observed: "The resolution seems to satisfy all sections in the Party. Those who had opposed the move for a joint front in Parliament may feel satisfied by the absence of any specific reference to this issue in this resolution. At the same time it does not rule out the President deciding to give a formal shape to the arrangement under which the Congress(O) and other Opposition parties co-operating with each other in Parliament at present."

The Working Committee's Resolution of November 12, is a far cry from their own AICC's call only five months earlier on June 28 for the "consolidation of national democratic forces to repel the threat of communist subversion and communal virus" so as to open up "the path of ordered progress resulting in a richer and better life for our people." This consolidation, went on the AICC resolution entitled, The Political Crisis, "becomes one of the primary tasks of the Congress." The long preamble to the resolution made it

clear beyond all doubt that the threat to the country's freedom and its democratic institutions came from the policies pursued by the Congress(R).

Appealing "to all nationalist, democratic and socialist parties, groups and individuals in the country to co-operate in this effort both in Parliament and outside", the resolution listed the issues "which should provide a meeting ground for all democrats and patriots", namely,

- "(a) the unity and security of India;
- (b) the defence of the constitutional liberties of the people and preservation of democratic institutions;
- (c) the maintenance of law and order; and
- (d) establishment of a secular society based on principles of social and economic justice and equality of status and ensuring effective opportunity to all to earn livelihood and attain a basic minimum standard of living."

After adopting such a clear and unambiguous resolution which was welcomed by the Swatantra Party and the Jana Sangh and even by the B.K.D., which was then collaborating with the Congress(R) in Uttar Pradesh (and which, though seeing virtue in the resolution, declined to respond on the peculiar ground that it was aimed at the Congress(R) and particularly Mrs. Indira Gandhi!), the central leadership of the Congress(O) found that it had raised a hornet's nest. The Congress(O) leadership in States like Mysore and Gujarat where they ruled rushed to make it clear that they could not align with the Jana Sangh and Swatantra Party. So did some leaders at Delhi who felt that the "socialist" image of the Congress(O) should not be tarred by the "communal" and "reactionary" labels of the Jana Sangh and Swatantra.

Really speaking, the internal differences within the Congress(O) can be attributed to the fact that the Congress split last year was not basically ideological, though in the first days of the split many did think so. Those who welcomed the split did so in the belief that at last the country could look forward to the emergence of a genuine three or four party system where the differences between the parties would be in substance and not merely in shade and where the electorate would for the first time have a genuine choice before it. Their hopes were soon belied when at Ahmedabad, the Congress(O) session vied with the Congress(R) in radicalism. The spirit pervading that session appeared to be "anything Mrs. Gandhi can do, we can do better". Not having been in the opposition,

the Congress(O) delegates forgot that without power all their radical slogans were just so much hot air.

It did not take them long to realise this and gears were, to some extent, reversed. The result was the kind of attitude taken by the Congress(O) on issues like the Privy Purses etc.

What did the "Grand Alliance" or "Consolidation" of nationalist and democratic parties envisage? In Parliament, it would have meant a common bloc with a common leader and a common discipline. The Swatantra Party and the Jana Sangh publicly conceded the right of the leader of the Congress(O) to be the leader of the bloc with the leaders of the constituent parties being deputy leaders. Outside Parliament it meant a democratic front at the national level with an agreed programme (even here the Swatantra Party and the Jana Sangh accepted the points listed in the AICC Resolution of June 28). Such a bloc or front would go to the polls with this programme. Naturally there would have been a division of seats to be contested and an agreement that the bloc would function as one group whether in power or in opposition.

In other words, the Grand Alliance was not a toppling operation. It was not conceived as a marriage of convenience of disparate groups welded together with the negative aim of toppling Mrs. Gandhi's Government but a positive one of providing the people of India with a democratic alternative to the party in power. This would have meant a trial of strength not here and now but in the next General Election whenever that was held.

Opposition to the Grand Alliance ran somewhat like this: an alliance with only two or three parties will not serve the purpose as this would mean the socialist image of the Congress(O) being sullied by association with parties which, rightly or wrongly, had come to be characterised by certain unfortunate labels. If, on the other hand, eight or more parties like the Samyukta Socialist Party, the Praja Socialist Party, the Vishal Haryana Party and the BKD were to be associated, the association with the Jana Sangh and Swatantra Party could be offset. The Congress(O) should therefore wait till such time as all these parties made up their minds, before agreeing to a formal agreement. Meanwhile, there should be "unity in action" without the insistence on a formal bloc.

But are these other parties willing? The SSP won't come in if the CP(M) is kept out! The SSP wants Mrs. Gandhi to be toppled first before talking in terms of an agreed programme. The Praja Socialist Party, despite the kick it got on its teeth from the Congress(R) in Mysore where a majority of its legislators (including MPs) have deserted it and joined the Congress(R), continues to hang on to the coat-tails of that party. The PSP won't consider getting into the alliance, for

in the first place they do not accept the Congress(O)'s socialist bonafides and secondly they have a pathological allergy to the Jana Sangh and Swatantra.

The Congress(O) leadership in Mysore and Gujarat, according to the *Hindu* report referred to earlier, "urged that in working out the pattern of alliance at the Central level, it should be ensured that the position of strength enjoyed by the Congress(O) in their respective States was not jeopardised." The implication is obvious. By all means an alliance in States where the Congress(O) is weak. But it is a different matter where the Congress(O) is in the saddle.

The communist danger to the country is real. Though pretending to oppose the Naxalites, the Communist Party of India is secretly encouraging their activities particularly in West Bengal, even while championing Mrs. Gandhi's Party and helping it in Parliament. They are in power in Kerala on the support of Congress(R). There has been a rapid breakdown in the law-and-order situation even in areas once considered peaceful. The adventurist policies of Mrs. Gandhi are fast reducing the country's economy to a shambles. The will of Parliament is flouted with impunity as in the case of the Privy Purses Bill. The Congress(R) Government in Delhi openly interferes in State politics and imposes their will as in Uttar Pradesh. The judiciary is under attack. Mrs. Gandhi does not hide her alignment with the Communist Party of India. On the contrary, she justifies her consorting with the Communists on the very spacious plea that she is willing to accept help from any party that supports her policies. From past experience it is very clear what CPI support for Mrs. Gandhi means. Its support is that of "the rope that supports the hanged man".

The protagonists of a Grand Alliance or National Democratic Front base their plea in the context of the above dangers. The premises on which the need for an alliance rests are: that there is a clear and present danger to the country's security; that there is a threat to the country's democratic institutions; that, therefore, at this point of time what is important is not party label, personality or even a particular pattern of economic policy but the need to eschew all these for the present and concentrate in saving India.

In this connection, the recent statements by two erstwhile foes in Tamil Nadu gives room for hope that all is not yet lost and that there are still people with the necessary courage and statesmanship to keep their priorities right.

Advising members of his party to withdraw support to the DMK, Rajaji wrote in the *Swarajya* of November 21: "The DMK of Tamil Nadu has made up its mind to be tied up with the topsy turvy Indira Gandhi Congress and the CPI. The trial heat is to be run in the ensuing municipal elections. With deep regret I

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Article 356 - Use And Abuse

C. S. Venkatachar

IT appears, in retrospect, that Art 356 of the Constitution is a legacy inherited by Congress as a result of its victory in the 1937 general elections under the Government of India Act, 1935. Congress then acquired its hegemonial character by flattening out the opposition parties and by the ultimate secession of the Muslim majority areas. When Congress elected to go into political wilderness after demitting office in the Provinces in October, 1939, the Congress majority provinces reverted back to Governor's rule. Congress noted the practical utility and the potentialities of Section 93 of the 1935 Act—curiously, the only Section of the Act which was in effective action for nearly six years. The lesson learnt was that strong central government can control the Provinces under its superintendence and direction. If the British could do that autocratically Congress can do the same under democratic trappings. So, Section 93 of the 1935 Act was reborn as Art 356 of the Constitution.

The Constitution provides for four types of emergency power—war; insurrection; subversion; financial collapse of a State. To these is added the "emergency" arising from the failure of the constitutional machinery in a State. The first four relate to national emergencies threatening the security and integrity either of the Union or of a State. The last has been developed as a handy weapon for ensuring the security and integrity of the power of the dominant Congress party in the States.

Congress, as a result, has utilised Art 356 by skilfully confusing the unwritten constitutional conventions of the British constitution with the rigid provisions of the written constitution under which the country is governed. Ivor Jennings had on one occasion noted that India has gone quite far with its emergency provisions because it had behind it the strong language of the Government of India Act, 1935.

The constitutional convention involved in Art 356 seems to relate to the formation of government—at any rate this has frequently figured in declaring under the Article that the government of a State cannot be carried on under the provisions of the Constitution. The Constitution has enacted legal powers for the formation of State governments. Conventions and code of principles under which the President and the State Governors should exercise their substantial powers in the constitution of executive authority has been left in the air or to be developed in practice.

But these conventions are based on two-party system of parliamentary government, essentially English in character, exported to India where older loyalties

and fragmentation within the body politic survive and actively articulate. It makes little sense to fit them into the working of a one-party dominant state ruled by Congress party; the situation if at all has worsened by the split in the party. The written constitution does not recognise a political party as such as a part of the constitutional machinery. Over years what has developed is not any set of procedure or convention on the formation of government in a State but the convenience, wishes, and the pursuit of power for the exercise of uninhibited executive authority by the dominant Congress.

Obviously, the use of Art 356 is largely conditioned by the state of politics of the Congress party. At the centre the party was stable under the towering personality of Nehru. By assuming the Congress presidentship after the ouster of Purushottamdas Tandon, Nehru settled to his own satisfaction the relationship between the organisation wing of the party and the parliamentary wing. He shed party presidentship when he found that the party needed him for electoral victories more than he needed the party to put him into office.

At State level, politics is manipulated by two groups—one the wielders of power (legislative wing), the other the holders of powers (organisation wing). In all States intra-party rivalry has been endemic; this gave an excuse to central party leadership to intervene in party squabbles. For moderating and harmonising party feuds, Nehru used the services of party managers. When a more drastic solution had to be imposed, the central government invoked, in the interest of Congress, its authority under Art 356 of the Constitution. The so-called 'flexible nature' of this provision has undoubtedly responded to the needs of Congress.

What may be the need of Congress may well be the misuse of the Constitution. Since the commencement of the Constitution, there are nearly a dozen occasions of resort to Art 356. Its career started in 1951 when a Congress ministry in the Punjab resigned owing to factional fights within the party. A proclamation of the failure of the constitutional machinery was made on the Governor's report. In 1952, the erstwhile Part B state of Pepsu came under Presidential rule because of the possible threat of a non-Congress government coming into office. Kerala, chronically plagued by group politics, had had several doses of Presidential rule, always of doubtful constitutional validity. In Andhra, Orissa and Rajasthan time was gained under Presidential decree to manipulate, outside the legislature, the party factions so as to secure the installation of a Congress government. In Haryana, Art 356 was

used to impose moral standards on the floor-crossers. These instances go to show that in the absence of organised public opinion, of constitutional conventions and of restraint on the part of the party in power, constitutional powers may be misused for extraneous purpose and abused to the detriment of democratic progress. The only safeguard in such circumstances is eternal vigilance under enlightened, informed, responsible public opinion.

It is time we moved away from the erring path the Congress has been treading so far. There are three principal factors involved in the equation of the determination of the failure of the constitutional machinery under Art 356—the President under whose authority the Proclamation is issued after he is 'satisfied' that it should issue; the State Governor on whom falls the responsibility to make a report to the President for his consideration and action; the State legislature which is primarily concerned in the formation of government for the executive is located within the legislature. But the legislature has so far been excluded from the equation where the vital question involved is one of securing confirmation of powers from the legislature for a group or groups claiming the requisite majority to form a government. Instead of testing the claim in the legislature, we have witnessed such gimmicks as—counting of heads at Raj Bhavan; parading of legislators carrying signatures; seriously scrutinising the claims and counter-claims of party and factional bosses.

It is evident we cannot operate politics on the illusory dogma of the non-existent two-party system. Politics in a legislature where there is not one single majority party, will have to turn on the manoeuvres of different groups. Congress has no longer hegemonial power to boast that it, like England, does not love coalitions. State executive will have to depend more and more on coalition of groups within the legislature.

The secret of politics in such circumstances is to appeal to middle and moderate opinion and carry on government as long as the executive is in harmony with the legislature and is able to secure assent of the latter for broadly agreed policies. Only when an irresolvable deadlock ensues and there is no way out, then the Governor may have to recommend, with perfect objectivity and impartiality, to the President that action be taken under Art 356. On his part, the President after consultation with the central government, should be in an independent position to act or not to act on the Governor's recommendation. Normally, deadlock in the legislature in a parliamentary system has to be resolved by an appeal to the electorate in whom rests the real power to apply the needed corrective. If in Indian conditions with an inexperienced electorate and the costliness of frequent elections, the accepted democratic procedure needs some variation, then the authority under Art. 356 will have to be used as a last resort and that too under exceptionally compelling circumstances.

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have to advise the Swatantra Party in Tamil Nadu that we cannot support the DMK. Let Swatantra partymen and sympathisers support Swatantra candidates where they are put up and give all support to Congress(O) candidates wherever they oppose the DMK and the New Congress and the CPI in these elections. Shri Karunanidhi said some time ago that the Swatantra Party will be a loser by this break of alliance with the DMK. Probably this is a correct assessment. But personal or party loss should not deter us from doing our duty by the nation to save it from any increase of the Indira-Communist prestige or power, which would take India towards satellitism under Communist Powers."

Addressing the second annual conference of the National Students' Tamil Development Council at Madurai on November 22, Mr K. Kamaraj, conceded that there were ideological differences between both the parties but pointed out that the Swatantra leaders shared his party's anxiety about India's future and the desperate need to save India as well as democracy. "They have patriotism. Many of them fought for India's freedom. How can our alliance with such

leaders for a specific purpose be branded backward?" Mr. Kamaraj asked. (*Hindu*, November 23.)

If the Grand Alliance materialises, the results of the next General Election are bound to be a close one. It will certainly result in saving the country irrespective of whether the Alliance is returned to power or it is in opposition. For the numerical difference will be narrow. But if such a development does not take place, the odds are that while no single party will have obtained an overall majority, Mrs. Gandhi and her allies the Communists will, in all probability, get together in a coalition government at Delhi. The post-war history of Eastern Europe is replete with instances of what happens when Communists share power. It will in short be a prelude to a communist take-over.

And if this happens, the guilty men responsible for reducing India to serfdom will not be so much Mrs. Gandhi and her allies who have already given adequate notice of their intentions but the democratic parties in the opposition, who preoccupied as they appear to be with their little vested interests of dogma, labels and immediate benefits, ignored the writing on the wall.

Gamal Abdul Al-Nasser

Adam Adil

IT is more than a month since President Nasser of Egypt died. His death was so sudden and unexpected that the world was stunned. The impact of his death is still being strongly felt.

Not only the Arab world lost a dynamic leader, but the world at large, one of the most controversial figure. For the first time after Saladin of Crusades fame, Nasser gave the Arab world a sense of dignity, unity and a sense of purpose. Many Arabs — the conservative and the privileged ones — disliked him but millions of poor Arabs loved him. He inspired the young Arabs, who never hesitated to sacrifice for the Arab cause.

After a brilliant period of Arab renaissance when not only science and philosophy flourished in the Arab lands and the Arabs became the harbingers of an era of enlightenment in Europe, a gap of ignorance and backwardness set upon the Arabs themselves. Ibn Khaldun, Avicenna, Gazali, Ibn-Arabi became only legendary figures of the past and at least for three centuries, especially during the reign of Ottoman empire, Arabs ceased to be inspired by their great traditions. Then, with the disintegration of Ottoman empire European imperialisms held their sway over the Arab world and led to the increasing impoverisation and stagnation of Arabs. The orthodox Arab Ulemas ascribed their degradation to their drifting away from Islamic principles. This belief was shared by non Arab Muslim Ulemas, who saw that the whole Islamic world was in a state of stagnation and degradation. The most famous and greatest of these Ulemas was Jamaluddin Afghani. In the later nineteenth and early 20th century he toured whole of the Muslim world and preached the idea of United Islam as an antidote to European imperialisms, which were exploiting the Arabs and other Muslims. Jamaluddin Afghani got many adherents in all Islamic countries. A great scholar, he was an intellectual giant with an uncanny foresight. He was the real founder of the concept of Pan-Islamism. Jamaluddin Afghani still inspires many an orthodox Muslim.

As against the Muslim orthodoxy, were men like Kemal Ataturk, who saw the regeneration of Muslims only in modernisation and sought to modernise Turkey. Kemal Ataturk's example had a tremendous impact on the Islamic world. Obviously Nasser was one of those, who keenly felt degradation of Egyptian society which, for centuries was exploited by a parasitic Pasha class. He was determined to bring about social revolution which would change the face of Egypt. Born of lower middle class parents, he personally experienced the humiliation the poor Egyptians

suffered from. At the apex was a corrupt monarchy, whose isolation from the Egyptian masses was complete. When Nasser was a colonel in the Egyptian army, King Farook ruled and he was the embodiment of utter moral degradation of the upper Egyptian class.

It was natural for Nasser and his conscientious fellow officers to feel resentful against what was happening in Egypt and the rest of the Arab world. A conspiracy to overthrow Farook was inevitable. Nasser along with trusted colleagues brilliantly planned and executed the overthrow of Farook and the monarchy. It was totally a bloodless revolution. Nasser did not want violence or any kind of bloodbath. A few years later, he recorded that he could not get a wink of sleep on the night of the revolution not merely because he was happy that the coup had succeeded but also for the fear that in the armed encounter somebody might have died. So human was his approach towards the Egyptian revolution in the beginning.

One of the first acts of Nasser as the President of Egypt was to change the economic structure of Egypt with a special emphasis on the reorganisation of Egyptian agriculture. He had no alternative but to abolish the Pasha class who owned large tracts of lands. The peasants were hungry and starving. The vast lands of the Pashas were distributed by Nasser to landless peasants and no landlord was allowed to own more than 200 acres of land.

Judged purely in terms of economic achievements, there are not many to Nasser's credit. In fact the lives of the ordinary people have not changed much in terms of material benefits. Of course, the major achievements that go to his credit are the nationalisation of the Suez canal, which was a bold move in view of the bitter British and French opposition as these two countries held substantial shares in the Suez Canal Company. Second achievement was the building of the High Aswan dam with Russian help, which brought into cultivation 1,500,000 acres of land and generated cheap electricity.

Along with achievements he had his defects, if not failures. For instance, he sought to divide the Arab World into progressives and reactionaries. He branded Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Tunisia, Morocco, Yemen under the Imam, Libya under King Idris, as reactionary countries. Other countries were under varying degrees of progressiveness. Egypt was at the apex of progressive countries. The result was that Nasser tried to instigate rebellions in 'reactionary' countries. Even plots were hatched to assassinate the heads of reac-

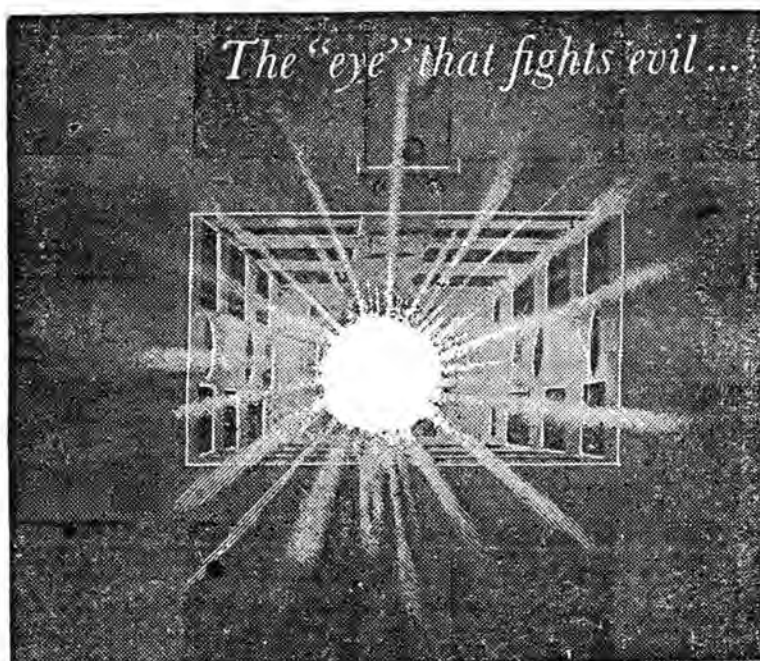
tionary states. Whether Nasser had a direct hand in these assassination plots is rather doubtful. But there is no doubt that Nasser's denunciation of 'reactionary' kings and heads of states inspired such plots. Similarly, Nasser sent about 70,000 Egyptian troops to fight against the Imam of Yemen. Millions of Egyptian pounds were wasted in the Yemeni venture. The Yemeni venture did not actually succeed. Although the palace was bombarded and destroyed, Imam Badar escaped and organised resistance against Egyptian army in Yemen, and the republicans were backed by Nasser. Saudi King gave massive help both in money and armaments to the Imam with the result the Nasser's venture in that country was frustrated. The fight between the progressive and reactionary Arabs emasculated the Arabs and kept them divided. This only helped to strengthen Israel.

Although he heavily leaned upon Russia for arms and Russian personnel, his non-alignment could not be doubted. He did not accept Russian political ideology. He was not a communist and in fact banned the communist party in Egypt. He was a devout

Muslim and hence had no use for a godless creed. He told Christopher Mayhew, a member of British Parliament "Western papers say that I am going to become another Czechoslovakia. How do they think these Russian technicians are going to seize power? I have my army (288,000 men), my police and no communist party. What are they going to do: march on Cairo?" There is no doubt that Nasser was sincere in this expression.

Nasser's last achievement was the settlement he successfully brought about between the Palestine Commandos and King Husein of Jordan. Before this settlement, the fdayeen and Husein's army indulged in mutual slaughter — the casualties running into thousands. This was stopped due to Nasser's intervention and it has to be seen how these Arabs will honour the settlement.

Nasser was a unique personality. His great value as Professor Elie Salem of Beirut's American University puts it "was not so much what he did, but what he meant to the Arab people".



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Portrait Of A Tyrant

V. B. Karnik

THAT Stalin was a tyrant, the most cruel and malignant tyrant of modern times, is now admitted even by Communists. Khrushchev, the then ruler of communist Russia, gave in his so-called secret speech at the twentieth congress of the Communist Party held in February 1956 a good part of the story of Stalin's crimes and misdeeds. The story was never denied or disputed and, though some attempts took place thereafter to refurbish the image of Stalin, the image had been so blackened and damaged that they did not succeed.

In his *The Rise and Fall of Stalin** Mr. Robert Payne, the well-known biographer of Lenin and author of many other authoritative books, has drawn a full-scale portrait of the tyrant. The portrait covers the life of the tyrant from his birth to death, is based on meticulously collected information from a variety of authoritative sources and gives a detailed account of his activities during the seventy-three years of his life.

In the Introduction itself the author has pronounced his verdict on the person whose biography he is writing. The verdict is: "Terror, naked and unadorned, was his accomplice; the terror of the day and night stalked through his life. There were no treacheries or cruelties he was incapable of performing, no vows or promises he was incapable of breaking. There was something terrifyingly mechanical in his murders, so that he comes at last to resemble the harrowing machine in Franz Kafka's story 'In the Penal Colony' (p. 14). A little further he writes: "He belongs to a new species—the mass-murderer, who kills without compunction and without enjoyment. He murdered by habit or out of laziness, often without thought, because murder often solved problems which could be solved with more difficulty by hard thinking" (p. 16). He was, according to the author, "the greatest tyrant of his time and perhaps of all time." Every page of the seven-hundred-page biography provides ample and irrefutable corroboration of the verdict.

Stalin, a cobbler's son born in poverty, began his political career as a minor communist functionary in his native Georgia. It was Georgia that was to be later the first victim of his fury. The author tells the tragic story in the following words: "On February 16, 1921, Stalin gave the signal for invasion. Stalin's friend Sergo Ordjonikidze was the commander. Nine days later the Red Army entered Tiflis, looting, raping and murdering on a scale which was unheard of since the time of Tamarlane. It was Stalin's revenge against the city where he had spent his youth." (p. 271) Continuing,

the author writes: "The destruction of the independent state of Georgia was brought about with cold-blooded cynicism. . . . In Stalin's eyes the crime of Georgia was that it was being ruled by moderate socialists." (p. 271) Similar events were to take place many a time.

At the time of March 1917 Revolution Stalin was in exile in Siberia. In a few days he was in Leningrad and was one of the leaders of the Communist Party. His part in the November Revolution was, however, insignificant, though, later when he rose to power, he had the history rewritten to show him play a decisive role as the only reliable and capable colleague and collaborator of Lenin. History records, as the author has pointed out, that Stalin was opposed to Lenin's April Theses and insistence on the immediate overthrow of the Provisional Government.

Stalin rose to power through his control over and manipulation of the vast bureaucratic apparatus of the Communist Party and the Soviet government. Immediately after the Revolution he was appointed the Commissar of Nationalities. But in the next few years he acquired many other positions of power. "He was a member of the Politburo, a member of the Military Revolutionary Council, acting Inspector General of the Red Army and roving political commissar". (p. 266) Later he was placed in charge of Rabkrin, the newly created Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate with power to control every branch of the administration. As a result Stalin was "in a position to control the machinery of government. He had appointed his own men to key administrative posts, set his spies to watch over them, collected voluminous data on all of them and ensured their loyalty. . . . Already he had a stranglehold on the machinery of government." (p. 267) Later he became the general secretary of the party and further strengthened his position.

Stalin was able to rise to all these positions and accumulate in his hands a vast amount of power because he enjoyed the confidence of Lenin, the father figure of the Russian Revolution. Towards the end of his life, however, Lenin lost confidence in him and was anxious to remove him from all positions of power and more particularly from the general secretaryship of the party. This is clear from Lenin's Testament which was denied and withheld from the party for several years and from a couple of his articles on the Georgian question. Lenin was disgusted by Stalin's cruel and murderous activities in Georgia and wanted to throw him out of the party. "His last words and last letters spoke of his anguished determination to crush Stalin for the evil that he had done, the evil he would conti-

* *The Rise and Fall of Stalin*, Robert Payne, Simon and Schuster, New York, \$ 10.

nue to do." (p. 309) Fortunately for Stalin, death intervened and Lenin could not carry out his wish. Lenin died under suspicious circumstances and there are reasons to believe that Stalin contrived to bring about his death. Mr. Payne has dealt exhaustively with this crucial episode in Stalin's life and brought together all available material.

Owing to his control over the party and the state apparatus, after Lenin's death, it was not difficult for Stalin to eliminate all his rivals and establish his monopoly of power. Then began his reign of terror. The first victims were the peasants, ten million of whom perished in his campaign of collectivisation of agriculture as he himself told Churchill at a later date. Then came industrial workers and intellectuals, large numbers of whom were sent to forced labour camps to labour and perish. Mr. Payne writes, to Stalin, "Men were statistics, to be moulded at his pleasure; a few million more or a few million less made no difference to him". Stalin's "fatherly affection for the people took" according to the author, "the form of mass executions on a scale which has had no equal in history." (p. 381) These massacres were devised for one purpose only: to maintain Stalin in power.

It is necessary to remember, however, that these massacres and the whole system of terror, were not invented by Stalin. He inherited them from Lenin; they were rooted in the ideology of Communism. Mr. Payne has pointed out: "The Communist system, as proclaimed by Lenin, involved the negation of the most elementary laws of human morality. Lawful was whatever served the interests of the revolution or the passing impulses of the revolutionary dictator. In the name of the revolutionary law hundreds of thousands of completely innocent people had been killed. In the name of the same revolutionary law the revolutionary leaders were to fight among themselves until only the most ruthless survived." (p. 297)

This last phase of violence against his own colleagues, the leaders of the Communist Party, began in the life of Stalin after the murder of Kirov in December 1934. That murder, brought about by Stalin himself through one of the NKVD agents, was to serve as the excuse for the reign of terror that he let loose against the leaders of the party. Most old Bolsheviks like Trotsky and Zinoviev, and Kamenev and Bukharin and thousands of other lesser lights fell prey to that reign of terror. Before they were executed many of them had to declare themselves as spies and agents of foreign powers in abject confessions secured through long and merciless torture. Some of them had foreseen what was happening to the country and the party under Stalin's regime. Mr. Payne has quoted a statement of Bukharin made at a meeting of the Central Committee in the autumn of 1936. With "incredible courage" for which he had to pay later with his life, Bukharin told Stalin and his police chief Yezhov:

"Stalin wants to establish his absolute power over the party and the state, and to reach this position it is necessary for him to ride roughshod over all obstacles. That is why we are to be eliminated. But in order to eliminate us, you must use the weapons of fraud, lies, and provocation. By means of political terror and unheard-of methods of torture, old party members make dispositions which even you do not believe. You need the blood of Bukharin and Rykov to bring about the *coup d'etat*, which you have been planning for so long and which your police apparatus is preparing." (p. 471) They foresaw Stalin's reign of terror but they were not able to prevent it for he had cleverly involved them in all crimes and had thus compromised them. Khrushchev in his secret speech gives the most authoritative account of this murder campaign against the party and its leaders. But for that account it would have been difficult to believe that such a thing had taken place.

A little later the generals of the Red Army fell a prey to Stalin's lust for murder. They were accused of being in league with the German and the British army and were executed without even the semblance of a trial. It is true that, as stated by Payne, "in that empire of fear where thousands upon thousands were perishing for no known reason the execution of the generals was only one incident among many", but it had the most disastrous effect upon the morale and efficiency of the army. The country paid for those executions dearly when only a couple of years later it had to face the mighty attack of the German army.

Murder became a habit with Stalin. Mr. Payne has described the position as follows: "He saw enemies where none existed and struck out at them blindly; and as these shadowy and wholly imaginary enemies increased in numbers, proliferating because they were drenched in his own guilt, so he struck out all the more blindly, more violently, and more recklessly. Once he had begun, there was no end to it." (p. 509) He went on murdering till the very end of his life. A few days before his death he invented the "Doctors' Plot" and sent to jail several prominent doctors. Confessions were secured from them that they had murdered a number of their patients who included several prominent personalities. At that time, "in Stalin's eyes Jews represented a mortal danger to his regime". He also developed suspicions about his close associates, members of the Central Committee and the Politburo including Khrushchev, Kaganovich and Beria. It is only his death that saved them from the axe of the executioner. There is suspicion, therefore, and Mr. Payne has drawn attention to various suspicious circumstances that Stalin's death might not be natural.

Naturally or otherwise, Stalin died in 1953 and the whole of Russia heaved a sigh of relief. During his long regime of thirty years, Mr. Payne has pointed out:

(Continued on page 11)

Vicious Circle?

Analyst

EVERY day several murders are taking place in the State and some are being shot down by the police. Yet the parliamentarians and the Government have not realised the urgency of the matter. The people are so terrorised that even if a murder takes place in their very presence, they will not come forward as eye witnesses. "See no evil!"

Perhaps the special powers, less than what the police here wanted, will ultimately come. But, let us be clear, it is *not* going to solve the problem. It will only help the police to some extent.

What kind of help? The police will go out and swoop down in troubled areas and arrest by the dozens and even hundreds and give them good thrashing and put them behind bars. In fact the process has already started.

Naturally many innocents will be involved and their parents will be embittered. The police mood is at present understandably very vindictive at the lower and middle levels. One can therefore anticipate the shape of things to come. I repeat that such vicious tendencies have already manifested themselves in parts of Calcutta.

The likely effect? Extremely anti-government feelings will be generated in the community. The youthful group in the locality will become more determinedly aggressive. The elder generation will be sulky and even sympathetic towards their boys. This setting will provide excellent recruiting ground to the "revolutionaries". The marginal conflicts and tension between Maoists and Marxists and other leftists will diminish at the local level, and all leftists will join hands to beat back the "attack" by the police and the administration. The Congress(R) and the Bangla Congress will be isolated. The Forward Bloc, the RSP, and even the CPI will be further separated from the ruling party. This will provide a suitable psychological opportunity to launch movements against the Centre's rule of "repression and terror". The CPM and the CPI will come closer at least at field level.

In this developing situation, elections, if precipitated, can only mean defeat of Congress(R) and the Bangla Congress. If no elections are held, the administration has to be stronger and more determined with each passing phase. Can Mrs. Gandhi go to that logical extent? It is a matter of will power and also of deciding to forego the support of the CPI and other leftists.

Thus we are coming to a phase in West Bengal

politics where there has to be not only clear thinking but also a kind of parting of ways. In any case normal democracy is almost inconceivable in the near future. If no elections, strong-arm Presidential rule is inevitable. If elections, the revolutionary sentiment will be predominant again with an anti-Centre bias.

Is there no way out of this vicious circle? Not by the conventional ways. I have been stressing this quite for some time. But perhaps I am in a minority of one.

Strong administration is alright. Police measures are alright too, with the added preventive detention powers. But what do all these amount to? It will amount to 15 to 20 thousand youngmen behind bars and harassment to five times that number. The effect of this on the community would be bitterness against the police and a generation of the spirit of revenge. The police will be attacked as also the administrative staff. They in their turn will be embittered and ferocious against the local youths. The cycle would thus go on. And the most important consequence will be the complete alienation between the Administration and the people. Can anything be built on this foundation? Can anything be even retained on this basis?

I am not opposed to strong measures as such. But I am totally opposed to relying practically entirely on these to solve the problem. It cannot be done.

Where is the positive psychological, healing approach to the youth? Even Ajoy Mukherjee who fasted at Curzon Park as Chief Minister against violence talks of beating the Naxalites — beat, beat, beat. Where are the Gandhists and the Sarvodayists? All is paper talk, all are paper Gandhists! Leaflets and posters by the Government of West Bengal are good as far as they go. At least it has given up the idea of remaining neutral. But psychological winning over must be by a personal leadership. When a body of 15 or 18 or 21 goes out and kills a man towards whom he had not an iota of animosity, he has gone berserk. He has to be brought to his senses by psychological shock. Mere physical beating will not bend him. And this mental illness is now widespread. To turn them back from this somnambulist path is not the function of a B. B. Ghosh or a Ranjit Gupta, least of all of a Dhavan. Men who are capable of emotionally attracting the attention of the youth must come forward and do something dramatic. Time has now come to consider this approach. Let us hope it is not yet too late.

21 November, 1970.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I have read with interest your review of our Monograph on Absenteeism in *Freedom First* of October 1970.

2. However, one word about your observation on the employment of non-permanent workers in industry. It is true, that in the units surveyed by us, about 74% of the total employees on the muster were found to be permanent, while the remaining were employed as Badlis (14% to 15%), temporary (about 11%) or casual workers (1% to 2%).

3. *Prima facie*, this shows that about 26% of the workforce is employed on a non-permanent basis. However, such a conclusion is erroneous since the employment of Badlis is not resorted to out of any ulterior motive but is the result of high absenteeism among the permanent employees themselves which necessitates their employment to meet the manpower needs of the industry. It is a well-known fact that every industry takes care of absenteeism by keeping a certain leave reserve as stand-by on a permanent basis. But it so happens that the rate of absenteeism exceeds even the proportion of this leave reserve which consequently necessitates the employment of Badlis or temporary persons. If absenteeism were to decrease, the level of Badlis too would fall and to that extent the strength of permanent workers would go up, in the present case, it would come to 89%.

4. In short, because 74% of the total workforce on the muster are only permanent, it cannot be concluded that 74% of the required personnel are on permanent basis; even if 100% are permanent there would be need to employ 26% more as Badlis to provide for absentees!

5. I hope I have explained the apparent "evil which needs to be set right".

Yours sincerely,

N. M. VAKIL
Secretary,

The Employers' Federation of India

Bombay, Oct. 7, 1970

If leave reserve is maintained on a permanent basis, as stated by Mr. Vakil, it should be enough to take care of the 70 per cent of absenteeism which is "authorised absenteeism". In that case the percentage of permanent workers will not be as low as 74 per cent. The number of Badlis to be found to take care of "unauthorised absenteeism" will then be much smaller than what is required at present.

V.B.K.

Reviews

D.M.K. in Power

P. Spratt, Nachiketa Publications, Rs. 25.

ALL over the country there is a good deal of ignorance and misunderstanding about the D.M.K. and its aims and objectives. Its rise to power in Tamil Nadu after the fourth General Election was, therefore, viewed with suspicion and nervousness. It was feared that the separatist tendency might grow and there might be constant conflicts between the Centre and the State Government.

Nothing of the kind has happened and the D.M.K. has succeeded in providing a reasonably efficient and stable government. The D.M.K.'s success is all the more remarkable because it lost before completing its second year in office its tallest leader and its main architect and organiser, Mr. C. N. Annadurai.

Mr. Spratt's book covers only the first year of D.M.K.'s period in office. The account that he has given of the Ministry's work in the first year should convince any dispassionate observer that the D.M.K. can run the State and also provide some relief to the people. Apart from giving the account, Mr. Spratt has delved into the past and traced the roots of the D.M.K. to the Justice Party of the Twenties and Thirties and to the Self-Respect movement led by Periyar Ramaswami Naicker. This historical information will prove of value to students of the Indian political scene.

As pointed out by Mr. Spratt, the D.M.K. is a regional party. But it cannot confine itself only to the region. It must find a place for itself in national politics. Other regional parties are also growing. All of them deserve careful study and analysis. *D.M.K. in Power* can provide a model for similar studies of other regional parties.

N.D.

Studies in Green Revolution

Edited by G. S. Pohekar, United Asia Publications, Rs. 5.

THIS is a "slim volume" of articles on "Green Revolution" written by six scholars. It gives a good idea of the "Green Revolution" that has taken place in some parts of the country. The extent of the "revolution" is, however, very limited. One of the writers has pointed out that "it is confined to the 20 per cent irrigated area and production of wheat and gram". But in that limited area it has proved what application of science can do in the field of agricultural production. It is to be hoped that that lesson will be learnt and vigorous efforts will be made to spread the "revolution" to wider areas and to other crops. The book will be useful for stimulating thought and action in that direction.

S.D.

A TYRANT — Continued from page 8

"There was scarcely a family in Russia which had not suffered at the hands of the dictator. Even those who thought they were on good terms with him had felt the terror of his presence." (p. 712) The world also heaved a sigh of relief. For, in spite of the iron curtain, tales of the brutalities of Stalin, of his purges and liquidations, of his concentration and forced labour camps, of the reign of terror that he had established had spread far and wide. The world was happy that at long last the reign of the tyrant had come to an end. It will take the Russian people several years to get over the effects of that nightmare. Three years after the death of the tyrant Khrushchev began a half-hearted movement for De-Stalinisation. It had a significant impact in Russia and in East European communist countries. In Russia, Stalin's statues and pictures came down in several places and many towns on whom his name was imposed became free of that imposition; his corpse that was lying in the Lenin Mausoleum was removed from that highly regarded place and buried in a corner of a public cemetery. In Hungary De-Stalinisation led to a popular revolt. It was, however, drenched in blood and suppressed by the successors of Stalin. They did the same thing in Czechoslovakia in August 1968. The lesson to be learnt is that De-Stalinisation will not succeed and be effective as long as the source of the evil, namely, the totalitarian communist dictatorship is allowed to remain intact.

The portrait that Mr. Payne has drawn covers also some of the positive achievements of the tyrant, such as, industrialisation and scientific and technological progress and victory in the patriotic war of 1941 to 1945. Those are achievements, but they pale into insignificance when measured against the heavy costs that had to be paid, such as, the eclipse of all rights and liberties, the massacre of millions and the abject humiliation of the people at the feet of a bloodthirsty tyrant. The portrait has been drawn with infinite care and precision and does full justice to the malignant force that held Russia in its evil grip for about thirty years.

BOOKS RECEIVED

1. *India and the I.L.O.*, N. K. Kakkar, published by Sultan Chand and Sons, Amir Chand Marg (Nai Sarak) Delhi 6. Price: Rs. 10.
2. *The Working of Parliamentary Democracy in Ceylon*, A. R. Tyagi and K. K. Bhardwaj, published by Sultan Chand and Sons, Amir Chand Marg (Nai Sarak) Delhi 6.

LENIN'S WHIP HAND

(The following is from an article by Mr. Marcel Body published in a recent issue of *THOUGHT*, the wellknown weekly journal. Mr. Body was intimately connected with the Comintern in its early years)

IN the struggle between the parties affiliated to the Second International and those allied to his Third International, Lenin held the whip hand, as the Russian Communist Party was able to send abroad specially trained men provided with ample funds. The effects of the massive intervention by the Communist International in the workers' movement outside Russia were not long in making themselves felt. The defeat at any price of Western Social Democracy, regarded as enemy number one, became the main objective of Bolshevism and its International. When Angelica Balabanova reproached Lenin in 1919 for sending men to Italy who were simply adventurers, he replied: "They will always be good enough to split Turati's party." "Turati's party," in other words the Italian Socialist Party, was indeed split, but the man who put the pieces together again was not Togliatti but Mussolini. What is not generally known is that in Moscow in 1921 and the years following, Mussolini's fascism was judged to be preferable to Turati's Socialism, since the Comintern thought fascism would prepare the way for Communism. It was in Germany that the struggle against Social Democracy was conducted with the most ruthlessness, violence and financial effort. Accused of all possible crimes, besmirched by unscrupulous adversaries, egged on by the agents sent from Moscow, the German Social Democrat leaders saw their influence decline and flounder. But the victor of this unequal contest was an outsider who in the meantime had entered the political arena. His name was Adolf Hitler.....

Land in India has become the playground—and of late the battleground—of politics. And food crops do not grow on playgrounds and battlefields.

Title to land that, from time immemorial, was held as 'sthira', permanent, secure, is today a scrap of paper, torn into bits, bandied and blown about in every game of political paperchase.

When we talk of land hunger let us not forget that land cannot be eaten by the hungry, that pattas are not edible. If all the available land is distributed among the 550 millions of India, there will not even be an acre for each person; it might be a successful way of growing more votes, not food.

—M. A. SREENIVASAN, *Mysindia*.

With Many Voices

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

In the decade ahead of us, civil war, not war between nations, will be the main danger we will face.

—Prime Minister Edward Heath,
quoted in *Time*, November 2.

There is obviously one yardstick for the Russians, another for the United States and the West.

—Frank Moraes, *Indian Express*, November 2.

He (Alexander Solzhenitsyn) shows what the harvest of tyranny is: fear, hate, mendacity, incompetence, dullness, an all-embracing corruption.

—*Time*, November 2.

The trouble with the Russians is that they want something for nothing, and nobody has got around to telling them they cannot have it.

—*The Economist*, November 7.

The capital levy is indeed once and for all — like capital punishment.

—J. R. Jayawardena, opposition leader of Ceylon,
quoted in *The Economist*, November 7.

The Government had aligned itself with every other blackmailing country and its policy was to revolve round the smiles of Mao and the frowns of Kosygin.

—Resolution passed by the Central Working
Committee of the Jan Sangh, *The Sunday
Standard*, November 8.

To the Editor,
FREEDOM FIRST,
C/o Democratic Research Service.
127, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Bombay 1.

Please enrol me as a subscriber to FREEDOM FIRST.

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Signature

Communist China is far too big and too vicious to be contained by India on her own.

—*Thought*, November 14.

What I like about being a Minister, is not so much the money but being able to see the Queen occasionally.

—George Brown, quoted in the
Sunday Tribune, November 15.

Law-makers themselves are becoming law-breakers, and if the common man has little respect for law, there is nothing to be wondered.

—Sri Prakash, *Bharat Jyoti*, November 15.

We could nationalize the private farms tomorrow, but then we would have no tomatoes and no flowers. These crops require more initiative to raise than the state farms can provide.

—A high ranking Agricultural Ministry official
of Poland, *Time*, November 16.

India has long been edging towards outright satel-
lism where the Soviet Union is concerned.

—*March of the Nation*, November 21.

The present Government and the Congress Party led by Mr. Jagjivan Ram, is fast moving towards the Socialist Pattern of Poverty.

—*Current*, November 21.

Almost everybody in U.P., from the Governor down-
wards, has been treating the Constitution like a foot-
ball.

—*The Statesman*, November 22.

The 'green revolution' cannot solve the world nutri-
tion problem but it can buy time for the world to
cope with a bigger problem — overpopulation.

—Dr. Norman Ernest Borlaug, the American
agronomist, winner of 1970 Nobel Peace
Prize, *News Feature USIS*, October 23.