

FEBRUARY 1954

Dylan Thomas - A Profile

by Rex Berry

SOME years ago a Foyles 'literary' luncheon had reached its climax with the announcement from the top table that in a few moments a well-known Welsh poet would address the gathering on 'Modern Poetry and its place in the Verse of Tomorrow', a somewhat obscure title, but in keeping with the speaker. The parasites of the pen shuffled in their seats and gazed toward the solitary microphone, the symphony of coughs and sneezes died away, a lonely bread roll was quickly devoured down a Marxist throat, a long hush became an unbearable silence. Against the sordid backcloth and on this fearful stage a poet rose to speak. A tubby, redfaced rebel from the Celtic hinterland, a five-fathomed, sky-scraping, hemlock-headed son of Wales. Clutching the last drops of red wine in his fist he stared like a hero at the bagpipe-breasted people before him and said in his most polished drunken way: "Through the gorse came a homosexual horse!"; Mr. Dylan Thomas had spoken. What more was there to say about 'Modern Poetry and its place in the Verse of Tomorrow'?

Now the little goblin-sucker of the pubs is a mere ghost. The great argument of his life and work is on. Ever since his bardic bombshell in a black gilt-ed book burst upon the poetic scene the Dylan legend has been manshaped a hundred times. Was he a fake? Miss Sitwell emerged from her nursery to say that, 'a new poet has arisen who shows every promise of greatness,' whilst Mr. McNiece scowling in his Tower, declared, 'He is like a drunk man speaking wildly but rhythmatically, pouring out a series of nonsense images, the cumulative effect of which is usually vital and sometimes even seems to have a message!' His readers are a divided nation; those who like and those who hate surprises. But they all wait

for his kettle to boil and fail to realise that it boiled when he wrote:

*Light breaks where no sun shines;
Where no sea runs, the waters of the heart
Push in their tides:*

As Henry Treece has already said, 'with such work he ceased to be a 'promising' poet, and became a poet with a past.' His enemies shout out for a meaning and meet the full force of the seawhirl Thomas who replies by saying, 'I ask only that my poetry should be taken literally!' He expanded this theme with this explanation, 'A poem by myself needs a host of images. I make one image...and it needs another, let that image contradict the first, make a third image out of the other two together, form a forth contradictory image, and let them all, within my imposed formal limits conflict.' Generally speaking Dylan Thomas was seeking no other end than putting his own house in order. He was not moral, far from it, nor didactic, and compared with the propagandist-poets he could be considered anti-social.

It would be ridiculous to suggest that Dylan's did not have faults. But it is these personal idiosyncrasies of a poet which must be taken for granted if his work is to be judged at all. People resented his merry-madness, his unresolved prep-school puns, his cold laughter born of a supreme personal vanity. 'His work,' one critic barked, 'is like an uncondemned tour of Bedlam!' It is interesting to hear our friend Stephen Spender saying of him, 'Thomas' poetry is turned on like a tap; it is just poetic stuff with no beginning nor end, or intelligent control.' To which the Mnetha-Devil replied in a letter, 'My poems are formed. They are tight compartments. Much of their obscurity is due to rigorous compression, the last thing they do is flow; they are much rather hewn.'

The spasmodic outbursts and brooding terror which runs through all his work is a vain search for a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of his particular emotion. His problem may even have been that of Hamlet, 'am I to stare towards some measure of Godhead, or am I to guide, and be content with myself as I am?' This emotional

crisis prevented him from ever becoming a T. S. Eliot or a Pope. Although he produced some of the most striking word music of our times, he never revealed his philosophy, psychology or politics. In fact he never gave away his interest in contemporary life. Apart from a passing reference to a Western; and an allusion to a lavatory cistern, he locked himself up in his private world and relied on the voices of his mind to provide him with words.

... the summer blood

knocked in the flesh that decked the wine.

Poetically speaking it was Dylan Thomas who took modern verse out of the refrigerator and put it on the stove. If we are not to misjudge him, it is important to understand this, he taught English 'modernists' the trick of 'words.' He is the victim of his imitators, for his style and technique contradicts them. His 'seed-at-zero, dry-as-Christ, tallow-eyed, bonerailed, grave-gropings,' so far from being just words, are meanings,

too personal perhaps for common digestion, but meanings to his powerful end.

Dylan died that night in a New York hospital, just as his personal flower was beginning to show a bud. To the most casual of his admirers it was a significant sign that his genius was about to bloom. A poet, or any other artist, particularly this soft-voiced jewel from Wales, will achieve only that which is in him to achieve. However objectively we look at him now, the charm of the man lies in his wonderful sense of words, his complete instinctiveness and above all his love of life. He has written his own epitaph with the superb lines:

Beginning with the doom in the bulb, the spring unravels.

War on the destiny of man!

Doom on the sun!

Before death takes you, O take this.

Notes

Asian Security

IT was a stirring call for Asian unity and Asian preparedness in the face of common dangers that was given by the Prime Minister of Ceylon at a meeting of the Indian Council of World Affairs in the Central Hall of Parliament in New Delhi on January 18.

"We have a common battlefront on our very doorsteps to engage our attention," said Sir John Kotelawala, "and while we delay in facing it, the ugly form of communism rears its head above us." The newly

independent countries of Asia must be protected at all costs from foreign interference, "whether through communist activities or in any other manner." "Communism in Asia, which owes no loyalty to anyone but to the international movement, unfortunately thrives because in our democratic way of life we honour the liberties of our citizens. Communism is entirely foreign to the religious, cultural and social traditions of our people. In facing it too, South-East Asia can achieve more by acting in concert than by the efforts of individual nations."

These are heartening words coming as they do against the background of a free world whose defences reveal a gaping void in the area that lies between Turkey and the Phillipines. That is a vacuum that Soviet-Chinese imperialism might at any time move into and if such a catastrophe is to be averted this vacuum must be filled by measures of collective security.

In so far as the Prime Minister of Ceylon is concerned, his recent action in refusing facilities for communist propaganda in Ceylon, such as that to which the Indian people have recently been subjected by Harry Pollitt and Jagan, shows our Ceylonese neighbours at least do not allow any neutralistic

qualms to come in the way of protecting their own security. It is, therefore, to be hoped that measures for collective security of the entire region will be discussed at the impending meeting in Colombo of some of the South and South Eastern Asian Prime Ministers.

If the anxiety to prevent the Western Democracies from bolstering the free countries of Asia has any validity at all, the way of forestalling and anticipating such a process is for these countries to come together themselves in a regional security pact of their own comparable to the Rio de Janeiro pact of the American republics and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. To make such a defence agreement 100% effective in military terms, it is true that it would need to be underwritten by the world's leading Democracies like U.K. and U.S.A. as well as by Australia and New Zealand. Such a collective move would be quite

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different in its psychological and emotional content from unilateral arrangements between one country of Asia and one Western Power alone. If this country would now join its neighbours in such mutual defence arrangements by which an attack on one would be considered an attack on all, the ground will have been cut from under the feet of those who believe that unilateral pacts are the only way to bolster the defence of the free world. It would make irrelevant both such pacts and the hysteria in which they result in neighbouring countries.

There is only one respect in which the Kotelawala plan can be improved. The proposal to confine the Asian Prime Ministers' Conference to India, Pakistan, Burma, Indonesia and Ceylon is difficult to understand. There is everything to gain and nothing to lose by inviting also the Philippines, which now has at its head a progressive and dynamic statesman in President Ramon Magsaysay, Thailand and the associated states of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

Freedom in Education

THE Bombay Government's order restricting admission into English-teaching schools to Anglo-Indians and non-Asians must be viewed with grave misgivings by all those who cherish the democratic way of life and have the cause of good education and Indian unity at heart.

In every civilised society, it is the inalienable right of parents to educate their children according to their own lights. The State can compel them to send their children to school, but it cannot dictate the choice of school or enforce segregation on grounds of race, religion or language. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, states: "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children." India is a signatory to this declaration and the Bombay Government's order is clearly in conflict with Article 26. The Indian Constitution also lays down that educational institutions receiving governmental aid shall not discriminate in the admission of pupils except on grounds of merit. While the representatives of India speak out loudly, at international assemblies, for equal rights for all, nearer home such rights are being threatened. Mr. Frank Anthony has rightly described the Bombay Government's attempt to segregate school children on grounds of race and language as "educational apartheid."

The English language is still one of the greatest single factors in the unity of India. It is the medium of communication between people of different regions, the language of the law and of all higher and technical education worth the name. Proficiency in it is still essential in order to enter the civil and defence services of the country. All this cannot be seriously challenged by even the most unreasoning enthusiast of Hindi. The Bombay Government's policy, however, will in no way advance the cause of Hindi; on the contrary, with its shifting of emphasis from English to the regional languages, it will only

succeed in further lowering the already low educational standards prevailing today.

A sound policy in education cannot be doctrinaire in its approach. It must insist on high standards and cater to the needs of both the students and the country; above all it must not destroy freedom of choice nor increase bureaucratic interference. We hope that even at this late hour public opinion and the opinion of leading educationists will prevail with the Bombay Government to rescind this order before irreparable harm is done.

At Last

AT long last thousands of Chinese and North Korean prisoners of war have won the freedom for which they have risked their lives during the past year or more. January 23 was indeed a great day for the free world. The communist aggressors on their part had suffered their biggest propaganda defeat since the rising of June 1953 in Berlin and East Germany.

Throughout the night prior to their release by the Indian Custodian Force the communists had kept up their campaign of blackmail and bluff by broadcasting ceaselessly to the helpless prisoners that they would be "killed by communist gunfire" if they tried to return to the U.N. lines. But next morning their bluff was well and truly called when the Chinese prisoners marched out of their camps carrying portraits of President Chiang Kai-Shek and Dr. Sun Yat-Sen and waving Nationalist flags and the Koreans shouting "Banzai" as they marched past a portrait of President Syngman Rhee.

Indians have reason to feel relieved and happy that the ultimate issue of this country's intervention in this matter has been the release of the anti-communist prisoners. Such satisfaction cannot but be mixed with regret, however, that General Thimayya who, along with his troops, comes out of this entire chapter with flying colours, should have been directed to attach to the act of handing over the prisoners to the U.N. somewhat ungracious admonitions against releasing them on the one due date. While taking the grace out of a correct act, this has given a handle to mendacious communist propaganda.

International Legal Conference

THE Ministry of External Affairs deserves to be congratulated for sponsoring and underwriting the recent International Legal Conference at Delhi when practitioners, law-professors and Judges from nearly twenty-five countries debated an interesting agenda for five days. The items on the Agenda should perhaps have been selected with a keener eye on what merits discussion in the international legal field. Thus the Constitution of India and a review of the judicial system in England and India were subjects of no particular interest to the international lawyer and it is unfair to expect him to make any useful contribution on subjects smacking strongly of domestic interest. A review of the United Nations

Charter, however, provided the Conference with a really vital topic to tackle. The delegates were divided in two distinct camps, those who proposed that next year, when the Charter comes up for revision, no alterations other than very minor ones in the nature of improvements in legal drafting should be effected; and those who urged major vital alterations aimed at making the United Nations a stronger, more representative and effective organ. Curiously, the protagonists of both views were motivated by a keen sense of realism. Those who proposed minor changes felt that in the context of the present political events, to seek major alterations would be to disrupt and destroy the U.N. Their opponents proposed major amendments for the very reason that according to them, without certain major amendments in the Charter, the U.N. would never be able to take effective enforcement action and would slowly but surely disintegrate. The Conference finally reached a decision befitting the jurists as well as the diplomats present. While affirming its faith and loyalty to the U.N., it indicated its anxiety to agitate for major amendments but so as not to weaken or destroy the U.N. This would appear to be putting forward great endeavour, expecting little result.

The discussions on the acquisition of nationality by naturalization and the extent to which Human Rights contained in the Universal Declaration were either violated or given effect to indicated a welcome approach to the problems involved and were particularly remarkable for the restraint shown by different delegates when dealing with live political controversies. For the first Conference of its type on Asian soil, it was a great success, if for no other reason, for the practical manner in which it demonstrated De Wattel's classic saying 'that a dwarf is as much a man as a giant.'

On Re-Writing History

THE re-writing of history to suit particular causes has so far been associated mainly with Russia. As far as we are aware no attempts have been made in India to write history with particular objects in view. At worst, historians have been guilty of suppressing facts unpalatable to them, and giving prominence to others which support their own theories. This is a human failing, and nothing much can be done about it.

Dr. P. V. Kane's address at the History Congress at Waltair on December 29, 1953, should open our eyes to a great danger that exists in this country. Politics is our national pastime and political propaganda has often made use of history as a medium. Dr. Kane referred to the report of the Zakir Hussain Committee on basic national education which contains an unusual suggestion. The report stated that as the Indian nation has adopted non-violence as a method preferable to violence, Indian children should be taught the superiority of non-violence over violence in the context of history. Dr. Kane rightly observes that no Indian history based on principles stated

above can be written, particularly for the period from about 1200 to 1920 A.D. and it would be better not to teach any history at all rather than one which is so obviously tailored to political ends. Fortunately, no history books of this type have yet been written, and we hope that any attempts to do so will be strongly discouraged by everybody concerned.

Relapse?

FRIENDS of democracy and of Yugoslavia will be distressed by the treatment meted out to M. Milovan Djilas, for the 'crime' of some idealistic and civilised thinking. Such thinking has for long been considered a heinous crime in Soviet Russia, but it had been hoped that it would be viewed in proper perspective in a country that prides itself on its battles with Stalin and has the courage to match its anti-Soviet valour by some new experiments in social organisation.

One would imagine that a poet-philosopher like M. Djilas would be prized by his colleagues even as he was liked by the mass of the people who elected him to Parliament with the highest number of votes. Perhaps a party that talked wistfully of the 'withering away of the Party' might have allowed M. Djilas to retain his governmental posts even though he might fall from grace in the Party. But it seems that Marxism-Leninism disfigures the spirit even as small-pox disfigures the body.

The entire Djilas episode is a disappointment for those who saw in the experiments of Yugoslavia the expanding realisation of the values of freedom and democracy. The one-party system is too treacherous a basis upon which to build the edifice of freedom.

However, it is only fair to recognise that the Yugoslav method of purging has so far been more restrained than the bizarre Soviet one. What has happened to Djilas looks like a dangerous relapse in a patient that had appeared to be enjoying the buoyant feeling of a cure. It might be hoped that the relapse is only temporary.

(Continued from next page.)

It is a tragedy that the lessons of history, the testimony of individual experience, or even memories of its own past experience in the thirties seem to be lost on the dominant section of the Praja Socialist Party in Travancore-Cochin. The P.S.P. might profitably ponder the fact that communist strength and socialist weakness in South India is itself the result of an earlier United Front with the C.S.P. in the nineteen-thirties. Further collaboration can only bring about further deterioration.

Those who wish to see democracy survive in this country, including friends of the P.S.P., can in such a context only pray that the P.S.P. will be saved by the wisdom and maturity of the electorate in Travancore-Cochin from the consequences of its misguided tactics.

Embrace Of Death

ON the eve of the General Elections in the State of Travancore-Cochin has come a startling disclosure by the Democratic Research Service of some secret correspondence being carried on between Dr. N. M. Jaisoorya, M.P., and Mr. G. M. Shroff of the Hyderabad P.D.F., and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, part of which was circulated to delegates attending the Third Congress of the Party recently in Madura. This correspondence throws lurid light on the real working of the United Front and tears to shreds the pious pretensions of the communists about the genuine unity and equality that is supposed to exist between them and their allies. It has a moral to tell which may yet have some relevance to the success or failure of the opportunist electoral understanding reached between the communists and others in Travancore-Cochin.

A "Government of Democratic Unity" has been announced as the objective of the Communist Party of India. To achieve it, the Party is prepared to form a "United Democratic Front" on a countrywide scale "by way of various democratic parties and groups and individuals coming together on whatever issues and in whatever places they can agree to work and lead the masses...." In this Front, "each party can function in its own name while on all agreed issues all parties either in their name or in the name of the United Front can present a united opposition."

On the face of it, this proposal appears to be reasonable and democratic, but it is worth while to investigate it further if its real meaning is to be found. The concept of the United Front is not a new one. It has been used in the past and once more it has been dug up and dangled as a bait before other parties. Its objective is not to form a coalition but to destroy the socialist parties who believe in the democratic method. Lenin used to boast that he, in his time, had given moderate parties the embrace that killed. He wrote that the Bolshevik Party concluded "a formal political alliance with Struve, the political leader of bourgeois liberalism." Yet "it was able at the same time to carry on an increasing and merciless ideological and political struggle against bourgeois liberalism." In the same spirit, Lenin urged the British communists to support the socialist Arthur Henderson: "I want to support Henderson with my vote in the same way as a rope supports the hanged." This then is the communist concept of "independence" for the constituent units of a United Front—the independence of the communists, not only to use them as a facade, but also to exterminate them. There is a fundamental difference between the liberal and socialist parties and the communists—viz., that whereas the former recognise democracy, the latter do not, and whereas the former do not seek destruction of society, the latter do. Stalin has laid down that to a communist, "reforms are of use only as instruments that dis-

integrate the system," and that "the revolutionary will accept a reform in order to use it as a screen behind which his illegal activities for the revolutionary preparation of the masses for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie may be intensified."

This fundamental difference of approach and the fact that the communists regard themselves as the sole leaders of the broad mass of the people make it imperative that they destroy the socialist parties by any device available. The history of Europe in the thirties when the communists used every device from collaboration with the fascists to the honeyed words of the United Front to destroy the social democrat should serve as a grim reminder of their real objectives. The fate of collaborating parties in Eastern Europe and China, where they have either been liquidated or reduced to obedient puppets, should also serve as a warning to those who would today believe communist professions.

The lessons of history are not however always easily learnt. Dr. N. M. Jaisoorya, M.P., and Mr. G. M. Shroff, who have been collaborating with the communists during and since the last General Elections, have discovered some of the truth the hard way. In the course of a letter to the Central Committee of the C.P.I., they state: "The working class leadership in practice means C.P.I. leadership and in our experience they have always attempted to equate leadership with C.P.I. leadership, since the C.P.I. does not recognise any other party than itself as the working class party.... In such a background the slogan takes a shape in practice to somehow impose this leadership on every Front at all strategic levels. The 'somehow' includes even undemocratic methods and intrigues.... It must be pointed out that this call is not merely local but from the Centre and probably forms a basic principle." They also belatedly discovered that communist policies were being determined by "Moscow, Comintern or Cominform", that the C.P.I. had "extra-territorial loyalties"; that it believed in "armed struggle," and that it was guilty of "petty-Commissar mentality."

In the reply that the Central Committee of the C.P.I. sent to Dr. Jaisoorya and Mr. G. M. Shroff from its office in New Delhi on November 16, 1953, over the signature of P. Ramamurthy, instead of giving any satisfaction or promise of better behaviour in future, the Communist Party have put Dr. Jaisoorya in his place. They accuse him of repeating "the anti-communist slanders." They also threaten him with being smeared and denounced as a traitor when they continue: "The imperialists and feudal landlords and monopolists who collaborate with the imperialists have been repeating this slander."

This is the fate that awaits not only Dr. Jaisoorya and Mr. Shroff but others who may be so misguided to follow in their footsteps.

(Continued on page 4, col. 2.)

The New Humanism—A Critique

by John S. Connor

THERE is much talk today, by those people who place freedom first on the list of man's possessions, about the dangers which currently beset this hard-won human value. Forces seeking its destruction, or at least its transvaluation appear to abound and abide almost everywhere. So great is the strength of this contemporary "enclosure" movement, so widespread and deep-sunk are its social penetrations, that, as one such harried liberal has emotively explained his position, "I feel despaired to find the roving wings of the bird of freedom clipped and its beautiful feathers singed in a tragic manner." A good many hardier souls seem to derive inspiration rather than desperation from a vigorous opposition. By combining their efforts in active associations they strive to meet squarely, and overcome completely, the threat of cultural extinction. The various national Committees for Cultural Freedom are outstanding examples of this sort of joint venture.

The immensity of the task thus undertaken by the freedomites is patently evident. It entails nothing less than a comprehensive renovation of man, both in his person and in his institutions. For reasonable men, the record of the past is still the key to a sound understanding of the present and a safe preparation for the future. As a result of such an investigation, though, some truths may be exhumed and some harsh confessions extracted. But surely our worried friend quoted above is right when he issues the warning: "If we are not prepared to evaluate, criticize, and accept the concept of cultural freedom from a scientific point of view, we shall be sailing under false colours and... shall be giving a new lease of life to the demon of reaction." Let us work a small-scale historical experiment to demonstrate the accuracy of this admonition.

The opening of the modern era in Western culture, we know, was marked by a revolt against external authority, more particularly religious and spiritual authority. As that drive for self-realization in this world through untrammelled self-expression, Humanism as it was most frequently called, gathered momentum, it left a livid stream of social consequences swirling in its wake. To grasp the full colour and course of this disturbance, it is necessary to have some conception of the situation which existed in the beforetime. Laski describes the economic features thereof succinctly when he says, "...men lived within an order in which effective social institutions... judged that activity by criteria derived from outside itself. They did not regard the individual interest as conclusive. They refused to accept material utility as a valid justification of economic behaviour. They sought to impose... a body of rules upon economic life of which the inner principle was consideration for social well-being taken in the context of individual salvation in the next life." Politically, Roscoe Pound tells us, "...the end of law,

and hence toward what legal precepts should be directed and how they should be applied, the ideal of the later Middle Ages... is that of Greek philosophers and Roman lawyers. It conceives of the legal order as having for its end the orderly maintenance of the social status quo... the principle of justice is to give to every one his own and what is one's own is determined by the social order."

By the end of the 16th century a new foundation for social organization had been successfully laid. Liberalism was the stuff from which it was made, and it had a moral and intellectual core that was strictly earthbound. The texture of this theory was material and entirely encompassed within worldly limits, instead of being spiritual and oriented toward a reality beyond time and space. Its practical social ideal assumed the form of a burning desire for natural power because of the immediate ease and comfort such control promised. In politics, the state became self-sufficient. It developed its own principles of conduct, which constituted the ultimate standards of peace and order. It was fast becoming absolutist in the international sense, though certainly not on its internal or domestic side. For that would have hindered the growth of unfettered capitalism, the then rising economic system. In the latter order, a social conception of wealth was replaced by an individualistic one. The norm of utility was no longer social good but individual want, and pursuit of material gain became the main purpose of life.

At the close of the 17th century, the superstructure of a Liberalistic society was taking a definite shape. Rationalism and Materialism were in full control of the cultural processes. The state had largely become an association of successful business men, with its laws chiefly aimed at protecting such success. The ideal citizen and the prosperous person were assumed to be one and the same. The freedoms to be advanced were identified with his interests, and the dangers to be guarded against were those threatening security. Liberty for the most part became synonymous with an absence of restraint upon the rights of property. A programme of land enclosures had separated the peasants from their main source of livelihood, while the methods of industrial operation left the worker with nothing but his labour power. An increasing "hardening of heart" against the poor asserted itself, and they were considered to be simply the victims of their "idle, irregular, and wicked courses." The view of man as a human being was rapidly fading out under the glare of "man as an economic entity."

In the 18th century the tendency toward Liberalism had achieved the proportions of a steady drift, and it was rapidly approaching the apogee of its political and economic implications. Business men were openly and loudly proclaimed as leading public benefactors. The less the restraints upon their all-con-

suming passion, the greater the benefits to society as a whole. To ensure such freedom, these tycoons were put in effective charge of the state, where they proceeded to compel it to function within the narrowest limits possible. A full acceptance of the tenet of automatic progress, which pronounced that government best which governed least, was running rampant.

It was in the 19th century that Liberalism entered upon its triumphant epoch. The liberal ideal glorified the splendour of freedom of contract—by which was meant the absence of any effective check on capitalist enterprise, and it refused, in any real fashion, to consider the state as a possible source of social benefit. So far as the great masses of men were concerned, liberation was a hollow joke. It merely transferred their unlimited subservience from the landlord to a new type of economic master—the industrialist. Democracy, the political watchword of the times, insisted that the people were sovereign and that the state must serve their interests. But its concept of people was made coterminous with property, and its governmental procedures were strictly controlled by and for the interests of those who directed production. Internationally, it put the finishing touches to a virulent nationalism and a strident imperialism.

Most of us living today know only too well how this whole cult and culture of Liberalism has been under severe attack and on the rapid decline during the present century. Collectivism, as a full-fledged and far-flung hostile reaction to the long and vain-glorious reign of Individualism, has been gaining increasing sway in the aftermath of the two most horrendous wars in history, the climax of the long trek of independent man to find himself. Communism, the real firebrand of this flaming movement, is actually a specially bred offspring of materialistic, atheistic Humanism. Karl Marx, an ideological geneticist, simply blended the dialectics of Hegel with the materialism of Feuerbach and the sociology of Proudhon and the economics of Ricardo to produce the most potent challenge that Liberalism has yet faced.

Such then are the main features of the social order spawned by the old Humanism. By its very nature, which aimed at the ultimate sanctification of man by "the emancipation of the spirit of man," by "... the removal of restraints one by one," it has condemned itself to a continued thwarting of its own best interests. By turning man's whole attention in upon himself it has turned man's best efforts against himself. As Lewis Mumford has well said, "All the slippery optimism which has so devitalized the democratic peoples ... has sprung from an essential defect, which is best seen in its intellectual nakedness in the philosophy of pragmatic liberalism."

One of the most heartrending chapters in this tragic tale of man is still being written. For there are proponents of human freedom who even now offer this very same defunct and discredited cultural philosophy, albeit under the scintillating and stimulating titles of "New Humanism" and "Radical Humanism," to deceive if possible even the elect. They are especially active in the East, where lack of previous experience with their quackery assures them

a good market on a wholesale scale. Realistic advocates of cultural freedom should be alert to and arrayed against this appalling danger in their midst. If they are not, they will never be able "to create a new society of moral men."

I. C. C. F. NEWS

Dr. Sampurnanand, Minister for Home and Education in the Government of Uttar Pradesh, met and addressed a large number of members in Bombay on the "Vulnerability of Indian Society" on January 4, 1954.

Prof. Robert C. North, of Stanford University, U.S.A., and editor of the *Pacific Spectator*, addressed a gathering of writers in the Bombay offices of the Indian Committee.

A series of talks under the general heading of "Freedom and Culture" was inaugurated on January 13, 1954 when Prof. M. L. Dantwala spoke on "Bread and Freedom." On January 20, Mr. Rudi Van Leyden addressed a gathering on "Freedom in the World of Arts and Letters." This was followed by a talk by Mr. Rohit Dave, on January 27, on "The Basis of Cultural Freedom." The programme for February includes the following:—

February 3:—"Freedom in Indian Society"

February 10:—"Freedom of Information"

February 17:—"Freedom of Political Organisation"

February 24:—"Free Trade Union Movement"

CEYLON C. C. F

The following are the office bearers of the Ceylon Committee for Cultural Freedom, which was inaugurated recently:—

President:

The Hon'ble Mr. J. R. Jayawardene, Minister for Food and Agriculture, Govt. of Ceylon.

Vice-Presidents:

The Ven'ble Welivita Sorata Nayeke (Vice-Principal of the premier institute of Oriental and Buddhist learning in the island).

The Very Rev. Dr. D. S. Anthony, O. M. I. (General Manager of Roman Catholic Schools).

Rev. Fr. Basil Jayawardene (Vicar of St. Pauls.)

Dr. A. Panikkar (A leading Ayurvedic Practitioner).

Hon. Secretary:

Mr. M. A. De Silva, Parliamentary Editor of the *Ceylon Daily News*.

The British Guiana Crisis

by S. M. Shakoor

Dr. Cheddi Jagan has come and gone. In a series of one night stands across India, he has been feted by the all mighty and listened to with bewilderment by the many humble. This article by a prominent trade unionist compatriot of Jagan will help in promoting a better understanding of recent happenings in British Guiana.

A PURGE of the communist elements from the Free Trade Unions in British Guiana is now under way, but it is doubtful whether any such purge can be successful unless these democratic unions are given help from trade unionists outside this country. The recent suspension of the Constitution by the Governor has brought into brilliant focus the extent to which the trade union movement has been undermined by the communist dominated People's Progressive Party which gained a bare majority vote at the General Elections but managed to capture 18 out of 24 elected seats in the House of Assembly.

The Constitution, granted this year on adult suffrage, was a liberal one. It made provisions for two Houses, the House of Assembly which carried 24 elected and three nominated officials, and the State Council, carrying nine nominated members—two of the nine members being nominated by the Majority Party of the House of Assembly, one by the Minority Group, and six by the Governor. There were six elected Ministers, all holding portfolios, in the House of Assembly, a nominated Speaker, and a Deputy Speaker nominated by the Majority Party.

Democratic Unions Oppose Communist-Controlled P. P. P.

Guianese at the moment resent very much the stigma which has been attached to the country in general as being "communist-minded" and a communist country whose sole aim is to break all links with the British Commonwealth of Nations. The free trade unions — the Man-Power Citizens' Association which serves the major industries of the colony, sugar and bauxite on the Berbice River; the Mine Workers Union, an off-shoot and affiliate of the M.P.C.A. in the bauxite industry on the Demerara River; the Civil Service Association, which is also a registered trade union, and the British Guiana Union of Journalists—are firm in their stand against the communist People's Progressive Party. An uphill task confronts the trade union movement in British Guiana if it is to purge itself of the communists within its ranks. This the free unions intend to do, and for help they look to free trade unions and trade unionists of the world.

Suspension of the Constitution came as a surprise to British Guianese. In fact the announcement over the British Broadcasting Corporation that troops were being sent to this country had many citizens, who were unaware of the communist plot, asking the question as to whether such troop movements were

justified or not. Up to now there has been violence on a small scale, but it is known the People's Progressive Party, like an octopus, has spread its tentacles into the Police Force. It was lack of confidence in this institution of the administration which caused the British Government to take the precautions it did when there was no other way out than to suspend the Constitution.

Background of British Guiana Labour

To grasp fully the present situation it is necessary to go back to the 1930's when the Colony was beset by a series of strikes, mostly on the waterfront. These were led by Mr. Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow (now O.B.E.), a dour labour unionist whose efforts on behalf of the workers had established the British Guiana Labour Union, the first of its kind in the Colonial Empire. To Critchlow fell the honour of introducing many labour legislations which benefited the workers immensely. Trade unionism in British Guiana was thereafter placed on a firm footing, though there was always the tendency to have many unions in any one industry.

These relationships held good until the 1940's when the Man-Power Citizens' Association became the leading and recognized union in the sugar, and later, the bauxite and other industries. It was not easy for the M.P.C.A. to achieve this, but the confidence displayed in the Union by employers and employees was such that the M.P.C.A. was able to secure many noteworthy advancements for the workers, especially in the sugar industry where, within a period of ten years, wages increased by more than 300 per cent while production increased only about 25 per cent and the cost of living went up about 200 per cent. The workers were given better living conditions, and in addition were awarded incentive bonuses.

Dr. J. P. Lachhmansingh, because of his lust for power and self-aggrandisement, formed the Guiana Industrial Workers Union. So bent was he on attaining his ambitions that he commenced a reckless series of strikes in an effort to climb on the backs of the workers to achieve his goal. He called strikes in the sugar industry with regularity every year, but these had little effect. The Man-Power Citizens' Association still held the confidence of the industry, and through its realistic approach enjoyed and secured more benefits for its members.

During these troublesome days of the late forties, there came on the scene of trade unionism in British Guiana two men: Mr. Ashton Chase, who had been

born in the trade union movement and trained by Mr. Critchlow, and was sent to London to study trade unionism at Ruskin College. Instead, most of his energies were turned to the assimilation of communist doctrines. The other man was Lindon Forbes Sampson Burnham, a Barrister-at-Law and a former Guiana scholarship winner. During his studies in London, Burnham was reported as having become a member of the Communist Party. He later travelled to what is now familiarly known as the Iron Curtain countries. Ashton Chase was later to oust Critchlow as General Secretary of the B. G. Labour Union, and Burnham to become its President.

The communists had gained their first foothold in the trade union movement in British Guiana. Meanwhile, Dr. Cheddi Jagan, who had been studying dentistry in the United States, returned with his communist American-born wife Janet. These four were instrumental in forming the People's Progressive Party. As the party grew it indoctrinated the illiterate and semi-literate in the rural areas and the city, and Dr. Jagan added yet another trade union to his communist fold. He became the President of the Saw Mill Workers Union. From then onwards, in typical communist style, began a series of wildcat strikes in the forest industry and also on the waterfront. The communists held out a friendly hand to the unrecognized G.I.W.U., and aided and abetted Dr. Lachhmansingh in his efforts to gain dominance in the sugar industry.

Governor's Warning Ignored

The new Governor of the country, Sir Alfred Savage, fully aware of the composition of the People's Progressive Party, in his opening speech to the new House of Assembly, warned that for the future progress of British Guiana there must be harmonious relationship between Capital and Labour, and an understanding that one could not do without the other; that it was only by working in the closest co-operation that the country could reach its desired goal of self-government within the British Commonwealth of Nations. The warning by Sir Alfred also fell on deaf ears as subsequent events proved.

First business done by the Party in the House was to pass a Resolution urging the British Government to intercede with the American Government to spare the lives of atom spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. Next move was to repeal the Bill which Mr. Luckhoo, President of the M.P.C.A., had successfully got the previous Legislative Council to introduce banning communist literature. This complete, the Party then set about to introduce highly controversial and undemocratic legislation, one of which was to make it compulsory that people should cultivate their lands regardless of whether they had the money or not. The Government was to advance the money, with the Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Jagan, being the sole person to say how the money should be repaid. It would have paved the way for outright confiscation

of privately owned lands. The Bill was thrown out by the State Council.

Following closely on the communist pattern, Dr. Lachhmansingh, backed by his Party's powerful majority in the House, made demands on the Sugar Producers' Association for recognition of his G.I.W.U. The Association agreed to give the G.I.W.U. recognition so far as the field workers were concerned, but the M.P.C.A. was to retain the right to represent factory and other workers. This measure of appeasement was not enough for Dr. Lachhmansingh. He reinforced his claims for recognition by demands for increased wages. Without receiving an answer from the S.P.A. to his further demands, the Doctor, backed by his communist colleagues, called a general strike in the sugar industry.

The Labour Relations Bill

The strike lasted 25 days. Workers lost in earnings some \$2,000,000. The strike was called off, and the Party brought forward its infamous Labour Relations Bill. It had assured the workers that once this Bill was passed, the sugar industry would have to recognize the G.I.W.U. The Minister of Labour, Mr. Ashton Chase, sought to get the sanction of the House to have the Standing Rules suspended so that the Bill could be carried through all its stages in one day. The Speaker, Sir Eustace Woolford refused. The Party took to the street corners.

The Bill, according to the Minister of Labour, was based on American and Canadian labour laws. In truth and in fact it was an undisguised attempt by the communist members of the Ministerial set-up to bring all unions and individuals under their thumb. Once again the Party-controlled Assembly gave the green light to an iniquitous measure, but before the State Council (who it was known would reject the Bill) could sit to debate it, the United Kingdom Government, acting on intelligence that a Red coup was in the offing, ordered warships and troops to British Guiana. With their arrival the Moscow-worshipping "People's Government" was sacked and Governor Savage, vested with emergency powers, ordered the five-month-old Constitution suspended. He announced that a caretaker Government in which Guianese would have a full share of representation would be set up to run the country while a Commission of Enquiry sat to determine the checks and balances which should be inserted into an amended and modified Constitution.

It is on this future that the trade union movement has to concentrate its energy. The uphill fight to rebuild the confidence of the outside world in British Guiana will be a hard one. It is primarily the resistance which the free trade unions can make to the communist movement which will dictate whether the industrial future of the country will blossom out as Guianese would like it to. The free trade unions look to the outside world to help them create industrial peace and stability.

Review

Ballet-Hoo

ON Monday, January 18, the Soviet Cultural Delegation had its opening night at the Excelsior Theatre in Bombay. A large gathering attended the show and the reds and pinks of Bombay society were out in full force and in swollen numbers to welcome the delegation. There were however to be seen in the crowd some innocents and genuine lovers of the ballet who, irrespective of their political views, had come to see the show. For these people, in spite of all the applauding and encoring, loudest from the backbenchers, obviously placed there for this purpose, (an Englishman formerly associated with the theatre in London and known for his political affiliations was seen nudging the man sitting next to him and telling him to clap louder), the evening was a complete disappointment. The programme started with the playing of the Soviet and Indian national anthems followed by speeches from Justice Chagla and the leader of the delegation. Justice Chagla tried to reassure us that nothing was going on behind the scenes. He coupled this with a declaration of his faith in the democratic way of life.

The curtain now went up and the programme that followed included violin and piano recitals, folk and ballet dances, folk and classical songs, a recital of the balalaika and even an acrobatic turn. One felt that the only thing left to round it off was a magic show! Such a hotch potch and mixture was bound to give one a feeling of dissatisfaction but perhaps it was hoped that the variety would make up for the poor quality of most of the numbers.

At the beginning of each item, before the curtain went up the announcer told us of the honours received by the artist. Most of them were honoured artists of the U.S.S.R. and some of them Stalin Prize winners. Apart from it being in rather bad taste this only raised expectations and added to the disappointment.

Maya Plietskaya, the ballerina, fell far below all expectations in all three of her presentations of the classical ballet. Even in the "Dying Swan", while her arms moved expressively, her foot work was heavy and ungraceful. When the Soviet Union claims her as their foremost ballerina it does an injustice to itself, for surely the home of the classical ballet should have more to show for itself than Maya Plietskaya, who would be considered third-rate by any European standards. As for Yuri Gofman, who partnered her, it would perhaps be kinder not to say anything about him. Most of the folk dances too were extremely poorly rendered except for the last number—the Russian Folk Dance. This was done with spirit and skill and was the peak of the performance.

In the sphere of music and singing the standard was slightly higher but the low water mark was touched by Rashid Beibutov in his humorous songs.

In his gestures and mannerisms he savoured very much of a night club singer. His unconsciously humorous interpretation of Iqbal's "Sare Jehan Se Achha Hindustan Hamara" went down extremely well. It was surprising to see so called Indian patriots, always so vociferous in guarding their country's honour and prestige, enjoying immensely the murdering of India's most beautiful national song.

The Acrobatic Etude was good but rather incongruous in a programme of classical music and ballet. The Vallabhai Stadium was the more appropriate place for this number. If the delegation wants its shows to be more successful they would be better advised to cut out the classical numbers and have more folk songs and dances where the colourful costumes and pleasing music would make up to a large extent for the lack of proficiency.

B. A.

The Art of Chavda

AN exhibition of paintings and drawings of Shiavax Chavda, the eleventh one-man show of his career, brought to the art lovers of Bombay an experience but all too rare. Rarer still these days is the phenomenon of a painter, at least in this country, who is free from political and moral preconceptions and prejudices. Chavda muscles into no cliques, runs after no *gurus*, keeps aloof from all polemics and paints because he loves to paint. This attitude has caused him to be obliquely sniped at by art critics of differing, even contradictory political views. But Chavda says he cares "two pins for them."

Shiavax Chavda, one of the most interesting and forceful of India's living artists was born in Gujarat in 1911. After graduating from the Sir J. J. School of Art, scholarships enabled him to have further training and experience in Europe. He obtained the Diploma in Fine Arts at the Slade School in two years instead of the customary three. Subsequently he worked at the Academie de la Grande Chaumière, Paris. He also had the privilege of learning stage designing under the well-known Russian artist, Polunin.

Since his return to India he has travelled widely over the sub-continent in search of material, reaching as far north as Kashmir and east to Assam and the Burmese frontier country. Pictures based on sketches made on some of those journeys, specially the recent visits to Singapore and Indonesia, were on show. They illustrated well the essential qualities of Chavda's work: his fine, sensitive draughtsmanship, and, in painting, his use of wide surfaces of pure colour. Chavda was represented in the Unesco Exhibition in Paris, the Exhibition of Indian Art at Burlington House, London, the Salon de Mai, Paris, and the Exhibition of Indian Artists, which travelled through the States under the auspices of the American Federation of Art.

Chavda's documentation of Hindu Temples in Indonesia constitutes pioneering work of lasting cultural significance. The opening of the Exhibition by Mr. W. G. Archer, Keeper of the Indian Art Section

of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, was a fitting tribute and recognition of Chavda's contribution to the great art traditions of this country.

The Exhibition was open from January 9 to January 16, at the Jehangir Art Gallery.

N.D.O.

Korean Tales

By Melvin B. Voorhees (Secker & Warburg London 1953. 12s. 6d.)

LEGEND has it that it is the dream of every American journalist to write a book. Quite naturally, and perhaps happily, not every reporter's dream comes true. Mr. Melvin B. Voorhees, is however, among the more fortunate ones. And *Korean Tales* is the result of service at U.S. Headquarters in Korea. It is part fact and part fiction; the fiction is easy to distinguish since the characters in it have names like Sergeant Doe or its Korean equivalent.

"When I saw my remarks in print," says Mr. Voorhees, "I was struck that EUSAK truly was 'uncommonly uncommon'." The same, alas, cannot be said for *Korean Tales*. Reading them, one gets the impression of reportage that is at best a compromise between the confidential style of *Time* magazine and the gushing adulation of a feminine fashion journal. The fiction, however, is more difficult to define.

The tendency to generalise from the particular is a common failing, and human beings may differ only in the extent of their generalisation. Mr. Voorhees after seeing particular Koreans has, no doubt with simple faith in his own judgement, proceeded to lash out with generalisations about Orientals. Here are some samples:

"Like other Oriental military bodies, the Korean Army does not see itself as of its people, but rather as an élite class raised above the masses." No doubt members of the Indian, Pakistani and other "Oriental military bodies" will be interested to learn this.

"There never was a time among Oriental people when rank, be it social, political or military was not accorded unusual privileges." Lacking Mr. Voorhees' profound knowledge of Oriental history and his intimate personal acquaintance with the contemporary Orient one can only pass on to the next one:

"Oriental tradition, training and fundamental belief (is that) the common man is plentiful cheap and easily reproduced; brains, culture and caste, though their worth may only be imaginary must be preserved and nurtured." It might perhaps be mildly amusing to speculate on Mr. Voorhees' fate, had this "tradition, training and fundamental belief" obtained in the Occident.

F. S. N.

The Oliviers

By Felix Barker (Hamish Hamilton, 1953 Sh 15/-)

THERE are several ways in which the actor may try to come to terms with a curiosity that he must accept as an inevitable by-product of success. He may put at a biographer's disposal his theatrical records, private diaries, if any, and correspondence; which is what Sir Laurence Olivier and Miss Vivien

Leigh have preferred to, and no doubt it turns out a good way.

Mr. Felix Barker has preserved his independence as a biographer, reflecting acting triumphs and failures more often in fairly selected quotations from current criticisms than in his own words and producing at the same time a satisfyingly detailed and intimate double-biography.

R. H.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

FROM Jules Laforgue to Jean-Paul Sartre, from Swinburne to T. S. Eliot and Enid Starkie, by way of Arthur Symonds, students of poetry for the past eighty years have been giving us their impressions—often a strangely partial impression—of the life and work of Charles Baudelaire. No literary historian, however, would pretend to deny that seldom has an artist resolved more triumphantly, upon the rarified and exalted plane of art, conflicts that he failed to master in terms of every day existence. Published by Hamish Hamilton, Mr. Martin Turnell's *Baudelaire* is a thoughtful and scholarly estimate of Baudelaire's poems. He has avoided abstract discussions in order to concentrate on essentials—the meaning and artistic value of *Les Fleurs du Mal*, the impact of Baudelaire on French poetry, and some reflections on what is rather grandiloquently called his relevance for our own time.

Edited by Ursula Bridge, *W. B. Yeats And T. Sturge Moore—Their Correspondence: 1901-1937*, contains hitherto unpublished correspondence between two men of equal powers of mind engaged in the same metier and ranging in subject from small technical points of verbal expression to a philosophical discussion lasting six years, arising out of an anecdote of Frank Harris' about Ruskin's cat.

Triumph And Tragedy, the sixth and the final volume of Sir Winston Churchill's *Second World War* is a narrative of absolute military victory, sad and gloomy in tone because its theme, in Sir Winston's words, is "How the Great Democracies Triumphed and So Were Able to Resume the Follies Which Had So Nearly Cost Them Their Life."

The pursuit of the criminal long ago gave place in M. Georges Simenon's work to the quest for understanding of the man. His latest, *Act Of Passion* is in the form of a letter—the book's original title is *Lettre à Mon Juge*—and is one of the most pathological of M. Simenon's tragic little dossiers, but the pathology is in character and quite unpretentious.

Behind Mr. G. S. Fraser's bold and promising title *The Modern Writer And His World* hides a book of somewhat humdrum purpose. Cut to the pattern of the late Dr. Joad's and Mr. Cole's guides to philosophy and economics, the popularizing purpose, at any rate, is interpreted with a good deal of latitude and the author's critical talent does from time to time break free of restrictions voluntarily imposed.

R. H.

With Many Voices

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

—Tennyson.

The prestige of India’s foreign policy is so high in the world that no party can raise its voice against it.
—*Hindustan Times*, December 27, 1953.

The Indian communists, holding their national congress during the past week, have had a golden text for their attacks on “American imperialism.” Mr. Nehru might well have been a fraternal delegate on their platform.

—*Daily Telegraph*, January 4, 1954.

“The Vice-President (Nixon) returned from his trip convinced that India’s neutralism stemmed from Nehru’s belief that India could be a dominant force only if non-communist Asia remained weak and unarmed. He was also said to feel that Nehru is contemptuous of flattery but respectful of strength.”

—*Newsweek* quoted in *Times of India*, December 31, 1953.

The failure of India’s foreign policy was never more evident before as now when the country finds itself without friends at this critical period of its history.

—Mr. Asoka Mehta in *Times of India*, January 2, 1954.

“Peking,” according to this report of Mr. Raghavan’s description, “is one of the most beautiful old cities of the world and gives a similar feeling as you get in Prague..... It is really another aspect of the Arabian Nights.”

—*Thought*, November 28, 1953.

“Quite a few people in India were not familiar with conditions in China.”

—Mr. Hsia Yen, Deputy Leader, Chinese Goodwill Mission in *Times of India*, December 27, 1953.

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The most impressive feature of Russia is the manner in which “a most perfect harmony has been brought about between science, art and culture in that country.”

—Mr. Govind Sahai in *Times of India*, January 3, 1954.

Dr. Katju said that comparisons were odious, but he imagined that if some other system of government were in force in this country “every single person who was accused would have confessed within two months.”

—*Times of India*, December 22, 1953.

It was for the peoples of Asia and Africa to avoid the “Charrybdis” of a new imperialism centred in Moscow in getting clear of the “Scylla” of old colonialism. The new colonialism knows no mercy.

—Dr. Sitaramayya in *Indian Express*, December 30, 1953.

“France is not ripe for anarchy.”

—Prime Minister M. Laniel, quoted in *The Observer*, December 27, 1953.

“We have to fight our battles on three fronts, with the Party of National Conservatism, the Party of Pseudo-Progressivism and the Party of Spurious Religion.”

—Mr. N. G. Goray (General Secretary, Bombay Praja Socialist Party) in the *Bombay Chronicle*, December 30, 1953.

PSP Conference Commences

Dais Collapses

—*Bombay Chronicle*, December 30, 1953.

Bombay’s Finance Minister Dr. Jivraj Mehta, today said he did not even know the elements of finance.

—*Times of India*, December 30, 1953.

There is a passage in the Koran which says: “If you give something without a smile, it is better not to give at all.”

—Mr. Phillips Price M.P., in *Times of India*, January 2, 1954.

“From Marxism being regarded as a Christian heresy, Christianity soon became a Marxist heresy, with the result that its few remaining adherents suffered the fate of other Marxist heretics, and were exterminated.”

—Malcolm Muggeridge on “How to Become a Servile Society Without Knowing It” in *Punch*, December 2, 1953.

“The war in winter is cold war.”

—An answer in The Madras Public Service examination, *Indian Express*, January 13, 1954.