

FEBRUARY 1955

The Problems Of Cultural Freedom In Asia

THE Conference on Cultural Freedom in Asia" scheduled to be held in Rangoon from 17th to 20th February, 1955, will be an intimate gathering of Asian intellectuals to examine the problem of cultural freedom in the context of the intense Asian situation of today.

The problem of cultural freedom presents some distinctive features in Asia. In many important respects it is different from what it is in the West. The Western peoples have a long and living tradition of freedom and democracy. Democratic values are finely woven into the fabric of their social and spiritual life. This is not the case with our continent.

To begin with our people in Asia have to battle hard for their daily living. Their strength and energy is almost entirely consumed in the solution of this elementary problem. Not that the Asian people care nothing for freedom, that they prefer slavery. They do not and would not. But their minds have not yet been freed from the primary task of physical living and natural well-being.

The problem of our intellectuals is much more difficult and complex. Not only are they too faced with hunger—in fact, their style and standard of living makes it even acuter—but they also suffer from the hunger of the spirit.

They are, it is true, inheritors of a long and historic tradition of culture. The values of this culture are eminently rich and fine. Its philosophy is profound. But our culture has crusted because of hundreds of years of inertness and its philosophy frozen by decades of mental torpor and lassitude. The introduction of the modern industrial civilisation not only seemed to knock out the very basis of this culture and philosophy but it shook the foundation of its social

structure, leaving a trail of tensions and contradictions in its wake.

This has sharpened the spiritual contradiction which is a normal feature of the modern scientific age. Outer technological development which always tends to outstrip the inner moral development of man dangerously widened the gap in our backward Asia (except perhaps in Japan) where modern scientific technique is hastily adapted rather than steadily assimilated over a number of years. This has put immense scientific power in the hands of those who may not know how to use it with sufficient enlightenment or responsibility.

The minds of our people, particularly of the intellectuals have been, besides, the prey of a peculiar historical situation. Two or three centuries of imperialist exploitation have created a mood of intense nationalism. This has not abated inspite of the attainment of independence by many countries and has created complicated problems of adjustment with the outside world.

Communism and other reactionary ideologies have found fertile soil in this complex situation. In taking advantage of this situation, they have cynically exploited the social conscience of the people and the idealism of the intellectuals.

Unfortunately unlike the Western democratic intellectuals Asian intellectuals do not have the inner resistance power to withstand the attacks of these reactionary ideologies. The traditional philosophies and values have ceased to be significant for them and the new democratic values and institutions of the West have not yet entered into the texture of their being. In fact, in the difficult situation of Asia today it has become hard for them to see the exact relevance of these values and institutions, at least in their traditional forms, whereas the promise of social and economic development which communism, for instance, holds for them, acts as a dangerous mental dope. While traditional Western democratic values and institutions do not seem to emerge naturally out of the Asian pattern and they do not appear easy to apply to Asian conditions, the communist promises seem to

provide some of the really urgent answers. And, therefore, Communist experiments seem more feasible than the attempts of some thinkers to evolve indigenous Asian forms of democracy suited to our culture and social patterns. The Asian intellectuals cannot easily see the fraudulent nature of these promises, with the result that the powerhouses with which to charge and recharge democratic batteries against the onslaughts of totalitarian ideologies seem to be largely absent from the Asian scene.

In such a situation it is natural, even essential, to concern oneself with the task of exposing the pretensions and practices of these totalitarian ideologies. But such an effort cannot by itself appeal to the imagination of the people, because it does not appear relevant to the pressing problems on hand. What is needed is to develop positive approaches and offer relevant alternative solutions of the problems which are agitating the minds in Asia. It does not mean that these reactionary ideologies should not be exposed but the exposure must come out as a part of positive democratic alternatives.

It is not contended that only a particular positive solution is capable of fighting the menace. Only history will say that but the mere existence of a positive approach even though imperfect, will prove to be a great prophylactic against the disease. For, if totalitarian Communism, for instance, seems to appeal to the imagination of Asian intellectuals today, it is not because it is a logically or even practically superior system. It has had its victories largely through default. It wins because of the absence of positive alternatives. Whenever such alternatives exist Communism is on the defensive. In India, for instance, where Revolutionary Gandhism, Radical Humanism and Decentralised Socialism and in Burma where Buddhist Socialism have re-inforced traditional democratic thinking Communism has never been intellectually aggressive.

The Movement for Cultural Freedom is a broad-based intellectual movement which gladly welcomes all such democratic approaches and alternatives. It is not an exclusive, esoteric movement. It offers no single solution as the only solution. It exists in the belief that all positive democratic approaches can meet in a creative concourse and compete in the most friendly manner for the ultimate honours. We are not interested in the absolute triumph of any particular solution. We are confident that such a friendly concourse of democratic philosophies will stimulate and activate the minds of the intellectuals with positive alternatives and will not only provide the necessary prophylactic but will actually inspire the renaissance of ancient values and give them potent relevant expressions in the modern world. It will revitalise our culture and thus create the inner strength of cultural freedom. Freedom of Thought and Spirit, which is the fountain source of all cultural growth is the life blood of this endeavour, and we trust that it will produce the much needed cultural and philosophical afflorescence.

The Conference on Cultural Freedom in Asia will be the first serious attempt in this direction. This

will be for the first time that a representative group of writers, thinkers and scholars of the countries of South, South-East and East Asia, who have enriched the cultural life of their respective countries, will come together and discuss within the framework of democratic pluralism cultural freedom in the context of urgent Asian problems. They will consider, for instance, the problem of economic development and democratic method, of planning and freedom, of totalitarian tendencies and threats. They will also consider the relation of the State and the Individual. This Conference will reflect on the impact of the West on the life and culture of the people and consider, in the modern context, the problem of the renaissance of traditional culture and values as also the relation between Western and Eastern concepts of art and literature. In this respect they will have to pay attention to the situation of the intellectual and indicate the ways of establishing a creative relationship between the members of the intelligentsia and the people. They will also consider the effects of resurgent nationalism on the attitude of peoples towards internal and external problems. These and allied problems will engage the attention of a unique band of Asian intellectuals who will gather together in this grand endeavour.

These problems are a challenge to their genius and vision. They are in fact the challenges of the age and the leaders of the Governments and peoples in Asia have been trying to meet them. But we believe that more than statesmen and politicians who are trying to meet them within the confines of their party programmes and ideologies, it is the task of scholars, philosophers and creative thinkers, who can bring an integrated understanding, wide sympathy and spiritual insight to bear on these problems. The Society for the Extension of Democratic Ideals of Burma, whose hospitality is making this unique gathering possible is, we believe, performing an historic task.

PRABHAKAR PADHYE

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Notes

Scientific Spirit

PRIME MINISTER NEHRU'S inaugural address to the Indian Science Congress, recently held in Baroda, was a remarkable piece of liberal-democratic thinking which is becoming so rare in recent times. It was therefore most welcome. It must have come as an agreeable shock to the scientists present, especially to those from Soviet Russia, to see the leader of the Indian Government come before them and advise them "not to just bow down to governmental or nationalistic pressures, but to create an atmosphere of free enquiry which was so necessary for scientific development." The definition of the scientific spirit which he offered should have also come as a shock (not necessarily agreeable) to those emissaries of the "crowning of science" which has been offered as the quintessence of truth by those countries which have recently become special objects of love and admiration in this country.

Mr. Nehru described the scientific spirit as humility before truth and the refusal to submit to dogma. Of special note was his insistence on values, the concept of which is sometimes regarded as inconsistent with the spirit and teachings of science. Said Mr. Nehru: "I do not see what it will profit an individual or a country to progress at the cost of values we hold important. But I hope India will progress and yet preserve those qualities she has always valued." Everyone will fervently hope so, but it is hard to see how the hope will be realised unless this consciousness of values affects all our national and international policies and does not merely provide an occasion for magnificent eloquence at scientific gatherings. We are happy to see that, on this important occasion, the Prime Minister has given a message which the Movement for Cultural Freedom is assiduously trying to spread. If one will read the Proceedings (published by Secker and Warburg) of the Congress on "Science and Freedom," held in Hamburg through the joint endeavour of the Congress for Cultural Freedom and the University of Hamburg, one will see that the celebrated scientists gathered at the Congress were considering the problems precisely in the spirit defined by the Prime Minister and raising precisely the same problems within the framework of the same values.

Yugoslav Experiment

THOSE of us who saw in the Yugoslav experiment a liberalisation of the communist revolution and thus a solution of the greatest problem of the present era will be woefully disappointed by what is currently happening to the official biographer of Marshal Tito (Dedijer) and to the former Vice President of the Yugoslav Republic (Djilas) who was generally acclaimed as the successor of Tito. Unfortunately, our

ideas of hospitality seem to have prevented the Indian press from discussing these unsavoury happenings at a time when the Head of the Yugoslav State was enjoying the gracious flavour of oriental hospitality in India; but the issues are so vital that silence on this point would be fittingly considered criminal in the history of human liberty. Both Vladimir Dedijer and Milovan Djilas are being tried for carrying on propaganda against the State. The readers of *Freedom First* are aware of what happened to Djilas over a year ago (*F.F.* 21). After a year's gracious silence, Djilas thought his conscience could not allow him to be quiet and gave an interview to the *New York Times* because nobody in Yugoslavia would or could publish his views. In this interview, Mr. Djilas advocated the necessity of the two-party system, and bewailed the fact that communism had become synonymous with totalitarianism because of the policies of Yugoslavia also. If one reads this interview, one is struck by its dignified and courageous tone and the studied absence of bitterness, from a person who had every right to be bitter. Even so, the interview was too much for the acting Head of the State, Edward Kardelji, who expressed the magnanimous desire "to spit in the face" of men like Djilas and Dedijer, who was the lone defender of Djilas when he was accused before the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia last year. One need not speculate about the results of this trial. Mr. Djilas knew that he was taking a risk. The record of these men shows that they will probably take what comes.

The most tragic aspect of the case is that it almost proves that one of the most brilliant experiments in social reorganisation of modern times seems to have become moribund. The reason is obvious. The Yugoslav experiment of decentralisation was not the result of a realisation of a new truth, but was only an ideological manoeuvre in the leaders' fight with Moscow. But the experiment meant certain ideological consequences which the leaders, with years of Stalinist training, were not prepared to accept. Here precisely lay the brilliance, courage and greatness of Djilas, which evidently is not acceptable to Tito and his colleagues. One hopes however that he who had the courage to defy the mighty Stalin will yet have the courage also to accept the consequences of his experiment and that he would go down in history as a pioneer and not merely as a defiant satrap who nevertheless was strapped by the limitations of his erstwhile master.

Rajaji's Appeal

IT is difficult to understand the propriety and utility of Mr. Rajagopalachari's call to the United States of America to scrap its atomic arsenal. America is asked to take this step unilaterally and without waiting for any guarantees from Soviet Russia. Mr. Rajagopalachari has made this call upon America because, according to him, it is "she who committed the mistake first". It is true that the atom bomb was invented first by America, but it should not be forgotten that

Hitler was on the point of making the discovery. It is easy to imagine what would have happened to the world, if, instead of America, Hitlerite Germany had succeeded in building the first atom bomb.

Atom bombs and hydrogen bombs are no doubt diabolical weapons and the earlier their use is banned the better will it be for the world as a whole. The ban can be secured only by lessening the world tension and by persuading Soviet Russia to effect a drastic reduction of her mighty pile of conventional armaments. It is the bellicose intentions of that country and the vast superiority that it enjoys in the matter of conventional armaments that compelled America to embark on her programme of building up the atomic arsenal. And it cannot be denied that it is that atomic arsenal which stopped Soviet Russia from driving home the advantage of her vast superiority in conventional armaments.

Mr. Rajagopalachari was candid enough to admit that he made the appeal to America because she was "morally big enough" and that he had no hopes that any newspaper in Russia would take a letter from him. This latter fact should have given him an idea of the issues involved in the struggle between the two countries. In his State of the Union message to the Congress, President Eisenhower outlined in clear terms the real nature of the struggle. He said: "It is not a struggle merely of economic theories, or of forms of Government, or of military power. At issue is the true nature of man. Either man is the creature whom the Psalmist described as 'crowned with glory and honour, holding dominion over the works of his Creator,' or man is 'a soulless animated machine to be enslaved, used and consumed by the State for its own glorification.'"

When stakes are so high can one legitimately ask the strongest Power in the free world to throw away, what an American publicist has called, its deterrent power, the power which prevents the Soviet Union from using its vast military strength to make more conquests? The only way to save the world from the atomic destruction that threatens it is to create the climate of peace. The atoms for peace plan propounded by President Eisenhower is a significant step in that direction. Mr. Rajagopalachari should have applied his great talents to the elaboration and progress of such a plan. His appeal, we regret to say, can under the present circumstances serve no useful purpose, except to add grist to the mill of communist propaganda.

Freedom in East Germany

MRS. MRINALINI SARABHAI, the well known Indian dancer has an interesting tale to tell about the "freedom" that she and her colleagues enjoyed in East Germany. Mrs. Sarabhai returned a few days back after a three and a half month dancing tour of many European countries.

Mrs. Sarabhai and her troupe were in East Germany for a fortnight on the invitation of the Culture Bureau of the East German Government. Narrating her experiences she said: "As soon as we reached East

Berlin we were taken to a hotel with barbed wire enclosures, 25 miles away from the city. We could not go out alone and meet and talk to the people on the streets." There was, she said, "a sort of security wall between the enthusiastic crowds and us." In spite of repeated requests Mrs. Sarabhai and her colleagues were not able to meet German artistes. At a reception arranged in their honour by the Culture Bureau they were able to meet only the Minister for Culture, who was the only person present besides Mrs. Sarabhai and the members of her party.

It is significant to remember in this connection that the dancing tour was assisted by the Government of India.

Chinese Labourers for Soviet Russia

A news Agency has circulated the report that about five million labourers have been sent by the communist rulers of China to work for the Soviet Government in Siberia and other places. The report states that the Government of China has agreed to make Chinese coolie labour available to Russia for dam and canal construction and for work in the coal and gold mines of Siberia.

The report is accompanied by other information relating to the transfers of population from one area to another that are being effected by communist rulers in order to root out parochial feelings and rebellious tendencies. One wonders if the report and the information are authentic. Credence is, however, lent to them by the fact that Russia is experiencing a tremendous shortage of man power. The Government is engaged at the moment in a drive for getting men to go to Kazakhstan and Altai to develop the virgin land. The first Secretary of the Communist Party, Mr. Krushchev said in a recent speech: "If we could add just another 100 million to our 200 million even that wouldn't be enough!"

In a view of this acute shortage what could be more natural than to turn to the obliging Chinese rulers who have a plentiful supply of man power? It does not matter to both that men are not just chattels which could be moved from one country to another.

Cultural Delegations?

IN a letter to the *New York Times* recently, Mr. J. J. Singh, President of the India League of America, put forward some suggestions for the strengthening of Indo-American relations. Actually aware of the large number of cultural delegations exchanged between India on the one hand and Russia, China and the satellite countries on the other, he pleads for the formation of a new cultural society for closer contacts between India and America. He feels that missions from India would be greatly impressed by visits to United States, "where they could go anywhere they choose, stay anywhere they liked and talk to anyone they wished."

While supporting Mr. Singh's appeal, we venture

to doubt if our standard of achievement for cultural relations between India and America should be borrowed from those which have been limelighted in recent years. The uncritical adulation, the attempt to impress and be impressed, the propagandist motive of showing, what Mr. Singh calls, "all that glitters," by one party, and the determination to see nothing else, on the other, what has all this to do with culture? It is politics and the most hypocritical part of it at that. Advocates of cultural relations between India and America ought to think in terms of long term results, in terms of solid foundations for understanding between nations, of a genuine confrontation of two cultures rather than the surrender of one to the other.

This purpose cannot be served by hasty imitation of the cultural delegation idea popularised by the communists and their fellow-travellers. An altogether different approach is necessary. Mr. Singh would be doing a vital service to Indo-American relations if he worked out such an approach. It may not bring immediate spectacular results but the work will endure when the present flimsy "cultural" relations between India and the communist countries have been thoroughly discredited. Even today, in private and often in public a large number of Indians are sceptical of the "culture" demonstrated to them with more showmanship than sincerity.

Cultured Pearls

THE Government of Bihar has launched a drive to make its constables "culture minded." Policemen are not only encouraged to take an interest in dance, drama and music but also given a fortnight's training in these admirable subjects. Later, they are to be sent, in batches, to the villages in order to rouse "a mass-consciousness against crime and criminals."

Thus the fight against crime is lifted from the prosaic world of foot-prints and finger-prints into the romantic one of culture. It will now be possible, instead of interrogating a criminal, to subject him to a classical *raag* rendered preferably by a policeman who in the past has only given vent to his musical talents in the privacy of the bath-room, a procedure which is bound to get results. It is indeed an advantage when the long arm of the law can with equal facility apprehend a criminal or perform the complicated *mudras* of the dance.

If only Sherlock Holmes had played his violin in the London underworld instead of brooding in Baker street, crime would have disappeared from the metropolis and poor Dr. Watson had time to practice medicine. Of course, one can only contemplate with horror the possibility that Holmes may not have been a very good violinist.

Conference On Cultural Freedom In Asia

THE Conference on Cultural Freedom in Asia will meet in Rangoon from 17th to 20th February, 1955. The Conference will be attended by about forty leading scholars, thinkers, writers and philosophers from the countries of South, South-East and East Asia.

The Conference is organised through the joint efforts of the Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Society for the Extension of Democratic Ideals in Burma. It is sponsored by such outstanding Asian personalities as Madame Aung San; Dr. Conrado Benitez, Dean of the Filipino Women's University; Mr. Jayprakash Narayan; Dr. Lin Yutang, the famous Chinese philosopher; U Thein Maung, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Burma; Dr. Nanbara Shigeru, President-emeritus of Tokyo University; Dr. Sampurnanand, Chief Minister of the State of Uttar Pradesh; Dr. Raziuddin Siddiqi, Vice-Chancellor, Peshawar University; Dr. Sumitro Djojohadikusumo, Dean of the Faculty of Economics of the University of Indonesia; Dr. Tanaka Kotaro, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Japan and Sir Arthur Wijeyewardene, retired Chief Justice and for some time acting Governor General of Ceylon.

The Society for the Extension of Democratic Ideals in Burma has formed a Host Committee to look after the arrangements of the Conference. The Host Committee consists of Justice U Chan Htoon of the

Supreme Court; U Thant, Secretary to the Prime Minister; Madame Kyaw Nyein (wife of the Foreign Minister), Y Yan Aung, U Maung Maung, with U Nyo Mya as Secretary.

The Conference will discuss such topics as the New Resurgence in Asia, the Situation of the Asian Intellectual, the Impact of the West, the Problems of Freedom and Economic Planning, the State and the Individual and Totalitarian Threats to Cultural Freedom in Asia. It is hoped that these discussions will lead to a greater understanding and better approach to the various issues involved in these problems.

India will be represented at the Conference by a delegation of six consisting of Mr. Jayprakash Narayan, Mr. M. R. Masani, Mr. Asoka Mehta, Mr. Eric da Costa, Mr. Ram Singh and Mr. Laxmanshastri Joshi.

A number of prominent intellectuals from various countries of the region have been invited to write papers for the conference. Amongst them the following are from this country: Prof. V.K. Gokak, Mr. Kodanda Rao, Mr. Philip Spratt, Prof. G. D. Parikh, Mr. Asoka Mehta, and Prof. Narmadeshwar Prasad.

Mr. Prabhakar Padhye is the General Secretary of the Conference and he is already in Rangoon to look after the arrangements.

The Historical Position Of Communist China: Doctrine And Reality

by Karl A. Wittfogel

ON the first of October, 1949, the Chinese Communists* climaxed their military success by establishing on the mainland a new revolutionary government, the "Chinese People's Republic." While this government included a number of splinter parties, it was—and is—undisguisedly dominated by the Chinese Communist Party. The new rulers, who quickly destroyed the old system of political control, are today drastically reorganising the country's social and economic relations. And they are planning to go far beyond the changes accomplished to date.

Under these circumstances, the institutional historian may reasonably ask: What kind of society did the Communists set up on the Chinese mainland? Can this "new" China which, for brevity's sake, will be referred to as "Communist China," be equated with any known socio-historical conformation? And can the societal goal toward which Communist China is moving be predicted with any degree of scientific precision?

To arrive at a satisfactory answer it is advisable to state first what the Chinese Communists themselves consider the roots of their present conditions and what they envisage as the future Chinese society. This done, we shall note the profound discrepancies that exist between these ideas and the developmental concepts of their supreme authorities, Marx and Lenin. A critical evaluation of these discrepancies will aid us in independently defining the peculiarity and developmental position of the society which today prevails on the Chinese mainland.

II

The Chinese Communists claim that Chinese society passed through the stages of slavery and feudalism, until, in 1949, the Communist victory initiated "a new society and a new state."¹ There is still some difference of opinion concerning the duration of the period of slavery;² but this does not concern us here. The official doctrine is definite in declaring that Chinese feudalism presents several peculiarities and that, in the 19th century, it was modified under the impact of Western imperialism. After the Opium War China became a "semi-feudal"

"semi-colonial" society and while the "semi-colonial" conditions seriously crippled the growth of a modern indigenous capitalism, they did not altogether prevent it. The Chinese People's Republic expropriated the *compradores* and the government-attached "bureaucratic capitalists;" but for the time being, it is permitting the "national bourgeoisie" to supplement the state-owned economy. To supplement, not to dominate it. The state-owned economy which is "of a Socialist nature" constitutes "the leading force of the entire social economy."³ Chinese society, which, despite the presence of capitalist elements, never reached the stage of capitalism, will skip this stage altogether. Aided by the socialist Soviet Union, it will move directly toward socialism.

Thus, present-day Communist China is a "democratic" society on its way to socialism. Complete government ownership and management in industry and the collectivization of farming will mark the end of the transitional period and the beginning of a full-fledged Chinese socialist society.

This is the official doctrine. It is, in all essentials, taken from the arsenal of the Comintern, whose theoreticians since 1920—the year before the Chinese Communist Party was founded—have systematically analysed the conditions of "colonial and semi-colonial" countries and the stages and conditions of the communist-led revolution. It does not exhibit any originality, "Maoist" or otherwise. But it gives the Chinese Communists an immense self-confidence and sense of direction; for, according to this doctrine, social development is unilinear and irresistible, and the Chinese Communists, like their comrades elsewhere, are the glorious tools of history. They guide their suffering fellow-men from the dark valley of class oppression and exploitation to the bright and happy heights of socialist human relations and eventually to the paradise of a classless society.

III

Persons not familiar with the theoretical background of Communism may vigorously object to the policy of the Chinese Communists; but they will not criticise them on the level of doctrinal orthodoxy. The Chinese Communists, they may say, invoke Marx and Lenin for their ideas about society and history; and since Mao and his followers call themselves Marxist-Leninists, they are at least ideologically consistent, whatever else they may be.

This conclusion is as strong—and as weak—as the premises on which it rests. Manifestly the argument cuts two ways. If the evidence should show, as I

* The main ideas of this paper were presented at the annual meeting of the Far Eastern Association in New York City, April 15, 1954.

¹ The Common programme and other documents of the first Plenary session of The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, p.1. (Peking, 1950)

² Cf. Mao Tse-tung: Hsuan-Chi (Selected Works) II:594 (Peking, 1952) Kuo Mo-jo: Chung-kuo Ku-Tai She-hui Yen-Chiu (A Study of the Society of Ancient China), pp.112 ff. (Shanghai, 1931).

³ Common programme: 11

think it does, that the ideas of Marx, Engels, and up to a point, also Lenin, do not justify the developmental self-confidence of the Chinese—and the Russian-Communists, and if the evidence should show furthermore that the top-ranking Chinese and Russian ideologists are eager to hide Marx's true views on these matters, as I also think it does, then we are here faced with a highly significant indirect confession of weakness. Then the Chinese and Russian Communists, who claim a progressive, proto-socialist or socialist character for their domains, must be profoundly insecure regarding their socio-historical role and purpose. Indeed the very ideas which they try so hard to hide should provide important clues as to what the top-ranking Communist ideologists really think about their developmental position.

IV

The London Marx, who, in the fifties, was already working on his *magnum opus* and who, in the sixties and seventies, wrote *Das Kapital*, would have scornfully rejected the unilineal developmental scheme (slavery, feudalism, capitalism) maintained and spread by communist ideologists within their orbit and, whenever possible, also in the non-communist world. True, in the *Communist Manifesto* (in 1848) Marx suggested something like a unilineal course of history. But after settling permanently in England in 1849 and more thoroughly studying the classical economists, he followed classical precedent in assuming the existence of an "Asiatic" or "Oriental" society, an institutional configuration, which arose independently of, and was different from Western antiquity and feudalism. In contrast to slave-holding antiquity, Asiatic Society did not decline. In contrast to feudalism, it remained stagnant, and it perpetuated its agrarian way of life for millennia.⁴

Thus the author of *Das Kapital* viewed societal development as a multilinear process. And he insisted that, different from the private-property-based Western class societies, in Asia an overwhelmingly strong despotic state dominated property, production, revenue, and social relations. According to Marx, the typical Orientally despotic state rested on two features: (1) government management of large-scale irrigation works and (2) a population that is "dispersed . . . over the surface of the country and agglomerated in small (village) corners by the domestic union of agricultural and manufacturing pursuits."⁵

Remembering this, we should have no difficulty in understanding why Marx employed the expression "Completely Asiatic" with regard to Chinese conditions,⁶ or why Marx and Engels designated Tsarist Russia as "Semi-Asiatic."⁷ The classical economists

were aware of huge hydraulic works in Egypt, India, and China;⁸ but there were no comparable developments in Russia. Thus of his two key features of Asiatic society Marx found in Russia only the second, the "dispersed" peasants. Without discussing here the peculiarities of what I call the "marginal" Oriental society, we may say that Marx obviously considered these "dispersed" peasants, who in their village communities combined small agricultural and domestic industry and who tilled the communally-held land, a sufficient foundation for the Oriental despotism of Tsarist Russia.⁹

Marx considered communal landownership typical for the villages of Asiatic society. But there were exceptions—among them, China. In one of his most significant statements about "Asiatic production," Marx noted that, in India, the combination of small agriculture and domestic industry is supplemented by a "village pattern based on communal property of land," and he added that this "was the original pattern also in China."¹⁰

The relevance of these ideas for the developmental position of China and Russia is manifest. If, in Marx's and Engels' opinion slavery in Asia was a secondary phenomenon that essentially appeared as domestic slavery,¹¹ and if feudalism was either altogether absent¹² or a subordinate feature that did not preclude general "Oriental" conditions,¹³ then we may well be astonished to find the Chinese Communists, who claim to be Marxists, fitting China into a scheme of development that proceeds from slavery to feudalism and capitalism. If, furthermore, in Marx's and Engels' opinion, Russia was not a feudal, but a semi-Asiatic country, then the Soviet-promoted escalator scheme of unilinear development does not fit the Marxian premises in the Russian case either.

For good reasons, the Communist ideologists are extremely embarrassed by the concept of a specific "Asiatic" society. This concept was upheld not only by Marx during his middle and late years, and despite some waverings, by Engels, but, for more than twenty years, also by Lenin, and early in his political career even by Stalin. It was on the basis of this concept that Lenin in 1906 and 1907, debated with Plekhanov the possibility of an "Asiatic restoration," that is, the possibility of a return to Orientally despotic forms of state control over land and peasants

⁴ For the whole paragraph, see Karl A. Wittfogel: *Oriental Society and Oriental Despotism* Chap. IX (ms). (Quoted hereafter as Wittfogel OSOD).

⁵ Marx, *New York Daily Tribune*, June 25, 1853.

⁶ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: *Gesammelte Schriften 1825 bis 1826* ed. by N. Rjasanoff I: 189 (Stuttgart, 1920) (Quoted hereafter as Marx and Engels 1920). Italics mine.

⁷ *Op.cit.*: 160 and 197. Cf. also Karl Marx: "Revelations of the Diplomatic History of the Eighteenth Century," *The Free Press* IV: 227. (1857). Italics mine.

⁸ See Adam Smith: *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, pp.646 and 688 ff. (New York, 1937). Marx may also have found references to the hydraulic aspect of Chinese agriculture and government in Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte* II: 286 and 298. (Leipzig, 1920).

⁹ See Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels *The Russian Menace to Europe*, A Collection of Articles . . . by Paul W. Blackstock and Bert F. Hoselitz, pp.211 ff. and 233 (Glencoe, Ill., 1952).

¹⁰ Karl Marx: *Das Kapital* III, I:318 (Hamburg, 1919).

¹¹ Karl Marx: *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Oekonomie* (Rohentwurf) 1857-1858, p. 392. (Moscow, 1939); Friedrich Engels *Herren Eugen Duhrings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft. Dialektik der Natur* 1873-1886, p. 162. (Stuttgart, 1921).

¹² Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: *Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe* III, I:480. (Moscow 1927 ff.).

¹³ Marx and Engels 1920 I:147, 475.

should the fought-for second Russian revolution take a retrogressive turn.¹⁴

Marx was paralyzed by the idea that in Oriental society the functional bureaucracy is the ruling class. It was at this point that he dropped crucial insights gained by Richard Jones and John Stuart Mill.¹⁵ And Lenin was increasingly frightened by the nightmare of the *Aziatchina*, the "Asiatic system." When, during World War I, Lenin saw the second revolution approaching he ruthlessly threw out Marx's and his own previous views on the Asiatic system and on its significance for the development of Russia. *State and Revolution* and the lecture on *The State* in 1919, do not discuss Oriental despotism and the Asiatic mode of production, which he had readily mentioned in his writings up to 1914. Instead, Lenin presented the unilineal escalator scheme (slavery-feudalism-capitalism), an extraordinary performance coming, as it did, from someone who, in Russia, combatted Oriental despotism and feared an Asiatic restoration.¹⁶

V

Is the idea of an Asiatic restoration also applicable to China? Prior to answering this question, we shall first, from the standpoint of Marx and Lenin, weigh the claim of the Chinese Communists that their rule, by initiating a socialist economy, paves the way for a socialist society. Using Marx's and Lenin's definition of socialism, we arrive at a conclusion very different from that offered by present-day Communist ideologists.

Socialism is planned economy, managed in the first phase by a strong state, plus popular control over those who, during the phase, and as the representatives of the strong state, control and manage the decisive means of production. It is planning plus effective popular control. This, in a nutshell, is Marx's concept of Socialism. Without doubt it is Utopian in its treatment of the power issue;¹⁷ but it does postulate as an essential feature effective control over the planners. The authors of the *Communist Manifesto* identified the workers and the revolutionary state; and they were bitterly attacked by the Anarchists for thus camouflaging a new enslavement of the workers. In 1871, and under the influence of the Anarchists, Marx insisted that the state of the period of transition, in order to fulfil its socialist task, had to be rigidly controlled by the people and that, following the example of the Paris Commune, the transitional

state should have no bureaucracy, no police and no standing army.

A few years later, Engels, elaborating on the rise of despotic government, argued: The men who as public functionaries establish their power above, and independent of, the people, cease to be the "servants" of the commonwealth. They become its "master." Engels illustrates his point primarily by reference to Oriental rulers, whose position was not less despotic because it was based on such necessary functions as the maintenance of large irrigation works.¹⁸

Thus, according to both Marx and Engels, state control over the decisive means of production is socialist only when the representatives of the functional state are genuinely controlled by the people. Otherwise, the regime will be a despotism, which, as has been the case in Asiatic society, can impose the cruellest forms of exploitation and oppression.

VI

It is widely known that prior to the Bolshevik revolution, Lenin supported this view. It is not as widely known that, prior to 1905, he declared "primitive democracy" and a state of the Commune type to be unworkable; and that without rational explanation, he changed his position after the fateful year 1905, when, rejecting the cautious Menshevik approach, he proposed a short-cut to socialism via a "democratic" dictatorship headed by a small proletariat and supported by a large revolutionary peasantry.¹⁹

In countering Plekhanov's warning that such a dictatorship instead of initiating socialism, might produce a restoration of Russia's "Semi-Asiatic" past, Lenin conceded that, unless buttressed by socialist revolutions in the leading industrial countries of Western Europe, the revolutionary dictatorship he envisaged could not, in the long run, escape an "Asiatic restoration." For a brief period, such a restoration might be warded off by radical democratic measures (no bureaucracy, no standing army), which had to be key features of the aimed-at new "democracy." Conforming to Marx's idea of 1871 concerning the proto-socialist state, Lenin later added the third condition: no police. Whatever the deeper relations between Lenin the socialist and Lenin the strategist may have been, between 1906 and 1917 Lenin declared that primitive democracy was an essential prerequisite for the proto-socialist character of the dictatorship he was striving to establish.

The Bolsheviks did indeed establish such a dictatorship. But immediately after their victory they created a ruling bureaucracy that, together with the new Soviet police and standing army, blocked all attempts at popular control. To use Engels' formula: they initiated a regime, whose functionaries, instead of being "servants" of the new society, were its "masters."

¹⁸ Engels 1935:183.

¹⁹ Lenin first formulated this turn in *Two Tactics*, a book whose political implications for "backward" countries, such as China and India, are crucial. See Karl A. Wittfogel. "The influence of Leninism-Stalinism on China," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 277, p. 25. (1951).

¹⁴ See Wittfogel, OSOD, Chap. IX (ms)

¹⁵ See Karl A Wittfogel: "The Ruling Bureaucracy of Oriental Despotism; A Phenomena that Paralyzed Marx." *Review of Politics* 15, no. 3: 352 ff. (1953)

¹⁶ Wittfogel, OSOD, chap. IX (ms)

¹⁷ And it suffered the very fate which Marx and Engels ascribed to early Utopian socialism. Marx's socialist ideas were progressive in their criticism of the early industrial system; but, to use the language of the *Communist Manifesto*, they lost "all practical value and all theoretical justification," when a new historical situation required, not the blind promotion of total statism, but its critical rejection. Marxism then became what the *Manifesto*, with respect to earlier socialist groups, designates as "reactionary" Utopianism. (For a discussion of Utopian core in Marxism, see Wittfogel, OSOD, chap. IX).

VII

From the standpoint of those Bolsheviks who really believed what they said they believe, this development was upsetting. Certain arguments of the early intra-party opposition groups indicate that not a few sincere "subjective socialists"²⁰ were profoundly disturbed by the conditions they themselves had helped to bring about. Bukharin protested as early as April 1918 against "bureaucratic centralization" and the danger of an "enslavement of the working class."²¹ In 1921, after the Kronstadt rebellion, Lenin too admitted his concern about the growing menace of the new bureaucracy.²² And in 1922, a year before he was completely incapacitated, he was not sure whether the small group of Old Bolsheviks was still leading the new "bureaucratic machine," or whether the bureaucratic representatives of an "alien" culture had not already won out. "Who controls whom?"²³ His answer shows him doubtful as to who actually was in the saddle. The victory of what he called the "non-proletarian" elements in party and state was prevented only by the "undivided prestige" of "the Old Guard of the Party" — a prestige that could be destroyed by "a very slight internal struggle within this stratum."²⁴ Not long afterwards, Lenin died. And the subsequent struggle not only crushed the "undivided prestige" of the Old Guard—it physically destroyed the great majority of its members.

VIII

According to Marx's criteria, which Lenin accepted until 1917, the October Revolution established not a proto-socialist government, but a despotic apparatus state, whose representatives were soon able to operate as an exclusive (monopoly) bureaucracy. For the many persons of good will who, living outside the Soviet Union, hoped that the Bolshevik "experiment" would blaze new trails to social justice, insight into this fact comes as a rude shock. And this shock is not made more bearable by the realization that the Bolshevik leaders consciously took strategic risks that they knew could lead to an "Asiatic" restoration.

The implications of all this for the evaluation of Communist China are most serious. Lenin himself indicates the difficulty of building socialism in backward agrarian countries such as China and India. In 1920 he repeated what all Marxists believed, that, left to their own devices, these backward countries could not directly advance to socialism. They could do so only if properly helped by "the victorious proletariat of the Soviet Republics."²⁵ A year later he found the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. threatened by the new

"non-proletarian" bureaucracy. And a year later still, he saw this new bureaucracy as overwhelmingly strong. How then could the new Soviet apparatchiki (men of the apparatus) be expected to introduce, in China and India, a socialism, which they themselves had strangled at home? Instead of the socialist-proletarian chain reaction, which Lenin had expected in 1920, did not the Soviet apparatus state initiate, in the "colonial and semi-colonial countries," a chain reaction of an entirely different type? Who now led whom, and where?

In his speech on the Food Tax on April 21, 1921, Lenin made the only attempt I know of to define, the "economic root"—in other words, the class character—of the new Soviet bureaucracy. Avoiding all labels and obviously speaking to the initiated, Lenin rejected the idea that the new bureaucracy might have a bourgeois military (formerly he would have said: a Bonapartist) quality. Instead he considered it to be based on "the fragmented and dispersed character of small production."²⁶ The formula reminds us of Marx's and Engels' references to Tsarist Russia. It reminds us that, until 1914, Lenin had used similar words to define Russia's Oriental despotism. As if to dispel all doubts, Lenin in 1921 stated: "Capitalism is evil, compared with socialism. Capitalism is good, compared with mediæval production, compared with small production, compared with a *bureaucracy connected with dispersed small producers*."²⁷

This is not very Aesopian allusion to Marxist concept of Oriental despotism. Using criteria, which Marx and Engels had provided and which in 1906-7, he had considered in his discussion with Plekhanov, Lenin evidently viewed U. S. S. R. as heading for an "Asiatic restoration."

Shall we, expanding on Lenin's frightened insights, conclude that a victorious (socialistically disguised) Asiatic restoration in the Soviet Union brought into being in Communist China another (socialistically disguised) version of an Asiatic restoration? Shall we, accepting Lenin's veiled "Asiatic" interpretation of the U.S.S.R., say that Mao Tse-tung's China far from being proto-socialist, is nothing but another version of an Asiatic restoration?

IX

With the negative part of this appraisal, we certainly have no quarrel. If the Chinese Communists have derived their idea of socialism from an openly totalitarian system, then they would have been consistent, when they called their new despotic and oppressive class society "socialist." Hitler was consistent in terms of his own definitions, when he referred to himself as a "socialist." But the Chinese Communists, like their Soviet comrades, invoke Marx and Lenin as supreme authorities for their brand of socialism. This being the case, the conclusion is unavoidable that Communist China has nothing to do with the proto-socialist society which Marxism envisaged as the first step toward socialism proper.

²⁰ In 1912 Lenin applied this term to Sun Yat-sen, whose socialist intentions he considered both sincere and illusory (see V. I. Lenin: *Sochinenia* XVIII: 146 (4th ed. Moscow, 1941-1950) (quoted hereafter as Lenin, S).

²¹ V. I. Lenin: *Samtliche Werke* (German Edition) XXII: 646 ff. (Wien-Berlin, later Moscow-Leningrad). (Quoted hereafter as Lenin SWG).

²² Lenin, S XXXII: 329 ff.

²³ Lenin, S. XXXIII: 258

²⁴ Lenin, S XXXIII: 229

²⁵ Lenin, S XXXI: 219

²⁶ Lenin S XXXII: 330

²⁷ Lenin, S XXXII: 329. Italics Mine

But if Communist China is neither a socialist nor a proto-socialist society, what is it? Accepting broadly the classical concept of an "Oriental" society and the idea of multilineal development and admitting an important common denominator, monopoly bureaucracy, for the modern Communist state and Oriental despotism, I nevertheless feel that it is not permissible to equate these two institutional orders.

Oriental society is essentially agrarian. The communist apparatus society either is, or strives to be, strongly industrial. In Oriental society, the government in core areas usually manages heavy water-works; but it does not operate the economy of the individual peasant. At most, Oriental society is semi-managerial. While it possesses total political power, it exerts only a limited social and intellectual control over its subjects.

In the Communist apparatus state, the government first aims to establish managerial control over industry; and in a country with a marginal (non-hydraulic) Oriental background, such as Russia, the new society may at first also be semi-managerial, but semi-managerial in the industrial sense and with new mechanized devices for social and intellectual control. In an industrially "backward" country with a hydraulic agriculture, such as China, the state-operated sector of industry may expand more slowly, although in mainland China, after less than five years, the greater part of all large-scale industry is already controlled by the government.²⁸ But where, as in China, some methods of Oriental State craft, including forced labour service, have been employed until today, the "socialization" of agriculture is definitely facilitated. In 1952, in the "old liberated" (northern) part of China, party-directed "mutual aid" teams and co-operatives already included about two-thirds of all peasants.²⁹ Thus we have in Communist China a "mixed" semi-managerial system of the new type, and one that probably involves tighter patterns of social and intellectual control than were practiced in the U.S.S.R. prior to the collectivization.

Collectivization definitely crushes the individual peasant and adds agriculture to the state-controlled economy. Some concessions to the peasant notwithstanding, the U.S.S.R. today is a total managerial apparatus society that for all practical purposes combines total political power with almost total social and intellectual control. In due time, and with certain modifications, Communist China — unchecked by external forces—will also reach this goal.

X

To honor its "Marxist" promoters, the new society may be given a Marxian label. In an attempt to determine the social relations of Asiatic society, Marx once used the formula "general slavery."³⁰ The semi-managerial character of Oriental despotism makes this term inappropriate for Asiatic society. It is much more suitable for the Communist apparatus societies of today. Going far beyond what Plekhanov and Lenin called a "Semi-Asiatic or "Asiatic" restoration, these societies proceed—unevenly, but steadily—toward a political, social, and economic conformation that can indeed be designated as a system of general (state) slavery.

³⁰ Marx 1939:395

ENCOUNTER

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²⁸ 'Of the total value of industrial output in 1952, state-owned industry accounted for 50 per cent; joint state and privately owned industry for 5 per cent; co-operatives for 3 per cent. and private industry for 42 per cent. Of the total value of output of the larger industrial enterprises, state-owned industry accounted for 60 per cent; joint state and privately owned industry, 6 per cent; co-operatives, 3 per cent; and private industry, 31 per cent.' (Communique on National Economic Cultural and Educational Rehabilitation and Development in 1952, issued by the State Statistical Bureau of the Central People's Government, September 28, 1953, Supplement to *People's China*, No. 20, p.2. (1953). (Quoted hereafter as Communique on Development).

²⁹ "State farms and the movement to organise mutual-aid teams and co-operatives continued to develop in 1952. There were 2,219 state farms in the country, of which 52 were mechanized. 3,663 agricultural producers' co-operatives. and over 8,300,000 mutual-aid teams of various types. In 1952, in the old liberated areas, more than 65 per cent of the total number of peasant households and in the newly liberated areas, about 25 per cent were organised into mutual-aid teams and co-operatives" (Communique on Developments, p. 4)

A Journal Of Arts And Ideas: 'Quest'

THE Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom has passed the stage of publishing its official organ in the form of a house magazine. It needs a more ambitious expression of its growing influence on Indian writers, artists and intellectuals. It needs a specifically literary journal in consonance with the aim of the cultural freedom movement. It needs a journal directly and comprehensively concerned with cultural questions, not only the relation of culture to freedom, but the internal problems of the arts, technical, aesthetic and spiritual problems of the creative life. It needs a magazine of Indian creative and critical writing, a magazine performing a disinterested service for arts and ideas. In such disinterested service lies the vindication of the cultural freedom impulse, the natural human impulse not only of the artist but of the artist in all men.

The Indian Committee has decided to start QUEST so that this need may be met. *Freedom First* has prepared the ground, it has obtained a large measure of support for its views, without which QUEST could not even be contemplated. It has also created a tradition of hard-hitting, provocative politics which QUEST will carry on. There will be no watered-down politics in QUEST; politics will be treated as a human concern, to be discussed from a certain view-point, the inevitable, logically necessary view-point of a journal claiming to be a champion of the arts.

In order of importance, QUEST will be first Indian, then Asian and finally international. I believe this will give it a more authentic voice than many magazines in India desperately trying to be vaguely Asian and "international." If it can be a faithful, sympathetic and critical reflection of Indian life as a whole, it will serve as a better link between India and the world than journals devoted to that special relationship. Only by being strongly oneself is it possible to have fruitful relations with others.

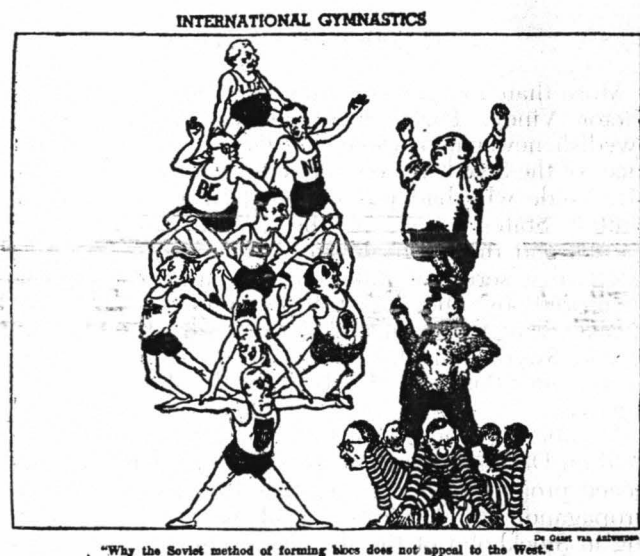
To avoid any confusion at *Freedom First's* ceasing to be an organ of the Indian Committee, it must be seen in the perspective of the Committee's growth and changing needs. As I see it, the problem of the Committee is to strengthen its roots in Indian soil, to attract support from every part of the country, and to be an organic part of Indian intellectual life. That is why, when asked to suggest a name for the journal intended to meet this challenge, I thought of QUEST. I felt it most accurately describes not only the Indian Committee's intellectual task of the time but the real nature of the present Indian, Asian and international spiritual situation. When tyranny is accepted, all the answers are automatically found, but when freedom is mentioned the quest begins. It is a happy terminological co-incidence that QUEST is to continue the work of a journal in which Freedom is First.

QUEST will be more than a compilation of articles. It will initiate discussions, stimulate exchange of

views, carry out studies and surveys, review books and exhibitions, collect and annotate news not easily accessible about new cultural trends in India and abroad. It will attach great importance to writers in the Indian languages, publishing translations whenever possible. It will stimulate audience participation to the maximum extent and would welcome correspondents all over the world.

Contributions to QUEST should be sent to me at its temporary address, The Retreat, Bellasis Road, Bombay 8. I shall be glad to discuss subjects and points of view with prospective contributors. It need hardly be mentioned in conclusion, that a high standard of writing is expected.

NISSIM EZEKIEL



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C. C. F. News

ERNST REUTER LECTURE SERIES

A series of lectures dedicated to the memory of Ernst Reuter is being sponsored in Berlin by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, in collaboration with the Ernst Reuter Association. Reuter, the late, great Mayor of Berlin, whose life, works, and name have become symbols of German anti-totalitarianism, was one of the chief founders of the Congress.

Lectures are to take place, one each month of 1955, on major problems of our epoch. Lecturers will be: Clement Attlee, Raymond Aron, Wilhelm Hausenstein, George F. Kennan, Arthur Koestler, Richard Lowenthal, Herbert Morrison, André Philip, Michael Polanyi, Ignazio Silone, Paul-Henri Spaak, Herbert Tingsten, and Arnold J. Toynbee.

ACTIVITIES IN SWEDEN

More than 250 persons attended a lecture given by Victor Vinde, Paris correspondent of the leading Swedish newspaper *Dagens Hyheter*, under the auspices of the Swedish Committee for Cultural Freedom. Mr. Vinde who had just returned from a trip to the United States, analyzed the political situation in France and the United States. This lecture was the latest in a series of talks on international problems sponsored by the Swedish Committee. A recent speaker was American novelist James T. Farrell, who visited Sweden in October 1954 and spoke on "The Social and Political Situation in the United States Today."

Members of the Swedish Committee, in a meeting held on December 2nd, adopted a resolution on Soviet peace propaganda, warning that the purpose of this propaganda and, in particular, of the November meeting in Stockholm of the so-called World Peace Council which issued the "Stockholm Appeal" in 1950, is to arouse hostility for the West in Sweden.

At the same meeting, members agreed to convene a Scandinavian conference next Spring in collaboration with the Danish Committee and a number of Norwegian personalities. The conference will deal with "The Position of Scandinavia in the World Today."

LATIN-AMERICAN TOUR

German Arciniegas well-known historian from Colombia and a Vice-Chairman of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, was on a brief lecture tour to Latin-America in January 1955 on behalf of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. Mr. Arciniegas gave a series of lectures in Santiago de Chile under the joint auspices of the local Committee for Cultural Freedom and the Summer University of Santiago. He also gave several lectures in Montevideo under the auspices of the local Committee for Cultural Freedom.

"PREUVES" MEETING

Preuves, the French language monthly published under the auspices of the Congress for Cultural Freedom holds meetings from time to time to discuss outstanding social and cultural problems. At one such meeting held in December 1954 Andrezej Panufnik, Poland's greatest composer, who "chose freedom" last July, gave detailed public testimony on artistic life in contemporary Poland.

"In the West, you believe that artistic creation in a 'popular democracy' is limited by censorship, but that at least the artist doesn't have to worry about material concerns," Panufnik stated. "Nothing could be less true. In Poland the artist has to struggle to get even a mere subsistence and, in my opinion, this is one of the ways in which the system exercises its pressure on the artist."

Additional testimony was supplied by Czeslaw Milosz (former cultural attache at the "popular" Polish embassies in Washington and Paris — whose book, "The Captive Mind," is circulating clandestinely in Poland), by the painter Josef Czapski, and by Constantine Regamey, now professor at the University of Lausanne. Jean Cassou, Director of the Paris Museum of Modern Art, presided. *Preuves* holds similar meetings at its Paris office every two weeks.

MEXICAN BOOK FAIR

The Mexican Committee has set up an impressive exhibit at this year's annual Book Fair in Mexico City. All international Congress publications are on display, along with a good assortment of books by those associated with the Congress. For this event the Mexican Committee also published a small book on "Art, Science, and Freedom" with texts by Malraux, Breton, Silone, Koestler, Hook, and Aron, and a preface by Mauricio Magdaleno, head of Mexico's Department of Culture. The Communist reaction; the Diego Rivera-Siqueiros group has launched in intense press attack against the Mexican Committee.

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Reviews

Burma under the Japanese

Thakin Nu, Macmillan, London, Sh. 12/6.

THIS is a translation in English of a few sketches that the Prime Minister of Burma, U Nu wrote in Burmese about the conditions in his country under Japanese occupation. They were written in 1945, a few months after the end of the occupation. Written immediately after the event and by a person who had taken a leading part in developments that took place during the period, the sketches possess a picturesque freshness that is rarely to be found in such narratives.

U Nu or Thakin Nu, as he was then called, was a prominent member of the Government of independent Burma that was formed by Dr. Ba Maw. The Government had hardly any power. U Nu writes: "That was our 'independence.' Even when there was an attempt to kill the Adipati (Dr. Ba Maw, the Head of the State) he could not touch the assailant with the tip of his fingers because he was a Japanese. And worse than that he could not even touch one of his own subjects who enjoyed the favour and protection of the Japanese." The Government bore the stamp of 'Made in Japan' and had always to do the bidding of Japanese military authorities.

When the world war spread to Asia in 1942, the Burmese and a large majority of their nationalist leaders welcomed the Japanese as liberators. But it was not very long before they realised that they had exchanged one slavery for another more exacting and more brutal slavery. U Nu has described in his sketches the process of this disillusionment and how in the end a resistance movement developed under the leadership of General Aung San and many others who were closely connected with the puppet Government of Dr. Ba Maw.

It is this personal experience of the Japanese siren songs which has compelled the Prime Minister to utter a warning against "Pied Pipers" and to advise his countrymen "not to follow in the train of these pied pipers, however seductively their tunes may strike the ear." The reference is obviously to communist propagandists extolling the imaginary virtues of Soviet Russia and Communist China.

The sketches make delightful reading. They give a lot of interesting information about the events and personalities of that short period of Burmese history. They also disclose a fine picture of the writer, who as the Prime Minister is today guiding the destinies of his country. He is a noble and truthful soul, anxious to devote himself to literary pursuits but forced by circumstances to assume big political responsibilities. Everybody reading these sketches will be glad that the assumption of those responsibilities does not altogether preclude him from sometimes indulging in his heart's desire.

V.B.K.

Heritage of Buddha

Celina Lu Zanne, Philosophical Library, New York. pp. 290; \$ 3.75.

MADAM CELINA LU ZANNE'S maiden attempt at novel writing has been on the whole quite successful. Though she exhibits blatant ignorance of the facts of Indian cultural and sociological life in the times of Buddha, she has made a sincere attempt to weave a readable biography of that noble son of India who was the first man to revolt against the Brahmanical tyranny, oppression and persecution. He had the best of life which the civilization of that period could offer but his inquisitive spirit was not satisfied. He wondered why poverty and richness existed side by side, why the Brahmins were lords of other castes, why there was death, disease and old age. But none could satisfy his curiosity. On the contrary attempts were made that his sensitive spirit should not be allowed to see the sordid side of life, but to no avail. He saw and thought over these things and became sad. All the pleasures and enjoyments could not hold him long and he renounced the world and spent many years to find out true knowledge and ultimately succeeded in his efforts. He not only searched for the path for himself but having found he illumined the souls of many and his religion spread in the so called Far East, which is for us in India the Near East.

It is a pity that many of us in India do not know much about Gautama's life apart from the accounts we have read in the text books of history and hardly there exists a good biography. The author has done well to acquaint the English speaking world with the life of one whose message is most needed in the present day fear-torn world.

MADAN LAL SHARMA

McCarthy and the Communists

by James Rorty and Moshe Decter, Beacon Press, Boston, 1954; pp. 163; \$ 2.00.

IN recent years no one has provoked more violent reactions than Senator McCarthy. To some, he is a knight in shining armour valiantly battling to save the damsel of democracy from the distress of communist subversion, to others he is either the herald of a fascist America or the evil progeny of an alliance between the Texas millionaires and the Church of Rome. To the communists he is the bad name to give all those who oppose their conspiracy. Truth, has indeed been the biggest casualty on all the fronts of "McCarthyism."

Facts about Senator McCarthy have always been there, but they were lost in public amnesia, after all it is true that the headlines that men make far outlive their real stories — and Senator McCarthy made too many headlines for the public to remember anything else. The American Committee for Cultural Freedom, which has always taken a firm stand against "McCarthyism" has sponsored this excellent analysis of the Senator, and Messrs Rorty and Decter have by painstaking research and a strict avoidance of emotions weighed Senator McCarthy and his work.

The result is that the myth has been shrunk into the man and the man is most unimpressive except as a showman. Starting with the famous speech in Wheeling, Va., where the Senator "revealed" the existence of several communists in the State department and ending with the Army-McCarthy hearings, this book is an admirable record of the career of an individual who skillfully exploited public fear for personal advancement. Its best chapters are the first entitled "The Divided Front Against Communism"—wherein the confusion caused by Mr. McCarthy is dealt with—and the last entitled "The Real Issue: How to Combat Communism Responsibly." Both of them show how important it is for all those who believe in the free way of life to stand firmly against the menace of communist totalitarianism, in spite of all the McCarthys in the world.

Living as we do in the twilight of a demagogue, when the Watkins Committee, the American Senate and the electorate have all but put finis to the career of Senator McCarthy as a crusader of an American renaissance after "Thirty Years of Treason," it is nevertheless important to realise how demagogues arise and how a democracy can be rid of them without stooping to the methods of demagoguery. And this is what this book shows in the manner of a scientific analysis. It is an absolute *must* for every student of the present world.

FAIZ NOORANI

Marxism : Past and Present

by R. N. Carew Hunt, Geoffrey Bles, London, 1954; 12s. 6d.

READERS of Mr. Carew Hunt's earlier work *Theory and Practice of Communism* will have recognised in him an outstanding scholarly critic of Marxian doctrine and its application in Soviet Russia since 1917. In his new book on Marxism he is primarily concerned with its theoretical formulations and their exposition by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and to a lesser extent Stalin. His ability to pick out the relevant and the important from a mass of often contradictory and unclear writings—for "Neither Marx nor Engels were at sufficient pains to define the terms they used or, if they did so, to stick to their definitions"—is quite extraordinary. That Marx was both a theoretician and active politician at the same time makes the task of the critic very difficult indeed; in his case it is not easy to separate polemics from theoretical expositions. Mr. Carew Hunt succeeds admirably in organising the material on the subject and presenting his criticism cogently, though one feels that the subject requires more elaborate treatment.

His main thesis is that Marxism is not a democratic doctrine, and that what has happened in Russia is more or less the logical outcome of the philosophy of Karl Marx, so faithfully accepted by Lenin. Both Lenin and Stalin may have deviated from it to some extent, but it is they, and not their Marxist democratic (?) critics, who were the faithful followers of the Marxian doctrine. This is an important point that needs to be pondered over by socialists who claim to be Marxists and democrats at the same time.

Those who are anxious to study Marxism in all its aspects cannot do better than turn to Mr. Carew Hunt's book. In it they will find all they want, all that is of importance in Marxism.

GOPAL KRISHNA

Letters to the Editor

Call Of The Hour

Sir,

Your correspondent, Shri Sailesh K. Roy, in his letter to you published in the January number of *Freedom First* said, inter alia: "Every attempt should be made to raise the activities of the Congress from suspicious propaganda level and to direct them towards stimulating and popularising creative vitality"; and in your footnote to the letter you observed: "We agree with the correspondent that the activities of the Committee should be directed towards stimulating creative vitality.....The Indian Committee is not a mere anti-communist front. It is wedded to the ideal of freedom and culture. The Committee is also aware of the fact that stimulation of creative activity in all spheres of art and culture is the most effective way of counteracting that threat and developing the free society which alone can guarantee the freedom of culture. The Committee can do more useful work if it receives the enthusiastic co-operation of all men of culture."

Sir, I subscribe to the ideal of freedom and culture. I agree that creative vitality in all spheres of art and culture should be stimulated. I also agree that a free society alone can guarantee freedom of culture. In making these assertions we assume the prevalence of normal conditions in normal times, both of which do not exist at present. We are in the thick of a life and death struggle at present. What freedom we have, what culture we have, are both under mortal attack. We have to struggle for their survival. If we lose, there will be no culture left for the application of creative vitality: there will be no freedom left, first or last.

We must leave normal activities to await the return of normal times. We must be alive to the call of the hour. We cannot afford to relax the activities of the anti-communist front. There is no reproach in the Committee doing "propaganda" on the anti-communist front. It would be failing in its first and only duty at the moment if it neglected or slackened its efforts. If Shri Roy reads Shri Masani's *The Communist Party of India*, he will appreciate the gravity of this warning.

Bombay.

J. K. KOTEWAL

Real Wages In Soviet Russia

Sir,

I have just glanced through the January issue of *Freedom First* and I am really surprised that articles like "Real Wages in Soviet Russia" should have a place in it. The impressive statistics around which you have built your article are not only inconclusive, they are actually incorrect. You say that the Indian worker has to work 68 minutes for a kgm of bread.

This works out roughly at less than two annas per pound. Nowhere in Bombay or, for that matter, anywhere else can you get bread at such a low rate. Then you go on to say that he has to work for 12,960 hours for a suit of clothing. I dare say that a Maharajah would probably pay more than Rs. 3,240 for a fancy suit of clothing complete with jewels and trimmings of gold; but our poor Indian worker does not yet aspire to it. Assuming that your figure should be minutes and not hours, the cost works out roughly at Rs 54 which again is not the sort of clothing he would be going in for. Why give such wrong figures, if correct ones cannot be obtained? Since your article is entirely based on figures, you are merely straining the reader's credulity by offering him as facts something that is very much off the beam.

Leaving apart what happened before the War, it is clear from Mrs. Chapman's figures that between 1948 and 1952, the real wages of the Russian worker have gone up by more than half, almost by 60 per cent, and the prices are roughly two thirds of what they were in 1948. No other country in the world can boast such an improvement in living conditions and it is simply ridiculous to tell anyone that the Russian worker is no better off than his forefathers were in 1913, before the Revolution.

Bombay

J. DUBASHI

[We assure our correspondent that the figures given in the article have been worked out very carefully. The only mistake was a printing error in mentioning 'hours' instead of 'minutes'. The figures given for a suit of clothing are for a woollen suit which for Indian conditions has been equated to three cotton suits. It should have been clear to the correspondent that the figures do not contemplate an Indian worker wearing three cotton suits or purchasing a dozen eggs for his day to day life but give the work time that would be necessary for purchasing equivalent quantities of consumer goods in the various countries mentioned in the article. The figure of 2 as. per lb of bread in India worked out by our correspondent is obviously mistaken. It should be about 3 as. 6 ps. per lb, which is about the prevailing market rate. Our correspondent has merely asserted that the figures given in the article are wrong. He has not tried to

show how and why they are wrong. He should have been a little more cautious before challenging figures painstakingly collected by eminent economists.

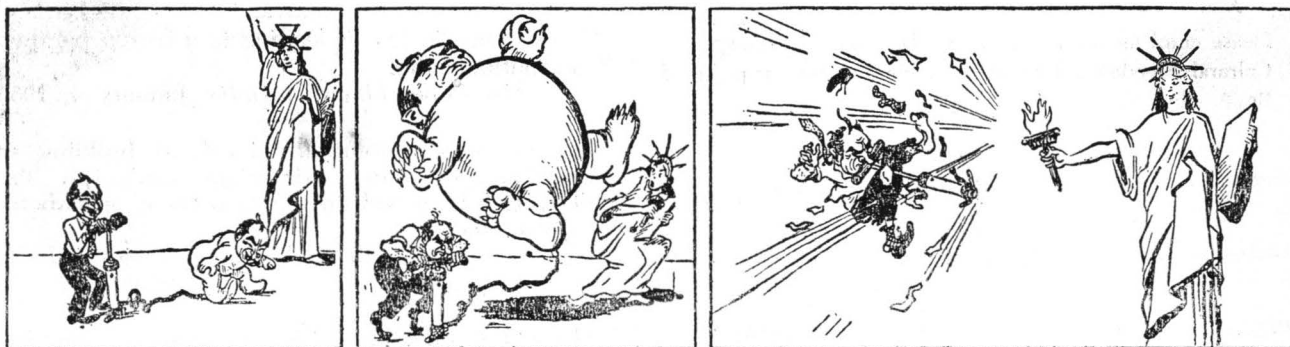
There is no reason why our correspondent should compare Soviet wages in 1952 with the wages in 1948. Mrs. Chapman has herself shown that since 1948 there has been some reduction in prices leading to a rise in real wages. The point at issue is the achievement of the Russian Revolution as a whole and that could be decided only by a comparison of the present conditions of Soviet workers with the condition as it was before the Revolution. It may sound ridiculous to our correspondent, but authoritative economists all over the world are now convinced that the standard of life in Soviet Russia has not materially improved since the Revolution.

We may invite our correspondent's attention to one more recent estimate. At the British Food Fair held recently in London the Russian Government had exhibited in a special stall the things that Russians eat and drink. Writing about it, Mr. A. Kumar stated in the issue of *Thought* dated 2nd October 1954: "From the prices quoted at the stall, British statisticians have worked out some interesting facts. A moderate Sunday meal in London for a family of four (consisting of vegetable soup, roast meat and dessert) costs approximately Rs. 7/6/- as compared to Rs. 47/- to Rs. 59/- in Moscow. A Russian worker has to spend the earnings of ten hours work on his weekly basic diet; a British worker four hours. An egg in Britain costs the equivalent of seven minutes of work; in Russia 23 minutes. Two pounds of butter in Britain are equivalent to 152 minutes work and in Russia 490 minutes."

Mr. S. L. Kirloskar, another member of the Indian industrialists' delegation, has the same tale to tell. In a speech made in Bombay on 3rd January, 1955, he said: "The cost of living was horrible. A shirt cost a minimum of 120 roubles. A shoe anywhere from 300 to 400 roubles."

It is regrettable that facts regarding the condition of workers in Soviet Russia have to be gathered in a circumstantial manner. But if anybody is responsible for that it is the Soviet Government which, unlike all civilised Governments, refuses to publish information about wages, prices and other data vital for determining the standard of living.—Editor]

A SOUTH AMERICAN VIEW OF SENATOR M'CARTHY'S CURRENT FORTUNES



With Many Voices

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

"The deep

—Tennyson.

The price we shall have to pay for getting such work done in India, as is seen in communist countries, will be loss of freedom and total dictatorship, and worst of all, a state of war with some visible enemies.

—Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, *Times of India*, January 14, 1955.

Impartiality is either a delusion of the simple-minded, a banner of the opportunist, or the boast of the dishonest. Nobody is entitled to be unbiased towards truth or falsehood. When a conclusion has been reached, there cannot be two different truths. If one statement is true, the opposite is false.

—Prof. Gaetano Salvemini, Italian Anti-Fascist Historian, *Current*, January 19, 1955.

The only country that remains imperialistic is Russia.

—Dr. Santiago Claret, Cuban Ambassador-at-large, *Times of India*, January 12, 1955.

The proletariat cannot rule; it is too ignorant and incompetent. It would not be the proletariat if it were otherwise.

—Mr. Gilbert Murray, *The Times*, London, January 3, 1955.

Someone summarised the characteristics of the British people when these were cited as the four pillars: the ballot box, the cricket bat, limited companies and the authorised version of the Holy Bible.

—Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, *Times of India*, January 8, 1955.

INDIAN COMMITTEE FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM
127, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
BOMBAY 1.

Please enrol me as a member of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom. I remit the annual membership fee of Rs. 3/- by.....

Name :

Address :

Date :

Signature

The method of chopping off and bloodletting is dangerous and infectious. You chop off one head today, another one tomorrow still another one the day after.

—Joseph Stalin, as quoted in *New York Times*, December 26, 1954.

They (the rulers of India) are pandering to communism day by day. They go and kiss Chou in China and then come back here and attack the Indian communists. I do not understand this mentality of peaceful co-existence between liberty and despotism and between tyranny and human freedom.

—Mr. N. C. Chatterjee, M.P., in Parliament, quoted in the *Hindustan Times*, December 12, 1954.

Congress is immovable like an over-burdened ass. Instead of taking one thing at a time, they have undertaken a thousand schemes which they cannot fulfil.

—Acharya Vinoba Bhave, *Times of India*, January 20, 1955.

One must "always be ready to change side with justice, that fugitive from the winning camp."

—Simone Weil in *La Pesanteur et la Grace*.

It is typical of the contempt in which communism holds human intelligence to seek to make world opinion believe that a man in full (Air Force) uniform is going to try to spy in China.

—Mr. Henry Cabot Lodge, *New York Times*, December 12, 1954.

A frontranking opposition M.P. remarked to me: "Why should there be one law for Venkataraman and another for Krishna Menon?"

—H. V. Kamath, *Current*, January 5, 1955.

Mr. Jai Prakash Narain's dedication to the Bhoodan movement is perhaps the most impressive single manifestation of its appeal.

—*Statesman*, January 3, 1955.

Co-existence in fear is leading to a frozen paralysis of international life.

—The Pope, *Times of India*, January 4, 1955.

The Congress resolution aimed at building up "State Capitalism" along side private capitalism. That itself would be a welcome development and should be encouraged.

—Mr. S. A. Dange, *Times of India*, January 21, 1955.

✓ The C.P.I. may be a joke, but Communism is a danger.

—Phillip Spratt, in *Current*, December 22, 1954.