

### Sheikh Abdulla and Kashmir Problem

V. B. Karnik

IT was the fond hope of many democratic and secular-minded Indians that, after his release from jail and subsequent detention, Sheikh Abdulla would suggest some concrete solution to the intricate and vexed problem of Kashmir. It is with regret that one is compelled to say after many months of waiting that Sheikh Abdulla has not fulfilled that hope.

There were obviously many difficulties in the way of Sheikh Saheb. Being long in jail, he had to get himself acquainted with the situation as it developed after his arrest and with the new forces that had emerged on the political scene in the State and also in India and Pakistan. He had to take his bearings, he had to study the pros and cons of various alternatives and he had to find out, particularly, how far he would be able to carry with him those who called themselves his supporters and followers. This would naturally take some time; but that some time must come to an end one day or the other. Sheikh Abdulla, it appears, desires to continue it indefinitely.

Since his release from detention and after his visits to Kashmir, Sheikh Abdulla has delivered many speeches. In all those speeches he talked about the Kashmir problem but, with regard to its solution he has always talked in very vague and general terms. To say that the problem must be solved, that India must honour her pledges, that the solution must be such as would satisfy all the three parties, namely, India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir does not tell anybody anything. It is only a repetition of a few trite slogans, which does not help the solution of the problem. Not only in public meetings but even in private conversations with responsible persons Sheikh Abdulla has not said anything more. In addition, he has from time to time made many irritating statements which he could have easily avoided.

This deliberate refusal to say anything concrete or definite and to keep people guessing can be justified only on the supposition that the Government of India and they alone have the responsibility of solving the Kashmir problem. It is they who should work out solutions: if any one of them appeals to me, I shall

support it; but to offer solutions is their business and not mine. That appears to be the position that Sheikh Abdulla has adopted.

Technically he may be right and the treatment that was accorded to him since 1953 might justify that attitude. But he must realise, as events should have convinced him, that that is not the way of solving the Kashmir problem. People have higher expectations from him. They regard him not only as a leader of Kashmir, but as an eminent Indian devoted to the cause of democracy and secularism. They expect him to do everything in his power to help the growth of progressive and non-communal forces in the country. In that capacity he has to shoulder some additional responsibilities.

If the entire responsibility is left in the hands of the Government of India, very likely nothing may happen in the near future; the deadlock may continue and the problem may become more intricate and insoluble. There must be some appreciation of the difficult conditions in which the Government have to operate. On one side, there is the intransigence of Pakistan and, on the other side, there is the pressure of Hindu communalists and impatient nationalists. The demand for the complete integration of Kashmir is becoming stronger and stronger and may in course of time prove irresistible. The Government can withstand this pressure and follow a more reasonable course of action only if they get a positive response from a leader of the eminence of Sheikh Abdulla who can speak in the name of the people of Kashmir.

Circumstances have combined to make a pursuit of the ideal solution of the problem anything but a running after a mirage. At the moment no useful purpose will be served by narrating the sorry tale and by trying to apportion blame. Facts must be accepted

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as they are. A plebiscite is not possible, nor independence, to be guaranteed by India and Pakistan, except through war or violent revolution whose result, apart from the destruction that either will inflict on the area, can never be predicted in advance. Constituted as he is, Sheikh Abdulla cannot have sympathy for either of the two methods. Those methods being barred, a solution will have to be found only within the framework of the Indian Union. Sheikh Abdulla appears to be aware of this fact. A *Times of India* news service report of June 6, from Srinagar stated the following about his position:

"Sheikh Abdullah said here today that those who claimed that he wanted Kashmir to be given to Pakistan or wanted independence for Kashmir were talking "sheer nonsense." All that he wanted was a solution which would bring peace to Jammu and Kashmir and also to India and Pakistan".

But is it not possible to be more specific and say in concrete terms what solution would, according to him, "bring peace to Jammu and Kashmir and also to India and Pakistan"?

Sheikh Saheb should now stop talking in vague and general terms. He should formulate his suggestions for the solution of the problem in concrete terms. He could in the first place discuss them with his followers in the State and win their approval. They could be then discussed with his numerous friends in the country. Modified in the light of those discussions they could be finally placed before the Government of India for their consideration. The suggestions should be all along flexible and not cut and dried; and the spirit on both sides should be not one of take it or leave it but of accommodation and of a desire to reach an agreement. It is likely that, in spite of all efforts, the suggestions may not be acceptable to the Government. In that case the deadlock may persist. But Sheikh Abdulla will have the satisfaction of having made an honest attempt to find a solution. And on the basis of that attempt he will have a claim to the support and sympathy of many in the country.

Sometime back a suggestion was bruited that a free and fair election in Kashmir might be accepted as a substitute for a plebiscite. Sheikh Saheb, it is reported, did not reject the suggestion. But, according to an interview published in the journal of the Sarva-Seva Sangh, he added a qualification which would make the proposal unacceptable to nationalist opinion in the country. The qualification that he added was: "But if some one wants elections to be a substitute for plebiscite or self-determination in the present case, such elections have to be strictly fair and free, — so as to be recognised as an alternative to plebiscite by all the parties concerned. It is too obvious to need

mention that such elections must inspire confidence of all concerned, and, therefore, they cannot be conducted or presided over by one of the interested parties to the exclusion of others. You cannot be a judge in your own cause."

Neither the Government of India nor Indian public opinion will accept this proposal. It is to be hoped that Sheikh Saheb will not insist upon it.

It is not difficult to understand Sheikh Abdulla's anxiety not to annoy or antagonise Pakistan. Kashmir is adjacent to Pakistan and for its economic development has to rely in many ways on that country. Moreover, Pakistan has staked a claim to Kashmir. It is, therefore, essential to be very tactful in all that concerns Pakistan. One can grant that, but at the same time, it is necessary to emphasise that efforts for establishing good relations with Pakistan should be made only as a constituent unit of the Indian Union. India will welcome those efforts and will do everything that may be possible to help them.

Free and fair elections will make a good beginning to the solution of the Kashmir problem. The Government of India will feel encouraged to adopt that course if it will have an assurance from Sheikh Abdulla and his colleagues that they will be treated as a substitute for plebiscite and that immediately thereafter fruitful talks will follow for determining the exact place that Kashmir is to occupy in the Indian Union. Elections will, of course, take place under the supervision of the Election Commission. Ample precautions must be, however, taken to see that they are free and fair and any suggestions that Sheikh Abdulla may make in that behalf should receive the immediate attention of the Government.

The Kashmir problem has for the time being reached a dead end. Sheikh Abdulla can rescue it from that position and place it on the road to solution. But for that purpose he will have to give up the non-committal attitude that he has adopted so far and come forward with concrete and positive suggestions. If he adopts that course he will receive full support from all non-communal and progressive forces in the country.

## STRIKES IN INDIA

By V. B. KARNIK

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# Indo-Soviet Plan Tie-Up

M. R. Pai

IT is significant that the announcement of a move for "dovetailing" India's Five-Year Plans into Soviet plans has been made while Parliament is in recess. No democratic Parliament would tolerate such a move which bargains away the freedom of a sovereign nation.

This move is against our national interests.

In the first place, it violates a basic principle of sound business: room to manoeuvre by having several competing buyers and sellers. "Dovetailing" India's plans in some sectors with Soviet plans means signing away that precious business right.

It is dangerous on other grounds also for the Indian economy to be tied up to the Soviet economy.

Soviet and Indian economies are constructed in different ways. Soviet economy is a Command Economy. Decisions are centralised. All their talk of decentralisation pertains only to decentralisation of *execution*, not of *decisions*. The decisions are taken by a few, and ultimately by a handful bosses of the Communist Party without any democratic reference to the wishes and aspirations of the people. For instance, there is the well-known case of the lampshades. It took the authorities years to realise that the lampshade was thoroughly repugnant to the buying public, and a decree of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was necessary before the lampshade was changed!

Although, there has been some relaxation of the grip of the central planners since the Libermann thesis of 1962 attacked "cumbersome centralised planning" and "pusillanimous regimentation of enterprises by bureaucratic planners", basically the Soviet economy is in the straight-jacket of totalitarian Marxist dogma. In sharp contrast, India has accepted a democratic way of life. The economy should, therefore, produce goods and services desired by the people. Economic decisions and activities should be decentralised. The central plan should be one of coordination, i.e. indicative, and not of compulsion, i.e., command. To tie up Indian planning to Soviet planning would be like a marriage between a bear and a peacock.

Such dovetailing of plans would import distortions into the Indian economy. The Soviet Union, being a world power and notwithstanding all professions of peace, has basically a war economy. All resources are devoted to the building up and maintenance of a war machine. Therefore, the emphasis is on heavy industries at the cost of agriculture and consumer goods industries. A marriage between Indian and Soviet economies would lead to lopsided growth of Indian economy. This process has already started with adop-

tion of Soviet model of planning since Second Plan in 1956. With "dovetailing", it would accelerate to the point of irreparable damage to the Indian economy.

How these distortions take place is illustrated by what is happening today. The Russian-aided Heavy Engineering Corporation at Ranchi, with an investment of over Rs. 185 crores by 1967, is a drag on the economy. Soviet insistence is said to be responsible for the appointment of an administratively and technically unsuitable person, Mr. K. D. Malaviya, as Chairman of this plant. Since the plant is running at a loss, which is estimated to run into Rs. 30 crores bracket in another 3 years, it is said that to keep it going India should go in for a fifth Steel Plant! The existing three Public Sector steel plants have not yet been digested by the economy. Losses on these have mounted to nearly Rs. 120 crores, and the Indian Government has stated that these "adverse results are a matter of great concern" to it.

On top of this, to please the Russians, the Bokaro Plant work has been undertaken. Already Rs. 75 crores have been spent in 1966-67, Rs. 57 crores in 1967-68, and Rs. 110 crores have been earmarked in the current budget. With an average 15 per cent price rise over last four years, such massive expenditure is adding fuel to the inflationary fire. How hard the Russians could be in their dealings is shown by the fact that despite previous loud assertions of not entrusting "turnkey jobs" to foreigners, the Government gave the short shrift to M. N. Dastur & Co., a qualified Indian firm, which could have designed the plant.

Distortions introduced by Soviet association with our planning projects are illustrated also by the Antibiotics Plant at Rishikesh and the National Instruments Plant at Madras. Both are producing goods in quantitative and specifications unrelated to the Indian market.

The danger of getting into the grip of Soviets in economic matters is illustrated by events in Czechoslovakia.

Dana Adams Schmidt, revisiting Prague after 18 years, reported as follows in London "Times" of June 6:

"Economically, this has been a failure of planned socialist economy. The new gospel in Prague is that a type of market economy should be introduced. . . ."

"Another aspect of the economic story was that the Czechoslovak economy had for 20 years been geared — and distorted — to suit the needs of the Soviet Union which could absorb an unlimited amount of almost any kind of goods, for which it paid the Czechoslovaks in roubles they could not spend in the West or even in

other communist-bloc countries; the Czechoslovaks spread their productive effort over a vast range of low-grade goods. Increasingly, as the years went on, Czechoslovak factories adjusted to low Soviet standards and became incapable of competing in the West."

Economic dealings with Soviet Russia need to be cautiously done if one is to go by past experience. For communists, they are not commercial propositions, but a handmaid in their ideological pursuits. Their ways of business are queer, but none too queer to be of advantage to the other party. Even a nation of traders like the British is stumped by these new business tactics. For instance, a British Machine Tool Manufacturer who recently got a Soviet order for £ 1½ million learnt that it needed more than business sense to deal with this new customer. "Delay was not by any means the only abrasive Russian tactics — Russians also tend not to produce the contract terms until they have forced an agreement on the overall contract price. All too frequently the contract then proves to contain commitments costing the supplier more than he had bargained for." There was, in addition to all this, even the political stunt of a "walk out" by Russian team during price talks!

Soviets have a way of their own in business. For propaganda purposes, they quote low rates or make spectacular offers, and then go in for their pound of flesh on the quiet. In Bhilai for instance, the "cheap" plant was subsequently loaded with unnecessary and expensive spare parts and components. The Committee on Public Undertakings of Third Lok Sabha (30th Report) was constrained to observe: "The excessive over-stocking of stores and spares in Bhilai is a matter of serious concern." The case of the locomotives is too well known to need repetition.

The spectacular order of Rs. 100 crores worth of railway wagons is now proving a headache both to the industry and the Indian Government. After the propaganda sugar coating comes the bitter pill of "technical requirements" which will drive the manufacturers nuts and wipe out their profits. So far as the Government is concerned, as a *quid pro quo*, Russia is trying to force down its throat TU 134 planes for the Indian Airlines Corporation. A technical committee has ruled out TUC 134 as uneconomic as other suitable models are available elsewhere. But so great is Soviet pressure, the Government has obligingly appointed another committee to reconsider the issue. There can be no doubt a host of committees will be appointed till a decision favouring TU 134 model is taken. In the alternative, like the Novosti deal, the Government will confront the country with a *fait accompli*, some State Trading Corporation official signing a barter deal for TU 134!

In the light of initial public criticism of Indo-Soviet plan "dovetailing", Dr. D. R. Gadgil, Deputy Chairman

of the Planning Commission, has "clarified" that dovetailing merely means ascertaining Russian orders for Indian goods over a period of years. If it is as simple as that, the Planning Commission is not the proper agency for negotiations but the State Trading Corporation, or the Commerce and Industry ministries.

If we want to do business with Russia — and, we must, whenever it is to our national advantage — let it be done on commercial lines without any ideological hanky-panky or sentimental ballyhoo. In the meantime, it is necessary to appreciate Soviet business as also political tactics.

The latest tactics of Soviet Russia are not to have in countries like India communist governments for fear of "revisionism" into Chinese camp and for fear of provoking hostility among large sections of anti-communist, democratic people. They would rather have sympathetic governments, whose true nature of servility to Russian bosses will not be easily understandable to bulk of their populace. Such governments led by stooge Prime Ministers can be made to toe the line by manipulating the economic decisions. That is why "dovetailing" is the latest idea proposed, just as information manipulation is sought to be done through the Novosti deal which was furtively arranged.

The late Jawaharlal Nehru tried his best to introduce Communism in India on instalment plan; he failed; let the public of this country, committed to the democratic way, not allow his daughter to drag India into the position of an economic satellite of Communist Russia through "dovetailing" of plans. Economic colonialism is as bad as political colonialism.

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# France In Turmoil

S. Narasimhan

IT was not an ordinary storm but a terrific tornado that swept over France in the month of May. No ordinary person could have withstood it; but the strong man of the country, General De Gaulle not only withstood it but has emerged triumphant out of the ordeal. His triumph is proclaimed by the result of the first round of elections which took place on June 23. In that round his party won 148 seats out of 160 for which deputies were declared elected outright. For the rest of the seats the second election will take place on June 30 and, if the voting trend that was exhibited on June 23 is any indication, the Gaullist party is sure to win a large number of them. It will return to the National Assembly with increased strength.

Faced with a choice between stability and disorder and chaos, represented by the Gaullist party as a choice between General De Gaulle and totalitarian Communism, French people made their choice in favour of stability and General De Gaulle. That is the manner in which the issue of the day was presented to them and, alarmed by the disorders and disturbances that plagued the country for over a month, they did not wait to find why and wherefore they happened but rushed headlong towards De Gaulle who, they hoped, would not allow them to recur.

It was a nightmarish experience that the people of France had to pass through in the month of May. It all began with a students' strike and their protest demonstrations. The students were dissatisfied with the course of their studies, with methods of teaching and with the administration of educational institutions, more particularly the University of Sorbonne. Sorbonne is a venerable French institution with a long history and tradition which has changed the least in spite of all changes that have taken place all over the world during the last fifty years. Students had protested many a time against antiquated courses and methods of examination and teaching, but all their protests had fallen on deaf ears. In the middle of May their protest suddenly assumed an unusually militant form. They not only refused to attend classes, but they turned out teachers and other functionaries and took possession of lecture rooms, laboratories, libraries and administrative buildings. They began to march up and down the boulevards of Paris which brought them in conflict with the police. The police, it appears, used excessive force in breaking up student meetings and demonstrations. Thereafter there were pitched battles between the students and the police and there were barricades in the streets, more particularly in the Latin Quarter. The protest soon turned

into a revolt and it did not remain restricted to students or to Paris.

The revolt spread to workers to whom the students had issued a call to join them in their attempt to overthrow the established order. Workers all over the country went on strike. In a day or two there was a general strike, bringing all production and services to a dead stop. The strikers, who included all kinds of workers from production workers to railwaymen, postmen, teachers and employees of the Radio and Air services, numbered over ninety lakhs. Apart from stopping work, the strikers in many cases took possession of their places of work.

The striking workers had, however, a limited and well-defined objective. They were not actuated, like the students, by a desire to bring about a revolution. What they demanded were an increase in their emoluments, an improvement in their service conditions, and some voice in the management of their respective concerns. In view of these limited objectives, it was possible to have talks with them through their organisations and secure some settlement as the Government tried to do in the next few days.

The revolt of the students and the countrywide strikes of workers came as a big shock to the Government. It was as if there was a sudden earthquake and the whole social structure had collapsed. General De Gaulle was away on a visit to Rumania and the Prime Minister, Mr. Georges Pompidou was in Afganistan. Both rushed back to Paris as soon as the news of the sudden outburst reached them. What De Gaulle saw after his return was, as described by *Time*: "Reviled by France's students and rejected by its workers, De Gaulle saw his government crumbling beneath him, Paris hostile and ready to explode, and opposition politicians closing ranks to cut him down." The Prime Minister tried to secure a settlement of the strikes through talks with the leaders of workers' organisations, the C.G.T. and F.O. Some concessions in wages and other matters were offered. They satisfied the leaders and an agreement was evolved. Workers, however, rejected the agreement and refused to call off the strikes. The students also were not pacified though an inquiry into police excesses was promised and assurances were given that their other grievances would be looked into and removed. On May 24, General De Gaulle conceded in an address to the nation that France was on the "edge of paralysis". He promised reforms both to workers and students and announced his decision of holding a referendum in June to ascertain public opinion on the reforms. He appealed

to them to call off their strikes and end the danger to the country. There was no response to the appeal.

At that moment France appeared to be on the verge of a collapse. As *Time* described it: "With the non from the workers, the faltering Gaullist government lost all momentum. Plainly confused and dispirited, Ministers trekked in and out of the Elysee; De Gaulle and Pompidou seemed to be at the mercy of events that they could no longer control. The opposition parties made an open bid for power. They gave a call for the establishment of a provisional government and the election of a President to replace De Gaulle. There were massive demonstrations in streets, of workers and students, in Paris and other cities and there were shouts of "Adieu, De Gaulle; adieu, De Gaulle."

All these developments would have unnerved any other person; and for some time De Gaulle himself was unnerved. He was for a little while unsure about his course of action. It appeared for a day or two that he was thinking of quitting. But talks with the leaders of the Army convinced him of their support and he decided to fight. In a broadcast to the nation on May 30 he declared: "I shall not withdraw. I have a mandate from the people. I shall fulfill it." He warned the people that France was threatened by dictatorship and appealed to them to stand by the Republic. He assured: "Progress, independence and peace will prevail along with liberty." He then announced his decision to dissolve the National Assembly and to hold fresh elections on June 23 and 30. The referendum that was contemplated earlier was postponed.

With De Gaulle's determination to fight the tide turned. The common man who had been stunned by the developments and terrorised into passivity woke up to his responsibility in the situation. He began to express his abhorrence of violence and disturbances and his demand for peace and stability. Many pro-De Gaulle demonstrations took place, the most impressive was the one which took place in Paris. About a million Parisiens are reported to have taken part in it. Slowly a movement back to work began. In about a fortnight all strikes were called off; workers vacated the factories and normal work was resumed. In some places there were difficulties and the police had to use force. In a few days the ardour of the students also cooled down. They vacated the Colleges and the University that they had occupied. In the case of students also there were some clashes and force had to be used to compel them to vacate some of the places that they had occupied. On the whole, however, the return to normality was fairly quick and without too many incidents once the process in that direction began with the Government's determination to crush the revolt and to enforce law and order. The country soon settled down to normal life and waited patiently and anxiously for the result of the election.

But why and how did this outburst take place, an outburst explosive enough to shatter the entire social

structure? The country was enjoying an era of prosperity; its trade and industry had developed, it had accumulated a huge reserve of gold and it enjoyed high prestige in the world. For ten years General De Gaulle had ruled keeping order, maintaining a strong currency and all the while striving for a position of leadership among the nations of the world. It appears now that this was only one side of the picture. The other side was pictured as follows by the *U.S. News and World Report* a few days after the outburst: "One overriding point seemed clear; Under the veneer of stability that General De Gaulle had built since 1958, France remains basically weak economically and politically. In many ways the country lags compared with its European neighbours. Economically, France seems a nation slipping backward. The franc is faltering. The balance of trade has turned unfavourable. Inefficiency plagues all levels of industry. Government intervention and bureaucracy throttle business, education and agriculture. Politically, the Gaullists lack a majority in the National Assembly and must rule with the help of other parties. Already there have been defections from De Gaulle's party."

Other weak points highlighted by the journal are: "Frenchmen began to get the impression they were again being smothered by an authoritarian style of government. During the crisis, Frenchmen protested bitterly against the "soulless technocrats", the Government bureaucracy. The technocrats were the experts who were supposed to lead France into a new era. Now they were being blamed for France's failure to push ahead. . . . . Unemployment now is the highest since the days of the depression. Half a million men are looking for work, exclusive of youths seeking their first jobs. Workers blame the Government for tolerating this unemployment in an effort to hold down inflation while at the same time pushing automation and modernization. . . . . An estimated 4 million Frenchmen who hold jobs still earn less than \$ 120 a month. Only Italian workers among those of all Common Market nations earn less than the 81 cents an hour the average Frenchman makes. At the same time, prices are rising faster in France than in any other Common Market country, largely as a result of French bureaucracy and inefficiency. Workers and others in France are resentful over high taxes for social security. . . . . An agricultural crisis actually has simmered for years while the Government sought to mechanise farms. Modernization has increased production and forced down prices. But it is the big farmers who have prospered. The small ones are being forced out. . . . . France has 600,000 university students, more than any other country in Europe and five times as many as just 20 years ago. Living and study conditions are appalling by American standards. Class-rooms are too crowded for many students even to attend. The Sorbonne has 30,000 students. Its library seats 300. There are few recreational facilities. And the cen-

tralized education system, dating back to Napoleon, seems to many to be unsuited to preparing students for modern life.... Probably the biggest failure of all, as far as the average Frenchmen is concerned, has been General De Gaulle's housing programme." The strikes of workers were to a large extent spontaneous. Communists and their C.G.T. arrived on the scene after the strikes had already taken place and even when they came their efforts were directed towards bringing about a settlement rather than accentuating the conflicts. Workers paid little heed to the leaders which became clear when they rejected the settlement that the leaders had arrived at with the Prime Minister and continued the strikes. The demands of the workers roughly were increased wages, forty hour week without loss in wages, better social security and severance pay and improvement in conditions of work. A demand was also made for a voice in management. The terms that were offered for the withdrawal of strikes were an increase in minimum wage from 45 to 60 cents per hour, a ten per cent increase in basic pay, reduction of weekly hours of work to forty without loss of pay, larger family allowances and pensions, a lower retirement age and a bigger voice in management. These concessions will have to be made to workers in spite of the fact that they did not call off the strikes immediately. This will naturally impose a big burden on the economy of the country.

Students who sparked the outburst did not have any such specific demands. Theirs was a general revolt against existing conditions and the prevailing social order. It began because they were not allowed to hold the meetings that they wanted to hold. It spread and became violent because in trying to suppress it the police committed a number of excesses and entered the Sorbonne area which they had never done for hundreds of years. No doubt, conditions in the universities were very unsatisfactory and a large number of students were faced with the prospect of unemployment. But their opposition was more fundamental. Reporting their revolt, the Paris correspondent of *Weekend Review* stated that, according to them, "the university is no more than a tool to mould new managers which capitalism requires to continue the oppression of the working classes." What they wanted was, stated the correspondent, "a permanent confrontation, albeit intellectual, between existing institution and successive younger generations. They purposely refrain from stating their demands in concrete forms, in the belief that what is needed is not the replacement of old institutions and principles by new ones, but a permanent awareness of the futility of dogmatism."

The heroes of the students were not Marx or Lenin or Stalin. They were the Che Guvera and Mao and Reginald Debray. The students belonged to various political faiths and persuasions, the dominant trend, however, was that of anarchism. During the days that

they were in possession of the Sorbonne University, it became a city state. They created there, according to Time, a "unique communal society" where there was a "combination of revolutionary ardour and disorder". Describing it, a University of Paris professor said: "It was a once-in-life-time thing. There was a purity about it, a spontaneity that I don't think I'll live to see again. Things just happened. Nobody was in charge. It was a headless revolution, but there was plenty of soul. It has been something I'll tell my children and grandchildren about." However, it did not last long. Along with the strikes of workers, the students' revolt also subsided after a month or so after leaving for the posterity a saga of noble impulses and heroic deeds. No established political party, including the Communist Party, played any important role in these developments. The opposition parties were as much staggered by them as the ruling parties. Later, General De Gaulle put the blame for the outburst on the Communist Party. But really speaking, it had no hand, in the beginning, either in the students' revolt or in the workers' strikes. At a later stage it tried to influence workers' strikes, but over the students' revolt it had no influence at all. After the upsurge had subsided, the leader of the Communist Party Waldeck Rochet boasted that "Communists had barred the road to bloody adventure." "We are not adventurers", he claimed. This was borne out later when the Communist Party tried to project itself as a patriotic party of moderation.

It was essentially as an election strategy that General De Gaulle presented to the French people a choice between himself and "totalitarian Communism". Communism had little to do with the events of May. The forces responsible for them were different and, unless they are tackled, France will not get the peace and stability that General De Gaulle has promised her. The General has promised reforms which, he hopes, will be able to contain those forces. It is not possible to foretell at the moment if that hope will be fulfilled.

## THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA A SHORT HISTORY

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# India's New Look At South-East Asia

"Atreya"

WITH the end of the Budget session of the Parliament, Mrs. Indira Gandhi undertook an official visit in the third week of May that included four important South-East Asian countries. Mrs. Gandhi left India on the 18th of May and arrived in Singapore on the 19th of May in the first lap of her visit. In Singapore and its Prime Minister Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, Mrs. Gandhi met a highly independent country and Prime Minister who knew what they wanted and who seemed to have a clear sense of direction. Mr. Lee Kuan Yew was very much interested in having India's support, especially in the context of British withdrawal from its defence commitments in South-east Asia. But with a huge Chinese population and himself a Chinese, the Prime Minister of Singapore would not buy any arrangement which meant direct opposition to Communist China. After breaking away from Malaysia, Mr. Lee has permitted the Bank of China to operate in Singapore and the Peking regime to open a chain of department stores. At the same time the Singapore Prime Minister has improved his relations considerably with the United States. While initially opposing American involvement in Viet Nam, the Singapore Prime Minister now wants the U.S. to stay on in Viet Nam with restraint, resolution and determination.

Mrs. Gandhi's visit to Singapore is within the context of these factors. As far as Singapore was concerned, conditions were very favourable for India and Singapore to enter into a meaningful bilateral relationship, a favoured theme with India's Prime Minister in the light of her father's and her opposition to any collective security arrangements. The Singapore Prime Minister, however, placed as he was in a much more volatile situation than India, seemed to be less inhibited about security through collective or military alliance measures. Both Mr. Lee and Mrs. Gandhi seemed to agree to the need for expanding the present base of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) consisting of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and Singapore.

After a two-day stay in Singapore, Mrs. Gandhi flew down to Australia where she received a very affectionate welcome, official and non-official. Refreshingly enough Mrs. Gandhi avoided platitudes in all her speeches excepting for an occasion in Australia when she said that "war cannot solve any problem and the nations of the world must therefore learn to live and let live in the true spirit of peaceful co-existence." She delighted the Australians with handsome appreciation of Australia's help during India's critical days of the drought and famine conditions. The Australian Prime

Minister offered the fullest cooperation of his country with India in any reasonable and workable steps that would ensure peace in South-East Asia and prosperity in the region.

Mrs. Gandhi was closely questioned by press correspondents in all these countries on her attitude to the consequences of British withdrawal from the South-East Asian region and what role India envisaged for herself as an alternative power when Britain withdrew. Here Mrs. Gandhi was very very cautious and went out of the way to avoid giving any impression that India was trying to extend its sphere of influence into South-East Asia after British left. She was however not satisfying her questioners when she answered that she did not believe in the theory that if Viet Nam fell, communists would overrun the rest of South-East Asia. She believed South-East Asia could hold its own through 'internal strength and economic development'. There did not seem to be any dilution of her naivety on this matter at all. She, however, conceded that after the British withdrawal if a small power such as Malaysia asked for help from India (a question which she described as hypothetical), it would depend on the sense in which help was asked for and on India's capacity to give it.

"The best safeguard for the independence and stability of the South-East Asian region was nationalism—not the chauvinistic type but the true spirit of patriotism and the establishment of popular governments," asserted Mrs. Gandhi, considerably oversimplifying the complex developments in South-East Asia during the past two decades. Notwithstanding such highly superficial observations, the Prime Minister made a very good impression in Australia.

From Australia, Mrs. Gandhi went to New Zealand which had always very close ties with India. Mrs. Gandhi did not have to spell out any policy statements in New Zealand where she received a very affectionate welcome.

After New Zealand, Mrs. Gandhi arrived in Malaysia on the last lap of her South-East Asian visit.

In Malaysia too, Mrs. Gandhi did not have to be defensive and explaining her policies. The depth and reality of shared experiences between India and Malaysia were too significant to be explained through any platitudes. As in the case of New Zealand, Malaysia was one country where the Prime Minister was subjected to the sincerities of true friendship for India. Reciprocating herself, she offered technical and other assistance to Malaysia.

The Indian diplomats posted to South-East Asia

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# President Ayub And Pakistan

V. B. Karnik

IN India there are a number of misconceptions about the life and work of Mohammad Ayub Khan, the President of Pakistan. They are natural to some extent in view of the relations between the two countries. It is to be hoped, however, that the publication of his autobiography\* will help the removal of some at least of those misconceptions and lead to a better understanding of the role that he is playing in the affairs of Pakistan.

It is still widely believed in India that Ayub Khan is the military dictator of Pakistan. People remember the events of 1958 when he emerged as the military dictator. The advance made since then has not so far made much of an impact on the Indian mind. The fact, however, is that Ayub Khan was elected the President of Pakistan in 1960 and that he was re-elected to the same position again in 1965. On the latter occasion there was a stiff contest for Presidency between Ayub Khan and Fatima Jinnah, the sister of the late Quaid-e-Azam, Mohammad Ali Jinnah. In the contest Ayub Khan secured 63.31 per cent of votes against 36.36 per cent secured by Fatima Jinnah. There would have been no election and no contest if Ayub Khan were the military dictator he is supposed to be. It is agreed on all hands that the election was free and fair and that the other contesting candidate, Fatima Jinnah, had a full and fair opportunity to place her point of view before the people.

Another misconception is about the type of regime that exists in Pakistan. It is true that Pakistan has discarded parliamentary democracy, but she has not adopted a dictatorial system of government. She has decided to develop what she calls a system of basic democracy in which the people at large elect through adult franchise local councils for small compact areas and the councils in their turn elect the National Assembly and the President. Pakistan has 80,000 of such basic democracies and they are in course of time to be entrusted with full responsibilities of local administration. Whatever one's view about these organisations, they cannot be regarded as organs of dictatorship.

President Ayub Khan played the most prominent part in the evolution of this new system of government. He characterises it as "a blending of democracy with discipline — the two prerequisites to running a free society with stable government and sound administration." The reasons which persuaded him to

abandon parliamentary democracy are described by him as follows: "How can you run a parliamentary democracy when you have big landlords in the country who can influence thousands of votes? How can you run a parliamentary democracy when you have *pirs* and *faqirs* who can influence the people indirectly? How can you have parliamentary democracy or stability when you have ten or fifteen or more political parties in the country without any programme whatsoever? How can you have parliamentary democracy when you have not even reached the level of universal primary education?" There is some truth in these questions of President Ayub Khan; but it cannot be forgotten at the same time that, in spite of all the handicaps mentioned by him, India has got along fairly well with parliamentary democracy during the last twenty years.

Another very widely prevalent misconception in the country is that Pakistan is a theocratic State. No doubt, the leader of Pakistan described their state as Islamic State and Islam is the religion of the State, but it is not an Islamic State of the concept of *Ulemas* and *Maulavis*, the religious leaders of the people. The latter had been all along opposed to Jinnah, whom they regarded as *Kafir*, a non-believer. When Pakistan was established and she began to develop as a modern democratic state, most *Ulemas* regarded Pakistan as "an un-Islamic country, an un-Islamic Government and an un-Islamic people". They desired that they should be entrusted with the task of drawing up the constitution and governing the country. There was thus a tussle between them and educated Muslims who desired their country to develop along modern lines. President Ayub Khan represents that modern trend in Pakistan. *Ulemas* and other religious obscurantists opposed him, but so far at least he has succeeded in defeating their opposition.

On the issue of relations with India, however, Ayub Khan's thinking is as unrealistic and distorted as of any other Pakistani. The following from the chapter on foreign policy will give an idea of his basic thought on the issue: "But the cause of our major problems is India's inability to reconcile herself to our existence as a sovereign, independent State. The Indian attitude can be explained only in pathological terms. The Indian leaders have a deep hatred for the Muslims, and since they must disclaim and deny it all the time, they are the victims of continual tensions. From the beginning, India was determined to make things difficult for us. The colossal problem of refugee rehabilitation was created by India to cripple our economy. This was accompanied by denying us our share of

\* *Friends Not Masters*, A Political Autobiography, Mohammad Ayub Khan, Oxford University Press, Rs. 50.

the assets of undivided India and the threat of diversion and stoppage of river waters flowing into our territory. Contrary to all agreements and principles, India forcibly occupied a major part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir and concentrated her forces there, thus posing a constant threat to our security. At the back of it all was India's ambition to absorb Pakistan or turn her into a satellite." At another place he has written: "India's aim is to expand, dominate and spread her influence. In this she considers Pakistan her enemy number one." This is no doubt, a false and highly distorted picture of India's intentions and policies. But the tragedy is that it is believed to be true by even an enlightened person like President Ayub Khan. An equally false and distorted picture of Pakistan's designs and intentions obtains in India. That gives an idea of the tremendous psychological barrier that has to be crossed before any fruitful attempt can be made for improving relations between the two countries.

In the earlier chapters Ayub Khan has given a short account of his family background, his education, his service in the military, his opting for Pakistan, the mess that the politicians made and the Revolution in 1958 when he was called upon to play the dominant role as the Chief Marshal Law Administrator. Soon the Governor General, Sir Iskandar Mirza who imposed the martial law disappeared from the scene and Ayub Khan became the sole and supreme authority in the country. Ayub Khan introduced many reforms. In introducing the reforms as well as in clearing the mess that the politicians had made he avoided the use of force and terror. The observations that he has made on the course of action that he adopted deserve to be noted. He has stated: "Harsh and violent methods of dealing with individuals only establish harsh and violent precedents and lead to an unending political vendetta. My target was problems and not individuals. Whenever terrorism, particularly political terrorism, starts in a country you can never eradicate it from the bones of the people. It stays there. Once this phenomenon appears, it rubs off the thin veneer of civilisation and provides an outlet for man's most primitive and animal instincts. Political victimization leaves a lasting scar. The revolution could easily have turned into a blind alley where there would be no going forward and no return. My ambition was not to prove to the world how well I could run the show: my anxiety was to establish conditions and set up institutions to prove how well the country could run itself. The vital thing was to help people to identify themselves with the objectives of the revolution so that things should move on their own momentum." The observations bespeak a civilized mind and a mature statesman.

Rulers do not ordinarily write autobiographies, more particularly during the period of their rule. Ayub Khan has provided an exception. But the exception is

more nominal than real. The autobiography that he has written tells little about himself. What it tells is all about his political programme and activities. That in itself is, no doubt, very important as it provides a key to the understanding of the politics of Pakistan. To Indian readers that would be the main attraction of the book.

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(SOUTH-EAST ASIA—Continued from page 8)

were called in a conference by the Prime Minister when she arrived in Malaysia. The envoys and high Commissioners of India deputed to the different countries outlined the need for more dynamic Indian policy towards the S.E. Asian countries. The presence in many South-East Asian countries of large Indian Communities has made India extremely defensive. There are nearly 2 million Indians in Burma, Malaysia and Singapore and the Indians are no exception to the rule that foreigners are not always liked by the local people.

At the end of her visits to Singapore, Australia and New Zealand, and Malaysia, the Indian Prime Minister seemed to be convinced that neither the British withdrawal nor an American disengagement in Viet Nam need cause grave concern about the security of the countries in the region. But she seemed to be in agreement with the Tunku that the subversive influence of the Communists, especially under inspiration from Peking would represent a formidable threat.

Returning to New Delhi, Mrs. Gandhi made the following statement: "...The proposed British withdrawal from the Indian Ocean was bound to change the situation in the region and the best way to meet it was for the countries concerned to stand together as far as possible and help one another in becoming economically strong. Each country faced a different situation and had different fears. They could not be lumped together. Some of them had faced confrontation. So far as India is concerned we think the best way to meet the situation is for the countries concerned to stand together."

Thus at the end of her South-East Asian tour, the Indian Prime Minister seemed to have discarded some of her platitudes concerning collective security among the non-Communist nations of South-East Asia, though she hedged and hummed about with differing terminology. The logic of the realities of the situation seemed to be striking her in spite of the elaborate insulation provided by non-alignment shibboleths.

The visit of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and Malaysia represents the first conscious and serious effort by India to take these countries which are so close to us seriously. The present attempt by Mrs. Gandhi is the first pragmatic endeavour in our foreign policy and is in accordance with the nearly twenty-year old exhorta-

(Continued on page 12)



Democracy is a Government of the people, by the people, for the people. True. But it can find fulfilment only if citizens have a right to own property, to produce and consume goods and services desired by them within reasonable regulations by the State. Democracy can find fulfilment only

if the Initiative and enterprise of the people, whether in agriculture, business, industry or the professions, are allowed to flourish. A democracy can work only if you, an intelligent citizen, understand the economic issues and help to formulate public opinion

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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.

Most politicians are cowards who fear to lose their seats by telling the truth.

—Kingsley Martin, *New Statesman*, June 7.

After 15 months of EMS Ministry in Kerala, are the people enthusiastic or at least satisfied by its achievements? I think no honest man could answer this question in an emphatic affirmative. And that should be recognised as a measure of our failure.

—C. Achuta Menon, *New Age*, June 9.

In the aftermath of Dallas, Memphis and Los Angeles, it seems lunacy to call the right of everyone to carry firearms a "fundamental liberty".

—*Swiss Press Review and News Report*, Berne, June 10.

Two women had jumped into a well yesterday in panic but were rescued by members of a different community, who provided them with food and shelter last night. This incident showed that there was no communal tension.

—S. K. Wankhade, Maharashtra Minister, *Times of India*, June 12.

The country's food authorities have been as unprepared for the bumper harvest this year as they were for the earlier shortages.

—*The Indian Express*, June 14.

The old ruling princes are asked to give up their privy purses. Instead, the new ruling princes, the MPs and MLAs, will have their privileges and privy purses enlarged.

—C. Rajagopalachari, *Swarajya*, June 15.

A Marxist can make no sense of a revolution in an affluent society.

—P. Spratt, *Swarajya*, June 15.

There was a surprising amount of "close sympathy and collaboration" between Jan Sangh and the Plebiscite Front.

—Dr. Karan Singh, Union Minister for Civil Aviation & Tourism, *The Indian Express*, June 17.

That the U.S. is tortured cannot be denied. That it is gravely sick is too simplistic a view. *Time*, June 21.

40 per cent of the Chico membership in West Bengal has now gone over to the Naxalites.

—Sathi, *Thought*, June 22.

There is too much politics in India and too little citizenship.

—M. R. Masani, *Times of India*, June 22.

The growth of caste pressure groups is a natural part of the democratic process in a poor country where the Government has many favours to dispense by way of jobs, contracts, licenses and permits.

—Sham Lal, *Times of India*, June 25.

Only six steps are necessary to transform India from a food importing country into an exporter of food-grains. The first, adequate water; second, electricity at reasonable rates; third, good seeds; fourth, fertilizers; fifth, pesticides; and sixth, incentive prices.

—Nirlep Kaur, *M.P. Young India*, June 1968.

Only that is good, hold the Communists, which helps the Communist Party to attain its aim, only that bad which hinders it in the attainment of its aim.

—*Opinion*, June 1968.

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tions of democratic groups within the country. Mrs. Gandhi's present visit is the first attempt at a really independent foreign policy outside the scope of "big power chauvinism". The desire for greater involvement with her regional neighbours represents signs of greater maturity and is to be welcomed.

As could be expected, the reaction of Peking to Mrs. Gandhi's trip has been very hostile. Peking has alleged that Mrs. Gandhi undertook her South-East Asian tour to become the leader of 'anti-China' clique at the bidding of U.S. Imperialists and Soviet revisionists. "Mrs. Gandhi will not succeed and her ambition is just a day dream", commented Radio Peking. The broadcast said India was not non-aligned and that Mrs. Gandhi toured the Asian countries to replace the military blocs under the American control which were now collapsing. India sought to carry out the military alliance under the camouflage of economic cooperation", charged Peking Radio.

Notwithstanding Mrs. Gandhi's carefulness and defensiveness that her trip was not intended to rally around the S.-E. Asian countries in any defensive alliance against anybody, the Chinese Communists were determined not to buy indicating their determination to carry out subversion of all non-Communist nations. If this is understood by Mrs. Gandhi, the purpose of the present visit will become more meaningful.