

A Reminder

V. B. Karnik

AFTER all the encomiums that were showered on the Russian Revolution on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary, a young Tadjik writer, a Russian citizen, Mr. Aziz Oulougzade has sprung on the world stage to remind us all of its one significant failure, a failure which makes a mockery of all its achievements on the material plane, the failure to ensure liberty. Mr. Aziz Oulougzade was in India as a member of a three-man youth delegation. On the day that the delegation was to leave New Delhi for its return trip to Moscow, Mr. Aziz Oulougzade refused to go back to Moscow and sought political asylum. From what has appeared in the papers it is clear that he does not want to go back to his motherland because he is not able to live there as a free man.

A similar drama was enacted in New Delhi some eight months back. The person involved in the drama was the daughter of Stalin, the one-time cruel dictator of Russia. Svetlana Stalin refused to go back to Moscow where she had left her son and daughter because she was convinced that under communist rule she would not be able to live her own life. In the end she decided to go to the United States and is now living there as a free citizen.

Aziz Oulougzade and Svetlana Stalin belong to two entirely different categories of Soviet citizens. The former is a humble writer making a modest living in Moscow as a teacher, while the latter belonged to the privileged category of the sons and daughters of party bosses who had all avenues of success and advancement and easy life open before them. But both developed the same feeling, the feeling that they were stifled, that they had no freedom, that they would be compelled to live a life as may be decided for them by the rulers of the country. Both revolted against this oppression and as soon as an opportunity presented itself broke away from the bondage.

The two were fortunate enough to find the opportunity and make their escape. There may be many others, hundreds and thousands, who may be pining for a similar opportunity. That is the reason why Russian rulers do not ordinarily allow their citizens to go out of their country. The officers that they send out

and the delegations that are allowed to go abroad are as a rule handpicked persons whose loyalty to the regime is above suspicion. Even then on many an occasion they are required to leave behind their dearest relatives as hostages.

The action that Svetlana Stalin and Aziz Oulougzade were compelled to take throws a flood of devastating light on the state of human liberty and rights that obtains in communist Russia. It is never easy to leave one's own country, abandon all that one may have built up during ten or twenty years of adult life and face an uncertain future. It is only an irrepressible urge to freedom that will persuade a man or a woman to make that choice. The fact that some persons feel compelled to make that choice robs the Revolution of much of its glory.

Lovers of freedom all over the world were attracted to the Russian Revolution not by its capacity to produce huge quantities of iron and steel and coal and electricity or to build up a powerful military machine or to send space ships to the Moon but by its promise to expand human liberty and to establish a society of equality and freedom. Fifty years have passed but that promise far from being fulfilled has been cruelly belied. Svetlana Stalin and Aziz Oulougzade and others like them provide from time to time a bitter reminder of that ugly fact.

COL. LESLIE SAWHNY

Col. Leslie Sawhny was an able industrialist, a keen sportsman and a great gentleman, but above all he was a dedicated and ardent democrat. It is in that capacity that *Freedom First* knew him best and would like to remember him for all the time to come.

Col. Sawhny's sad and sudden death at the early age of fifty-two is a blow to the journal, the Democratic Research Service and many other organisations with which he was closely associated. His sincerity, his fearlessness, his love of freedom and his deep ingrained humanism were always an inspiration to them. They will miss him for many many years.

Freedom First pays its humble tribute to the memory of Col. Sawhny, one of its best and most steadfast friends.

Death Of Fourth Plan

M. R. Hazaray

WHO killed the little Robin—the Fourth Plan in the offing? Of course the answer is plain. It was killed by the doctrinaire dogmatists and buried most unceremoniously by our learned Planners.

Undoubtedly, the Fourth Plan must have died of its sheer size and weight at the time of its birth.

The First Plan was avowedly modest and it merely aimed at increased production and reduction of inequalities. Independence of the country—the political flush of enthusiasm helped it succeed. The Second Plan arrived on the tide of economic success of the First Plan. Naturally it was more ambitious and aimed at development of basic and capital goods industries stepping up the outlays 10 times over from 60 Crores to 690 Crs. It however brewed the foreign exchange crisis. The Third Plan was virtually shattered by two external attacks yet it provided laudably for the twin objectives—defence and development as if they were complementary in a way and not so conflicting after all. Yet the defence expenditure had to be doubled at the cost of further economic development from Rs. 343 Crs. to Rs. 708 Crs. approximately. The Fourth Plan was to be still bigger by the same token but alas it proved abortive because of the devaluation debacle that played havoc with prices and production after two successive drought years. Following table of pattern of investment goes to prove the evergrowing sizes of the successive Plans.

Period	Public Sector	Private Sector	Total
First Plan			
1951-1956	1560	1800	3360
Second Plan			
1956-1961	3731	3100	6831
Third Plan			
1961-1966	6300	4100	10400
Fourth Plan			
1966-1971	13600	7750	21350

Thus the mathematics of multiplication was incorporated in our planning from its very inception and most probably this formidable mathematics must have driven out economics from its field. The growing sizes of the plan naturally led to growing deficit financing in the economy from Rs. 532 Crs. in the First Plan to Rs. 1200 Crs. targetted i.e. 25% of the total Plan outlays in the Second Plan and to Rs. 1150 Crs. far exceeding the target of Rs. 550 Crs. in the Third Plan.

Dependence on external assistance also increased manifold from a meagre Rs. 203 Crs. to 2600 Crores targetted in the fourth Plan. General price level similar-

ly went on spiralling merrily upto 6%, 9% and 15% per annum respectively over the period of planning. The explosion of population continued unabated and eluded planners as politicians dared not swim against the current and court unpopularity on this account.

The result of it all was the heavy burden of taxes both direct and indirect that became unbearable to both the rich and the poor alike. The dead weight of taxes had its inevitable effect on the progress of the economy in the vital sectors like agriculture and industry. Planning produced recurrent crisis—finally resulting in crisis of confidence in the planning itself. We could not plan for full employment. On the contrary unemployment became widespread. The backlogs of unemployed increased from 5.3 million to 25 million at the beginning of the Fourth Plan. The progress of agriculture declined and that of industry slowed down. Though food production increased from 50 million tons in 1951 to 100 million tons to-day and industrial Index (Base 1956-100) jumped upto 190 at present from its low level of 74 during the First Plan period, the increase in food production or industrial production was not at all commensurate with the multiple effects produced elsewhere in the economy.

On the whole the targets of planning receded where they should have succeeded and succeeded where they should have been kept in bound. Hence it is foolish to hope for the survival of the Fourth Plan in such unnatural circumstances.

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Russia From Many Angles

ANOTHER IMPERIALISM

In the course of an article in the Los Angeles Times Mr. Louis Fischer wrote:

The internationalist concern for the world working class has given way to a Russia—first nationalism which is the cause of the real rift with China and of Cuba's defiant attitude toward the Soviet sugar daddy who gives her a 350 million-dollar annual subsidy.

Russia's nationalism irks her East European satellites and has driven Rumania to adopt an independent foreign policy. The numerous communist parties of the globe which are still puppets of Moscow have lost their revolutionary potential and are being used to buttress Russia's foreign policy. In an age when other empires are doomed, Russia should be regarded as yet another imperialist seeking power far and near at the expense of the Soviet people's standard of living. . . .

From the Czars, however, the Communists inherited a fear of the West. It is not a fear of military attack—they are too strong for that—but a fear of the corrosive effect of freedom. Close contacts with western Europe and the United States unhindered correspondence between individuals and institutions and a mutual ceasefire of vitriolic diatribes would undermine the communist autocracy which the Kremlin is determined to perpetuate despite its demonstrably high cost.

Nevertheless dissent is not dead in the Soviet Union. Soviet physicists, the indispensable men, buy abstract art and hang the pictures in their homes and try to protect the artists. Poets and writers speak out against repression with increasing vehemence and frequency. The new technologically minded generation who in 10 years will be ruling Russia are bored with the allegedly scientific doctrines of Marx and Lenin which time has disproved and want freedom and better living conditions. They deplore the wastefulness of foreign aid—especially sending billions in arms to people who cannot use them—and prefer to see the money spent inside the country.

STALIN'S PURGES

The following is an extract from a series of articles published in New York Times.

By 1967, the cumulative evidence left little doubt Stalin's purges had come close to causing Russia's defeat by Germany in World War II.

Stalin decimated his political and industrial establishment in the 1930's. Of 1,966 delegates to the 17th Soviet Party Congress in 1934 1,108 were arrested. Of 139 members of the Central Committee, 98 were arrested. The toll in the Red Army was three Soviet

Marshals, including the Commander-in-Chief, Marshal Mikhail N. Tukhachevsky, every officer who commanded a military district; two of the four fleet commanders, every army corps commander; almost every division commander; half the regimental commanders, members of military coubells and chiefs of political work. One-third to one-half of the 75,000 Red Army officers were arrested or shot.

SECOND REVOLUTION

In the course of a long article on the anniversary Time wrote:

From feudal czarist Russia the heirs of Marx and Lenin have created a modern state that trails only the U.S. in power and production. Moreover, though no country has ever freely elected a Communist government, they have managed to impose their ideology on one-third of the earth's population, about one billion people.

The cost of it all has been huge. The vicious civil war that followed the Bolshevik coup decimated the Russian population and laid waste the land. The Stalinist reign of terror destroyed millions of Russians, among them many of the most intelligent and talented, and put a permanent scar of guilt on the nation's psyche. Industrialization was accomplished only by forced labour and the long and severe deprivation of the populace. The self-defeating collectivization of agriculture was squeezed from the blood and brows of the stolid and melancholy peasantry. Fear has been the single most dominant characteristic of 50 years of Communism.

Despite the burden of such a legacy, Russia is changing faster and in more ways than at any time in its history. Instead of the fiery prophet Lenin, the obsessed and brutal Stalin or the bubbly and unpredictable Khrushchev, it is led today by an oligarchy of sober, cautious bureaucrats who embody the country's new striving for respectability. . . . the government is experimenting with economic liberalization and cautiously widening the still narrow limits of individual freedom and expression. Ideology, long the great bugaboo of Soviet life, is being sacrificed to pragmatism in order to get things done. And the regime is facing a growing gap between Russia's government and its citizens, brought about by the onslaught of technology and the rise of new and striving classes in the "classless society". . . .

Where does Russia go from here? One popular theory is that the Communist and capitalist systems are gradually converging, as the U.S. Government provides more social benefits and the Russians adopt more of the

trappings of capitalism. That theory has several serious flaws.

The Soviet government has adopted a few capitalist devices like incentives simply because the needs of modern technology make them desirable. Pressures from the new class of technocrats are also largely responsible for the loosening up of Soviet society. If people express themselves more openly in the Soviet Union today, it is certainly not because the leadership is committed to eventual democracy, but because a more varied and complicated economy requires the men who run it to be in the habit of asking questions.

The men in the Kremlin possess power that is potentially limitless and unrestrained in its exercise; they could blow the whistle on reform any day and reimpose at least some of the tight discipline of the past. Once fully launched, however, liberalization may not be so easy to stop. The vast reorganization of the Soviet economy and the increasing force of technology are producing a second revolution in the habits and outlook of the people that the Kremlin will be hard-pressed to reverse. If that revolution continues to work its influence, arousing among Russians a longing to join the modern world and giving them a freer voice to articulate that longing, it could ultimately be of more significance than even the October Revolution.

STICK TO SIMPLE THINGS

A letter to the Editor published in the The Economist gave the following piece of advice:

Let us stick to simple things. The Russia of 1967 lacks almost all the prerequisites of human dignity: for example, objective law, logic, freedom of discussion and loyalty between individuals. At the top the country is still run by a junta of bosses disposing of all the classical aids to coercion. Now empty of creative ideals, these men can be credited only by those who have seen and heard them.

Surely we should recognise twentieth-century marxism (marxism-leninism) for what it is: the instrument of mystification of a group of Eurasian war-lords. To hope that their words and deeds will evolve into a presentable life-system is absurd. Their power will last until it is overthrown by the Russian people. Meanwhile let us not celebrate anything but that people's survival.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Writing about to day-to-day life in Russia, The Economist, London stated:

Russia fifty years on is a grey place. To visit it as it commemorated the October Revolution was to realise that conditions can go on getting better for a long time without becoming good. Life in Russia is still extraordinarily inconvenient by western standards, and it is a shock, after all the talk and the reality of

east-west detente, to find the regime still so closed to outside inquiry, so absolutist and so suspicious.

Queues are still the first thing that catch the western visitor's eye: queues waiting each morning for the shops to open, queues of 100 or 200 people who have got wind of a consignment of fresh fish, queues for eggs and scarce kinds of tinned fruit, queues waiting every evening in the cold outside icecream parlours and restaurants, queues even to buy a quick drink at a wretched windy street kiosk instead of a warm pub, queues of people standing twenty minutes in the middle of Moscow before they can get a taxi even outside the rush hour.

In Russia, prices of the most essential goods stay low, and rich and poor have an equal chance of buying what is scarce; it is simply a matter of getting into the queue in time. Those who come too late inquire when the next consignment will be on sale, and take care to arrive well before the shop opens so as to get near the door.

If the visitor puts himself in a Russian's shoes he can find plenty to be glad about. Living standards have improved and the housing shortage in the cities is no longer so acute. Food in the restaurants has improved, and the supply of cars has increased so much, in Moscow anyway, that the city is a jaywalker's nightmare. And Russians have all their space achievements to be proud of, as well as their great advances in education and health services.

But when the visitor returns to his western shoes he cannot help being assailed by doubts about the real quality of life, leaving aside the material discomforts. All over Russia today the streets are filled with millions of ugly portraits of Lenin reduced to caricature by the fearlessly-jutting Batman chin, the burning, narrow, calculating eyes. (The present leadership appeared on the posters only a few days before the anniversary.) The other symbols employed for the anniversary are crude and crushing: massive hammers and sickles, zooming rockets. It would matter less if unofficial art were free, but it is not.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA A SHORT HISTORY

BY
M. R. MASANI

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Creativity In Crisis : Russian Story

Dilip Chitre

THE grit shown by the Soviet creative writer in the face of police persecution, exile, imprisonment, machine-gun squads and the cruelly idiotic grin of commissars is perhaps a more dazzling achievement of the Soviet spirit than all those technological fireworks which blind critics in underdeveloped countries like ours. It is expression which has paid a higher price than that paid by 'alienated' *avant garde* in France or the United States or even in our own country where persecution of each type is hardly known. What Sinyavsky is prepared to face in order to proclaim his own moral and aesthetic vision is the monstrous machinery of a penal colony.

Fifty years have passed. They have given us Lenin, Stalin, Malenkov, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev. They have also given us a brilliant galaxy of martyrs such as Boris Pasternak in the cause of creative and moral perception.

On one hand, we have tyranny with a changing face; on the other, we have the natural alliance of the creative spirit attaining a moral dignity unparalleled in the modern world. This upsurge of the spirit shines through the grotesque, naive, exhibitionistic, but savagely powerful works of Mayakovsky and his contemporary heirs; or it is reflected in the lonely depth and width of Boris Pasternak's tragic perception and triumphant vision.

Alienation, in an affluent and democratic society, is often a matter of cultivation. In a slumbering and impoverished democratic society like ours, it is often a luxurious form of insanity which has neither aesthetic nor moral ends before it.

In a society like the Soviet, engineered by a few theorists and monopolists of political power, alienation is painfully real and valid. To be a traitor in a situation like that is to be triumphantly human. Secondly, we who fight against a dominant minority in our society, fight an Establishment which can be continuously and openly attacked (although it can never be totally demolished) at a lesser and more indirect personal cost. To be a Genet in France is different from being a Sinyavsky in Soviet Russia. Genet's social offences are pardoned when his fellow writers sign an appeal, his creative genius is granted even certain privileges not due to thieves who cannot write: Sinyavsky's very act of writing is an offence considered deserving a 'mild' jail-term of seven years, and Sholokhov would feel sorry that it could not be as severe as in the good old days.

Therefore, I feel, that the creative crisis in Soviet literature is much more real than that in the so-called free

world. It has brought out the best qualities in a creative spirit which emerge only under real death-tensions. The Soviet establishment has a Kafkaesque quality which makes the Soviet non-Conformist writers' conflict existentially more real than that of the existential heroes of the West. It is a paradox. When witches are burnt, only then even black magic assumes the moral dignity of a Christ on the cross. When witches become celebrities instead, witchcraft leads only to decadence and further decadence.

Our own non-conformity and alienation only dwindles into schools and movements and generations. We cannot grasp the moral dignity of a mutation in the sensibility that is celebrated in the arena of death, surrounded by the sort of laughing hyenas who had totally encircled the dying Pasternak.

It is this essentially moral poignancy, this sense of profound involvement in the self-critical unfolding of sensible experience in the face of external pressures, that for me comprises the heart of the matter. This year in particular when ideologists and counter-ideologists will again take up their trumpets or pens to praise or damn the Revolution once again, I am really obsessed most with only this aspect of the Russian story.

Obsessed with a debate the frame of which has not changed over half a century, the writers in the Soviet Union still have a sense of individuality. But it is the limited individuality of a rebel whose hand is forced by his enemy or, if you like, his big Brother. Even the rebel has to claim to be a Communist, as Evtushenko has been doing. And in doing so he is forced to get involved in a politics that is very alien to his own creative calling. He may struggle admirably; he may show his ingenuity in debate; he may become a martyr and inspire an applause. But he is permanently condemned to this frame of reference which forces upon him the pressures of an intellectual mythology which is not of his own choice. This is how Esenin and Mayakovsky were dragged into a controversy which was not even remotely connected with literature. And the situation is basically unchanged.

Because of his peculiar and rigidly pre-set relationship with the Establishment on the one hand, and because of the almost congenital infection with the code of Marxist thinking—the poet must always find himself in a double-bind situation. He can think only of two major roles to play: the role of a Communist prophet-poet, which Mayakovsky chose to play; the role of a 'traitor'/martyr. Of this I suspect every Soviet writer is unconsciously aware. In fact, his writing is shaped by

this awareness. And there are some writers, like Voznesensky in our time, who derive their dynamism from the very fission caused by the conflict between the two roles.

But these younger poets, the most widely known of whom are Evtushenko and Voznesensky, are Soviet poets in the sense that their entire past has been spent in post-Revolutionary Russia. Andrei Voznesensky was born in 1933, Evgeny Evtushenko in 1933, Bella Akhmadulina in 1937. The eldest of the most important present-day Soviet poets, Evgeny Vinokurov, was born in 1925. The poetic pre-occupations of these few people will provide us with some interesting material for analysis and speculation. All these poets are individualistic. But that is not saying much. The interesting fact about them is that (and this I say only on the basis of the translations of their work I have seen) they divide into two types. Evtushenko, and to some extent Voznesensky, often turn declamatory, oratorical, and rhetorical like Mayakovsky. They show an excessive self-consciousness and an element of verbal extraversion. It is as if they force the identity of a poet upon themselves and write in the voice of a spokesman, a champion, or a prophet. Both of them, particularly Evtushenko, display their gifts like untamed prodigies. One is reminded of Esenin here as well as Mayakovsky: the precocity, verbal as well as that of the attitude towards things, reflects a self-dramatized maladjustment which prevents a mature introspection. Voznesensky, who is probably among the world's finest contemporary poets, often over-articulates his basically narrow thematic material. Things are made dramatic, they are blown up, inflated, and made a bit grotesque in his poetry. Evtushenko, who got very highly praised rather hastily by Western critics, appears even more grotesque to me. Loudness is *not all*.

On the other hand, Vinokurov and Akhmadulina seem to be writing a poetry hidden at the surface, a poetry of condensed depth and not a poetry of tonal sweep. In a sense, this is a turning inward of one's poetic concern.

I am not one of those who naively choose to see only the unfortunate political halo projected consciously or unconsciously around the head of every Soviet poet by some Western critics. But I also think that it is equally naive to assume that politics in the Soviet Union do not put pressures on the creative mind. Esenin and Mayakovsky were responding to a situation which contained, among other things, such pressures. And it is apparent that both their poetic devices derive partly from this sense of siege and compulsion to adapt their poetic gifts and urges in a specific manner. This is what must have affected even the literary attitudes of a generation which has seen the persecution of Pasternak and the victimization of Sinyavsky and Daniel.

Voznesensky is facing peculiar pressures: as a poet he has a strain of Mayakovsky in him; but he also

shares something with Pasternak, with the young poet Brodsky. He is torn between a vague rhetoric and a concrete mysticism. And he cannot wrench himself free: he chooses to see himself as a prophet-martyr and a lyricist turned inward at the same time. The two roles are incompatible: they tend to split the very personality of his language. His speech shows a distinct schizophrenic crack.

It is a tragic but magnificent struggle. Here one sees the poetic conscience of one of the world's most gifted contemporary poets strained under peculiar environmental pressures.

And I am not ashamed to treat Voznesensky as a symbol of the creative mind in the Soviet Union. It is a story of creativity in crisis. It is a story of men and women systematically alienated from their own creative selves by the demands of a State. Their great gifts and their restless urge to experiment thwarted by the presence of a rigid code of an ideology which dares even to predict the possibilities of poetry—its content, mode, form, substance, and architecture. They have a pre-assigned role to play. And if they refuse to play it, they are forced to rebel. And rebels are unfree: their antagonist limits and dictates the course of their creative careers. A Soviet writer even a rebel against political pressures, is condemned to turn political. This inhibits his compass and suppresses his inner drive and energy. His destiny thus becomes historical: he is deprived of the historical position of the artist who transcends his own culture while giving its inner diseases, conflicts, and contradictions a miraculously detailed and vivid form. The seismograph of his sensibility itself damaged, the brilliance of his expression becomes chaotic and intermittent.

At this point, inevitably, my thoughts turn to our own situation as writers in India.

The Russian Revolution has had a tremendous impact on the minds of the Indian intelligentsia of a generation and more ago. Even today, one hears of 'progressive' and 'reactionary' writers in Indian languages, although one hears less about them as one used to about 20 years ago.

The mythology of a Revolution, of bloodshed and a miraculous rebirth, does appeal to many utopia-seeking romantic writers. And here I see a self-imposed inhibition on creativity, narrowing the conscience and the sensibility of many writers. They tend to confuse ideological dogma with moral involvement. With the massive economic pressures we face today, with our cultural decadence and social diseases, with the sheer magnitude of our problems—we tend to become narrow, rigid, pessimistic, or desperate. Such tensions often help to stimulate creativity. But rigid dogmas, even if they intensify the creative writer's aesthetic vision, often lead him astray from his central concern as an artist. Pushed into the position of a propagandist,

(Continued on page 10)

Equality In Soviet Life

S. H. Deshpande

IT has been said that there are no experts on Soviet Russia—only varying degrees of ignorance. Our ignorance of the state of affairs regarding income distribution in the Soviet Union is abysmally deep. One reason is that the Soviet Union does not publish data on income distribution—a fact which in itself, needless to say, is quite significant. The other reason is that Western scholars, many of whom have devoted a whole lifetime to putting together a reasonably intelligible picture of the Soviet economy have paid more attention to overall growth rates, rates of industrial production, particularly heavy industry production, and relatively less to the consumption and welfare standards of the Soviet citizens. There are welcome signs of the situation in this respect having begun to change in the past few years but it still cannot be described as satisfactory. In this light an attempt to tackle the subject would be a foolhardy venture. But the subject happens to be of surpassing interest and an attempt, however weak and faltering, needs to be made.

Since the state of information forbids the use of quantitative measures, what is attempted here is a compilation of information on different layers of income-earners in Soviet society from the top to the bottom, mostly in qualitative terms. Figures are used, whenever it has been possible to obtain them but the reader needs to be cautioned against attaching any spurious precision to them, since even Western scholars, whose material has been primarily used here, are not always in agreement with one another on many issues pertaining to the facts of the case. The figures, therefore, should be looked upon as indicators of 'broad orders of magnitude' and nothing more.

The richest class of persons in Soviet Russia has, it seems, always consisted of successful artists and 'intellectuals'. John Gunther, in his *Inside Europe*, 1936, mentioned playwright Vasily V. Shkvarkin as earning 200,000 roubles in royalties in 1934, and an editor of a comic journal earning 30,000 roubles per month. Top-ranking film stars too would belong to this category, and also perhaps leading scientists and inventors. Next would come the highest Government and Party functionaries, heads of secret police, army generals etc. High Government and Party officials live in such unbelievable secrecy that an idea of their material wealth is difficult to form. The salaries which the Communists accept are 'miniscule' says Gunther. He also talks of the frugality of Stalin's living and of the financial probity of other members of the Government. Stalin's salary is mentioned to be about 100 roubles per month. However, salaries are a poor indicator of

the real wealth of persons in the Soviet Union, particularly of those in the favoured categories as Gunther himself is careful to note. Stalin occupied three rooms in the Kremlin but his dacha (*country house*) was the "Soviet equivalent of the country home of an American millionaire." This must have been, by and large, true of other Government functionaries and high Party officials. Djilas speaks of the Party official being considered by his fellow citizens as "very rich and as a man who does not have to work".

Two things need to be noted about the very highest income-class, the 'cream of the cream'. Their number, probably, was not very large, as compared to that of similar income earners in the capitalist countries. "Among all the one hundred and sixty million Russians, there are probably not ten men who earn £5000 per year. The proportion of national income controlled by the richest, therefore, would not be very significant.

The classes of 'Salaried employees' and 'Wage earners', in that order, would constitute the next income classes in the hierarchy. 'Wage earners' include workers up to the rank of foreman, including apprentices. 'Salaried employees' consist of supervisory or administrative personnel of the rank of foreman or over, up to and including the director of the factory, engineers and other technical personnel, doctors, economists, teachers and other hired professional workers and office workers generally. Whatever Soviet Policy existed in respect of wage differentials existed in respect of these classes (and state-farm workers). Soon after the Revolution, in 1919, the 2nd Trade Union Congress made a plea for greater equality in wage-scales and laid down very narrow differentials. The 3rd congress in 1920 revised the earlier policy and increased the differences quite considerably. This policy remained in effect until 1926 when the 7th Congress again opted for greater equality. Tomskey, in his report at this Congress made a plea for 'elementary class justice' and incidentally threw some light on the distribution of income in the USSR. He said, "In truth, when foreigners travel here they are surprised most of all by the circumstance that under a dictatorship of the proletariat in our revolutionary unions..... the difference between the pay of qualified and unqualified labourers is of such colossal magnitude as does not exist in Western Europe....." Widespread revision of wage scale then followed to remain effective until 1931 when Stalin in his speech at the meeting of factory managers condemned 'equalitarianism'

in no uncertain terms. There has been no official espousal of equalitarianism since.

Abram Bergson, from a study of the Soviet wage structure in the early years concluded that in 1928 (which coincided with the heyday of equalitarianism) the inequality in the earnings of Soviet wage earners was 'distinctly' less than in 1914. By 1934 the inequality had increased (probably because of its official approval after 1931) but was still less than that which characterised the pre-Revolution period. Bergson attributes this greater equality to the absence of trade-unions of skilled workers which generally have the effect of keeping their wage levels high in capitalist countries; to greater equality in opportunities for higher education and skilled crafts; and to the existence of non-monetary incentives. But by 1937 the inequalities within the ranks of wage-earner had increased still further and may not have been far different from those existing in the capitalist countries.

The great divide between agricultural and non-agricultural incomes has been frequently commented upon. Jasny believes that the difference between rural and urban incomes at the beginning of the First Five Year Plan was substantial, the urban per capita income being 3.7 times the rural. But even if the Gosplan estimate of the urban incomes being 2.7 times the rural is accepted Jasny's calculations show that this difference went on increasing over time. Thus in 1928 rural per capita income was about 37% of urban income; in 1950 it was 31.1%, in 1952 it was 28.8% and in 1956, 31.5%. "This great disparity", observed Jasny, "not unreasonable for a backward agricultural country but unsuitable for an industrial country, should have been reduced over the years. Rather than this, it widened considerably, and the development brought the situation to near catastrophic dimensions".

It is necessary to take notice of the inequalities prevailing *within* the agricultural sector. In the first place state-farm (*sovkhoz*) workers. This is because the state farm is "Socialist Property" and the worker on the state farm is a government employee getting a guaranteed wage, just like an industrial wage earner. On the other hand, the collective farm is "Co-operative Property" and the State does not directly look after the wages or the well-being of the collective farm member. What he gets is a *share* in the total output of the farm and there too, his remuneration is not the first charge on the income of the *Kolkhoj*. The compulsory delivery to the Government, at fixed prices, is the first charge. In addition there are deductions for various common funds. The meagre residual that remains is divided among the members in accordance with their individual work contributions.

And yet, the poor peasants certainly were not the most disadvantaged section of the society. To locate this section we have to turn to the "world of barbed wires, watch-towers, police dogs and hungry desti-

tute men" who peopled the forced labour camps and forced settlements. The estimates of the number of the inmates of these camps have ranged between 2 million to 20 million. Swianiewicz, himself a one-time inmate, puts the figure at about 7 million in 1941 (excluding the prisoners of war who, according to him, accounted for another 5 to 7 million). Jasny gives a figure 3.5 million at Stalin's Death. If Swianiewicz's estimate of 7 million is accepted, 8 per cent of the labour force in 1941. These outcasts, mostly young men of 35 to 50, were condemned to a life of hard, exhausting, labour with little by way of food, clothing, accommodation or ordinary personal liberties.

We have some definite idea of what is happening to the various bottom layers of the Soviet society after the death of Salin. Starting first with the inmates of the forced labour camps a definite improvement becomes discernible. On the one hand there has been no mass intake of prisoners as in the worst of Stalinist times; on the other, large numbers have been released since Stalin's death, particularly during 1953-57. In addition, some concessions have been extended to the prisoners.

The *Kolkhozniks* have received a much better treatment at the hands of Stalin's successors. There is, basically, evidence of the official attitude towards agriculture having changed. Agriculture is no more an 'internal colony' at the expense of which industry is to be built; production considerations have begun to matter more than ever. Whatever the soundness of Khrushchev's agrarian policies, underlying them was the realization that at the bottom of the production difficulties of agriculture lay the miserably low reward which the collective farmer obtained for his work.

A factor making for greater equality within the *agricultural* sector is the efforts made to enlarge the area of state farms. All the virgin lands (about a 100 million acres) opened up for cultivation since 1958 are entirely operated by state farms. In addition numerous *kolkhozes* have been turned into *sovkhozes*. As a result of these measures the *sovkhoz* share in the total agricultural output which was 10 per cent in 1954 had gone up to 20 per cent in 1962.

Since 1957 amelioration also has come to the low paid workers. In January 1957 minimum wages for wage-earners and salaried employees were increased. This increase was expected to raise the wages of the low-paid workers by 33 per cent. Also income and bachelor taxes on earnings of upto 370 roubles monthly were abolished and tax rates were reduced for middle categories of income earners.

It is quite possible that the scales might at one time be tipped in favour of the low-paid wage-earners' class and at another in favour of the farmers in accord-

(Continued on page 11)

Russian Revolution-A Balance Sheet

COMMUNISTS in the Soviet Union celebrated in November the 50th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. This is a time of reckoning. What have the Bolsheviks done in 50 years? What is going on in Russia today? Where is the world Communist movement headed?

Here are findings of the world's foremost authorities.

The old Russian Empire—under Soviet rule—has made gains in education, science, social services, industrialization, urbanization, military power, missile and space technology.

In total volume of economic production, Russia has moved up from fifth rank in the world in 1917 to a position second only to that of the United States. The U.S.S.R. still runs a poor second—with a gross national product only 45 per cent, or less, of American output.

The rate of Soviet economic growth has slowed in recent years. It is being exceeded in a number of non-Communist countries, including Japan, Germany, Taiwan, Greece, France and Italy.

On a per capita basis, Soviet economic output ranks around 20th in the world—behind such countries as Luxembourg, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Israel, Switzerland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Venezuela and New Zealand.

Of the major powers involved in two world wars, the U.S.S.R. has had a slower growth rate in production, relative to population, than any of the others. All countries that were ahead of Russia in 1917 are ahead of it today.

Where human consumption—the standard of living—is concerned, the Soviet people are even further behind other nations than per capita GNP indicates. The Soviet regime has given first priority to building heavy industry and a war machine—not goods that benefit people.

Russian agriculture—forcibly collectivized by the Communists—has proved to be one of the most costly and least productive farm systems ever devised. In recent years, the Soviets have had to buy around 2 billion dollars' worth of surplus food from the West to avert acute distress.

Public education has been one of the genuine achievements of the Soviet regime. Today, 95 per cent of the people can read and write—in some language—compared with about 40 per cent at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution. But liberal learning has suffered from Marxist dogma, Communist propaganda, censorship, lack of academic freedom.

The Bolshevik experiment—over 50 years—has taken a terrible toll of death and suffering during various periods of war, civil war, Red terror, Stalinist purges, farm collectivization, forced industrialization, slave-

labour camps, mass deportations and liquidations of ethnic minorities. Western demographers calculate that the Soviet Union would have at least 80 million more people than it does today, if it had not been for deaths and lessened birth rates caused over this period by war, terror, famine and pestilence.

Communism has expanded its domain over 15 countries, containing 1.1 billion people—a third of the world's population—and a fourth of its land area. None of these territorial acquisitions came about through free elections. All were the results of conquest, coup or subversion. Now, the Communist bloc is beginning to disintegrate. In a modern world, Bolshevism appears an anachronism.

As Russia looks ahead, many pressures—internal and external—are building up in the Soviet system.

The people want a better way of life—now—instead of “building for the future,” which never seems to come. “After 50 years of Communist promises,” said one observer, “the people are tired of waiting.”

They want better housing, more consumer goods of better style and quality, higher real wages and a better selection of foods, more privacy for family living, more private-property rights, less interference from the police and petty bureaucracy, and maybe—some day—an automobile.

Half of the Soviet population today is made up of persons 26 years old or younger. They did not live through the Revolution. Many cannot remember Stalin or World War II.

Youngsters are fed up with indoctrination in Communist ideology. Freedom of thought and action are valued more. Western music, dancing, clothes attract younger people. Poets and writers are popular; their works, banned by the regime, have a large clandestine circulation.

Alcoholism, vandalism and juvenile delinquency—which the Soviets call “hooliganism”—have risen at an alarming rate. Reform schools called “institutes for public re-education” have been set up for juvenile offenders.

A cultural revolt is evident among better-educated Russians—writers, artists, scientists, educators and scholars. What they want is more freedom of expression.

Although the Communist Party still frowns on religion, people seem bored with atheism. There has been a growth of religious feeling and church attendance, particularly among working-class people.

The crime wave has grown to major proportions. Stealing from the State by citizens has become so widespread that repeated offenders are sent before firing

squads. A Ministry for Preservation of Public Order was established to cope with the magnitude of crime.

Unlike a democracy or constitutional monarchy, the Soviet system provides no legal machinery for an orderly succession to leadership. Thus, a permanent struggle for power goes on at the top of the Communist Party.

Special-interest groups are said to be fighting for a larger share of the power and wealth. A constant struggle goes on over allocation of Soviet resources between competing demands of industry, agriculture, science and the military.

The Communist Party, the Red Army, the KGB (secret police) are still the pillars of power. The KGB wields the greatest power in a physical sense. The KGB monitors the party, checks on the military, runs the internal police, customs and border guard.

The primary purpose of economic growth in the U.S.S.R. has been not peace and prosperity for the Russian people, but advancement of the Soviet regime as a political and military power.

Despite talk of "peaceful coexistence", *detente* and "liberalization" in the Soviet Union and its satellites, Kremlin rulers remain dedicated to Communist principles of "world revolution," "class warfare" and "wars of liberation."

Regardless of treaties on nuclear tests, outer space and "nonproliferation", there has been no abatement of the Soviet drive to gain supremacy in the race for nuclear arms—in both offensive weapons and missile defense.

The Soviet announcement on October 10 that military spending for 1968 will go up by 15 per cent means the largest increase in Soviet history.

The Kremlin has pledged a billion dollars in military aid to North Vietnam. Also, the Russians are re-equipping Egypt and some other Arab countries with an

estimated 2 billion dollars in arms to replace those which were lost in the Arab-Israeli war last spring.

Significant trends in Soviet military and foreign policy appear to be the following:

The Russians will try to maximize unrest in Latin America, radicalize the Middle East, expand into the Mediterranean. They are hoping that Europe will turn neutral, and that Africa will become racially anti-American. In Asia, the Russians fear the Chinese, and are trying desperately to get a pro-Soviet regime in Peking.

The Soviets are building up expeditionary forces which are flexible, diversified, airborne and amphibious, in order to inject Soviet power more rapidly into local uprisings and military conflicts far from home. Included are long-range troop and cargo transports, big helicopters, paratroopers and a new Marine Corps.

Already the Soviets have penetrated deeper into the Mediterranean and Middle East than at any other time in Russian history.

Communist solidarity is cracking. Eastern European satellites have become more independent. Red China, formerly the No. 1 friend, now is the No. 1 enemy. The Kremlin must reckon with a future when 780 million hungry Chinese will have nuclear missiles. The Chinese have historical claims to some Soviet territory, and ideological claims to leadership of the revolutionary movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Fragmentation of the Communist bloc doesn't mean there is no longer any threat—it just means the threat is different.

—U. S. News & World Report, November 6, 1967

(Continued from page 6)



"Hold out for a few more months, we're coming!"

he will only be a spectacular example of a waste of talent like Mayakovsky. Pushed into the position of Sinyavsky, he will face victimization. Pushed into the position of Voznesensky, he will become a rebel wasting his tremendous talent only in defending his rights as a creative man through his poems—and will be prevented from producing his best, natural work.

And yet today, in this country the admirers of the Soviet revolution ask us to become 'progressive' even if that involves developing a monstrous naivety. Worse still, when a fellow-writer like me worries about the fate of a Sinyavsky or appreciates the unflinching assertion of individuality by a Voznesensky, he is branded as an American agent.

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

SOVIET LIFE—Continued from page 8

ance with shifts in political exigencies. But on the whole the concern for the underdog seems to have increased and this augurs well for the future.

This conclusion is reinforced by other developments. The pension law of July 1966 sharply increased pension rates. Tuition fees charged since 1940 for secondary and higher education have been abolished. The length of the working week has been cut from 47 hours to 41. Further cuts were promised in the 7 year plan but seem to have been shelved. There is a good deal of loosening of exceptionally stringent labour-laws. Powers of the trade unions (factory committees) have been a little enlarged.

For the upper classes we have once again the testimony of John Gunther *Inside Russia Today* from which we can get an idea of their standard of life and how it looks if contrasted with that of the common people. The composition of this class appears to remain the same and once again the artists and certain kinds of intellectuals top the list. "What might be called a millionaire class has grown up, composed mostly of writers who earn royalties, musicians, scientists and inventors. The richest man in Russia is supposed to be a composer of popular music, whose earnings have probably amounted to 1,000,000 (old) roubles (over \$100,000) per year. Several well-known figures like Galina Ulanova the celebrated ballet dancer, and the novelist Konstantin Simonov, are supposed to have "unlimited" bank accounts; their balances are so large that they can draw without limit". Senior members of the Government probably draw monthly salaries of 1000 to 1800 roubles or \$1100 to \$1980.

There are some signs that the elite in the Soviet society—top industrial managers, plant directors, leading engineers, senior military officers, popular novelists and artists, members of the Academy of Sciences, University professors—are slowly assuming the character of a 'class', in the sense that their children have easier access to higher education and better paid jobs.

Women continue to enjoy equality of status as in the Stalinist times. Reviewing the progress made by women Peter Wiles observed, "...in the domain of economic equality for women the USSR is very far ahead of us indeed, even allowing for overwork and a great deal of defeminization distasteful even to career women". It is an idle speculation, but one worthwhile indulging in, that with rising living standards women may decide to give more time for household duties, prefer the more congenial comforts of the home and withdraw at least from the more 'masculine' professions, since it was the economic circumstances which largely forced them into the ranks of workers.

The general impressions that can be formed from this account are three (1) Inequality in Russia, during the Stalinist times was quite glaring (2) In the post-Stalin period, inequality seems to have been reduced. (3) At the moment the indications appear to point to a still greater equality in the future.

The appearance of some of the writers, artists, scientists and 'intellectuals' in the highest categories is a striking Soviet feature. An obvious reason seems to be the political importance of these classes as effective weapons of propaganda. A totalitarian system, while it is exceptionally brutal to dissenting intellectuals, must also be exceptionally generous to intellectuals who sing paeans of praise to the Establishment. One who has tasted the quality of Soviet 'literature', particularly of the Stalinist times, need never be under illusion that genuine artistic merit mattered even a bit for being the recipient of state largesse. The point is obliquely strengthened by the fact that certain categories of intellectuals, like the medical profession, who have no propaganda value, get very low emoluments and enjoy a low social status.

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

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—Chanchal Sarkar referring to Kerala, *Hindustan Standard*, December 8.

All in all, it looks as if we are in for pretty large deficits in State and Central budgets.
—*Weekend Review*, December 9.

Communism is no longer a monolith.
—Frank Moraes, *Indian Express*, December 12.

Majority rule is not the same thing as democracy.
—C. Rajagopalachari, *Swarajya*, December 16.

In a secular state, prayer meetings should be for prayer and not for politics.
Opinion, December 19.

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—Mathai Manjuran, Kerala Labour Minister, *The Hindu*, December 19.

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—Mrs. Indira Gandhi, *Times of India*, December 25.

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—Y. B. Chavan, *Times of India*, November 28.

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—*Indian Express*, November 28.

What was happening in West Bengal was that a Government which had lost its majority was bent on prolonging its hold on power.
—*Weekend Review*, November 25.

The Congress leaders are becoming their own worst enemy.
—*The Economic Times*, November 28.

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—L. K. Jha, *The Economic Times*, December 28.