

NOVEMBER 1958

A Lesson And A Warning

by V. B. Karnik

RECENT events in Burma and Pakistan will cause grave concern to all those who are interested in the development of democracy in the new States of Asia and Africa. For India they have a special significance, as what happens in those neighbouring countries is bound to affect the course of her development. The failure of democracy in those countries will prove a serious obstacle in the path of her march towards that ideal.

In Burma there has been so far no serious departure from the forms of democracy. A military regime has been established, but it was thought necessary to secure for it the concurrence of Parliament. Parliament has not been disbanded, nor are political parties outlawed. A general election is in the offing and, it is said, that military rule was established in order to ensure that the election that takes place is free and fair. It is likely that under the premiership of U Nu the election would not have been free and fair, but it is, everybody will agree, a sad day for a democracy when it has to resort to a military regime in order to ensure the fairness and the freedom of a general election.

It is to be hoped that the Government of General Ne Win will remain true to its plighted word, organise a free and fair election and hand over power to whosoever wins it. But to part with power is the hardest thing that anybody can be expected to do. Every regime tries to perpetuate itself and can always think of a million causes why a change is undesirable and would, if brought about, prove disastrous to the country. No one can be too sure that the military regime now established in Burma will not find itself in that position. In any case the temptation to follow that natural course will be very strong unless democratic forces assert themselves and demand a change.

In Pakistan there has been no such concern for the forms and procedures of democracy. President Mirza seized power without any pretence and abolished by a stroke of pen both the legislature as well as the political parties. He was frank enough to declare: "I have no sanction of law or of constitution. I have only the sanction of my conscience". He acted in collaboration

with the Commander-in-Chief, General Mohammed Ayub Khan, —and it may be that it was the military chief who determined the course of events. General Ayub Khan is reported to have stated: "We both came to the conclusion that the country was going to the dogs. . . . I said to the President: 'Are you going to act?' If you do not, which Heaven forbid, we (the armed forces) shall force a change'."

A military rule is now in force with General Ayub Khan as the Chief Martial Law Administrator. Martial Law has been proclaimed and military officers are administering the country with the co-operation of the civil service. Most politicians have gone home to resume their normal avocations, while a few have been arrested and are awaiting trials on a variety of charges. The country as a whole has not reacted adversely to the abrogation of parliamentary rule and the proclamation of martial law. There is on the other hand a certain sense of relief. The people, it appears, were tired of and disgusted with the rule of corrupt and quarreling politicians and are not sorry that they have been dismissed. They are happy at the fall in prices and at the general availability of essential and other goods. Hoarding and profiteering have been checked and a rise in wages has been just announced. But this cannot go on forever. A strict regime of hardships and austerity is just around the corner. Military administrators have already begun talking about it and to take steps to clamp it down on the country.

Unlike Burma, the new rulers of Pakistan do not hold out any hope of an early election and resumption of democratic administration. President Mirza has his own views about democracy and he has not kept them secret. He believes in "controlled democracy". In the course of a statement he said, "you must remember that Western-type democracy cannot function here under present conditions. We have only 16% literacy. . . . Democracy without education is hypocrisy without limitation." Further clarifying his views he said: "Democracy requires breeding. These illiterate peasants certainly know less about running a country than I do. . . . There has to be someone to prevent the people from destroying themselves." The regime that he has in view appears to be a benevolent dictatorship. He has the plan to get together "20 or 30 good clear chaps" to draw up a constitution. The franchise will be clearly very restricted with high property and educational qualifications and other provisions are also likely to be such as would provide a convenient legal framework for a dictatorship.

After these lines were written came the news of

another change over in Pakistan. A Ministry has been installed in power with the Chief Martial Law Administrator as the Prime Minister. But it did not stop there. The President, Sir Iskander Mirza had also to step aside and General Ayub Khan is now the sole repository of power. One cannot be too sure that this is the final shape of things.

Events in Pakistan are moving according to a pattern which has become familiar in the new States of Asia and Africa, from Indonesia to Egypt. In all these States—parliamentary democracy of the Western type introduced on the attainment of independence is giving way to various forms of dictatorship, some more or less open and some more or less veiled. Dictatorship of military leaders seems to be the order of the day. Dissatisfied and disillusioned with their political leaders, the people are turning to military leaders in the hope of finding some security in the welter of confusion and corruption created by the former. Brought up in the tradition of obedience and dependence and unaccustomed to stand on their own legs, the people are turning towards strong men, valuing security more than political freedom or democratic rights.

One would have thought that the experience of Europe during the inter-war period in which fascist and communist dictatorships rose to power in a number of European countries and ultimately brought about the second world war was enough to convince the people that security and prosperity cannot exist without freedom and democracy. It appears, however, that each nation has to learn its own lesson. It is to be hoped that the nations of Asia and Africa will learn the lesson early and without too much harm to themselves, their neighbours and the world as a whole.

What has happened in Burma and Pakistan has a lesson and a warning for India. The events in those two neighbouring countries are bound to have their repercussions. We cannot be too sure and complacent about the success of our democratic experiment. After all, the people of India and Pakistan belong to the same stock and there is not much difference in their cultural tradition. The social and economic problems facing them are similar and during the last ten years of their separate existence India cannot be said to have solved them any more successfully than Pakistan.

India has a more developed and efficient system of

administration. Another advantage that India can claim is the existence of a group of universally respected national leaders of great eminence and competence and of a national political organisation like the Congress with its branches and centres in all parts. Pakistan has been very unfortunate in that respect. Early in the beginning of its career, it lost its founder, Quaide Azam Jinnah and its most outstanding architect, Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan. Their place could never be filled up and with them also died the Muslim League which they had built up and brought to power and prestige. These were irreparable losses which are responsible in a large measure for the present debacle of democracy. India has these two incontestable advantages over Pakistan. They are useful for democracy, but cannot by themselves guarantee its survival and progress. There is also, on the other hand, the danger that the presence of a very eminent individual may give rise to the cult of personality and block the growth of democracy.

The contagion of a loss of faith in democracy and of the turn in the direction of a strong man to save the nation is spreading fast in many parts of the world. Even France, the classic land of democracy, could not escape the contagion. Our position is far more delicate and sensitive and it has been rendered more so by what has happened in Burma and Pakistan. In spite of the Prime Minister's confident assertion that the contagion will not spread to India, we cannot be too sure about our immunity. We have made impressive economic progress, but not enough to satisfy the crying needs of the people. We have built some democratic institutions, but they have yet to become a part and parcel of the people's life. We have tried to teach people to be conscious of their rights and responsibilities, but it is a lesson which is learnt slowly and with great difficulty. We cannot be therefore too sure about the inviolability of our democratic experiment. It will succeed only on the basis of a living faith in democracy. And that faith is yet to be created.

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Notes

Firing In Kerala

WITHIN a period of four months, the Communist Government in Kerala has resorted to police firings three times. Ironically enough, everytime the target of communist bullets has been workers though, fortunately, at least once the bullets missed their mark and there was no casualty. But the latest firing, in the third week of October, killed four workers and injured more than twenty. This was a sequel to the strike called by the communist-led plantation workers' union in the Hill Ranges and the partisan attitude of the Kerala Labour Minister who, instead of trying to bring about a peaceful settlement of the dispute, actually went about encouraging the militant workers of the communist union. He characterised workers' demands as "perfectly justified," refused to advise them to call off the strike and even accused the management of playing politics.

It was, therefore, to be expected that with the active encouragement and incitement of the State Government the strike would deteriorate into mob violence endangering the law and order situation. Mr. Ramanujan, the President of the INTUC, had warned against this eventuality beforehand, but the State Government found it convenient to ignore his warning and connive at the activities of their union workers.

The INTUC unions were also a party to the strike, but they arrived at an agreement with the management to refer the dispute to adjudication. But the Labour Minister refused to concede their demand for adjudication on the specious plea that INTUC unions had no following among the workers and he openly sided with the communist-led unions. He did not trouble to disclose the ground on which the State Government had based its conclusions. With the State Government adopting such a partisan and unprincipled attitude and abdicating all its normal functions of maintaining law and order, it was not surprising that lawless elements in the party and the union gained upper hand and let loose a reign of terror in the plantation area.

Hungary After Two Years

TWO years have elapsed since the Hungarian Revolution was crushed by the Soviet tanks in the streets of Budapest, but still the wave of terrorism unleashed by the puppet Hungarian regime to suppress the free spirit of the Hungarian people continues unabated. Now a new era has started there which could best be described as that of persecution of the intelligentsia. In the months of July and August, 21 persons were sentenced to death at the secret trials in Budapest, most of whom were students and intellectuals. Secret trials likewise brought death to 21 persons in

Transylvania at the same time. With the exception of a few miners and other workers, these too belonged to the class of intellectuals. In Budapest and in Transylvania death sentences pronounced at secret trials cannot be appealed, and are carried out within two hours after the sentence is pronounced. Among the executed in Budapest was the well-known journalist Kalman Gajary, who was serving a ten-year prison sentence before the outbreak of the Revolution in 1956.

On instruction of the Budapest Government, an investigation was started against 3200 Budapest lawyers concerning their loyalty towards the regime. The investigation resulted in the disbarment of 800 lawyers. At the same time the Government decreed the discontinuance of individual law practice. All lawyers had to join a workers community until the end of last August. A yearly revision of lawyers' licenses was likewise decreed by the Ministry of Justice.

The official Communist Party paper *Esti-Hirlap* (Evening News) reported the revision of the licenses of 4000 actors and actresses and others employed in the entertainment business. According to the newspaper this became necessary "because they had shown tendencies of glorifying bourgeois and decadent ideas."

Edre Sik, the chief Hungarian delegate to the U.N., recently declared that the U.N. could hold debates on the question of Hungary till doomsday, yet the situation there would remain unchanged. This shows the callous and inhuman attitude of the communist regime and, at the same time, it exposes the utter helplessness of that world assembly before a regime which is devoid of all moral scruples.

Writers And Communism

IT is a strange irony that when the Asian-African Writers' Conference was deliberating writers' problems at Tashkent attributing all the evils to which Asia-Africa are heir to the wicked West, a young prominent writer from a communist country finding it impossible to live in his motherland was forced to seek asylum in the West. Marek Hlasko, one of Poland's top writers, fled to the West on October 8 and arrived in Berlin as a political refugee. Since the Polish October Revolution of 1956 which brought Gomulka to power, the 25-year old author has been regarded as the *enfant-terrible* of Polish literature and films. His short stories drawing on his varied experiences were first published three years ago and his third collection won the Polish Publisher's Prize last year. Significantly enough, it was not published in Poland but was published by Polish emigre publishers in Paris. *The Eighth Day Of The Week*, based on one of his stories, was to have been the Polish entry in the Cannes Film Festival last year, but was suddenly withdrawn by the Polish Government.

Hlasko is considered neither a communist nor anti-communist; but as a writer his career has all along been very stormy and controversial. In his writings he has been outspoken against totalitarianism. He

recently spent several months in Paris where he gave defiant interviews to Western magazines in answer to savage attacks from *Trybuna Ludu*. But in spite of "brutal despair" which pervades his writings, he made an effort to co-exist with communism in his own country without compromising his conscience or integrity. "A writer without a country is nothing", he stated in one of his interviews in Paris. But the utter hopelessness of the situation ultimately drove him to escape from Poland. The tragic flight of a young writer in his twenties symbolises the mute agony of all creative artists in that land which has relatively a liberal regime than other communist countries. It also exposes the utterly fraudulent and phoney character of the Writers' Conference at Tashkent where the so-called representatives of Asian-African Writers, putting on blinkers, were enjoying the lavish hospitality of the Soviet Government, when at the same time a young promising writer in a satellite country had to flee the land of his birth in search of freedom and happiness.

Good News From Algeria

THE situation in Algeria is taking a hopeful turn. Slowly, but cautiously, both the sides are groping their way towards an honourable compromise. General De Gaulle's recent orders to his Generals in Algeria, that the army should get out and stay out of Algerian politics, and, above all, should not stage-manage the elections to be held soon, have paved the way for the Algerians freely to choose the representatives they want. They can even elect nationalists campaigning on a platform of independence. The right-wing extremists considering this as a challenge to their power, tried to organise a general strike as a show-down in Algeria but had hurriedly to cancel their plans as the army stood solidly behind De Gaulle and refused to co-operate with the colons.

Admittedly De Gaulle's concession to nationalists does not guarantee complete electoral freedom, as it debars all those "who take part in terrorist activity and therefore can be charged under criminal law". But, even this obstacle could be overcome by setting up nationalist candidates who will have FLN's tacit support and who, when elected, could be able to negotiate with the Paris Government.

The National Liberation Front, on its part, has also modified and moderated its stand on Algerian independence. Mr. Ferhat Abbas, Prime Minister of "Free Algerian Government", has declared himself willing to negotiate with Paris without insistence on the prior recognition by the French of Algerian independence. He has also recently expressed willingness of his 'Government' to enter immediately into ceasefire negotiations with France and has even implicitly deplored terrorist activity on French soil and hinted that an end might be put to it. These indirect exchanges between Paris and the nationalist "provisional Government" hint at direct talks carried on privately and there have been strong rumours current in France that such talks have been going on between the two parties behind the scene. Be that

as it may, these developments certainly should open the doors for a negotiated settlement of the Algerian question.

D. R. S. NEWS

MR. Ralph Borsodi, ex-Chancellor of Melbourne University, Florida, U.S.A. spoke on "Morality of Democracy and Communism" on the 3rd October. Dr. Miss Dastur who was in the chair introduced him to the audience as an economist, educationist and a well-known writer.

The distinguished visitor prefaced his talk with an explanation as to why he chose to visit India. He felt that the centre of gravity was shifting from the West to the East. After the Second World War, America found herself at the helm totally unprepared for it when the leadership was thrust upon her. In a decade India will, in all probability, assume the leadership of Asia and the world. The ideological vacuum in the world was sought to be filled by Russia. But communism, he asserted, was immoral both as to the means as well as ends. The communist concept of a new world order was based on violence, and it sought to overthrow the existing governments and cultures by subversion and genocide.

It was useless, he said, to compete with Marxists in promising a better utopia than a socialist heaven: for they could always outshine the democrats in promising better things. Neither could we afford to ignore defects of the existing capitalistic order. The advocacy of democracy was not enough. Democracy, according to him, could never be a sufficient guarantee against totalitarianism. A positive approach to meet the communist challenge was therefore essential. Political liberty, economic justice and humanisation of our institutions, he stated, should be the three basic aims of such a new social order. The powers of the government should be limited to preserve the political liberty of the Individual. Justice, he pointed out, did not mean equality. It was not just to treat the inefficient, unskilled worker as though he was equal to the efficient and skilled worker. "Justice is in accordance with natural law. Justice provides incentive to work; equality removes it. Equality is a form of compulsory charity." Mr. Borsodi outlined seven essentials of a moral order:

1. Free Market: It meant abolition of all price controls, fixing up of wages and profits. Competition would be fraternal in such a market.

2. Free Trade: It involved abolition of tariffs. That all nations belonged to the same human race was itself a sufficient warrant for the establishment of a free international trade. If trade within a nation was good, then trade between nations was equally good.

3. Abolition of monopolies: There would be no economic justice unless all special privileges, patent rights and subsidies were abolished.

4. Cooperative Ownership of all Natural Monopolies.

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Rhodes Seminar, A Report

by A Correspondent

THE seminar on "Representative Government and Public Liberties in New States" held in Rhodes (Greece) from 5th to 13th October was the third in a series of seminars organised by the Congress for Cultural Freedom. The earlier two were held in Vienna and Venice respectively in the month of September. The Vienna seminar discussed the question of Workers' Participation in Management, while the one in Venice was devoted to a discussion of Tradition and Change in Arts. The Congress is organising these seminars with the assistance of the Ford Foundation.

Rhodes was a nice place for holding the seminar. It is a quiet little town on the shores of the Mediterranean without too many activities to distract the attention of the participants. It has an old world setting which reminds visitors of its hoary past dating from the fifth or sixth century before Christ. There was a certain appropriateness in discussing in this ancient seat of civilisation the problems of the functioning of democracy in the new States of Asia and Africa. Rhodes had seen the glory of the Greek civilisation and had since then weathered a number of invasions and the rule of a variety of foreigners, returning to the lap of Greece only at the end of the second World War. There were a number of mute lessons in that long history which could not but make their impression on the minds of the participants.

Through its Mayor and the City Council, Rhodes accorded a warm reception to the seminar. The dance and music performances and the barbecue dinner gave an idea of the Island's way of living. Kind words and friendly smiles were to be met everywhere. But, for those who could see below the surface, there was also an undercurrent of criticism. Surprise was expressed, quietly and guardedly, that problems of democracy should be discussed in a place which did not enjoy its benefits. This gave an inkling into the political conditions prevailing in the Island and in Greece.

The participants were about thirtyfive drawn from all parts of the world and belonging to over twenty countries. They were invited not as representatives of their respective countries but as eminent individuals who could discuss the problems before the seminar in an authoritative but detached manner. They included persons from old States as well as new States. Prominent amongst those who came from the old States were Mr. Raymond Aron and Mr. Bertrand de Jouvenal of France, Mr. Ignatius Silone of Italy, Mr. Galbraith, Mr. Louis Fischer and Mr. Robert Hutchins of the United States, Mr. Gunnar Myrdle of Sweden, Mr. Jakobson of Denmark and Prof. Michael Polanyi and Mr. Strachey of Great Britain. Others came from such new States as Egypt, Tunisia, Sudan, Ghana, Nigeria, Lebanon, Palestine, Iran, Pakistan, India, Burma, Thailand and Indonesia. Mr. Louis Albert Sanchez was present from the old, new States of Latin America.

India figured prominently at the seminar. One Indian, Mr. Asoka Mehta, M.P. was one of the Directors of the Seminar, the other Director being Prof. Edward Shils of Chicago University. Indians constituted the largest single national group. The participants, besides Mr. Asoka Mehta, were Mr. M. R. Masani, M.P.; Prof. V. K. N. Menon, Director of the Indian Institute of Public Administration; Dr. D. R. Gadgil, Director, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics; Mr. V. K. Narasimhan of the *Hindu* of Madras; Mr. Raghavan Iyer, Fellow St. Anthony's College, Oxford and Dr. Daya Krishna of the University of Saugar. Some others were present as observers. They were Prof. P. G. Mavalankar, Mr. N. Majumdar of *Hindustan Standard*, Mr. Prabhakar Padhye, Mr. K. K. Sinha, and Mr. V. B. Karnik.

There was also a number of papers from India. Mr. K. M. Panikkar, the Indian Ambassador in France, contributed a paper on "the traditional order and the free society." Other outstanding papers contributed by Indians were: Dr. D. R. Gadgil's paper on "transformation of society in the new States and its relation to civic spirit, national unity and public liberties," Mr. Asoka Mehta's paper on "the opposition in the new States," Dr. Daya Krishna's paper on "what is democracy?" and Mr. Raghavan Iyer's paper on "strengthening political democracy and public liberties in the new States." Mr. M. R. Masani also contributed a paper which was a case study of the problems of democracy in India.

The seminar met at a time when the recently established democratic institutions in the new States were passing through a period of severe stress and strain. In Lebanon there was a virtual civil war between the two more or less evenly balanced communities represented by their political parties and groups. In Burma, the Government of U Nu had just resigned and the Commander-in-Chief of the Army had just been invested with supreme power. The news of the change-over in Pakistan, by which the Government of Mr. Noon was dismissed, President Mirza assumed full power and the country was placed under martial law, came when the seminar was midway through its work. All these new facts of the situation had to be taken into consideration and answers found to all the questions posed by them. Even in older States democratic institutions had received a set back as, for instance, in France. A mood of introspection and a desire to learn from each other, therefore, dominated the discussions at the seminar and there was a large measure of give and take between the representatives of old and new States.

It is not possible here to give even a cursory review of all the discussions that took place during the seven days of the seminar. The seminar met every day for six hours and all those six hours were devoted to intensive discussions. In some cases discussion took

place on the basis of reports about the democratic experiments in some new States. The reports were very valuable as they showed how conditions differed from country to country and how it was not possible to lay down one single formula which could hold good for all countries.

Mr. Kukrit Pramoj of Thailand gave an interesting account of the situation in his country where the introduction of the forms of democracy without their underlying spirit had reduced it to a farce. The rule of a benevolent absolute monarch had been replaced by the unprincipled and tyrannical rule of over two hundred absolute rulers, the so-called elected representatives of the people. Mr. Maung Maung of Burma, on the other hand, characterised the setting up of military rule in his country as a democratic process as it had, at least for the time being, blocked the advance of the communists. Mr. Asoka Mehta in his concluding remarks drew attention to all these vastly dissimilar experiences and pointed out how it was not possible to prescribe one common road for the advance of the new States towards democracy.

The discussions that took place exposed the clay feet of some of the accepted gods of democracy. A two-party system, with one of the parties in power and the other in opposition but always ready to take over from the first, was supposed to be an essential requirement of parliamentary democracy. Mr. Gaitskell of the British Labour Party put forward that point of view in his paper and Mr. Strachey spoke at the seminar urging its acceptance. But that turned out to be a peculiar British or at the most North American experience. Mr. Jakobson of Denmark contested the idea and pointed out that if the nation were divided into two parties and if the two parties differed on material issues the result would be a civil war. He advocated the multi-party system prevalent in Scandinavian countries. Further discussion revealed, as pointed out by Mr. Raymond Aron, that a democracy can operate even with one dominant party as in India. The upshot of the discussion was that what is important are not the institutions but, as pointed by Mr. Jouvanel, the spirit of democracy, the spirit of rationalism, the spirit of toleration and the spirit of humanism.

There was at the beginning of the seminar a discussion on the meaning and essence of democracy which was initiated by Dr. Daya Krishna of Saugar University. Between the two aspects of democracy, namely, one, the participation of the people and the other, the safeguarding of the people's liberties, he laid more emphasis on the latter. This issue raised by him was ignored in the beginning. But towards the end the seminar diverted to it and the consensus of opinion was that public liberties are far more important than representative government. There was also a discussion about democracy and economic progress. There were some like Mr. Strachey who emphasised rapid economic progress and wondered if it could be achieved within the framework of democracy. Mr. Masani valiantly championed the other point of view. He asserted that the freedom and the

welfare of the people were far more important than the rapid rate of economic growth and that it was not desirable to sacrifice the happiness of the living generations for the problematical economic plenty of an indefinite future. The argument went to and fro but the consensus appeared in the end to be that democracy would not survive unless economic progress was achieved.

It is not possible in a short note to give a gist of all the issues that were discussed and the points that were raised during those seven days of intensive discussions. It is to be hoped that the Congress will at an early date publish a report of the seminar making available to the general public both the papers as well as the discussions. One more point may be, however, mentioned. A lot of stress was laid at the seminar on the infra structure. Mr. Gunnar Myrdle of Sweden first mentioned it and asserted that a democracy did not merely depend on an elected parliament at the top, but that it was necessary to build below a variety of autonomous and semi-autonomous institutions which helped people in carrying on their day to day activities. Mr. Myrdle was opposed to the proliferation of bureaucracy, which, he said, could be avoided if the people themselves created such lower organisations and undertook through them to look after many of their requirements. The idea was generally approved, but it was pointed out that in backward parts owing to the apathy of the general public such organisations might become the strongholds of reaction or of anti-social elements.

India figured prominently in the discussions. There were some papers which specifically discussed the problems of democratic development in the country. Mr. Masani's paper was a case-study of the functioning of democracy in India. The papers of Mr. Asoka, Dr. D. R. Gadgil and Mr. Narasimhan also dealt with some specific aspects of the Indian situation. Many speakers referred from time to time to the great Indian effort to combine democracy with rapid economic progress. Mr. Louis Fischer referred to India as the most developed democratic country in Asia and Africa. There was curiosity and desire to know about Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan's views regarding partyless democracy and decentralised economy. All in all, it was flattering to know about all this interest in the Indian experiment and to realise the solicitude over its success. It is to be hoped that the course of development in the country will not disappoint the expectations of all those high-souled champions of freedom and democracy.

Chinese "Panchsheela" in Burma

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“People’s Communes” Of China

by Adam Adil

REPORTS emanating from the mainland of China indicate that the communist regime is embarking upon an ambitious programme of total social and economic regimentation.

Firstly it is attempted to establish what the Chinese Communist Party calls “people’s communes,” the declared object of which is to create state reservations in industry, agriculture, exchange, education, militia and in all channels of social intercourse and economic existence. Sometimes these “people’s communes” are designated as “statefarms” but this term, as we understand it, is inadequate to describe what is actually attempted.

The “people’s communes” are formed by linking the merger of the neighbouring agricultural cooperatives with the appropriation of such private property as remained to the lot of the peasants after collectivisation, including their homes, gardens, vegetable plots, shade trees, cattle, pigs and other animals, even their “kitchen ranges.” In other words, the peasants are being deprived of everything they could call their own.

The official *New China News Agency* points out in one of its dispatches to the newspapers in China and other countries, “life is organised along military lines and there is greater discipline in production and daily life.” The net result of such a way of life is that even the last vestige of the freedom of the individual is eliminated and home and family life is completely disrupted. The establishment of common mess-halls, nurseries, kindergartens, tailoring teams etc, is purported to “liberate” women, which actually means harnessing of the fair sex into harder, monotonous, dreary full-time work for twelve hours a day. Again the introduction of industry in rural areas as an integral part of the “people’s communes” has effected a sharp decline in the living standard and worsened the working conditions of industrial workers, all the more.

Each ‘commune’ covers about two to ten thousand households, whose members apart from serving the State primarily in the field of agricultural production, are forced to do such work as are assigned to them in industry, mining, public construction etc. The commune members are required to lead communal existence, possess nothing and work hard regardless of the nature of the work performed. They are paid wages, no doubt, but if they are found ‘less diligent’ and ‘less enthusiastic’ about their work, they are liable to a cut in their wages and, in addition, some severe punishment. They are actually entitled to some small bonus only when they actively support the party leader.

The *Red Flag* which is the theoretical journal of the Communist Party states: “The people’s communes . . . have wiped out certain last vestiges of private ownership of the means of production.—Owing to the ever growing need to work collectively and the ex-

tension of public canteen service to all the members, it becomes both impossible and unnecessary for them to keep small personal plots of land and breed their own pigs . . . And they have gone beyond the pattern of collective ownership in certain respects. Moreover, from such developments as the supply system of grain within the communes (based on coupons redeemable for meals at the mess hall, rather than grain issued to individual households as was the system previously), people can easily see the budding sprouts of communism.”

The *People’s Daily* of Peking reports: “People’s Communes have gone a step further than agricultural cooperatives towards the development of public ownership. All private (vegetable) plots, private houses, land, livestock and trees etc., gradually come under the commune ownership and the small number of domestic animals and poultry to be kept by private persons for the time being will gradually come under public ownership.” Small vegetable gardens belonging to different households are transferred to the ownership of the communes. Horses and carts, farm implements, fishing boats, and fishing nets are converted into investment in the communes and none of these things are paid for. All trees around the households including the front trees are transferred to the commune without any compensation. Even the privately owned tailoring establishments and barber and cobbler’s shops have not escaped this fate; small merchants and peddlers and private stores are abolished. In this strait-jacket economic regimentation it is the small man who has suffered the most.

By the end of August, 38,478 agricultural cooperatives were converted into 1378 peoples’ communes covering 99.98% of all the peasant household in a province. The communisation process is speedily carried on in other provinces; any resistance to communisation is crushed ruthlessly.

In general the following are the chief features of the people’s communes:

- (1) They develop agriculture, poultry, forestry, livestock breeding, sideline occupations and fishing in an overall way. They seek to unify the management of industry, agriculture, trade, education, military under the Communist Party bosses. They are the best form of basic organisation from the point of view of party interests.
- (2) Every commune has a township as its political, economical and cultural centre.
- (3) The economic and political organisations are merged in one in the commune
- (4) The means of production gradually change from the system of collective ownership to that of ownership by the whole people, and ultimately, under the people’s communes, the vestiges of private ownership is eliminated.
- (5) With their large membership, manysided undertakings and high enthusiasm among the members, a more detailed, stable division of labour arises in the communes.

Members are organised on military lines. The specialised skill of members, their general know-how and their production and studies are combined. (6) Life is collective with public services replacing a great part of domestic labour. (7) The members are paid according to wages system and in some communes a grain supply has been introduced.

Apart from his daily wage a worker in the commune as stated earlier, gets a small bonus. But the worker is required to satisfy following conditions in order to be eligible for bonus. He must (1) be obedient to leadership and work enthusiastically, (2) participate actively in production drive and overfulfil the production quotas according to specified quality and within the specified period, (3) protect public property and struggle against evil personalities (like political opponents of the Communist Party) and evil practices (like non-Marxist and non-communist acts) at all times, (4) think (progressively), study hard, and develop high socialist consciousness and the habit of contributing voluntary labour, and (5) work, at least 28 days per month.

The party has declared "with regard to the members who are not enthusiastic in work, who are lax, or are inclined to be absent from work without proper reasons, they should be educationally criticised and issued basic wages at a discount, or demoted in their wage grades."

A portion of the wages of the commune members is often withheld as "a wage reserve during bumper harvest years so as to meet wage requirements in lean years." Even grain is withheld from individual peasant households who, as a consequence, are forced to feed themselves at communal kitchens, where, normally, the food is quantitatively and qualitatively poor. Waxing eloquent over the "advantages" of communal kitchens the *People's Daily* remarks: "Grain can be consumed and saved on a planned basis... for instance, Yin Fu-Yuan and his family consumed eight cattels and two taels of grain per day; now in the mess hall they consume seven cattels. Also, waste in the consumption of firewood can be reduced. The forty-four households in (one-Old style) cooperative originally consumed 680 cattels of straw, now they use 250 cattels of firewood." It is thus obvious that the

peasants in China are broken away from their old family ties and tradition and driven into a state wherein individual preference, likes or dislikes even in the matter of food, is held as a taboo.

Although the withholding of the portion of grain and communal kitchens have destroyed the freedom of a household to function as a family, they have helped in scaling down the State-wage bill. Thus, the State seeks to have its expenditure at the expense of healthy and happy family life, which was the pride of the Chinese culture for ages and which Professor Lin Yutang eulogises so brilliantly in his *Importance of Living* and other books.

The extension of peoples' communes has served one more purpose: it has eliminated the rich diversity of Chinese life and created, in its place, a drab uniformity in the mutual relationship of Chinese citizens. The *People's Daily* makes no secret of this fact. It says, "the expansion of communes and the merger of communes and township into one entity, which facilitates the rapid advancement of rural areas in industry, communications, culture and education, makes it possible gradually to eliminate the differences between rural and urban areas, between peasant and worker, between peasants and intellectuals, between individuals and individuals, and also between collective ownership and ownership by the people as a whole." The *Red Star* makes a still more shocking statement. It says that the differences in Chinese society were being eliminated not by raising the standard of life of the masses to the level of the well-to-do people but by reducing that of the well-to-do people to the level of the masses; "not by an upscaling but by a downscaling of wages, working and living conditions of other groups to the grade of peasant." In other words, what is aimed at is not the distribution of wealth but of poverty! And those who are reduced to the lowest grade are given the grand, eloquent title of "all-round men!"

D.R.S NEWS — Continued from page 4

5. Free Banking: Banking should be a public utility and not a private business. The debauching of currency by the government was immoral and the function of banking should be taken out from the hands of the government.

6. A just property system: There should be distinction between what could be privately owned and what could be privately possessed. One could own property but could not claim a title to the minerals, oil and forests which were gifts of nature. They should be held in trust by the community.

7. A Just Land Tenure: The ground rent and royalties collected should be used to support the public treasury.

Mr. Borsodi felt that these seven points should be implemented before a rational and moral economic order could be established. They called for political reforms, institutional changes. But above all, he stated, right education was the only hope for bringing about a human social order. Men should be imbued with moral values so that a good society could be formed.

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India, Bhutan And China

by S. Sharangpani

PRIME Minister Nehru's visit to Bhutan last month was significant for many reasons. Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan provide a sort of buffer area between India and China and, therefore, India is vitally interested in the territorial integrity and independence of these states nestling in the eastern ranges of the Himalayas.

After her failure to maintain Tibet as an autonomous buffer zone against possible threats from the north, the only security for India now lies in harmonious relationships with these states on the basis of mutual help and interest. Nepal is a sovereign state and Sikkim and Bhutan are India's protectorates. As such India is responsible for their defence and international relations and is morally committed to help them progress economically. India has extended her hand of co-operation to Sikkim and already a vigorous road building programme financed by India is under way in that state. But Bhutan, which is seven times as large as Sikkim, is more backward and supremely insulated from the modern world. It is the only state in the world whose soil is untouched by the wheeled vehicle—even by the bullock cart.

Wrapt in the Himalayas, these two different outposts of the Buddhist culture have however been causing some anxiety to political and defense planners in New Delhi. While the life in these hermit kingdoms moves slowly to the rhythm of caravans of mules and yaks, there are rumours of a big transformation going on in Tibet under the leadership of the Chinese communists. They are dependent for their economic wellbeing on their trade with Tibet and the caravans moving between Tibet and these two kingdoms can carry not only goods but also explosive ideas—especially after the establishment of the communist regime in Tibet. Besides, though so far India has had correct and cordial relations with China, our past relations with her with regard to these frontier kingdoms leave no ground for complacency on our part. Sikkim was under Tibetan overlordship before the Anglo-Chinese treaty was signed in 1890 which gave the British control of Sikkim's foreign affairs. Even as late as in 1910, the Chinese invaded Tibet and establishing their hold there, started applying pressure on Bhutan and Nepal which they claimed as their feudatories. But the Anglo-Bhutanese treaty of 1910 gave the British control of Bhutan's foreign affairs and made it clear that Nepal and Bhutan were independent from China. In 1914 by the Simla convention, the Chinese suzerainty over Tibet—subject, of course, to Tibetan autonomy—was recognised and the India-Tibet border was fixed up by the McMahon line. But the Chinese never ratified this agreement and the McMahon line was never accepted by them officially. Chinese maps, therefore, have continued to show their frontier as running parallel to the Brahmaputra river—including the Nefu region and Bhutan as part of the

Chinese territory. The recent example of this Chinese intransigence has been the publication a month back of the map of China showing the Indian territories inside the Chinese frontiers by Peking and Moscow in their official organs. This has naturally caused irritation in Delhi and has also served to underline the need for great vigilance on India's part.

The Indo-Bhutanese border is perhaps the most important from the strategic point of view. This hermit kingdom has an area of 18,000 square miles of rugged mountains with not less than 14 passes to Tibet. It is also closely connected with its northern neighbour from the point of view of proximity and geography; and spiritually and culturally also it is closer to Lhasa. Of late, it is reported, a section of the Bhutanese population has grown indifferent and is said to be already imbibing the new tendencies and spirit of red Tibet. Moreover, China has already begun opening up Tibet by building roads and through concerted economic measures and has even established military bases in Southern Tibet.

Judging in the light of these facts, the Prime Minister's visit to Bhutan came none too soon. It was a demonstration of India's active interest for the first time in this border state. The fact that the Prime Minister was the first Indian to visit Bhutan and that it is accessible only through the Tibetan region shows how much until now we had taken this state, whose borders we are pledged to defend, for granted. Mr. Nehru therefore rightly emphasised that the freedom of Bhutan and India should be safeguarded so that no one from outside could do any harm to them. Accordingly he also advised the Bhutanese not to admit too many outsiders into their country. But Bhutan cannot remain isolated for ever from the main stream of the current history. Its cloistered existence in the recesses of the Himalayas might have guaranteed its freedom till now. But in this atomic age it cannot remain insulated from the outside world for long and its seclusion today is no guarantee for her freedom, especially in the face of the communist build-up in the north. Modernisation of Bhutan, though in small doses, will ultimately be beneficial to India and Bhutan as well.

Mr. Nehru has offered aid for the economic development of the state and on his return has even underlined the need of direct communication lines between India and Bhutan. Accordingly, West Bengal and Assam, it is reported, are working on the project and two direct road links between India and Bhutan are being planned for construction in the near future. Prime Minister's visit thus opens a new chapter of closer friendly ties and fruitful co-operation between the two countries which alone will ensure freedom and well-being of both. It also shows a growing awareness on India's part of the strategic realities on our north-eastern frontier.

France Bows To De Gaulle

by Ida Dhami

THE outcome of the referendum held on September 28, in both metropolitan France and its overseas territories, has surprised even the most optimistic, both because of the massive participation in the voting (85%) and the overwhelming proportion of voters (80%) who endorsed the new Constitution. It is perhaps understandable that the people in metropolitan France, weary of more than a decade of political instability and economic deterioration, turned out in such large numbers to give their unqualified support to the General. For, though he has not revealed his future programme in detail, they have come to recognise in him the symbol of the glory of France. He represents the only hope of strong, devoted and honest leadership at the present time. This emotional satisfaction may account for their giving him a "blank cheque". But the situation is different in the case of the overseas territories. No one had anticipated that all of them, with the sole exception of Guinea, would accept the new Constitution by such sweeping majorities. In Algeria which still remains the most agonizing of all problems besetting France, 83% of the voters turned out at the polls despite the instruction of the F.L.N. (National Liberation Army) and 93% of these voted "yes". This is all the more remarkable since de Gaulle gave no indication of the solution he proposes for the Algerian crisis.

Obviously France is bewildered. Having tried various political parties, none of which had been able to bring about either political stability or economic improvements, they turned to de Gaulle in desperation. For his promises were backed by glorious achievements still fresh in the minds of men. People voted "yes" as the only possible way out.

But cooler judgements will soon be applied. France's many problems remain unaffected by the mere ushering of the fifth Republic. De Gaulle himself was the first to describe the referendum as a pure formality. After a brief transitional phase—during which the President will have almost unlimited powers—the Constitution provides for the election of a President, who, in turn will appoint the Prime Minister, and the establishment of a new Parliament. The many outstanding problems, the existence of many political groups and tendencies all promise a lively electoral campaign. And the new Constitution gives the President overriding powers such as only a strong and dedicated patriot can wield without becoming corrupted. De Gaulle undoubtedly hopes to teach his people a proper appreciation of political stability. But France has traditionally been a nation of individualists, where differences of outlook were always quick to reassert themselves and where the rule of one man at the pinnacle never lasted long.

But Algeria remains the crux of the problem; there lies probably the real test of the viability of the fifth Republic. During the short period of his rule, de

Gaulle has already built schools, carried out water schemes which had hitherto remained on paper, provided employment through the construction of roads, and despite the loud grumbling of the *colon*, has brought about an increase in agricultural wages. It appears that such improvement schemes, together with the incessant and vigorous pre-polling campaign conducted by the army, have been responsible for getting out so many people to vote. But what made them vote "yes" in such overwhelming numbers, for observers were generally agreed that the sanctity of the polling booth had been scrupulously safeguarded during the referendum?

It is obvious that the different sections of the population voted "yes" for different reasons. While the *colon* voted in favour of integration, the Moslem voters, even though they disregarded or openly defied the propaganda of the F.L.N. would never agree to such a policy. They too, however, are tired of all the misery and suffering which four years of war brought to their land. Lacking in political experience, perhaps also in responsible leadership, they seem to have decided to place their trust in a man who, since 1944, has realised and often declared that the problems of Algeria called for a liberal approach. Of course their "yes" may not be their last word. Whether they will remain content to be part of a French "community"—if not in complete integration, at least in close federation—will depend on what improvements de Gaulle achieves for them. A few days after the referendum de Gaulle outlined a comprehensive five-year social and economic programme in the speech delivered at Constantine. He spoke of land redistribution and development, of mining and housing schemes, of better schools for the illiterate and better wages for the worker. While stipulating that two-thirds of Algeria's parliamentary representatives are to be Moslems, he carefully avoided making a clear-cut statement of his intentions regarding Algeria's political status in the French community of territories. The time for such a decision will, in his view, come only after Algeria will have become a strong country, capable of looking after its people. And that, concluded de Gaulle, appealing to the masses of Algerian Moslems, can be accomplished only with the help of France.

Yes, the much-hailed enthusiastically supported referendum will not provide a miraculous solution to France's many problems. But, apart from the fact that it provided unmistakable evidence of the loosening of the communist grip—they lost almost one quarter of their votes and two of their outstanding leaders, Maurice Thorez and Duclos were defeated in their own constituencies—the vote showed the strong determination prevalent throughout France and French territories to put an end to political chaos and to economic stagnation. General de Gaulle has indeed a tremendous task before him.

Review

The Blue Ants

By Robert Guillain, Secker & Warburg, London, 1957, price 25 sh.

IF *Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai* is to become more than a noisy slogan in the service of political expediency, India needs to study the developments in China with acute care, for the good-neighbour policy in politics must be founded on an appreciative understanding of the forces moulding the neighbour's thoughts and actions. And *The Blue Ants* which is a before-and-after account written by an experienced French journalist and scholar who knew the Kuomintang China, can be read with profit; the incurable dialectician can triumphantly point to the material achievements of the new regime; the inveterate liberal can have his normal wounds reopened; and the reader, with a mind still open to conviction, is sure to find good food for thought.

Mao Tse-tung's China, we are told, can boast of impressive material success, but is a woeful tragedy from the social humanitarian point of view. Imagine China with no flies, no spitting, no gambling, no beggars, no prostitutes and no disorderly crowds! China without poverty and filth? No, not yet. But they are on the way out, for China has become methodical and a strong government has firmly harnessed the dormant energies of the millions; it reinvests 20% (as compared with 2-3% in other Asian countries) of the total revenue. (This figure does not seem accurate: China invests 20% of its national income, and the figure for other Asian countries is too generalised and too low; while India, for instance, reinvests over 10% of its national income.) Factories multiply, production graphs rise and the industrial workers devoutly support the regime. But what about the peasants, who for centuries obeyed only the elements? They too obey the commissars. "The Law of the peasant" was only a temporary phase; their dispossession by the state is to proceed via collectivisation. China—and this, in the author's opinion, is the communist regime's most momentous achievement—is at last united and unified by one party, one language and one élan-marxism. Unfortunately it has also become uniformed—a blue cotton uniform for the body and a misty grey for the mind!

But what is the price of the obvious material and technological progress which is loudly advertised throughout the country? The Juggernaut of dialectical materialism has passed over the land, levelling all tall poppies, all diversities. The first casualty was the Chinese sense of humour; then followed the intellectual torment of implacable indoctrination—regimented life, mutual distrust and fear. To have individual opinion is monumental egotism; to doubt is to be damned; and deviation means death. Why seek truth when it is already known? All good men follow the right path and those who don't cannot expect to survive their folly for long. Socialist realism rules supreme

in art and literature; both substance and form are determined for the artist. Like a good soldier he too must never question orders. Nothing from Plato to Laski can enter the country without passing the acid test of commissar censorship. The old China bound the feet of its women; the new China is binding the heads of men and women alike. What is to be done when the revolutionists become conservatives, the atheist believer, and the rebel conformist?

The new rulers of China carry out the socialisation of the brain in two stages; first the bourgeois filth is washed out, and then it is filled with the right collective ideas. Guillain points out that China has cut itself completely from its ancient past. A nation of ancestor worshippers is doing the last honours to Confucius and its old culture—they are being admitted into the museum! China is being "Westernized" (more precisely industrialised) on the Russian model—a process which the Americans had attempted to bring about with Chiang Kai Shaik. She dispels the illusion of those who still indulge in wishful thinking and believe that Chinese communism is different from Russian communism, nay perhaps its rival. In fact, China openly admits to being an extension of Russia's Five Year Plans. Furthermore, Russia is in no way imposing itself on its neighbours, for China frankly invites further aid and guidance from the Big Brother.

The open forbidden world of China is still far from freely accessible to anyone other than fellow-communists or—travellers. Guillain's book, is therefore, all the more valuable, for it is an honest and unprejudiced account of a writer who refuses to have himself labelled as belonging to either of the two political camps. Though I found his original series of articles in *Le Monde* more stimulating, both for substance and for style, *The Blue Ants* is a remarkable evaluation of the rapidly moving New China. All those in India who are aware of the growing impact of China on the whole of Asia will find it most useful in making a critical appraisal of its social and economic policies.

IDA DHAMI

I. C. C. F. NEWS

The Patna Group arranged for the performance of Mr. Jack Teagarden and his Sextet comprising one of the finest Jazz exponents of the United States. The concert was held at Lady Stephen's Hall on October 14. The concert was a great success.

Mr. Tibor Meray, the young Hungarian writer was in Bombay on October 10 and 11. He delivered a public lecture under the auspices of the Committee on October 10, on "The Hungarian Prospects". Mr. H. R. Pardivala, Bar-at-Law, presided.

Dr. Daya Krishna of the Saugar University, who had just returned after attending the Seminar on "Representative Government and Public Liberties in New States" held in Rhodes, gave a talk on October 24, on the discussions that took place in the Seminar. Mr. V. B. Karnik introduced the lecturer.

With Many Voices

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

—Tennyson.

Parliamentary democracy has succeeded 100 per cent in India.

—Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, *Statesman*, Sept. 30

Party system is totally unsuited to India.

—Jayaprakash Narayan, *Hindustan Times*, Sept. 30

Democracy is not proving to be a particularly viable political form in Asia.

—C. L. Sulzberger, *New York Times*, October 12.

The question: "After Nehru, what?" now begins to appear ominous in the light of the developments in Pakistan.

—*Examiner*, October 18.

If democracy fails in Mr. Nehru's subcontinent, the rest of Asia will draw a dictatorship moral.

—*News Chronicle*, London, October 13.

The suppression in some of our countries of democracy by dictatorial forms of military governments, I do not take it as a sign of the failure of democracy in our countries but rather—at least I hope so—teething troubles of our own democracies.

—S. Bandarnaike, Prime Minister of Ceylon, *Hindu*, October 17.

Conditions prevailing in France immediately prior to the French Revolution were almost similar to those now obtaining in India.

—Dr. Triguna Sen, Mayor of Calcutta, *Hindustan Standard*, October 17.

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Democracy without education is hypocrisy without limitation.

—President Mirza of Pakistan, *Time Magazine*, October 20.

I do not believe in guided democracy.

—U. Nu, Burmese Prime Minister, *Times of India*, October 16.

Have you ever heard of Lenin or Stalin standing for election?

—Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, *Statesman*, October 7.

My authority is revolution, I have no sanction of law or constitution. I have only the sanction of my conscience.

—President Mirza of Pakistan, *New York Times*, October 10.

I am a Westerner, and will remain so.

—President Habib Bourgiba of Tunisia, *Times of India*, October 17.

Whether you talk of a communist state like the Soviet Union, or many non-communist states that are highly industrialised, in the final analysis they worship the same gods, the god of industrialisation, the god of the machine.

—Prime Minister Nehru, *Time Magazine*, October 20.

A spectre is haunting the communist world—the spectre of Revisionism. —*Link Magazine*, October 12

Considerable body of opinion is inclined to think Sarvodaya has spiritual affinity with communism. And the fact that Russophiles and Sinophiles are not rare among Gandhians lends point to that view.

—*Radical Humanist*, October 12.

Hunger is more important even than freedom, except in odd individuals.

—Prime Minister Nehru, *Time Magazine*, October 20.

It is hard to make communists of Poles: they are too Catholic, and they have a sense of humour.

—Adlai Stevenson, *New York Times*, October 2.

The existence of a Communist Government in Kerala is like having foreign rule in the country because the communists always look to foreign countries for advice.

—M. S. Golwalkar, R. S. S. Chief, *Sunday Standard*, October 5.