

MARCH 1955

Culture And Freedom

by U Ba Nyunt
MAYOR OF RANGOON

[The following is the inaugural speech delivered by U Ba Nyunt, the Mayor of Rangoon, at the Inaugural Session of the Conference on Cultural Freedom in Asia held in Rangoon from 17th to 20th February 1955.]

IT is a great pleasure—indeed it is a proud privilege—for me to have been invited to deliver the inaugural address of this conference, a conference which is bound to prove to be a unique event in contemporary Asia. It is, I believe, for the first time, that representative intellectuals, writers, artists, scholars and thinkers who have enriched the respective culture of their country—have come together to deliberate on a theme, that has been the concern of intellectuals of all climes and times.

Culture is the precious possession of man. It is what distinguishes him not only from the beast but, in a finer sense, distinguishes one individual from another. Man is moved not merely by material needs. He is equally moved by intellectual and emotional needs. These intellectual and emotional needs of man have created the cultural growth of mankind. That is why they say that man does not live by bread alone. It is true that it is bread that makes living possible, and that to a starving man God appears in the form of food. But the moment man's basic material needs are satisfied his spirit is released and it starts roaming over the entire expanse of thought and imagination. When it is said that culture is the fruit of leisure it only means this. It means that the possibility of culture arises only when the minimum basic needs of man are satisfied. But these needs are what man shares with beasts. He does not share with them, or rather the beasts cannot share with man, culture. That is one thing which is man's peculiar glory. It

is entirely the creation of man. It is the fruit of his spirit.

This spirit cannot be caged without destroying its most fine and valuable elements. Its operations cannot be confined to a set pattern. Culture fixed to a set pattern is like a pool of stagnant water, which might, for a moment create an impression of serenity and tranquility, but which ultimately must create an atmosphere of disease and death. Developing culture is like a running stream whose rhythm symbolises the rhythm of life. The mind of man is the most sensitive instrument of culture and unlike stomach or sex its needs are not fundamentally physical. Nor are they limited. They are limitless both in quantity and quality. That is why culture cannot grow without freedom — freedom to expand and freedom to explore. Unless man's mind is left completely unfettered in its innate quest for variety, for newer experience, for experience for its own sake, it would not function fruitfully. This is the basic condition of cultural growth. Therefore when you gather here to fathom and measure the problems of cultural freedom, I would say that you have gathered really to discuss the fundamental needs of culture.

Culture and cultural freedom are identical things. There is no culture without freedom and freedom is meaningless without culture. A man whose needs of the spirit are not satisfied, who, therefore, lives on the level of beasts, cannot be called free.

But the necessity for freedom itself imposes certain obligations. The Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore wanted the winds of all cultures to blow freely on him, without of course being swept away by any one of them. It is indeed a tragedy that so many division walls have arisen in the modern world that the free flow of cultural winds has become almost impossible. It is to be hoped that your deliberations will go a long way in demolishing these ominous walls that have been disfiguring the international landscape.

Another point we should not forget is that in the wake of political emancipation from alien rule, the peoples of Asia today are trying to bring about better economic conditions. Some of our governments lean

towards the principles of the modern Welfare State. In this endeavour there is the danger of the State becoming absolute, unless, of course, the principles of democracy are strictly adhered to. In some parts of the world we are witnessing today that the implementation of the Welfare State principles requires the suppression of all opposition. The governments become insensitive to public opinion. In fact the individual exists for the State and not vice versa. And the State authority is vested entirely in the hands of one or a few selected individuals. These are done all in the name of the all-powerful State. Eventually the iron grip of such a State extends beyond its own frontiers and a new form of imperialism appears, which has been fittingly described by our Burmese leader, U Kyaw Nyein, as being "even more degrading and more dangerous (than old-time imperialism) because it is more ruthless, more systematic and more blatantly justified in the name of world communist revolution."

We in Burma can congratulate our present leadership that such a form of imperialistic totalitarianism has not yet appeared on our scene. As long as we in Burma adhere to the principles of Pyedawtha — the principles which are essentially based upon democratic planning and suited to the mental make-up of the Burmese Buddhist philosophy; as long as those in India adhere to the principles of Gandhism and Bhoodan; as long as those in Indonesia adhere to the principles behind Pantjijilla; in fine as long as all of us do not lose hold of the traditional cultural values in our economic or any kind of the state planning, the danger of totalitarianism can be kept off.

Using such noble terms as 'global peace,' 'broad-based-peoples' democracy,' the new imperialism has already appropriated or misappropriated the individual freedom of millions of peoples elsewhere. We in the regions of South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia can also fall easily into the grip of totalitarianism, if we rush carelessly for the 'get-rich-quick' technology and economic planning without paying due

regard to the traditional philosophies and cultures. A spiritual vacuum, resulting from rejection of traditional philosophies, poverty from lack of equitable economic planning and 'technical know-how'; illiteracy, are factors which pave the way for totalitarianism.

Culture is indeed the best means of solving such problems and I believe that men of culture are best fitted to wield this weapon. For unlike the politicians, they deal in humanity. They are concerned with the basic values of human experience. They are concerned with men's minds, and thoughts, and emotions which are the basic factors of human understanding.

But they can do this only by insisting on the basic values of culture — which indeed are the values of freedom. You are going to insist on these values, and I am glad you are holding this Conference in Burma. Burma has chosen a particular road of reconstruction — which, as our Prime Minister U Nu has said, was chosen with great deliberation. I always remember those words of his: "Before we decided on our final choice of these two roads — Democracy and Dictatorship — we pondered deeply. We made our choice not hap-hazardly but after a serious consideration." This choice was deliberate, but it was not accidental or mechanical. It was finely woven in our Buddhist culture; and the new consciousness of Buddhism which our country is displaying indeed entitles it to be the first venue of this great endeavour for cultural freedom in Asia.

I am happy to welcome our distinguished Asian delegates to our free country where the winds of all cultures are blowing freely. I wish this endeavour a great success.

FREEDOM FIRST

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Notes

The Fall of Malenkov

THE dramatic ousting of Malenkov from the premiership and the instalment of Bulganin in his place have started a wave of speculation in Western countries as to the possible line-up of forces inside Soviet Russia and its likely impact on the domestic and foreign policies of that country. The policy pronouncements that have accompanied this dramatic shake-up tend to dismiss the belief that the downfall of Malenkov was only the culmination of a sordid jockeying for power going on inside the Kremlin since the death of Stalin. Current reports on the latest developments in Russia, on the other hand, lend point to the feeling that the fall of Malenkov might mean the end of the era of collective leadership and a throw-back to the Stalinist cult of one-man leadership, with its attendant stiffness of attitude towards the opponents of the regime, both inside and outside Russia.

The theory of collective leadership was a hasty improvisation when the contending parties for the legacy that had fallen from the dead hands of Stalin found themselves evenly matched. It was evolved as a stop-gap arrangement, but it could not provide a roomy canopy for the contending parties, with the result that the process of each elbowing out the other from under its shelter started just when the outside world was fed on the dope put out by *Pravda* and other Communist papers, that there was no struggle inside the Communist Party for Stalin's throne and that the Party was a family of happy members. But Khrushchev soon combined with Malenkov to get rid of Beria, and now Malenkov himself is got rid of. That Malenkov has been made the scapegoat for the failure of Khrushchev to spur on the production of Soviet agriculture shows the measure of impotence to which Malenkov was reduced and the strength that Khrushchev had gathered, after the liquidation of Beria.

Khrushchev has now no rival in the party, but he is not yet the real master of Russia. The army, it appears, has suddenly developed ambitions and Khrushchev has been forced to appoint Bulganin, an army man, as the Prime Minister as a sop to the feelings of the Army. Zhukov, the hero of Russian soldiers, whom Stalin had consigned to the back-waters of Odessa when he saw in him a potential rival, has been made the Defence Minister. While it might be a matter of months before Bulganin is "relieved" of his duties, in Zhukov Khrushchev has a real threat to his power.

At the moment at least, the army seems to have the upper hand. The new regime's accent on heavy and military industry is a concession to the persistent demands of the military leaders who always held the view that communism in Europe has reached its high water-mark and further expansion is possible only when Russia has the military advantage

over the West. This might inevitably lead to the end of co-existence in Europe.

But in Asia, it appears, co-existence will be pursued with a vengeance. The backwardness of Asia, its poverty and its impatience with the slow process of democratic experimentation, all combine to provide a fertile ground for the spread of communism without having recourse to unnecessarily violent military methods. Molotov's friendly reference to India, Burma and Indonesia in his first foreign policy speech after the new regime took over seems to be a prelude to this 'soft' policy that the communists want to pursue in Asia, in a bid to suck the democratic countries of this region into the Communist camp. *Pravda* went out of its way to compliment Pandit Nehru and the Indian people 'who are upholding their independence and working for peace' although the Indian Communist Party never accepted India as independent till now and always regarded it as the 'biggest semi-colonial country yet to win freedom.'

The dangers of this 'friendly' policy to the democratic countries of Asia are obvious. In Europe we have witnessed the tragic fate of those who in their naivete accepted this 'friendly' offer and paid for it with the independence of their countries and with their own heads. Dr. Benes of Czechoslovakia is a classic example of this. It should serve as warning to those in Asia who in their new-found enthusiasm and lack of intimate knowledge of communist working, might be tempted to rush to their 'friendly' embrace.

Telugu Writers' Statement

AMONG the most encouraging features of our cultural life during the past few months are the steps being taken by writers and intellectuals to organise themselves against the threat of communist tyranny. A report from Madras published in *The Indian Express* states that more than 150 Telugu writers and artists have issued a declaration of "unshakeable faith in the ideal of Welfare State" attained through Parliamentary Democracy. Conscious of their heritage, they refuse to lend support to "any order of society that is alien to the history, traditions, culture and spirit of the country."

The stand of the Telugu writers is particularly heartening because it is not merely negative, "against totalitarianism either of the left or of the right," it is in favour of fostering certain conditions indispensable to the functioning of a democratic government. One of these is the right of opposition. Another is the widespread practice of tolerance, which is a concomitant of the right to oppose authority. The right (to oppose) and the virtue (of tolerance) are naturally linked to faith in intellectual liberty. Signatories of the Telugu statement are therefore to be congratulated on grouping together all three and bringing out their logical relationship. "We consider that intellectual liberty is the birth-right of man and the right to criticise the Government is implied in intellectual

liberty. Liberty is based on the tolerance and respect for divergent opinions."

Celebrated poets, scholars and musicians signed the statement. Spade work for the endeavour was made by S. Narayana Babu and P. Padma Raju. Similarly, from Bangalore comes news that a national Union of Indian Artists and Writers has been formed. In a manifesto released recently it declares opposition to the State imposing on writers "any conditions irrelevant to their free mission and activity." The manifesto warns Indian artists against the various "cultural" fronts of the communists.

Pure Simons

FROM time to time, there have appeared groups of individuals who agree with communism but not with the communist party. Having in common only a concern for doctrinal purity, some hark back to Lenin, others to fallen angels like Trotsky and yet others to Marx himself. Compared to the followers of orthodox Russian Communism, they may be called the devotees of the church of St. Marx and some Latter Day Saints or just Seventh Day Atavists. So far, they have indulged only in doctrinal quarrels and amoeboid division. The news of their coming together would therefore be truly in the category of "man bites dog."

Such an event took place recently in Bombay when the United Marxist Party was formed. The names of its constituents are indeed interesting. Some, like the Bolshevik Party and the Communist League, are straight out of the anthropological museums of Marxism, and others, like the Peasants and Workers Party, the Revolutionary Socialist Party and the Forward Communist Party are probably in the category of the Piltown Man. In the class of inveterate optimists there is a section of the People's Democratic Front, which burnt its fingers collaborating with the Communist Party in Hyderabad. The presence of two observers from the Scheduled Castes Federation is rather strange but perhaps the Federation looks on the others as outcast communists.

The Party, we are told, will oppose both the communist and Congress parties; but otherwise it is full of goodwill. It will base itself on "full intra-party democracy" and create a "sense of brotherhood" in the party. It will be "most friendly" towards the Soviet Union, its satellites and Communist China. Now and again it will co-operate with the Communist and Socialist parties in order to "create a climate of leftist unity"—clearly a case of friendly dry ice on the clouds of dissension!

Members of the new party will, no doubt, wear Khaddar and be mistaken for Congressmen. When they also talk of Socialist revolution and friendship for Russia and Communist China, they will be mistaken for communists. But when they add that they have no connection with the Cominform, the uninitiated can hardly be blamed for concluding that there must be some truth in the reports about flying saucers landing.

Bray, New World

MANY human beings have, perhaps, felt sorry for the lower animals who are denied the benefits of a large and watchful bureaucracy and who lack the aid of a multiplicity of controls to keep them on the straight and narrow path of planned progress. These people will, no doubt, welcome evidence to the contrary.

Recently, the Madras Livestock Board announced that "donkeys are increasingly becoming scarce in the State." The very phrase "increasingly becoming scarce" is enough evidence of decreasing lack of concern. But not content with that, the Board purposes to meet, under the chairmanship of the Madras Minister for Agriculture, "to tackle this problem" and launch a "breed more and better donkeys drive." And who but the perverse could fail to see the need for more and better donkeys!

The news that the Rajasthan Government has almost halved the export duty on donkeys in order to step up their export, encouraging, in itself, can only afford a short term solution to the problem of Madras. A long term solution must involve a thorough examination of more fundamental questions. Should, for instance, the drive for more donkeys be entrusted to the private sector or should it be a State monopoly? And why, in the first place this scarcity of donkeys? Could it be that the propaganda for planned parenthood has at last fallen on receptive ears? Moreover the very fact that there is a surplus in Rajasthan and a scarcity in Madras denotes a lack of co-ordination and shows the need for tackling the entire question on a national scale.

Any way it is heartening to see that in the march towards the Millenium of Family planning and Fertilizer factories, donkeys, at least, are not forgotten.

Will be shortly out

Q U E S T

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Editor: NISSIM EZEKIEL

**Army and Navy Building,
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Conference On Cultural Freedom In Asia

THE Conference on Cultural Freedom in Asia which met in Rangoon from 17th to 20th February was a unique gathering. Leading poets, writers and thinkers from various Asian countries came to the Conference in their individual capacity to discuss and ponder the common problems facing Asia as a whole.

The Conference was jointly organised by the Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Society for the Extension of Democratic Ideals of Burma. The latter is an organisation of Burmese intellectuals devoted to the spread of knowledge of democratic principles and ideals and to the adoption of democratic practices in the national life of Burma. Justice U Chan Htoon is the President of the organisation and U Thant, Secretary to the Government of Burma in the Prime Minister's department, is its Honorary Secretary. The Society had appointed a Host Committee to make arrangements for the Conference. Justice U Chan Htoon was the Chairman of the Host Committee and U Nyo Mya was its Secretary. Amongst its other members were U Thant, U Yan Aung and Madame Kyaw Nyein, the wife of the Minister for Industries of the Government of Burma. The association of these eminent individuals with the Conference proves that at least in Burma it is recognised that there is a clear distinction between State neutrality and intellectual neutralism.

The Conference was sponsored by a number of prominent individuals from various countries of Asia. They were the Honorary Chairmen of the Conference. Amongst them are to be found such names as those of Madame Aung San, the widow of the Burmese national leader; Dr. Lin Yutang, Chancellor, Nanyang University, Singapore; Dr. Nanbara Shigeru, President Emeritus, Tokyo University; Madame Pibul Songgram, Thailand; Dr. Sumitrao Djojohadikusumo, Dean, Faculty of Economics, University of Indonesia; Dr. Tanaka Kotaro, Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Japan; U Thein Maung, Chief Justice of the Union of Burma; Sir Arthur Wijeyewardene, retired Chief Justice of Ceylon; Dr. Conrado Benitez, Dean, Filipino Women's University, Manila; Dr. Raziuddin Siddiqi, Vice-Chancellor, Peshawar University, Pakistan; Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan; and Dr. Sampurnanand, Chief Minister of the State of Uttar Pradesh.

The Conference was attended by thirty-five delegates drawn from twelve countries. The delegates were eminent and highly respected men in their own countries and some of them have reputations extending far beyond the frontiers of their own country. From the Philippines came Dr. Benitez, an eminent historian, President of the Rural Reconstruction Movement and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Filipino Women's University, and Prof. Alfredo Morales, a very prominent young academician. Pakistan was represented by a former Cabinet Minister, Mr. A. K. Brohi; the Secretary-General of the Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, Mr. Sarwar Hasan; and an eminent author, Dr. Mazeruddin Siddiqi.

Amongst the delegates from Burma were a judge of the Supreme Court, the Rector of Rangoon University and a couple of prominent university teachers and lawyers. Japan had sent three professors and three writers and poets. Mr. Takdir Alisjahbana, Indonesia's leading writer and Mr. Mochtar Lubis, editor of *Indonesia Raya*, represented their country. India was represented by a delegation of six consisting of Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, Mr. M.R. Masani, Mr. Eric da'Costa, Tarkateerth Laxmanshastri Joshi, Mr. A. K. Mukerji and Mr V.B. Karnik. The Overseas Chinese were also present at the Conference. They were represented by Mr. Chang-Kuo-sin, the President of the Asia Press, Dr. Harry H. Wang, author and writer, and Miss Maria Yen, poet and novelist. Other countries represented at the Conference were Ceylon, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia.

The Conference began its work on the 17th afternoon with a preliminary session which settled the order of business. Justice U Chan Htoon of Burma presided over the session. Later in the afternoon, there was a public inaugural session which took place at the historic City Hall. The Hall, which was tastefully decorated, was packed to capacity. The Chairman of the Host Committee, Justice U Chan Htoon, welcomed the delegates on behalf of the Society for the Extension of Democratic Ideals. In his speech he referred to the great religious and spiritual revival that was taking place in Buddhist countries and more particularly in Burma and pointed out that "an idea is the strongest dynamic power in the world, capable of integrating and directing forces that can mould the history of continents."

NO CO-EXISTENCE

Mr. M.R. Masani, member of the International Executive of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, then conveyed to the Conference the greetings of the Congress. In the course of his speech, Mr. Masani said: "For us who believe in the equality and solidarity of men, wherever they may find themselves, the problem of human freedom is an indivisible one. We hold it a great truth that humanity cannot be half slave and half free. Culture to us is an end in itself—something which reflects awareness of oneself and the world and the untrammelled growth of human individuality and happiness. Culture to the totalitarians is a mere means to a political end already determined by the dictators. In the context of the twentieth century, freedom of expression is the essence of culture. While therefore on the plane of State politics there may perhaps be a possibility of co-existence between States based on different ideologies, on the plane of ideas there can be no co-existence between the culture of democracy and the culture of communism. Freedom is the same everywhere. While we may disagree between ourselves on many matters, we are in fundamental agreement, as against the totalitarians, about the true

nature of man. We hold as Justice U Chan Htoon in his elevating address of welcome has suggested that all men share a little of that divine spark which is commonly referred to as the soul. There can therefore, be no specifically European, no American, no Asian and no African brand of freedom. All the same, since this is a regional meeting the Congress for Cultural Freedom has felt it best to let the initiative develop among those within the region who have knowledge and experience of its special circumstances. Hence my proud privilege as, so far, the only Asian member of the International Executive of our organisation to bring to you in person its greetings."

The General Secretary of the Conference, Mr. Padhye, then read the messages of greetings. Extracts from important messages are given separately. The Mayor of Rangoon U Ba Nyunt, delivered the inaugural address published on the front page of this issue.

Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan then delivered the keynote speech. In the course of his speech, he pointed out how man alone had created culture and how culture could not be developed without recognising the supremacy of the individual. Man, he said, was the root of all things and he should be enabled to develop himself as a self-sufficient and self-reliant entity. Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan also referred to the Bhoodan Movement in India and pointed out how it was trying to solve many difficult social and economic problems not through legislation or other actions of the State but through the voluntary efforts of men.

The Inaugural Session concluded with the leaders of delegations from various countries expressing their greetings and welcoming the idea of the Conference.

The discussions of the Conference began on the morning of the 18th. The Conference had before it three topics for discussion; (1) The Condition of Cultural Freedom in Asia—a Review (2) Problems of Cultural Freedom in Asia and (3) New Approaches to the Development of Cultural Freedom in Asia. The three topics were subdivided into a number of sub-topics. About thirty papers written by scholars from many of the participating countries had been received on these topics. Prominent amongst those who wrote the papers were Prof. Alfredo Morales, Prof. Takeyama Michio, Prof. G. D. Parikh, Principal V. K. Gokak, Rev. U Thittila, Prof. Ohira Zengo, Mr. Eric da'Costa and Tarkateerth Laxmanshastri Joshi.

The discussion of topic No. 1 began in closed session on the 18th and continued throughout the day. Mr. A.K. Brohi of Pakistan presided over the session and Mr. A.K. Mukerji (India) and Mr. Mazheruddin Siddiqi (Pakistan) acted as rapporteurs. In the morning session the discussion centred on the place of religion in the new resurgence and how far religion could meet the challenge of communism. Various views were expressed about the revival of Buddhism in Burma and of Islam in Pakistan. The consensus of opinion, however, was that the need of the day was a positive faith in humanism. In the course of the discussions which took place in the afternoon on other sub-topics, attention was particularly directed towards the danger of compartmentalisation

of life into economic, political, religious and moral spheres and it was pointed out that unless man changed, all institutional and environmental changes were bound to fail. Information was given at the session about the Bhoodan Movement in India and the Conference felt that the Movement was a very interesting experiment which deserved to be studied very closely.

Discussion on topic No. 2 took place on Saturday the 19th, the third day of the Conference. Mr. M. R. Masani of India presided over the session and Mr. Eric da'Costa (India) and Mr. Mochtar Lubis (Indonesia) acted as rapporteurs. For convenience of discussion the topic was divided into four parts (1) Legacy of the Past, (2) Freedom and Economic Planning, (3) State and Cultural Minorities and (4) Totalitarian Threats to Cultural Freedom in Asia. The discussion on the "Legacy of the Past" revealed no uniformity in outlook with regard to the obstacles that the Past and in particular Colonial Administration raised to the extension of cultural freedom at the present time. It was felt by some members that, while the general system of Colonialism was undoubtedly bad, this did not imply that countries of this area previously dominated by metropolitan colonialism were not gainers on some accounts. The broad conclusion of the discussion was to the effect that Colonialism had left behind certain cultural handicaps and, in the economic field, had tended to give a wrong direction to production which was always conceived in the interest of the metropolitan country.

PLANNING AND FREEDOM

A most interesting discussion took place on the sub-topic of Freedom and Economic Planning. It was realised that while in the peculiar conditions obtaining in Asian countries it was necessary for the State to intervene to a large extent in bringing about economic development, the growing intervention of the State represented a danger to Cultural Freedom. The danger could be minimized, it was pointed out by some, by regional instead of national planning. Another view forcefully presented at the session was that neither State enterprise nor private enterprise provided a solution to the problem. The problem could be solved, it was pointed out, by developing an economy largely based on the self-sufficient village, which it was possible to organise on the basis of new advances in technology.

In the course of the discussion on the 3rd sub-topic, particular reference was made to the conditions of the Overseas Chinese. The Conference expressed its sympathy with the plight of Chinese intellectuals and heard with horror, from those with personal experience, of the conditions existing in the Chinese People's Republic. In the course of the discussion on sub-topic four, it was realised that, though there were many internal threats to culture in the various countries represented at the Conference, the most dangerous threat was the one represented by International Communism.

The last topic was discussed at the session of the

Conference which was held on the morning of the 20th, under the presidentship of Dr. Conrado Benitez of Philippines, with Prof. Morales (Philippines) and Mr. D'Silva (Ceylon) as rapporteurs. The discussion revealed a general awareness on the part of the delegates of the necessity to develop in their respective countries the movement for cultural freedom. Several delegates promised to establish, on their return, Committees for Cultural Freedom in their respective countries or to organise other activities of a similar nature. It was resolved at the end that Mr. Padhye, who has been appointed by the Congress for Cultural Freedom as its representative in Asia, should be entrusted with the task of co-ordinating the Movement developing in various Asian countries with the assistance of a Consultative Group consisting of an eminent individual from each country. The Conference then ended with a vote of thanks to the Host Committee and Mr. Padhye the General-Secretary. Mr. Padhye also thanked the delegates for their assistance and cooperation.

On the same day, there was a concluding public Session at which speeches were delivered by some of the prominent delegates explaining the discussions that took place at the Conference. Daw Mya Sein of Burma presided over the meeting and speeches were delivered by Mr. Siddiqi (Pakistan), Mr. Eric da Costa (India), Mr. Sarwar Hasan (Pakistan), Justice U Chan Htoon (Burma) and Prof. Watanabe (Japan). Moving a vote of thanks to the Chair and and to the Burmese hosts, Mr. Masani explained the significance of the Conference and pointed out how in its own humble way the Conference had made its contribution to the defence of democracy and freedom in Asia.

The Host Committee had made excellent arrangements for the Conference and all delegates were greatly touched by the generous hospitality of which they were the recipients and the many social and cultural functions organised for their benefit.

The Conference was voted a success by all those who participated in it. It brought together for the first time from various countries of the region men and women who were able by the end of the proceedings to develop a common framework of reference and a feeling of belonging to a fraternity. The Conference has laid the basis for the expansion of the movement for cultural freedom in Asia. It now remains to give the goodwill and understanding created by the Conference a stable organisational form so that it may prove to be the beginning of a widespread movement for the defence and advance of cultural freedom.

Writing in the *Sunday Observer* (London), Philip Deane, who came to Rangoon from New Delhi to cover the conference, refers to the participants to the conference as "the first group of Asians who have faced up to the unpopular task of pointing out these dangers to freedom. These men are not embittered second-raters. They could be in the driver's seat if they cared to climb on to the bandwagon. They have preferred (admittedly with varying degrees of conviction, and from different intellectual motives—some religious, some humanistic, some purely rational) to swim against the stream."

Deane then goes on to ask: "Can these men who seek to bring enlightenment compete with rabble-rousers who offer the quickest way out of poverty? The inspiring fact is that they are willing to try."

Messages To The Conference

[The following are extracts from some of the important messages received by the Conference for Cultural Freedom in Asia]

Dr. Lin Yutang, Chancellor, Nanyang University, Singapore:

"It is important in this hour of confusion and chaos in thinking that scholars and professors who are devoted to the preservation of freedom of thought should come together and discuss the vital relevant problems. It is my humble opinion that, in order to function properly, the Congress should keep itself absolutely clear of party affiliations."

Sir Arthur Wijeyewardhene, former Chief Justice of Ceylon:

"The Conference on Cultural Freedom in Asia is a definite step in the great movement for Peace in Asia and the World. The meeting of delegates from many Asian countries and the discussion of important and thought provoking subjects cannot but contribute towards the establishment of peace and the demolition of all warlike tendencies."

Dr. Kotaro Tanaka, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Japan:

"The various cultural, political or economic problems which mankind is facing at present are ultimately connected with a higher order, that of ideas. That is as true of Asia as it is of the rest of the world. But in Asia, the spiritual root of our problem must be more clearly emphasised, because we have introduced the material aspects of Western Civilization at the sacrifice of our own tradition of intellectual, moral and spiritual values."

The call of the hour is urgent. We must lay aside all differences caused by the accidents of geography and of history; we must unite in the acceptance of universal ideas transmitted by a common heritage; and, finally, in order to collaborate with one another for the noble cause of humanity, we must not hesitate to enrich and strengthen ourselves through the Western

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Problems Of The Indian Cinema

by S. S. Vasani

Mr. S. S. Vasani, President of the Film Federation of India, is not only a wellknown film producer but also a prominent advocate of cultural freedom. The following are extracts from a speech delivered by him at a Film Seminar held recently in New Delhi

I SHOULD like first of all to express my utmost gratitude to the All India Sangeet Natak Akademi for having organised this Seminar on films. Today is yet another important day in the history of the Indian film industry, for here again a weighty body, backed and blessed by the Government, is recognising the film industry, not as a subject for legislation and control, but as something that is capable of making a vital contribution to our national culture.

The cinema may be young. It may still be unstable. It may lack the support of the old traditionally minded people; but no one can deny that the cinema has come to stay. It reaches hundreds and millions of people every day, feeding them with ideals, moving their emotions and moulding their thoughts. Its growth is therefore inevitable. It has strongly rooted itself in people's lives and will soon develop itself to such an extent that nobody will ever have the time to think of its stability or question its utility.

Mr. Justice Rajamannar, President of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, said at the time of its inauguration: "It will be one of the functions of this Akademi to set up high standards for this new form of art, without impairing its commercial value." To raise the artistic standards without impairing its commercial value: that is the crux of the question. Film artistry is unfortunately compelled to compromise with the people's standards in life and art. This is the greatest handicap of the film. It has to make itself acceptable and in order to achieve this end it has to go through great barriers of infinitely variegated tastes and to reach and satisfy the public. It has to draw millions of spectators before the investors can hope to get back their outlay. The mass audiences are generally not well equipped to appreciate artistic subtleties. It cannot be denied that sometimes films fail miserably when they become too artistic!

The great majority of the cinema audiences tend to favour melodrama and other easier forms of emotional expression. Taking our own standards, for instance, I do not hesitate to accept the fact that improvement in the artistic standards of our films has been slow and halting. I think this is in a large measure due to our low economic standards.

The Indian film industry is now over 40 years old. According to a recent industrial survey, it stands second in respect of capital investment, fourth in respect of wages paid and fifth in respect of the number of people employed. Yet, we have only 8½ theatres per million of our population. This is the lowest figure for any progressive country in the world.

One of the reasons why the cinema has not progressed in proportion to the needs of our population

is that public men and philosophers have neglected the study of it. When they think of the cinema, they think only of sex and immorality. They do not think of the better aspects of the cinema. Many of them have a closed mind on the subject. They suffer from a complex, caused by the age-old prejudice of so-called 'genteel' folk towards any kind of show business and the men and women engaged in it. Even in countries like England and America, which are certainly more advanced than India, they look down upon actors and actresses with an air of superiority.

Another reason for the inhibited growth of the cinema is the confused thinking about its use, its scope and purpose. What are the uses to which the cinema can be put? It can be used as a powerful supplementary aid in education. It can be, and to a very large extent is, used as a means of propaganda, publicity and advertisement. It can be developed as one of the fine arts in its own right. It can be used as a medium for the enlightenment of other nations about our own culture, customs and manners.

The scope of the cinema being so wide and the purposes for which it can be applied so varied, it is obvious that the agencies employing the medium of the screen for various specific purposes must also be necessarily as varied. Its use as a medium of advertisement, for instance, can be sponsored only by commercial interests. As a medium of mass education it is pre-eminently the domain of national and State Governments. It is indeed a great pity that our educational institutions have not begun to exploit the immense potentiality of the film for educational purposes.

What is the ground on which the industry is sometimes run down? That our films do not educate, they only entertain! The truth is that while a preacher may be entertaining, the entertainer who takes to preaching is in danger of becoming a bore. Therefore film producers should always remember that if they forget their fundamental role of entertainers and attempt to pose as preachers, they will be doing so at their peril. Rajaji has said: "Those who give healthy and good entertainment are doing a patriotic service."

What will definitely solve the problems of this vital industry and make it grow are the following: (1) Allow cinemas to multiply, without let or hindrance (2) Reduce tax on admission considerably, if indeed it cannot be abolished altogether (3) Allow thoughts and ideas to grow by liberalising censorship (4) Subsidise educational, aesthetic and artistic films (5) Help manufacture of raw films and other equipment in this country.

Man And The State

by Yatin Gaznavi

IF each of the human rights was by its nature absolutely unconditional and exclusive of limitation, like a divine attribute, obviously any conflict between them would be irreconcilable. But who does not know that in reality these rights, being human, are, like everything human, subject to conditions and limitations, at least as far as their exercise is concerned? That the various rights ascribed to the human being limit each other, particularly economic and social rights, the rights of man as a person involved in the life of the community, cannot find room in actual fact without restricting, to some extent, the freedoms and rights of man as an individual person, goes without saying. What creates irreducible differences and antagonisms among men is the determination of the degree of such restriction, and more generally the determination of the scale of values that governs the exercise and the concrete organization of these various rights.

Here we are confronted with the clash between incompatible political philosophies; because here we are no longer dealing with the simple recognition of the diverse categories of human rights, but with the principle of dynamic unification in accordance with which they are translated into action; we are dealing with the tonality, the specific key, by virtue of which different music is played on the same keyboard, either in harmony or in discord with the exigencies of human dignity.

We can imagine that the advocates of a liberal-individualist, a communist, or a personalist type of society will set down on paper similar, perhaps identical, lists of the rights of man. They will not, however, play the instrument in the same way. Everything depends upon the supreme value in accordance with which all these rights will be ordered and will mutually limit each other. It is by virtue of the hierarchy of values to which we subscribe that we determine the way in which the rights of man, economic and social as well as individual, should, in our eyes, be translated into the order of fact. Those whom, for want of a better name, I just called the advocates of a liberal-individualist type of society, see the mark of human dignity first and foremost in the power of each person to appropriate individually the goods of nature in order to do freely whatever he wants; the advocates of the communist type of society see the mark of human dignity first and foremost in the power to submit these same goods to the collective command of the social body in order to "free" human labour (by subduing it to the economic community) and to gain control of the movement of history; the advocates of the personalist type of society, as one of which, *Man And The State** identifies M. Jacques Maritain to be, see the mark of human

dignity first and foremost in the power to make these same goods of nature serve the "common achievement of intrinsically human, moral and spiritual goods" and of man's freedom or autonomy. These three groups will inevitably accuse each other of ignoring certain essential rights of the human being. It remains to be seen who makes a faithful image and who a distorted image of man.

A SOCIETY of free men implies basic tenets which are the core of its very existence. A genuine democracy implies a fundamental agreement between minds and wills on the bases of life in common; it is aware of itself and of its principles, and it must be capable of defending and promoting its own conception of social and political life; "it must bear within itself a common human creed, the creed of freedom."

The body politic has the right and the duty to promote among its citizens, mainly through education, the human — and essentially practical — creed on which depend national communion and civil peace. It has no right, as a merely temporal or secular body, within the sphere where the modern State enjoys its autonomous authority, to impose on the citizens or to demand from them a rule of faith or a conformity of reason, a philosophical or religious creed which would offer itself as the only possible justification of the practical charter through which the common secular faith expresses itself.

The important thing for the body politic is that the democratic sense be in fact kept alive by the adhesion of minds, however diverse, to this moral charter. The ways and the justification by means of which this common adhesion is brought about belong to the sphere of inner freedom of mind and conscience.

The problem of freedom of expression is not a simple one. In discussing freedom of expression we have to take into account a variety of aspects. On the one hand, it is not true that every thought as such, because of the mere fact that it was born in a human intellect, has the right to be spread about in the body politic. On the other hand, not only censorship and police methods but any direct restriction of freedom of expression, though unavoidable in certain cases, are the worst way to ensure the rights of the body politic to defend freedom and the common charter; because any such restriction runs counter to the essential spirit of a democratic society.

Moreover, the common agreement expressed in democratic faith is not of a doctrinal but merely of a practical nature. As a result the criterion for any interference of the State in the realm of ideas and their expression ought also to be practical, not ideological: the more extraneous this criterion is to the content of thought, the better it will be. It is too much for the State, for example, to judge whether a work of art is possessed of an intrinsic quality of immorality.

(Continued on page 11)

*MAN AND THE STATE by Jacques Maritain, edited by Richard O'Sullivan, Hollis and Carter, 1954, pp. 198, sh 21/-

Reviews

Education for World Understanding

By R. P. Masani, (K & J Cooper, Educational Publishers, Bombay)

MODERN education in general suffers from what Dr. Paul Hoffman would characterise as "academic frustrations", though he used the phrase in the context of economic studies. For, modern education has failed to transcend national limitations and racial prejudices. It makes no contribution to the prevention of world disunity and war. Educationists all over the free world are seriously engaged in evolving a corrective to modern education. Prof. John Dewey offered his new scheme of education; "schools of tomorrow" for this purpose. Sir R. P. Masani's latest book, "*Education for World Understanding*" which is written under an arrangement between UNESCO and the Indian Institute for Educational and Cultural Co-operation, is a commendable work in the same direction. The book is intended to serve as a basis for the furtherance of the ideal of one world and world community, with human liberty, equality and fraternity as the ruling principles of social, national and international life.

Sir Rustom's book is undoubtedly a most important contribution to modern educational ideas. A handbook of suggestions to teachers, it provides valuable guidance to render the teaching of literature, history, geography, civics, mathematics and the sciences really worthwhile. It seeks to infuse an international spirit into the teaching profession — the first step towards fostering the "world view" envisaged by Dr. Albert Schweitzer.

"May we not hope that the threat to civilization of the twentieth century may stimulate the human race to avert the impending crisis by such a revolutionary change in its ideology as would enable it to rise to a higher and loftier conception of human relationship and a better and worthier order of human society? How can man's longing for such a change be satisfied?" asks the author. Indeed, the book itself is an answer.

Dr. Radhakrishnan in a brief foreword rightly says: "Mr. R. P. Masani provides the teachers with material which they can use for fostering world loyalties, a sense of moral values, the dignity and freedom of the human spirit. Those who use it will catch a little of his deep faith and enthusiasm."

The present book is one more testimony to the author's great scholarship and learning. It deserves to be read not only by teachers but by all educated men and women, anxious for a new world order of solidarity, happiness and peace.

Sir R. P. Masani offers a new philosophy of education—a philosophy which has the whole world as its perspective. In this respect he is continuing the great traditions of Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Spencer and others.

ADAM ADIL

Reluctant Traveller in Russia

by Tadevsh Wittlin, Rinehart & Co., New York, \$ 3.00.

MR. WITTLIN was one of those who fled from German-occupied Warsaw and attempted to cross into France through Russian-occupied Eastern Poland. He was caught by the Soviet Security Police; so that, from having been in the frying pan he was now in the fire. From then on, for over two years, he was sent from one Forced Labour Camp to another—he had a chance to become very well acquainted with Siberia, as well as with the officials who rule over the destinies of all Russians. The *Reluctant Traveller* is the story of those two terrible years; but the story is written with so much courage and humour that even the most dreadful parts never become too unbearable.

Many writers have the gift, made fashionable in the thirties, of writing a grimness and sordidness into ordinary everyday life. Mr. Wittlin has the contrary gift of writing lightly about extreme cruelty and horror. To be quite frank, if this book had been written in any other manner I doubt if it could have had a chance of being read by many people. Some things are too terrible to think or read about. And few people have the strength of will and determination to face terrible truths which are not immediately before their eyes. It is to the credit of Mr. Wittlin that he has managed to pass through his experiences as a Soviet prisoner without letting them embitter him.

LAAEQ FUTEHALLY

Czechoslovak Exhibition

A VERY impressive structure has been put up in a matter of days to house the Exhibition of Czech Industries in Bombay. As you enter it the first thing that strikes you is the noise—the noise of the tractor pumping water—the noise of many large machines working together—and the noise of the music from the loudspeakers—all doing their best, no doubt, to drown the still small voice.

Even to the layman it seemed obvious that the bigger machines — like tractors, lathes, drills and so on were very "good." They looked workmanlike and competent and had an excellent finish. Without being an enthusiast in these things, one still realized that the Jawa motorcycles were lovely machines; even the ordinary pushbikes were beautiful. In fact everything remotely connected with machinery was extremely good. The typewriters, dental chairs, medical equipment, etc. were all of a superior quality; far superior, if one remembered rightly, to anything that was displayed at the Industries Exhibition of the U.S.S.R. and its satellites three years ago. The high standard established by Skoda for instance, seems to have been maintained in "New Czechoslovakia", as the handout called that country.

I. C. C. F. NEWS

[The Calcutta Group of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom gave a hearty send off to the Indian Delegates going to attend the first Asian Conference on Cultural Freedom being held at Rangoon, at a tea party at the Asian Hotel on February 15. Unfortunately, only Pt. Laxmanshastri Joshi and Mr. Eric Da Costa could attend. Swami Agehananda Bharati, Professor of Philosophy at the Nalanda University, Bihar, and Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose, Professor in Anthropology at the Calcutta University, spoke on the significance of the Conference and the tasks before it.] Among the 60 persons who attended were Sudhindranath Datta, Narendra Deb, Radharani Debi, Mohan Singh Sengar, Monoranjan Guha, Sibanarian Ray, J. N. Mitra, Harikumar Chakravarty, J. C. Goswami, V. S. Mathur, Rajani Mukerjee, Hamdi Bey, and Sitaram Goel.

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[The Poona group has planned a lecture series on "Revaluation of Reform Trends in Maharashtra during the last century." Three lectures of the series were delivered on 25th and 27th January. The speakers were Dr. P. G. Sahasrabudhe, Mr. V. D. Ghate and Prof. M. P. Mangudkar. The personalities that the speakers dealt with were Mr. Agarkar, Mr. V. R. Shinde and Mr. Jotiba Phuley. The lectures were held in the hall of the Sahitya Parishad and were largely attended. The other two lectures of the series by Dr. D. R. Gadgil on Ranade and by Prof. G. B. Sardar on Lokahitawadi will be delivered in the month of March.]

(CZECHOSLOVAK EXHIBITION—Cont'd from page 10)

Consumer goods, on the other hand, were very disappointing. It might be that the variety and inspiration of our Indian handicrafts has spoilt us for appreciating the humdrum consumer goods of other countries; or that, accustomed to the high standard of British craftsmanship, we are intolerant of anything that falls short of it. Be that as it may, most Indians must have found the textiles drab and uninteresting, while some things, like toys, suitcases, etc., were shoddy almost beyond belief.

Czechoslovakia has always been noted for its cut-glass. Most of the crystal at this exhibition was a repetition of old designs, quite nice, but certainly not inspired. Beads, trinkets, and imitation jewellery had been another speciality of Czechoslovakia. They continue to make them, in much the same patterns and styles as they did before. The one item conspicuous by its absence was Czech embroidery. Most Central European countries produce beautiful and vivid peasant embroidery, and the Czech embroideries were one of the most beautiful and vivid. It was sad to see that this exquisite form of folk art was not represented here. One can only hope that it has not ceased to exist altogether.

L. F.

(MESSAGES—Continued from page 7)

philosophy of life as it has developed from an intimate contact of two millenia with Christianity."

Dr. Han Suyin, the wellknown Chinese woman writer:

"It is a matter of enduring regret for me that, owing to my daughter's illness, I am not able to attend this conference of Asian writers, the first of its kind.

Freedom, under whose auspices your conference is held, is the very essence of a writer's work. It is the breath of creation. Liberty alone can interrogate, search, demand to know, find truth and establish it in harmony in the hearts of men.

But the word freedom has been sundered from its reality, as have many other words, such as peace, and happiness. Such beauteous words are now suspect of treachery, cynically evil, so vicious and constant in their misuse. Freedom has a derisive ring, so often does it serve to label a heavier bondage. Never have words assailed the air about us and deafened us so much; never have they meant so little.

And so many of us, with a shred of love, for the true meaning of words, feel lost and desolate in the terrible jungles of verbiage which thickens around us. We grope blindly, going neither forward nor back, turning on ourselves, and sinking, occasionally, in the swampy grounds of officious propaganda and otiose fanaticism. This conference is a coming together of people who want to find a way out of this swampy jungle. Here, as exhausted wanderers meeting and gathering comfort and help from one another and sharing resources, we meet in a quest for the real things that matter and ask Heaven's blessings to attend us in this search."

Mr. Bertrand Russell, Hon. President of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, Paris:

"The objects of the Conference have my whole-hearted sympathy. Cultural freedom in many parts of the world has diminished in recent times, but its importance for the well-being of mankind is at least as great as it ever was. I hope that the deliberations of the Conference will be successful in furthering the great purpose for which it has been called."

(MAN AND THE STATE—Cont'd from page 9)

Is not, one may counter, the perversion of human minds, is not the destruction of primary truths much more detrimental to the common good of the body politic than any other work of corruption? Yes, it is. But the fact is that the State is not equipped to deal with matters of intelligence.

Each time the State disregards this basic truth, which flows from the nature of the State, the order of intelligence is made to suffer. And since the order of intelligence always has its revenge, the body politic, in one way or the other, is ultimately made to suffer. M. Maritain, however, maintains that only one society can deal with matters of intelligence—"The Church." Those who know their history well can scarcely find it difficult to disagree.

With Many Voices

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

—Tennyson.

The latest reports claim that both China and Russia are inclined to revise their stand on the Kuomintang regime's participation in the proposed conference on Formosa. Let us hope nobody will suggest that this concession on their part is "influenced" by Sir Anthony Eden or Mr. John Foster Dulles.

—The *Free Press Journal*, February 18, 1955.

In their foreign policy the rulers of Russia follow closely the lines of their imperialist predecessors. At home they carry on and intensify the traditional Russian police state.

—Mr. Clement Attlee, *Thought*, January 29, 1955.

The free people of Asia ought to be thankful to America. Because she has the atom bomb, there is no war yet.

—Sir John Kotelawala, *Times of India*, February 1, 1955

There can be no question as to the Communist goal in Asia. It is to take possession, or at least achieve dominant control, of one-third of the world's population and the enormous agricultural and industrial potential of the area.

—Mr. Harold E. Stassen, *Times of India*, February 1, 1955.

The British Government regard the islands of Quemoy and Matsu as "part of China," Sir Roger Makins, British Ambassador to the United States said here, replying to questions after he had spoken at a luncheon of the Executives' Club of Chicago. Asked if Britain would surrender Hongkong to Communist China, he replied: "Hongkong is British Territory."

—*Bangkok Post*, February 21, 1955.

One cannot laugh posthumously. Otherwise, the Soviet Union would have resounded with Gargantuan laughter when on February 8, the resignation of Georgi Malenkov was announced . . .

—*The Radical Humanist*, February 13, 1955.

INDIAN COMMITTEE FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM

127, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
BOMBAY 1.

Please enrol me as a member of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom. I remit the annual membership fee of Rs. 3/- by.....

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Address :

Date : Signature

On the question of the Kuomintang regime's participation at the proposed conference on Formosa, Mr. Nehru is influenced by Churchill.

—*Pravda*, widely reported in the Indian Press.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant has strongly suggested to the Prime Minister that before Mr. Menon is taken into the Cabinet the Public Accounts Committee must be given the opportunity to consider the Government of India's stand vis-a-vis the jeep scandal and other affairs of the High Commissioner on which it had passed grave strictures.

—*The Current*, February 23, 1955.

Is it true that M. Khrushchev, who has emerged as the new strong man in Russia does not believe in co-existence in the political field, but only in the commercial?

—H. V. Kamath, *The Current*, February 23, 1955.

The British Communist leader Harry Pollitt "declined to make any comment" (on the Kremlin Switch-over.) His immediate headache: how to square his propaganda about the Soviet agricultural triumphs with Malenkov's admission of failure in that field.

—*The Current*, February 23, 1955.

The so-called peace committees have not come forward to express any opinion, organise protests and demand a ban on the Russian hydrogen bomb. If they sincerely believe in peace they must denounce Russian efforts to develop and possess atomic weapons of mass destruction as vehemently as they condemn American experiments. Or has the Cominform sent them a secret circular that the Russian hydrogen bomb contains only red roses?

—In a letter to the *Times of India*, February 23, 1955.

Mr. Nehru seems to hold that aggression only takes place if you band yourself with others to resist any likelihood of it.

—Jan Sevak, *The Current*, February 23, 1955.

The contrast between our sale of heavy water to India and Mr. Molotov's boasts last week about alleged Soviet superiority in hydrogen bombs tells a story whose moral will not be lost on the world.

—*New York Times* Editorial, quoted in the *Sunday Times* (Madras) February 20, 1955.

To tell our African guests not to take any discriminations too seriously because we practise such discrimination even among ourselves is derogatory to our self-respect and nationhood.

—*The Sunday Standard*, February 20, 1955.