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A JOURNAL OF LIBERAL IDEAS

A VARIETY OF COMMENT

K. S. VENKATESWARAN

PSYCHIATRIC ABUSE IN THE USSR

READERS might recall that in May 1980 Amnesty International had come out with a richly documented report on **Prisoners of Conscience in the USSR** which catalogues in meticulous detail, among other things, the flagrant abuse of official Soviet procedures for confining people to psychiatric hospitals against their will. In the three years that have gone by after the publication of the report, more evidence of such abuse has been unearthed, according to a recent Amnesty Briefing.

Based on information gathered from such diverse sources as first-hand accounts of a number of victims who have since emigrated from the USSR, **samizdat** accounts of other, less fortunate victims, testimony of several emigré Soviet psychiatrists, and the findings of an eminent British psychiatrist who personally examined some victims on a visit to Moscow in 1978, the Briefing clearly establishes that the situation has, far from improving over the years, undergone a change for the worse.

"Since August 1977, Amnesty International has learned of 110 people who have been forcibly confined to Soviet psychiatric institutions for indefinite periods, for political and not genuine medical reasons. Nineteen of these were confined under criminal procedures to **special** psychiatric hospitals which constitute the most severe form of psychiatric detention and are intended for people who 'represented a special danger to society'. Most, however, are confined to ordinary psychiatric hospitals under civil (administrative) procedures sometimes on more than one occasion during this period."

The case of Petro Grigorenko, an ex-commanding officer in the Soviet army, is illustrative. Arrested in 1969 following public speeches he made in support of

the movement of Crimean Tartars deported during the Second World War to return to the Crimea, Grigorenko was ruled "not responsible" (for his actions) and confined to special psychiatric hospitals under criminal procedures for five years. When a Soviet psychiatrist, Dr. Semyon Gluzman, challenged the official diagnosis made of Grigorenko's mental condition, he was himself arrested and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment and internal exile for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda."

Not surprisingly, after Grigorenko emigrated to the USA in 1979, the distinguished panel of psychiatrists and psychologists who examined him in New York concluded unequivocally that they could find no evidence of mental illness in Grigorenko. "Nor could we find evidence in (his) history consistent with mental illness in the past," said the panel.

THE THREAT TO THE BBC

YET another announcement that the British Government plans to cut back some of the BBC External Services programmes as a part of its economy drive, has brought in its wake an avalanche of protests from faithful listeners at home and abroad. Some of the letters that poured into Bush House (the BBC's headquarters in London) and the British embassies all over the world reveal the depth of the feelings that millions of people have been entertaining towards this unique institution for decades.

One listener from Italy wrote: "Just thinking that I may not be able to listen to you any longer makes me feel sick; nor can I stomach the fact that I shall not have news of everything that happens in the world anymore . . . Stations like the BBC are like gusts of mountain air among the torried currents of falsehood."

"In France," said another old faithful, "radio means

the BBC. Your listeners are enabled to argue with their countrymen about such matters as the Anglo-French lamb dispute."

At stake are seven language broadcasts: French, Italian, Spanish, Somali, Portuguese, Maltese and Burmese, besides the BBC's Transcription Services which help to supply other countries with BBC programmes. When a similar proposal was mooted in 1979, the reaction from overseas and domestic listeners was so strong that the government was persuaded to instantly drop the idea. In fact, in the case of one threatened language service, Turkish, the number of broadcasts was actually stepped up since 1979. A Turkish newspaper was moved to comment that had the service closed down, "a window through which the Turks can see the outside world would have been closed too."

The BBC itself has been arguing that in purely monetary terms, the savings that might be effected by the proposed cuts would not amount to much. On the other hand, the loss to the BBC in terms of international goodwill would doubtless be inestimable—a fact which even the most determined government would think twice before ignoring.

THE SCOURGE OF MALNUTRITION

NANI PALKHIVALA was far from being alarmist when, in the course of his incisive analysis of the recent Union Budget, he referred to the catastrophic effect that the proposed changes to sections 35CC and 35CCA of the Income Tax Act would have on rural development in India. Translated into law, these proposals, he said, would be tantamount to "unashamed politicisation of an essential national service", because henceforth no Company or other assessee would be free to incur deductible expenditure on rural development but could only make contributions for that purpose to the proposed Prime Minister's Rural Development Fund.

To drive home his point about the incalculable harm that would be caused to the already desperate situation in our rural areas by these politically-inspired changes, Palkhivala cited a particularly poignant example which merits recalling. Referring to the recent observations of the noted nutritionist Dr. C. Gopalan, he said that out of the 23 million children to be born in India in 1983, no fewer than 20 million were expected to be physically and mentally impaired as a result of malnutrition.

Palkhivala's example could not have been more relevant, especially in the light of the heart-rending details provided by the latest report on "The State of the World's Children" published by UNICEF earlier this year.

"Today, an invisible malnutrition touches the lives of approximately one quarter of the developing world's young children," says the report. "It quietly steals away their energy; it gently restrains their growth; it gradually lowers their resistance. And in both cause and consequence it is inextricably interlocked with the illnesses and infections which both sharpen, and are sharpened by, malnutrition itself". According to UNICEF, as many as 40,000 children die **every day** from malnutrition and related diseases, while six times as many "live on in a hunger and ill-health which will be forever etched upon their lives."

And, pray, what have the governments in the so-called developing countries done to combat this terrible scourge in a really effective manner in recent years? Precious little, alas. "To allow 40,000 children to die like this every day," comments UNICEF, "is unconscionable in a world which has mastered the means of preventing it. Yet progress towards preserving the lives of our children is now actually slowing down... Overall, present trends predict that the proportion of the world's children who live without adequate food, water, health-care, and education—a proportion which has been steadily declining for more than a generation—will now remain approximately the same at the end of the century as it is today."

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INDIAN AID TO USSR ?

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There is a major impasse in the trade between India & USSR. In spite of all rosy and optimistic speeches and pronouncements made by the Soviet side, the facts present a gloomy picture.

2. It has been learnt from authoritative sources that the Soviet side has contracted for only about 40% of their annual purchases of about Rs. 1800 crores, i.e., they have only signed contracts worth about Rs. 700 crores. The Indian side, on the other hand, have signed contracts of about 70% of their annual commitments of Rs. 1800 crores, i.e., in excess of Rs. 950 crores. The Russian side constantly talks of the Indian side's inability to purchase newsprint, sulphur and fertilizers. However, the facts are that if all these were fully purchased, even then the total would amount to hardly Rs. 130 crores. Again, the Russian side has not been able to fulfil the delivery schedule of fertilizers. In fact, they are behind schedule in deliveries of most items.

3. The Russian side also talks of Rs. 500 crores deficit in trade. Well, such deficits have existed in the past. Very often, India had run up large deficits with USSR but that did not stop India from continuing their purchases from USSR. This is a passing phase and the USSR should not have placed what is now a total embargo on purchases from India. This action

of the USSR is having a very deleterious effect on many factories and industrial units supplying in a big way to the USSR and it is bound to create unemployment as it has done in a very large way in Ludhiana and in the Kandla Free Trade Zone, which will surely have its impact on Indo-Soviet friendship as well as on the Soviet side's reputation of being a reliable and steady business partner.

4. The Indian Government should urge the USSR not to place a total embargo on purchases from India, especially of sensitive items which have a considerable employment potential in India, such as woollen hosiery, cashewnuts and carpets.

5. In fact, the Soviet Union is the only trading partner of India where there is "REVERSE-AID" situation because in fact, the rupees 500 crores trade surplus amounts to a short term loan on aid being given to a superpower like the Soviet Union by a poor country like India. It is lamentable that the USSR is not balancing the trade by supplying more items of need to India, like crude oil, petroleum products and fertilizers, which are already mentioned and emphasised in the Annual Trade Protocol between the two countries and which the Soviet Union has an obligation to supply, so as to balance the trade.

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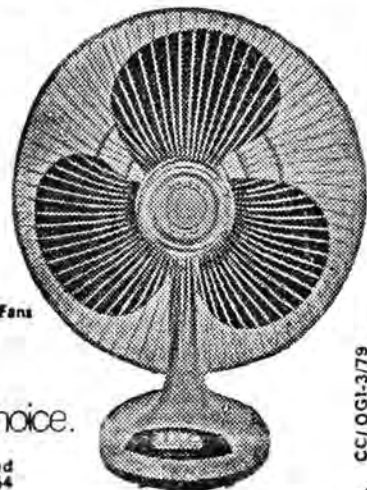
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FREEDOM FIRST

AS I SEE IT: MINOO MASANI

Following close on Arthur Koestler, I find that I have lost another literary friend in Constantine FitzGibbon, novelist, biographer and historian. I met him first in West Berlin in 1960 at a get-together organised by the Congress for Cultural Freedom. In the same year, Constantine published a novel which is perhaps his best known work, **When The Kissing Had to Stop**. In this novel, England becomes a Soviet colony under a Labour Government led by someone like Tony Benn and the Queen has to fly to Canada. Constantine who had been a Marxist earlier in life, thus signalled his awareness of the evils of the international communist conspiracy. He followed this up in 1963 by another book sarcastically entitled **Random Thoughts of a Fascist Hyena** which led Mr. Conor Cruise O'Brien to comment that "Constantine FitzGibbon is no more a Fascist than he is a hyena . . .". On the contrary, Constantine was a warm and loveable man.

In its obituary on March 25, *The Times* wrote: "He was much loved by many friends, who understood the basic humanity and hatred of injustice which lay behind his volatile, impulsive and sometimes erroneous judgements."

Constantine's other works include a biography of his friend, the Welsh poet, Dylan Thomas (1965), **The Life and Times of Eamon De Valera** (1973) and **Drink** (1980), in which he wrote about his own struggle and victory over the evil of alcoholism.

Some time in the 1970s, I had the pleasure of visiting Constantine in his home in Dorchester in the South of England but, in spite of repeated invitations from him, I was never able to visit him in Dublin where he had settled for the last years of his life.

When the U.S.A. betrayed its ally, the Republic of South Vietnam, and allowed it for lack of arms to be overrun by North Vietnamese aggressors, they were warned that this would lead to a situation which could best be described as a game of Dominoes. That this indeed was the name of the game was proved by the way in which the North Vietnamese, who have been called the "Prussians of Asia", overran Laos and Cambodia. It seems, however, that they are not content with their mastery over the whole of Indo-China and that the next Domino they aim at is Thailand. If Thailand were overrun there can be no question that Malaysia and Singapore would fall next to superior military force. It would thus appear that some more chickens of the American betrayal of South Vietnam have now come home to roost.

The Vietnamese communists are of course acting

as surrogates for the Kremlin. Not that the Vietnamese people benefit from it, because a large number of them are at present working in the Soviet Union as slave labourers, because only a small part of their wages are being paid to them while the rest is being appropriated by the Soviet Government in payment of the armaments they have been supplying to the Vietnamese communists.

From the latest press reports it would appear that the U.S. Government have seen the potential danger posed by Vietnam to Thai frontiers and are air-lifting, somewhat belatedly, essential military supplies to Thailand.

If the whole of S.E. Asia falls to the Vietnamese communists, India will be surrounded by Soviet Imperialism on the one side from Afghanistan and on the other side from S. E. Asia. It has been said that India's real defence lies along the Mekong river. Mrs. Indira Gandhi happens to be both the Prime Minister of India and Chairman of the so-called Non-Aligned Movement. The obligations of both offices demand that she should denounce the Vietnamese aggression and break off diplomatic relations with the Heng Samarin regime.

The Foreign Minister of Singapore, Mr. Dhanbalan, has said that Singapore would be very disappointed if India remains silent about the latest incursion into Thai territory. Singapore is also reported to have suggested that, as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, India should hold an urgent meeting between member countries of the movement on this development.

If Mrs. Gandhi maintains her present silence and inaction, it would mean that she is failing in her obligations both as Prime Minister of India and as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement.

When I had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Malti Singh, who represents Amnesty in our country, during my last visit to Delhi, we discussed the issue of capital punishment and I told her I could not go all the way with her in her campaign against capital punishment. Since then a controversy has developed over the case of four men in Poona sentenced to death in 1976 for the multiple murders in the Joshi-Abhyankar family. This was a particularly gruesome murder of several people with no motive but sadistic pleasure. I cannot for the life of me join the sloppy people in Poona who have requested commutation of the death penalty. I am very glad that the President has rejected their petition.

It would be helpful if those who do not like capital

punishment could specify the kind of cases where a life sentence would suffice and the kind of cases where capital punishment should continue.

Let me add, however, that I myself would much rather incur a sentence of death than linger in jail for the rest of my life! This consideration also applies to the delays that take place in the execution of a death sentence. Why were the four men sentenced to death as far back as 1976 not executed soon after their conviction and why is their agony still continuing?

As a former Mayor of Bombay, I have great respect for the institution of Mayors. It is, therefore, with some regret that I must enter a caveat against a plea of the All-India Council of Mayors made recently to the Prime Minister against the abolition of octroi which is a major source of income for civic bodies.

I am afraid I cannot share their enthusiasm in favour of octroi. It is the most pernicious impost because of its oppressive impact on urban citizens indirectly and directly on trade and transport, specially road transport. Apart from being a regressive levy, it creates immense opportunities for bribery and corruption. It results in under-utilisation of scarce capital resources embodied in trucks and goods by forced idling of trucks at octroi and numerous other checkpoints. According to the field surveys of the Keskar Committee, enforced idling of trucks is in the neighbourhood of about 35 per cent on an average. Far worse is the enhanced fuel consumption entailed by this levy estimated at 10% by the National Council of Applied Economic Research.

Scores of committees that have gone into this question have favoured the substitution of octroi by an

alternative levy. You cannot keep on increasing indirect taxation on all goods and services and yet claim that you are serving the common man. This levy has been described by various committees as having "nearly every vice and offending against all canons of taxation", "giving wide discretionary power to low paid staff which leads to corrupt practices", being "expensive to collect and hence wasteful", constituting a "restriction on through trade", "vexatious and inhibitory", "a major hindrance to the free flow of traffic and trade", and "retarding the growth of commerce and industrial activities".

The Masani Committee, appointed by the Union Government, of which I had the honour to be the President, had suggested that octroi should be discontinued and merged in the general sales tax or some other levy unconnected with motor transport. The Committee of Ministers for Augmentation of Financial Resources of urban local bodies suggested that octroi should be replaced either by a turnover tax or by a surcharge on sales tax. The Wankhede Study Group recommended a turnover tax.

Yet Maharashtra and Gujarat have been dragging their feet for the substitution of octroi, while a state like Tamil Nadu which did not have octroi has started imposing an entry tax!

The Union Government has not done enough to bring pressure to bear on the State Governments to cooperate with them in this matter and, if any plea has to be made to the Prime Minister, mine would be that the Union Government should use whatever leverage it has to get the State Governments to settle for an alternative source of revenue.

Courtesy: *The Statesman*, Calcutta.

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KARL MARX : The Tyranny that Feeds on his Name

BERNARD LEVIN

Marx surely provides one of the greatest paradoxes of history. Nearly half the people in the world live under governments that call themselves Marxist, and although the ultimate goal of humanity, in Marx's philosophy, was the freeing of the individual from the bonds of class and exploitation which had held him since the rise of capitalism, a process of liberation which was to end with the withering away of the state, every one of the regimes which profess to live by his system is a brutal tyranny, in which the individual is less free than any capitalist wage-slave and in which the state, so far from withering away is more obtrusive, more powerful and more ruthless than any government based on the class system.

How are we to explain this extraordinary looking-glass world? One way is to say—what is certainly true—that none of these "Marxist" governments have anything Marxist about them, and that if Marx could return and examine them he would be quite unable to understand how and why his name had been dragged into the matter. But of course that explanation, so far from clearing up the mystery, makes it all the more obscure. For if the Marxists have lost their Marxism, wherewith shall they be Marxed? Why should a Russian government in 1983 feel obliged to pretend that it rules by the principles laid down in (the phrase from Ian Mackay) a big, boring book on Victorian economics written by an old man with a beard in Tufnell Park? None of the rulers concerned has ever read the book: they couldn't have done, for no one could possibly finish it, not even Marx, who gave up, bored insensible by his own rubbish, after the first volume, though he lived on for more than a decade, sponging off Engels intellectually as well as financially, and leaving him to make what he could of the rest of the book.

This particular part of the Marxist legacy has many sides. The very same fate, it can be seen, has overtaken Trotsky, our own world being awash with idiots who call themselves Trotskyites without having read, let alone understood a line of their hero or of Marx: for that matter the murderous lunacy called Maoism gave rise to a similar following elsewhere, calling themselves Maoist to the genuine bewilderment of the Chinese leadership, who could discern nothing of their ruler's views in those held by many who styled themselves his loyal subjects *in partibus infidelium*.

A theory which whatever its deviser's intentions,

has given rise to nothing but a barbaric despotism must surely have had something wrong with it in the first place. What is the causal connexion between Marx's Marxism and the pseudo-Marxism of the Soviet empire, between a theory of liberation and an actuality of slavery, between a Utopian idealist who wanted all men to be brothers and a gallery of thugs who want nothing but the perpetuation of their own power?

I put it like that because of all the excuses for communist tyranny to be heard in the West one of the most repulsive, as well as the feeblest, is the claim that it cannot be laid to the door of Marx, or indeed of Lenin (who, it should be remembered, set up the Gulag). But in law, a man is held to be responsible for the likely consequences of his actions, and certainly it is not difficult to find in those of Marx and Marxism the seeds of the still proliferating evil practised in their name.

To start with, a man as personally intolerant as Marx, who was constantly denouncing and excommunicating all those in his own camp who ventured to question some detail of his argument, can hardly keep intolerance out of the bones of his philosophy. He did not have the power to send those he anathematized to their death, but he offered to those who came later a ready-made set of templates from which the justification of millions of deaths could be constructed, and it is no use saying he did not intend it: may be not, but he was it.

He was also in the same sense, the dictatorship of the proletariat, one of the greatest individual paradoxes within the main paradox itself; there is no system of government in the world, no, not the most corrupt personal fief of the worst of Black Africa's dictators, in which the proletariat have less say in their own destiny than in the lands of communism, *ne* Marxism. But it is all too easy for those who dictate to the proletariat, by combining Rousseau (the father of modern totalitarianism) with Marx, to persuade themselves that all they are doing is to carry out the proletariat's dictatorship by a form of representative government; Rousseau allows such rulers to claim that the proletariat, if they knew their best interests, would approve, and Marx provides a set of principles for the dictatorships to rule by. And the gun and the barbed wire will take care of anyone who points out that on both counts the emperor has no clothes.

The next charge that can be laid to Marx's account is his historicism; again, the charge is not so much

that he was guilty of it, though obviously he was, as that those who came after used it to justify their own crimes, so that Marx faces judgment as an accessory before the fact. If history is seen as a consistent progress through definable stages of development towards an ultimate apotheosis in which "pre-history ends and history begins", then anyone who tries to push history out of its orbit must be an enemy of the people, for whom no fate can be too harsh; from this point it is no great step to arguing that anyone who denies that history is still in its original orbit is an enemy of the people too. Meanwhile the ultimate apotheosis is indefinitely postponed, no doubt through the machinations of more enemies of the people, who must be sought out all the more ruthlessly, and all the more ruthlessly punished, even if the effort required for such salutary action means that the apotheosis must wait even longer.

But finally, and most important, there is the principle most closely associated with Marx, though Engels, faced with the realization that it was manifest nonsense, tried to weasel out of it after Marx's death: historical materialism. And it is that nonsense, which five minutes' conversation with a single

real human being would push over, that constitutes the greatest crime committed by this harbinger of slavery and murder. Once the rulers are possessed of a theory which purports to explain everything in terms outside both the explainers and the explained to, human beings become objects in a theory, and if there is one thing we know about objects in a theory, it is that they do not feel pain, not even from rubber truncheons or bullets. QED.

Lenin, Stalin, Brezhnev, Ulbricht, Jaruzelski, Rakosi, Mao, Castro—such men as these are not aberrations from Marxism, but its most perfect flowers, its juiciest fruits. Marxism gave them the weapons, and they finished the job; the fact that they finished Marxism at the same time is the last great irony of the story, but it is no consolation to those who died or to those who rot in jail, or for that matter to those who still live, still free and wish to stay that way. The revolution envisaged in the **Communist Manifesto** is, in the communist lands, further off than ever. No doubt that distresses Marx as much as it surprises him. But he has no one to blame except himself.

Courtesy: *The Times*, London.

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OPINION—The New Look

SINCE the February 1983 issue, *Opinion* has a new editor, Jehangir Patel. Mr. Gorwala is never wrong in judging men and matters. He could not have found a more worthy successor than Jehangir who, apart from being a first rate and dedicated journalist, is one who knows how to combine idealism and economic or commercial viability. Mr. Gorwala continues to be the proprietor and would meet the deficit from his personal income as he has always done for many years, but Jehangir Patel, being a man of honour and integrity, would see to it that the weekly, with its new look, would break even and overcome any financial crises.

It would not be inappropriate on this occasion to pay our tribute to the glorious record of public service rendered by Mr. Gorwala.

We take this opportunity to wish Mr. Gorwala many more years of public service, and *Opinion*, with its new editor, a bright future.

Bombay

Arvind Deshpande

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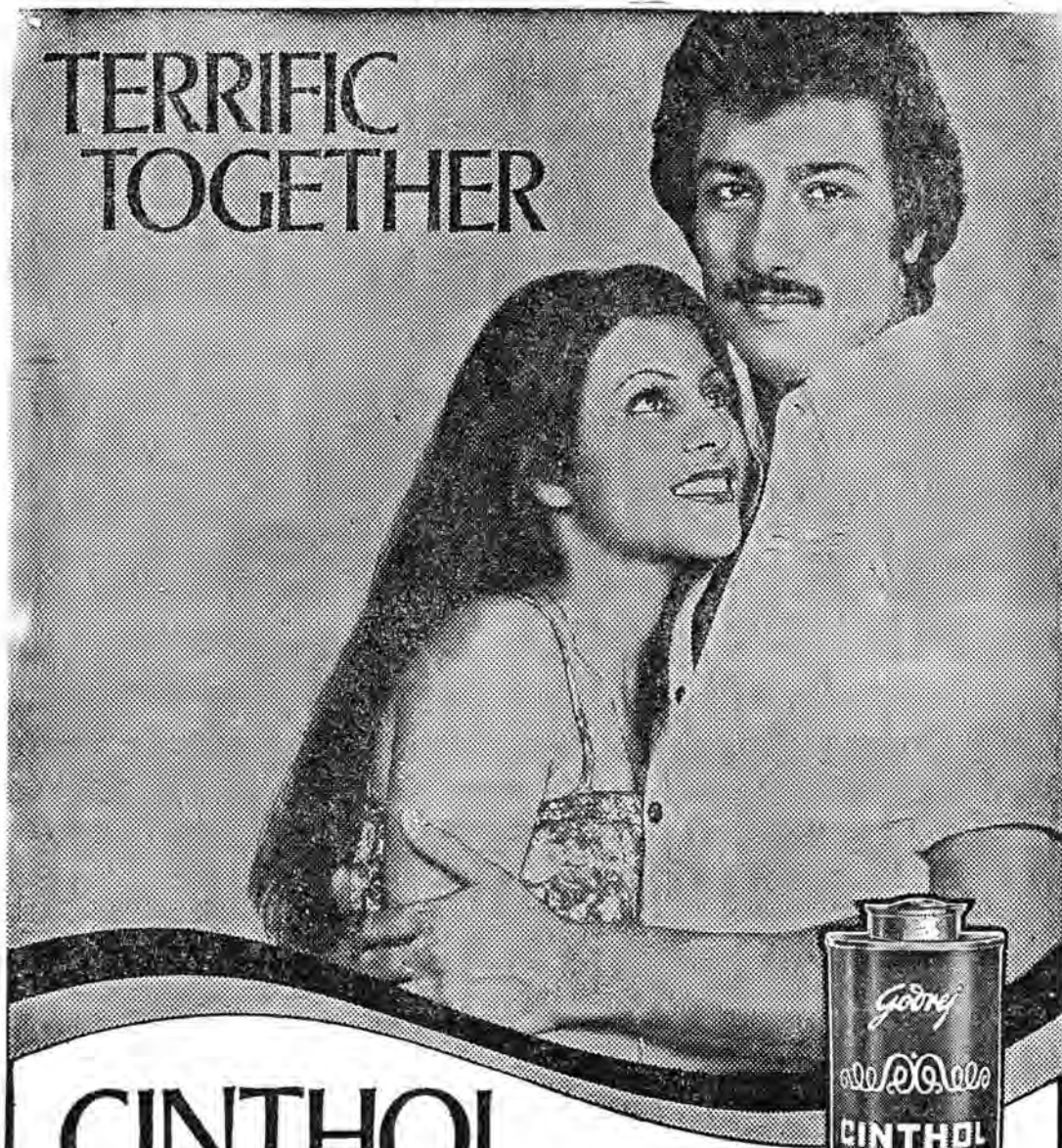
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BOOK REVIEWS

MODERN LIBERALISM (Conversations With Liberal Politicians). Edited by F. Bolkestein, Member of the Netherlands Parliament. Published under the Auspices of the Professor B. M. Telders Foundation.

THE book consists of conversations with eight prominent European liberal politicians, including On Giovanni Malagudi and Mr. Jo Grimond, and one Indian, Minoo Masani. Some of those interviewed have been active parliamentarians, some have been members of Government, and three have been Presidents of the Liberal International.

The interviewer Mr. Fritz Bolkestein is an ardent and active Liberal intellectual who is at present Minister of Trade in the Netherlands Government. The book is a collection of varied views on subjects of concern to liberals everywhere, and these naturally reflect the different political and economic conditions in various countries, but it is possible to find agreement on certain basic questions. First of these is, "What is Liberalism?" It is an attitude more than a doctrine; it is not an ideology but a way of life, according to one of the liberals interviewed in the

book. But it is more than an attitude. Modern liberal thought brings "into focus the new synthesis which is necessary between public intervention and the initiative and the autonomy of the individual", according to Malagudi, the Italian liberal.

Arising from this question comes the next: "What distinguishes liberals from others?" First, their desire for freedom which they consider to be a fundamental human right, the basis of all liberal thought. Secondly, liberals believe in the primacy of the individual and do not approve of the growing power of organisations and governments. Thirdly, liberals believe in decentralization. It is not easy to implement this principle but since liberals believe in a pluralist society the decentralization of government, of authority in general is essential. It alone can make local democratic control possible.

The second major area of discussion is economic. Liberals consider that *laissez faire* cannot be complete, but the question arises how much control and protection should be given to those who need it. Liberals believe, as Masani says, in the small entrepreneur because the self-employed man has the right mixture of independence and individual initiative. Jo Grimond says, "The only really effective economy is the free enterprise, market economy".

All the persons interviewed believe that wherever



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private enterprise is abolished, civil liberties disappear, and wherever civil liberties are respected there is prosperity on the economic front.

This leads, naturally, to the next issue and that is the attitude to the welfare state. The liberals interviewed in the book believe that the more one intervenes, the more one is obliged to intervene in detail. Bureaucracy becomes important and self-defeating. Absolute security means the loss of creativity and of the sense of responsibility.

Liberals believe that in North Western Europe, there is too much security, and the need now is to stress individual responsibility. People should be responsible for their own lives. It is only when they are reduced to poverty for reasons beyond their control that the community should help them. Equality, they feel, has been over-stressed. It cannot be a human right.

Equality of opportunity must be given up to a point. Education, for example, must be available to all and extra attention for children from a deprived environment should be given provided that standards are not lowered. There should be no quotas but preference for minorities, including women. Certainly a situation should not arise, as in Madras, where the non-brahmin is given priority over the brahmin, regardless of qualifications, which is pointed out by Masani.

The liberal attitude to Trade Unions is different from that of others. Societies are now increasingly dominated by large organisations, and while unions must be given their due importance it is necessary that they should not be permitted to dominate economic life, as they do in certain developed societies. Every effort must be made to get their agreement to whatever steps have to be taken for the good of society as a whole, but if consensus is not possible governments must govern and unrealistic demands must be resisted.

This leads to the liberal attitude to socialism. Liberals believe that the social democratic parties have become conservative. Grimond says that "Democratic socialism was a parasitic growth which depended on a liberal, political and economic society. But it gradually weakened society."

"Socialists want to distribute wealth in a way that frustrates the creation of it."

They must choose, and moderate socialists will want to create more wealth.

The attitude to the Soviet Union emerges from the various ideas and attitudes mentioned above. Believing as they do in Freedom, it is not possible for liberals to approve of the internal conditions in Russia nor of neutralist ideas.

In conclusion, the liberal creed may be summed up as follows: Freedom First, The Primacy of the Individual, The Wish to Decentralize, Support for Private Enterprise, and a preference for general rules, not specific measures. Liberals prefer to look at the world as it is, not as they would like it to be. They are more realistic than politicians of other currents. This is a strength, because seeing the world as it is helps to deal with it. But it is also a weakness as it may result in a lack of passion.

Mr. Bolkestein concludes: "Nothing in excess".

One cannot withhold admiration from the excellent quality of the get-up and printing of the book. Why must our own publishers continue to produce such shoddy stuff?

Mehra Masani

POWER ON THE LEFT. American Radical Movements since 1946 by Lawrence Lader. W. W. Norton & Company, New York, London. Pp. 410.

In common political parlance, "Left" may mean Communist, but all Left movements need not be so. The term in its broad sense connotes a spectrum of radicalism, a platform to protest against the Establishment.

The author chronicles the rich, turbulent and often violent history of radical and left movements in the United States from the end of World War II to the more passive late 1970s. In his well-documented book

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he traces the changing ideological patterns of Left movements from orthodox communism to the new Left, its social and economic fall-outs, and their historical relevance.

In the first chapter, "The Campaign against Labour and the Left, 1946", the paranoid fear of the American business and press barons in dubbing even anti-Communist labour leaders as Communist or every strike as a Communist plot cannot but in the light of the present attitude of the American Big Business and their eagerness for trade ties with the Communist World, be described as selfish instincts for self preservation. In contrast, today it is American labour under the legacy left behind by the irrepressible George Meany that is upholding the torch of liberty and opposing trade with the Communists because of the suppression of human freedoms in Communist nations.

In the 2nd and 3rd chapters, the woolly-headed attitude of the Americans towards the Left is striking. While Congressmen like Vito Marcantonio were labelled Communist merely because of their espousal of ethnic minorities, a confirmed Communist like Henry Wallace was in Truman's Administration. It virtually required an uproar to sack this future American Third-Party Presidential candidate of the Communists.

The author, whose sympathies for radicalism and Communism are obvious from his writings, is at pains to prove Henry Wallace's democratic credentials when

he writes: "He (Wallace) spoke up constantly for free enterprise, once in a speech as Secretary of Commerce using the words six times in two paragraphs." The author ought to have realised that the word "democracy" is also used by the Communists in a sickeningly ritualistic manner without a modicum of faith in it.

The author has devoted chapters 5, 6 and 7 to the purge of Communists from American politics. It can be surmised from these that it amounted to writings "judicial persecution" because of innumerable Court indictments against the Communists. If history has any lesson, the author should have kept in mind that the Communists in free nations only use freedom to destroy democracy. In spite of that, they don't suffer the fate of dissidents in Communist nations who are either exiled or physically liquidated.

Lawrence Lader's bias is only to be expected, as he himself "had the small advantage—some may consider it a disadvantage—of participating in one phase of the American Left" (i.e. from 1946 to 1950). Lader, however, has failed to explain how the new Left differs from the Old or its definite philosophy. He only begins with the revolt on the Berkeley campus without elucidating its causes or its impact.

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A LETTER

THE TEXTILE STRIKE

Dear Sir,

Every beginning has an end, and so there is no doubt that the textile strike too will end one day. It will go the way of all other strikes without a single benefit to the striking workers.

Strikes and Morchas have become a nuisance in recent years in Bombay. It is high time we put an end to this nuisance. When millions of our people are jobless, it is a great pity that those who already have jobs should go on strike.

While we concede the right of workers to strike, this ultimate and precious weapon should be used by them only as the last resort (as the Polish workers have done, although unsuccessfully so far), when all avenues for redressal of their grievances are exhausted. Have our workers demonstrated their solidarity in support of the striking Polish workers?

After carefully studying the history of all strikes in the last thirty years, we have now discovered that 99% of the strikes have ended in total failure, and strikes had to be withdrawn ultimately under most humiliating conditions. Ultimately, any "face-saving" formula is good enough for the leaders to withdraw the strike they had instigated!

The reasons for the withdrawal of strikes are usually the following:

1. In the interest of our country and due to the inconvenience caused to the public, the strike is withdrawn (as if they did not know this before they had gone on strike and this wisdom dawned on them only after the total failure of their strike!)

2. In view of the appeal issued by the Prime Minister (for that matter, an appeal from any blessed leader will do), the strike is withdrawn. (Why did they not consult the Leaders before going on strike?).

3. No victimization. (The question of victimization would not have arisen at all had the workers not gone on strike!).

We suggest the following reasonable formula to end the textile strike:

1. No victimization.
2. All "badli" workers will be made permanent.
3. An advance of Rs. 2000 to all to be recovered in easy instalments of Rs. 50 per month.
4. An increase of Rs. 100 in salary to all.
5. All other disputes referred to a committee of retired judges for arbitration.

C. Cardoz

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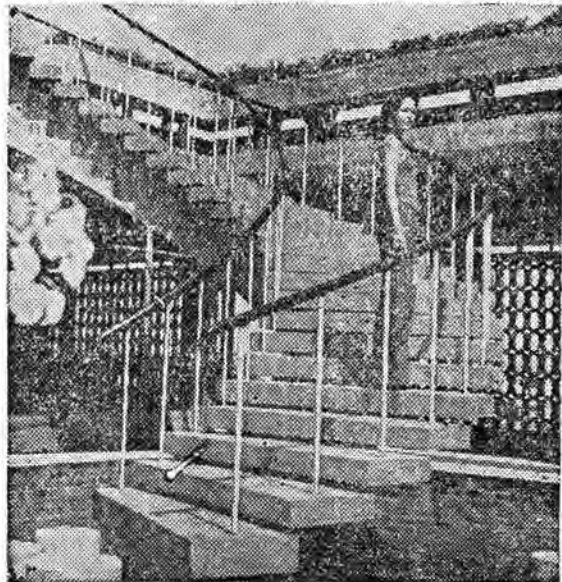
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WITH MANY VOICES

I am one of the 380,200,003 people who have never seriously read Das Kapital.

—James Cameron in *The Guardian*, March 15.

For all the high-sounding words about solidarity and the Third World's superior concern for global peace and welfare, there is a narrow-eyed national self-interest here at least as dominant as among powerful states, and sometimes more so.

—Flora Lewis in *The Herald Tribune*, March 15.

All I'm trying to do is not join my ancestral spirits just yet.

—Joshua Nkomo quoted in *The Observer*, March 20.

The Nonaligned Movement is like the United Nations, only more so.

—*The Washington Post*, March 16. A

On Indian breakfast television there was a man standing on his right leg, while his left ankle was on the back of his neck. With this contortion he somehow symbolised the multi-nation corroboree known as the non-aligned summit meeting, with its semantic jinking, arm-wrestling over commas and the pursuit of reason's noble thread through what is, in part, an eisteddfod of cant.

—Trevor Fishlock in *The Times*, March 12.

My greatest asset is that people would buy a second-hand car from me.

—Helmut Kohn quoted in *The Sunday Observer*, March 20.

We are witnesses to our own hijacking and may wake up one day to find that we have docked in a Soviet port.

—Deputy Prime Minister Rajaratnam of Singapore in *The Times of India*, March 13.
pore quoted in *The Times*, March 10.

It is not a question of being busy for 36 hours. The question is how much work you do in one hour.

—Mrs. Gandhi quoted in *The Times of India*, March 13.

India has a genius for arranging monster *tamashas* overnight God took six days to create the world: India would have done it in five.

Trevor Fishlock in *The Times*, March 12.