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EDITOR: M. R. MASANI

BREAD OR FREEDOM ?

M. R. Masani

"IS it better to have elections now or a stable economy?" we are asked these days.

When some of us joined Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel and B. R. Ambedkar in framing the Constitution of the Republic, we thought we had answered that question by enacting a Constitution which assured both elections and economic stability. In fact, we enjoyed both for twenty-five years from 26th January 1950 when our Republic was established.

Now, stability is not necessarily a good thing. Stability can be good or bad—it can be at a high level of freedom or a low level of slavery. It can be the stability of prosperity or the stability of poverty. So what is obviously wanted is economic progress and prosperity along with stability.

It is not a new question that is being put to us. The Communists and Fascists have posed this question for a long time to justify their dictatorship. 'Do you want bread or freedom?' is the way Stalin, then Hitler and then Mao posed this question.

Lenin and Trotsky said to the Russian people: "Just endure our dictatorship for ten years, put up with all the hardships, tighten your belts, and then what will happen? The millennium will arise. The State will wither away; the land will flow with milk and honey." That was the dream of Lenin and Trotsky. Today we are fifty-five years away from the time when Lenin and Trotsky asked for a few years' sacrifice so that a beautiful future would emerge. But the Russian people do not find the State withering away; they do not find even the dictatorship withering away. Today in Moscow people are still without homes; today they are getting by without enough clothes; the bread queues in Moscow in recent years have often been longer than they have been any time since the Revolution.

Ask a man: 'Do you want a bed to sleep on or a table to eat on?' Being simple enough not to see the antithesis between bed and table, he will say 'both'. Ask a woman whether she wants a *choli* or a sari, and she too will say: "Why, of course, both". Ask a man whether he wants a home or an office or shop and once again the answer will be: "But why must I choose? Naturally, I want both a place to live in and a place to work in." Of course, our common man or woman would be right.

This choice that is offered between bread and free-

dom is an altogether false antithesis. There is no clash between bread and freedom or between elections and economic prosperity. On the contrary, by and large, they go together. If by bread is understood consumer goods in general, ask yourself which are the countries where 'the consumer is king', where his numerous daily wants and needs are met best, and the answer will be the United States of America, Canada,

You Said It

By LAXMAN



—Or maybe, the calendar has been amended!

— Courtesy: *Times of India*

Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, Sweden, West Germany, and, in our own continent, Japan and Israel. These are obviously the countries with functioning democracies, a free press, considerable dissent and periodic elections. And which are the countries where there is the greatest poverty and privation for the man in the street, the greatest shortages and the worst quality of consumer goods? They are the Soviet Union and Communist China which do not have elections or the rule of law or a free press. So the record shows that countries that have elections have economic prosperity while countries that do not have elections have,

THOSE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS

Hedrick Smith

(*New Age* of November 7, 1976, under the title 'Talk Less, Talk Sense' took exception to a remark made by Mr. Sanjay Gandhi and quoted in the *Hindustan Times* of October 30 that "inequalities are more pronounced in socialist countries. The wage differential there is one to 20 and the party leaders do not disclose their wages". As it happens, Mr. Sanjay Gandhi was right on this point as will be seen from the following extracts from a recent book *The Russians* by Mr. Hedrick Smith, a Pulitzer Prize winner and for three years *New York Times* correspondent in Moscow.)

PICK any weekday afternoon to stroll down Granovsky Street two blocks from the Kremlin, as I have, and you will find two lines of polished black Volga saloons, engines idling and chauffeurs watchfully eyeing their mirrors. They are parked self-confidently over the kerbs, in defiance of No Parking signs. Their attention is on No. 2 Granovsky, a drab beige structure, windows painted over and a plaque that says: "In this building on April 19, 1919, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin spoke before the commanders of the Red Army headed for the [civil war] front."

A second sign, by the door, identifies the building simply as "The Bureau of Passes". Now and then, men and women emerge with discreet brown paper packages, and settle comfortably in the rear seats of the Volgas to be chauffeured home.

At the far end of the building, other chauffeurs are summoned by loudspeaker into an enclosed and guarded courtyard to pick up telephoned orders for home delivery. A white-haired watchman at the gate shoos away curious pedestrians, as he did me when I paused there.

For these people are part of the Soviet elite doing their shopping in a closed store deliberately unmarked to avoid attracting attention, accessible only by pass.

An entire network of such stores serves the upper

crust of Soviet society. These stores insulate them from the chronic shortages, endless queueing and rude service that plague ordinary citizens. Here, the politically anointed can obtain rare Russian delicacies like caviar, smoked salmon, the best canned sturgeon, export brands of vodka or unusual vintages of Georgian and Moldavian wines that are rarely available elsewhere.

Perquisites are parcelled out according to rank. The very top leaders get home delivery or supposedly use stores right inside the Kremlin and Central Committee headquarters. Deputy ministers and the Supreme Soviet executive group have their special shop at a Government building on Bersenevsky Embankment Road. Old Bolsheviks who joined the Party before 1930 and are now on pension have a special shop on Komsomol Lane. The value and quality of the *Kremlevsky payok*, as it is called—the "Kremlin ration" — is arranged in descending order, according to those receiving them.

* * *

Dotted around Moscow are tailors, hairdressers, laundrers, cleaners, picture framers, and other retail outlets—secretly serving a select clientele. "I couldn't believe my eyes. I wanted to buy everything in the store," a middle-aged woman journalist confided to me after she had been smuggled into one store by a

BREAD OR FREEDOM? (Contd.)

by and large, people starving for the needs of life.

Now, need this be a matter for surprise? Is it not obvious that it is only men who can change their government from time to time whose needs have to be attended to, because if they are not met they will change their government? On the other hand, is there any earthly reason why a slave should be well fed or looked after? Prison and concentration camps are not places celebrated for the quality of their food or the style of their clothes or amenities in housing. This is obvious again, for the wretched slave who cannot change his government does not have to be looked after. He or she has no alternative—short of revolution—but to put up with starvation, lack of clothing and shelter and the needs of life. Those who built the Egyptian pyramids by slave labour died by the thousand in the process. Those who built Stalin's forced labour canals died by the thousand on the job.

I had a hand in the drafting, from 1948 to 1950,

of the Constitution of the Republic and I still think it is the best one the Indian people could give themselves. I was, however, early to see the dangers by which the Constitution was threatened. Speaking at a Seminar in Coonoor from October 20 to 27, 1968, I had observed: "Mrs. Indira Gandhi is reported to have said that Parliamentary Democracy in India is there for keeps and there is no danger of any kind of upset or military dictatorship. I hope she is right. As a democrat, I would like that to be true, but I can't share her optimism. Neither on economic grounds nor non-economic grounds can we say that parliamentary democracy is secure in India. The prevailing disgust with the politician, good and bad alike, is a very real thing." Those fears have, alas, now become grim facts.

My reply to the question with which we started therefore is: "It is best to have both elections and economic progress. We want both Bread and Freedom. We want Bread in and through Freedom".

powerful friend. "For them," added her husband, "Communism has arrived."

For another privileged sliver of Soviet society there are eight hard-currency Beryozka shops in Moscow where Russians with "certificate roubles" can buy imported goods at bargain prices. Certificate roubles are a special currency usually issued to those who have earned money abroad—diplomats, trusted journalists, poets, and the like—which they must change back into Soviet money. But well-connected government officials supposedly get part-pay in these certificates, which trade on the black market at up to 8-to-1 for regular roubles.

Many Russians are infuriated at the existence of these stores which are, in effect, a consumer goods sector where Soviet currency is not accepted. "It is so humiliating, so insulting to have stores in our country where our own money is not valid," fumed a white-collar worker. And it so brazenly flouts the proclaimed ideals of socialist equality.

This privileged class is a sizeable chunk of Soviet society—well over a million, and counting relatives, probably several million. Its precise size is one of many elusive things about Soviet society, since the Russians do not admit it exists. Salary levels are deceptive measure of privilege. For example, Brezhnev's official salary, according to what I was told, is 900 roubles (£640) a month but his other perquisites make his real income far higher, though incalculable.

* * *

The nerve centre of the system is known as the *nomenklatura*, the nomenclature or secret roster of those who hold the most sensitive positions and who are selected by the Party bosses. Nomenklatura exists on practically every level of Soviet life from a village to the Kremlin. It operates like a self-perpetuating, self-selecting fraternity.

The one other avenue into the Soviet elite is the ability of an individual to contribute to the prestige of the Soviet State in some demonstrable way. A leading scientist, prima ballerina, cosmonaut, Olympic champion, violinist, or military commander can earn status in the Soviet elite—status, but not power, and that is the essential difference that marks off the political elite from all others.

PARTY MONOPOLY

The Party holds the monopoly of bestowing on them the prizes and ranks that guarantee a life of ease, or simply deciding who gets profitably published. The Party also punishes. It can withhold official recognition, as it did in the early years in denying Solzhenitsyn the Lenin Prize; in suspending the right to travel abroad for Rostropovich, the famous cellist.

After the Revolution, Lenin decreed that talented specialists should be paid more than ordinary workers and that scientists should get special food rations, in spite of Communism's egalitarian goals. But it was Stalin who really developed the system of privilege and boldly defended it with capitalistic logic — on the grounds that certain groups, who were especially va-

luable to the state, merited special pay and rewards.

Now an entire department of the Party Central Committee known by the innocuous title *Upravleniye Delami*—"the Administration of Affairs"—and with a secret budget operates and equips an extensive stable of choice apartment houses, country dachas, guest houses, car pools, and security-screened servants for the power elite. A Moscow journalist explained to me that these servants have to sign a statement saying they will not gossip about how the elite conduct their private lives. They are rewarded for their discretion with their own special stores and dachas.

The most conspicuous symbols of privilege are the chauffeur-driven limousines, with their grey curtains discreetly shrouding VIPs from curious glances. They race down the centres of streets while policemen frantically motion other traffic to the kerb. A loud buzzer warns the traffic cop to halt other vehicles when one of the bigshots heads out of the Kremlin toward the green-belt villa settlements of the most mighty. Word gets radioed ahead to other police on the route.

The cream of the elite, about 20 people in all—Politburo members and national secretaries of the Party—use black Zil limousines, handtooled and worth about £40,000 apiece. I once peered into a parked leadership Zil until a security man waved me away. It looked like an elongated Lincoln Continental with

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue deals with some fundamental problems like the compatibility of democracy and economic progress on the one hand and communism with extreme inequalities on the other. These are the themes of an article by the Editor and extracts from Hedrick Smith's book *The Russians*.

World News is a veritable *tour d'horizon* of the entire globe from U.S.A. through U.K. and Czechoslovakia to North Korea.

A. G. Noorani and Geeta Doctor contribute reviews.

There are also four interesting letters.

a posh interior—soft armchair seats, air conditioning, radio telephones, and other gadgetry. Stalin was known for using a convoy of six cars—five Zils and one Packard, using a different car each time so that no one would know precisely where he was. Khrushchev cut it back to four. Brezhnev has a stable of western models (Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud, Citroen-Maserati, Lincoln, Mercedes and Cadillac) given him by foreign leaders because of his fetish for posh cars...

For the second echelon the most prestigious car is the Chaika, a bulky, high-bodied limousine that looks like a pregnant Fifties-style Packard. So well known are Chaikas for barging down the special centre lane of main avenues, the lane reserved for VIP cars, that it has colloquially become known as "the Chaika Lane". Cabinet ministers, admirals and marshals, and

important visiting foreign dignitaries rate Chaikas. Some Western embassies and businesses have bought them for 10,000 roubles (£7,000). Ordinary Russians sometimes rent them for wedding parties.

So vast are the fleets of chauffeur-driven state cars (mostly black Volgas) that ordinary Russians take luxury cars for political bigshots for granted. But I have heard people complain that limousine drivers charge through narrow intersections without slowing down, scattering pedestrians like chickens on a country road. An American black woman attending the Soviet-sponsored World Congress of Peace-Loving Forces in 1973, was so uncomfortable at the lordly way the Chaika driver was racing through the crowds with her official delegation, that she complained that it reminded her of the czarist nobility splattering mud on the peasants. "Shhhh," cautioned the official Soviet guide, "that's not nice to say."

As ostentatious tokens of privilege, however, the chauffeur-driven cars are atypical. Generally, the Soviet political elite enjoys its privilege life in privacy and inconspicuous consumption. I was a bit surprised myself in 1974 attending the glittering reception held in the cool elegance of St George's Hall in the Kremlin in honour of President Nixon. The tables groaned with delicacies—several kinds of caviar, smoked salmon, roast suckling pig. Waiters in white livery moved among the hundreds of guests from the Soviet elite. It was only natural for American reporters to mention the regal hospitality. But the Soviet press kept a discreet silence, and not a glimpse of this sumptuous ostentation appeared on Soviet television.

This is typical of the Kremlin leaders, for their lives are unseen. They dwell in exclusive residential ghettos, spend their leisure hours at their own holiday hideaways or in clubs segregated by rank. When they travel out of Moscow they use a special airport, Vnukovo II.

We walked on until we were opposite an ungainly, old five-storey pseudo-classical building, surrounded by a high fence. The iron gate, formerly the main entrance, was now permanently chained shut. People were using an entrance on the left. Parked outside were black Volgas with telltale MOC and MO licence plates of Central Committee cars. One driver, who wore the flat, shortbrimmed fedora and dark blue raincoat of KGB plainclothesmen was pacing beside his vehicle. Another sat in a car with red seatcovers minding a little girl in the back seat. Out came a lady in a chic, fur-trimmed coat and imported knee boots. She got in the car with the red seatcovers and was driven off.

"That's the main Kremlin Clinic," Pavel explained. People had spoken of the Kremlin Clinic often but this was my first glimpse. Actually, it is a system of clinics and hospitals loosely known as the Kremlin Clinic. The most conspicuous is across the street from the Lenin Library, around the corner from the Granovsky Street store. It, too, is unmarked except for reliefs of the hammer and sickle by the door. On occasion, I saw Politburo Zils parked out in front, while KGB agents killed time gossiping in pavement groups. My

Russian friends thought it unlikely, however, that Brezhnev or other bigshots actually went there for treatment because, as one journalist said, "When they get sick the doctors go to them."

* * *

The greatest perquisites of high status, however, exist outside the city. The leaders and their families have entire communities of hideaway dachas. Brezhnev can choose between the mild climate of the Crimea or Pitsunda on the Black Sea, the bracing weather of the Central Russian hunting region around Zavidovo where, like a German baron of old, he enjoys taking foreign guests like Henry Kissinger boar-hunting, the calm of the pine-wood retreat outside of Minsk where he quietly secluded himself with Georges Pompidou.

* * *

At places like the Crimea and the Black Sea Coast, the dachas of some Politburo members, most notably the one built by former Ukrainian Party boss Pyotr Shelest—are so sumptuous that they have raised eyebrows among more puritanical Party officials. Shelest could command the use of whatever labour force and materials he wanted. Sand was especially trucked in for his beach, along with all kinds of furnishings for his home. Seawalls and breakwaters were built along the half-mile shoreline. Security men stopped swimmers or strollers from venturing too close.

Whatever misgivings other Soviet leaders may have felt about Shelest's opulence, he was not forced to give up his dacha until he was ousted from the Politburo and lost his Ukrainian post. On this, Party protocol is usually merciless. Loss of position means loss of the state dacha, though as a high-ranking deputy premier, Shelest undoubtedly got a more modest dacha even after he was demoted. The system works the opposite way, too. Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko showed off his new Politburo dacha in the Crimea to Henry Kissinger in June, 1974. In 16 years as Foreign Minister, Gromyko had never rated the top-rank dacha until admitted to the Politburo in April, 1973.

DACHA

Dacha is one of those magical elastic words in Russian that conceals more than it reveals. Above all, it signals escape from the crowded city into the calm of the Russian countryside. Rather conveniently it blurs social differences. Perhaps that is why Russians are so fond of using the word. A dacha can mean anything from a little, oversized toolshed to a grand mansion taken over from the old aristocracy.

The Party leaders themselves have mansions with several acres of land that come cost-free from the state. Many lie just off the road to the village of Uspenskoye, where foreign embassies have a communal beach on the Moscow River.

Muscovites find their entire life-style such a mockery of Marxist ideals that they make fun of it. Brezhnev, goes one joke, wanted to impress his mother with how well he had done and invited her up to see his town apartment. She looked nonplussed. So they sped

off in his Zil to his dacha near Usovo, one used previously by Stalin and Krushchev. He showed her each room, but still she said nothing. So he called for his personal helicopter and flew her straight to his hunting lodge at Zavidovo. There, he escorted her to the banquet room, grandly displaying the big fireplace, his guns, and unable to restrain himself any longer, asked: "Tell me, Mama, what do you think?"

"Well," she hesitated, "it's good, Leonid. But what if the Reds come back?"...

* * *

Unseen in the deep forest are two dacha settlements antiseptically designated "Zhukovka-1" and "Zhukovka-2". The locals, however, called Zhukovka-1 "Sovmin" for Soviet Ministry, or Council of Ministers. Zhukovka-2 is known as "Academic Zhukovka". The Sovmin village is surrounded with a brick and iron fence. Entry is only by special pass, and the pecking order is strict. In fact Sovmin now consists of two areas—one for lower, though still very important officials, nearer the road, and the other, for the upper crust, on the more secluded side.

The dachas are allotted according to rank and protocol. I was told of a high-ranking scientific administrator, promoted to deputy minister who gracefully tried to decline a state dacha in Sovmin on grounds that he had purchased a nice dacha of his own in a scientific settlement and did not want to move. He was sternly admonished: "Are you trying to insult the system of nomenklatura? You must sell your private dacha and take the state dacha that goes with your position." He complied.

But anyone who has spent a summer afternoon in Zhukovka can understand why the high and mighty are drawn to this place. It is a lovely tranquil timeless place, less than 20 miles from the throbbing city of Moscow, and yet a world away. The village overlooks the slow-moving Moscow River and the gently undulating Central Russian plain.

* * *

POOR COMMON MAN

But the Soviet elite who hobnob so closely together in the hidden dacha settlements around Moscow have arrogated to themselves a larger system of privileges than merely being far better clothed, fed, housed and medically cared for than the rest of the population. Their lives simply take place on a different plane. The elite take advantages for granted with an arrogant disdain for the common man that often surpasses the haughtiest rich of the West.

"On any railroad train, any Aeroflot flight, in any hotel, at any performance, the managers know that they have to set aside a certain number of places for the *vlasti* [the powers-that-be]," an Intourist guide confided privately.

* * *

Equally important to some members of the elite is simply the right to *enjoy* things normally forbidden to others. I know of famous Soviet writers who have

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the banned works of Solzhenitsyn and other literary contraband quite openly on their bookshelves, a sin for which dissidents have been jailed. The privileged, I was told, can catch movies like *Blow-up*, *Easy Rider*, *Midnight Cowboy*, *Bonnie and Clyde*, *The Conformist*, or 8½—which are banned by censors for normal Soviet eyes. Access to such showings becomes a matter of highly prized status for intellectuals.

Also, for many, the system of direct privilege is reinforced by the informal network of connections and influence—*blat* as the Russians call it. Sons expect their fathers or fathers-in-law to promote their careers through *blat* and fathers take it equally for granted that they should do this. Certain universities and institutes have become known as the province of the Party, government and military elite for their offspring...

* * *

The life-style of top Soviet officials is as far beyond the ken of a Russian steel worker as the life-style of the jet-set Americans is from the life of a Detroit auto worker. Unlike America, however, the rarefied life-style of the Soviet privileged class has virtually no impact as a public issue. A few dissidents like Andrei Sakharov and Roy Medvedev have attacked the system of privilege but even among dissidents this has been secondary to many other issues.

WORLD NEWS

WORLD WAR III IS ON

ACCORDING to a British political affairs expert, Mr. Brian Crozier, the Third World War is not in the future; it is going on now and has been for the past 31 years. Only most people in the West have not been able to recognise the fact because it has taken a completely different form from other previous world wars. Mr. Crozier does not see the situation today as totally desperate; but people in the West who believe in freedom have to wake up to the true nature of the struggle and then combat it. This is the purpose of his new study "Security and the Myth of Peace", subtitled "Surviving the Third World War", published by the Institute for the Study of Conflict in London.

The Third World War, according to Mr. Crozier, was launched immediately after the Second World War had ended. It consisted of a highly concentrated Soviet effort to increase the global power of the Soviet Union until a degree had been reached where a process of reversal would be impossible. The plan was to do this in such a way that the rest of the world would not realise what was happening; and indeed because no shots were fired this was precisely what happened. It seemed a natural corollary of the post-war situation that the Soviet Union, as the strongest power in Eastern Europe, should obtain supremacy over the states which lay between the Western border of the Soviet Union and what had been the German Reich. The first great mistake of the West, according to Mr. Crozier, was in this respect, and he particularly singles out for criticism the American policy of "containment" which was brought into operation at that time.

In the three decades which have come between us and that time, Soviet prestige has been steadily rising. There has been too much emphasis on the actual threat of total war caused by the arms race, and it has been generally considered in the West that the great arms buildup by the Soviet Union has been "contained" by successful competition from the United States. The idea has been that in spite of all the money which has been spent in the Soviet Union, the Americans have remained top dogs — and therefore the world remains safe for freedom.

But this has not been the way the game worked. In spite of not winning the global arms race, Soviet prestige and power has been increasing. The Americans were using, or rather not using, their armaments for defence. The Soviet Union was out to control new parts of the globe, not by direct use of the armaments of which they were increasingly disposing, but by brandishing them. The result is today that the Soviet Union controls states and wields preponderant influence in areas where it would have been quite unthinkable in the years which followed the Second World War.

The areas in which the Soviet Union has been

advancing will be already familiar to most readers of the *Swiss Press Review and News Report*. We have made it one of our most important tasks to draw the attention of our readers to such phenomena in the last years and months. In the last months we have detected an acceleration of the process. But it has not been quite the acceleration which had been largely foreseen.

In the 60s the Soviet effort was concentrated in Asia, China which was greatly influenced by the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath, seeking for a means to introduce in real political terms the ideal of permanent revolution, was not a fit adversary for Soviet expansionism. Although the Chinese people had themselves been warned that the Soviet aim was eventually to bring the Chinese under their sway, China was turned in upon itself; and until the Nixon visit to China after the turn of the decade there was little attempt to use anti-Soviet policies to prevent the expected Communist victory in Indochina.

As we also foresaw in those years, Communist Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia — now that they have been taken over by the Communists — have not linked themselves to the natural fount of Asian Communism, as many thought they would. Instead, they are intensifying their contacts with the Soviet Union, and it is to that superpower which they are linking their destinies. China is now surrounded, not with non-Communist countries, but with Communist countries owing allegiance to the Soviet Union — a situation which is infinitely more dangerous for them than before. And there is every evidence that they are now clearly aware of the fact.

It is because the Chinese have become aware of the fact that the Soviet Union has changed the field of its expansionist tactics to Africa. In spite of an inauspicious beginning, the Soviet Union wishes to bring its relations with Hua's China on to a much more friendly footing, and this is not compatible with an aggressive attitude in Asian affairs.

The switchover to Africa has been operated by Moscow very efficiently and very rapidly. When the Vietnam war was at its height, it would have been a strange idea that Vietnam situations would very soon be reinvented, not elsewhere in Asia among Vietnam's still non-Communist neighbours, but in far-off Africa. Today, however, there are a number of African states which are completely under the control of the Soviet Union. Large numbers of Soviet military experts, and experts from the East European satellites of the Soviet Union, have appeared on the soil of Africa; and, in addition to this, troops from Cuba, the Soviet Union's oldest non-European satellite, enabled the Communist MPLA to win the civil war in Angola.

Mr. Brian Crozier points out in the study which we have mentioned earlier that Soviet policies in these fields have been immensely successful. But he has also taken pains to point out that this success has come

about because the Soviets have been quite consciously fighting a war. It is not the victory of historical inevitability which has done the trick (as Marxists will have us believe), it is meticulous planning. Once this is realised, once the West can be brought to believe Crozier's thesis that all this is part of the Third World War, then there will be a willingness to do something about it. There could be no better moment than the accession of a new American President, and it is to be hoped that Mr. Crozier's study will find its way to the desk of Mr. Carter's foreign policy advisers.

—*Swiss Press Review*, November 15.

NUCLEAR DISASTER KILLED SOVIET SPACEMEN

DOZENS of leading Soviet space scientists were killed in a moon rocket explosion in 1960. Dr Zhores Medvedev, the dissident Soviet scientist, said in London yesterday.

Dr Medvedev also told *The Observer* that in 1958 hundreds of people died in an explosion of nuclear waste materials near Blagoveshensk, in the Urals.

Details of the 1960 rocket disaster were given to the British Intelligence Service (MI6) in 1961 by the Soviet defector and double agent, Oleg Penkovsky. His report met with some scepticism at the time. Dr Medvedev's statement (published in the *New Scientist* last week) is the first public confirmation of it.

Dr Medvedev said at his Mill Hill home yesterday that in the autumn of 1960 the Soviet Communist Party leader, Mr Khrushchev, wanted to impress the Americans with Soviet technological superiority.

He therefore ordered that a Soviet moon rocket should be launched at the same time as he arrived in New York to head the Soviet delegation to the United Nations.

The elite among the Soviet space scientists and engineers were gathered for the launching at the 'cosmodrome'. But when the order was given to press the launch button the ignition failed.

'According to the safety rules, no inspection should have been allowed without first draining off the fuel,' said Dr Medvedev.

'But the officer in charge, Marshal Nedelin, decided that he could not afford to go through this lengthy operation. The rocket was supposed to be fired as Khrushchev's ship, the *Baltika*, docked in New York harbour. So he ordered an inspection immediately.

'While this was taking place, the ignition started to function. The rocket lifted briefly off its launching pad but was caught by the inspection ladders.

'Everyone in the area was killed,' said Dr Medvedev. 'The disaster cost the best brains in Soviet space technology.

'Nedelin's death was announced shortly afterwards "in a plane crash." The others killed received no obituaries. Later another rocket of the same kind was launched successfully.'

The 1958 catastrophe occurred only a few dozen miles from Blagoveshensk in a deserted area where the Soviet nuclear authorities had buried waste from

nuclear reactors in the Urals industrial complex.

The waste was not buried very deep, said Dr Medvedev. 'The nuclear scientists had repeatedly warned about the dangers of this, but the authorities had ignored them because the alternative of dispersing the waste, or burying it in the Pacific or Indian Oceans, was considered too expensive.

'Suddenly,' said Dr Medvedev, 'there was a huge explosion like that of a volcano. The buried material had overheated through nuclear reactions.

'The explosion threw radioactive dust and materials to a great height, and winds blew the clouds for hundreds of miles. Nobody knew the extent of the disaster, and there were no plans ready to evacuate people.'

Dr Medvedev said that many towns and villages were not ordered to be evacuated until symptoms of radiation sickness appeared. Tens of thousands of people were affected and hundreds died. The true figures were never disclosed.

'The area of the disaster is still considered dangerous and roads passing through it are closed. A number of biological stations have since been set up on the edge to measure the radioactive damage to plants and animals.

Dr Medvedev said that the radiation victims were distributed among many hospitals, but nobody knew how to treat the different stages of radiation sickness, how to measure the dose received, or how to predict the consequences.

There was no laboratory with which to investigate



YOUR GUARANTEE OF GOODNESS

chromosome aberrations, and no chemical protection against radiation exposure was available.

— *The Observer*, November 7.

THE INVADER IS R ... A

ALL generals prepare for their next war by fighting the previous one; and Yugoslav generals are no exception. This autumn's manoeuvres of Yugoslavia's "all-people's defence" system were basically an updated version of the guerrilla war Marshal Tito's partisans waged from their mountain strongholds in central Yugoslavia against Hitler's and Mussolini's armies during the second world war. The only major difference: this time the presumed enemy was Russia.

Last month's manoeuvres—code-named Golija 76—showed how Yugoslavia would try to deal with an invasion.

But who is the potential invader? Three Yugoslav generals recently made it plain—again in the weekly *Nin*—that it was Russia. Not explicitly; but what they said was clear enough to their fellow-countrymen. "We assume," they observed, "that we would have to destroy 2,000 enemy tanks." But the only part of the country flat enough for that number of enemy tanks is along the frontiers with Hungary and Rumania, both members of the Warsaw pact. Since Rumania, to the north-east, is friendly to Yugoslavia and has no Soviet troops on its soil, the main attack would presumably come from Hungary in the north.

There are problems in making "all-people's defence" work. Although the Yugoslavs now produce about 85% of the military equipment they use (from rifles to subsonic jet aircraft), their more sophisticated weapons—especially missiles—come from Russia, the country they see as their likeliest enemy. The Yugoslavs have for some time been trying to reduce their dependence on Soviet weaponry. An alternative source is now being sought in the United States, which supplied arms to Yugoslavia for a decade after the break with Russia in 1948.

—*The Economist*, October 16.

TRAVEL TROUBLES WITH AEROFLOT

ONE day at the peak of the travel season, several summers ago, all flights from Moscow to the Soviet Far East were cancelled—on account, said the laconic announcement at Domodedovo Airport, of technical difficulties. Three thousand six hundred passengers were stranded.

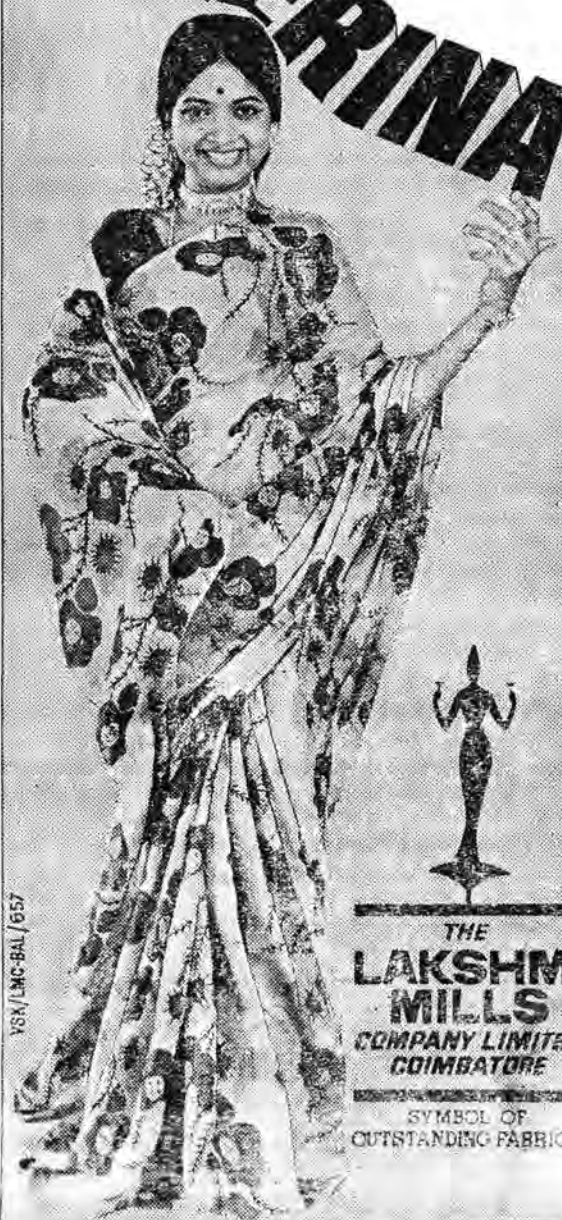
They were joined on the second and third days by thousands more, until a veritable small city of travellers was sprawled over the airport terminal and in the surrounding forests.

The problem, it turned out, was that all 18 of the TU-114 aircraft assigned to that route were grounded 6,000 miles away in Khabarovsk, because there was no fuel.

"It had not been delivered," said the weekly *Literary Gazette*. "It was an oversight, negligence on someone's part." It took weeks to clear up the congestion. . . .

A CHARM FOR THE CHARMER

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Inside the country, every fifth passenger can expect to depart late, a Ministry of Civil Aviation traffic administrator conceded to a Soviet interviewer. In a single two month period at Domodedovo—the biggest and newest airport serving Moscow—245,000 passengers were delayed for reasons other than poor weather.

In many places, flights are routinely overbooked, so that some dismayed passengers are left behind at the ramp—after their bags have already been processed—which leads to an unseemly scramble for seats by travellers rushing to get on board first. On the other hand, many planes are listed as full when there are vacant seats. Flight cancellations at the last minute are also common.

Service and comfort in the air are functional at best. Things have much improved since the gruelling non-pressurised flights of the early 1960, but there are still few frills—such as toilet paper.

The cabins smell of disinfectant—a distinctive sweet smell that one never forgets. Seats are cramped, and meals when served are Spartan and generally uniform. . . .

The Soviets are apparently not satisfied with their share of international flying traffic. Aeroflot has a notorious reputation for rate cutting, and does not belong to the International Air Transport Association, which sets fares.

Last July, after a lengthy investigation, a Federal grand jury in Brooklyn indicted Aeroflot's New York office on 22 counts of illegally peddling round-trip tickets for the Paris-Washington route at about half the lawful minimum fare.—Washington Post.

—The Guardian, October 20.

U.S. WARNED ON SOVIET POLICIES

A group of former high-level government executives has been formed to sound the alarm to the U.S. public about what they consider dangerous Soviet policies.

The group—called the Committee on the Present Danger—will challenge President-elect Jimmy Carter and anybody else who tries to cut the U.S. defense budget next year.

Paul Nitze, former deputy secretary of defense who helped organize the committee, said its objective is to achieve “a clear understanding by the populace of what's going on” in the world as a result of Soviet expansionism.

Chairmen of the tax-exempt committee will be Henry Fowler, secretary of the Treasury in the Johnson and Kennedy administrations; Lane Kirkland, AFLCIO secretary-treasurer, and David Packard, deputy secretary of defense from 1969 to 1971.

Eugene Rostow, former under secretary of state for political affairs under President Lyndon B. Johnson, was another organizer of the committee.

Former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger encouraged Mr. Rostow to organize the committee, Mr. Rostow said, but has not yet made up his mind

about joining it. Former Secretary of State Dean Rusk has joined, Mr. Rostow said.

—International Herald Tribune, November 10.

LAWYERS FOR PRESS FREEDOM

LAWYERS should become more involved in the fight for greater press freedom, Mr. Harold Evans, editor of *The Sunday Times*, said yesterday. Speaking at an Institute of Journalists luncheon in London, he said that, unlike those in the United States, lawyers in Britain had not become strongly involved in that field.

“We have an area in which extensive damage can be done to individuals or the newspapers, yet we have not heard a murmur from the lawyers,” he said.

Mr. Evans spoke of his concern about the difficulties of MPs in obtaining information from the Government and said that parliamentary question time was a joke. There were 95 forbidden subjects, including rent of government offices and telephone tapping, on which MPs were unable to get replies in the Commons.

He described the ordinary MP as impotent. “There are only a minority of MPs who are actually concerned to find out what is going on,” he said.

—Times, November 10.

BANK UNIONS AGAINST TAKEOVER

PLANS by the Labour Party's National Executive Committee to nationalise the big banks and seven major insurance companies come under attack from three different sources today—the bank unions, the Confederation of British Industry and one of the banks under a nationalisation threat, National Westminster.

The three bank unions the Bank Staff Association, the National Union of Bank Employees, and the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs have prepared a report which will be submitted to the Labour Party's Home Policy Committee today. It will form the basis of a discussion to be held within the Committee on how best to consult staff representatives on nationalisation.

The union's report is very clear in its opposition to the NEC's proposals. One union leader said at the weekend that if the Labour Party continued with the scheme it would find itself in a mess. His union feared that the takeover of the four clearing banks could lead to rationalisation and the creation of a people's bank with heavy redundancies.

—The Guardian, November 8.

N. KOREAN VENALITY

THE North Koreans have been very keen recently on spreading the words uttered by their would-be revered leader, Kim Il-sung. Their technique is to buy large areas of advertising space in West European and American newspapers and print there verbatim extracts from their high-placed Comrade's works.

As far as the English and French versions are concerned, the content of the North Korean pages has always been so bad stylistically as to be almost

CENSOR NOT PROTECTED BY EMERGENCY

Supreme Court Decision on Habeas Corpus Inapplicable, says Bombay High Court

A Division Bench of the Bombay High Court consisting of the Honourable Mr. Justice V. D. Tulzapurkar and Mr. Justice Gadgil allowed on December 7, 1976, the petition filed by a magazine *Sadhana* where the orders of the Government forfeiting the issues of the magazine and the press where it was printed were challenged. The orders were made under Rule 47 of the Defence and Internal Security of India Rules, 1971.

It had been argued on behalf of the Government that the petition was not maintainable in view of the Presidential Order dated 8th January 1976 suspending the Fundamental Rights under Article 19 of the Constitution of India guaranteeing Freedom of Speech and Expression and that the petitioner was seeking to enforce this fundamental right by the petition. At the hearing, the Government had relied on the recent Judgment of the Supreme Court in the *Habeas Corpus* case where petitions seeking to set aside orders of detention were held to be not maintainable.

The learned Judges held that the petition filed by *Sadhana* was maintainable as, in the petition, the magazine was not attempting to invoke Article 19 in challenging the Orders of the Government in forfeiting the issues and the press but was seeking to set aside the Orders on grounds other than Article 19 and that the Presidential Order did not apply if Article 19 was not invoked. The learned Judges also held that the *Habeas Corpus* decision was inapplicable and distinguished the case, holding that Article 19 and Article 21 were governed by different considerations which made the reasoning found in that decision inapplicable to the *Sadhana* petition.

On the merits, the learned Judges held that the Orders were illegal and that none of the issues of the magazine which had been forfeited contained any 'prejudicial reports' as required under Rule 47 to enable the Government to forfeit the issues and the Press

and as interpreted by the Supreme Court in its earlier decisions. The learned Judges also held that Rule 47 contained a graded scheme for the imposition of penalties of which forfeiture was the severest.

Coming to the merits and dealing with each individual article in question, their Lordships laid down certain principles. They negated the contention that criticism and for that matter even strong criticism of the policies, measures and actions of Government and attacks on Ministers and/or public officials who for the time being are engaged in carrying on the administration, although within permissible limits of the law, would be impermissible during Emergencies. They held that even during the Emergencies that are currently in operation, democracy has not been suspended nor have the freedoms conferred on the citizen under Article 19 been abrogated or suspended (merely the enforcement of those rights by Courts of Law has been suspended), but these freedoms are still available within the limits or restrictions imposed under statute law. They further observed that the expression 'Government established by law' cannot be equated with, but must be distinguished from, Ministers and/or persons for the time being engaged in carrying on the administration and therefore criticism or attacks on the incumbents of ministerial posts or high offices in Government will have to be distinguished from criticism intended to create disaffection towards 'Government established by law'. This in other words means that, even if while criticising the policies and measures of Government, oblique motives are attributed to Ministers or persons who are responsible for formulating such policies or adopting such measures, the same cannot be equated with the criticism of 'Government established by Law'. The learned judges therefore set aside the Orders of forfeiture.

WORLD NEWS (Contd.)

unreadable; and one of the strangest things in view of this is that the North Korean representatives who bring the copy along always lay down with the utmost stringency the condition that not a word or comma should be changed—not even spelling mistakes.

This condition has been completely counter-productive. It is safe to say that the North Korean advertising pages are hardly ever read and have absolutely no effect whatever.

The people who bring the copy to the newspapers concerned almost always pay immediately in cash. They have to do this for a very simple reason—the North Korean word no longer has credit. North Korea is currently the world's worst debtor. And unlike other countries which get themselves into trouble in this way it ignores its debts completely. There is no question of consolidation or anything of the sort. The North Korean Communists simply buy things without any intention of paying.

The way in which the advertisements were paid for

in cash has astonished newspaper people for a long time. Now perhaps an explanation has been found, with the uncovering of the drug racket run by North Korean diplomats in the Scandinavian countries. It seems that diplomatic missions of North Korea abroad have been encouraged to make arrangements to pay for themselves by their own activities. And the diplomats stationed in Scandinavia hit on a profitable way of doing it. They managed to finance themselves, and probably the advertisements too.

We may assume that the process will now come to an end pretty rapidly and in any case newspapers will not be very keen on accepting money which probably comes to them from such a source. At all events, any good which might have been done for North Korea by the advertisements—even if they had been hard-hitting and effective—would certainly have been undone by the new evidence of North Korean Communist venality which has now come to hand.

—Swiss Press Review, November 8.

Letters

JUDICIAL REVIEW

In the review of the book *Crossman Affair* Mr. Noorani says that judicial review is an indispensable part of democratic Government. But there is no judicial review of Acts of the British Parliament which is supreme and beyond the jurisdiction of the law courts.

The recent amendments to our Constitution have followed the British example. But the difference is that the British Parliament is more than 800 years old and therefore has far more experience and knowledge of democratic codes and conduct than our Parliament which has been in existence for only twenty-nine years.

November 9, 1976.

HIRJI JEHangIR

[Sir Hirji Jehangir is quite right in pointing out that Britain is an exception to the general rule of democratic Constitutions that provide for judicial review of the Acts and decrees of their Parliaments. The reason for the difference is that, unlike us, the British have no written Constitution at all and therefore the British analogy, as Sir Jehangir quite rightly points out, cannot apply in our case.]

It is also relevant to point out that there is a strong move led by eminent jurists like Lord Hailsham and Lord Denning, supported by numbers of all political parties, to establish a Bill of Rights which would limit the sovereignty of Parliament and make its decisions subject to judicial review. If the need for this is felt in Britain with its democratic traditions, how much greater is the need in our own country which lacks these traditions.

Even at present, the British High Court and Court of Appeal have struck down decisions of the Education Secretary, Mr. Mulley, on the petition of the Tameside parents, thus opening the door to judicial review of the Executive, even without a Bill of Rights.]

—EDITOR

WHAT CAN THE PRESIDENT DO ?

The President of India can restore to the people what belongs to them, to the citizen of India his freedom and to Man his rightful status and sovereignty which is unchallengeably his.

The Parliament's term was over in March 1976. They got their own term extended, all by themselves and without the people's sanction by one more year.

The existing central government headed by the Prime Minister is supposed to be of Parliament's making. That government also loses its authority along with that of the Parliament.

Only the President therefore remains there in his place, according to the country's law and Constitution, to discharge his duties as the highest in office. If the President does not rise to the occasion and restore to the people their self-respect, he loses the chance which destiny has given him.

To rise to the occasion, the President should make a declaration to this effect :

- i) That the present Parliament is dissolved.
- ii) The Central Government which emerged from the Parliament, therefore, also goes away.
- iii) General Elections are ordered in February 1977.

The writer here is a writer first and writer last, belongs to no political party, nor has any affinity with any one of them. They are, all of them, parties to the Gladiator's Sport as in the Roman arena. As a Man, I hate the game of all political parties. Vanquished as they are, they have forfeited their right to play the same game of power politics any more. I ask them all, as a Man, to quit the arena for good and preserve human values. As a writer, I have human values uppermost in my mind, freedom, which gives Man self-respect and a sense of dignity are supreme among them. When the arena victors trample upon the supreme values Man's freedom, let the political parties, crushed and humiliated, withdraw from the arena and join without party distinctions the citizens of this land, equated to six hundred million strong.

In the meanwhile, let the President, who still stands out the only rightful office bearer, restore this country to a condition where people feel free to decide as to who should conduct their country's affairs and how, as duty bound servants. Let him stand by the people, do this job and serve this country's interest. Let it not be forgotten that Man the world over is one.

—V. S. VARKHEDKAR

PRICES

Your Editorial note on *Prices are Like Water* is timely. Every citizen should accept that the Government's attempt to control the market during price rise of essential commodities will not have long term desired effect. It is obvious that rise in price level is attributed to a certain extent through deficit financing by the central Government. It is high time that our Government should follow realistic approach towards all sectors, so that it will contribute to our economy by creation of extra ordinary renewable assets.

—R. SRINIVASAN

GANDHIJI'S WRITINGS OBJECTIONABLE ?

You were kind enough to publish my letter to the Prime Minister with the caption "Are Gandhiji's writings objectionable ?"

This question raised in the caption has been answered in the affirmative by a function recently organised in Indore, viz "Anand Bal Mela".

In this Anand Bal Mela organised by Antar Bharati with local Congress help the communists had a book stall but the Sarvodaya Sahitya Bhandar was again refused space.

Ironically; Antar Bharati is a wing of the Rashtra Seva Dal and is associated with many leading Gandhites.

—N. C. ZAMINDAR

Reviews

THE PENULTIMATE PHASE

THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND THE RAJ 1929-1942

—B. R. TOMLINSON

(Macmillan, Rs. 55/-)

MOST writers on the British Raj in India have tended to concentrate on the last phase climaxing in the transfer of power in 1947. The interest is understandable. Dr. Tomlinson has, however, done well to draw attention to the neglected period of the last but one phase of the Raj from 1929 to 1942. It was a formative period in which the Congress first assumed the reins of administration, parleyed with the British with a closer prospect of attaining complete independence for India, and established some norms which are still relevant.

In this period the British devised a new strategy for rule in India. While handing over some power in the provinces, they aimed to retain some of the vital attributes of sovereignty, keeping control over crucial departments of Central Government (defence and foreign affairs) and substituting influence for control over others (setting up a semi-independent Reserve Bank to manage the currency and national debt). At the same time they hoped to enlist collaborators at the all-India level by giving them responsibility over some areas of Central Government. These plans were embodied in the 1935 Government of India Act. The next seven years revealed their shortcomings. By March 1942 London had been forced to recognise that the constitutional structure of the Raj would have to be reshaped yet again, and that the extent of British formal rule in India would have to be limited still further.

What is more, although in the 1940's "the relationship between the all-India Congress leaders and their subordinates was further complicated by Congress control over the Central Government, the origins of the political system of independent India must be sought in the events of 1934-39, not those of 1945-47".

Hence the relevance of the period.

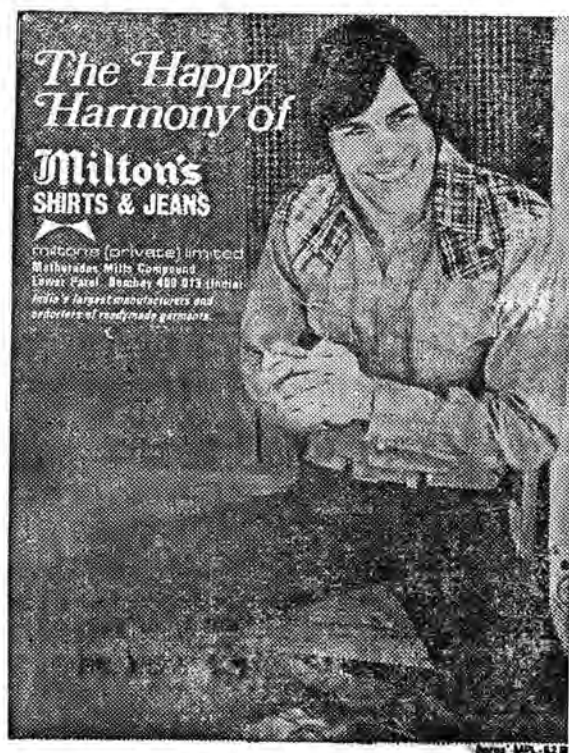
The author has concentrated on six of the twenty Congress provinces — Bihar, U.P., Utkal (Orissa), Mahakoshal, Nagpur and Vidarbha in the Central Provinces. He writes with wry humour "The only serious editorial problem has resulted from the poor standard of the typist employed by Congress leaders. Almost every typed letter from one Congress leader to another contains several errors of spelling, typing or punctuation." No pains have been spared. The author has looked into the archives and brought to light much that was hitherto unpublished.

The bulk of the book is a study of Congress response to the Government of India Act, 1935. The federal part of the Act never came into force but a decade

later it served as a model for the draftsmen of the India Constitution to work on.

The book, however, throws much light on the working of the Congress and especially on Gandhi's role. Factionalism and internal discord were rife even then. "Although there was general agreement about the cause of these evils — intrigues, filth and petty quarrels resulting from a greed to (sic) power leading to a rush to take over Congress bodies as a stepping-stone to securing election to Councils, Corporations and local boards — only Gandhi was clear about a solution. Congress memberships, according to the Mahatma, was the clue: he condemned the enrolling of members simply to get their votes (or even a signed, marked ballot paper) at the next Executive elections; he claimed that a simple four anna subscription was too loose a qualification for Congress membership, and recommended a stiff khaddar-wearing qualification also. In Gandhi's final proposals (which were put before the Congress session at Bombay in October) the khaddar clause, spinning franchise and six-month membership qualification to vote were all designed to combat corruption and to secure discipline and quality at the expense of mere numbers of Congress members."

The book lays bare the manner in which Dr. Khare misused power "Khare also used the police to fight his political battles and this too caused resentment."



One wishes the author had included Bombay within the scope of this work. We would have had an interesting account of the Nariman episode. Fortunately there is a full discussion of Bose's revolt.

Dr. Tomlinson points out how Bose differed from the other Congress leaders who followed Gandhi. The following passages reveal a lot about him. "In many ways, both Nehru and the 'Gandhians' represented one style of leadership — both were prepared to subsume their provincial ambitions in the need of the Congress as a nation-wide whole, both looked on Gandhi as a political father-figure, a beneficial as well as a necessary influence on India's development. In this respect Bose was an outsider — he regarded his provincial interest in Bengal as all-important and saw the Mahatma's influence as only a useful political tool. For health reasons (he suffered from tuberculosis) he had been in Europe for some time; his previous links with the all-India leaders had been based more on political expediency than on any identity of interest. This independence of outlook and action was the real source of Bose's challenge to the established leaders.

"Even Bose's financial resources were independent of those of the 'Gandhians'. The main sources of funds open to the 'right-wing' leaders were donations from Indian businessmen negotiated by Patel, Desai, Bajaj and G. D. Birla. There was also the capital and interest on certain special appeal funds and the loans that could be raised on them. Nehru had no independent resources; he was completely dependent on the 'Gandhians' for money. Bose's sources of income were smaller, but they were genuinely his own. He could rely on payments for favours shown to Bengali businessmen by the Bengal P.C.C. and the Calcutta Corporation (as long as he controlled these bodies) and on 'protection money' from large industrial magnates in Bengal, Bihar, Assam and Orissa, given in return for good labour relations. He also had support from a group of non-Bengali businessmen, headed by the Delhi millowner Shankar Lal, and could use the funds of the Tropical Insurance Company (of which he and his brothers were directors and Shankar Lal Managing Director) to stabilise his finances. From these sources Bose managed to raise Rs. 50,000 simply for the expenses of his delegates and canvassers at Tripuri." Bose was a party boss in his own right.

Nor has the author a particularly high opinion of Bose's Forward Bloc. Many of his lieutenants were men innocent of ideology and united only by the bond of common ostracism. The Left Co-ordination Committee which Bose set up was equally ineffective. It consisted of four members of the Forward Bloc, three of the CPI and two Royists.

As Jayaprakash Narayan put it "The basic difficulty in the path of unity was the ridiculous idea held by every miserable little party that it alone was the real Marxist Party, and that every other party had therefore to be exploited captured or destroyed." Gandhi regarded the Bose revolt as but "a symptom of a still more dangerous disease the growing corruption in the Congress."

The book shows, incidentally, how well the British kept themselves informed of the internal squabbles of the Congress. The Intelligence Bureau prepared estimates of the respective strengths within the Congress of the various groups.

It is a good study within the terms of reference the author has set. The reader will be well advised to ignore Dr. Tomlinson's pronouncements on other and wider issues such as the merits of the Cripps offer, for instance.

A. G. NOORANI

TURN LEFT FOR UTOPIA

THE ORIGINS OF MODERN LEFTISM

—PIERRE GOMBIN

(Pelican Books)

"A person who is not a Communist at the age of twenty has no heart, but if he is still a Communist at the age of thirty he has no head" is a maxim that will only amuse the infidels. From the evidence put forth by Pierre Gombin in his evolution of present day leftist thought in France, one would conclude that leftism is a state of mind when one can always be twenty, reaching out for an utopia that is, as ever, just around the corner to the left. Only this condition is no longer guaranteed by the orthodox Marxist-Leninist process of revolution but by a new method of "contestation" which manifests itself as a permanent attitude of defiance against all forms of authority.

Gombin, who is a Frenchman attached to the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, begins his study of leftism from the first dramatic period of "contestation" that occurred in France during the student revolts and general strike of May-June 1968. His critique is, therefore, linked to the French experience only and that also at the theoretical level, for he states quite clearly that his concern is not with "practical leftism". This again is in keeping with the French tradition, of which Sartre is perhaps the most well known example who even as he swore to hate the bourgeoisie with his last breath did not ever become a member of the Communist party. His critics have accused Sartre of being swayed more by strong emotions than by systematic thought but possibly this is what enhances his reputation as a prophet of his left, which thrives primarily on an emotional appeal. In the West Sartre's political polemics are not likely to be considered seriously, except as a reflection of his philosophical views, since the very impetus for change has receded. It is only in the East where a whole new generation is prepared to accept Marxism, or any of its various avatars, with all the blind unquestioning enthusiasm of a new faith, that the issues that he raises are likely to cause a ferment. It is in this context that one can accept yet another treatise on the subject.

Unlike Sartre, Gombin does not pretend to be a prophet, his book is mainly expository. Starting with a brief critique of the Russian experience, which has been the unhappy stumbling block for all believers in the Marxist credo, he asserts from the very first that "Sys-

tematic Leftism takes an alternative form to Marxism-Leninism." He presents instead the views of the "new" leftist philosophers such as H. Lefebvre, P. Chaulieu, Claude Lefort and a group known as the Situationiste Internationale who see repression at every level and who enlist the support of "all who do not have control over their own destinies and the ordering of those whose activities do not lie in their own hands". They reject Marxist thought both on historical grounds since in any case events have proved him wrong and also on ethical grounds since an adherence to Marxist-Leninist philosophy in countries such as Russia and China has led to far greater repression than that from which it was trying to liberate itself. The point that they endeavour to make is that any system imposed from without is in itself wrong since it would have been tainted by bourgeois thinking, and that whether one talks of "State Capitalism or State Socialism" one is referring to different aspects of the same phenomena. "The social and economic relationship characterized by Soviet society shows that it is going through the last phase of capitalist development, that in which development of the economy has reached a peak in which concentration of capital and power is at its most intense," notes Gombin.

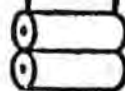
The ideal apparently is to have a philosophy evolve spontaneously out of the existing situation, and this can happen according to the leftists, only when the proletariat develops a consciousness of its position and through the force of this consciousness promotes itself to a higher state. Anton Pannekoek, the Hungarian leftist thinker described this as an evolutionary process where a human being's attempt to control his universe through technological miracles is accompanied or should be accompanied by a corresponding struggle for consciousness. "Men have to think changes before they can accomplish it." Being of the orthodox school he of course envisaged the thought-process-leading-to-change as a class struggle but if we ignore this for the moment it is worthwhile noting that the emphasis has shifted from an objective to a subjective change. Almost all present day leftist thinkers are united on this point though they are not clear as to how this consciousness will express itself, since this will become obvious only as the consciousness makes itself apparent.

Marxism has been described as "a creed to be clung to when the intellect questions and rejects". It is when the moral authority of a faith crumbles that it tends to retreat into mysticism and appeals to subjective criteria. Modern leftism appears to have reached this stage when it has become necessary to rephrase its ideology in terms that will not all be unfamiliar to students of mysticism. "The only valid philosophical category is totality" they say, "and only by the dialectical method can totality be appreciated... The proletariat by the specific dialectic of its class situation is moved to find a way out of it since it alone possesses the understanding of the process, hence of the totality. In this conception, consciousness is not a simple reflection of the process of history but is truly the agent

by which history may be transformed; at the the moment of revolution the separation between subject and object disappears completely; a fraction of humanity perceives totality and thus raises itself to the level of self consciousness."

It will be seen from this that the new left cannot get rid of the habits of thought of the old left. Instead of "exploitation" and "revolution" the fashionable labels are "alienation" and "contestation". Instead of "party communism" there is "council communism" and "consciousness raising" and though much poetry and emotion is expended in talking about the ends, the means remain as vague and undefined, as liable to serious criticism as ever. What H. Lefebvre and his kind seem to be complaining about is no longer any dark malevolent economic force but the grey cancerous inevitability of modern life. But the remedies to combat this are the same.

There is the same touching faith in the proletariat which "in a cyberneticized society will be 'almost' everybody, since even the masters are programmed". Of course it is important that he should feel alienated which again under the conditions imposed upon him by capitalist society is considered to be inevitable. There is the same ambivalence as to the use of power which is looked upon with utmost horror, not be avoided at all costs and replaced instead by "spontaneous acts" which bring about the regeneration of society. "The new revolution" according to the Situationiste Internationale "thus cannot aspire to the mere seizure



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of power a simple renewal of the governing team or of the ruling class; it is power itself which must be suppressed in order to realize art which is the ultimate objective, the realization of poetry; which at the same time entails in superceding it clearly requires a recognition of one's own desires (stifled by the show society and diminished into pseudo desires) free speech, true communication (not unilateral and manipulated as now) rejection of productivity for its own sake, rejection of hierarchies, of all authority and all specialization. The liberated man will cease to be homo faber and will become an artist, that is to say the creator of his own works."

These yearnings are obviously an expression of a society, where production even while it may not have reached saturation point, has outstripped actual needs. The relevance of such a situation to all the third world countries who are feverishly engaged in the struggle to catch up with the Western industrialized paradise cannot be ignored when the whole mechanistic materialistic view of history is being challenged. There is no reason to believe that they will not end up facing the dilemma in which Western man finds himself, a victim of the monster machine that he has created. It is a dilemma of which leftism appears but as a reaction. For Asian man who has never felt the need to express his individuality to the extent that Western man has, who has instead always allowed himself to

be dominated by forces larger than himself, by nature, by religion, by dynasties, the danger is of being swept into the vortex of the machine age clinging to the raft of leftist thought which has been built under an entirely different set of conditions.

—GEETA DOCTOR

STERLING NO MORE

A TERRIBLE story reaches me from the stews of Hong Kong. It appears that a British businessman, staying at one of the more opulent hotels, requested a girl to be brought up to his room. Having made the delivery, the bellboy heard a piercing scream. Returning to the room, he found the girl cowering in a corner, her arm outstretched in terror. "Help me, help me!" she cried. "He wants to pay me in sterling."

PHILIP NORMAN

—Sunday Times

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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

If nobody knows who Jimmy Carter really is, it means that Jimmy Carter is himself still free to decide.
—The *Times* quoted in the *International Herald Tribune*, November 6-7.

The TUC is not involved in party politics, Nor is its General Secretary I hope that every trade unionist with a vote in Walsall, Workington and Newcastle will cast it next Thursday for the Labour candidate.

—Len Murray quoted in the *Times*, November 11.

In view of the worldwide regard rightly paid to the lightest word I let fall in this space

—Bernard Levin, in the *Times*, November 9.

No investment without profit, no profit without investment.

—Headline in the *Times*, November 3.

Decadence begins when people no longer ask: "What are we going to do?" but rather "What is going to happen to us?"

—Leopold Labdez in *Survey*, Winter 1976.

I once jocularly referred to East-West rivalry as 'competitive decadence'. At present we are, unfortunately, in the lead; but we can recover from it.

—Leopold Labdez in *Survey*, Winter 1976.

The boycott of American businesses by the Arab countries because those businesses trade with Israel is an absolute disgrace.

—Jimmy Carter quoted in *Time*, November 8.

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An obituary notice about Western civilization is as premature as the one which Mark Twain once read about himself.

—Leopold Labdez in *Survey*, Winter 1976.

The banishment of the 'archipelago' from the Russian language. Even geographers are obliged to substitute for it the expression 'group of islands'.

—Michael Heller in *Survey*, Winter 1976.

Frankly, I cannot imagine what the government would be like without you.

—Richard Nixon to Henry Kissinger in January 1971 quoted in *The Economist*, November 6.

Socialism is not for now.

—Mario Soares quoted in *The Economist*, November 6.

I am rather a slapdash unliberal conservative socialist.
—Richard Crossman quoted in *The Economist*, November 6.

The important point about power is not who holds it (everybody with a good idea buzzing in his head thinks that of course he should). It is that nobody should hold too much of it.

—*The Economist*, October 23.

When the communists marched into Saigon 18 months ago, the rank and file were heard to say: "Next stop Bangkok".

—*The Economist*, October 23.

Detente is sliding us into a situation in which we will eventually have to choose between nuclear war and strategic surrender to Soviet power.

—Dr. R. J. Rummel in his book *Peace Endangered: The Reality of Detente*.

After 18 years Nasser left Egypt with a police state, only 1 million industrial workers, a protected public sector that ate up rather than produced hard currency, and a huge civil service marked by red tape, low salaries and redundant labour.

—*The Economist*, November 13.

The Palestinians will fight to the last Egyptian for Palestine.

—Bitter joke in Cairo quoted in the *Times*, November 15.