

OCTOBER 1954

A Free Or Regulated Press?

by V. B. Karnik

FREEDOM of the press is one of the essential requirements of a free society. It is only through a free press that information can be communicated and ideas can be canvassed which enable the people to exercise their sovereign right of moulding society according to their will. A society progresses on the basis of a march of ideas, social, political and technological. A free press enables those ideas to be freely expressed and debated and accepted or controverted.

Democracy is a rule of the people by the people. But the people cannot rule themselves properly if they are not adequately informed about public affairs. It is the task of the press to make that information available to the people in an objective and dispassionate manner. The press cannot perform that task successfully unless it is free from official control.

In no country is the press free from abuses. Many a time it gets under the control of a few financiers, who then utilise it for advancing their own interests as against those of the society as a whole. Many a time it gets into the hands of unscrupulous persons who specialise in arousing the passions of the people or in dishing out for their so-called entertainment stories of crime or sex.

These are grave abuses which require to be remedied. But the remedy against them is not the strait jacket of governmental control. In the first place, governmental control is ineffective. Ways can be easily found to circumvent the regulations that may be prescribed. In the next place, the remedy against the evil gives rise to another evil of an even more malignant character. It is the evil of the subservience of the press to the government.

The slow but the sure way of curing the press of the existing evils is to educate public opinion. An en-

lightened public will demand from its newspapers a high standard of truth and decency. It will not tolerate newspapers which give one-sided or distorted reports on public affairs or which pander to the low tastes of some readers. The public is the patron of newspapers and the latter cannot deny it too long the standard of dispassionate purveying of news that it demands from them. Journalists can also play an important role in improving the standards. They belong to a noble profession and a heavy responsibility rests upon them of upholding its best traditions.

It is in the light of these considerations that one must view the recommendations made by the Press Commission. The Report made by the Commission is of a monumental character. It is a mine of very useful information and contains an able survey of the press industry as a whole. It is not proposed here to discuss the Report, which will need exhaustive treatment which is not possible within the ambit of a short article. What is proposed is only to assess the merits of some of the important recommendations made by the Commission.

One of the most significant recommendations of the Commission is regarding the pay scales and conditions of service of working journalists. A free press cannot be developed in the country without securing the services of men of talent and integrity. If such men are to be attracted to the profession of journalism they must be assured a fair income and a reasonable amount of security. Criticism has been levelled against the recommendation that, if accepted, it will drive out of business many newspapers. There does not appear to be much force in the criticism. The press is a growing industry and from the figures collected by the Commission it does not appear that newspapers are not making profits. In any case, a concern that cannot pay a minimum wage to its employees does not deserve to remain in business. It is to be hoped that the scales and conditions recommended by the Commission will be treated only as the minimum and that more prosperous newspapers will be persuaded to treat their employees more generously.

As an antidote against uneconomic competition indulged in by bigger newspapers against smaller newspapers the Commission has recommended the reintroduction of the price-page schedule such as was in force during war years. It is difficult to be enthusiastic about this recommendation. During the war years it was imposed because of scarcity of newsprint. The object now in view is different. It is to save smaller newspapers from being driven out of business by bigger newspapers. The object is praiseworthy, but it is doubtful if the price-page schedule will be able to achieve it.

The Commission has recommended the appointment of a Press Registrar for compilation of all facts and figures relating to the press industry and publication of an annual report. This is a welcome suggestion provided the Press Registrar is only authorised to collect facts and figures and publish them. He should have no other and more powers. A report published from year to year regarding the state of the press will help the public to know the facts and to bring their influence to bear on the evils which may be brought to light. This would be an effective way of building up a vigorous public opinion in favour of an independent and responsible press.

It is regrettable that the majority of the Commission has gone on record in support of the existing shackles imposed upon the press by the press laws. It is particularly regrettable that the majority has recommended the continuance of the Press (Objectionable Matters) Act. The Act is an invidious piece of legislation. The press is not demanding any special privileges. Why should it be then subjected to special penalties? The ordinary law of the land is enough to bring offending newspapers to book if they commit any offences. The Government on the other hand proposes to go a step further. It proposes to make the defamation of public servants a special offence thereby enabling the Public Prosecutor to launch prosecution. This is one more fetter which is being forged.

The most objectionable recommendation of the Commission is the suggestion that the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act should be made applicable to the newspaper industry. The ostensible purpose of the suggestion is to help the collection of statistics on an all-India basis. But the recommendation, if accepted, will not be confined to that narrow purpose. It is bound to have far-reaching consequences. It will subject the newspaper industry to the close control of the Government. Once this initial step is taken the door is left open for the Government to proceed further when it chooses and dictate to newspapers what they should or should not write and what they should or should not publish. It is in the light of this far-reaching consequence of the recommendation that it should be vigorously opposed by all those who stand for the freedom of press.

The bias of the Commission appears to be in favour of more and more State control. It has recommended the setting up of a Press Council for the self-government of the industry. The Council is to be set up by the Government and not by the industry itself. In

the circumstances it is difficult to regard it as an essay in self-government. The essence of the matter is that there should be as little control of the Government over the press as possible. The Commission does not appear to accept that point. Many of the vital recommendations made by it, like the one for State monopoly of newsprint trade, are calculated to result in giving the State more power to control the press. Viewed in this light, the Report of the Commission is not likely to give much comfort to those who believe in the development of a free and self-reliant press.

The newspaper industry in the country is still in its initial stage. According to the Report of the Commission, there are only 320 daily newspapers with a total circulation of little over 25 lakhs for a population of over 36 crores. That gives an indication of the vast scope that exists for the expansion of the newspaper industry. Literacy is growing in the country and with the growth of literacy the demand for newspapers is also bound to grow. The press could therefore confidently look forward to a very rapid growth of its circulation and influence. Such development of the press will not, however, be facilitated if certain recommendations of the Commission are implemented.

With the growth of the press some abuses are bound to creep in. The best remedy against them is to leave the press free to deal with them and to develop a strong public opinion against those abuses. To invite government intervention to check them is to surrender a large part of the freedom of the press. Thomas Jefferson, the most notable amongst the founders of the American Republic, said on one occasion that all other freedoms can be sacrificed but not the freedom of the press as it is the foundation of all other freedoms. The liberty of the mind expresses itself through the freedom of the press and the liberty of the mind is the very foundation of a free society. It will be criminal to forget these basic truths in the anxiety to deal with temporary abuses that crop up from time to time.

FREEDOM FIRST

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Notes

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YET one more douche of cold water is on its way from Mao Tse-tung to the thick skulls of those who insist on seeing in him a potential Tito. While the Yugoslav Government is busy dismantling the structure of collective farming and is endeavouring to put the peasant on his feet as a free farmer, the Chinese Government is accelerating the tempo of collectivisation.

In an important article in *Pravda*, Liao Lu-yan, Deputy Head of the farming division of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee, has unfolded plans which reveal that "in less than ten years, a hundred million families farming on a peasant scale will have been pressed into collective agricultural units." So far, laments Liao, only 2% of peasant holdings have been collectivised, but by 1957 he promises that just over a third will receive this treatment. It is recorded in the article that the first big push has already taken place between October 1953 and April 1954, during which period the number of families herded into collectives rose from 273,000 to 1,660,000. "Over the same period, collective farms increased from 14,000 to nearly 100,000."

In Soviet Russia, the effort at collectivisation had resulted in a widespread famine and the liquidation of three million *kulaks* (*ryots*) in the thirties. There only twenty million families had been involved in the operation whereas in China five times as many are concerned. The mind boggles at the proportions of the human misery that is in store for the Chinese peasantry. It is obvious that, like the Bourbons, the communist—whether he be in Russia, China or India—learns nothing and forgets nothing. His dogma is all that matters to him and China must be a carbon copy of Russia.

The latest news only confirms the apprehension voiced over a year ago by *Freedom First*, that, as in Eastern Europe before, the much vaunted agrarian reforms of June 30, 1950, were a cynical fraud on the Chinese peasants. The very first section of the Land Reform Law had then laid down that "the land tenure based on feudal exploitation is being abolished and replaced by a system based on peasant ownership." Now peasant ownership, with which the farmer was lured into supporting Mao's dictatorship, goes overboard and the communist bosses come out in their true colours.

Purblind

WHAT, against this background, is one to think of the purblindness of so many people in the rest of the world? The statements made so far by Mr. Attlee and Mr. Bevan are compositions in which sense

and nonsense jostle for front place. The desire for peace and trade—or should it be trade and peace?—is evidently so strong as to fog the vision of these mature politicians. They have justified the criticism of their colleague, Mr. Hector McNeil, Minister of State in a former Labour Government, who described their visit as foolish and ill-timed as well as the boos and catcalls with which the news reel showing their departure from Moscow was greeted in several London cinemas.

How refreshing in contrast is it to read the wise and lucid impressions of their Indian socialist colleague, Mr. Brajkishore Shastri, in his new publication *From My China Diary* (Siddhartha Publications, 35 Faiz Bazar, Delhi—Re. 1/-). The P.S.P. would do well to send each of the British travellers a copy of this little book, so sensitive and instinct with real understanding of the plight of the Chinese peasants and workers.

Meanwhile, New Delhi proceeds merrily with its own illusions. Not content with giving Chinese communist engineers an opportunity to join in moulding—or sabotaging?—plans for flood control in North East India, they are now engaged in reducing the cable rates for press messages between China and India in an effort to "help free flow of information between the two countries."

Free flow from whom and to whom? Has New Delhi cared to pose itself this question? Here is what Brajkishore Shastri has to say about the press in China: "Since all newspapers are owned or controlled by the Government there is hardly anything in them which might reasonably be called news as we understand it. American atrocities in Korea, production figures of a certain factory, harvest in a certain village were about all the news the Chinese newspapers seem interested in. It is not incorrect to say that on the whole the Chinese student as well as the newspaper reader is ignorant of what is happening in the world. Of course, nobody can subscribe to a foreign newspaper. Even short-wave radios are banned. Even those Chinese who may somehow manage to have a radio set capable of catching foreign stations simply do not have the courage to listen to foreign news."

Who then in China would read the news of what is happening in India—of our democratic processes, of our river valley schemes and of our economic developments? Who indeed will benefit from these concessions except the Tass and New China news agencies who will continue to purvey the usual lies about our country?

And who in India would benefit by cheaper news from China and who would be the purveyors of the news? In the absence of facilities for correspondents of newspapers in the free world to function in communist China, the answer is obvious. It will be the G. K. Reddys about whose reporting *Freedom First* has had reason to comment earlier.

A book appropriately entitled *Planned Perfidy* by Alan Winnington and Wilfred Burchett, British and Australian scribes who accompanied the North Korean and Chinese aggressors when soldiers from their countries were dying in defence of freedom and

the United Nations in Korea, has been published in Peking. These men escaped conviction on charges of high treason against their countries only because technically a state of war with North Korea had not been declared. Readers of the *Times of India* and the *Hindustan Times* will be interested to know that among those to whose "objectivity and fairmindedness" tribute is paid in this book are Messrs. G. K. Reddy and Poonen Abraham.

Special Marriage Bill

THE Special Marriage Bill which is being currently debated in Parliament deserves the support of all those who are interested in social progress. It is a modest attempt to evolve a common law on the subject of marriage for all citizens of India. The law will be of a permissive character and there will be no compulsion on those who desire to follow their traditional laws or customs to register their marriages according to the new law. The law will enable those who so desire to solemnise their marriages before a civil authority without having to renounce their religion. One of the significant features of the proposed law is the provision for dissolution of marriage by mutual consent. There was violent opposition to this provision and to the Bill in general from orthodox elements. They do not take kindly to attempts to reorder social life on rational lines. We are happy that they did not succeed on this occasion in killing the Bill, for which a very large measure of credit is due to the Prime Minister. He intervened energetically on a couple of occasions, and saved the Bill from being smothered by the forces of social reaction. It is to be hoped that this modest measure will be a forerunner of others of a more far-reaching character calculated to rid the Indian society of many of its oppressive and unjust practices and institutions. Political freedom will not endure unless it is given the solid foundation of social freedom.

Bombay Government and Bhoodan

IT is difficult to understand the motive of the Government of Bombay in proposing in the Bhoodan Bill to set up committees for the distribution of lands donated in pursuance of the Bhoodan Movement without the active co-operation of its author Acharya Vinoba Bhave and his associates. The Government of Bihar had also tried to do the same thing, but had to give up the plan in the end and to agree to leave the work of redistribution to Acharya Bhave and his lieutenants. It should be plain to everybody that Acharya Bhave who has initiated the Movement and who is collecting the land gifts will be in a better position to reallocate the lands to deserving persons than the nominees of the Government. The Government of Bombay will, it is hoped, see the force of this argument and make the necessary changes in the Bill.

Unwarranted Action

A COUPLE of weeks back the Government of Delhi seized from a printing press copies of a pamphlet entitled "Communist Conspiracy in Kashmir." This unwarranted action of the State Government has received very little publicity in the press. It is, as a matter of fact, a gross violation of the freedom of press. As such it should have been universally condemned by all those who stand for freedom of the press. If the pamphlet contained any objectionable matter the writer and the printer could have been brought before a court of law. But far from doing that the Government have merely seized the copies of the pamphlet. This gives rise to the suspicion that they have no case which they can take to a court of law. Was it then their desire to hide from the public what communists are doing in Kashmir that prompted their action? If the Government desire that the public should not draw such an inference they should release the copies and make proper amends to the writer and the printer.

Lost Ground

TUCKED away in the columns of the Indian Press was a French news agency report from Siagon which stated that "French guards had fired at a crowd of Viet-minh prisoners who were mutinying on board the ship taking them to the communist area of Indo China in protest against their repatriation." No further news came; no explanation was vouchsafed. The 2,500 hapless prisoners were evidently handed back to the communist tormentors from whose clutches they had once escaped.

Perhaps the one moral gain of the Korean settlement was that over 20,000 Chinese and North Korean POWs successfully resisted all the pressure brought on them to return to their communist homelands. Now evidently the French, following on their miserable capitulation at Geneva, have lost the ground gained in Korea. It is a tragedy that has passed unnoticed in a world that is busy buying peace at almost any price.

Is it any wonder that, encouraged by such supine surrender of principles, the Soviet agent Ho Chi Minh should cast off what little pretence remained about his real character and demand, as he has over the Viet-minh radio on September 1, that the Vietnamese people should "realise close unity . . . first and foremost with the people of China and the Soviet Union. We must be united like a *bloc* to oppose the plot of peace-saboteurs, namely, American materialists, French warmongers and their henchmen"?

A Beginning

IT is against the background of this mounting threat of further communist aggression in Asia, as demonstrated also by building up of rebels like K. I. Singh of Nepal and Pridi of Thailand and the threat of an attack on Formosa, that the success of the

Manila Conference, although it has led only to a partial measure in collective security, marks a beginning which may one day burgeon into a full-fledged system of collective defence.

Four features of the Treaty signed at Manila are of particular significance. The first is the loyalty demonstrated to the Charter of the United Nations. The second is the success of the efforts of the Asian participants in securing the inclusion in the Pact of a declaration for the freedom and right to self-determination of the countries of the region.

A third aspect, which is not so happy, is the elimination of the concept in the original draft of the Treaty that it was directed specifically against communist aggression. This change, which was evidently secured by the efforts of Britain, France and Pakistan, is an unfortunate one since it gives ground for the fear that the Pact might be invoked in the case of disputes within the free world itself. It is therefore reassuring that the United States have made a reservation that they understand the Pact to be directed against communist aggression alone.

The fourth significant feature is the inclusion within the scope of the defence pact of the territories of Laos, Cambodia and what remains free of Vietnam, south of the new boundary line by which, as in Korea that country is now partitioned.

It was none else than U Nu, the socialist Prime Minister of Burma, who had first warned against the danger of leaving these small nations on the border of the free world to their fate. In a press interview in the beginning of August, U Nu had suggested that the independence of Laos and Cambodia should be guaranteed by the readiness of the United Nations to fight for those two countries. Unfortunately, as Mr. Dodds Parker, the British Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, explained during a recent visit to Colombo, "there is no security within the United Nations, with the Russians enjoying the veto." It is to stop this dangerous breach that the South-East Asia Defence Pact has been concluded and a line has at last been drawn across which communist imperialism can aggress only at its peril. A great deal, however, yet remains to be done on the political, ideological, economic and military fronts to supplement the beginning that has been made in Manila.

John O'London's Weekly

AT a time when digests of capsule thinking and mass pandering of dubious tastes, under the guise of providing "entertainment" to weary humanity, are in vogue, the discriminating among us had cause to feel quite jubilant a short while ago with the stepping in by *Encounter* and *The London Magazine* to fill the vacuum created by the folding up of *Horizon* and *Strand*.

Early last month, however, came the saddening news of *John O'London's Weekly* stopping publication after a remarkably long career of nearly 1575 issues.

That the inability to pay its way through commercially was the reason why such a stalwart as *John O'London's Weekly* had to cease publication is

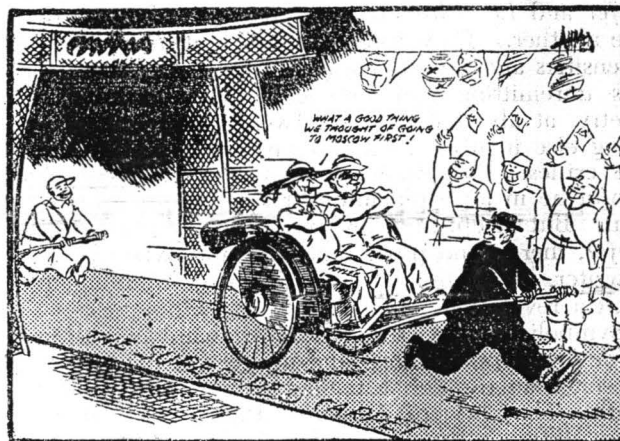
a sharp slap in the face of the blatantly loud minded readership of our time. In an age when cultural values are unceasingly menaced from all quarters, we would, in the words of Wordsworth, like to welcome many a new *John O'London's Weekly*, as:

...Thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exaltations, agonies
And love, and man's
unconquerable mind.

Instead, we are called upon to sign an obituary!!

Stephen Spender's Visit

AT the invitation of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom the wellknown British Poet Stephen Spender is visiting India towards the end of October. He will be in India for a month and will visit Madras, Bangalore, Bombay, Calcutta, Lucknow, Delhi and a couple of other places. A programme of lectures on various subjects has been arranged which he will be delivering at all places that he visits.



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Arthur Rimbaud: Le Voyant

by Yatim Ghaznavi

On October 20, 1954, falls the birth centenary of an extraordinary poetic genius, of a poetic "meteor," as Mallarmé was to define him at the close of the symbolist period: Arthur Rimbaud. *FREEDOM FIRST* is privileged to publish for the first time an essay primarily concerned with an evaluation of Rimbaud's poetic work — EDITOR.

Si je désire une eau d'Europe, c'est la flache
Noire et froide où vers le crépuscule embaumé
Un enfant accroupi plein de tristesses, lâche
Un bateau frère comme un papillon de mai.

—*Le Bateau Ivre*

NO single solution and no single system explains the poetry of Arthur Rimbaud. The temptation of each critic has been to elucidate Rimbaud by means of one theory, to reduce his work to a wilful unification. But the three works, the poetry, *Une Saison En Enfer* and *Les Illuminations*, are very different from one another. They reflect the different moments and intensities and preoccupations of the poet's character. His unremitting and irrevocable abandonment of poetry, at about the age of twenty, more than anything else in his career, has mystified and intrigued the critics. For many of them the principal clue would be in an explanation of this unique renunciation. But except for a few passages in *Une Saison En Enfer*, there is no proof that Rimbaud, when he was a writer, between 1870 and 1874, ever contemplated such a reversal.

Symbolists were attracted to Rimbaud much more through the unusualness and mystery of his case and career, than through a feeling and sympathy for his work. They were aware that his writings were different from the splenetic laments of Laforgue, from the amorous, nostalgic chants of Verlaine and from the metaphysical dream of Mallarmé. Because of *Le Bateau Ivre*, Rimbaud was essentially for them a sea adventurer, a modern Ulysses or Merlin. They could easily associate *Le Bateau Ivre* with *L'Invitation Au Voyage* of Baudelaire and *Brise Marine* of Mallarmé. Many knew that Rimbaud was living at Aden and they could interpret this as a realization of the voyage poem.

To the portrait of Rimbaud the adventurer which the symbolists cherished was soon added the statue of Rimbaud the sanctified. Jacques Rivière analysed Rimbaud's revolt as belonging to a metaphysical order, and went so far in his demonstration to call Rimbaud the purely innocent, a being exempt from original sin. The sense in which Rimbaud is a mystical writer is difficult to define. No writer is less naturalistic than he. The surrealists, during the years between the two wars, realized this, and adopted Rimbaud as an exponent of the supra-sensible, as the great investigator of the surreal and the infinite. They saw him as a liberator of the imagination whose major activity had taken place on the frontiers of the unreal or on

the most distant confines of the real. Rightfully they considered his *Les Illuminations* a work by a genius not purely man.

But the aesthetics of Rimbaud the *voyant* has some thing almost too active and violent for the principal discipline of the surrealists, their passivity, their persistent questioning of the subconscious. The movement and rhythm of *Les Illuminations* testify to a more deliberate conscious means of arriving at derangement. Whereas the surrealist watches and waits for the unpredictable manifestation of the subconscious, Rimbaud violates his mind and ravishes the images as they form. His poetic secrets are the result of a spiritual rape and conquest. His art is the seizure of his own reality.

EACH poet reaches in himself some private part, some extraordinary domain, by ways that are open only to him. What is common, for example, to symbolist poets writing between 1875 and 1890 is of fairly slight significance. What does count is precisely what makes Rimbaud different from every other poet in the world, what makes a line by Baudelaire exclusively his and distinguishable from every other line of poetry. Each poet is unique. Each great poem is incomparable. A man becomes a poet by reaching this absolute intimacy of his own. His poetic creation will therefore be a defiance of ordinary verbal communication. Its origin lies in the ineffable part of his own being and therefore are much closer to the silence of the universe than to its noises and verbal vulgarities.

As with Baudelaire, Rimbaud believes that poetic language contains all sensations, perfumes, sounds, colours. Words are magical recipes and self-contained myths. They possess a unique kind of truthfulness, not to be confused or contaminated with historical truth. The new method of attaining poetic truth is lofty and perilous. It demands the destruction of order, conventions, patterns, rules. It runs the risk of leaving the poet midway between the old and the new method, of making him simply into a despoiler of order, an iconoclast.

The enterprise has a superhuman aspect, in seeking to reach visions which existed before the poet himself did, in reaching to his prehistorical memory. Such

poetry is an ascesis, a power that will convert a man into a real poet, a stealer of fire, a Prometheus. Poems on such experience will be his irresponsibilities; according to Fowlie, Reneville, in his study of Rimbaud considered these poetic experiments quite comparable to the exercises of the Hindu mystics by which they tried to merge their will with the Universal consciousness.

The almost terrifying directness of Rimbaud's poetry takes over the reader and holds his attention. This time the poet has succeeded in transcribing immediately his vision. The shock of Rimbaud's poetry comes perhaps from this quality. When Claudel first read *Les Illuminations*, the shock was one of unpredictable revelation. He believed he saw in the prose poems an elucidation on the very meaning of poetry, which he was to call the recreation of everything that exists, a new birth of the world and of oneself.

The prose poems are all illuminations of a secret catastrophe we can only guess at. Their universe is incoherent. Their fragmentariness, despite the frequent sumptuousness of their language, sets them off from our familiar world of appearances. Their element is discontinuity. Each poem is separated from all the rest, and strains to discover again its context. Pictures that are incompatible with one another, farewells that may be preludes, visions that are both mystical and erotic, explosions of anger and introversions, these are the themes of *Les Illuminations*.

After going through in *Une Saison En Enfer* an experience which some would equate with damnation, in *Les Illuminations* Rimbaud learns something of the greatest catastrophe for an artist, that of incommunicability. The possible anguish of such an experience may have been enough to explain the poet's silence which began after *Les Illuminations* were completed and which lasted until the poet's last days.

RIMBAUD undoubtedly thought—not the only one to do so of course—that in a world of ever increasing uniformity and restriction, dreams offered the only safe refuge for a poet anxious to expound his individuality and enjoy that measure of freedom which is necessary for the cultivation of metaphorical warts on the face. The attitude is understandable, but fallacious: firstly, because the strangeness of dream is no guarantee that a poem written out of it will be good poetry; secondly, because not long afterwards it became plain that dreams are not quite “free” as he had hoped.

Rimbaud's merit as a poet rest on something very different from his capacity to have strange dreams in greater number than anyone else, just as Van Gogh's greatness is something more than an insistence on yellows. The strange dreams and the yellows are not excluded from the greatness: they are used by it.

The much-discussed relationship with Verlaine, if it is considered in its analogy with Rimbaud's poetry, reveals its importance and its uniqueness which far exceeds any biographical or psychological importance. The literal story, as much as is known of it, is com-

posed of passion, absurdity and tawdriness. It is drab in the routine of tavern existence and poverty. It is melodramatic in the intervention of Verlaine's wife and the two mothers and the final pistol shot. It even involved court proceedings and imprisonment.

The moments of elation and happiness seem to have been offset by many moments of despair and disgust. Through all of the episodes two kinds of magic preserved it: intoxication and poetry. How closely they are related can be seen not only in the ancient Dionysos-tragedy ritual, but in the Rimbaud-Verlaine attempt to exceed ordinary living. Intoxication and poetry are two ways of blotting out the real world, of making it absent, of literally leaving the world. Poetry is intoxication when, as in the case of Rimbaud, the most infernal hours of life are transfigured and redeemed.

The poetic theory of Rimbaud has always to be considered from the viewpoint of his final silence. This silence was more dramatic and absolute than that of Mallarme and Valery and the surrealists, but it is closely related to theirs. Rimbaud was at all times more capable of absolute silence because he had something of mystic's temperament which would know that for absolute truth there is no literary expression, no recognizable formulation of thought.

LE BATEAU IVRE, written at the beginning of the four years of Rimbaud's career as a poet, is not only a successful poem itself, but is the archetype of all the future work. It contains his principal themes, the order of his experiences, the evolution of his work and his poetics. The poem is about the one called away from his familiar world, who leaves the land for the ocean and discovers there fresh marvellous contacts with the waves. When the tempest comes, the sea assumes the form of a beast and the poet becomes aware of lurking monsters and menaces. He is caught in cataracts and maelstroms, in a total submersion in the wild elements. Then begins the disillusion, the period of martyrdom and fatigue. The voyager is tired of all excesses. He is on his knees, now, aware of the drownings going on within the range of vision, and aware of his growing nostalgia for the past. These awarenesses grow into a need to escape again, this time from the hell of his illusions, and to return to cities. He wills the most humble return possible, the one most lacking in grandeur and waves, the return to a child's mudpuddle.

In one way, *Le Bateau Ivre* is an answer to the poser in Baudelaire's *L'Invitation Au Voyage*: “What have you seen?” The question was asked by a child, by a *cerveau enfantin*, and Rimbaud's answer is appropriately that of a child. The poem signifies, from start to finish, a child's world. Baudelaire had written that great works of the creative spirit represent a recapture of childhood, and Rimbaud substantiates this theory in *Le Bateau Ivre*.

Between the extreme poles of Rimbaud as *voyou* (Fondane) and Rimbaud as catholic (Riviere), the exegesis range. Each thesis is full and as substantiated as the others. Each system is convincing, and

(Continued on page 10)

Breaking The Human Spirit

by Nissim Ezekiel

IGOR Gouzenko is well-known as the person in the Soviet Embassy, Ottawa, whose defection in 1945 with top-secret documents revealed the Russian spy-network in Canada. He wrote *The Fall of a Titan** in hiding, protected by the Canadian Government. Presumably, it is his first novel, and the impulse to write it seems to have arisen from a desire to tell the truth about day-to-day life in Soviet Russia. The result of this endeavour is interesting in its own right, apart from the author's technique of fiction, the intrinsic dramatic appeal of the story and the prose style.

As fiction, *The Fall of a Titan* is no ordinary performance. The open narrative form is kept firmly related to a single theme, thus achieving both, organic unity and panoramic range. The plot follows a lengthy (680 pages) and at times tortuous courses. The author's obvious intention is to take in as many aspects of Soviet life as possible. Having grown up with the Soviet State, as the blurb states, and "subjected to the full blast of Communist doctrine," he is thoroughly acquainted with its effects on human personality. His choice of methods for portraying the "new Soviet Man" is of a blandly prosaic realism.

This realism, highlighted by tellingly perspicacious phrases, and passages of precise objective description, is altogether convincing. It lacks genius but not fire. Its appeal emerges from the natural power of the eye when it is clearly focussed on the object. It cannot be said that nothing is contrived to serve the author's ideological purposes. At the same time, the unity of theme and a gift for creating real personages saves *The Fall of a Titan* from episodic fragmentation and abstract didacticism.

The theme is based on the widely held belief about Maxim Gorki's disillusion with communism, during the last few years of his life, his refusal to support it when pressure is brought upon him to do so, and his eventual destruction by it. He is thinly disguised as Gorin, author of "Father" and other novels which expressed the pure Utopian fervour of the early Russian revolutionaries. This is the Titan of the novel, causing disquiet among the Kremlin murderers by his silence—interpreted by the police state as a form of revolt in one so eminent—about the totalitarian and terrorist character of Soviet authority.

One difference between Gouzenko's book and anti-communist novels of various kinds is worth mentioning. The characters here are shown going about their *normal* business, in the main, and living the *normal* lives of Soviet citizens. In that respect *The*

Fall of a Titan is more terrifying than such a tour de force as "Darkness at Noon" which concentrates on the use of terror in a police state. Gouzenko deals with the fear in Soviet life, not by concentrating on it but by showing how all-pervasive it is. No matter who is described, the predominating impression is of fear each character knows *all the time* that his status in society can be suddenly transformed into that of a victim. Nothing then can save him from perpetual misery and eventual destruction.

This method of portraying Russian society can be used only by a Russian writer. It is modified but not weakened in Gouzenko's novel by the conspiratorial theme for it is made to appear natural in the Soviet set-up. The task of breaking a man's will by the unscrupulous use of power is part of the Soviet way of government. As the author laconically comments at the outset, "... it was not the first time that the Politburo had run up against the problem of turning a man into a slave. That branch of science had reached a high state of efficiency; it had become a fine art. The most able, the most experienced people were engaged in it."

It is in that spirit that Prof. Novikov undertakes the task of converting Gorin into an ally of Soviet tyranny. The background of the slave society in which the attempt is made is richly worked-in with much detail and fluency. At times it becomes a weird, fantastic picture and puts a great strain on the reader's credibility. Yet, within the framework of cruelty, treachery, unscrupulousness, sycophancy and lust, Gouzenko has packed redeeming images of human love and natural beauty. His women characters in particular, pulsate with life, their dignity, suffering and tragic destiny made flesh by the author's candidly sensuous touches.

In a novel of 680 pages it would be surprising if one could find the virtue of compression, selection and symbolism. The characters come crowding in, scores of them, from all walks of life, with their individual weaknesses and strong points ably hit off, stage managed with increasingly astonishing virtuosity. There are plots and counter plots, murders, abductions, thefts, political liquidations, insanity, convict processions, adolescent vice, drawing room vulgarity and even mass rape. There are marriages made and broken, betrayals galore, opportunism unlimited, all the paraphernalia of the Soviet shop-window for visitors, foreign delegations, disguised concentration camps, manoeuvres in the University, corruption, crime and nepotism in the routine politics of the Soviet State. Gouzenko's merit as a novelist is to make these things absolutely real to the reader, a faithful reflection of the society in which he was born and brought up.

* *The Fall of a Titan* by Igor Gouzenko (Cassell, 18s.)

Review

The Captive Mind

by Czeslaw Milosz, Secker & Warburg, 18sh.

CZESLAW MILOSZ is a Polish writer and poet who left his country after trying to live under the 'new faith.' By going into exile he sacrificed much more than people who just leave behind material possessions; he left behind his birthright to write for his people in his own language; this is the supreme sacrifice a writer can bring for his integrity and freedom. Missionaries of the new faith like Pablo Neruda or, in our midst, Adib will dispose of Milosz and his book as a futile voice of stubborn petit bourgeois nationalism and reaction. They will dispose of his factual narrative either as lies or regrettable incidents necessitated by the greater force of historical reason. It is therefore the duty of all lovers of freedom to read the book and spread its message. Nothing might cure some of our befuddled intellectuals quicker than this realistic account of 'freedom' in a small country that has come under the political shadow of 'THE CENTRE.' The insidious methods used to bring people to heel by corruption or degradation or subtle conversion are explained with almost clinical accuracy. As these methods are already being employed in our very midst as part of the big softening up process, a wide-spread study of this book may have a wholesomely antiseptic effect.

The method employs the system of the gradual tightening of the screw. You don't know that you have been caught till it is too late and all avenues of retreat have been destroyed. The revolution that happened in the Eastern European countries at the end of the war was a revolution by decree. There had been liberation from the Nazis but the liberators were not welcome. The changes that came over these unhappy countries and turned them into colonies and satellites of 'THE CENTRE' was "indeed a peculiar revolution, there was not even a shadow of revolutionary dynamics in it; it was carried out by official decree." Bourgeois, nationalist and even catholic writers, intellectuals and artists found that the new masters were accommodating. They were safer and more prosperous than many of their colleagues who had been communists before but had not been quite satisfied with the way 'big brother' had gobbled up and exploited the new provinces of 'THE CENTRE.' For people who had not been able to write, publish and read, hear concerts or visit theatres during years of Nazi oppression and persecution, the new era began with a cultural honeymoon. While the old national flags fluttered again outside the windows, a stream of warm passionate patriotic literature flowed from the pens of the poets and writers. The beginning was liberal and practically everything passed the censor except direct hostile references to the U.S.S.R. One was not (yet) forced to praise it, could yet ignore it.

Once a writer had his article published by a Government journal or had his book printed in a Government Press, the screw was tightened. If he

did not take part in the general changes of the mind on which the new masters insisted he risked the newly acquired comforts, riches, popular successes and fame. Authors who were happy to see a couple of thousand copies of their books printed and sold before the war, now experienced the exhilarating fulfillment of their aspirations; ten thousand copies, hundred thousand copies, literary prizes, private studios—but when the time came to profess the new faith the alternative was simple: profess and continue the giddy flight to fame or fall back into the abyss of nameless and fameless oblivion. No terror, no deportation, no trials except in some special cases, just oblivion. Watching already published books being withdrawn from shops and libraries, having your name omitted from literary histories and journals, being denied every and any access to his audience, the writer undergoes agonies and tortures worse than the infamies of concentration camps. Many succumb, accept the temptation only to find themselves confronted with an even more devilish device of torture; the order to write. Slacking production may be taken as a sign of protest and will entail loss of all privileges. "He will have five desks in that elegant apartment of his, and on each, the beginning of a novel. And every day he'll howl with despair knowing that everything he writes is as dead as stone."

Some writers and others living under the new faith develop a system of selfdefence which permits some sort of survival. Milosz calls it 'Ketman' after the method of some Islamic heretics in Persia in the days of greatest orthodoxy. The system consists of outward co-operation in order to maintain a secret domain of freedom and resistance. This necessitates a daily snake dance of most intricate evolutions and involutions in order to avoid giving oneself away. Milosz asserts that millions on every level of society in those 'captive' countries and even in the 'CENTRE' itself live by Ketman and create a kind of existence which is completely incomprehensible to people living under normal liberal conditions. It is here that Milosz is most critical of the propaganda that reaches these countries from the outside world. It is not only misdirected and without effect, it does a lot of harm. "A Pole, Czech or Hungarian practised in the art of dissimulation smiles when he learns that someone in the emigration has called him a traitor or swine at the very moment when this traitor or swine is engaged in a match of philosophical chess on whose outcome the fate of fifteen laboratories or twenty studios depends."

"The old and the new intelligentsia no longer speak a common language... Emigre politicians help greatly to facilitate the work of the government... Their listeners are not displeased to hear them abuse the government they, too, dislike; still they cannot treat their formulations seriously. The discrepancy between these politicians' favourite words and the real situation is too clear; the superiority of the dialecticians, whose reasoning is always adapted to actuality, is too obvious."

"The lone individual asks himself if his antagonism is not wrong; all he can oppose to the entire propa-

ganda apparatus are simply his irrational desires. Should he not, in fact, be ashamed of them."

"The creative man has no choice but to trust his inner command... this inner command is absurd if it is not supported by a belief in an order of values that exists beyond the changeability of human affairs, that is by a metaphysical belief. Herein lies the tragedy of the twentieth century. Today, only those people can create who still have this faith or who hold a position of lay stoicism. For the rest there remains the sorry lie of a safe place on the 'wave of the Future'." The intellectual weakness of the free democratic side and the lack of effective help that comes to the 'captive minds' behind the curtain is brought out forcefully in this book. A position of just being 'anti-' is not good enough in this struggle against the world's most ruthless realists.

Much could be said about 'Social Realism' which naturally finds exhaustive treatment in Milosz' book. S. R. is supposed to present reality not as a man *sees* it, but as he *understands* it. "Understanding that reality is in motion... the author should praise everything that is budding and censure everything that is becoming the past. The doctrine forces all art to become didactic." And finally this wonderful bon mot of literary criticism: "Socialist Realism strengthens weak talents and undermines great ones."

The 'Captive Mind' is a text book on the psychology of mass mental perversion. It has been written complete with minute clinical case studies of some of the victims. It is, unfortunately, in parts a bit too verbose and too full of stuffing and would well bear reduction in size to that of a hard hitting pamphlet. In that form it might prove an effective anti-biotic in cases who have had initial attacks by the virus.

R.V.L.

Postmarked Moscow

by Lydia Kirk, Gerald Duckworth, London, 18 sh. pp. 240.

THE book *Postmarked Moscow* by Lydia Kirk, wife of Admiral Kirk, is written more or less in the form of a journal and describes mostly her personal experiences and impressions during the period that her husband, Admiral Kirk, was the American Ambassador in Russia, from 1949 to 1952. She makes no attempt to hide her definite bias against Russia and especially its communist regime. However, she does also express her appreciation here and there of things Russian. There is nothing particularly new in what she says. We have all already read and heard about forced labour; the regimentation of workers; their low standard of living as compared with the highly industrialised Western countries; the drabness and monotony of the clothes; the poor house-hold articles and food. We know of the very restricted contacts which even high diplomatic personnel are allowed to have with the Russian people. She stresses again and again the failure of her attempts to meet the wives and families of the Russian officials and diplomats whom her husband, as Ambassador, now and then entertained. For instance, she mentions that the acceptance of the Ambassador's invitation to a small informal lunch by Vishinsky was considered quite an event in Moscow diplomatic circles. Out-

side of the satellite countries, the only Ambassadors to have personal interview with Stalin were the American, British and Indian Ambassadors. The experiences of the wife of one British Secretary and of the Dutch Consellor are related to show the poor conditions prevailing in the best Moscow hospitals. Again and again the hostility of the Russian authorities towards the members of the diplomatic staff is illustrated by incidents relating to accomodation, repairs, servants and travelling facilities. All this we have been told before. What is interesting is this picture rolled out before us with its daily incidents which bring this state of affairs vividly before our eyes. The great patience of the Russian people in the face of the relatively hard conditions of life in which they live; their great physical stamina; the rigours of their climate; the total authoritarian system which directs and controls their life and which they seem to accept without any outward signs of revolt are again and again emphasised. The relative religious liberty allowed to the people is illustrated by her personal visits to various Churches which, according to her, are very well frequented. Beggars are plentiful especially at the entrance of the churches, she says, and the maimed and the decrepit are often to be seen along the streets. The imposing pageants; the processions; the culture parks are all vividly described. The theatre; the ballet; the opera; the punch and Judy shows are mentioned with great admiration. The book is interesting with all the many details of every-day life as lived by a high Western diplomat and his circle, and serves to illustrate the antagonism and tensions inevitable between the outlook and the appraisals of the authoritarian and the free Western worlds.

A.K.W.

(YATIM GHAZNAVI—Continued from page 7)

each system I suppose, is right, in its way. Rimbaud is a *voyant* and therefore bears relationship with the Asiatic mystics (Reneville). He dabbled in occultism and hence justifies the study of Geugoux. The poet's reaction to his society permits Debray to see him as a communist utopian. Magny has little difficulty in allocating Rimbaud to the descendents of Sade; and Bousquet reveals him essentially as a reader of Swedenborg. Rimbaud is best comprehended when he is seen as being simultaneously both christian and pagan, blasphemer and catholic, *voyou* and *voyant*, sane and neurotic, as Asiatic and an Ardennais, an Abyssinian and a Gaul, a Swedenborgian and a Marxist. The great mark of genius is to reveal to each critic what he is looking for. Rimbaud's phrase, *je est un autre*, stands as the clue to this phenomenon, as sign of the irrevocable truth of ambiguity. Poetry can be fought over, argued for or against; it cannot be explained once and for all.

Of all the manners of speech, poetry is that form which bears the memory of the initial irremediable failure of all speech. Of all the poets, Rimbaud is perhaps the one who felt the most desperately poetry's fatal approximation to the absolute. The way he had elected to reach the absolute was a *cul-de-sac*. *Je ne sais plus parler*. The poet is the man stranded somewhere between the idea and the word.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

RILKE'S *Craftsmanship*, a study by H. W. Belmore (Oxford: Blackwell, sh. 25/-) has the merit of concentrating on Rilke's main poetic works, to the exclusion of all biographical irrelevancies. However, his method of presentation, repetitive to the point of dullness, has a tendency to titillate rather than satisfy. We tire of his fragmentary examples because too few of them are related to an original insight or discovery of a more general kind. A craftsman's skill cannot be appreciated without reference to his intentions; we want to know not only what Rilke did, but why he did it, choosing one instrument rather than another.

Nancy Mitford's *Madame de Pompadour* (Hamish Hamilton, sh. 15/-) is not only poor history, it is also bad writing. Miss Mitford's style is flipant, frisky and gushily feminine. But in spite of its various shortcomings, a fairly reasonable notion of Madame de Pompadour does emerge.

If critics were to take dust jacket blurb seriously, Wyndham Lewis' *Self Condemned* (Methuen, sh. 15/-) would come to be hailed as an unorthodox, portrait of a violent perfectionist. The actuality, I am afraid, is uncomfortably otherwise.

In George Simenon's *Strangers In The House* (Doubleday, \$2.95) there is a tinge of bovaryism, a good deal of Flaubertian irony and an unexpectedly affirmative resolution to disaster. Like all of Mr. Simenon's novels, this is plotted to extremely fine tolerances and may be read, as the saying goes, on any of several levels or even in a hammock.

Noble Prize Winner for Literature in 1951, Par Lagerkvist calls himself "a believer without faith—a religious atheist." The latest of his writings to be translated into English, *The Eternal Smile and other stories* (Random House, \$4.50) is a collection of novelettes, short stories and fables originally published in Sweden between 1920 and 1935. Some of these tales excoriate the folly and cruelty of men but most suggest that, with all the evil and suffering of life, to live in the world is still a potentially joyful adventure.

R.H.

Letter to The Editor

Dear Sir

May I invite your attention to an article "From a Visit to India" appearing in the September issue of *Swiss Review of World Affairs*? The article makes appreciative references to an article by Mr. V. B. Karnik in the June issue of *Freedom First*.

Referring to Mr. Karnik's article the writers says: "This critic of Nehru's doctrine of non-alignment is a lamer in the desert, however. He deserves the more for it as a clarification of the basic question of Indian foreign policy seems urgently necessary." The writer

further says: "The tendency to invoke the myth of Asiatic solidarity dulls the sense of many Indians for the realities of the world-political situation. Thus the attempt especially of viewing Red China not primarily as a Communist power but as an Asian brother nation appears as a highly risky basis for coping with the problem of communism and communist imperialism. In defending its attitude on Communist China the Indian Government likes to point to the determination with which it fights all subversive activity within its own borders. But the very differentiation between internal and external communism is apt to further impede a correct appraisal of Communist intentions in Asia."

Is it not gratifying to note that the views expressed by *Freedom First* are receiving commendation from such an influential organ of European public opinion as the *Swiss Review of World Affairs*?

Calcutta
Sept. 16, 1954.

Yours truly,
S. N. Nag.

C. C. F. NEWS

The Congress for Cultural Freedom granted eight scholarships to exiled students from Eastern Europe (comprising two Hungarians, one Czech, one Bulgarian, two Poles, and two Rumanians) to enable them to participate in the seminar on "Situation and Tasks of the European East," organized by the European Forum at Albhach from August 17 until September 6, 1954. The seminar was directed by Michael Polanyi, member of the Executive Committee of the Congress, Alex Weissberg-Gybulski, member of the Congress, and by W. Thorbeck. Economic and sociological problems of the satellite states were studied. Each of the students chosen by the Congress delivered a lecture.

The Mexican Committee for Cultural Freedom was officially inaugurated on 26 August 1954. There was a public meeting on the occasion in Freedom House, attended by an overflow crowd. Chairman and major speaker at the meeting was Salvador Azuelz, Chairman of the Department of Philosophy and Letters at the University of Mexico.

A major conference of the Congress for Cultural Freedom was held in Santiago de Chile early in June, attended by four delegates of the Chilean committee, and two delegates each from the committees in Mexico, Cuba, Honduras, and Uruguay. M. Julian Gorkin, editor of *GUADERNOS*, also attended the meeting. The delegates were received by the President of the Chilean Republic and invited to a banquet given in their honour by the Writers' Association and PEN Club.

A book, "McCarthy and the Communists," is just published by Beacon Press, Boston. The research for this study was prepared by the American Committee for Cultural Freedom.

With Many Voices

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

—Tennyson.

The men of the Soviet Union are past masters at winning friends and influencing people by use of the artistic ambassador (especially in the fields of ballet, theatre and chess).

—*New York Times*, August 22, 1954.

From the Indian point of view neutrality and neutralism are two different things.

—Mr. Aneurin Bevan, *Indian Express*,
September 9, 1954.

It (The Communist Party) is the sworn inveterate enemy of the Socialist and democratic parties..... The Communist does not look upon a Socialist as an ally in a common cause. He looks upon him as a dupe, as a temporary convenience, and as something to be thrust ruthlessly aside when he has served his purpose.

—Mr. William Stenson, *Sunday Standard*,
September 5, 1954.

Communism today represents aggression on a pattern before which even Hitler's fiendish exploits look, in retrospect, like essays in kindergarten.

—Editorial in *Thought*, September 11, 1954.

We believe in collective security and we have no reason to believe that Russians and Chinese are different today. There is the Russia-China pact of 1951. That is a military alliance and that goes on.

—Mr. Dodds Parker, *Hindustan Times*,
September 4, 1954.

Communist China has received notice that it would be unwise and dangerous to try to repeat Japan's ferocious adventure of 12 years ago.

—*Evening News*, London, September 9, 1954.

✓ Communism was a forest fire. Could India, which was near the fire, talk of co-existence?

—Dr. Ambedkar quoted in *The Examiner*,
September 4, 1954.

INDIAN COMMITTEE FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM

127, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
BOMBAY 1.

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

Name :

Address :

Date : Signature

✓ It would not matter a jot if three quarters of the human race perished; the important thing was that the remaining quarter should be communist.

—Lenin quoted in *Encounter*, September, 1954.

While Mr. Nehru is constantly sending cultural delegations to China and Russia with a view to securing better understanding of the achievements of these countries, Congress Ministers in different States are busy interpreting communism as a doctrine of undiluted hatred and violence.

—Mr. Govind Sahai, *Times of India*,
September 8, 1954.

The Mao Tse-tung Medal for Dupes (first-class) will be shared between Mr. Attlee and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

—Mr. Philip Spratt in *Current*, September 22, 1954.

For the Communists there is no such thing as neutrality. Those who are not with them are against them. "There is no third side and neutrality is a facade," says one of their great leaders.

—Vivek in *Mysindia*, September 12, 1954.

There is sound symbolism in the fact that the Philippine Republic should play host to a conference of this sort. The Philippines has met and overcome the menace of domestic Communist subversion.

—*New York Times*, August 15, 1954.

Non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries means different things to a democratic nation and to a communist country.

—Raja Hutheesing In *Janata*, September 12, 1954.

At home we have a simpler definition: co-existence becomes very easy if you turn over the pay packet intact, no questions asked, no answers needed.

—*Free Press Bulletin*, September 3, 1954.

The blast by *Pravda*, official organ of the Soviet Communist Party, against British Labour Party leader Clement Attlee's interview in Hong Kong, is extremely revealing - and not without its comical aspects as well. *Pravda* seemed to think that because Mr. Attlee was fed full of vodka and caviare in Moscow, he should also be full of praise and honey in describing his Russian trip. What ingratitude for hospitality given, the Red newspaper fumed.

—*Nippon Times*, Tokyo, September 15, 1954

What is happening to the proceeds from the of Soviet literature in this country? Where do go?

—Dr. K. N. Katju, Home Minister, in the *H the People*, on September 1