

Choice Before the Congress

by Adam Adil

THE Indian National Congress is still the best organised and the most effective nation-wide political organisation in the country. No other political party is formidable enough to challenge its position and replace it from the seat of power, at the Centre or in the States, in the immediate future. In a sense, therefore, the Congress represents the organisation-potential of the country and, for good or bad, the destiny of the country is linked with the organisational health and ideological character of the party. Anyone interested in the well-being and democratic progress of the country has, therefore, to study carefully developments taking place inside the Congress organisation.

The recent trends in the country, and more particularly inside the Congress organisation, have therefore far-reaching and disturbing implications which need to be closely analysed by all Congressmen as well as democratic parties and groups in the country. Apart from the internal scramble for power, dissensions and fissiparous proclivities, the Congress today is threatened with a malaise of a far more serious character. Under Prime Minister Nehru's dominating personality and leadership, the Congress today is able to hold itself together as a unified organisation. But behind this facade of unity, the party has already become a house internally divided into two camps, both competing with each other for the leadership of the party. This scramble for power itself is bad enough to sap the strength of the organisation, but, what is worse, this scramble has now been given an ideological garb as between the Right and the Left, the Rightists being dubbed as reactionaries and the Leftists styling themselves as "progressives", and claiming to be the real successors and followers of the Prime Minister. The battle, besides, has no longer remained confined to the Congress organisation alone. The communists, always eager to infiltrate the ruling party, have seized the opportunity and have already joined forces with the Leftists with a view to form a united front with the latter as against the Rightists. In this, they are being encouraged by the enthusiastic

response they are receiving from these self-styled progressives.

The communist tactics are, of course, evident to those who have followed their tortuous career for the last many years. Since the Amritsar Congress in 1958, the Party has been steadily moving in the direction of the united front with the Congress from above as well as from below. These tactics and policies have been clearly formulated at the Vijayawada Congress of the Party held two months ago. The party programme adopted there clearly aims at the formation of a National Democratic Front as the immediate objective of the communists to be achieved as a means of eventually establishing in the country a People's Democracy with the Communist Party as the supreme arbiter. The Vijayawada thesis, therefore, gives a call for a "united front with the progressive elements in the Congress so that together they may tackle common national problems". The party programme further clearly states that "it is necessary to recognise that while a large part of the forces of the Right are inside the Congress, the bulk of those who are our potential allies are also inside the Congress.... We must look upon democrats inside the Congress and the mass of Congressmen as our friends and potential allies in the struggle for the consolidation of political independence." Anyone acquainted with the communist jargon and thought-processes would realise the implications of this statement, and the implications are not flattering to many so-called progressives inside the Congress. Moreover, the Communist Party's resolution and subsequent statements made by party spokesmen throw a peculiar light on the role played by these progressives in the Congress organisation and administrative apparatus. To put it bluntly, the communists expect to mobilise these progressives—or their "potential allies"—in order first to split up the Congress and later on to capture it from within for their tactical and ideological purposes.

That the communists are indulging in their usual double-talk and playing a double game in relation to the Congress is obvious, and even the communist leaders are quite frank about their objective and tactics. They plan to oppose the Congress wherever possible and thereby canalise all the discontent against the ruling party into their fold, while at the same time they hope to win over an influential section of Congressmen by outwardly supporting the "progressive" policies of the Congress which would suit their ideological aims and tactical line. E. M. S. Namboodiripad, for example, while explaining the tactical line adopted at Vijayawada has recently stated that the

communist tactical line arose from the understanding of the character of the Congress as a ruling party. The two sides of the tactical line, he explained, were "unity with Congressmen in so far as the masses of Congressmen are interested in the implementation of the declared progressive policies of the Congress leadership, and the struggle against the leadership of the Congress and the Government led by it since it is they who formulate and implement the anti-people policies of imposing the heavier and heavier burdens on the common people". Thus the Communist Party has not only assumed the role of the supreme arbiter deciding the progressive content and character of the Congress leadership and policies, it has also arrogated to itself the championship of the masses of people as against the Congress Government. The communist objective is thus plain enough: inside the organisation, to split up the Congress into two groups, and isolate the two groups from each other by supporting the convenient one; and outside the party, to isolate the party from the people and thereby weaken it further by depriving it of its popular base.

It is in the context of these communist tactics that the present struggle between the "Rightists" and the "Leftists" in the Congress assumes rather sinister significance. The unhappy results of this process are already becoming manifest in an unexpected manner. Many eminent Congress leaders, imagining themselves to be leftists, have started mouthing communist phrases and using communist tactics against their own colleagues in the party and the Government. Recently, no less a person than Mr. Jagjivan Ram, Union Minister for Railways and an eminent member of the old guard, made a public statement saying that "anti-socialism elements" were active in the Congress. He further said that the Congress was at the cross-roads and "if the people who were opposed to socialism managed to run the party on the lines of capitalism, it would convert itself into a reactionary organisation." Coming as it did immediately after the recent feverish lobbying in connection with the election to the post of Deputy Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party in which he himself was a contestant, the meaning and significance of Mr. Jagjivan Ram's statement could not be lost. And the language and the substance of his statement were disconcertingly similar to those of the statements made by the communist spokesmen.

But what is more disturbing is the fact that the "Leftists" within the Congress are not only trying to force a sharp cleavage between their own group and those who are pragmatic and courageous enough

openly to differ with them, but they are also seeking to cooperate with the communists in many of their front organisations and on many issues. They are also trying to solicit communist support in some of their own activities. The recent by-elections held in Delhi gave a glaring evidence of this process. For the by-election to the Lok Sabha from Delhi, the Delhi Congress put up a candidate who was not only serving in the office of the Soviet News Agency, *Tass*, but was also an active member of the Peace Council, a communist front organisation whose loyalty and *bona fide* were openly questioned by our Prime Minister only a few months before. Similarly, in the by-election to the Delhi Municipal Corporation, the Delhi Congress openly sought the support of the Communist Party and of well-known fellow-travellers like Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali. Besides, the "left" group also appears to be in league with the journals like *Link* and *Blitz* which are serving as mouthpieces of the Communist Party and even, at times, indulging in character assassination of veteran Congress leaders of integrity. These journals often descend to the lowest level of mud-slinging against eminent Congress leaders in the hope that a lie repeated often enough may be believed by at least a section of the gullible people. The tactics of these journals are understandable, though despicable. But what is unfortunate is the fact that these journals are being openly patronised by many eminent and responsible Congress leaders.

The sad result of this whole affair was evident a few weeks ago, when the Congress Parliamentary Party was scheduled to meet to elect its Deputy Leader. The choice for the post was obvious and it was practically a foregone conclusion that Mr. Morarji Desai, by virtue of his pre-eminent position in the party and the country, would legitimately occupy the post. He had, besides, already acted as the leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party in the wake of Pandit Pant's illness and death, when Mr. Nehru was away in London to attend the Commonwealth Premiers' Conference. Yet, it is now well-known that the Leftists deliberately conspired to project the election to the post as a bid for succession to Prime Minister Nehru and feverishly attempted to prevent Mr. Desai's election. Of course, an election to any post inside the organisation is a perfectly democratic way of expressing the majority choice, and no one need object to the election as such. But the way in which the campaign against Mr. Morarji Desai was conducted by the Leftists and the manner in which it was publicised and given a distorted twist by the communist and the pro-communist journals in the country was a sad proof of the extent to which the communists and their "potential allies" have succeeded in splitting the organisation.

Another issue which the communists are trying to cash in upon in order to tempt the Congress leadership into a united front with them is that of communalism, which has unfortunately cropped up in the country as a result of the recent tragic events at

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Communist Infiltration Tactics

by P. Spratt

THE election of President Kennedy has raised the hopes of those who in the last years of Eisenhower's Presidency watched the steady expansion of the communist power and began to despair of anything being done to check it. Kennedy seems to be a vigorous man with a modern mind, and among his advisers are men who have shown awareness of this problem and have thought about it in an original way.

Kennedy's first three months of office have on the whole been promising. Events have gone badly, but he has lived up to his reputation as a man of decision. Let us hope that the miscarriage of his well-meant action in Cuba does not discourage him.

After the first world war the communist regime consolidated its position in Russia, but thereafter for twenty years failed to achieve any expansion. During and after the second world war it achieved a considerable expansion, not by revolution but by military force, in Europe, and a few years later, by a combination of both elements, in Asia. Again as the war receded, the outer world hoped that this second phase of expansion would come to an end. But the situation was now very different. The communists had learnt from their failure in the twenties, and concentrated their efforts on economically backward areas. They also learnt from the Korean war that expansion by straightforward invasion should be avoided. But there are other means of expansion, and since Russia began to make nuclear weapons, the communist bloc has felt strong enough to put great pressure behind the drive for world conquest. Some authorities estimate that the bloc spends on this campaign three or even four billion dollars a year, which is said to be a hundred times as much as its opponents spend on countering it. What exactly these estimates cover is not clear, but there can be no doubt of the enormous disparity. The world revolution is being undertaken as a centralised professional job, but it is being opposed by little more than scattered amateurs.

The world has never "settled down" after the second world war as it did in some measure after the first. Colonies, ex-colonies and non-colonial but backward countries are all in a turmoil. More than half the non-communist world is passing through a revolution.

The communists try by various means to take advantage of this. Cooperation with the revolution from outside has proved disappointing, but infiltration of the leading groups of nationalist or democratic revolutions has shown results. This method came near success in Iraq and Congo, and it has met with complete success in Cuba. This infiltration method is being pressed where opportunity offers, but it is not the only way. They have also developed a method of penetration of countries bordering on the

communist bloc. This does not depend on a country being in a revolutionary state, but only on its being technically backward. The plan is being pushed more or less actively in South Korea, South Vietnam, Laos, Burma, India, the three Himalayan states, Afghanistan and Iran. The methods vary in detail, from orderly official economic aid to camouflaged invasion by substantial bodies of troops, who of course enroll local recruits where possible. It has achieved considerable success in Laos and South Vietnam, and must be expected to succeed elsewhere.

Both methods usually involve secrecy. In Cuba it has totally baffled the American intelligence agencies. The number of Cuban communists is still very small, and their record is inglorious, but they have destroyed their opponents one by one, obtained complete power, and now control a substantial army and a valuable base for further expansion. The invading forces in Laos and South Vietnam number only a few thousand men, but they have brought those states near to chaos, and in Laos they are now to be given a large share in ruling the country.

These are, of course, backward states, but South Vietnam is far from primitive. The method is flexible, and can be used against almost any kind of rural population. It does not depend on discontent, though it can make use of it. We must not think that such exploits cannot be repeated in the border areas of India and Pakistan.

However, penetration of the border is not at the moment the main danger in India. A third type of infiltration seems to be in progress. It may go back to an earlier model, that of Czechoslovakia in 1948, or it may follow that of Cuba in 1959-60, or it may adopt a combination of the two. Such a plan would not depend in any way on economic discontent, but it would be greatly aided by a political crisis, which we have no right to assume cannot happen here.

Hitherto attempts to check the advance of the communists in backward countries have taken two forms: military and economic aid. There is much dissatisfaction with both methods. Some idealists demand that they should be extended only to democratic states. It is possible that more zeal might have been shown in encouraging democracy in aided countries, but any absolute rule is of course impracticable.

It is sometimes argued that since the communist attack does not depend on economic discontent, economic aid is unnecessary and may stir up trouble rather than allay it. It is true that economic discontent is not always an important factor. It had little to do with the trouble in Cuba, a relatively prosperous country, where the poor took no part in the revolution anyway. Laos is poor, but there seems to be

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Communist Strategy in South Vietnam

(Contributed)

THE six-year record of the communist drive to take over the Republic of South Vietnam by a combination of military action from without and subversion from within, reads like a handbook on the Marxist strategy of expansion. The Geneva Agreement of 1954 split the country along the 17th Parallel, at one of the narrowest points in its 1000-mile length. This short boundary line traverses an almost impenetrable jungle-clad mountain terrain, except for the coastal area, making it ideal for guerilla attacks.

Vietnam's "provisional military demarcation line," set by the Geneva agreement, in principle was to exist only until free general elections in 1956 should bring about unification.

At the time of the armistice, the area north of this line was firmly controlled by Vietnamese communists. Within two weeks, Ngo Dinh Diem established a non-communist government south of the line, which he has headed ever since.

Although North Viet-Nam is somewhat smaller than the southern part, its population is larger by approximately two million and it is entirely dominated in a totalitarian framework by the Communist Viet-minh, ruling out any chance of genuine elections.

Beginning shortly after the Geneva Agreement of 1954 partitioned the country, and operating at a constantly accelerating pace, the communist regime of North Vietnam has infiltrated its southern neighbour with guerilla fighters and political agents. The aim has been to confuse and terrify the population, turning it against the Government in an attempt to overcome the republic's energetic defence against armed invasion.

Communist subversion and ultimate conquest of northern Vietnam is a prime example of the use of a "nationalist" movement to promote communism. Moscow-educated Ho Chi Minh, still titular leader of the DRV regime, first organised Indo-Chinese exiles in 1941 at Liucho, China, as the Viet Minh, or league for the independence of Viet-Nam (from Japanese occupation).

Dominated from the beginning by hard-core communists, the Viet Minh kept its true character hidden by a camouflage of nationalism. Since an underground nationalist movement existed in Indo-China during its wartime occupation by Japanese, the Viet Minh posed as a similar resistance force. Gradually, it infiltrated and took over the northern province of Tonkin.

At the same time, Ho Chi Minh and his associates were laying plans to undermine and destroy the genuine nationalist groups. A bloody campaign of extermination against non-communist partisans was conducted by the Viet Minh during the period between the Japanese surrender and the arrival of re-occupation troops.

The Vietminh proclamation in September 1945 of

a "Provisional Government of Vietnam" was the signal for the start of guerilla warfare against the French, which was carried on with increasing severity for the next nine years. However, between 1945 and 1950, when the Chinese Communists reached the borders of Vietnam, the Viet Minh, isolated from direct contact with an established communist regime, endeavoured to win foreign support by representing itself as merely an anti-colonial nationalist movement.

In this guise, the Provisional Government in January, 1946, held nation-wide elections for a "National Assembly." At the second meeting of this body, in October 1946, non-communist deputies were practically eliminated and the Assembly became a communist puppet legislature.

At the third meeting, in September, 1955, when French control had been liquidated, the Assembly approved a reorganisation of the government as a "fatherland front" which, in theory, should include non-communists. As in the "fatherland front" of Bulgaria, the non-communist representation has no power or influence.

The Viet Minh itself was renamed the Lao Dong, or workers' party—a euphemistic designation for a Communist Party. As party chairman as well as president of the DRV, Ho Chi Minh and his administrative apparatus control some 26 million people, or about 54 per cent of the total population of Vietnam.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Vietnam, on the other hand, adopted in 1956, specifically outlaws communist activities and the Communist Party. Nevertheless, infiltration from North Vietnam has resulted in the presence of about 12,000 communists, a fourfold increase over the figure reported in the latter part of 1959.

The clandestine communist apparatus in South Vietnam has been built around a hard core of "sleepers" who were left at the time of partition. In the months following July, 1954, an exchange of persons was carried out, based on their personal choice for a non-communist or communist homeland.

Despite vigorous obstructive measures, including terror and arrests, on the part of the Hanoi regime, nearly one million persons left Communist North Vietnam for the south.

In the same period, the South Vietnam facilitated the departure of about 140,000 persons, mainly soldiers and their families, who wished to go to North Vietnam. How many communists were left behind is not known, but officials in Saigon believe it was considerable. It was these "sleepers" who made up trained cadres and agents to conduct terrorist activities, disseminate undercover propaganda, and direct the intimidation of villagers in key areas.

Following the elections in South Vietnam for depu-

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The Tragedy of Laos

by A Democrat

MORE than six years after the Geneva Agreement of July 1954, which supposedly ended the Indo-Chinese civil war, the 14-nation International Conference is again being held in Geneva to discuss the problem of peace and stability in the former Indo-Chinese states. In 1954, the civil war in Vietnam was the main and immediate concern of the participants in the Conference which tried to end the hostilities on the basis of the partition of Vietnam. This time, the communists are firmly in the saddle in North Vietnam, while South Vietnam is being menaced by sabotage and subversion tactics of communist guerillas from North Vietnam, and Laos, which was recognised as an independent and sovereign country in 1954, is tottering on the brink of the communist take-over, with two-thirds of her territory already under the control of the communist-backed rebel forces.

In order to understand the significance of this phenomenon, it is necessary to study the communist strategy in South-East Asia right from 1949—the year the Chinese communists conquered the whole of the Chinese mainland. The Chinese communists, as soon as they established their control over the mainland, tried to extend their influence in three different directions—in Tibet, in Indo-China and in Korea. These were the moves designed to extend their control over West, South-East and Far-East Asia. In this grand design, French Indo-China was, for the communists, the key to the conquest of South-East Asia. The Chinese communists had only to cross over the traditional southern border of China into the rich valleys of the Red River, and the great Mekong River. The first aim of the Chinese communists was the conquest of the Red River area of Northern Indo-China. It was easy for them to achieve this objective as the Vietnamese nationalists were already fighting the French for independence. The communists simply joined them and ultimately took over the rebel leadership with the help of Moscow-trained Vietnamese communists led by Ho Chi Minh.

The Geneva Agreement of 1954 partitioned Vietnam into two—the communists thus got their first objective, the Red River valley, and a new red satellite—North Vietnam.

The Agreement divided up the rest of French Indo-China into three parts—South Vietnam, an anti-communist country, Laos and Cambodia, both guaranteed by Russia, Red China, Britain and France as neutral. The U. S. did not sign the agreement.

Next objective for the Reds was Laos. Although supposed to be "neutral", it was even then divided, and it remained divided. The communists, during the Indo-China war, had set up a compact battle-trained force of about 1,500 Pathet Lao men in Northern Laos where they occupied two Laotian border provinces.

Sometimes, these Red troops struck South. But always this communist army remained a unit, biding its time.

The Pathet Lao is headed by Souvanna Vong, half brother of Prince Souvanna Phouma, who is dominated by his fanatic communist Vietnamese wife, who incidentally comes from the same country in Central Vietnam where Ho Chi Minh was born.

On many occasions, the Laotian Government tried to make peace with the Pathet Lao, but each attempt failed. All these times, the Pathet Lao asked for two concessions which no Government can ever make to the communists and survive: (1) participation in the Government, and especially control of the security apparatus of the State; (2) a *modus vivendi* which permits the communists to operate inside the society without opposition from the constituted authority.

Once, for example, the Laotians tried to keep the communists happy in a coalition Government which the Reds said was all they wanted. The communists agreed to "surrender" their two Northern provinces. They agreed to disband most of their army of 7,500 men and "integrate" the hard core of 1,500 veterans into the Royal Laotian Army. In return, communists occupied two posts in the Laotian Cabinet.

Like all efforts to placate the communists in Laos, this one failed. The Reds formally handed over the two Northern provinces of Laos to the central Government. But when the governors and other officials, appointed by the King and his Government, went to the North, they soon found that they were only tolerated as front men for a communist-controlled area.

The Reds' army was officially dissolved. The 1,500 hard-core troops were "integrated" into the Laotian Royal Army—but kept their own commanders and their own arms and refused to be dispersed out of their two battalions. Some 6,000 communist-led troops were "demobilized" and sent home to their villages. Actually, as the Laotian Government soon discovered, these troops went home as disciplined and well-trained cells of communist propagandists.

Inside the Laotian Cabinet, the two communist ministers and their aides worked hard, salting communists into key positions throughout the Government. They were on the point of taking over Laos from the inside when, in 1958, anti-communist Laotians of the armed forces and from the civil services overthrew the Government.

Communists once again went north. The two hard-core battalions marched out of the Royal Laotian Army, taking arms supplied by the U. S. along with them. Once again it was "war".

In August 1960, Captain Kong Lee, a U. S. trained paratroop commander in the Laotian Government's capital of Vientiane, threw out the anti-communist

regime backed by the U. S. Since then, Laos has been in chaos.

The U. S. moved into the picture in Laos as the French pulled out. In full measure, Laos represented a microcosm of all the problems with which the U. S. has to deal in Afro-Asia. It is a backward tiny Buddhist kingdom (population 30 lakhs and area 89,000 sq. miles) in which the vast majority is unconcerned with politics and, indeed, with the whole process of government and economic development. The U. S. has a large investment and commitment in Laos. America has funnelled military and economic aid to Laos at the rate of \$ 30 crore per year. Besides, a protocol to the SEATO pact commits the SEATO powers to the preservation of Laotian independence. The guarantee is based on recognition that communist control of Laos would gravely jeopardise the security of South Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand i.e. the West's whole strategic position in South-East Asia.

But neither the U. S. aid nor the SEATO guarantees has brought strength or stability to Laos. The internal civil war, coupled with the apathy of the masses, has played into the hands of the communists who have the well-disciplined Pathet Lao troops which have been armed, trained, staffed and led by the Vietminh. The communists have also been aided by the mountainous and jungle terrain ideally situated for the guerilla warfare at which they are adept, and by the infiltration of agents and supplies from neighbouring communist China and North Vietnam. The communist forces were further strengthened by a sizeable Soviet air-lift since the beginning of this year. On the other hand, although the Royal Laotian Government's troops outnumber the Pathet Laos by nearly two to one, they have shown little inclination to fight and have become increasingly demoralised and ineffective in checking the steady expansion of communist control.

It was in the face of this communist drive that the U. S. joined Britain in March in asking Russia to agree to a ceasefire in Laos. The Western powers said that, provided a cease-fire was verified first, they would agree to the long-standing Soviet request for an international conference to negotiate a political settlement in Laos.

Moscow quickly agreed, in principle, to the Western proposals. But it was not till the last week of April that Russia joined Britain in calling for a cease fire under the supervision of a revived International Control Commission, and the convening of an international conference on Laos at Geneva.

The International Conference began its delibera-

tions last month, but it could meet not before the Pathet Lao troops held more than two-thirds of Laos, compared to a few border pockets they held at the beginning of the year. And while they were attacking places fifty and forty miles respectively from the Royal capital of Luang Prabang and the administrative capital of Vientiane, the Royal Laotian troops in both the cities seemed unconcerned; they were busily engaged in elaborate ceremonials in connection with the cremation of King Sisavang Vong, who died eighteen months ago.

The communist side attending the Geneva International Conference would obviously bargain from a position of strength. They are holding powerful cards, as they have already occupied more than half of Laos. It is clear that the minimum the Russians will agree to is a coalition government headed by Prince Souvanna Phouma, the so-called "neutral" Prince who has moved steadily closer to the Pathet Lao in recent weeks. This would only help the communists to establish their stronghold over the whole country by political or subversive means. It is evident that the communists will occupy key positions in the coalition government and convert Laos in the near future into a People's Democracy by means of internal subversion which the coalition government headed by the neutralist Premier would be ineffective to check. Any kind of "international guarantee" to preserve the independence of Laos will be of no avail against the communist tactics of boring from within. If this happens, Laos will be yet another Asian country lost by the democratic world. The real choice, therefore, today before India and other democracies is between divided Laos, partitioned like Vietnam into communist and non-communist halves, and Laos wholly under the communist domination posing a threat to the existence of the rest of South-East Asia. The choice is obvious.

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ties to the National Assembly, in October, 1959, there was a sharp upturn in communist subversion. Unable to sabotage the elections, the Viet Cong—the term for South Vietnamese Communists—resorted increasingly to terrorism and even assassinations. Their major targets are local police officers, village guards and officials, and their families. The objective has been to isolate government officials from the people.

To counter this recurrent threat, the Diem administration has undertaken a large-scale programme of resettlement in rural areas commanding the known corridors of communist infiltration. Sixteen rural towns, each serving a local population of about 25,000 peasants, are planned as outposts against guerilla penetration. One of these was opened in 1960 and the rest will be completed within a year. A similar resettlement programme in Malaya effectively countered guerilla operation.

The battle cry of the Hanoi regime has been "reunification" of all Vietnam, though it is clear that this would be acceptable to the Vietminh only if it were on communist terms.

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Prospects of Democracy in India

by S. P. Aiyar

DEMOCRATIC government and politics rest on the idea of the responsibility of the rulers to the people who are considered to be the ultimate repositories of political power. Implicit is the notion that the people are able to exercise their choice—to decide who in their opinion are most trustworthy and competent to govern them. They have the right to recall a government in which they have no confidence. By *People* is meant the electorate which exercises its political decisions through the electoral system on the principle of *one man, one vote*. The bewildering variety of opinions in the society are polarised by the party-system which in democratic countries is considered the bedrock of representative government. From this it follows that though men are unequal in the endowments of Nature they have the equal right to decide the form of government under which they live—for *what touches all must be approved by all*. They also have the right to live in a society that does not hamper their natural development. Further, from the basic postulate that every man is a centre of absolute value, it follows that democracy is not arbitrary government but one of principles—the principles being embodied in the constitution of the land which is considered more important than the men who framed it or those who are at the helm of a temporarily constituted government. This is the implication of the saying that a democracy is a *government of laws and not a government of men*. When men come into conflict with the arbitrary actions or decisions of those in authority they have the right to appeal to the law of the land interpreted by a free and fearless judiciary.

The corpus of democratic ideas in the form now stated is a product of Western political development. "Looking back to traditional societies of Asia", says a perceptive interpreter of Asian institutions, "it is difficult to discern any approach to the values of democracy".

In India the British official policy for a long time, rested on the assumption that the people of India were not mature enough to run the institutions of free government and that it would be unwise—and unfair—to introduce these into the country in the form in which they were found in England. A good deal of current sociological thinking still supports this view. But the articulate sections of Indian society educated in the liberal ideas of English politics, furiously repudiated the official point of view and condemned it as the excuse of an imperialist power to hold on to India. A great Indian statesman, and one who all along was deeply sympathetic with British policy in India wrote an article with a significant title, "Leave India to her Fate". The temper of Indian nationalism after the First World War compelled England to work out a compromise and it was decided by the Montagu-

Chemsford Reforms to grant self-governing institutions by stages. The executive was to become gradually responsible to the representatives of the people in a lawfully elected legislature. The strength of political forces within the country and outside compelled a speedier transfer of power than what was contemplated by the rulers or anticipated by the people of the country. But for a full generation the governing elite of the country had been under *probation*—under the guidance of a foreign government which with all its faults was by its nature constitutional-minded. This period of training has been of immense advantage to India and to view it in the proper perspective one must compare India's experience under the British to that of Indonesia under the Dutch or of Congo under the Belgians. The comparative stability of democracy in India in spite of the fissiparous tendencies too well-known to require comment, is an eloquent testimony to the advantages of British rule.

When Independence came those who had long been in opposition and trained in the techniques of agitation found themselves in positions of power and were naturally confident of their ability to govern the country. Nor did the people doubt their competence. Within a remarkably short period a Constitution was framed for the country which, though it has not been wanting critics both within the country and abroad, has stood the test of a decade of stress and strain. By the end of 1951 it was decided to hold a general election on the basis of adult franchise—which produced an electorate of 190 millions. Dr. Rajendra Prasad described this as an act of faith. Professor Hugh Tinker says that this was an act of faith in another sense also—in the Civil Service—for upon the officials fell the incalculable task of making the elections possible. Considering the peculiarities of Indian society, even the task of preparing the electoral roll has been a great achievement. A second election in 1957 has given the country a greater confidence in the operating technique of elections. Two five year plans have registered a programme which is remarkable when one considers the difficulties in the implementation of these plans and the immature techniques of administration which cannot be changed all of a sudden. The difficulties in keeping close to the targets set in the plan and the divergent points of view that have been expressed are due to the fact that the Planning Commission has itself been passing through a phase of experimentation. The achievements of the Indian Government in many fields, however, is contrasted by considerable popular discontent. The fissiparous tendencies that one notices in India today and the pulls exercised by State Governments on the *National Development Council* to procure for themselves as much resources as possible are at least partly

economic in character. The prospects of democracy must be viewed against the background of Indian economic conditions and the struggles that they have given rise to.

It is significant that 13 years ago few people asked the question as to whether democracy would succeed in India; today there are few who do *not* ask this question. This change in outlook is partially accountable for by the unfortunate experience of newly independent countries in Asia and Africa. What thinking men and women in the country want to know is whether the institutions of democracy have taken root after the efforts of a decade. There is of course no way of ascertaining this. Even an experienced gardener is not always sure if the sapplings that he has planted will grow. In the case of human institutions it is infinitely more difficult to speak with confidence for they do not grow by themselves and are moreover constantly disturbed if not uprooted by the violent passions of men.

Criticism of democracy in India is made from many angles and it is not possible to examine all these here. Let us consider the working of democracy from a few prominent angles. It is said that in India there is no opposition and where there is no opposition there can be no genuine democracy either. The idea that democracy requires an opposition arises from the fact that no individual or group of men in society can claim to be infallible. The human mind even if it has access to all the channels of information including a free press, is an imperfect instrument for knowing the truth in all its aspects and it is necessary to evolve a system which ensures the clash of opposite points of view so that the different facets of an intricate problem can be seen as a whole. The word opposition in politics has a meaning similar to what it has in mechanics. When opposition becomes an end in itself it defeats its own purpose and degenerates into obstructionism. This is what has happened in India. Often the attitude of the opposition parties has been negative and destructive rather than positive and purposeful.

On the other hand it is said that the Government of India is not responsive to public opinion. This is true or false according to what one is thinking about. In a number of cases the Government of India has yielded to public opinion. In this context one is reminded of the difficulties in the passage of the Hindu Code Bill. But in a number of cases the Government has also been obstinate. The influence of Government works subtly in various directions and we often hear of pressures being brought on particular issues or persons. All this may be true or false to varying degrees. It must be admitted, however, that a widespread belief in these undesirable ways of Government, can in the long run be damaging to the cause of democracy.

Further, critics of democracy in India maintain that Parliamentary control over the administration is too imperfect to ensure responsibility. It must be admitted that there are twilight areas in the country's administration. Students of Public Administration have often pointed this out — Dean Appleby for instance. It is also true that publicity in Indian Administration is ex-

tremely defective. There is no systematic or organised way of enabling the public to receive reports concerning various aspects of administration. The more critical the report the greater is its scarcity e.g., Mr. Gorwala's Report on the Administration of Mysore is extremely difficult to get in Bombay. Even for research purposes, institutions find it difficult to keep themselves continuously informed. A word must also be said with regard to the authenticity of the reports. Prof. Morris-Jones tells us that the inaccuracies in the Rau Committee's report on the administration of the Damodar Valley Corporation were due to the inaccurate information supplied by the Government to the Committee. There is also a large measure of truth in the criticism often heard that the Government does not take action on several reports. In other directions the conduct of the Government has been praiseworthy. For example the U.P.S.C. in its Report for 1957-58, states that during the year there was not a single instance in which its advice was not accepted. If the Commission is able to report in this manner in the coming years healthy traditions will have been laid and it will go a long way in providing for a clean civil service.

It could be said that though we have yet to go a long way in learning the ethics of parliamentary life the working of India's Parliament leaves no room for despair. Parliament has become conscious of its rights and privileges. It is also necessary to remember that Nehru has been an educative influence on the Parliament and has been responsible for making the country aware of its value. What is important to consider in any evaluation of democracy in India is not the weakness of the opposition parties but the temper and outlook of the ruling party. What strikes the student of Indian politics most is not the occasional departure from strict democratic etiquette which one notices in the statement of rival political parties but the fact that all political parties consider the Constitution as pre-eminent and believe in the efficiency of constitutional methods. It is of course true that the rank and file of the principal parties have yet to be completely educated but this will necessarily be a slow process. The present leadership of the country under Nehru has sound democratic instincts and can be trusted not to misuse the tremendous powers which it now enjoys. The prospects of democracy in India will depend ultimately on whether the democratic leadership will perpetuate itself. The electorate in India is free to choose between rival political parties and will exercise its right in the future as it has done in the past. Meanwhile, much will depend on the Congress as the ruling party setting up norms of political morality and standards of behaviour both for its own rank and file and for other political parties in the country. The great task before the Congress for the present and for the future is to conduct itself in recognition of the truth that in a democratic system no party enjoys the privilege of immortality.

Without Comment

THOUSANDS OF SHEEP DYING IN RUSSIA

MOSCOW, May 16.—Food and other consumer goods are in short supply in the city of Gorky because of poor distribution, while inefficient farming methods in other areas are causing the death of thousands of sheep, threatening the country with a real shortage of mutton, newspapers reported here yesterday.

The Communist Party newspaper for the Russian Federal Republic wrote that 11,000 sheep died of starvation in April and that more were dying in May in the livestock producing region of Chita, north of Outer Mongolia. The reason was, the paper said, that the Kolkhoz (collective farm) workers obstinately continued to plant oats—usually a weak crop in that area—although they had been instructed to do otherwise by the plenary meeting of the Communist Party Central Committee in Moscow last January.

—*Statesman*, May 17

REDS JOIN CONGRESS PARTY

JULLUNDUR, May 12: Thirteen well-known Communists of Ajnala Tehsil, Amritsar District, have left the Communist Party and joined the Congress. The Communist workers were welcomed into Congress ranks by Shri Harinder Singh, Congress MLC, at a welcoming ceremony at Rajasansi.

The wrong stand taken by the Punjab Communist Party on border dispute with China has been given as reason for the resignation by these former Red workers.

It may be recalled that since the failure of the anti-betterment levy agitation started by the Punjab Communists a large number of Communist workers have left the Communist Party and joined the Congress.

—*Free Press Journal*, May 12.

ESCAPE FROM RED PARADISE

In its efforts to stem the steady and embarrassing flow of defectors into West Germany (5,191 last week), the East German Communist regime recently offered rewards to villages showing a record of three months without a single defection. Last week the first reward was won by the village of Gatow, near the Polish border. The local party secretary reported that the village had fulfilled the conditions and collected the reward. Next day, he skipped out himself to West Berlin.

—*Time Magazine*, May 5.

MOSCOW ASSAILS NEHRU'S VIEW ON CUBA

MOSCOW, May 4—Prime Minister Nehru's "ignorance" about the situation in Cuba "can only arouse bewilderment," Moscow Radio said today.

In a summary of an article in *Literaturnay Gazeta*, broadcast to South-East Asia Moscow Radio said Mr. Nehru had told an April conference of an all-India business organization that India "cannot judge the conditions in Cuba, who is in the right and who is in the wrong."

"How did it happen that Mr. Nehru was unable to solve such a simple problem, and even began contradicting facts?" Moscow Radio asked.

The broadcast said India's UN delegate was probably speaking in accordance with his Government's views when he asked the United Nations to defend Cuba from outside claims on its sovereignty.

"It can hardly be expected that Mr. Nehru has forgotten about the message he sent Fidel Castro personally in which he expresses his sympathy for the Cuban people and speaks of solidarity and support." Moscow Radio said, "And today he cannot judge as to who is right and who is wrong, who is threatened and against whom an attack is being prepared."

"Mr. Nehru says he is not aware of what is taking place in Cuba, but there are different kinds of ignorance. The ignorance of Mr. Nehru can only arouse bewilderment."

—*Hindustan Times*, May 6.

REDS' DEFECTION

FEROZEPUR, May 17, Eleven members of the Communist Party in Ferozepur tehsil, including its secretary, Mr. Jagannath, have joined the Congress Party at a special function here on Monday.

Mr. Harcharan Singh Brar, MLA and President of the District Congress Committee, who presided over the function, assured them of "proper place" in the Congress.

—*Indian Express*, May 18.

Tibet Fights For Freedom

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Review

Communist China Today

by S. Chandrasekhar, Published by Asia Publishing House, Bombay.

WHAT is China upto? There can be as many guesses as there are experts on China. But one thing is certain: China will make its presence felt especially on its neighbours. It is possible it may not let the world rest in peace. The population pressure and explosion in China, its belief in the inevitability of war and its survival in a nuclear holocaust, its messianic belief in communism—all these suggest that it may go in a direction which is not good for itself, its neighbour and the world at large. Few people know that Peking runs a Department of Overseas Affairs and it has included in its census overseas Chinese who are nationals of other countries. Add to this communists in various countries of South-East Asia. Prospects are not exactly encouraging to the area.

The book under review gives some vivid glimpses of changing China, a China radically different from the China of Confucius, of Lao-Tse, of Buddha, and even of Sun-Yat-Sen. No significant fact and figure has escaped the discerning eye of the author who has sketched a real picture of China with all its strength and weakness. Chinese communists wooed the peasantry with the promise of land reform, and with its help liquidated the landlords. "It is officially estimated that about three million landlords were executed, but according to external observers the number executed was closer to twenty million," says the author. And of course the communists kept their promise. "700 million mou of land (one mou is equal to a sixth of an acre) were distributed during the upsurge of the land reform to some three hundred million poor and farmless peasants." Then the peasantry was made to learn "pocket handkerchief farming" was uneconomic. Then followed co-operatives, collectives and communes, in quick succession to reach "one step beyond the Soviet Union."

With the introduction of communes, China has reached the final stage of communism. "What is a Commune? In essence it is the merging of a number of collective farms and villages into a single organisational and administrative unit which is responsible for the all-round development of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fishery as well as the industry." "The People's Communes are administrative and functional units where labour is organised along the military lines and things are done the way the battle duties are carried out, and the people live collectively. Every member of the commune becomes a soldier, literally and metaphorically. The commune becomes a labour battalion."

The commune has almost destroyed the family. Loyalty to the family has been replaced by loyalty to

the State. Chinese women have been released from "the slavery of the domestic work," and this has added a new labour force for industrialisation. It will not be surprising if, in some future date, the women are also released from the bondage of marriage because, according to Marx, slavery began with marriage. If communes have come, can community of men and women be far behind?

The commune is the ultimate in state ownership. It is supposed to have reached the communist goal: "from each according to his ability, to each according to his capacity." Need of course is not greed or desire. The state will decide the need. The dull blue pants and coats of the Chinese people only express the uniformity that has been introduced in the name of equality. As the author puts it: the communes is "a kind of cradle-to-grave insurance scheme in return for unquestioning, life-long hard labour."

One can not choose one's neighbours; more so with a country. We have to know our neighbour, China—its strength and its weakness, its intentions and its motives. China has a stable government now after decades, a determined leadership and a hard working people working harder in a totalitarian set-up to catch up with the west. "20 years compressed in one day" is their slogan. The Chinese leadership may require a diversion to maintain the strain on its people. We are in competition with this state and regime, whether we like it or not. We owe it to ourselves and to other economically underdeveloped countries to show that there can be industrialisation without destroying social values, to create a society where there are equal opportunities for all, a bigger cake as well as a better and equitable distribution of it so that everyone has a stake in the present form of society. We have to show that a society where there is equitable distribution of property is better than a society where everything is held in common.

—M. DEVADAS KINI

Sidelights On Rajaji

Khasa Subba Rau, Vyas Publications, Madras. Rs. 1.50 nP.

THIS is a richly deserved tribute paid to Rajaji by one of his life-long admirers, Khasa Subba Rau. It is a tribute and not just fulsome praise. The articles collected together in the book discuss Rajaji's many qualities of head and heart and analyse the role that he is playing in the political movement of the day.

Rajaji is a person who is wellknown for his acute intelligence and for his courage of conviction. During the days of the national struggle he differed with the Mahatma and other Congress leaders on the issue of Pakistan. With his unerring insight into the political situation he saw the irresistible force that Jinnah had built up behind his demand and realised the necessity of conceding it in the interest of early attainment of independence. He had the temerity of giving bold expression to his views. He suffered the fate of a heretic, but that did not deter him. If his sugges-

tion had been accepted in those days, it is likely that the bitterness that developed later and the communal riots that followed could have been avoided. But all Congress leaders were not as far-sighted as Rajaji.

Rajaji has again taken upon himself a mission which is not at the moment popular. It is the mission of building up an opposition. To start with, it was "a one-man opposition unremittingly engaged in the study of every great question of national significance and offering criticism and guidance in the spirit of Socrates aware of the risks of voicing unpalatable truths but persisting in it, nevertheless, as in a mission which has to be done and which he alone can do." The one-man opposition has now developed into an opposition party, the Swatantra Party. At the ripe old age that he has reached, nobody would have blamed Rajaji if he had retired from politics and availed himself of his well-earned rest. But he is a person "ever engrossed in a battle-royal to subdue history with the weapon of human intelligence". True to this description, Rajaji is now engaged in a battle-royal to change the course of developments in post-Independence India set in the direction of state-capitalism.

These and various other characteristics of Rajaji are lucidly set forth in this collection of short essays written between 1956 and 1960. One may not agree with all that the writer has said about Rajaji, but the light that he has thrown on the ideas and motives that guide his work will be of help to understand the real significance of the opposition movement that he is now developing against the Congress Party and its Government.

—V B. K.

COMMUNIST TACTICS (Continued from page 3)

little discontent: no doubt the people would be perfectly willing to be left in peace.

However, in other countries, especially India and Pakistan, economic discontent is important. Here the argument is valid, that the main job of the advanced countries is to help the backward countries out of their backwardness while they remain under liberal institutions. Here economic aid is, for the present, more important than military.

But even if both types of aid are given in suitable quantity and administered with efficiency, they will not necessarily prevail against the new communist tactics of infiltration or penetration. It is pleasing that President Kennedy realises this and has called for new methods. "Our security may be lost," he says, "piece by piece, country by country, without the firing of a single missile or the crossing of a single border. We intend to profit from this lesson. We intend to reexamine and reorient our forces of all kinds, our tactics and our institutions...." It is to be hoped that America and the other advanced countries will be willing to put substantially more effort into the necessary defensive measures.

CHOICE BEFORE THE CONGRESS (Cont'd from p. 2)

Jabalpur and other parts of the country. The communists, by playing upon the fear of communalism, have already rushed forth to extend their hand of friendship and cooperation to the Congress in fighting the monster of communalism. Their offer is so psychologically timed as to exert special appeal to the generality of the Congressmen and the public. And the communists obviously hope to broaden this proffered cooperation with the Congress to fight all the "reactionary forces" in the country. Some of the recent statements of the communist leaders give indications of the communist strategy on this count. By exploiting the recent resurgence of communalism for their tactical purpose, and by posing the choice before the Congress leadership as between communalism and communism, the communists want to trap the Congress leadership into cooperation with them.

It would be indeed fatal to the interest of the Congress, and democracy in India as a whole, to align with the communists even to fight the evil of communalism. Communalism is, no doubt, an evil which threatens the socio-economic progress as well as the unity of the country, but it has to be fought on the socio-economic plane and by weapons of education and economic development. It is one of the concomitants of our social and economic backwardness; it cannot be eradicated by making it a political issue. In fact, no political party in India is free from the incubus of communalism. Like all other parties, the Communist Party is equally guilty of communal and other narrow parochial affiliations. And when it suited their tactics, the communists have never hesitated to exploit and incite communal and other parochial passions, as can be seen from the recent local elections at Jalna, where the communists unabashedly exploited communal tension between the Hindus and the Muslims. Besides, communalism is undoubtedly bad, but communism is worse. To join hands with the communists to fight communalism will be tantamount to encouraging a far bigger evil to fight a smaller one.

The problem before the Congress leadership today is, therefore, a fundamental one: Can cooperation between democrats and communists ever be a workable avenue for the solution of national problems, serving the national interests? The problem is not peculiar to India and it has to be viewed in the context of the world-wide struggle between democracy and totalitarian communism. The problem needs a clear-cut answer; it would not brook of any half-hearted compromise or considerations of political expediency. What is at stake is our democratic way of life and fundamental values which are totally incompatible with those of the communists. Many other countries, like Czechoslovakia, with a long-standing tradition of democracy, have tried this experiment in co-existence and cooperation with the communists; and they ended up by becoming satellites of the Soviet Union. History gives no reason why India, if it also follows the Czechoslovak example, should prove an exception.

With Many Voices

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

—Tennyson.

✓ We do not doubt that the Sixth Congress (of the Communist Party of India) will be a significant landmark in the struggle of the Indian people for national independence, peace and friendship between all peoples in the world.

—Suslov, in a speech before the Sixth Congress of the CPI, *New Age*, April 30.

The Congress, denouncing monopolism in economics, has made a monopolist of itself in politics. The socialistic pattern had added a second string to its monopolistic bow. The result has not been good to the common man.

—D. V. Gundappa, *Times of India*, May 18.

There is a limit to the bank balance of Mr. Nehru's reputation. Today all of us (Congressmen) are drawing upon that balance.

—Dr. H. K. Mehtab, former Chief Minister of Orissa, *Hindustan Times*, May 16.

✓ I think they (the Congress and the Praja Socialist Party) do not consider communists more dangerous than communalists.

—E. M. S. Namboodiripad, *Hindu*, May 16.

✓ If there is a choice between the Jan Sangh and communists, I will have communists as my partners against the Sangh.

—Brij Mohan, President of the Delhi Congress, *Link*, May 21.

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Neutral nations seem to constitute a real free world to show in practice that private enterprise and nationalisation can go side by side and that a really free country is the one in which a communist and a capitalist can both feel at home.

—G. S. Bedi, *AICC Economic Review*, May 7.

Today the talk of socialism is the loudest but, at the same time, wealth is playing a greater role in society than ever before. Nobody considers it wrong to be rich by any means. Money plays a greater role in the Congress itself than ever before.

—Dr. Harekrishna Mehtab, former Orissa Chief Minister, *Times of India*, May 22.

Every day, my admiration for Lenin grows. The more I know about his work and his life and above all the more I understand the revolution, the more I admire Lenin. Only now I can grasp the difficulties Lenin had to overcome and the magnitude of the heritage he bequeathed humanity. When I see a Soviet oil-tanker, I think of Lenin. When I see a Soviet tractor, I think of Lenin. Whenever we get anything from the Soviet Union, I feel gratitude to Lenin.

—Fidel Castro, *New Statesman*, May 19.

There is every reason to fear that Cuba will become completely communist.

—Kingsley Martin, *New Statesman*, May 19.

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