

Recent National Conventions

Adam Adil

IN recent weeks four important democratic political parties in the country have held their annual national conventions or plenary sessions. They are, Praja-Socialist Party, Samyukta Socialist Party, the Bharatiya Jan Sangh and the Indian National Congress. Except the Indian National Congress, which has held the reins of government during the last twenty years, the other parties have experienced power only since recently. Again the Congress which generally had never been out of power (except in Kerala—that too for brief periods) has been driven into opposition in more than six states. It is therefore obvious that each of these national political parties have new experience either of newly being in power or of newly being in opposition. In the context of the latest experience the recent national conventions or the plenary sessions of these political parties assumed special significance.

Talking of the PSP, and the SSP conventions their experience of sharing power has not been happy. The Uttar Pradesh presents a typical example of their confusion and frustration which had had expressions in their conventions. The SSP especially as measure of its protest against what they considered the failure of UP Chief Minister Mr. Charan Singh to implement the programme of the ruling Samyukta Vidhayak Dal of which it is an important constituent decided to withdraw its representatives in the State Cabinet. Again as a mark of protest against Centre's language policy two SSP members of the Uttar Pradesh Cabinet sought to violate law in New Delhi and even court arrest—a strange phenomenon of ministers consciously and deliberately breaking law. Unfortunately the SSP convention did not apply its mind to the effect the withdrawal of its representatives from the UP cabinet would have on the fortunes of non-Congress governments in the states. Secondly, it did not take into account the consequences of violation of law by responsible members of state cabinets on the future democratic way of life in this country.

In the PSP convention (and also in that of the SSP) the question of socialist unity was discussed. It was obvious that the leaders of the PSP and SSP were

anxious for the merger of both the political parties to form an effective block of socialist forces in the country.

In the past the efforts of socialist unity have had unhappy consequences. Not long ago after leading separate existences, the PSP and the SSP had merged together. But with the best of intentions on their part the leaders and the rank and file of the original units could not pull on together for long, before they could be an effective united socialist democratic front against the Congress they fell out. In the break-up Mr. S. M. Joshi, who was originally the President of the PSP was a gain to SSP for having been elected the President of the merged parties he did not go out with his erstwhile friends and colleagues but preferred to remain as the President of the SSP.

But inspite of this unfortunate experience of the past, the desire on the part of the PSP as well as the SSP for socialist unity was ardent and genuine.

The conventions however did not discuss the steps or the terms and conditions of the merger of the two political parties. It is legitimate to hope that in view of the disappointments and frustrations, the socialists have experienced in the united fronts with both the factions of the communists in some states and with the Muslim League in Kerala, the leaders of the PSP and the SSP will seriously take up the issue of socialist unity and adopt concrete steps towards merger of both the parties.

It must be however stated that PSP as well as SSP leaders in the deliberations of their respective conventions, failed to take into account the effects their political alignment with the Right and the Left communists will have on the traditions of parliamentary democracy in the country. The PSP leaders—more than SSP leaders—are conscious of the danger the Right and the Left communists constitute to internal stability and external security of the country. Yet they sought to find fault with the West Bengal Governor (and with the Centre) for the dismissal of the Ajoy Mukherjee government in the strategic border state, especially when the Right and Left communists while forming a part of the state government were playing havoc with the lives of the people by deliberately engineering the break-down of law and order.

The latest annual session of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh held at Kozhikode in Kerala judged from all standards was a success. Firstly, Kerala is a state where the influence of the Jan Sangh is known to be the least. Yet it put up a fine show. It is said that the

rich farmers from the rural areas and the flourishing business men from the urban side financially supported the Jan Sangh session. Their sudden love for Jan Sangh was due to the fact that with the defeat of the Congress and the emergence of communists as a dominant political force they felt that Jan Sangh alone could safeguard their interests. The success of the Jan Sangh was all the more creditable in view of the fact that the deposits were forfeited in all the four parliamentary and twenty-four Assembly seats contested by the Kerala unit of the Jan Sangh.

It must be admitted that the speech of the outgoing President Mr. Balraj Madhok was significant in that he called upon the people to meet "the twin challenge of communists and the Muslim League, the agents of India's twin enemies, China and Pakistan".

The Foreign Policy Resolution indeed, struck a new line totally different from those adopted by most other political parties. For instance, it called for the recognition of Taiwan "which happens to be our most important window; and established foe of communist China". It also called for support to forces exerting for independence of Tibet, Sinkiang, South Mongolia and Pakhtoonistan. It desired the recognition of Dalai Lama as "the head of the emigre government of Tibet" and wanted speedy development of "India's nuclear deterrent".

Similarly clear-cut was its Economic Policy Resolution. It stated that Jan Sangh's policy would be based on "stability of prices, full utilisation of productive capacity and capital formation for further development." For this purpose, the Resolution demanded that "capital should be given encouragement in private sector also and credit regulations should be liberalised". It rejected the nationalisation of banks and considered the scheme of social control as of dubious value. The newly elected President, Mr. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, in his Presidential address pointed out that the Congress ten-point economic programme including abolition of privy purses, was intended to divert the attention of the people of India from the immediate problems of unemployment, shortages of housing and clothing.

The warning of the Jan Sangh about the communist (and Muslim league) danger in Kerala was timely and indeed welcome. But its alignment with the communists in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh only with the intention of keeping Congress out of power in those states was rather surprising. If communists were a danger in Kerala they were of equal danger in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh or any where else in the country. The Jan Sangh Session did not seek to resolve this contradiction.

The Plenary Session of the Indian National Congress held at Hyderabad was decidedly a success for the rightists. The Young Turks and the leftists who had mastered strong and itching for a fight were in a disarray. The overwhelming majority of the delegates

to the session were behind the old leaders and acted on the common sense dictum that a known devil was better than an unknown saint. Even the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi whose sympathies were known to be with the Young Turks and the leftists found herself isolated from the majority of the delegates.

The Congress Plenary session was the first meet of Congressmen after the General Election. It was therefore, expected that the Congress leaders as well as the delegates would do a bit of stock taking, try to understand the reasons for the Congress debacle in some of the states and think of the ways and means of improving and strengthening the organisational and legislative wings of the Congress.

But instead of indulging in sincere self-criticism which was so imperative the Congress session tried to do nothing more serious than find fault with the non-Congress governments. Of course, there is much to be said against these governments, but the record of Congress governments in the states where now non-Congress governments function, was no better. Therefore the hope that the people in these states ardently desired the return of Congress governments was futile. The Congress governments got the bad name and were dislodged because they gave rise to wide-spread corruption, favouritism and inefficiency and were afflicted by mutual rivalries between local Congress leaders. But the Congress Session devoted little time to the eradication of these evils from the Congress ranks.

There was, of course, considerable stress on the clear definition of Congress ideology in political and economic terms. The need of such a definition even twelve years after the adoption of the ideal of socialist pattern of society at Avadi Congress, indicates how confused congressmen are regarding what they now call "democratic socialism". The insistence of an influential section of Congressmen on the abolition of privy purses, nationalisation of banks and stricter control over trade and industry shows how Congressmen in general are anxious to adopt minor "panaceas" for major ills such as increasing unemployment, industrial recession, inflation, agricultural slowdown, increasing population and governmental inefficiency and delays. Mr. Morarji Desai, however, while moving the resolution on economic policy, indeed put up a brave fight against leftist pressures.

While the Congress session devoted its time to the solution of the linguistic and such other problems, failed to take a serious note of the nuclear-capacity of the Communist China. According to India's Defence Minister himself, China is producing forty nuclear bombs a month and would soon have an intermediate range ballistic missile system, which would drop these bombs on the centres of population which is within 1500 miles from the Tibetan border. The Congress session should have devoted some time to consider measures to counteract the menace the Chinese nuclear capacity constitutes to India's security.

A Seminar On Liberalism

M. D. Kini

LIBERALISM is a view of life and a way of life. It puts man in the centre of things. Man is the measure of everything. It, of course, recognises the need for organisations and institutions which make community-life possible. It regards these institutions as a necessary evil. It is for maximum freedom for man to live a life of his own and to realise his best self with the minimum restrictions which are necessary for the community to exist. The political aspect of liberalism is democratic form of Government, not merely because it believes that the counting of heads is better than breaking them, but more because it recognises the sanctity and the sovereignty of the individual. In the economic sphere it is for free enterprise, again, not merely because free enterprise makes for greater efficiency and allows a lot of choice for the consumer, but more because vital economic power is dispersed all over the society so that more people have opportunity to exercise freedom.

These thoughts occur to me when I recollect my impression of the Seminar held recently in Poona on "The role of competitive free enterprise in economic development", jointly sponsored by the Indian Group of Liberal International and the Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung Foundation of Germany. The credit for making it an experience goes to Professor R. Bhaskaran and Dr. S. P. Aiyar. It had an opportunity of listening to a galaxy of eminent speakers like Mr. M. R. Masani, Mr. V. B. Karnik, Prof. B. R. Shenoy, Mr. V. K. Narasimhan, Dr. F. A. Mehta, Mr. Michael Seneviratne, Mr. Murarji Vaidya, Dr. Masing, Prof. Raj Krishna and a host of others. The discussions that followed the talks were lively and animated.

Prof. Bhaskaran defined Liberalism, in his inimitable way, as a way of looking at things — "the most permissible kind of attitude", that it does not believe in ultimates in goals and finals in solutions. It believes neither in total individuality nor in total collectivity. It is a philosophy of freedom. But freedom is not a gift of nature. Man is born slave trying to be free. He has to be educated to be free. Freedom cannot be a consequence of equality. Freedom does not prohibit equality. But the passion for complete equality may endanger freedom.

Prof. B. R. Shenoy was firm and forthright. He traced all the ills of our economy to the planning which involves exchange-control, import restrictions, foreign-aid at Government level, appropriation of largest bulk of the total investment resources for

public enterprise, socio-economic legislation and deficit-financing. He was all for the removal of restrictions on foreign exchange etc. for a free and better economy as well as more welfare. He was uncompromising on this. Now everybody including the socialists agree that our present permit-licence raj has brought our country to this pass. But it would be difficult to imagine our country without any restriction on import, exchange etc. especially when even the U.S.A. had to clamp some on foreign tour. But Prof. Shenoy was logical and was not challenged at all. He emphasised the point that the basic industries differ in different countries and in the same country at different times and that India's basic industry is agriculture.

Mr. V. K. Narasimhan was all for what he called "functional approach" to all problems. Every issue has to be judged on its own merits without prejudice and pre-conceived notions. He advocated the setting up of quasi-judicial commission before deciding on nationalisation. Prof. S. H. Deshpande proved by mathematical precision why a relatively better off farmer will be a loser in a cooperative farming society where all resources are pooled.

In an impassioned speech Dr. F. A. Mehta analysed the state of our economy and the policy decisions which led to the mess we are in now. In his quivering voice one can sense the agony he felt about the lost opportunities and the consequent wrong direction our economy took after the first Plan. He was one of the very few Indian economists who opposed the wrong priorities and mis-direction of our limited resources by the planners. He said even the basic needs of planning like a formulation machinery, an evaluation machinery and a control room were absent in our planning. Of the 178 projects in the third Plan only 30 had proper project reports. Between 1960-65 productivity has gone up only by 26% whereas the wages have gone up by 55%.

I was rather disappointed with Mr. Y. D. Phadke's lecture on the economic development in Thailand, Taiwan and Malaysia. He brushed aside the progress achieved in those countries by saying that it was because of the large quantity of foreign-aid. He maintained that the fruits of economic development have not reached the masses in those countries. He deplored the authoritarian rule in the first two countries. He rightly observed that a free and democratic society is more important than a high rate of growth. But I

have a feeling that he was rather too harsh in his judgement. All of these countries are almost under a siege by the Communist China. We cannot expect a democratic form of Government under this condition. If U.K. and U.S.A. did maintain their democratic form of Government during the World War, it is because they have a tradition of democracy. He also omitted an important fact of land reforms in Taiwan. The landlords were compensated at market value on transfer of their lands to farmers, and were induced to engage in industries. This, along with the foreign-aid helped Taiwan to reach the so-called take-off stage in her economic development and do away with the foreign-aid.

Mr. D. N. Patodia, the young and dynamic M.P. from Rajasthan showed with facts and figures how free enterprise has played a big part in the economic development of India in spite of all the restrictions by the Government. He said that over-capitalisation, over-staffing and maintaining of big inventories are some of the defects of the state enterprises. There is a strange mixture of high prices and low profits in the state sector. The Indian farmer about the poorest in the world has to pay prices which are about the highest in the world for his fertilizers.

There was a lucid analysis of the role of trade unions in a free economy by Mr. V. B. Karnik. He maintained that there could be no free trade union without a free society. He cited the examples of the USSR and Nazi Germany where unions were imposed from above and acted merely as transmission belts of the regime concerned. He traced the development of trade union movement along with that of democracy especially in U.K. He concluded with the remark that the movement of protest has now become a movement for co-operation. The trade unions progressed from the doctrine of restraint to collective bargaining during the last hundred years. This is mainly due to the widening of democratic system and processes.

Prof. Raj Krishna spoke on the food problem in India. He said that there was an annual growth of 3.5% in demand for food and our growth in food production has been nearly 3 per cent since 1951. The food production has gone up from 54 million tons to 89 million tons between 1951-65, which is quite creditable considering the past 50 years. He was critical of the use made of the food grains obtained from the USA under PL 480. Instead of using it for buffer stocks, it was used to disturb both consumption and production. He was hopeful about our food production, thanks to some of the new varieties of wheat and rice.

Mr. M. R. Masani, M.P., who inaugurated the seminar, summed up the discussion of the main theme when he said that there is no contradiction or conflict between development and democracy or food and freedom, as some participants suspected. The rapid economic development in Taiwan, Israel, Thailand, Malaysia, South Korea, Japan and Pakistan as against the slow growth in India, Ceylon, Egypt, Indonesia, Burma, Communist China, prove that free economy helps faster growth.

Mr. Masani traced the growth of Liberalism in India. J. S. Mill and others gave inspiration to our own Liberals like Dadabhoy Naoroji, Pherozsha Mehta, Justice Ranade and others. But liberalism could not grow in India because of militant nationalism and later socialism. Now that militant nationalism has achieved its purpose and socialism has shown its clay-feet, time has come for the revival of liberalism. Gandhiji was a liberal when he declared that he was for that type of government which governs the least, which gives maximum freedom to man and minimum authority to the State. Our Constitution too is liberal as it was adopted in 1950.

If liberalism has to thrive in India it has to find its roots in Indian tradition. Then and only then can it catch the imagination of the masses. The pluralism and diversity in Indian tradition and history make the task of liberals easy. The freedom of thought and expression which is the essence of liberalism is also to be found in this tradition. Liberalism has a good soil and climate in India if only liberals make use of it.

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BY

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Liberty And Russian Revolution

R. Srinivasan

ALL revolutions, whether they be the Spartacist of Roman times or the more recent French, American and Russian Revolutions remain essentially attempts at striking for more liberty. Even the most peaceful of modern revolutions, the English one of 1688, had a long charter of basic liberties.

The Russian Revolution, too, began as a movement to extend freedom to the down trodden, the poor peasant, and the urban masses condemned to live in squalor and in perpetual bondage. The difference between the Russian Revolution and the earlier ones was in this that there was an elaborate philosophy which underlay the Revolution. The central tenet of it was that liberty remained meaningless in the absence of economic opportunities. Since then, almost all people have seen the indissoluble connection between liberty and economic opportunities. The Russian model of economic and political organization has remained an attractive blueprint to many statesmen of underdeveloped nations and they have sought to rebuild their nations on the Russian example. It is for these reasons that an estimate of the trials of liberty in the Soviet Union is more than of mere academic interest.

When the Revolution broke out in Russia, it had a long tradition of social unrest to look back to. In fact, most Russian intellectuals in the country active after the 1860s were either seriously engaged in contemplating revolution or in opposing it. It was very much in fashion among the then young, and Lenin was only the latest among them.

All revolutions need dedicated people. Lenin's dedication was terrible in its earnestness. In the first place he had a certitude about his position which he could never doubt.

There was also the Marxist (as well as the abstract) habit of viewing events as decisions of Reason, Science, History which could not be questioned as such. His followers generally tended to emulate him and his doctrines.

On assuming power in November, Lenin called the toilers and workers of the twin cities to arrest and hand over to the revolutionary tribunals those who were enemies of the people and the revolution. The Holy Russian land must be "cleansed of all noxious insects, scoundrel fleas, bed bug rich" etc. Bread cards would be withdrawn from those who would not co-operate with the hunt of the government. The death penalty which was abolished was restored for seventy

crimes including theft and forgery; crimes against state property were visited by the same penalty. Some of these severe penalties might have been compelled upon the government—mainly because of the chaotic conditions then prevailing. And it is easy indeed to minimise the difficulties that the government faced. Terror became one of the inevitable features of Russian politics and was to continue for long.

The consolidation of the revolution through terror could not be continuously permanent or legitimate. There were pressures upon Lenin from party workers and attempts were made to further the revolution through other means. The need of the hour was for a core of workers who could be trusted to be loyal and ruthless. This was the task to which Lenin devoted himself and the modern communist party was the result. This was to prove a new political phenomenon and since the time of Lenin, any dictatorship has had one great asset—the party. The party was to develop inner resources, strength and suppleness never suspected earlier. The party was to bring about the dictatorship of the proletariat. The party developed certain distinguishing features which need to be noted. There was, an absolute unanimity on the theoretical principles of socialism, revolution and "democracy". Equally important has been the devotion expected of the members to the cause. Discipline has been rigid and no compromise allowed theoretically. However, tactically it has been admitted that temporary alliances may be accepted with other factions or parties—but only to eliminate them later. The party should lead the masses in their name and offer them the much needed leadership.

Along with the development of the party, there were successful attempts made to infiltrate into every group or institution and infuse them with the spirit of communism and revolution. This was made possible by the numerous cells that were established in factories, villages, army units, schools, etc. If in trade unions, soviets or cooperatives there were no party infusion, there were sedulous attempts made to lead the discussion through well-tried communist members. The elaborate police apparatus that was built subordinate to the party took care of deviationists. The Cheka developed modern methods of police state administration carefully copied by later dictators. In 1922, the Cheka was abolished but immediately the establishment of the G. P. U., the state political administration, took charge of the earlier Cheka.

Perhaps there was a justification for those totalitarian measures. The country after the revolution was plunged in chaos. Hunger, want and privation were widely prevalent. The anti-Revolutionary White Army was actively attempting to subvert the revolution. The whole country was in the grip of a near war and the method resorted to was that of war communism by which the entire economy was geared to the conduct of the war. Wholesale confiscation of agricultural produce to feed the army led for the peasants to revolt, to store away their grain and to butcher their cattle. Agricultural produce came to a stop and the country in 1920 faced a near famine. Economic disaster faced the country and Lenin confessed that the government had exceeded its demands upon the peasantry. The disbanded soldiery was now looting the countryside which again resulted in a revolt of the agrarian classes. Lenin halted socialist programmes by the New Economic Policy. The country had weathered the initial storms but the methods were to haunt future governments.

By the end of the twenties Stalin was the supreme master of Russia. He now turned to set right the path that Soviet economy had taken in 1921—when Lenin was compelled to postpone large scale industrialization. The economy that had been in shambles was operating in the late twenties. But it was not massive enough. The development was too slow and gradual. The country could not depend upon the capitalist nations. At all events attempts had to be made to accumulate vast capital resources—and this had to be done in urban as well as rural areas. The wheels of industry had to move continually, and these had to be continually fed by raw materials from the rural areas. Consumption had to be cut down, and savings to be effected. The rural populace had to make sacrifices, and feed the government with resources. They had to subsist on the meagrest rations. The peasants refused to cooperate; forced collectivization of the lands was the result. The wealthier peasants were compelled to leave their farms and thousands were deported to Siberia. Those who refused to cooperate, the peasants, the bourgeoisie which opposed the schemes, and the intellectuals—all of them formed the compulsory labour force to run these collectivised farms. Stalin was to confess to Churchill that the war against the peasants had been more difficult than that against the Germans. The dimensions of misery could be imagined. The concentration camps, the forcible eviction of people in thousands across a whole country, the calculated practise of genocide on the largest scale possible are familiar to everyone. A virtual state of civil war and anti-cooperation lead to the livestock of the country to

be reduced by one half. This was the beginning of a series of acts of terror that the tyrant was to unleash over the countryside.

By the beginning of the thirties the crises that Lenin faced on the economic front had passed and one should have expected respite from terror and compulsion. The rural opposition was put down—and in the urban areas the workers were loyal to the party and to work programmes. The economic trial was over and some order had been brought both into agriculture and into the industries. There was a good harvest in 1933 and the industrial production for 1953/4 soared from a mere 5% to 20%. Almost all sections of the population, including the intellectuals had fallen in line with the party and the regime. One should have normally expected a relaxation of severity. But the thirties were to witness a terrible reappearance of a bout of political murders.

The purge reached new heights in 1937 when tens of thousands of people from all walks of life, humble partyworkers, nationalists of the different regions, priests both of Catholic and the Byzantine churches all became victims of Stalin's megalomania. The police staff who had assisted Stalin in these extermination campaigns were visited upon by the same fate that attended their victims. In 1937 Stalin announced that the era of purges had come to an end and admitted that there might have been miscarriages of justice and mistakes in the award of punishments.

Its cost was enormous. The victims covered 70% of the Central Committee members of the Party Congress elected in 1934, one half of the army elite, a considerable body of economist-administrators, intelligentsia in large numbers, nationalists and of course thousands of innocents. The growth of industrial production which in 1935 was 20% crashed to 2% in 1939. But Stalin gained in subjecting his populace to an iron discipline never known before. There was perhaps none in the country, save perhaps Stalin himself, who could have been confident that he would not be the victim the next hour, the next day or the next week. This administration of terror had paralyzed the people into willing obedience and none would have dared to question the legitimacy of the regime.

Khrushchev's Russia did usher in a new type of political economy which may well be called "welfare totalitarianism" wherein certain benefits did percolate to the people. These were in the reduction in the hours of work, social security programmes, larger housing benefits and consumer goods. These, far from satisfying the people, have only whetted their appetites for more. Dis-illusionment came early and the giant pro-

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American Trade Union Movement

V. B. Karnik

THE American trade union movement is today the strongest and the wealthiest in the world. But it had to pass through a number of difficult phases before reaching the stage that it has reached. Mr. Gus Tyler begins his book* with an outline of the fascinating story of that advance. The outline is necessarily brief but it gives a good idea of the difficulties that were encountered and of the steps that were adopted to overcome them.

The larger part of the book is, however, devoted to a discussion of the problems that the movement faces in present-day America. This is in conformity with the sub-title of the book which is 'Trade Unions in a New America.' America is a fast-changing country. During the last fifty years or so it has undergone a technological as well as a social revolution. The revolution was peaceful and slow; but none the less it was a revolution. Mr. Gus Tyler has described the revolution and has dealt particularly with its impact on the labour and the trade union movement.

The problems that the trade union movement faces in the new America are the problems of automation, of the entry of Negroes in the labour force, of the shift of industry to the South and of the growing politicalisation of American society including the labour movement. Mr. Gus Tyler has dealt with each problem and trade unions' response to it in a competent manner. Referring to changes in the economy Mr. Tyler says at one place: "The nature of the economy is changing; from blue collar to white, from manufacturing to service, from low skill to high skill, from private industry to government, from North to South, from hand to brain." As a result of changes in the economy there will be changes in the labour force also. Those changes are described as follows: "The American labour force circa 1975 will be bigger, younger, and more feminine. It will wear a white collar, be better schooled, and work in a service trade. Its muscles will have shrunk and its brain will have grown. It will be drifting away from the farm and countryside for factories and stores in the neighbourhood or for jobs in cities and suburbs."

One of the misconceptions about the American trade union movement is that it shuns politics and is apolitical. Mr. Tyler has devoted a number of pages of his book to removing that misconception. Beginning with the thesis "Collective bargaining is a political struggle

over economic goals—just like most other political struggles in the world," he points out: "Trade unions as a distinct expression of one aspect of the broader concept covered by the term 'labour movement' turn to politics for a variety of compelling reasons; to organize; to enjoy legal status; to maximize employment; to legalise protection against the hazards of accidents, unemployment, illness, old age; to express the viewpoint of a body of citizens on its own state and the state of the world."

Mr. Tyler has devoted a special chapter to the discussion of American trade unions' involvement in politics. He concludes the chapter by describing the result of that involvement as follows: "The real impact will be in the changed political attitude of millions of individual American workers: an interested and informed involvement in national goals and a feeling of personal responsibility for decision-making. This era of political unionism will mark a revolution and, like so many other American revolutions, it will come piecemeal and silently."

American trade unions Mr. Tyler has pointed out are not static. They are responding to the changes in society. "Basically, the unions are responding to a new economy that is creating a new kind of work force. But this is not the only factor underlying the change in labour's personality. The movement is responding to the increased politicalization of the American people; it is responding to the metropolitan ferment; it is responding to the awakening of the Negro and to the remaking of the South. It is responding to the challenges of the second half of the twentieth century and is doing so through the attitudes of a changing membership and leadership." American trade unions have a bright future before them because they change along with the society in which they operate.

There are a number of books on the American trade union movement. But Mr. Tyler's will remain a distinct contribution. He has neatly described the challenges that it faces and boldly pointed the course that it must adopt if it is to serve workers as effectively in the future as it has in the past. Mr. Tyler is eminently qualified to write the book. He has been closely associated with the movement as the Director of Department of Politics and Education of the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union. He combines in a fine manner academic knowledge with experience of the day-to-day functioning of a big union.

* *The Labour Revolution*, Gus Tyler, The Viking Press, New York, \$ 6.50

Persecution Of Writers Under Communism

IN Russia writers are still being prosecuted and sentenced. A news item published in Indian papers in the second week of January gave the following information about the latest assault on the freedom of writers: "A Soviet court today sentenced Yury Galanskov to seven years' hard labour and Alexander Ginsburg to five years at the end of Moscow's 'literary underground' trial. Co-defendant Alexei Dobrovolsky, was given two years and Vera Lashkova, a typist and drama student one year. The sentences were reported by a member of the Young Communist League, who came out of the court. The same man has been acting as a semi-official spokesman on proceedings in the court. Ginsburg, Galanskov and Lashkova had pleaded not guilty to the charges. Dobrovolsky pleaded guilty and gave evidence against the other three. The four were held under investigation for a year before being brought to trial."

The trial and the punishment that was inflicted did not pass off quietly. They attracted wide notice. Crowds gathered outside the courtroom to show their sympathy with the writers and their contempt for the accused, the K.G.B., the Russian secret police. There was a protest demonstration on the street.

While the four writers were held in prison, over one hundred and fifty writers and scientists had petitioned to the Government asking for an open trial. The petition did not produce any result. On the last day of the trial an appeal to world opinion urging condemnation of the trial as shameful was widely distributed. Prominent amongst signatories to the appeal was Pavel Litvinov, the grandson of the old Bolshevik leader, Maxim Litvinov who was for a number of years the Foreign Minister of Russia. The association of young Litvinov with the writers' protest has created a very embarrassing situation for the Government.

Pavel Litvinov had earlier sent to several European papers his notes of the trial of the writer, Vladimir Bukovsky which took place in September 1967. It appears from the notes that Bukovsky, who was sentenced to three years imprisonment for a demonstration in Pushkin Square on behalf of three arrested writers, read at his trial sections from the Soviet constitution guaranteeing freedom of demonstrations and gatherings on the street. By way of contrast, he pointed out that in the U.S., the Supreme Court had assured the right of Communists to peaceful dissent. "What the prosecutor would like to hear from me, he won't hear," said Bukovsky, "there is no criminal act in my case. I absolutely do not repent." Nonetheless, the Soviet press reported that Bukovsky had pleaded guilty.

A savage sentence of fifteen years in prison was inflicted upon four writers, members of the Berdyayev Circle who were arrested in March 1967, together with 17 students from Leningrad. The Court justified the heavy sentence by claiming that the four belonged to "an illegal political grouping which worked for foreign intelligence under the disguise of a philosophy circle". Other eleven members of the Circle, mainly students from Leningrad University's Law Faculty, were, it is reported, banished to Siberia or confined to mental homes.

The world has not also forgotten the two writers, Sinyavsky and Daniel who were sentenced to seven years' and five years' "strict regime in a corrective labour camp" in February 1966. A new campaign has been organised to demand their release. Initiative in organising it has been taken by the International PEN and the Belgian League for the Defence of Human Rights. A large number of prominent writers, scientists and thinkers from various countries have already joined the campaign.

Among the signatories who have pressed for the release of Sinyavsky and Daniel are A. J. Ayer, C. V. Wedgwood, Iris Murdoch, Doris Lessing, J. B. Priestly, Rebecca West, Margharita Laski and others. Normas St. John-Sterias, a M. P. who has extensively commented upon censorship laws along with Graham Greene, Arthur Miller, Ignazio Silone, Francois Mauriac and Gunther Grass have joined the group to awaken public opinion. The Secretary General of the P.E.N., Mr. David Carver said: "We want the public in Britain to be aware of the fate of these two men. Public opinion here and elsewhere can help enormously in persuading the Russians to shift their position. In the New Year we shall be holding a major public meeting in London to demonstrate our protest. We intend to show the Soviet Government that we mean business."

From within the prison some appeals were smuggled out; one of these was from Ginzberg to Kosygin stating that he was ready to be tried and be convicted for giving his support to the cause that Sinyavsky and Daniel stood for. Ginsberg, once editor of the underground journal *Phoenix* was arrested thrice in six years. The magazine has the reputation of being one of the most creative of underground journals.

News is available about similar persecution of a prominent writer from Czechoslovakia. Ladislav Mnaeko is a well-known Czechoslovakian novelist. He won a few years back the highest literary award of the country, the Klement Gottwald Prize. His latest

(Continued on page 11)

Reviews

President Zakir Husain

A. G. Noorani, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, Rs. 15.

THIS is a short biography of Dr. Zakir Husain, the President of India. It is written by that young, well-known journalist Mr. A. G. Noorani who has already made a name for himself as a fearless and erudite political commentator. Popular Prakashan appears to have taken particular pains to make the book into a fine production.

Before he became the President last year not much was known even in educated circles about the life and work of Dr. Zakir Husain. He had always shunned publicity and he did not figure prominently in newspapers until he was elected the Vice-President in 1962 as he was not an active politician. He had dedicated his life to education and work in the educational field is hardly ever hot news.

Zakirsaheb was, however, wellknown amongst the leaders of the national movement as a man of great integrity and ability and as a person who would discharge with competence and distinction the duties of any high office that may be entrusted to him. That was why he was selected to succeed Dr. Radhakrishnan as the President of India. In ordinary circumstances, as a universally respected person, Zakirsaheb would have been elected without a contest. However, flushed by the success that they had secured in the general election, opposition parties desired to inflict one more crushing defeat upon the Congress. Therefore, there was a contest, but Zakirsaheb was elected with a large majority. Since then he is the President and in the short time that has elapsed he has given ample evidence to show that he can hold that high office with competence, dignity and grace.

In the short space of a little over a hundred pages Mr. Noorani has described in a lucid manner the main incidents in the life of the President and the qualities of head and heart which won for him respect and esteem from all those who came in touch with him in various fields of activities. His main work was, no doubt, the Jamia Milia. But he was for about seven years the Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh University and was also closely associated with Gandhiji's scheme of Basic Education. All these and many other activities and more particularly the complex developments in the national movement during that period in which Zakirsaheb must have been intimately involved can be covered only in a full-length biography. The picture of the President that Mr. Noorani has painted in this short book will whet the readers' appetite for such a biography.

Mr. Noorani has dealt with many aspects of Zakirsaheb's life and work. The main event of the period, however, has received no attention. It was the growth of the Muslim League and its emergence as the predominant organisation of the Muslims. One would have liked to know what Zakirsaheb and other nationalist Muslims did to counteract that phenomenon and why they failed in their efforts to win the support of the Muslim community. Mr. Noorani has not dealt with that problem nor has he attempted any assessment of the educational work of Zakirsaheb or of Jamia Milia to which he had dedicated himself. However, the book as it stands presents a fine portrait of Zakirsaheb, one of the most lovable of the great figures of our national movement.

The book has an illuminating foreword by Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan. Apart from several plates, it carries as a frontispiece a fine portrait of Dr. Zakir Husain by the celebrated artist, Mr. M. F. Husain.

V. B. KARNIK

The Lamp and the Lampstand

K. P. S. Menon, Oxford University Press, Rs. 10

MR. K. P. S. MENON was during his long period of service a distinguished public servant. His service began under the British. It continued after Independence and found its fulfilment in his appointment as the Ambassador of India in Moscow. He served both regimes diligently and loyally, taking care on both occasions to tailor his views to the views that prevailed in the ruling circles.

This is particularly noticeable in the case of the nine years, 1952-1961 that Mr. Menon spent in Moscow as Ambassador. He knew that during that period Pandit Nehru who was the Prime Minister as well as the External Affairs Minister saw only the bright side of the Russian Revolution and was interested in advertising and popularising it. Under the influence of that knowledge Mr. Menon became a devotee of the Revolution and of the existing Russian regime. The devotion then formed continued even after retirement and is now expressing itself through work for the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society, a work that is highly regarded in top governmental circles.

The book is Mr. Menon's offering to the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution. It is a combination of two earlier books, *The Flying Troika* and *Russian Panorama*. The earlier books are published together in one moderately priced volume without any substantial revision. The author declares that he did not find any revision necessary except for the omission of some parts for reasons of space.

The first part consists of the political diary which

records many events that took place during Mr. Menon's stay in Moscow. The events are wellknown and the writer does not throw any new light on them. Mr. Menon sees everything through Russian eyes and is naturally very critical of all actions and policies of the United States of America. The diary is, however, only "the record of one man's reactions" and will have to take its place along with several other records. There is nothing outstanding in Mr. Menon's record.

The other part is a book of travels which is far more interesting. Mr. Menon was able to travel extensively and he has given picturesque descriptions of all parts of Russia that he visited. His descriptions of the several Asian Republics that he visited and of the progress made there in the fields of education, health and industrial and social development will be read with keen interest. However, he moved about with blinkers on his eyes. He has not a word to say about the destruction and dispersal of several national groups in the Republics that he visited or about the domination of Russian communist rulers that he must have witnessed everywhere. Possibly, he did not find it necessary to mention them in a book of travels.

The Oxford University Press deserve to be complimented on the fine printing and get-up of the book and on the low price that they have charged for a book of about 350 pages.

V.B.K.

The Peace Corps

United States Information Service, Sikandra Road, New Delhi.

THIS is an attractively printed and profusely illustrated booklet giving information about the work that the American Peace Corps Volunteers are doing in India. The first batch of Volunteers came to India towards the end of 1961. Since then they have been coming in batches as and when the Government of India allows them to come. Most of them work in villages and small towns helping the local people help themselves in improving agriculture, in digging wells, in building roads or schools, in organising medical relief and doing many other similar things of immediate use to them.

The idea of the Peace Corps originated with the late President Kennedy. He thought that the Government-to-Government assistance which proceeds from the United States of America should be supplemented by people-to-people help provided by non-official voluntary workers who would go abroad and help people help themselves in the fields of education, sanitation, agriculture, road and house building etc. The idea appealed to the American people and by the end of 1966 over 16,000 American Peace Corps Volun-

teers were working in 53 countries. The Volunteers come from all classes of the American people and amongst them are to be found teachers, mechanics, social workers, sanitation engineers and others.

In India the Volunteers have been doing useful work in the fields of agriculture and food production, social services and smallscale industry. Some of them did splendid work in Bihar in the recent famine relief operations.

It is a pity that this silent, useful service that the Volunteers have been rendering to the people is disliked by some. The critics are mostly Communists and fellow-travellers. They are afraid that if the service is expanded and if the people learn to help themselves they will be denied the opportunity to exploit the poverty and the misery of the people for their own political ends. The ostensible excuse, of course, is that it amounts to expansion of American influence. Accordingly, they are trying to bring pressure upon the Government to stop the activities of the Volunteers. If the public is well-informed about what the Volunteers are doing they will not allow this attempt to succeed. The booklet provides the necessary information in an attractive form.

V.B.K.

The Shiv Sena, Why? and Why not?

A. N. Confectioner, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, Re. 1.

THE Shiv Sena is in the news all over the country and a lot is being said for and against it. In this situation a thoughtful statement placing before the public the pros and cons of the controversy was badly needed. This short pamphlet issued by Mr. H. R. Pardiwala performs that task in a commendable manner. It should be read by the critics as well as the supporters of the Shiv Sena.

N.S.

STRIKES IN INDIA

By V. B. KARNIK

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LIBERTY AND RUSSIAN REVOLUTION—Continued from page 6

gress in space programmes could not always compensate for genuine shortages, discomforts and unfulfilled expectations. Totalitarianism of the 20th century will go more the way of Huxley's fantasia, *Brave New World Revisited* where a non-terrorist tyranny perpetuates itself than the way of Orwell's *Nineteen eighty four*. The Soviet Union has survived half a century and its present set-up perhaps will be permanent for all times to come. It may be argued, as indeed it has been, that Soviet totalitarianism is not the terrible thing that it was under Stalin. Indeed it is not; but neither it is a free society. The curbs on individual liberties are many and are pervasive though they may appear to weigh but lightly upon the citizen.

The Russian system today has travelled far from the Stalinist days, but it has certainly several totalitarian features within it. As the society is becoming larger and more complex, there appears to have emerged a conflict between the needs of the party and those of the huge bureaucracy that has to function at several levels. The leadership has seen the colossal waste of human resources that was laid by terrorism; thought control and excessive centralization did not seem to bestow any benefits for the political system. Bureaucracy needs for effective functioning decentralization, autonomy at several levels and standards of rationality. The party's needs are centralization, authoritarian structure and manipulation of symbols and ideologies—all which are viewed with suspicion by the bureaucracy. For the time being the dominance of the party has been near total; but it has been compelled at certain stages to relinquish its prominence to the claims of the bureaucracy. Totalitarianism in all settled societies will be compelled to, modify its "totality" at certain sections when the bureaucracy or the other interests will take over. However since the party has absorbed all the interests the likelihood is that the bureaucracy will be the only competing interest to the party. With two giant interests competing there is bound to be some liberties but for the professional not for the ordinary citizen. With Hitler and Mussolini tearing the civility of Europe and with the rise of petty but terrible dictators like Franco, resulted in an important intellectual movement in Europe which was to spread all over the world. Many intellectuals saw only one alternative to Capitalism and Fascism and that was Socialism.

This conversion of the intellectuals was to be significant for the future nations of Afro-Asia. For several nationalists whether they be of Indonesia or India, were brought up to suspect capitalism and to regard imperialism as an inevitable feature of capitalism. This happened in India as well. In their zeal for building a new independent India, several nationalist intel-

lectuals saw in Soviet Russia the model to build an underdeveloped country.

—Extracts from a paper prepared for seminars on Russian Revolution organised by the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom.

(Continued from page 8)

novel *The Taste of Power* has created a sensation in European literary circles. It is a satire on the life of communist bureaucrats.

Ladislav Mnacko differed with the Government on its policy towards Israel and the Arab-Israel war. Finding it impossible to give expression to his view, he decided in protest to take a trip to Israel. The Government did not like his action and as a punishment stripped him of his honours, his membership of the Communist Party and of his citizenship. Explaining his protest action he wrote inter alia: "My protest now is purely political. I believe that a writer cannot be effective unless he recognizes the political aspects of his environment. My word carries some weight in Czechoslovakia even though I may speak only for myself, not as a representative of any group or organization. My present action, I trust, will be understood by all those who have not yet succumbed to complete apathy and abandoned all concern for political issues." The punishment inflicted upon him did not deter Mnacko. He is determined one day to return to Czechoslovakia, but until that becomes possible he will continue propagating the writers' right to dissent and give expression to his views.

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With Many Voices

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

According to the Communists, it is not the Legislature that must decide issues but it is the people who must decide. This means that all questions are to be decided not through free debate and discussions in Legislative Chambers but in the streets through violence.

—*March of the Nation*, January 3.

If anything, Naxalbari cut the Communists down to size and exposed them for the paper tigers they are.

—Frank Moraes, *Indian Express*, January 8.

The ministries have become empires by themselves.
—*Economic Times*, January 9.

Having encouraged a violent agitation, calling it satyagraha, the Opposition parties in West Bengal cannot legitimately complain of police atrocities.

—Acharya Kripalani, *Indian Express*, January 11.

There is nothing so inefficient as a dictatorship whether run by ideologists or "experts".

—Jo Grimond, M.P., *Manchester Guardian Weekly*,
January 11.

What was a legend at Bhubaneswar ended as a myth at Hyderabad.

—*Weekend Review*, January 13.

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A conference has been called by a cynic, an assemblage at which minutes are kept and hours are wasted.

—*Swarajya*, January 13.

The protest of the Soviet writers and the fantastic courage of young men like Yury Galanskov and Pavel Litvinoff reinforce, rather than weaken, the arguments in favour of constructive coexistence between Russia and the West.

—*Observer*, January 14.

Hyderabad made it very clear that the Congress had forgotten a great deal and learnt very little.

Opinion, January 16.

Law and order could not be maintained unless people were satisfied and given employment.

—*Economic Times*, January 17.

Hindi-protagonists are the enemies of Hindi and the biggest menace to the spread of Hindi language.

—Dr. P. B. Gajendragadkar, *Indian Express*,
January 17.

A country that does not trust its writers with freedom cannot possibly be serious in imagining that Radio, Peace and Progress is its own master.

—*Thought*, January 20.

The answer to Vietnam is Indonesia.

—*Current*, January 20.

There is no strategy, "open or concealed", in the Congress thinking at the Centre, to topple non-Congress Governments.

—Congress General Secretary, Sadiq Ali,
The Indian Express, January 24.

No doubt time has started running out for this country.

—Tarkeshwari Sinha, M.P., *Current*, January 27.