

Homage to Hungary

by M. A. Venkata Rao

IF Poland went one step forward on the hard path of liberation from the Soviet strangle-hold, Hungary has gone two. The Polish movement forced the Polish Communist Party and Government to reconstitute themselves and take up a firm position against the Russians. The failure of Khrushchev and his top colleagues to induce the Polish leaders to accept the Kremlin leadership in all things (in spite of the alleged "thaw and liberalisation" after the dissolution of the Stalin Myth) and their return from their surprise visit to Warsaw in high dudgeon, the dropping of Marshal Rokossovsky from the Politburo and the withdrawal of troop manouvres from around Warsaw during the fateful meeting of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party and the promise of better economic conditions to the workers to be implemented immediately are encouraging gains for Poland and constitute the first fruits of the Poznan revolt and sufferings. The net result is a certain elbow room for the Polish party to satisfy the Polish workers with some degree of betterment. But from the larger point of view of real democracy for the people, the results are meagre. What has happened as a result of the sacrifices of the demonstrators is a great blow to Russian prestige and a warning to the local party that they could not indefinitely continue to ignore the interests of the workers and people of Poland in favour of Soviet Russia. Nationalism has made itself felt but not decisively enough to overthrow the hold of the communists and the treacherous leaders who put Russia above Poland in all things in the name of the welfare of the working class of the whole world.

The blow to the prestige of Khrushchev and the Russian leaders delivered at Warsaw became the occasion for Hungarians to start their own all-out struggle for freedom. They were not satisfied from the beginning with local autonomy. Their protest was not primarily against Centralism as contrasted with Communism. They went all out against both Russian domination and rule by their own Communist

Party. They wanted full democratic freedom to choose their own government in free elections and full national freedom free from the strangle-hold of Soviet Russia. The widespread demonstrations began with university students. They raised slogans not only for freedom from Moscow and the withdrawal of Russian troops from their national soil but for democracy at home, for a radical departure from the totalitarian system of the communists—their one-party rule, their system of secret police, their fetters on free thought, their control of culture in all

An Appeal

Ference Nagy, former Prime Minister of Hungary has sent the following cable to the Prime Minister, Mr. Nehru:

"For some days past Russian troops have been fighting against the Hungarian revolutionary forces and against unarmed civilians. They have massacred thousands of Hungarians who, supported by the army and police forces of their own country, are demanding freedom for Hungary.

"I appeal to you as to one who has always sought peaceful solutions to help to secure an immediate armistice between the belligerent parties so as to put an end to the bloodshed."

its spheres. It is significant that students asked for freedom to import Western literature and for free travel to the West. The whole system that had cribbed, cabined and confined them in every walk of life and taken the joy out of life, a regime of overwork and underpayment with the fat of the land being continually siphoned off to the Soviet Fatherland with no ray of hope for a better day had become insupportable to the bulk of the Hungarians. They broke out in passionate rebellion with a fury that swept away the local communists. They recalled Imre Nagy to power who promised immediate betterment. But before he could do anything, Soviet armed forces went into action and began to mow down demonstrators in the city square of Budapest before Parliament House. But the people regathered after each

holocaust and surrounded the tanks reckless of life until the tanks were withdrawn. At the time of writing, after a week of fighting and resistance over the greater part of the country, the Party has been forced to announce a new presidium that has pledged itself to get the Soviet Troops withdrawn from the country and to restore freedom for the people. But even as yet, the Party continues to talk of its own leadership of the national life.

It is impossible to believe that the people of Hungary will now be satisfied with the promises of "communist freedom" under the hegemony of Soviet Russia. Both in Poland and in Hungary there is a dual movement in action—nationalistic and democratic. National independence in the sense of freedom from the control of Soviet Russia over their internal affairs has been promised to the people of Poland together with a redressal of their economic wrongs. It remains to be seen whether the Russians will allow the Party sufficient freedom in economic matters to fulfil this pledge. If things do not improve, the inmost urge for freedom in the full democratic sense, freedom from their own Communist Party as well, will occasion further unrest and struggle in Poland.

But in Hungary both national and democratic movements have started in a single stream of resistance. There does not seem to be any single overall command directing the resisters all over the country. The movement is so spontaneous and widespread that the whole people are in action. The police and military on the Austrian border have had to be withdrawn which has occasioned fraternisation between Austrian police and people on the one hand and Hungarians on the other. Farmers in wide areas in the West have taken an active part in the resistance. In some places they attacked and punished the loathed secret police. The real enemy is the system with its dread and dismal ingredients of State capitalism in industry and collective farms in agriculture, with their inevitable corollary of a proliferating bureaucracy and enormous overgrowths of secret police and militia who together eat up what remains of the fat of the land after accommodating the needs of the Soviet Fatherland.

Thus the Hungarian protest is against both foreign control and the communist system of government.

The outburst is inspired by the urge for a genuine democracy of the people as against the present *ersatz*

STOP THE MASSACRE

Mr. Salvador De Madariaga, Mr. Denis De Rougemont, Mr. Nicolas Nabokov and Mr. Stephen Spender have on behalf of the Congress for Cultural Freedom sent the following cable to Mr. Nehru:

"Appeal to you to engage your moral authority as the companion and disciple of Gandhi to stop the massacre of the Hungarian people. Your role as a mediator could contribute to a cease fire and withdrawal of foreign troops."

democracy or *people's democracy* falsely so-called in communist propaganda. That is why the hastily reconstituted panel of the Government in Budapest during the heat of the fighting announced the inclusion of two representatives of the once leading Small-holder's Party. But this is a futile gesture (as the awakened people know now), for the non-communist members of a communist government are not entrusted with key portfolios. Their presence does not abridge the real powers of the communist rulers.

Some Asian leaders said at Bandung (and after) that these East European States were fully sovereign States enjoying a position of equality with Soviet Russia! This myth of sovereignty supposed to be enjoyed by the East European States in the orbit of Soviet Russia has now been blown out in the grim fights in the streets of Budapest between Soviet Armed Forces and the people of Hungary. It is even rumoured that the Soviet forces went into action on their own without invitation from the Hungarian Government newly constituted under Imre Nagy. It is said that he had to confirm the action of the foreign forces to save the face of his Government.

The relations between East European States and Russia are governed by the Treaties of Peace concluded at the end of the war by which Russia has bound herself to respect the democratic wishes of these countries liberated from the Nazi yoke jointly with the Allies. It is but right that the leaders of the free world should challenge through the UNO the intervention of Soviet troops in Hungary.

The cause of Hungary is the cause of freedom throughout the world and is not less sacred than the cause of Algeria or other Asian or African peoples under the colonial yoke. It is the part of free men everywhere to express their sympathy and support for the Hungarian fighters for freedom and for the Governments of the world to assist them by all means short of war.

[As we go to press, it is learnt that the freedom fighters have succeeded in obtaining the dissolution of the secret police and the withdrawal of Soviet forces. Premier Nagy has also promised free elections.

—Editor]

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Notes

Sino-Nepal Treaty

THE full text of the Sino-Nepal Treaty signed at Peking in September after parleys between Nepal's Premier Mr. Tanka Prasad Acharya (who was on a private visit to Peking!) and Mr. Chou En-lai has not yet been published. The agreement corrects the position of superiority and privilege that Nepal enjoyed in Tibet as a result of a military victory over the forces of invading Tibet in the 18th century. Nepalese traders in Lhasa had the protection of a Nepalese military unit. Tibet gave an annual subsidy to Nepal. Nepal had the right to send military escorts to trading groups travelling to Lhasa. Of course these terms have become out of date and a new agreement normalising the relations between China and Nepal on a basis of reciprocity seems necessary and natural. Accordingly Nepal's relations with Tibet (and China) are redefined in the new treaty. Travellers to Tibet including diplomatic representatives will now have to possess passports and visas as between neighbouring nations of the modern world.

One curious feature of the agreement seems to be that Nepal will have the right to station trading units in three places in Tibet in exchange for which it is *China* and not *Tibet* that will have corresponding trading units in Nepal. China thus will have permanent outposts for trade and diplomacy in Khatmandu and other places in Nepal. And China adds her own to the British, Indian and American embassies in Nepal. Russia, it may be presumed, will not lag far behind before following suit with her own claims.

The agreement is said to mention the *panchshila* principles as governing the relations between the two countries. Thus India cannot object to the entry of Chinese influences into Nepal as she is the doughty champion of *panchshila* as the paramount basis of international relations.

The fact remains however, that Nepal lies within the perimeter of Indian defence on the North. India has a strategic interest in this area which cannot be abrogated by *panchshila* abstractions. One item of the agreement is the offer of aid by China to Nepal to the extent of Rs. 6 crores for economic development "without strings" of any kind (as it is announced). Such aid cannot be formally objected to but under the present administrative conditions in Nepal, large amounts of Chinese funds are likely to flow into the hands of politicians and others who may develop a vested interest in Chinese largesse. Indian aid is earmarked for specific projects in the execution of which India offers the assistance of technical personnel. It is said that many Nepalese do not like this rigidity in Indian aid conditions for their own reasons.

Dr. K. I. Singh, who was on a visit to New Delhi last month, has expressed uneasiness about the possible mischief of this Chinese aid proposal and in

general about this *open door* policy extended by Nepal to China.

The absolute need that India has of assuring herself of the defence of her paramount interest brings Nepal within the ambit of Indian influence. *Panchshila* only freezes the *status quo* and ignores the dynamic factors that are continually growing beneath the surface. India should enter into negotiations with China and get her to acknowledge and respect India's overriding interest in this vital area.

The intrusion of Chinese forces into the border of Burma ignoring the *Panchshila* treaty between them (so recently signed) on the plea of old maps and undemarcated borders recalls to Indian observers the existence of similar old maps showing Bhutan and considerable portions of Indian territory inside the MacMahon line in Assam within China.

The grim fact is that China is expansionist from the beginning of her imperial days centuries ago and the new military might being forged by her present rulers has only strengthened this old trait of hers. *Panchshila* seems too frail a barrier against the urge of New China. This is all the more reason therefore for special efforts to get India's rights recognised betimes.

Prime Minister's Second Thoughts

THE Prime Minister has made statements in recent weeks on the subversive activities of the Communist Party of India as well as on Stalinism which betoken a certain measure of recognition of their sinister nature. In view of a fuller indication of the Prime Minister's real mind on this grave issue and in view of the forthcoming general elections, these statements call for careful consideration.

In his speech in New Delhi on 23rd September, Pandit Nehru expressed uneasiness at the "possibility of money from foreign sources flowing into India in various ways, particularly during the coming elections. Foreign money can come to newspapers not in one way but in various ways, through advertisements and printing jobs for which high rates were paid. Again, certain agencies received books and publications either free of charge or at a nominal cost and they sold them at a profit." He was not "saying that newspapers received books and publications but certain parties received them." He "warned the public to be on their guard on this possibility." The Prime Minister no doubt has inside information of the Burmese experience during their recent elections when U Nu and U Ba Swe complained of foreign money strengthening the hands of the local communist party and even corrupting the workers of the government party viz. AFPFL.

In his speech on 7 October to Congress workers at Alipore, the Prime Minister castigated the Communist Party of India for their blind imitation of the destructive programme of the Russian Revolution of October 1917. He pointed out the futility of this idea specially in view of the revision of Stalinism going on in Soviet Russia today where leaders in power are admitting the mistakes of the Stalin era. Pandit Nehru for the first time openly expressed the view that the

"mistakes of Stalinism resulting in the death of lakhs of people were being fastened on Stalin alone." He "felt convinced that the mistakes flowed inevitably from the system based on violence and hatred. They were not the doings of one man." Referring to the better way of non-violence charted out by Gandhiji, Pandit Nehru declared that "nothing could be more dangerous for India than to attempt to follow the Russian methods." This contrasts refreshingly with the statement that he made immediately after Stalin's death to the effect that "he was a man of peace."

In his address to a mass meeting in Ahmedabad, he referred to the agitational tactics of the Communist Party of India "based on the belief that without bloodshed and strife they could not capture power. He deplored the "eagerness with which they rushed to places where there was some discontent and fanned the feelings of the people." While he did not mind their talking about socialism or communism, he "definitely did not approve of the tactics and technique of the Indian Communists." He pointed out that while they were silent about the drastic use of the military in suppressing popular demonstrations in communist countries such as Poland (as at Poznan), they complained loudly about police action in India. This showed their double standard of judgement.

Freedom Of The Press

WE have not had any reassuring reaction from the Prime Minister (who has been undoubtedly a champion and architect of democracy in India before the advent of national independence) in regard to the reactionary Bill imposing fresh shackles on the Press passed recently by the Punjab Legislature. He might have advised the Punjab Government against the measure and persuaded them to make it at least short-lived with a definite time limit set on it.

But on the contrary it is a matter of dismay to find him thinking on the same lines himself! He said in a meeting recently that the extent and nature of class hatred stirred up by certain communal papers in the U.P. during the agitation against Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's publication *Religious Leaders of the World* had prompted him to advise the Home Minister to draft a new measure to be put on the statute book curbing the freedom of the press and directed against the tendency to inflame communal passions.

The freedom of the press is fundamental to liberty. If all other liberties are suppressed leaving only the freedom of the press untouched, it is possible to recover them all through public canvassing and organisation of opinion, but if the freedom of the press which is a part of the freedom of expression is suppressed, other liberties will not long survive.

Encouraging Culture

THE announcement that the Government of Bombay has decided not to levy entertainment duty on amateur dramatic performances is to be wel-

comed as a step in the right direction in the policy of encouraging free culture. The professional theatre is too much under the domination of the box office and its personnel too commercial-minded to encourage experiments in novel ideas and techniques. Further, the stress today in the field of entertainment is too much on passive reception and enjoyment of scenes provided by professional managers and actors. There should be ample opportunities for persons of taste in the arts to give concrete expression to their creative talents from time to time as a free hobby considered as an end in itself. The predominance of passive absorption in present day cultural activities in the arts in most countries needs to be offset by spontaneous activities of amateurs without the depressing shadow of the need to achieve box office results. The action of the Bombay Government will go some way in encouraging free self-expression on the part of amateur groups with a taste for the theatre. The encouragement by government and municipalities to the construction of theatres in all cities and towns should also be part of public policy in this field. It is gratifying to note that the Bombay Government has just constructed an open air theatre in Bombay.

Strange Censorship

THE Bombay weekly *Current* has been subjected to a strange type of censorship. A trade union of railway book-stall employees thought in its wisdom that the policy of the journal was "anti-Indian and pro-American" and "derogatory to National interests" and decided that its members would not therefore exhibit it on the stalls licensed to them by the Railways. The employers in this country are not known for their cooperative attitude towards employees' unions, but in this particular case Messrs A. Wheeler & Co., (Private) Ltd. were found to be extremely solicitous in co-operating with the union.

The circumstances under which Wheeler & Co. acted are very suspicious. In the beginning, it was represented by them that the ban was placed by the Railway Board. On inquiry, it was found that the Railway Board had passed no such orders. The responsibility was then assigned to the Western Railway, but that Railway had not also taken any such step. One is left wondering therefore about the actual agency which engineered the ban.

Apart from these fishy circumstances which render the action all the more reprehensible, it will be preposterous, indeed, to allow trade unions of composers, machinemen or distributors to dictate to Editors the policies of their journals. Government censorship is bad enough, but this unofficial censorship would be even worse.

There is no doubt that the charges levied against *Current* are baseless, but whatever its views, nobody has the right to put a ban on its circulation. The attempt of the union raises an issue of principle. Nobody should allow such a vicious attack on the freedom of the press.

Asian Socialist Conference

by V. B. Karnik

THE Asian Socialist Conference which is holding its second session early this month in Bombay will bring to this premier city of India a galaxy of socialist leaders from many countries of Asia. A few prominent socialists of Europe are also attending as fraternal delegates. They all deserve a warm welcome to this city, the meeting place of East and West.

East and West are no longer two separate parts of the world as they used to be even until a few years back. The world is now as never before one world and it is no longer possible to consider the problems of one part of the world without impinging upon the problems of other parts. It is equally clear that the East is no longer the land of exploitation, a happy hunting ground for adventurous traders and military leaders from the West. That old relationship of master and servant has given place to a new relationship of equality and partnership which is slowly growing in both parts of the world. Most of the nations of the East are now free and independent and are the masters of their own destiny. It is in this new context that the socialists of Asia will have to consider the problems facing their countries.

In a united world there is scope and sometimes the necessity for the countries of a region to get together to discuss their regional problems. The same rule will apply to political parties or other organisations working in the region. The Asian Socialist Conference has a role to play and it will be an honourable and important role, provided the Conference will emphasise not its separateness from but its identity with the world movement for socialism, democracy and freedom.

The main problem that the Conference will have to tackle will be the problem of the backwardness and the underdevelopment of Asian countries. The backwardness and the underdevelopment obtain not merely in the economic and the political fields. Many a time it is too easily presumed that political servitude was the only cause of the many ills of Asian countries. It is forgotten that the servitude might itself have been the result of a deeper social malaise. Another misconception springs from a vulgar Marxist belief. It is imagined that the growth of modern large scale industries will automatically lead to the growth of a modern democratic society. There is, however, no such organic connection between the two. Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia have proved that modern technology and large scale industries can also develop under totalitarian regimes.

As a matter of fact it is contended by many, and not without apparent justification, that a totalitarian regime is a better agency for bringing about rapid industrialisation. They illustrate the proposition by pointing to the spectacular progress achieved by Soviet Russia in the sphere of certain heavy industries. This alluring prospect, this deceptive doctrine is the

real challenge to the socialists in Asia and elsewhere.

There is an insistent demand all over Asia for immediate economic progress. The demand can neither be suppressed nor ignored. The communists are in the field seeking to mislead the masses into following them towards their goal of the dictatorship of their party. It will be difficult to resist their appeal if rapid industrialisation is accepted as the only goal of social policy.

It cannot be denied that Soviet Russia has effected considerable progress in certain branches of industry. But progress in those branches of industry, mostly in armaments and heavy industries or industrialisation as such cannot be equated with the general well-being of the people. Neither Russia nor China nor any other communist country has paid any attention to the well-being of the people. The communist rulers of those countries do not mind keeping the people in abject poverty, denying them all rights and liberties and exterminating millions of human being in their mad quest after economic and political power. The well-being of the people, the dignity of the human individual, the rights and liberties of citizens are not the values they accept or cherish.

Industrialisation is a means to an end, the end being the constantly increasing welfare and the constantly expanding freedom of the people. In communist countries, the end has been forgotten and the means have been elevated to the position of an end. The problem that socialists have to tackle is be how to secure industrialisation without subjecting the people to undue stress and strain and without doing violence to their democratic rights and liberties. Nobody disputes the necessity of developing industries; few will dispute the necessity of the State playing an important role in developing them in view of the economic conditions obtaining in Asian countries; as a matter of fact, in major Asian countries socialism as such is no longer in dispute. In Burma and Israel socialists are in power. In India, though the Socialist Party is not in power, the ruling party of the country has accepted the goal of a socialist society. The same position obtains to a large extent in Indonesia. In Japan, the Socialist Party is the main opposition and it may succeed one day in winning over the majority of the electorate. By and large, therefore it is no longer necessary to argue too much about the theory of socialism.

The practice of socialism has however been found to be a much more difficult proposition. Some of the theories and formulas of socialism have in practice led to unexpected and unpleasant results. One of the basic tenets of socialism is the State ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. Experience has revealed that the strict enforcement of the tenet will convert the State into a huge Leviathan, an octopus which will have no place for the rights

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Soviet Economy And Its Problems

(Contributed)

IT is well known that the Soviet Union claims the highest merit for its economic system. With everything planned and regulated by the State, shortages, crises and injustices—economic imperfections of all kinds, in fact—are said to have been eliminated.

The claim must be examined in the light of subsequent events which have taken place in the Soviet Union—notably Malenkov's resignation as Premier in February, 1955, the dismissal of the Ministers responsible for State farms and for the coal industry in March, and the speech by Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Party, in January. In reality, the Soviet economy has not been running smoothly, has not been satisfying the needs of the people and—with the exception of heavy industry—has not come anywhere near the level of the most advanced capitalist countries.

The "unsatisfactory state of affairs which has come about in agriculture" was the chief reason given by Malenkov for resigning as Premier in February, 1955. His admission came as no revelation. The news that the Soviet Union was in the grip of an agricultural crisis became apparent when Khrushchev in September, 1953, submitted a revealing report to the Party Central Committee.

The most serious part of the picture revealed in September, was that there were three and a half million fewer cows in the U.S.S.R. than before the war,

(Continued from page 5)

and liberties of the individual. Bitter experience of this kind obtained in other parts of the world should serve as a warning to socialists in Asia. The original inspiration of socialism was not any economic theory or formula. It was the passion for liberty, equality and social justice. That passion is still burning in the hearts of men. It is that passion and not any dogma or preconceived notions about social organisation which should guide the thoughts and actions of Asian socialists.

The countries of Asia are crying aloud for a new life of economic progress, social equality and cultural renaissance. Along with other democratic elements, the socialists have the responsibility of leading their countries towards that new life. The new life will be worth living only if it ensures liberty as well as equality, freedom as well as bread, political rights as well as economic prosperity. All attempts made so far to secure bread at the cost of freedom have ended in the denial of freedom and also of bread. We are sure the Asian Socialist Conference will keep that lesson in mind and will guard against any tendency that lesson in mind and will guard against any tendency that may seek to advance socialism at the cost of democracy. In Asia, particularly, the socialists must act as real social democrats with an equal emphasis on democracy and socialism.

nearly nine million fewer than in 1928 (when collectivisation started), and four and a half million fewer than in 1916, before the Revolution. The gravity of these revelations, of course, lay in the big rise in population which occurred at the same time—almost a 50 per cent. rise between 1916 and 1953. The news about the fall in grain supplies did not come until March, 1954—six months after the September announcement. It was stated then that the area under grain had dropped in 1953 by nearly four million acres compared with 1940. To meet this agricultural crisis, a major campaign was launched in the Soviet countryside. This has so far met with little success.

The two problems of grain and meat continue to cause the most urgent anxiety. This was shown by Khrushchev's speech to the Central Committee on January 25, 1955 (reported by *Moscow Radio* on February 3). "The present level of grain production," he said, "does not meet the growing requirements of the national economy," and as for meat and other animal produce, "the level has obviously proved insufficient."

Besides revealing such deficiencies in the overall situation, Khrushchev made some serious and detailed admissions of failure. There was his statement about milk, for instance. Then there was Khrushchev's admission about pigs. Pig farming is the one sector of Soviet agriculture in which, in terms of numbers, plans are over-fulfilled. But quality, apparently, is lacking.

Not the least of Khrushchev's strictures concerned agricultural mechanisation. "It must be said plainly that in recent years there has been a lagging behind in agricultural machine building." In practice it is not so much the number of tractors in the Soviet Union which gives cause for concern as the fact that so many of them are constantly out of use through unskilled driving and lack of maintenance. Some of Khrushchev's most searching criticisms concerned State farms. He said that instead of being a model to others, these farms had been the scene of some of the most serious backslidings.

In view of these agricultural difficulties and the rise in population, it would be reasonable to suppose that there is a shortage of food in the Soviet Union. Some such shortage does, in fact, exist, although it would be untrue to say that the U.S.S.R. is badly short of food in general. The average diet of a Soviet citizen in 1954 provided 2,900 calories a day. But the shortage of particular foodstuffs, especially meat, makes the Soviet diet unbalanced. It is overburdened with starchy foods, from which four-fifths of the calory value is obtained, and deficient in fats, which provide only one-sixth. This unbalance has not improved in recent years. In many important ways, in

fact, the Soviet average diet to-day is no better than it was in the middle 1930.

The *Pravda* report on the result achieved under the 1954 State development plan claimed overfulfilment in almost every industry. The force of this claim, however, was weakened by admissions of fundamental errors.

There was the admission, for example, that a number of industries were "over-fulfilling their targets for goods of which there is no shortage and at the same time not fulfilling their plans for the output of highly important types of products."

The *Pravda* report listed some of the most important products for which the plans were not fulfilled. They included cast iron, certain nonferrous metals and some types of rolled steel; chemical equipment; metal rolling equipment and "electro-technical" equipment, heavy lathes and turbines; electric locomotives, goods wagons and railway sleepers; combines, ploughs, threshers and fertilisers; spinning and weaving machines; bricks.

Other fundamental difficulties spoken of in the *Pravda* report concerned investment, mechanisation, labour productivity, costs and sporadic work. As regards investment, the targets had not been reached for some of the most essential products; i.e. rolled goods, certain nonferrous metals, electrical equipment, vehicles, chemicals, fertilisers, heavy machinery, machine tools, and some kinds of agricultural machinery.

Concerning costs, the 1954 plan report stated bluntly that "the target for lowering the unit cost of industrial product in 1954, was not fulfilled." Poor labour productivity, as the 1954 plan report showed, was one cause of this failure over costs. Bulganin declared, in a speech to the Supreme Soviet on February 9, 1955, after taking office as Premier: "Higher labour productivity is a major factor in securing increased output by the national economy, lower costs of production and greater accumulations. Yet it must be admitted with complete frankness that we have serious shortcomings in this important matter. The increase in labour productivity is lagging behind the tasks set by the Five-Year Plan."

Trouble over the supply of the chief consumer product, food, has already been referred to. The lack of consumer goods in general, however, gives the Soviet people greater cause for concern than the supply of food. Malenkov, it will be recalled, launched a big drive for consumer goods after becoming Premier. According to the *Pravda* report on the 1954 plan (published on January 21, 1955) "the growing demand of the population for a number of important consumer goods is still not being satisfied." Mikoyan, former Minister of Trade, in a speech reported by *Pravda* on March 12, 1954, went so far as to say: "some people even have the impression that there are fewer goods about nowadays than there were a few years ago." In an outburst of unusual candour, Mikoyan also said: "We know that certain of the capitalist countries are producing greater quantity of certain products per head of the population than we are, and frequently better in quality."

The goods which the Soviet shopper often finds hardest to get are those in everyday demand. *Pravda* also spoke of "the absence of the simplest consumer goods—threads, needles, wicks, kerosene lamps and lamp glasses, tumblers, spoons, etc." Cigarettes, toothpaste, safety razors and blades were among other generally scarce items.

The current Five-Year Plan set a target of 105 million square metres of additional urban living-space by the end of 1955. If the target is to be reached, greater progress will have to be made than was reported, for example by *Pravda* on May 25, 1954, when it complained that in the first quarter of the year the Ministries concerned had "provided extremely little dwelling space, an infinitesimal part of the annual plan."

Assuming, however, that the current Five-Year Plan housing target were fulfilled, and taking into account the 296.5 million square metres of urban housing existing in 1950 at the end of the previous plan and the rise in population, the Soviet urban dweller's living space at the end of 1955 would still amount to five square metres per head (roughly eight feet by five). This is not only well below the minimum "sanitary norm" of nine square metres of living space guaranteed to each Soviet citizen by law, but it is less than people had in the early days of the régime—in 1923, for example, there were 6.4 square metres per head and less than in pre-revolutionary Russia, when there were approximately seven square metres per head. In the meantime, existing houses are falling into decay.

In the countryside the greatest housing difficulties have occurred in the virgin land regions. In these areas, where the average winter temperature is 10° C., many farmers must have suffered severe privations during the 1954-55 winter. On September 19, 1954, *Pravda*, described the housing situation in the virgin lands as "alarming." A year later (September 12, 1955) the same paper was declaring: "...It is impossible to close one's eyes to the serious shortcomings which still exist.....On a number of farms living quarters and—cultural welfare premises are being built at an excessively slow pace."

The causes of the situation which has just been outlined fall into two categories. Those in the first are of a sort fundamental to the Soviet economic system, and it is therefore difficult to see how their consequences could have been avoided. The factors in the second category are not inherent in the system, but are the product of lack of foresight or of a bigoted attitude to economic realities—in fact, of bad planning.

A fundamental misconception is having the most profound long-term on the life of the Soviet people is the continual over-emphasis placed on heavy industry. When Malenkov announced the consumer-goods drive in August, 1952, the heavy bias of 70:30 in the allocation of raw materials to heavy industry compared with light industry (the ratio he gave in October, 1952) was retained unaltered. In the circumstances, it was scarcely surprising that the consumer-goods programme broke down.

Bulganin, in his February 1955, speech to the Sup-

reme Soviet, affirmed that "the policy of the preferential development of heavy industry" was the one the Soviet Government would continue to apply. Dogma has thus triumphed over reason. The Soviet economy is to continue unbalanced, and the Soviet consumer is to continue to go short. But what the Party cannot get by way of incentives it secures by compulsion—through the Government-controlled trade unions and through corrective labour.

It is now necessary to turn to the other, more serious group of causes of Soviet economic difficulties—those inherent in the nature of the Soviet economic system. Notable among these is over-centralisation. The fact that the Soviet leaders have recently been trying to effect some degree of decentralisation of the economy, despite the obvious political dangers involved, shows how serious the consequences of rigid central direction must have become, and in an attempt to overcome these shortcomings Republican Ministries and other local authorities have been given a measure of autonomy in saying how plan directives should be applied to their own areas.

Initiating the decentralisation measures, the Government made some remarkable admissions of the extent to which the Soviet economic machine is hampered by bureaucracy. *Pravda*, for instance, stated bluntly on November 5, 1954, that the main efforts of administrative personnel "are concentrated not on the concrete and live task of mobilising the working masses for the fulfilment of the decisions of the Party and Government, but on the drafting of various and numerous directives, solutions, reports, letters and accounts." Reports appearing in the Soviet press suggest that the bureaucratic mentality is another of the fundamental, and therefore ineradicable, weaknesses of the Soviet economic system.

On the human front, the sum result of Soviet bureaucratic regulation is to stifle initiative. In industry, for instance, imaginative and aggressive output planning is clearly impossible because, with raw materials centrally allocated, factory managers cannot decide for themselves what they need and often do not know what they may get. On the land, farmers feel they must play safe.

Khrushchev also revealed that, besides killing initiative, the procurement and supply system encouraged wangling and dishonesty. Instead of striving for increased production, people were interested only in "getting more products from the central fund," and doing so by whatever means they could—honest or otherwise. "Wangling and dodging"—in fact, minor, dishonesty of all kinds—are among the most deeply-rooted phenomena of Soviet life, and are by no means the least important of the causes of the U.S.S.R.'s economic difficulties. Much of this dishonesty stems from the individual's desire to get more than a hard-fisted State allows him in the way of money and goods. Driven by shortages, the Soviet citizen resorts to stealing State property. The thefts take many forms.

It is the human element which is the final stumbling block in the U.S.S.R.'s economic system. Even a perfectly planned and regulated system—which, as

we have seen, the Soviet system is not—would still need human beings to make it work. Just how to get people to make it work is the problem the Soviet leaders have yet to solve. Clearly there are two alternatives—incentives or compulsion. The choice finds the Soviet leaders in a perpetual quandary. Nowhere is this dilemma more acutely evinced than in agriculture. Here, the Communists have repeatedly used bribery and coercion since the beginning of the Communist Revolution. Neither expedient has brought success; each has sometimes had results little short of disaster.

More than thirty years of communism in the countryside still find the Party on the horns of a dilemma. When it applies coercion, the country comes near to crisis. But when it offers incentives, the peasantry get too independent, and the political uniformity of the State is threatened.

I. C. C. F. NEWS

The Indian Committee accorded a reception to Mr. Allen Tate, the celebrated American poet and critic on October 20. Mr. Masani introduced the distinguished guest. In his reply Mr. Tate referred to the work that the Congress was doing and pointed out how it was bringing together freedom-loving elements from all over the world, irrespective of their colour, race or nationality.

* * *
Mr. M. R. Masani, Mr. Purshottam Triumdas and Mr. S. H. Vatsyayan gave evidence before the Select Committee of Parliament on the Copyright Bill on October 19. The evidence was given on behalf of P.E.N. All-India Centre, the Indian Institute for Educational & Cultural Cooperation and the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom and was in support of the joint representation on the Bill submitted by the three organisations.

ENCOUNTER

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Situation In South Africa

by Adam Adil

As a result of the application of the notorious Group Areas Act, which was adopted by the Strydom Government in 1950, Johannesburg in South Africa has become a scene of a large-scale population reshuffle. More than 1,00,000 non-whites including 22,000 Indians have been ordered to leave their hearths and homes and migrate to distant and most inconvenient areas reserved for them. Their place in their original areas will be taken up by the whites. The object of the Group Areas Act is the achievement of the segregation of races, an ideal held out by the Africaner Nationalists.

The very first victims of this Ghetto Act are twenty-two thousand Indians who are being forced out of Johannesburg. Soon they will be pushed out of Durban and other principalities. Next will be the turn of the Africans and Cape Coloureds to be displaced from areas where they have lived for generations. In fact, by the application of the Group Areas Act, the South African Government hope to achieve "by far the greatest part of the master Apartheid Plan."

Undoubtedly, Indians will suffer most from this forced reshuffle of the coloured people. For, having established their business and trade over the present areas for a generation or so, the change will ruin them economically. These Indian traders have indeed been pioneers of these flourishing townships from which they are now ruthlessly driven out. Once these Indians were the only people to establish trading posts in those unsettled areas where in course of time booming townships arose. They are now ejected from the very townships which they had built with their toil and sweat. Worse still is the manner of ejection—it is ruthless, high-handed, inhuman, it is even dishonest. The Indians are being forced to areas where they find no possibility of establishing their business anew. These areas are also unfit for human habitation. Lenasia, outside Johannesburg, where Indians are being forced to is about twenty miles away from the commercial life of the city. There are about £500,000 worth of properties owned by Indians at Mafeking. They are now being driven out of Mafeking to a place "which is at present used as a sewage-disposal farm." Under the Group Areas Development Act of 1955, a Development Board has been appointed and empowered to expropriate property in all the proclaimed areas. The Board appoints valuers to determine the "basic value" of the property to be expropriated. It is only after the expropriation, the Board invites the owner of the property to state the price. If the price agreed between the Board and owner of the property exceeds the "basic value" determined by the valuers, the owner of the property is required to pay 50% of the excess to the Board; if on the other hand the price is less

than the "basic value" the Board undertakes to make good 80% of the loss. Thus the "compensation" the owner of the property gets is only a small fraction of the real value of the ground or the property the owner is forced to abandon. The so-called compensation is utterly inadequate for setting up business afresh in the new areas. In Johannesburg alone, the Indians will incur a loss of over £22 millions. In Durban where the Indians own large properties, their loss will be still greater.

The forceful ejection of the Indians has stirred the conscience of a section of the white population too. Mr. Cutton, a Johannesburg city counsellor, said "the recent proclamations must have brought shivers of horror and distaste to all tolerant people, not only in South Africa, but to enlightened public opinion all over the world. . . . It is one of the most callous acts even in the history of this government." Mr. Miller, leader of the United Party in the Johannesburg City Council said that the implementation of the Group Areas Act "threatens to plunge the country into what will become the most serious racial cleavage this country has known."

Added to the financial loss is the insult with which the ejections are being carried out. When the government had first announced their decision to implement the Group Areas Act, they had promised that ejections would be carried out with the greatest care and without any harshness and injustice. It is now evident that the Government's promise is nothing but an eyewash. The Indians in Pageview who number about 2000 were most harshly treated and insulted while being pushed out—this happened in spite of the fact that all these Indians held freehold titles to their lands since 1937.

The Government have not cared to look into the legal aspects of the ejections. In a hearing of legal cases filed by some Indians in Mafeking, the only argument the government put forth in favour of ejection was that it had the backing of "the majority of the residents of the area." When Dr. George Lowen, who defended the Indians challenged the Government's contention and demanded witnesses to be produced, the legal Board which is charged with the responsibility of having such cases, ruled that no witnesses were necessary. Dr. Lowen denounced this ruling as "travesty of justice" and declared "the procedure of not calling witnesses is contrary to all rules of law on the onus of proof."

It is obvious therefore as the political correspondent of the *Rhodesia Herald* points out: "In practice, the Indian trader's custom will go to the European trader and the Indian trader will have to become a labourer if he cannot get a job as a waiter. The apologists for the Nationalist policy also do not draw attention to the fact that European traders who are drawn from

(Continued on page 11)

Review

Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East

Walter Z. Laqueur, Routledge and Kegan Paul, Sh32/- pp363.

THE book is divided into eight parts. The first part entitled "A Survey of the Middle East of the Twentieth Century" is really an interpretative chapter of the events which have led to the present complicated situation in the Middle East. The chapters which follow survey the history of communism and nationalism in the different countries of Middle East.

The feudal pattern of life of the Arab was considerably influenced by two events: 1) The modernisation of Turkey which emerged as a reformed Islamic State, challenged the 'theocratic' concept and dealt a serious blow to the Pan Islamic Movement. The Arab began to realise that "Islam" was not a strong binding chord. 2) The creation of Palestine which gave the Arab communists an opportunity to strengthen their own position in the Arab country and become heroes of Arab nationalism.

Communism and in the same breath perhaps nationalism are unacceptable to Islam. Communists therefore started by claiming a similarity with Islam. The Islamic trusteeship approach to the State and the socialistic outlook in its preventive measures against capital formation were stretched to meet the communist concept of a "withering" State and socialist capital. The author records an interesting exchange between a communist leader and a Moslem imam. When the communist had finished haranguing on the similarity of Communism and Islam, the Moslem leader asked the communist:

"You say that Communism and Islam are the same in essence. Do you believe in God and the prophetic mission of Mohammed and the holiness of his book? The embarrassed reply was "No". The third question was "Do you believe that you may be wrong—that Mohammed may be right and may convert Communists and Christians to our way of thinking?"

The answer this time, which came after a moment of obvious hesitation, was "Yes". Amid derision and hostility the communist and his comrades departed. But their departure was only from the open fight they lived and perhaps, today, the story is different.

In 1906 Arminius Vambrey wrote, "Religion absorbs the intellect of the Asiatic: it is stronger than his feeling for nationality, the latter is almost everywhere of second importance." Islam is not tied down to any region or area, the love of birthland is made transcendental and turned into love of "Allah His Prophet" and the universe he created.

The concept of nationalism is an important one; perhaps this is true of entire Asia. And as in other countries of Asia, the philosophy of nationalism came from the West brought by the sons of the rich who went abroad for education; but nationalism was not always identified with "democratic" Government. "Democracy" remained an abstraction, more as an idea,

for these countries did not offer scope for its development. For the successful development of "democracy" the need was to engage in the "creative work for the greater good of the community."

The Arab society was divided into two classes. A small rich minority and a vast majority of poor; a parochial society with lack of class consciousness because there are a minority which grows rich and the majority which sinks to the depths of poverty. Democracy needs a "joint creative action for the greater good of the society." Nationalism as expounded by communists was a miracle making force which would hasten the dawn of progress and prosperity overnight. It was such a concept that excited admiration for what dictatorship had achieved in Italy.

Professor Hans Kohn stated:

"I regard nationalism, national self-determination, national sovereignty, a new nation state as not a desirable good in itself. There is no hope for Middle Eastern nationalism, you must subordinate your personal strivings, your personal seekings, your class interests to what I call creative action for the common good. And there is little hope unless they learn to moderate their nationalism and to be ready for compromise solutions and accommodation, to outgrow their parochialism in an all-inclusive spirit of regional co-operation and beyond that in a large community of nations."

In the Middle East countries and in most backward countries of Asia, Communism has entered in the garb of "nationalist movement." Democracy lays greater stress on moral aspect—means to progress assume importance and 'end becomes a moral victory.' But the "want" with the desire to gain rises above all considerations of a moral sanction and becomes an end itself.

The danger of communism is not in the weakness of democracy but in the impatience of man himself.

A.P.

From Darkness to Light

A Confession in the form of an Anthology by Victor Gollancz, London, Pages 668, Price 15sh.

THIS valuable anthology of passages culled from the world's literature of religion, mysticism, ethical reflection, poetry and of human values generally is interesting for the light it throws on the way in which modern minds are seeking to take all historic cultures for their province, irrespective of past barriers of race and creed and to fuse the spirit of modern science with their best insights. The Indian reader will be specially interested with the citations from the Upanishads, the Code of Manu, the Bhagavadgita and from recent Indian thinkers like Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Tagore. The anthology is best used as a bedside resource for earnest reading and stimulus for reflection on the best things that have been said and thought on the supreme values revealed in life and nature. Even the secular humanists will derive much benefit if they approach it with a receptive attitude, leaving critical reaction for different and subsequent moods and occasions. The book can serve as a bridge-builder if used in the right way.

M.A.V.

To The Editor

Dear Sir,

In your article 'Strange If True' published in the *Freedom First* of September 1956, you say:

"It is undeniable that one single party should not be allowed to monopolise all seats in legislatures. It is desirable that there should be in the legislatures a good number of persons holding different views, standing for different policies and criticising the defects and wrong actions and policies of the ruling party. In that case, it will be desirable to seek adjustments with all opposition parties. If the purpose is to break the monopoly of the Congress Party, it will be served better by electoral agreements with all non-Congress parties, including the Hindu Mahasabha, the Jana Sangh and others. Such agreements may enable the return of many more non-Congress candidates to the legislatures."

I would like to reinforce your argument with a few observations.

In the last Indonesian elections, the communists did very well and the lovers of democracy in other countries have become anxious over this communist success. Recently I was in Indonesia, and one of the questions which I went on putting to thinking people there was about the possibility of the Communists taking over. I found that very few indeed were willing to entertain any fear of the communists gaining power either through electoral success or through insurrection. One respected scholar of the country said that the communists would not come to power because the electoral system of the country would allow all political trends in the country to be represented in Parliament and that the majority of the people were for the democratic processes. So far as the possibility of the communist insurrection was concerned, he said that the Indonesian people being peace-loving would not go to the extent of a rebellion.

(Continued from page 9)

the group representing less than half of the total population control 85% of the trade and will be likely to control almost 100% of the trade if the Indian competition disappears."

Actually the European traders in South Africa have been always wishing for the day when Indians will be eliminated from the field of trade. The European business community often demanded the break-up of the "Indian stranglehold" on the trade. The application of the Group Areas Act is aimed to clear the way for the European business community to establish their complete sway over the commercial life of South Africa.

The Asia-Africa group in the United Nations must take up the case of these unfortunate Indians in South Africa on the floor of that International Organisation before it is too late.

At the moment I am not concerned with the second part of this analysis. Regarding the possible electoral victory of the Communist Party in a democratic country, my thinking was further affected by the recent electoral experience in Burma. I was in Burma immediately after the last elections. You will remember that the Burmese Communists have done very well in these elections, so much so that it has caused anxiety to U Nu and his colleagues. In Burma really two parties have emerged as of any consequences, viz., the AFPFL and the Communist Front.

Contrasting the Burmese experience with that of Indonesia and reinforcing this contrast with our experience in our own country, I have come to the conclusion that the Single Member Constituency system (of the British pattern) which we and the Burmese have adopted, may not be of real benefit in sustaining and enriching democracy in underdeveloped countries. The system was primarily designed to enable only two parties to emerge as dominant parties and also to give a measure of stability to the political system. Now it is quite obvious that this system will ultimately enable only two dominant parties to emerge, but they may not be both democratic parties. In an underdeveloped country like ours, only the Congress and the Communist Party are likely to emerge as the two decisive parties because it is not ideology that would decide the fate of these parties but their capacity to mobilise resources; and only the governing party and the Communist Party with its vast though invisible sources of income can survive in this game. The middle democratic parties tend to disappear through exhaustion and erosion. This creates the ultimate danger of putting the Communist Party in power by democratic means and so hang democracy by its own rope.

It should also be remembered that the polarisation which this system brings about strengthens the insurrectionary capacity of the communists.

The system gives stability, no doubt; but in my opinion it gives over-stability, which puts the ruling party in such power (even with a minority vote) that it corrupts it, (as is being frankly admitted by U Nu in Burma with regard to the AFPFL).

Further, the system is an over-all fraud on the country, inasmuch as it enables it with even a minority vote to whip out an overwhelming electoral victory. The Congress continues to perpetrate this fraud and even deepens it by declaring that its arbitrary decisions are national verdicts. I think what must be done to counteract this is to try to reproduce the public opinion in the country into the Parliament and other legislative bodies. The state of political parties in the country should be reflected in the Parliament and the Assemblies. This would mean that you have adjustments not only with the communists and the Leftists but with all parties, after of course ascertaining as carefully as possible, the state of their real strength in different constituencies.

New Delhi, September 17.

Yours sincerely,
POLITICUS

With Many Voices

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

—Tennyson.

The most effective form of propaganda is not advocacy of one's own values but destroying confidence in those produced by your opponent. If he already has a bad conscience, your task is all the easier.

—Mr. Stephen Spender, *Encounter*, September 1956.

Only sixty-six generations of men have been born since Jesus died.

—Irving Kristol *Encounter*, September 1956.

In normal times we think of a fellow-traveller as a man with a foot in the enemy's camp; in modern Poland he is a man with a foot in our camp.

—Peter Wiles, in *Encounter*, October 1956

In a Thaw, what fellow-travellers think today Party members will think tomorrow.

—Peter Wiles, in *Encounter*, October 1956.

A coterie of gay optimists was clustered round the Prime Minister (T.T.K., Mahalanobis, Appleby and others) who believed that tangible resources should not be the criterion of daring performance.

—*Deccan Herald*, October 12.

One might say that the Soviet Union is getting ripe for its bourgeois revolution.

—*Bombay Chronicle*, September 23.

America offers a good model of the society the Labour Party should build, because it is relatively classeless.

—A. Crosland (Labour Party) in *New Leader*, October 8.

'The intellectuals are the...educated half-wits of Europe'.

—Winston Churchill, *Thought*, August 25, 1956.

To the Editor,
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When, during a discussion with students, we asked them, "Do you really have discussions about problems?" they replied: "Certainly we have discussions; but we decide first and discuss afterward."

—Andre Philip, in *New Leader*, October 8.

All references to liberalisation in the Soviet Union must be received with something more substantial than a pinch of salt.

—*Times of India*, October 25.

The recent developments in Poland and Hungary do not have any lessons for the Indian Communists.

—Mr. Ajoy Ghosh, General Secretary of the CPI,
—*Times of India*, October 8.

Asia today is more divided than ever before.

—Dr. P. S. Lokanathan, *Thought*, September 1, 1956.

* West Bengal was tottering on one leg and was being subjected to gravitational pulls from two directions—Peking and Dacca.

—Mr. Brajeshwar Prasad, (Congress M.P. from Bihar) *The Examiner*, August 25, 1956.

He (Mr. Krishna Menon) has done a great job and we are all happy to count him among our best friends."

—Mr. Shepilov, *Sunday Standard*, August 26, 1956.

An intellectual is a person 'who takes more words than he needs to say more than he knows'.

—Beachcomber, *Thought*, August 25, 1956.

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