

World Communist Congress

Adam Adil

THE Soviet Union at last succeeded in convening the World Communist Congress, though in truncated form. Of the world's 88 national communist parties only 75 sent their delegates. Some of the important leaders of the international communist movement like Mao Tse-tung, Ho Chi Minh, Josip Broz Tito and Fidel Castro did not attend. It would not be wrong to say that they boycotted the Congress.

Actually it took the Soviet Union nearly seven years to persuade the world's communist parties to attend the international meet. It was obvious that Russia does not enjoy the central position in world communist movement as it did till the death of Stalin or to be precise till Tito rebelled against Soviet hegemony over world communist movement. Today, communist world presents the spectacle of a house divided against itself. After Tito's exit, Mao Tse-tung chose to strike an independent line after a brief period of rendezvous between Russia and China in the wake of communist take over of the Chinese mainland. Even at a time when the Communist Party of China was struggling to establish itself, there was no love lost between Stalin and Mao. Mao Tse-tung always tended to ignore Stalin. His present defiance of the Soviet Union was therefore a natural consequence.

Actually, it was Nikita Khrushchev who at the height of his power in 1962, conceived the idea of convening the World Communist Congress. Russia was under heavy fire from China. Khrushchev's espousal of the principle of "co-existence with the capitalist world" was denounced by Mao as "revisionism". Again Mao had demanded a share in the immense military and economic might of the Soviet Union in order to promote revolutions in bourgeois countries. To use Russian might for national interest would jeopardise the future of socialism said Mao. Naturally, Mao was proving potentially a dangerous adversary to Russian

leaders. The only alternative, therefore, was the censure of Mao by the world communist movement.

But Khrushchev never succeeded even in taking a concrete step towards convening the Conference. Many of the world's communist parties were not willing to take sides in the polemics between Russia and China. After Khrushchev was ousted in 1964, sensing the temper of communist parties, Brezhnev and Kosygin thought it wise to shelve the conference. But in the meanwhile China by its arrogance towards other countries and the mess it created internally out of its Great Cultural Revolution, had antagonised most communist parties. The climate for calling the World Communist Congress was improving. Moscow felt the psychological moment had arrived.

The initial preparatory meeting was convened in Budapest in February last year. Here, however, Russian expectations were not fully fulfilled. It was not all smooth sailing for Russia. The Rumanians staged a walk-out; and some other communist parties would not go wholehog with Russia in castigating China. Russians had once again to soft-pedal the issue.

Then came the tragedy of Czechoslovakia. The armies of Russia and other Warsaw Pact countries committed naked aggression against a peaceful country which was trying to find its soul through a process of liberalism and democratic means. The conscience of many a communist party outside the Soviet orbit was disturbed. The British, the French and especially the Italian Communists, who constitute the largest communist party outside Russia and Eastern Europe (not to talk about China) were severely critical of the Soviet action. Brezhnev tried to justify the aggression by the formulation of his doctrine of limited sovereignty of the socialist countries. By this doctrine Brezhnev argued that the member of the Socialist Commonwealth had the right to intervene in the internal affairs of any socialist country wherever the fundamental principles of socialism were endangered. This doctrine, however, left the foreign communists cold. In fact, they feared the dangerous implications of such a doctrine. Particularly, the Rumanians and Yugoslavs were apprehensive that this doctrine, if accepted, would give a chance to the Soviet Union to impose its own brand of socialism on other socialist countries by force of arms if those countries showed an inclination towards independence and liberalism. In view of the fact that Rumania and Yugoslavia had

already charted an independent line from that of the Soviet Union, the doctrine appeared all the more sinister.

Naturally, the foreign communist parties, who were critical of Soviet action against Czechoslovakia, were in no mood to attend the proposed World Communist Congress. What might have surprised the Soviet leaders, was the contrast between world communist reaction against Soviet action against Hungary in 1956 and towards the Soviet aggression against Czechoslovakia in August 1968. One was more or less favourable and the other was definitely hostile. The Soviet leaders therefore, once again postponed the Congress.

The Congress which was at last convened was also beset with difficulties from its inception. Although it was decided to avoid the controversial issues, the Paragnay delegate made a frontal attack against China. This fact provoked the Rumanian communist party leader Mr. Ceausescue to warn the delegates that the discussion was taking an unwelcome shape. But anti-China lobby has formidable support in Polish First Secretary Wladyslaw Gomulka who declared "The principles of internationalism have been betrayed by the present leaders of the Communist Party of China, who have from positions of anti-soviet nationalism and great power chauvinism, violated the solidarity of the international communist movement." Encouraged by general anti-Chinese chorus which was evident among the delegates, Brezhnev did not hesitate to blame China and state that "The practical activities of Peking in international arena more and more convince us of the fact that China has actually broken with the proletarian internationalism and lost its class socialist content". But the question was not raised to the limit

of excommunication of China from socialist fraternity for fear of provoking mutually acrimonious debates, walk-outs and further split in the communist movement. In this respect, the primary objective of the Soviet Union in calling the conference failed.

What was shocking, however, was the abject failure of the Western delegates to raise the issue of aggression against Czechoslovakia effectively for the deliberation of the Congress. It is true, the First Secretary of Czechoslovak Communist Party, Gustav Husak, who replaced Alexander Dubcek, did not want the question to be raised. But since the very independence of a communist country was involved, it was not a light matter to be overlooked.

One thing which became evident at the Congress was the fact that the international communist movement has ceased to be monolithic as it had been for nearly fifty years with Moscow as its centre of gravity. Slowly, yet irresistibly, international communist movement is being beset with divisions and splits which are assuming serious proportions. Leaving aside Yugoslavia and China, communist parties in other countries do not agree among themselves on questions which vitally affect their economy and political stability. Again, Moscow is no longer considered the fountain-head of world revolution.

The very fact that Moscow took so long to organise the World Communist Congress and that the congress achieved nothing more than the denunciation of "imperialism" at a time when old imperialist countries had ceased to be imperialists, shows that the disintegration of the international communist movement has begun and it is beyond the control of the Soviet Union to arrest it.

Collective Security: Russian Style

Soviet ambassadors and heads of missions from at least 15 Asian countries gathered in Moscow last week to prepare the Soviet Union's momentous scheme for a new 'collective security system' in Asia.

The plan was launched by Mr. Brezhnev himself in his main speech to the World Communist Conference two weeks ago.

The purpose of the scheme is evidently to seal off any possible further expansion of Chinese influence across Asia at the cost of Soviet interests. The United States has already expressed a cautious interest in the Soviet idea for a collective security system, vague though its outlines still are.

For some years Soviet economic and military aid to Asia has been based on two principles: to reconcile differences between Asian countries before the Chinese can exploit them, and to support regimes in power—even conservative or military ones, in many cases—against revolution or subversion.

The Soviet fleet has built up a powerful presence in

the Indian Ocean. Soviet emissaries have even established contact with the Chinese Nationalist regime in Formosa. The next step is to build a collective security structure to bind together Soviet policy achievements in different countries. This structure would not be a conventional military pact. Nor would it be openly directed against China; a place might even be left vacant for Peking.

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Bengal: Two Trends

An Analyst

MONTHS of April and May and the first half of June have been extremely hectic politically. But the foci of interest have slightly shifted.

The heightened tension between the Centre and the State on the issue of Central Reserve Police and the Cossipore firing followed by the hartal supported by the U.F. leaders, that dominated the scene in mid-April, quietly and unobtrusively died down soon after the Chief Minister Ajoy Mukherjee and Dy. Chief Minister Jyoti Basu met Chavan and Swaran Singh. What exactly transpired in these meetings is difficult to say. But the two Bengal tigers softened considerably towards the Centre soon after and since then the anti-Centre virulence is, intriguingly enough, conspicuous by its absence.

While the Calcutta Corporation elections and the election of V. K. Krishna Menon to the Lok Sabha only confirm that the Congress remains routed and demoralised, other developments have taken place to indicate that the U.F. has just begun showing its internal cracks and tensions.

Two major trends during these two and a half months deserve to be noted. One is the continuation and even aggravation of lawlessness all over the State in a more dispersed form. And another is the flaring up of inter-party conflicts within the U.F. at lower levels leading to violent clashes and even political murders.

Soon after the Telinipara communal riots, the Rabindra Sarobar incident and Cossipore firing, quite a large number of smaller and larger conflicts, flare ups, gheraos of Thanas and factories, forcible seizure of lands in tea gardens and fisheries, inter-party attacks and murders followed and these began to have a cumulative effect on the general situation. The situation was deteriorating so fast that even the Home Minister had to admit that increased lawlessness was becoming a serious problem and he called meetings of district magistrates and police officers to tackle the situation. He also admitted that frequent transfers of officers were being demanded by various parties and their leaders, and, as a consequence, the police could not operate freely due to political interference.

Some of the interesting facts and issues that have come to the surface during this period are: (a) Anti-social elements have admittedly come in into many of the parties of the U.F.; (b) Political groups are trying to extend their influence in localities and are coming in conflict with others in consequence; (c) Political interference with the administration has admittedly increased; (d) Police is asked to distinguish delicately between "legitimate democratic trade

union movements", and rowdies and lawlessness; (e) Police becomes inactive or brings in the locally influential MLA or party leader to "settle" a demand; (f) Complaints against the CPM workers are ignored by the administration; (g) Police Thanas have been gheraoed by different political groups including the CPM to get certain things done; (h) Even court orders have been ignored in several cases of gheraos and gheraoed officers are almost compelled by the police to concede the demands before being "freed"; (i) Headmasters and teachers in schools and colleges, and doctors and nurses in hospitals have been ill-treated and gheraoed in many places; (j) Police officers' houses have been searched by rowdies coming as local political workers; (k) At least 13 political murders have taken place as reported in the press; (l) Attempts at organising trade unions of policemen are being made by political groups; (m) The Home Department has advised the police to refer the cases of anti-social elements to their respective political parties before taking action against them.

Special mention may be made here of the latest incidents in Durgapur where policemen were beaten up and even kidnapped, as a result of which a section of the police got out of control and attacked the students of a local college. Now the police is being lampooned by the U.F. parties. A very serious administrative problem is raising its head. Under pretext of this incident the morale of the police will be shattered and a section of officers and rank and file will be won over.

Another significant development is the inter-party conflicts that resulted in innumerable incidents throughout the month of May. With the gherao of Minister Subodh Banerjee by CPM supporters in the Secretariat Building the question of drawing up a code of conduct was raised but nothing resulted, as the CPM was not enthusiastic about it. There was a suggestion of having U.F. Committees at lower levels, but the CPM put its foot down by saying that it wants popular committees and not U.F. committees, the implication being that all U.F. parties cannot be represented in a local area; only those who have local influence can be allowed representation. Meanwhile, many of the other parties felt that the CPM was using the Home Ministry and the police to extend its influence and they have begun to resist this attempt. On the other hand, they also wanted to extend their local influence. This has generated clashes. The anti-social elements who have lately joined the parties, welcome this trend. But the main motive behind the clashes is political, although attempts at minimising it are being made. It appears that while many parties are involved

in these clashes, the CPM is mainly suspected to extend its influence in the rural and industrial areas and in the various institutions due to its having major portfolios, including Home.

These inter-party conflicts assumed such proportions that it was no longer possible for the CPM to ignore other parties' demand for a solution. What emerged was an informal meeting of the "Big Five"—CPM, Bangla Congress, CPI, RSP and Forward Bloc—to formulate a solution. As was inevitable, the fear of domination by the Big Five was immediately raised by the SUC and the Gorkha League, among others. One of the suggestions to prevent interparty conflicts reportedly proposed by the Big Five is to set up districtwise U.F. committees. The matter is now under discussion. However, this is no solution to the problem which is a built-in one in a 14-party united front government. Meanwhile the CPI-CPM summit attempted to get close at least on the tactical front. But if their controversies over Kerala are any indication, one cannot be sure if in West Bengal they can come closer. The chances are that while temporarily a patchwork may be attempted, the inherent contradictions are bound to flare up in local areas, if not at State level.

Two more aspects, namely, industrial relations and agrarian relations, both of which are showing interesting trends cannot be dealt with here owing to lack of space. With increasing weakening of State authority and with growing confusion and demoralisation of the

police force and the administration, a vacuum is emerging which is being filled mainly by party-militants. It is significant that senas and volunteer forces are being set up by parties on a large scale, all in the name of "defending" against "reactionaries". Most parties already have the nucleus of such a force.

In the coming legislative session bills relating to land will be taken up. Meanwhile defacto "land reforms" are already on the way either by forcible seizure and occupation or by ordinance or by the connivance of the administration. Peasant para-military forces are being built up, albeit under different party flags. The next real stage of "struggle" should then shift to the countryside. Meanwhile, the "educated" politicals in the country will be kept confused and diverted by other issues like Durgapur and gheraos and unemployment. The more intelligent of the U.F. leaders know that it is not in their power to tackle the major problems. Therefore their aim is to utilise the present Ministry to disorganise and weaken the State and entrench themselves in "actual power" in the countryside from where the revolution has to be ultimately promoted. This they are busy doing, albeit in an inefficient manner.

Some in the coffee house asked me: Is it going to be Vietnam or Indonesia in Bengal? I think it is going to be Vietnam. Meanwhile, Jyoti Basu has undertaken the thankless (thankless within the party) task of hoodwinking the rest of India by presenting a "sober image".

Violence In Calcutta

(A Correspondent)

THE Information Minister, Shri Jyoti Bhattacharjee lives in a rented flat on the 2nd floor of a big house on Pic Nic Garden Road within the Ballygunge Assembly Constituency. This Constituency is composed of Wards No. 68, 69, 70 & 71 of the Calcutta Corporation. Before Shri Jyoti Bhattacharjee became a resident there, the people of the locality lived in peace and tranquility as there was no bombing, no clashes, and no stabbing as at present. For some time past, this area—Kasba, Tiljala, Bosepukur, Bediadanga, Bondel Road has become very notorious as inter-party clashes resulting in bombing, arson, stabbing, shooting and killing are happening almost daily in broad day-light—in mornings, evenings and nights. The peaceful citizens of the area are now afraid of living in their homes as violence breaks out from time to time. Violent activities are committed many a time in the presence of the Police who act as mere spectators.

The following are a few of the facts that were

brought to the notice of the Chief Minister, the Deputy Chief Minister who is also the Police Minister, and the Information Minister.

Shri Sankar Ghatak, a close neighbour of Shri Jyoti Bhattacharjee, and a young Congress worker, worked for Shri Ranadeb Choudhury at the last mid-term election, Shri Bhattacharjee was the rival candidate in the Constituency. After the election was over, Shri Ghatak was mercilessly assaulted by the goondas of the United Front and he had to be taken to the hospital in an unconscious state.

Shri Jyoti Bhattacharjee openly declared that the youths of the United Front would be armed with guns, revolvers and ammunition to maintain peace in the State. Soon after this statement of the Minister, arson, bombing, assaults and stabbing began taking place throughout the day and Congress workers and Congress sympathisers are being wounded or killed. At

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The Leadership Of 1970s

M. R. Pai

AFTER sustained increase in prices over 15 years, there was a nominal drop in 1968. But prices have again started to rise. Pensioners, salaried people and a number of persons with fixed incomes are suffering the ill effects of inflation. The law and order situation in the country is causing considerable alarm to all who are interested in democracy. There is, in fact, a close relationship between inflation and break-down of law and order. Even an apostle of Sarvodaya like Jayaprakash Narayan has started wondering whether Naxalites are not doing a great public service by focussing public attention on some issues by resorting to desperate solutions.

The present state of crisis is due to inadequacy of leadership. Ultimately, a stable and prosperous society depends on good leadership. The importance of leadership has rightly been emphasised by Robert McNamara, himself a successful leader in business and Government, and at present dynamic head of the World Bank, in the following words:

"What, in the end, is management's most fundamental task? It is to deal with change. Management is the gate through which social, political, economic and technological change — indeed, change in every dimension is rationally and effectively spread through society".

It is necessary to examine why a country like India, which has produced giants in public life, is today having mostly pygmies. The contrast between the past and the present will be instructive and give us the guide-lines for the future.

A brief study of some aspects of leadership from the lives of the great leaders of the past will help us.

Raja Ram Mohun Roy, the great social reformer, was asked by the King of Delhi to prepare a memorial on his behalf, seeking to redress some grievances from the East India Company. When the memorial was prepared, a publication alleged that Ram Mohun Roy had stolen some documents from the East India Company to prepare the memorial. He immediately petitioned the Company to hold an inquiry into this allegation, and having compelled the Company to do so, publicly cleared his name and vindicated his honour. By this act, he showed that integrity is the first and foremost requirement of good leadership. This is sadly lacking today in our public life.

The second aspect of good leadership is the ability to win over loyalty of people. An instance from the life of Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, a great patriot and leader, will illustrate this. While he was undergoing his sentence in a jail in Burma, at that time part of India, a convict from Ratnagiri had also

been put in the same jail to attend upon him. But Tilak never treated him as a servant. Once when the convict fell ill, he would not allow the former to prepare food or to attend on him. On the other hand, he prepared food for the convict and nursed him for a number of days. Tilak treated the convict in such a way that when the convict received an order of release, he petitioned the authorities to allow him to stay for two more years so that he may have the opportunity of attending upon Lokamanya Tilak! In sharp contrast, one finds that leaders have, today, to buy loyalty of followers rather than win them over. The sad fact that about 14% of legislators defected after the 1967 elections, one of them as many as 7 times, shows how far public life has deteriorated.

The third quality of leadership, namely, taking public into confidence and being straightforward in one's dealings with the public is illustrated by the life of Sir M. Visveswaraiya, the great engineer, administrator and statesman who introduced the idea of planning in India. When he was engineer in the Poona Irrigation District, he found that considerable water was wasted by agriculturists. He instituted a new system which resulted in better utilisation of water. There was resentment over this and a number of people in Poona who were owners of land started an agitation. They started a campaign in local papers saying that they were being harassed. Sir Visveswaraiya collected all the clippings and forwarded them to the Government of the then Bombay Presidency, giving his reasons for the new system. The Government backed him saying that what he had done was correct. After this, he called a public meeting of the citizens where he explained the old and new systems and reasons for the change and the benefit of the system. He also had caused all officers to be present there and asked the agriculturists whether they had any specific complaint of harassment against any one of them in which case they would be required to answer them. There was none. This straightforward approach was very much appreciated by the citizens.

In sharp contrast, we find today leaders professing socialism and urging simplicity and sacrifice upon the citizens wallowing in luxury. This too is done in an indirect manner. Ministers at the centre, for instance, draw a modest salary, but enjoy practically unlimited perquisites (estimated at Rs. 17,000 per month). Members of Parliament have recently sought, and will shortly get, an enlarged portfolio of perquisites. Why not draw a high salary, pay taxes on them and buy everything at market price? Why not take the public into confidence, or does it come in the way of some

who preach equality of income, taxes on urban property and other egalitarian measures, and yet want to enjoy the best of things for themselves?

The fourth quality of leadership is that of being well-informed. Leadership is a great responsibility, and an ill-informed leader is like an unqualified driver on a public transport — a menace to society. Look at the leaders of yester years like Phirozeshah Mehta, Ranade, Gokhale and Mahatma Gandhi. Their predecessor, the Grand Old Man of India, Dr. Dadabhoy Naoroji, was a model for all. In the evening of his life, after unremitting service to the motherland, even a few hours before his death, he was having important news read to him by his grandchildren: What an avidity for knowledge, the basis for public service!

Most of our leaders today have ceased to read and think. They have discovered a new formula — verbal Niagara is a substitute for thinking.

It is this type of leadership which has brought the country to the brink of disaster.

There is, however, no need for despair. The intelligentsia which withdrew from public life, after attainment of Independence, is getting restive and there is a trickle back into public life from this vital constituent of society. The public is also getting fed up with the present half-baked leadership, and its methods of agitational politics. There seems to be an awareness that one should fight one's own battles instead of handing over one's fortunes to professional politicians, whose "commission agency" or "managing agency" is a very expensive one.

Business and industry have already started training leadership for 1970s and 1980s. Everywhere there is ferment, and out of this will emerge a new India with a leadership based on integrity, qualities of head and heart which would motivate followers, public service and knowledge.

Rebel Poet writes his 'Obituary'

Yevgeny Yevtushenko, the Russian poet once regarded as a young "rebel," has published his own literary obituary notice in the latest number of the magazine *Novy Mir*.

It is one of several important items to evade the censor in what is likely to be the last number of the magazine to be edited by Alexander Tvardovsky, the liberal poet.

Officials of the Soviet Writers' Union recently demanded Mr. Tvardovsky's dismissal. It is likely to become effective before the next number of the magazine appears.

Yevtushenko concludes a poem which is nominally about a cabaret in Barcelona with the words:

"I am a poet who died. But I can't remember how many years ago".

Another of his poems contains two verses clearly referring to the present wave of Stalinism in Russia:

"While the Fascist censorship Drowns thoughts like kittens in a sack,

Someone shouts at his wife:

Shut up, you fool!

But in Spanish, of course.

"People are so tired, so strained,

They vent their spleen on trifles,

Becoming each other's hangman

Forgetting who the real hangmen are."

Yevtushenko was dismissed last week from the editorial board of *Yunost*, another liberal literary Magazine.

The Daily Telegraph, June 2, 1969

Communist Front Organisations

Top officials in the international Communist front organisations have been replaced in what appears to be a thorough purge of personnel who have refused to support Moscow over the Czechoslovak issue. The latest victim is Satish Chatterjee, Indian General Secretary of the Transport, Port and Fishery Workers Trade Union International.

Chatterjee was replaced by another Indian, Devkumar Ganguli, at the Transport TUI's Fifth International Conference in East Berlin from May 12-16. Pro-Soviet control of the organisation was further assured by the appointment of an East German as one of the two Secretaries.

Chatterjee had denounced the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia last August, describing it as a "gross interference in the internal affairs of the CSSR, endangering the sovereignty of an independent Socialist State, which is contrary to the objectives of the WFTU and of our TUI".

Several officials of other Communist front organisations, who have been equally outspoken about this Soviet action, have also been replaced. They include Rodolfo Mechini and Francis Le Gal, President and Secretary-General respectively of the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), and Nuri Abdul Hussein, the Iraqi Secretary-General of the International Union of Students (IUS).

Some of the severest criticisms of the invasion came from the leadership of the WFTU and a question mark still hangs over the heads of the organisation's Secretary-General, Louis Saillant and its President, Renato Bitossi. Their position has been shaky and seems to have been further undermined by Soviet pressure.

A Dialogue Between Socrates And Lenin

Feroza Seervai

SINCE Socrates was a pagan and Lenin an atheist, neither of them went to Heaven. But on the 21st of January 1924, the soul of Lenin newly arrived from Earth, met the soul of Socrates somewhere in... and they talked upon matters of importance...

SOCRATES : I am overjoyed, Lenin, to meet you. Hundreds of years ago I expounded the idea of the perfect republic and now, I understand you have established a Communist State. Have you based it on my ideal republic?

LENIN : What a joke! Comrade Socrates, what a joke! But an intellectual like you is capable of any nonsense. I realize your bourgeois ideology! I, who have fought and won against the capitalists-scoundrels! I, who have brought equality to all men!! I, who have established a classless society!!! Not I, comrade. In my state I have established Justice. In your bourgeois ideology there is no freedom, but serfdom. How can you know Justice, with your bourgeois mentality!

SOCRATES : Lenin, you strike terror in me indeed, when you speak so vehemently. Pray, be gentle with me, and a little patient; for I would fain know from you, in what does Justice consist?

LENIN : As my master Marx taught, there is but one evil: the exploitation of man by man. There is one way to put an end to it: by abolishing all private property, by establishing the rule of the proletariat. This is the way to bring true equality among all men, —this is Justice.

SOCRATES : I fear Lenin, I am not qualified to understand you. I have been long away from Earth. You have called me bourgeois; you speak of the capitalist and the proletariat; you address me as comrade. These terms are new to me and I must request you to speak to me in simple words.

LENIN : I have always believed in the stupidity of the intellectual! In my state I never encouraged fruitless disputations, but I shall tell you, comrade Socrates. All men, born princes or paupers, in the East or in the West, fair-skinned or dark are to be regarded and treated as equal. This is Justice.

SOCRATES : I beg you forgive my stupidity, Lenin, but tell me, how do you mean should all men be regarded and treated as equal? Shall the weakling be regarded as the same with the athlete and the wrestler?

LENIN : No! You wilfully misunderstand me comrade Socrates. In my just State men are equal, for no man shall have more wealth than another; no man shall have more right than another to education or to labour; no man shall have any advantage over any other. In my just State, no man shall make another

toil for him, while he himself rests. So will men be equal.

SOCRATES : Light dawns on me now. I begin to see a little what you mean. There must be no privileges in a State where men are equal, and the happiness of all must be the ideal of every individual. Or do you mean something else?

LENIN : Just so, comrade. Each for all and all for each.

SOCRATES : But tell me further, in seeking the happiness for all, you seek that every man shall have primarily the satisfaction of his material needs. Is this not your aim?

LENIN : Certainly.

SOCRATES : But Lenin, animals too, our dogs and horses, and cows and sheep, all these have the same material needs as we. Shall we not also regard and treat them as equal with ourselves?

LENIN : You have a strange humour, comrade Socrates, to distort what a man says.

SOCRATES : But why do you make such a charge? Have I not clearly stated what you yourself have said? Or if I be mistaken, correct me. For, if I remember right, you agreed a little while ago, that justice consists in procuring the happiness of all, and that by happiness you mean primarily the satisfaction of material needs. Have not animals then, material needs also, and shall we not in perfect Justice show to them the same consideration as to men?

LENIN : No! In the process of evolution man has attained a level of development, where he is no longer mere animal but Man—a superior animal.

SOCRATES : I do not pretend to understand you now. Do you suggest there is really no equality after all? In maintaining that men are superior, you admit that there are levels of existence. Why then will you not admit at the same time that between men and men there may be differences also?

LENIN : Of course there are degrees of excellence among men. Have I not myself declared, that among every hundred of my supporters, sixty are fools, thirty-nine criminals and only one genuine Communist among them. And my master Marx has taught also the Law of the Just State: from everyone according to his abilities, to everyone according to his needs.

SOCRATES : But if men have different degrees of excellence, how can they be regarded and treated as equal?

LENIN : I hate disputations, comrade Socrates. Should not every man have in proper proportion the satisfaction of his needs? In the just State, every man

must labour, and no one must go unfed. Is this not equality? and Justice?

SOCRATES: Well have you provided, Lenin, for a State where men toil and eat and sleep. And if you were providing for a city of pigs, how else would you provide for the beasts?

LENIN: Nonsense, comrade Socrates. What else do you want in the just State?

SOCRATES: So Justice consists in providing for the bodies of man. Or have you a mind to provide for the soul also?

LENIN: Don't speak to me of souls and spirits. This is all bourgeois cant—mere inventions of dreamers like you. Ideas, values, art, these mean nothing to me. All nonsense! In the just State, comrade Socrates, a man does what the State wills him to do, whether he will or no. He is forced to do his job.

SOCRATES: Ah! so State-autocracy is freedom. I did not know. In my day, we called the forced labourer serf or slave. But I understand now, serfdom to the State is freedom.

LENIN: You Sophist! I am not surprised they sentenced you to death!

SOCRATES: No man is a Sophist, Lenin, till you can show his Sophism. But, if you force a man to his task, will he do his best? or will he leave half undone? and how will you force him? Can you change human nature?

LENIN: This is a foolish question, comrade Socrates, unworthy of you. The compulsory social organisation will create, by habit, this new kind of man, working unselfishly for his fellow-men and the State.

SOCRATES: After all, Lenin, you are much more of a dreamer than I thought! How will you procure the best men to do the best work for the State? For there

will be men, you agree, who will shun the harder tasks, since each is to have the satisfaction of his needs. You said: "from everyone according to his ability." How can you know a man's ability, if he should pretend?

LENIN: Yes, yes, Socrates, but a man will put in his best effort, for according to his labour shall he be rewarded.

SOCRATES: Forgive me, but I am again at a loss to understand you. You have said that some men have greater excellence, some less. You say now, that a man will be rewarded according to his labour. Then, it means that men of greater excellence will get higher rewards.

LENIN: They must.

SOCRATES: How then shall equality be maintained? We agreed, when we began, that in the Just State, there will be no privileges. But now we find, there are higher rewards for better work. And will there not be some men in the State, whose duty is to control and direct the labour of others? Such are leaders.

LENIN: What of that, you sly twister of words?

SOCRATES: Be gentle, Lenin, that means that there is not one class of men, but many: the leaders and the led; those with more rewards and those with less. And your class-less society has turned out to be after all a society with different classes of men—a State, according to you, without Justice. Your ideology has become the ideology of State-Autocracy, with classes among men, just as in the Capitalist State. Yours, only, is State-Capitalism!

LENIN: Enough! I have had enough for my first day here, comrade Socrates. Farewell! Remember, I believe in action, not in words, and in my Just State, bourgeois intellectuals of your kidney, are found only in concentration camps!

Appeal for Civil Rights

The civil rights movement in the Soviet Union has now assumed organised form. An "Action Group for the Defence of Civil Rights in the USSR" has been constituted in response to the mounting arrests and darkening political atmosphere.

It is this group of 15 people — led by the historian Peter Yakir—who have drafted a sober but almost desperate-sounding appeal for help to the United Nations Committee for Human Rights. The text of this historic appeal, dated 20 May, has now reached the West.

The Action Group's appeal reads:—

We, the signers of this letter, deeply disturbed by the unceasing political persecutions in the Soviet

Union, perceiving in this a return to the Stalin era when our entire country was gripped by terror, appeal to the United Nations Committee on Human Rights to defend the human rights being trampled on in our country.

We appeal to the United Nations because our protests and complaints, addressed for a number of years to the higher State and judicial instances in the Soviet Union, have received no response of any kind. The hope that our voice might be heard, that the authorities would cease the lawless acts which we have constantly pointed out—this hope has been exhausted.

Therefore we appeal to the United Nations, believing that the defence of human rights is the sacred duty of this organisation.

—The Observer, June 15.

South Asia And The Commonwealth

R. S. Morkhandikar

OF the proliferating international organisations, the Commonwealth of Nations is the most difficult to define. As one writer put it, 'defining the commonwealth in negatives is easy. Indeed, if one confines oneself to material links of defence and foreign policy and trade, it is easy almost to define it away altogether.' It is not a military or a regional alliance, it is not a club of like minded democracies; it has no common foreign policy; it is not a customs union. It is not in any very meaningful sense a meeting point of races and continents, for the interplay between them at commonwealth conferences is not very high as pointed out by Mr. Maurice Zinkin in an article in *International Affairs*. There is little in common between its members, least of all its wealth. Its greatest justification is that it exists and its strongest bond is the feeling that there is a bond. It is to use the phrase of Prof. J. D. B. Miller, a 'concert of convenience.' Therefore it has survived because it has not been very inconvenient to any of its members.

Whether the Commonwealth has a future or not, it has a past. And especially for India, Pakistan and Ceylon a significant place in their political development. This relationship between the two is the subject of a somewhat oddly titled book *The Commonwealth in South Asia** by Dr. S. P. Aiyar. The book traces the evolution of the Commonwealth, describes the impact of the British empire on the socio-political life in the subcontinent and narrates the story of the nationalist movement and political developments in the three South-Asian countries in the context of the Commonwealth.

The British empire — later renamed British Commonwealth — has contributed three things to South Asia (which for the purposes of this book is India, Pakistan and Ceylon): Free parliamentary institutions, English language and modernisation. It is a merit of the work that it sees the link between the three.

It is ironical to recall that during the colonial days, it was the British who doubted the propriety of introducing parliamentary institutions and English language into India and the Indians who insisted on having them. Thus referring to the Simon Commission Report, A. B. Keith wrote: 'It is noteworthy that the commission endeavoured to suggest that responsible government in India need not follow rigidly existing models, a fact which at once rendered it suspect in the eyes of Indian politicians.' More than twenty

years after independence, Aiyar notes, there is widespread disillusionment with the working of democratic institutions in India, and at least one South Asian member of the Commonwealth — Pakistan — admitted this openly and experimented with institutions which their authors thought were more 'suited to the genius of its people,' only to find that the Westminster model continues to have a hold over the imagination of the people.

A similar love-hate relationship exists regarding the English language. While knowledge of English is still regarded as a mark of culture and English is thought of as a window upon the outside world, both Ceylon and India have decided to discontinue use of English as an official language and as a medium of instruction. By a sort of feed-back process the decline of English may strengthen the 'traditionalists' and result in greater distortions in the 'free institutions' which, Lord Balfour declared, was the life blood of the Commonwealth. Politics in these countries is already characterised by mass violence, parochialism and communalism. Will the process of modernisation then continue or will the subcontinent slip into political and intellectual stagnation and decay? Dr. Aiyar does not seem very optimistic in his reply.

The transformation of the British empire into the British Commonwealth and still later into the multi-racial Commonwealth of Nations has been a remarkable process which shows its adaptability and resilience. Today the Commonwealth is approached from two points of view: utilitarian and sentimental. For its South Asian members it is the utility of the Commonwealth which largely holds an appeal — the trade preferences, Sterling area, Colombo plan and many other facilities which membership of Commonwealth brings. More than all this, as Zinkin points out, the Commonwealth provides one means by which the other members can obtain a strength beyond their own, if they can persuade Britain, out of Commonwealth loyalty, to shift her policy to meet their point of view. Aiyar admits, that in the Commonwealth India has a 'Platform' for India's foreign policy. Otherwise it occupies not an important place in the thinking of most educated Indians.

For great Britain it was largely a question of sentiment. She saw herself at the head of the Commonwealth — a sign of its great power, which in substance she had lost long ago. Only now, it seems, Britain realises that she is not a great power and has started trimming her responsibilities in proportion to her power. Thus she decided to give up her role east of

(Continued on page 11)

* *The Commonwealth in South Asia*, by Dr. S. P. Aiyar, Published by Lalvani Publishing House, Bombay. Price Rs. 30.

Reviews

Indian Communist, December 1968 Issue

Society for Research in Indian Communist Affairs, Marris Road, Aligarh. Price Re. 1.

IT is no secret that Communists are active in strategically important border areas. Little is, however, done either to check those activities or to keep an eye on what is happening. To explain away inaction and indifference ignorance is pleaded on many an occasion. The plea will not be available hereafter at least about two northern districts of U.P., the districts of Tehri Garhwal and Uttarkashi which lie along the Indo-Tibetan border.

An investigation in communist activities in the two districts was carried on by the Society for Research in Indian Communist Affairs of Aligarh. The results of the investigation are published in the December 1968 issue of *Indian Communist*, the quarterly journal of the Society. The Editor of the journal, Mr. J. G. Tiwari, was the main investigator.

The facts found out will prove of deep interest to all, more particularly to those entrusted with the defence of the country. According to Mr. Tiwari the Communists active in the two districts belong to the left or Maoist school of thought, though they call themselves Right Communists. They have penetrated into a number of local organisations, the most important amongst them being the Tehri District Cooperative Bank and the Tehri Garhwal Motor Owners' Cooperative. They are also active in the trade unions of road workers, transport workers and forest workers. Control of these organisations enable Communists to maintain a good number of whole-time and part-time workers. It has also given them a stranglehold over the economic life of the two districts.

According to Mr. Tiwari the main social base of the Communists is the petty contractors "living in villages and constituting the major portion of the educated local middle class". Their demands are championed as also those of the labourers employed by them. The demands of forest labourers are also championed including the demand that the forest produce should not be allowed to go out of the districts. In putting forward these demands Sarvodaya workers and Communists work together. This has enabled the latter to utilise the former for securing a strong footing in many villages. The grievances of Garhwalis against non-Garhwalis and of hill people against the people from the plains are also exploited from time to time. The result is that the Communists have built for themselves a powerful base in the two districts. Mr. Tiwari found that they are cleverly and industriously utilising that base for their subversive and pro-Chinese propaganda.

The information collected by Mr. Tiwari discloses an alarming situation. It should make the Government and democratic political parties sit up and think. It is to be hoped that the thinking will be immediate and earnest and that it will cover not only negative measures for checking communist propaganda but also positive measures for ameliorating the lot of the poor and backward people of the two districts so that they may not fall an easy prey to that propaganda.

V. B. KARNIK

Secularism in India

Edited by V. K. Sinha, Lalvani Publishing House. Rs. 21.

THE book is a collection of essays on problems of secularism written by about a dozen eminent writers. Some of them were written for a seminar held in Bombay in November 1966 by the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom.

Secularism is a concept that developed in Europe at the beginning of the modern age as a result of the conflict between the Church and the State. From Europe it travelled to the United States and led to the erection of a "wall of separation" between religion and the State enshrined in the American Constitution. Whether and how far the idea applies to India and the State established in India is the problem elaborately discussed in the book from a variety of points of view.

India is supposed to be a secular State. It is secular in the sense that it does not practise any religious discrimination and guarantees "freedom of conscience and right to profess, practice and propagate religion". This distinguishes it from Pakistan which proclaimed itself to be an Islamic State and did not guarantee safety and security to its Hindu citizens. It is but right and proper that this fact should be emphasised and widely advertised.

But in other respects India is not a secular State. The State in India does not accept the doctrine of complete separation between the State and religion. It has reserved to itself the right of intervention in religious institutions and practices in so far as they conflict with public morality or citizenship rights. It associates itself with religious practices and even encourages religion but without any discrimination. Many contributors to the book have drawn pointed attention to these facts. It is clear, therefore, that the word "secular" has acquired an entirely new meaning in India and is more or less tantamount to non-communal, non-denominational or non-discriminatory.

The late Mr. M. N. Roy whose two articles written over twenty years back are included in the book has adopted a clear and forthright position. According to him, India is not a secular State as "the pre-conditions of secularism are absent". He states: "The State is

not an abstraction, an impersonal machinery, therefore, it cannot be secular so long as the people running it remain religious-minded."

The word secular has acquired some prestige and popularity. But before adopting it as the expression of an ideal form of a society or State, one may pause and remember that as pointed out by M. N. Roy, "the Nazi State of Hitler or the Corporative State of Mussolini or the Socialist State of Stalin were also secular". Will it not be better then to shift the emphasis from secular to democratic, modern and moral? A democratic, modern and moral State is a better ideal to strive for than a mere secular State.

The book discusses this and many other problems relating to secularism. It is provocative as well as exciting as each contributor has presented his views in a forceful and persuasive manner.

V. B. K.

BOOKS RECEIVED

1. *The Hard and Bitter Peace* (World Politics since 1945), G. F. Hudson, Published by National Academy, 9, Ansari Market, Delhi 6. Price: Rs. 3.
2. *Himalayan Blunder*, Brig. J. P. Dalvi, Published by Thacker & Co. Ltd., Bombay 1. Price: Rs. 30.

VIOLENCE IN CALCUTTA — Cont'd from page 4

the time of the occurrence of these violent actions the Police are mere spectators. But later they arrest mainly Congress workers and Congress supporters.

There are two rival groups of people near Bondel Road and Railway Crossing, the Pals who are Communists and anti-Congress and the Ghoshes who are anti-Communists and pro-Congress. Most of the Ghoshes are non-Bengalis.

Just before the mid-term election, Congress workers took out a procession with Congress flags and when this procession was passing by the Bondel Gate a number of goondas of the C.P.I.(M) & R.S.P. attacked the procession and bombed and seriously injured a number of processionists.

On the day of polling (9-2-'69) the goonda youths of the United Front assaulted with bombs and stenguns Congress workers and supporters and killed Ranjit Ray and severely injured eight or nine others near the Bondel Gate crossing.

Therefore, bombs were thrown incessantly at the gates of the Calcutta Chemical Co. thereby causing injuries to Raja Ram, Ambika and Tewari, the three darwans of the Company. Raja Ram's injury was severe and he had to go to hospital.

On 28-2-69 the Kashba Thana was gheraoed.

Other activities of the goondas were as follows:

On 5-3-69 a young energetic Congress worker, Shri Nityananda Adhikary was seriously assaulted.

On 6-3-69 at about 7-30 p.m. a rickshaw was bombed. The leg of the rickshaw puller was injured and an infant passenger was also injured. Some pedestrians were also injured by bombs.

On 7-3-69 a Congress supporting washerman, while returning home with his clients' clothings, was injured by bombs.

On 4-4-69 the news spread that the home of Shri Jyoti Bhattacharjee had been bombed. Shri Ratan Ghatak, younger brother of the above-mentioned

Sankar Ghatak, a School Final Examinee, was arrested and was seriously assaulted by the Police. His home was searched at 2 A.M. but nothing objectionable was found. On 5-4-69 another Congress worker, Biren Das, was arrested and assaulted.

On 13-4-69 at about 5 P.M. a number of bombs burst near the crossing of Swinho Lane & K. N. Sen Road, where a number of young Congress workers live. At about 8-30 P.M. that night some United Front goondas with lathis, daggers, bombs, knives, guns and fishing nets went to the home of Baij Nath Singh and Banku Singh, wellknown Congress workers. They looted the house, assaulted the inmates and tried to catch fish from the tank. The villagers resisted the goondas. Later armed police went to the place whereupon the goondas retired.

The notorious goondas of the area are now the best friends and workers of the United Front.

(Continued from page 9)

Suez, and has sought entry into the EEC, as a price for which she has been ready to sacrifice many of its links with the Commonwealth. Thus the Commonwealth is no more politically a forum of 'consultation and co-operation.' Britain did not consult its members before her Suez adventure, nor did India/Pakistan before the 1965 war. The only serious political question on the Commonwealth agenda is Rhodesia. And if the British public opinion is any indication, it will not be long before Britain recognises the UDI, the counsels of Commonwealth members notwithstanding. It is clear then that both the sentimental and utilitarian views of the Commonwealth are under severe strain. Unfortunately the nature and extent of this subtle transformation in the Commonwealth has not been adequately studied.

With Many Voices

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

For the Soviet leaders, ideological sanction is a useful umbrella for its actions, but it is not indispensable.

—*Swiss Press Review and News Report*, June 2.

When a "cobra spreads its hood it is a Naxalite. At other times it is a Marxist."

—Union Law Minister, P. Govinda Menon,
The Hindustan Times, May 28.

If success is stacks of pledge papers, then Vinoba is succeeding, for he had managed to collect pledges from nearly half the 70,000 villages in the state. But if it's social transformation, he hasn't scratched Bihar's dusty surface.

—Joseph Lelyveld, *New York Times*, May 25.

The Presidential election is not the occasion for showing our concern for handicapped communities.

—C. Rajagopalachari, *Swarajya*, June 7.

An Indian Communist can be Soviet or Chinese, he simply cannot be Indian.

—Satya Roy, *March of the Nation*, June 14.

To the Editor,
FREEDOM FIRST,
C/o Democratic Research Service,
127, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Bombay 1.

Please enrol me as a subscriber to FREEDOM FIRST.

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Name:

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The army, I think, at the moment is the best popular profession.

—General P. P. Kumaramangalam, *Times of India*,
June 10.

People would have perished like flies if there was no planning in this country.

—Morarji Desai, *Sunday Standard*, May 25.

Power corrupts and lack of power corrupts absolutely.

—John Roche, *Daily Telegraph*, June 1.

Our universities today are filled with sounds of daggers and deaths and they are ruled by rowdies and criminals... a heart-breaking situation: wicked students flourishing and good students non-plussed; dishonest teachers moving their heads high, good teachers pushed into the background.

—B. M. K. Sinha, Vice-Chancellor of the
Magadh University, *Mainstream*, June 24.

The United Front Ministry speaks with two voices on the subject of gheraos.

—*The Indian Express*, June 16.

The right to participate in public decisions carries with it the duty to abide by those decisions when reached, recognizing that no one can have his own way all the time.

—President Nixon, *Time*, June 13.

With war clouds now in Sinkiang and in the East, the evolution of a less inhibited society in the Soviet Union becomes more remote.

—*The Guardian Weekly*, June 12.

Co-operation between Japan and India can help ensure peace, prosperity and stability in our part of the world.

—Prime Minister Indira Gandhi,
The Economic Times, June 26.