

THIRD WORLD EXPLOITS SOLIDARITY

Polish Communist Asks Unpleasant Questions

A remarkable echo of Mr. Daniel Moynihan's statements on the Third World published in earlier issues of "Freedom First" comes, of all places, from Soviet occupied Eastern Europe. Below is an abridged version of an article by Wieslaw Gornicki abridged from the Polish journal "Kultura" the official mouthpiece of the Polish United Worker's Party. Such an outspoken article could not have been published unless it also reflects the views of the Soviet Communist Party. This makes the article of even more interest and significance.

IN Poland, some 15 years ago there appeared probably the most interesting articles about and reports from the Third World written anywhere on our planet. At that time we Poles were certain that we had in our pockets thousands of infallible remedies for the ills of this world and we served them up in our books with the eagerness of people who passionately care about the world's fate.

One would search in vain for such books in English, Dutch, Belgian or French literatures. Only the peoples who are not guilty of the sins of classical colonialism have been capable of a genuine emotional and rational reaction to the problems of the Third World.

Our reactions were more than just an expression of solidarity with the poor and the hungry. It seems to me that at one stage in our post-war history we actually attained a moment of identification with the problems of the Third World. We sided instinctively with Indonesia when Indonesia laid a claim to Western Irian, even though historically Indonesia's claim appeared to us to be rather flimsy. We did not hide our satisfaction when Indian tanks suddenly overran Goa, even though the Portuguese rulers cried that it was a classical case of aggression and were supported by many. We swallowed without a word of protest many events in Iraq; Nasser's concentration camps for Egyptian Communists near Alexandria.

Such a way of reacting became part of our make-up and led us to adopt the rule that "We write favourably of the Third World—or we don't write at all." Probably the only deviations from this rule were our reactions to the massacre of the Communists in the Sudan and the events in Indonesia in 1965. Even today, tongue-tied by our unspoken undertaking, we begin to stammer, even though it is high time that we speak aloud, when it comes to informing our public that

a certain African president loves to mete out severe punishment with his own hands by caning the petty thieves in his town jail. Or that a certain Field Marshal orders his subjects to kiss the tips of his boots in public and has had the interesting idea of erecting a monument to Adolf Hitler.

For some time now this unconditional solidarity with the countries of the Third World has been questioned in our country. Our doubts are not due simply to the fact that ever more often we are witnessing the Right come to power in those countries; this could be explained away by the normal pulsations of the development rhythm. The real doubts on our part spring from other causes.

We have been reading attentively the resolution adopted by the Group of Seventy-Seven (the United Nations association of poor countries). We have listened to the various speeches made by their representatives in the United Nations. We have taken part in dis-

IN THIS ISSUE

Dr. F. P. Antia urges the inclusion of the right to die in dignity among the fundamental rights of the citizen. With the Quinlan case which has ended with the vindication of that right, the subject of euthanasia has become topical.

Our feature *World News* brings to the reader glimpses of developments in far-flung parts of the globe.

There is also a review of an autobiography by Golda Meir who is back in the public life of Israel.

cussions with the most eloquent spokesmen of the Third World. And we have been increasingly asking ourselves whether the second decade of independence has not led a number of Third World countries to a dangerous confusion of ideas. The confusion is not just a matter of politics: what is at stake is the very intellectual and moral premises underlying our mutual relations.

There is talk, for instance, of a "new economic world order," in which there would be a permanent system of economic preferences for less developed countries. There is also talk of the necessity of "redistribution of wealth on a global scale." In themselves such slogans cannot arouse in us any feelings of doubt or any reservations. Besides, there is nothing novel about them and they simply express the elementary ideals of justice that form the foundation of every socialist ideology. Nobody who wants to be regarded as a human being can treat with indifference the incredible fact that almost two-thirds of the inhabitants of our planet are starving and that life for them will get worse and not better.

Profound Changes

But in the last five years there have occurred profound and significant changes in the so-called Third World. It is true that the poor have grown poorer. But it is also true that within the Group of 77 there has emerged a number of countries which have moved up with an incredible speed to join the club of the richest countries in the world, at least in the sense of currency reserves. These are well known facts, so that we can dispense with repeating the stories about white Mercedes limousines with golden monograms on their shock-absorbers driven by Arab sheikhs or the palaces they are having built for themselves, which would have made the Turkish sultans green with envy. *But what we cannot dispense with is an examination of the relationship of wealth and poverty inside the Group of Seventy-Seven.*

We cannot but ask why the redistribution of wealth should not begin with the Group itself, since it displays the most striking contrasts in living standards. Kuwait's national income last year was \$ 11,000 a head. On the other hand, 24 other countries belonging to the Group have a national income of \$ 200 a head, while Haiti and Ethiopia cannot even achieve a level of \$ 100. Faced by such facts one cannot help asking a few simple but unpleasant questions: Why does Nigeria, overflowing with oil remain indifferent to the ghastly poverty of its neighbours, Niger, Mali, Chad, Cameroon? Why has not Saudi Arabia dropped by even a single cent the price of a barrel of oil sold to India? Why have the Arab sheikhs, which have no difficulty in purchasing banks and entire industrial corporations in the West failed to perform a single act

of solidarity with the poverty-stricken masses of eastern Java or the inhabitants of the Brazilian shanty towns?

It would be very difficult to explain what common interests actually link fellow Group members such as Paraguay and Oman, Mali and Malaya. Would it be the common denominator of a high illiteracy rate or a poor network? But to make good either deficiency one does not have to create a grouping with definite ideological and political aspirations. So what else is linking these countries? It is not the colour of skin, for all the human races are represented within the Group. Nor is it a common national income level below the world average; nor is it a shared condition of industrial underdevelopment. Sheikh Yamani ponders how to use the gigantic financial resources of Saudi Arabia, while for the Upper Volta the construction of workshops producing ordinary lathes remains a dream beyond the bounds of even theoretical planning. In the Group of Seventy-Seven it would be difficult to find even five countries that are not in a state of conflict with their neighbours. Yet such realities do not inhibit the Group from coming out at almost regular intervals with increasingly strident declarations and demands.

Insulting Comparison

The conception of "industrialised countries" suddenly ceases to be treated by the Third World within its historical context and is increasingly used by it as a synonym for describing all the countries that have succeeded in climbing above the level of say, \$ 1,500 dollars annual income a head. When this happens, we get an unacceptable and immoral confusion of the amount of national per capita income with the sources of income, we get an insulting comparison of the poor nations whose people with clenched teeth and by their own efforts have managed to build the foundations of industrial civilisation, with the white sahibs, who for a number of generations grew fat on the blood and sweat of the colonial peoples. Such reasoning—and it does not unfortunately occur so rarely as to be regarded as cases of unfortunate lapsus linguae—will not be accepted by any socialist country. It is outrageous, unjustified and all the more damaging to the interests of the Third World because it also places the burden of responsibility for the effects of colonialism upon those countries, which over the past five decades have been the most consistent enemies of classical colonialism.

It is therefore high time to warn the Third World that the effects of such reasoning and the claims based on it will be to dissipate the great fund of goodwill that has been built up, to take one example, in the consciousness of the average Polish man and woman over the last three decades. We may allow ourselves the pleasure of being frank on this matter because our

(Continued on page 3)

Between You & Me and The Lamp Post



Discarded Fashions

WHEN a conference of State governors takes a decision which is echoed by the Central Bureau of Intelligence, one can take it that it reflects the minds of those in authority. The line taken by the Governors and the CBI is that Article 226 of the Constitution, which empowers High Courts to admit writ petitions, should be either abrogated or truncated. That the right of judicial review should get in the way of the secret police is only to be expected. The Governors of States could hardly be expected to echo such a view but for the fact that they are in reality the mouthpiece of the Union government.

It is significant that about the same time as these developments, Law Minister H. R. Gokhale was discussing with Mr. Terebilov, the leader of a Soviet "Law" delegation, "issues relating to the legal and constitutional systems in the two countries." His Soviet mentors will have no doubt nudged the Law Minister's elbow in case this was needed.

It is interesting that just when the right of the citizen to approach the Courts for relief from actions of the executive and laws passed by the Union Parliament, which under our Constitution is a subordinate legislature and not a sovereign body like the British Parliament in Britain, is being threatened, there is in the U.K. an up and coming demand for a Bill of Rights which is capable of being enforced by the judiciary in order to protect the citizen from the vagaries of the executive and Parliament.

According to Lord Feather, the eminent trade unionist who is the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights, no one can be complacent about existing

measures for the protection of human rights. According to an editorial in the *Guardian*, the tradition of British opposition to such a Bill of Rights is evaporating: "Almost two hundred years ago there were many Americans, among them Alexander Hamilton, who felt a Bill of Rights was unnecessary. There are many people today opposed to a British Bill of Rights, but the idea continues to gather support. Leading figures in each of the three major parties have floated different proposals and an Appeal Court judge, Sir Leslie Scarman, has sketched out his own idea: a Bill of Rights which would be superior to Parliament. Now the Labour Party has produced a formal proposal (based on a scheme first outlined by the *Guardian's* Legal Correspondent, Michael Zander) which it wants party members to discuss."

The Liberal Party has also advocated a European Bill of Rights as part of a common programme for European liberals. Not to be outdone, Lord Hailsham, the Conservative leader in the House of Lords, wrote to the *London Times* about the "inherently dangerous character of the traditional omnipotence of Parliament. The sovereignty of Parliament has become the sovereignty of the House of Commons, elected as you have observed on other occasions, by a method ensuring at times its dominance by a relatively small minority of the electorate. The sovereignty of the House of Commons has become the sovereignty of the executive, that is a government controlling both the party whips and the immensely powerful Civil Service. The sovereignty of the government, in Labour hands, has become the sovereignty of the (unread and unreadable) manifesto, sanctified by the wholly heretical doctrine of mandate,

(Continued from page 2)

hands are clean and we have a morally clean record with regard to the countries of the Third World. For within the limits of our possibilities and the balance of forces in the world, we have done almost everything in our power to prove that our solidarity with the poor and hungry is not confined to the sphere of verbal declarations.

Treating all the "industrialised countries" as though there were no inherent differences among them, is only one step away from some very odd and disquieting ideas. One of them, for instance, is that all industrialised countries should pay a tax depending on their national income irrespective of the historical origins of their present level of national income. Were this proposal to be carried to its logical conclusion, we should have

a world in which Arab sheikhs would continue to purchase ever more villas on the Côte d'Azur, while a Polish carpenter in Sieradz, a Russian post-office clerk in Omsk and a Czech locksmith in Pardubice would share the costs of the "New Economic Order" with the Mijhaeceren of Utrecht and the gentlemen of the City of London.

Solidarity is a very fine thing, but on condition that it truly serves our well understood national and state interests. On the other hand, should we be forced to abandon it, then the world will become nothing but a vast arena where nations will compete for a place in the sun. Such a world would be a hard and sad place to live in.

and rendered largely unbeatable by the use of the prerogative of dissolution."

Once again, as in many other respects, those amongst us who profess to be modern are picking up the discarded fashions of the British.

Untopped Domino

THE Thai Prime Minister, Mr. Kukrit Pramoj, has been defeated in the general elections to Parliament by his brother, Mr. Seni Pramoj, the leader of the opposition. In case any reader should think Thai politics are a family affair and this change denotes a lack of seriousness, your Editor, who happens to know both brothers, can correct any such wrong impression. Both Seni and Kukrit Pramoj are distinguished intellectuals who have held aloft the banner of the free society and democratic liberties through years of authoritarian government. While functioning within the authoritarian system, they never succumbed to it and it is therefore natural that the people of Thailand should have turned to them when at last democratic freedoms, including freedom of the press, the rule of law and free elections were restored in Thailand last year.

It was in the last week of March that Mr. Kukrit Pramoj ordered the last of the American military personnel, except for 250 advisers, to leave Thailand. This was presumably an effort to appease sections of the Thai student community and his communist neighbours in North Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. His defeat shows that the people of Thailand did not approve of this decision and within a fortnight of this he has been replaced as Prime Minister by Mr. Seni Pramoj, who is opposed to such appeasement and stands for a policy of friendship with the West which is being followed by the governments in neighbouring countries like Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. Presumably the armed forces, who had opposed the former Prime Minister's move, will now be able to secure a reversal of his decision. It would look as if Thailand, which was to have been the first domino to topple before the Communist advance, has managed to avert that fall. For this all in South East Asia and South Asia who understand what is at stake should be grateful.

Labour Dithers

THE British Labour Party has, in making its choice of a leader and nominating the Prime Minister of Britain, echoed the wisdom of the Thais. By a decisive margin it has rejected Mr. Michael Foot in favour of Mr. Callaghan. It is true that Mr. Foot's election would have ensured the defeat of the Labour Party in the next general elections and Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, if she took a purely party view, must be disappointed at the result. From a national point of view, however, Mr. Foot's election would have been nothing short of a disaster. While generally believed to be an honest man,

he has shown such utter moral and mental confusion over issues ranging from the closed shop on the one hand to the appeasement of Soviet imperialism on the other that even a few months of his premiership could have done great damage to Britain. Ugly possibilities like those described by the well-known novelist Mr. Constatine Fitzgibbon in his book *When the Kissing had to Stop* may even have opened up if this honest man surrounded by evil forces had been placed in power.

There is no room, however, for rejoicing on the part of those who, whether in Britain or abroad, see these dangers. The impressive vote rolled up by the Tribune candidate and his nomination as Leader of the House show that the threat from the lunatic fringe of the Party is stronger than ever. They have drawn blood already by successfully vetoing the eminently sensible appointment of Mr. Roy Jenkins as Foreign Secretary because, forsooth, he is too good a European! The fight for the soul of the Labour Party is still on.

And Now Dubcek!

THE Communist campaign against Alexander Dubcek, the last Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia before it was overrun by the Red Army, has now reached its culmination with the charge launched by the present satellite government in that country that Dubcek and his supporters maintained links with the CIA even when they were in office. Thus the vilification of this communist who wanted "socialism with a human face" to be practiced in his country has reached its *reductio ad absurdum*. Those who are wrongly accused of being CIA agents throughout the free world may now rejoice that they are not only in the distinguished company of a noble man like Jayaprakash Narayan but also an honest communist like Alexander Dubcek!

"Majority Rule"?

FREEDOM FIRST is glad to receive corroboration of its doubts about the prescription of "majority rule" in multi-racial societies (see FF, April, page 4, note entitled *Much too Simple*) from no less a person than the veteran writer and commentator, Mr. Malcolm Muggeridge. In a letter to the London *Times* of March 24, 1976, he admits to a state of confusion as to what is precisely meant by the simplistic term "majority rule" and asks a number of pertinent questions: "Is it, for instance, what we refuse to allow in Northern Ireland? Or what exists in Uganda or Libya or Malawi or any of the other so-called liberated African territories? Is rule by Marshal Tito majority rule? Or by Papa Doc's son and heir in Haiti? Or by Fidel Castro? Or, for that matter, by Mr. Wilson or whoever is elected to succeed him in this country? Now that the wicked American has been chased out, is South Vietnam enjoying majority rule? Is Laos? Is Cambodia? I really should like to know."

So should we.

5,6,7 282

DYING WITH DIGNITY

Fredoon P. Antia

IT is not unusual to find amongst our friends and relatives elderly men and women, often over 70 years of age, who have long been suffering from some chronic, incurable ailment. It hurts those around the patient, probably even more than it hurts the benumbed patient himself, to see the physician pushing in quick succession, injections and drips into their withered half-dead muscles and veins. It probably hurts the conscientious physician himself, because he is well aware of the fact that the end result of all the effort on his part, no matter how sincere, is going to be negative. In most cases death can be deferred only by a few days or weeks, but in some, he will be able to prolong the patient's existence almost indefinitely. For the heart goes on beating, although every other organ of the body may be refusing to function normally. This writer has heard of a case where a lady over 70 years of age, completely bed-ridden, was thus kept alive like a vegetable for 13 years, only after which her heart stopped beating. The writer recalls also having read a press item about the desperate struggle the physicians are putting up to prolong the life of Shahid Bhagat Singh's old mother, aged 98 years. The physician feels that he owes it to the ethics of his profession, bound by the Hippocratic Oath, to go on pumping into the body of the patient, whether through the mouth or the bloodstream, whatever drug has even the remotest chance of prolonging life. Apart from the suffering of everybody concerned, this imposes *inter alia* a crushing burden, financial and physical, on those responsible for the patient's upkeep.

This writer is reminded of a Court case which came up in Hialeah in the State of Florida, U.S.A. A lady of 72 had to have her dried withered veins opened every day to force blood transfusion into her. Not being able to bear the pain she asked her physicians to stop torturing her by incising into her veins. The physician could not fail to see the logic of her request. But he felt he was between the devil and the deep sea. If he continued to give transfusion, it was tantamount to treating her against her will. If he stopped the transfusion, he would be aiding and abetting a suicide. As a cautious man he thought it prudent to take the issue to a competent Court of Law. The Judge ruled "I cannot decide whether she should live or die; that is up to God. But a person has a right not to suffer pain. A person has the right to live or die in dignity". He decided that the patient cannot be forced to accept any treatment which was painful to her. This judgement emboldened the physician to stop the blood transfusion. The lady was spared further torture. She died the very next day. The Judge put his finger on the right spot. What was at issue was the right of the human being to die in

dignity, just as much as he or she has the right to live in dignity.

Quinlan

Far different from the above was the ruling given in a more recent American case which received—and rightly—world-wide publicity. In September last year, the adoptive parents of a girl 21 years of age, Karen Quinlan, petitioned the Superior Court in Morristown, N.J., that the respirator which sustained Karen's life be ordered to be turned off to enable their adopted daughter who had been suffering from an irreparable brain damage since April—so that she is permitted to die. The facts of the case are that Karen went into an unexplained coma after having taken a tranquilising drug and alcohol and experienced difficulty in breath-

STOP PRESS

Since Dr. Antia wrote this article, there has been a welcome change in the situation concerning Karen Quinlan. The New Jersey Supreme Court has reversed the unfortunate judgement to which Dr. Antia refers and has given Karen's parents the right to exercise on her behalf her right to die. The logic of this decision is that, if a patient cannot exercise his or her right to decline medical treatment, his or her guardians — usually the next of kin — may do so.

ing, which led to her present brain condition. She never came out of the coma ever since she was affected thereby. She had to be kept alive with the aid of an artificial respirator and by intravenous feeding. Her weight dropped from 120 to 70 lbs. and her body was reduced to "grotesquely twisted flesh". She was completely unaware of her surroundings and could not feel, think or respond in any way. Karen had "lived" in this condition for over five months when her adoptive parents, devout Catholics, convinced that no amount of medical attention could restore her to anywhere near normalcy, after consulting their priest, requested the hospital doctor to switch off the respirator to enable her to die "with grace and dignity" and to be permitted "to return to the gentle hands of the Lord". The doctors refused. Such an act, according to them, would be tantamount to homicide for which they would be held criminally liable. The parents thereupon applied for a Court Order that the respirator be switched off, as Karen in her present condition had a "right to die".

The hearing went on for days. All physicians testifying in the Court for and against the petitioner admit-

ted that, although alive, Karen was in a vegetative state and could never recover normal health. Dr Julius Korten, Professor of Neurology at N.Y. University Medical School, an expert in the interpretation of brain wave patterns, said in an interview; "The Court of Law and physicians think of life v/s death and that is not the situation. There is life, there is death, and there is an in between state, that is vegetation".

The Judge ruled against switching off the respirator. By this time Karen had "lived" for nearly seven months in her comatose condition! He was careful enough to enter a caveat though, that the ruling was based on the facts of Karen's case and its application was limited to that case. There is little doubt that the judgement in favour of the Quinlan parents would have advanced considerably the cause of mercy killing. Karen must continue her vegetative existence and her parents must continue to suffer the pain, agony and mortification of seeing her in that state in full knowledge of the fact that there is no hope of ending it. Also the State of N.J. must continue to employ expensive medical resources, human and physical, of the order of thousands of dollars on her, fully aware that nobody is profiting by the treatment.

In a recent survey carried out by "Nursing 75", described as the world's largest nursing journal, 15,000 of USA's 1.5 million nurses who took part voted in favour or slightly in favour of euthanasia for patients who desired it. 96% were in favour of withdrawing life sustaining treatment from patients who expressed a desire not to continue it. This is the opinion of those who are in the closest touch with such patients and their suffering. In court cases, nurses seldom have a look in as experts or witnesses. The court depends entirely on the testimony of physicians and surgeons. If they are freed from their Hippocratic oath, is not there a distinct probability of their also tilting the scale in favour of euthanasia?

During the last hundred years we have all along been focussing our attacks — unsuccessfully though — on poverty, hunger, squalor and slums, which all detract from the dignity of living. But we have categorically been denying to the human being dignity in dying. Even socially advanced countries which have a humane slant toward suffering, not only of human beings but even of animals, are prepared to see indefinite pain and distress before death, rather than put an end to them by terminating life, in full knowledge of the fact that the suffering cannot end without the end of life. It is true though that in countries with a high standard of medical treatment, prolonging life may not cause as intense suffering as in the Third World countries, where standards of medical aid are lower. In countries like India therefore it becomes all the more necessary to take measures in suitable cases to enable life to end quickly, if that is the only way suffering is to end.

Even in the U.S.A. where medical assistance of a much higher order is available so as to minimise the pain and suffering of the patient, movements are afoot to propagate the cult of dying with dignity, i.e. without undue physical deterioration, dependence or hopeless pain. Organisations such as the Euthanasia Educational Fund and the Euthanasia Society of America have been propagating the cult of the "Living Will". The method adopted is for the person concerned to sign such a will in which he or she expresses the wish that in case of illness from which "there is no reasonable expectation for recovery, he or she be allowed to die and not be kept alive by artificial means or heroic measures". The contents of such a will have to be shared naturally with one's near and dear ones. It would be idle to claim though that this is a universally accepted cult in U.S.A. There is of course a great deal of raising of eyebrows and bitter debate.

Euthanasia

Incidentally the word "Euthanasia" derives from a Greek word meaning good death. It can be either active or passive in the sense that a drug or treatment can be administered to hasten death or withheld with the same objective in view.

About 18 months ago 250 top ranking intellectuals of the level of Andrei Sakharov and Julian Huxley asserted "the absolute right of the individual to control his or her own bodily destiny in regard to the reproduction, medical treatment or lack of it, and termination including Euthanasia and suicide". Another recent statement, amongst the signatories of which are several French, American and British Nobel Laureates, appeals to thinking people to incorporate in their will the desire that they would like to die with dignity and that those concerned should respect this wish of theirs.

We have confined ourselves so far to incurable cases of physical melody in which another party is normally involved, such as a physician, nurse, friend or relative. But surely those who are ill at heart or in mind, and have nobody to attend on them, have just as much right to relief in circumstances where they feel death alone can deliver them from extreme pain, embarrassment and/or humiliation. The present law whereby failure to be successful in such an attempt is being treated as an offence for which the person is prosecuted requires appropriate revision. For surely from any rational, equitable standpoint it cannot lie in the mouth of another party, even in close contact with the person contemplating suicide, to sit in judgement on the act, whether the particular situation warranted such an extreme measure or not. It is only the wearer who knows where and how sharply the shoe pinches. For the intensity with which an identical situation can cause pain and suffering to two different individuals varies enormously, depending on one's background,

bringing up, ethical and behavioural codes, and other strictly personal factors which no outside party can take into account. For example, to many an individual who has led an active, useful and meaningful life, retirement from normal work causes so deep and intense a boredom that he would prefer to be snuffed out quickly, rather than go on continuing what to him is a meaningless existence just waiting for death to claim him — which may not be on the scene for years. The concept of a happy, relaxed retirement turns out just to be a mirage, in India more than anywhere else. Continuous unemployment or absence of job satisfaction can cause just as deep a distress to a sensitive mind and suicide may appear the only way out. If society cannot solve the problem that causes such deep distress to the person concerned what right has it to demand that he should go on living, if life means nothing but suffering to him? Far from making an attempt at suicide a penal offence, a sane society should evolve and make available, with some formality to allow a cooling down period but without undue difficulty, specific devices, drugs, injections etc. for ending life without pain and without uncertainty as to the effect. And of course there should be no prosecution and no social stigma if despite all this the attempt fails. In India more than in any other country where life to hundreds of millions is nothing but an unceasing round of squalor filth and misery, the right to end one's own life should be considered as a Fundamental Right, on a par with any of the rights listed in Article 19 of the Constitution.

Obscurantism

Social reform has always encountered bitter opposition *inter alia* from religiously oriented groups. Such opposition has to be overcome. A little more than a hundred years ago in India we contended with the barbarous institutions of "Sati" and infanticide, both of which had not only social but also religious sanctions. Even today we are contending with institutions of child marriage and dowry, both heavily overlaid with centuries of social approval and even religious lore. Each generation has to fight its own battles against conventions and practices which are found to have outlived their utility. The only social reforms which we have successfully implemented in India are the legalisation of birth control and of abortion. But even in regard to these we seem to fight shy of giving adequate publicity as though we are restrained by a feeling of guilt for having passed such laws. If sanity is to prevail, as it should, there is no doubt that the rights to die in dignity, and to commit suicide, suitably safeguarded against their abuse, will have to be conceded sooner rather than later. The only tragedy is that so much avoidable suffering will have been inflicted on millions of persons before this is accepted. At any rate those countries which have abolished capital punishment, thereby conceding to those who wish the right to live, cannot in all conscience deny to those who so wish the right to die.

A CHARM FOR THE CHARMER

Lakshmi's
BELLERINA voile sarees
Enchanting. Wear for work.
Wear for fun. Around the town.
Around the picnic spots.
Any where-and BELLERINA
will please you every wear.
Made from 90s & 100s
pure imported cotton.

THE
LAKSHMI MILLS
COMPANY LIMITED
COIMBATORE
SYMBOL OF
OUTSTANDING FABRICS

VSH/LMC-Ed./957

WHY MARXISM IS LEFT BEHIND

Bryan Magee, M.P.

THE same three-word sentence has been uttered to me twice in the past year by men who are unacquainted with each other but who both came to world fame as Marxists or communists. The sentence was simply: "Marxism is dead". And both men, it turned out, meant the same thing by it.

They were saying that the contribution Marxism has made to man's understanding of himself and society has been magnificent but is now spent: nothing new or important seems likely to come out of it. Both men made the point that there are no longer any Marxist thinkers or artists of major significance—not even any outstanding critics—and that scientists are finding it impossible to make further progress on the basis of Marxist assumptions.

Similarly, at the political level, the multifarious regimes that call themselves Marxist are all finding that social advance leads them away from the Marxist programmes on which they originally launched themselves. At every level, then, the seams have become exhausted.

This is not to say that Marxism has ceased to matter. On the contrary, like many ideologies which it itself regards as defunct—Christianity, for instance—Marxism will continue to operate powerfully through individuals and institutions, and to make numerous converts among the young. But, like them, its importance and influence in the world will be those of established interests, not pioneering forces.

At this point I challenged each of them with current examples of revolutionary change brought about by communists. Both replied, in effect, that communism had been, and would continue to be, successful only when concealed under the cloak of nationalism. From Mao via Tito to Ho Chi Minh and Fidel Castro, all Marxist leaders who have been swept into power by their own people have proclaimed the chief aim of their struggle to be not the establishment of communism but the liberation of their country from foreign domination. That was the cause that inflamed the masses and roused them to fight. Among the rank and file of those national liberation armies one found no widespread enthusiasm for communism, nor even all that much interest in or understanding of it. The leaders had realised this and known how to turn it to advantage. On the other hand in every country, whether at peace or war, where the communists had been mistaken enough to base their appeal to the people on communism, they had failed to get mass support.

There was one other point that both men made, and that is that people in the West are taking a long time to wake up to all this, yet it has been widely understood

in the communist world for quite a while. In fact it is nearly twenty years since much of it was publicly acknowledged in *The New Class* by Djilas, who even then wrote in the preface: "This account may appear strange to those who live in the non-Communist world: it would not seem unusual to those who live in the communist one."

With a few qualifications, I believe that what these men were saying to me is true, and of historic importance. As for their last point, though, it is not really surprising that the limitations and fallacies of Marxism should be discovered first by the people who have tried to base themselves on it in practice, nor that they should then be more acutely aware of them than anyone else. Things have reached the point now when it is almost impossible to find a communist in a communist country. In the Soviet Union, for instance, the alienation of (to use the Russian term) the intelligentsia not only from the regime but also from the ideology on which the regime is based is virtually complete. If one wants nowadays to find intellectually serious enthusiasm for Marxism in intelligent people one has to look for it in non-communist countries.

Courtesy: *The Times*



YOUR GUARANTEE OF GOODNESS

NATO STUDY ON SURPRISE ATTACK

by a Special Correspondent

DEFENCE officials in Washington are expressing concern at the conclusions of a Nato study on the feasibility of a surprise attack on Western Europe.

A report, prepared by a senior officer of Nato's armed forces and now circulating within the alliance, reaches the startling conclusion that the Warsaw Pact is capable of delivering a successful attack on Western Europe using only conventional forces and that the surprise and speed of the operation would make it impossible to use the tactical nuclear weapons which are an integral part of Nato's "flexible response" strategy.

The report also reveals that there are now 16,000 Soviet agents operating in West Germany alone, and suggests that some of these are trained to participate in a surprise attack by seizing or destroying radio and television stations, early warning systems and key headquarters.

The report examines in detail the probable timing and method of a surprise attack, suggesting that it would be mounted from East Germany and that the main initial operations would be carried out by the 20 Soviet divisions stationed there, possibly reinforced by six East German divisions.

This force could, within three hours of the first move from their peacetime locations, be across the River Elbe and attacking the West German frontier guard units. Given even the most favourable conditions, Nato forces could not occupy the positions earmarked for them in the "forward strategy" in less than 10 hours.

Some troops, such as the Dutch Corps which is normally 300 kilometres from its battle area, would take 24 hours to move to their defensive positions.

By that time, the report concludes, the Soviet Armies would have penetrated deep into West Germany, their advance assisted by paratroop and commando units and by Fifth Column operations organized by some of the 16,000 Soviet agents now known to be active in the Federal Republic.

Within 48 hours of the start of the attack, the Warsaw Pact forces would have crossed the Rhine.

On the assumption that it would take the United States President between 36 and 48 hours to reach a decision on the use of battlefield nuclear weapons, the report concludes that their use in the circumstances would cause more victims among civilians and allied troops than among the forces of the Warsaw Pact. The logical inference therefore is that the battlefield weapons will never be used.

As the report says "the trend which encourages the dismantling of our conventional forces and their

chronic weakness results in a parallel increase in the risks of a nuclear conflagration at strategic level".

Although the author of the report accepts the political assumption that in present circumstances a surprise attack is unlikely, he draws attention to the progressive unilateral reduction in the armed forces of the West while the Soviet Union continues to build up its military power at an alarming rate, and concludes that any further erosion of Western European defence capability, or even further reduction of American force levels in Western Europe would create a situation in which the Warsaw Pact might reasonably calculate that a surprise offensive would meet with immediate success and thus "ensure mastery of the Euro-Asian continent for the Soviet Union".

The report also refers to the significant growth of communist influence in Western Europe, and the possibility that economic and social pressures might even bring about the "arrival of regimes with dominating communist tendencies in certain European countries".

It warns Western policy makers against falling into the trap of assuming that existing political conditions are unchangeable, and points out that, given a favourable military and political situation, the Soviet Union might have powerful motives for a limited military operation in Western Europe.

It would eliminate West Germany, which is, in Soviet eyes, assuming a position of increasing predominance among the European members of Nato; it would shatter the image of a free and prosperous society which presents such a startling contrast to the oppressive totalitarianism of the East European members of the Warsaw Pact; it would divert attention from some of the growing economic and social problems within the Soviet Union; and it would break the back of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and postpone indefinitely any prospect of political integration in Western Europe.

In this context the report recommends that Western Europe should assume responsibility for its own security, no longer depending entirely on the American nuclear umbrella. If it does not, it is argued, Europe has no political future since "what cannot be defended, in accordance with the classic definition of sovereignty, is not politically viable".

The principal impact of the report, however, lies in its detailed exposure of the basic weakness of Nato's current military strategy, and the total inadequacy of the West's conventional forces, in the face of a determined Soviet assault.

It points out that the insistence on a "forward defence", conditioned largely by West Germany's understandable reluctance to surrender its territory without a fight, makes sense only in the context of long warning times, giving the West time to move at leisure from its peacetime garrisons to its combat positions.

The central message of the report is that "chronic unpreparedness, together with the lack of the will to foresee the likely moment" may create the very conditions which would lead the Soviet Union to conclude that a military attack on the West would be successful.

—The Times

HOW SOVIETS USE FOREIGN DEBTS

FOR two years the Egyptians have been trying — unsuccessfully — to persuade the Russians to re-schedule Egypt's debt to the Soviet Union and thereby ease the pressure on the Egyptian economy.

In the latest round of talks, held in Cairo from November 22nd to December 15th 1975, the Russians rejected Egyptian proposals that there should be a "grace" period of 10 years and that all interest due on Soviet military loans to Egypt should also be included in the arrangement.

Instead, Moscow agreed to trade more with Cairo in 1976. Egypt would export some 395.3 million dollars worth of goods to the USSR and would receive 252.1 million dollars. According to the Yugoslav Tanyug news agency, quoting Cairo sources on December 17th, the difference "would be regarded as an instalment of Egyptian dues to the Soviet Union".

Thus the debts issue was not positively decided at the talks, both sides merely agreeing to have further discussions. The authoritative Cairo newspaper, Al Ahram, said on December 16th that the next step would be a joint meeting of experts to consider the question again.

The Egyptians had suggested repayment of all debts over 30 years, following a "grace" period. But the Soviet terms, according to the Egyptian newspaper, Al Akhbar, on November 26th, were that Egypt should pay 20 per cent of her military debt over 10 years without interest, and 40 per cent of her other debts over the same period at 2 per cent interest.

How much does Egypt owe the Soviet Union? No figures have been released, but Western estimates vary from 2.5 to 3.2 thousand million dollars. On December 29th the Egyptian Government announced that half of all its debts were owed to the Soviet Union. It was reported that there was "uproar" in the People's Assembly (Parliament). The Finance Minister, Ahmed Abu Ismail, did not give a specific figure, while the Economy Minister, Mohammed Zaki Shafic, told members that Egypt's foreign debts up to last September totalled about £ 2.1 billion, not including military debts to the Soviet Union.

A Chinese report from Cairo on December 16th said the rescheduling talks had failed "because of Soviet stubbornness and the Soviet tactic to continue to exert pressure on Egypt on this issue". The report took up a point made by the Egyptian weekly, Akhbar al-Yawm, that repaying debts over a long term was "a common practice" among friends and even rivals. Was not the Soviet Union itself paying for American arms received during the Second World War of 1939-45 — until the year 2001?

At the Cairo talks it was reported that the Soviet delegation, led by I.T. Grishin, Deputy Minister for Foreign Trade, had argued that if the Soviet Union had accepted Egypt's proposals, "other countries might be tempted to ask for similar treatment."

Yet in 1974 the economic debts owed to the Soviet Union by Somalia and South Yemen were cancelled. Somalia's debts then amounted to 45 million dollars

Wouldn't You Like to Oblige Your Friends?

Has it struck you, dear Reader, that you can do some of your friends a favour by bringing **Freedom First** to their notice and asking them to join you as a subscriber?

The record of the last few months, during which **Freedom First** has made news, proved true to its name and performed a service to freedom of expression, surely justifies you in enrolling your friends as our subscribers, making it possible for them to benefit from interesting information and candid comments on developments, both in India and the rest of the world.

ALL WE ASK

Cut out the subscription form on page 16 and arrange for it to be sent to us with as many names and addresses as you can muster.

Extra copies of **Freedom First** available from:

DEMOCRATIC RESEARCH SERVICE

127 Mahatma Gandhi Road
Bombay 400 001

(Phone: 254341)

her a "grace" period of 10 years, with repayment of debts over the following 30 years.

—*Swiss Press Review*

KREMLIN'S AGEING WHEELER-DEALERS

Victor Zorza

WHILE the World has been allowed to watch on television the ritual of the Soviet Party Congress, the real business is being transacted behind the scenes. The wheeling and dealing in which the Kremlin power-brokers engage in smoke-filled rooms has never been described by a participant, but it can be inferred from the few scraps of information that come our way....

The average age of the Politburo members has in for war material and, according to some observers, 80 million dollars for other aid. South Yemen's debts of 10 million dollars were similarly written off by the Russians. A claim that the Russians had given Syria a 10-year moratorium on arms repayments was made by President Sadat in a 'Le Monde' interview on January 21st 1975. In the case of Cuba, the Russians allowed creased from year to year and from congress to congress. It is now 66 years, greater than that of any comparable ruling body in the world, but the average age of its inner group is 70 years. Some of the most influential members, apart from Brezhnev who is 69, are President Podgorny (72), Prime Minister Kosygin (71), the ideologist, Suslov (73), and Defence Minister Grechko (72).

The gradual increase in the average age of the Central Committee members tells its own story. The average age of those elected in 1952, just before the death of Stalin, was 49; in 1956, when Khrushchev delivered the secret speech which dethroned Stalin, it was 51; in 1961, it was 52; in 1966, at the first congress presided over by Brezhnev after he overthrew Khrushchev, it was 56; and in 1971 it rose to 58.

There is much evidence between the lines of the Soviet press that this is resented by the younger, more dynamic members of the party hierarchy, who see the road to their advancement blocked by the dead hand of the bureaucracy. If the seemingly inexorable pattern of advancing years is not reversed at the Twenty-fifth Congress, the Soviet leadership will either crumble from old age, or it will be blown up by the head of steam building up from below. My own guess is that failing the long overdue rejuvenation of the leadership, the rule of the Kremlin gerontocracy will end with a bang, not a whimper.

—*The Guardian*

TAIWAN ON CAIRO

TAIPEI newspapers of March 17 said Egypt's decision to end its treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union is wise and that free nations of

Asia and Africa should follow Cairo's example in dealing with the Maoists.

The *Chung Yang Jih Pao* (Central Daily News) said: "The immediate effects will be (1) reduced mobility for Soviet naval forces in the Red Sea and Mediterranean, (2) increased cooperation between the United States and Egypt and enhancement of Western influence in Africa and (3) Soviet support of Iraq and Syria to bring pressure against Egypt.

"President Sadat's decision should set an example for those who think the 'enemy's enemy is a friend' and who expect talk with the Communists to bring peace."

The *Lien Ho Pao* (United Daily News) said: "Egypt's decision is a major diplomatic setback for Moscow.

"Russia has close relations with Syria, Iraq, South Yemen and Algeria. But none is so important as Egypt, a Middle East power and the master of the Suez Canal.

"Immediate results could be closer cooperation between the United States and Egypt and stronger Soviet support of Syria. Tension may mount along the Israeli-Syria border."

The *Hsin Sheng Pao* (New Life Daily News) said: "Cairo may deny the use of Egyptian harbors and naval facilities to Soviet vessels if relations worsen.

'Sadat's decision came after visits to seven Arab brother states, and the obtaining US\$700 million in loans. He has shown the Soviets that Egypt need not depend on Moscow so completely.

"The change in Egyptian-Soviet relations may promote a moderate Egyptian stand in the Arab-Israeli confrontation. This should be a lesson to many free world nations that are seeking the goodwill of the Communists."

—*Free China News*

TUC OPPOSED TO STATE NEWSPAPERS

Public ownership of newspapers would be "totally wrong-headed", Mr Len Murray, general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, told the Royal Commission on the Press.

He was giving evidence before the commission as leader of a 12-man delegation from the TUC. The delegation included the general secretaries of five newspaper-unions. Mr Murray said that the TUC was opposed to the state acquiring newspapers, however benevolent its intentions.

—*The Times*

'HISS HAS BEEN LYING'

IT was a cold-war confrontation, as unforgettable for its personal drama as for its historical significance. When, in 1951, Alger Hiss went on to prison for 30 months and Whittaker Chambers retired to a Maryland farm, the question still nagged: Who had lied? Today, in the minds of many people, doubts remain. But last

week Hiss, 71, still denying Chambers' charges that he passed secret State Department documents to Soviet spies, suffered a damaging setback from a most unexpected source—the files of his own defense attorneys.

The controversy flared anew when Allen Weinstein, a respected historian from Smith College who had tended to believe Hiss innocent, did a complete turn-about. After examining 15,376 pages of FBI files that he had pried loose in a Freedom of Information suit last year and additional papers that Hiss instructed his lawyers to make available, Weinstein declared: "Hiss has been lying about his relations with Chambers for nearly 30 years. . . . Others who once believed in Alger Hiss may now be persuaded that he stole the documents in question and that Whittaker Chambers told the truth."

Weinstein, who has been writing a book on the Hiss case, found that evidence given to him by defense lawyers was more damaging to Hiss than the FBI files. The professor published his conclusions in the current *New York Review of Books*, in which he reviews *Alger Hiss: The True Story*, a strong defense of Hiss by John Chabot Smith, a former reporter who also had access to the Hiss defense files. Smith's book on Hiss deals largely with conspiracy theories. He argues implausibly that Chambers was not an ex-Communist but a Walter Mitty-type dreamer who typed the disputed documents himself. If not Chambers, the FBI or someone else may have done Hiss in, Smith concludes.

On the basis of the defense attorneys' files, Weinstein argues that:

- Experts hired by Hiss's own lawyers concluded that handwriting on copies of stolen State Department documents was that of Hiss and his wife Priscilla.

- His experts also concluded that the typing of the copies produced by Chambers was identical to samples of Priscilla Hiss's typing, a conclusion likewise reached by the FBI.

- Defense experts also determined that documents passed on to Chambers were typed, as the FBI claimed, on a Woodstock brand typewriter owned by Hiss.

- Hiss was aware that the old Woodstock typewriter had been given to the son of a woman who had been the Hiss family maid. Even so, Hiss told the FBI and a federal grand jury that it had probably been sold to a secondhand dealer in Washington.

- Lee Pressman, a secret but active Communist who recommended Hiss for his first Government job, played a major role in defense efforts to discredit Chambers.

- Defense lawyers were told that Chambers and two other members of the Washington Communist underground had been in touch with Hiss in 1934, trying to recruit him for espionage. This evidence came from the wife of one of the two other members.

- Hiss's lawyers had corroboration for Chambers' claim that Hiss had given an automobile to the U.S. Communist Party in 1936.

Last week Weinstein told *Time*: "I wanted to believe that he was innocent. But I am a historian, not an apologist for anyone. I am not making a case for the FBI. I blasted them all along. I want every last piece of evidence I can get. I have tried to examine both sides of the matter. I can live with anything I find because I am not a partisan."

Chambers died on his farm in 1961, swearing that he had spoken the truth. Hiss, who is now a salesman and part-time attorney in New York City, doubtless will go to his grave still protesting his innocence. But Whittaker Chambers' story, which stood up under countless assaults during his life, has not been successfully refuted in the 15 years since his death.

—*Time*

KIM THOUGHTS 'INCREASE FISH CATCH'

from Peter Hazelhurst
Tokyo

IN terms of building up a personality cult, the somewhat inmodest President Kim Il Sung, of North Korea, is attempting to outdo Stalin, Chairman Mao or even Lenin and Marx.

Throwing caution to the wind, Comrade Kim has, in the words of official party organs, set himself up as the greatest revolutionary thinker of all time "without precedent in the East or West, in all ages, the sun of mankind".

The word Communism has been eliminated in official jargon in Pyongyang and replaced by a new officially entitled doctrine—"Kimilsungism". The state-controlled press declares that hundreds of millions of people have been liberated throughout the world by Kimilsungism and the doctrine has provided North Korea with the most advanced educational system in the world.

In an attempt to deify the dictatorial leader, the latest edition of *The People's Korea* goes on to assert: "The people of the world have extended eternal thanks to the great leader, Comrade Kim Il Sung, reverently looking up to the sun of mankind, to the great leader who has led hundreds of millions of once oppressed and maltreated people on the globe to take their place in the arena of history. . . . Thanks to the great leader, Comrade Kim Il Sung, the genius of revolution, the outstanding thinker and theoretician and peerless legendary hero. . . ."

Almost every sentence among the hundreds of thousands of words of turgid ideological literature emanating from North Korea is now punctuated with grandiose descriptions of Comrade Kim—"great and respected

leader, tender-hearted father of the nation, beloved leader and revolutionary genius".

The People's Korea states that the last year fish catch increased under the guidance of his "inspiring thoughts", cement production exceeded the set target and industrial production rose by 18 per cent.

Unlike other communist powers, North Korea has spent huge sums of its precious foreign exchange reserves in recent years to advertise Kim Il Sung's thoughts in American and West European newspapers such as the *Daily Express*, *The Times*, and *The New York Times*, considered hostile to the communist world.

Close observers of North Korea believe that the motive behind this move was not designed to convert the West to Kimilsungism but to reproduce the advertisements in North Korea, where the average person might believe that the Western press was giving editorial prominence to the thoughts of Kim Il Sung.

—*The Times*

MACAPAGAL BREAKS 3-YEAR SILENCE

Diosdado Macapagal, the former Philippine president who has gone into hiding after being refused political asylum by the United States, kept silent for three years about the martial law that President Ferdinand Marcos imposed in 1972.

Then last Thursday a blue paperback book was discreetly distributed to a few new agencies here. It was entitled "Democracy in the Philippines" and it was written by Diosdado Macapagal.

The Andhra Pradesh Paper Mills Limited

Manufacturers of top quality paper in a number of varieties.

**REMEMBER: IT'S ANDHRA MILLS
FOR PAPER THAT IS
GOOD FOR EVERYTHING**

Registered Office & Mills:
RAJAHMUNDRY (A. P.)

Administrative Office:
Shreeniwas House
Hazarimal Sonani Marg
Bombay 400 001

"I can no longer keep my thoughts and views to myself," Mr. Macapagal, 65, wrote. "I feel that I cannot live in tranquility and silence while democracy is being strangled and the rights and liberties of the citizens are being trampled on..."

According to the State Department in Washington, about the time the books were being delivered, Mr. Macapagal was in the residence of U.S. Ambassador William Sullivan seeking political asylum. He said he faced possible arrest for demanding that Mr. Marcos convene a special Interim National Assembly to handle the succession of his presidency and "to restore constitutional Government and end the martial law, which remains in force."

Mr. Macapagal first broke his silence in mid-January, the day Mr. Marcos went to the University of the Philippines to speak to alumni of the law school. The student

SOCIALIST RECORD IN U.K.

	Tories' 13 years 1951-1964	Wilson's 13 years 1963-76
	%	%
Retail prices	+55	+192
Productive employment	+4½	-16
Civil service employment (non-industrial)	-2½	+38
Unemployment	+25	+200
<i>In real items:</i>		
Post-tax living standards	+56	+36
Old age pension	+45	+35
Manufacturing investment	+53	+25
Public spending	+36	+80

—*The Economist*

newspaper, the *Philippines Collegian*, published a letter from Mr. Macapagal, demanding that Mr. Marcos convene the National Assembly "as a means of avoiding civil war in our country at the end of the Marcos rule."

Until then, few Filipinos dared discuss in public the prospect of the Philippines without Mr. Marcos, 57, who governs by decree. Mr. Marcos has refused to convene the National Assembly provided for in a new Constitution he proclaimed in January, 1973.

Mr. Macapagal was president of the convention which wrote the Constitution.

—*International Herald Tribune*

Review

THE "ONLY MAN"

My Life by Golda Meir

(Cox & Wyman, £6.75, pages 388)

WHEN Ben Gurion called Mrs. Golda Meir the 'only man' in his cabinet it was far from being adulation for when in October 1973 with the dice loaded against Israel the crises called not just for the leadership of man but that of a superman, Golda with that indomitable spirit and an iron will steered the nation to victory through yet another turbulent period in Israel's history.

Like most Jews of Golda's generation branded as 'children of death' hers is a touching story and she became aware of her Jewishness at a tender age of three when the ravages of pogroms were sweeping Kiev—her childhood homeland in Czarist Russia. Although ignorant of what pogroms were she soon realized that it had something to do against the Jews when she saw her father barricading her home against anti-Jewish mobs.

Autobiographies are often replete with one's own quotations but in this respect "My Life" is with a difference. Save for one or two statements, like the one in the UNO on Eichmann's trial in Israel, Golda fails to regale the readers with her caustic statements and repartees. Modesty may have restrained her from doing so but it would be worth quoting a couple of them.

On the Russian presence in Egypt Golda once said: "We do not believe that the Russians are there to teach the Egyptian cotton-picking". Yet another time, on the PLO, she remarked: "The PLO wants to draw the border on the Mediterranean with us on the other side. How do you compromise on your death?"

Golda Meir's autobiography "My Life", published simultaneously in seventeen languages setting an historic precedent, begins with vague glimpses of Golda's childhood which "is lost... in the fog of the time". "My Life" is a plain account and mental recollection of Golda's life and her activities as she "never expected to write the story" of her life. Golda was not born with a silver spoon in her mouth but from Kiev to Milwaukee and then to Palestine is a long circuitous journey packed with adventures and anxieties, successes and failures, tragedies and rejoicings, confrontation and struggles culminating in the supreme joy with the birth of the State of Israel.

In 1908 at the age of eight, Golda and her family followed her father to Milwaukee in the United States. Life in Milwaukee was not a bed of roses although it was a relief from persecution in Russia.

In her early life, her quest for personal identity clashed with her parent's orthodox views. In a way she was a rebel and unconventional and that was partly due to her early baptism into Zionism and the irrepressible urge to realize the visions of the Jewish State as conceived by Theodore Herzl, the father Jewish

Renaissance. Little wonder she plunged into the Zionist Movement both at Milwaukee and in Palestine like a duck taking to water.

But her public activities were resented by her parents and she soon ran to her elder sister Sheyna's place in Denver who was both her guide and confidante and as Golda writes "one of the great influences of my life—perhaps the greatest apart from the man I married." It was at Denver that she met and married Morris Meyerson but made migration to Palestine a precondition for their marriage and later Hebrued her name to 'Meir' at Ben Gurion's request.

She came to Palestine in 1920 in an unseaworthy 'Pochahontas' manned by a mutinous crew. In Palestine, in spite of initial hardships of pioneering her spirits never flagged as she remarks: "Although we had come to Palestine from different countries and from different cultures and often spoke different languages, we were alike in our belief that only here could Jews live as of right, rather than on sufferance, and only here could Jews be masters, not victims, of their fate. So it was not surprising that for all the petty irritations and problems, I was profoundly happy."

In Palestine her 'bourgeois contribution' to the austere kibbutz life of Merhavia like a tablecloth with 'a centrepiece of wildflowers' along with improved diet created a flutter. She writes: "It took quite a while, in fact, for the kibbutz to accept our strange 'American' way and us", but it was Golda who ultimately had her own way.

Golda's advent in Palestine coincided with the rise of Jewish and Arab nationalism which were by now gaining sharp edges and in the struggle of the Jewish people for the State of Israel Golda played no mean part to combat the challenge which history has hurled at Golda and her people, and on the eve of independence she even made an audacious and clandestine visit to Amman, disguised as an Arab lady, to restrain King Abdullah of Transjordan from joining the combined Arab attack on Israel. But such was her zeal for public activities that it clashed with her family responsibilities and she ultimately separated from Morris who died in 1951. A sense of guilt often nagged her for neglecting her children and so once when she stayed home from work in Tel Aviv, her children Menachem and Sarah danced round her, singing a little song: "Mommy's staying at home today! Mommy has a headache! Mommy's staying at home today!"

On May 14, 1948 when Ben Gurion read the scroll of Independence and called upon the members of the People's Council to 'adopt the scroll establishing the Jewish State' one of them was Golda, weeping with joy because it broke her heart "to think of all those who should have been there today and are not".

The dawn of independence found Golda in the thick of many a battle and she was soon appointed Minister to Moscow where she had the pleasure of meeting fifty thousand Jews on 'Rosh Hashana' (the Jewish New Year) at the Moscow Synagogue. Obviously the

Kremlin did not relish this and in her later visits she found the synagogue deserted.

But it was as Israel's Foreign Minister and later on as Prime Minister that she made that indelible impression on international affairs and highlights many interesting episodes in her life.

Golda's efforts to befriend the Arabs bare no fruits, and she narrates a strange incident when she as Foreign Minister represented Israel at one of the U.N. General Assembly and made friends with the wife of the acting head of Pakistani delegation. Both of them talked about women playing the 'role of peace-maker' and Golda fondly hoped to contact the Arab diplomats through her. But one day when Golda was having a cup of tea with her in the Delegates' Lounge, the Iraqi Foreign Minister came in. Golda writes: "She turned white. 'My God,' she said, 'he'll see me talking to you and she got up in a panic and left. That was the end of that.'"

As for Nasser Golda writes that he "once said to an intermediary whom we despatched to Cairo: 'If Ben Gurion came to Egypt to talk to me, he would return home as a conquering hero. But if I went to him I would be shot dead when I came back.'"

The book captures with brilliance the moving forces of the Jewish history in the Twentieth Century which changed the plight of the Jews who till 1948 were 'everywhere guest but nowhere host'. Golda speaks of Ben Gurion, his crony Berl Katznelson, Moshe Sharett with veneration and of her younger colleagues, Rabin,

Eban, Dayan with pride notwithstanding their differences.

Israel's friendship with Africa which is inspired by Theodore Herzle's celebrated words in his novel 'Atneuland' (Old-New Land): "There is still one other question arising out of the disaster of the nations which remains unsolved to this day, and whose profound tragedy only a Jew can comprehend. This is the African question..... of the slave trade, of human beings who, merely because they were black, were stolen like cattle — I am not ashamed to say, though I may expose myself to ridicule in saying so, that once I have witnessed the redemption of the Jews, my people, I wish also to assist in the redemption of the Africans", comes in for major focus in chapter "Africa and other friendships". Against this backdrop and Israel's aid to Africa the "rupture in diplomatic relations" with African States after the Yom Kippur War predictably hurts Golda who bitterly complains of their desertion in Israel's hour of crises.

Contrary to the hawkish image painted Golda's policies are tempered by moderation and realism. She could be tough and often showed momma's natural ferocity when her brood was in danger, but was never unrealistic or intransigent.

A dyed in the wool Mapai woman she was elected prime minister after Levi Eshkol's death in 1969 as she was the 'balancing wheel' between the two leading aspirants—the dovish Allon and the hawkish one eyed terror of the Arabs, Dayan.

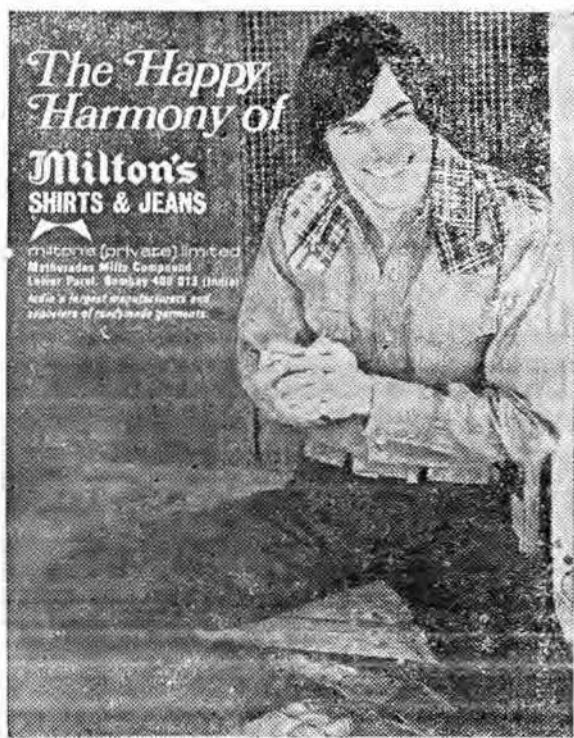
Golda writes her autobiography with a tormented mind, haunted by the holocaust against the background of the torturous history of the Jewish people and their epic struggle for Israel. But her supreme satisfaction of a mission fulfilled and the long elusive vision realised is so conspicuous that it can never escape the reader's attention. Written in simple English and shorn of its literary trappings, it has the distinct ring of the Jewish plea: "Let my people live".

It is fashionable for all statesmen to write autobiographies but it is not merely the office that make autobiographies interesting, but much more than that, and Golda's life has those ingredients which makes the book a delightful reading.

Golda's indefatigable sense of mission, the sufferings for a cause, the power of endurance, the strength to bear hardships, courage of conviction and firmness of mind makes "My Life"—this elegant blue jacketed book with four memorable black and white colour plates — a capsule version of the history of the Jewish people.

"My life" has already made the "best sellers" mark. With royalties and film rights yet to come, Golda in her evening of her life faces the inevitable prospects of becoming a Jewish millionaire, but still living in a modest two room apartment in a Tel-Aviv suburb.

NITIN G. Bhatt



WITH MANY VOICES

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

"If I were trying to read, much less answer all the attacks made on me, this shop might well be closed for any other business. I do the best I know how, the very best I can; and I mean to keep on doing it to the end. If the end brings me out all right, what is said against me will not amount to anything. If the end brings me out all wrong, ten Angels swearing I was right would make no difference."

—Abraham Lincoln quoted in *The Sunday Times*,
March 21.

Portugal's swing to democracy shows there's nothing like a bungled revolution to give a country a taste for liberty.

—*The Economist*, March 6.

Detente (which is franglais for appeasement).

—*The Economist*, March 6.

There has to be an enforcement agency in the country; if it isn't the market it has to be the police force.

—Frank Chapple, General Secretary, EETPU in
Observer, January 25.

The fact that many people are living and dying on the streets of Calcutta is a bigger challenge to the socialist conscience than the precise date that Des Warren (the jailed Shrewsbury picket) is let out of prison.

—Mr. Prentice, Minister for Overseas Development,
in *The Times*, March 2.

FREEDOM FIRST,
C/o Democratic Research Service
127, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Bombay 1. (Phone: 254341)

Please enrol me as a subscriber to FREEDOM FIRST.

I remit the annual subscription of Rs. 5.00

He is/I am a student. I remit Rs. 3.00

Name:

College (for students)

Address:

Signature

A lesson to all of us men to be careful not to marry ladies in very high positions.

—Idi Amin in a message to Lord Snowdon quoted
in the *International Herald Tribune*, March 23.

Mr. Brezhnev's excessive modesty and brilliant talent, his spiritual beauty and personal charm.

—Sharaf R. Rashidov, Uzbekistan Party Secretary,
quoted in *Time*, March 15.

Communism has sometimes succeeded as a scavenger, but never as a leader. It has never come to power in any country that was not disrupted by war, internal repression or both.

—President John F. Kennedy quoted in *Time*,
March 15.

Mr. Smith is his own man and will go his own way. But whether to heaven or perdition I am still not quite sure.

—Mr. James Callaghan in *Time*, March 15.

Democracy is the only reply from this country to the encroachments of Communism all around us. We cannot fight Communism by another kind of dictatorship. This would only play into the Communists' own hands. We must base our weapon on equal challenges and equal opportunity, the right to have individual choices and individual views. If we put away these things, we are lost.

—Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj in *Time*, March 15.

We have got to put a stop to constantly turning the other cheek and letting the other side kick us all over the lot.

—Senator Jackson in *Time*, March 15.

Western style liberal democracy is unsuitable for South Korea, especially while it faces the danger of aggression from the Communist North.

—President Park in *Time*, March 22.

I cannot sit still and see democracy be sacrificed in the name of national cohesiveness. Where democracy is gone there are only three alternatives: Communism, militarism or dictatorship.

—Former Korean President Yun Po Sun in *Time*,
March 22.

The real nuptial knot in India — where 90 per cent of marriages are still arranged — is not love but rupees.

—*Time*, March 22.