

'Kerala Communists Are Different...'

by Jupiter

A JOURNALIST friend flying back from Cochin, in Kerala, to New Delhi had an interesting experience which he narrated to me. Sitting in a back seat, he was typing letters on a portable machine which he carried with him, when he felt that somebody was at his back. Turning, he saw the pilot of the plane admiringly watch him at work.

"A very useful way of spending time during a flight," the pilot accosted him.

"Yes," concurred our friend, adding: "But these are only letters. If it were a longer trip I would have written my 'stories' in the plane."

Thereupon the conversation turned to Kerala and the journalist's impressions of his visit. Hearing the visitor doubt whether the Communists can do justice, in spirit more than in letter, to a democratic set-up, the pilot readily retorted: "But Communists in India are not like those in Russia and elsewhere."

This was the crux of the matter. The pilot evidently was not much political-minded. He didn't have any preconceived opinions about Communism or Communists. He was one of the many intelligent Indians who followed developments at home and abroad, mainly through newspapers, and formed their own opinions about them. But almost unconsciously what they read in the Press or heard over the radio influenced their views, especially on topics like Communism for the study of which very few would have the inclination or the leisure.

If I might recall, it was a favourite statement of Mr. Nehru that the Communists in India had nothing in common with their counterparts in China and elsewhere who were working miracles. It was meant to be a dig at them, a strategy, as a Congress leader enlightened me, to prevent the Indian Communists from basking in the reflected glory of Chinese achievements.

"He always does it," my Congress friend chuckled. "Today the Russians, the Chinese and other Communists are nearer to him than to their Indian oppositenumbers. The British Labour Party and Tito are more with him than with the P.S.P."

"Hurrah, the Communist guns have been spiked," acclaims DAREM of *The Times of India*.

But when Khrushchev launched his de-Stalinisation purge, when the aftermath of the Twentieth Congress and the Hungarian tragedy made nonsense of everything upheld by the Communists for over three decades, Mr. Nehru had to justify his earlier statements about Russia by describing everything happening in the Communist world as a part of the process of liberalisation and the Indian Communists had to fall back upon Mr. Nehru for their survival as a political force and not merely as a well-oiled organisation. First came the slogan, originally the product of wishful thinking by the Americans, that the Chinese Communists were dissimilar to Stalin and his cohorts. When purges broke loose in Mao's domain also, the slogan was modified to mean that the Indian Communists were not like their co-religionists anywhere else.

In what way? It is cruel to expect our pilot friend to answer the question. Public memory being proverbially short, he doesn't remember that since its inception the Communist Party in India has been faithfully mirroring the twists and turns in international Communism. Even if he is aware of it, he will be silenced by the Communist reply that, while it was so before, the arrangement ceased to be after Stalin's death. Our pilot friend cannot justifiably be expected to persist by referring to the smothering of criticism within the C.P.I. of Russian aggression against Hungary and ask why, in the absence of subservience to Russia, such an attitude is necessary. Our newspapers, being very respectable, have not said a word about differences among Communists over Hungary. The British Press publicised such "sensational news" and the public over there knows that the British Communist Party has been reduced to half its originally insignificant size by the Hungarian tragedy. But in our country, the Press being Free, with a capital 'F', only the C.P.I. Central Committee's resolution toeing the Moscow line on Hungary and Communist speeches in Parliament defending the Russian aggression are published. So naturally our pilot friend does not know.

In brief, it is part of the present Communist strategy to spread the illusion that they are different from Communists elsewhere, notwithstanding August 1942, the Ranadive period, Telangana and the stand on Hungary.

Asked to define the character of the Communist Government in Kerala, the Chief Minister, E. M. S. Namboodiripad, told a plenum meeting of the State Communist Party in Trivandrum last May that it would be wrong to fit the Kerala experiment into any

of the accepted patterns of government such as "bourgeois-democratic," "people's democratic," etc. He told his partymen that even within the framework of India's *bourgeois* Constitution much "good" could be done to the people and that it would be the effort of his Government to strive to do so. Kerala, he declared, was part of a long drawn-out strategy and it was wrong to judge it by short-term slogans.

Explaining the significance of Namboodiripad's statement a Communist journalist, Pavnan, told me: "You see, Kerala Communists are different from those elsewhere...." So that's it. That is the slogan.

This lengthy introduction, with its digressions, is only to highlight this strategy which has nothing to do with facts. But such is the perfection that Communists bring to the evolution of their strategies that others help the working of such strategies rather than hinder it. Let me illustrate my point. Panampally Govinda Menon, the "strong man" of the Kerala Congress, who is often referred to as a sworn enemy of the Communists, like "C.R." in 1953, gave me the benefit of his views on the Kerala situation in the course of an interview I had with him in Ernakulam on June 12. He reassured me that the mere formation of the Communist Government in Kerala was not a threat to democracy in India. Drawing a comparison between India and Canada, where the Liberals had just been replaced by the Conservatives, Govinda Menon said that in India also, in the States, the two-party system, meaning the Communists and the Congress, was inevitable. Now it was in Kerala. In the next elections it might be Andhra. But as long as the Congress remained in power at the Centre, which was bound to be for some decades, there was no danger to democracy in India, he emphatically stated.

Living up to his reputation for master-minding "democratic coups," (the reference is to making and unmaking of governments) Govinda Menon confided to me his formula for dealing with situations like the Kerala one. In Orissa, he admitted, the Congress Government was dependent on Communist support.

Ere long a similar situation would materialise in Kerala and the Communists would be eating out of the Congress hands, he was confident. Whether the optimism was based on the likely results of election petitions pending before tribunals or it flowed from the well-known capacity of Govinda Menon to win over members from other parties, it led to an attitude which clicked with the Communist strategy that they were not functioning as Communists in Kerala but were only striving to provide a "good government" to the State. It would breed the feeling that there was nothing wrong in Communists alternating with the Congress in government or in sharing power with the latter. The all-powerful Centre could check everything, including infiltration into services.

I specially cite the views of Govinda Menon because he is widely accepted as an anti-Communist Congress leader and because the Communists themselves look upon him as a *bete noire*. Secondly, I want to highlight the bane of the power-political approach to Communism, as different from the ideological attitude. Hare Krishna Mahatab, the target of endless Communist attacks during and even after the elections, an enemy of Communism in the sense that he is opposed, in practice, even to redistribution of land, is reconciled to remain in power with Communist support. Panampally, reputed as a red rag for the Communist bull, is prepared to share power with the Communists. Why? Because the Communists are in these two instances repositories of power. They have already acquired the quality which makes Russia and China attractive to people who only a few years ago looked askance at Communism. Here lies the clue to the impact of the Kerala experiment on the rest of India.

On the other extreme is Mr. Nehru and his attitude to the Kerala development. By this I do not mean that Mr. Nehru is a Communist or a pro-Communist. I accept *in toto* the Kerala Congress Secretary, Udayabhanu's assertion, in a signed letter to the editor, that Mr. Nehru subjectively, is the greatest champion of democracy in India. But objectively, Namboodiripad has more correctly sized up Mr. Nehru. In the course of his address to the plenum meeting referred to above, cataloguing the reactions which the Kerala experiment was producing, Namboodiripad was reported to have remarked: There are two types of reaction to the Communist rule in Kerala, one, that of some Congressmen, including the Prime Minister, that the Communists, weighed down by administrative responsibility, would turn constitutionalists and become indistinguishable from Congressmen. Such a development, Mr. Nehru hopes, would help the Congress in fighting elections against the Communists. The second type of reaction is that limitations of provincial autonomy and the Constitution will come in the way of the Communists carrying out their election pledges which will either lead to their disgrace or force them to resign.

In addition to his faith that the Communists will become constitutionalists in a democratic atmosphere, the Prime Minister also finds a profitable use of the Kerala development. The democratic experiment in

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Notes

Cooperative Farming

A CERTAIN amount of rethinking appears to be taking place on the issue of cooperative farming. Co-operative farming on the Chinese model would have been but another way of collectivisation of agriculture which has been adopted with such disastrous results in Soviet Russia and other communist countries. *Freedom First* had warned several times against the adoption of that course of action which appeared to have gained considerable support amongst the policy makers of the Government of India.

A number of State Governments had also advised against cooperative farming on the Chinese model. The most outspoken amongst them was the Government of Uttar Pradesh. It is the considered view of that Government that "cooperative farming will reduce production and invite bureaucratic control over the masses." The programme evaluation organisation of the Planning Commission has also found out, it is reported, that the results of the working of cooperative farms in various States were not satisfactory. All this seems to have persuaded the Government of India to reconsider their views on cooperative farming.

Some of the recent statements made by the Prime Minister have served to clear the air to some extent. In the last few days he has emphasised again and again that cooperatives must grow voluntarily and that they cannot be imposed upon the peasants. He has also shifted his emphasis to the formation of "service cooperatives" and multi-purpose cooperative societies. These organisations are to make available to the peasants "better agricultural equipment and technique" and they are to be developed "with the consent of the people." Another statement that he is reported to have made is of equal significance. He expressed the view that "in a socialist order of society it is not necessary that everybody should be a State employee or there should be collectivisation."

It is to be hoped that with this clear enunciation of principles and policy by the Prime Minister there will be no further attempt to push Indian agriculture headlong on the road towards collectivisation. There is a world of difference between collectivisation of agriculture and development of cooperative organisations in rural areas for supply of seeds, agricultural implements or manure, or for the sale of agricultural products, or for improving agricultural methods. While the former deprives the peasants of their lands and makes them helpless tools in the hands of a government official or a party functionary, the latter helps them to cultivate their farms better and to develop as independent and self-reliant members of a village community. It will be dangerous to confuse one with the other as their aims are far different.

Bhoodan And Gramdan

Leaders of the Congress and other political parties who had gathered together at Yelwal at the invitation of the Sarva Seva Sangh have issued an unanimous statement assuring their full support to the Bhoodan and Gramdan movement of Acharya Vinoba Bhave. The statement particularly appreciates Vinobaji's efforts to solve national and social problems by non-violent and cooperative methods and appeals to all sections of people to give his mission their enthusiastic support. The statement has also pointed out that "the closest cooperation is desirable between the community development movement and the Gramdan movement." It is to be hoped that as a result of the discussions which took place at Yelwal there will be hereafter greater cooperation between the Bhoodan and Gramdan workers and the governmental machinery looking after Community Development projects and National Extension Service.

The President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad who attended the conference has drawn a distinction between the Bhoodan and Gramdan movements. He said that "the former aimed at voluntary donations of private land for the landless while, in the latter scheme, there would not be any private landed property at all". The distinction is lost sight of by many supporters of the movement. At the moment it may not be of much significance but, in course of time, it may assume vital importance. Dr. Prasad's stress on the value of the voluntary principle and the obvious limitations to the efficacy of State intervention also deserve the country's consideration.

Welfare State

THE discussions which took place at a recent symposium in Bombay emphasised certain ideas which are likely to be lost sight of in the new found enthusiasm over a welfare State. The speakers belonged to many schools of thought but they all agreed that in the ultimate analysis the emphasis should be on welfare and not the State. Prof. B. R. Shenoy, Director of the School of Economics of the University of Gujarat, was particularly clear about the matter. He pointed out that a welfare State should be "a minimum State as opposed to a garrison or police State." He drew attention to the danger to a welfare State inherent in "the excessive importance given to the successful implementation of the Five Year Plan." Curiously enough, very few are aware of this danger though it is growing more and more serious from day to day.

Mr. K. M. Munshi, who presided over the symposium, also uttered some words which deserve to be treasured. He said: "Under the cover of the slogan of Welfare State some men glibly speak the language of the democrat, but cheerfully walk in the footsteps of the tyrant." Continuing in the same strain, he warned: "We use equivocal slogans and thereby seek verbal united fronts. Without our knowing it, the semantic Trojan horse carrying the Marxian dogma

enters our mind and will. If we allow this process to continue we do so at our peril."

These are wise words which should set people thinking. Welfare of the people is the end which is accepted by all. The end is sought to be attained by developing an all-powerful, all-pervading State. The time has come to seriously consider if the means will not negate the end. That is the crucial question which should engage the attention of thoughtful people.

Ill-Conceived Remarks

THE remarks that Dr. Keskar, the Minister for Information and Broadcasting, made against Radio Ceylon were ill-conceived and unfortunate. His complaint that Radio Ceylon was doing something improper in beaming its services to India was, to say the least, frivolous. Ariel of *The Times of India* has given the Minister a convincing answer. Ariel wrote: "For those controlling All India Radio to adopt the lofty attitude that Radio Ceylon sins heinously by beaming its services to India is adolescent, since AIR itself, along with other world radio organisations like the Voice of America, the B.B.C. and the Soviet air stations, all beam their services to one region or another."

Dr. Keskar's complaint was that the service beamed to India was not fit for educated Indian listeners as it consisted of "cheap music which has no touch of culture whatsoever." Dr. Keskar forgets that in a free society it is the listeners who decide what is fit and unfit for them and not the Minister or his officers. They decide it by choking off the radio or by switching on to other stations when a programme which they dislike is offered to them. If that test is applied it will have to be admitted that Radio Ceylon is popular with large sections of the Indian people. People listen to Radio Ceylon because it gives them the kind of music they like.

Dr. Keskar's remarks are worrying in their import because they imply a desire to dictate to the people what they should and should not listen. Dr. Keskar is a highly cultured person, but he has no right to impose upon others his culture or his own ideas of culture. The people must be left free to develop their own culture. To enjoy light music is not necessarily a sign of lack of culture. To deny the people the light music that they love and to impose upon them the classical music which they do not understand is no way of uplifting their cultural level. If many people listen to Radio Ceylon it is a clear indication of their preferences. A.I.R. should study those preferences and improve its own services.

Dangerous Portent

THE recent armed clashes between the two Hindu communities in the Ramanathapuram district of Madras State spotlight the internal stresses and strains to which Indian social life is yet subject. The clashes between the Maravars and the Harijans which started in an obscure village following the murder of a Hari-

jan Christian, developed, in less than a fortnight, into a huge conflagration. Communal feuds, which are not entirely new to this country, have rarely reached a pitch of violence witnessed during these riots. The two communities setting fire to each other's houses, and murdering several people, including women and children, surely makes a shocking reading. This despicable incident is yet another rude reminder that we have yet to go a long way in achieving harmonious relationship between different communities. Tolerance, loudly boasted to be a particular virtue of our culture, has yet to strike roots in our social soil.

Another incident, though enacted on a minor scale, which highlights this intolerance was reported in newspapers a few weeks ago from New Delhi, where a crowd of about 500 persons staged a demonstration outside the office of *Sarita*, a Hindi magazine with a progressive and liberal outlook, and attempted to break into its office. The cause for this violent outburst was a poem, published in the July issue of the magazine, which, it was alleged, offended the religious sentiments of many Hindu readers. The Delhi administration proscribed the issue and ordered the prosecution of the publisher and printer of the magazine. This is another incident of intolerance and bigotry. Respect for one's life, property and opinion is the pre-condition for the healthy growth of democracy. Incidents such as these surely portend the growth of dangerous and disruptive forces which, if not checked in time, may put an end to decency and security in public life.

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Ilya Ehrenburg Rebels

by James Critchlow

LITERATURNAYA GAZETA'S latest attack on novelist Ilya Ehrenburg is surprisingly gentle, when one considers that the article which provoked it was a clever blast at the very foundations of the Soviet system. What Ehrenburg had done was to resurrect the great 19th-century French writer Stendhal and to use his writings as a devastating critique of Soviet life today. The result is probably the strongest public condemnation of the Communist Party dictatorship since Stalin's rise to power.

It is difficult to imagine Ehrenburg, who has long been labeled an opportunist, hurling defiance at the Party line, but that is precisely the effect of his article, "Lessons of Stendhal," which appeared in the Moscow monthly *Inostrannaya Literatura* ("Foreign Literature," No. 6, 1957).

Take, for example, the Stalin's "cult of personality." For months, Soviet propagandists have been running a campaign, in response to questioning voices at home, to convince people that the crimes of the Stalin era were purely a matter of the late dictator's personality. They have denied with repeated vigour the "slander" that Stalin-type abuses are an inherent feature of the Soviet system. In answer to this, Ehrenburg comes up with the following quotation from Stendhal:

"What counts is not the personality of the tyrant but the essence of tyranny. A tyrant may be intelligent or stupid, good or evil—whatever the case, he is both all-powerful and powerless, he is frightened by conspiracies, he is flattered, he is deceived, the prisons fill, the cowardly hypocrites whisper, and the silence becomes so complete that the heart almost stops."

For any Soviet reader who is obtuse enough to miss the point, Ehrenburg has this blunt reminder:

"He (Stendhal) belongs to us, and everyone is entitled to see in him his teacher.... Stendhal's experience refutes not only the strayings of the distant past; it also dispels many illusions of the present day which are at times passed off as incontrovertible truths."

Ehrenburg apparently wrote his article as the struggle between Khrushchev and the Malenkov-Molotov group was nearing its climax. At least, he slyly makes Stendhal comment on the power rivalry and the possible emergence of a new Stalin:

"Can one be profoundly moved by verse, even the best verse, when no one knows where we shall be in a year's time, whether we shall find ourselves under the yoke of the inquisition, whether the Duke of Orleans will sit on the French throne?"

Most of Ehrenburg's essay is devoted to the problem of the writer and the artist in their relationship to society and the state. This is most timely, in view of the tenacious behind-the-scenes struggle for loosening of the Party's cultural controls now being waged by a small but courageous group of Russian writers.

Ehrenburg, despite his past record of having served on occasion as the Party's hatchet-man for cultural issues, is now squarely behind the dissidents.

Ehrenburg even finds in Stendhal a defense of Vladimir Dudintsev and other Soviet writers who have been accused of "distorting Soviet reality" (that is, portraying realistically some of the seamier sides of Soviet life):

"The novel (Stendhal is quoted again) is a mirror on a broad road. At times it reflects the blue sky, at other times the mud, the puddles, the bumps, and you accuse the man who holds the mirror of lacking taste. The mirror reflects mud, and you blame the mirror. You would do better to blame the road with its bumps on the highway department."

To this, Ehrenburg adds his own comment: "No matter how precise the social (read: Marxian) analysis of the development of society, no matter how much individuality is subordinated to social processes, the world of the novel is different from philosophical (read: Marxist-Leninist) generalizations, state plans, statistical data."

Through Stendhal, Ehrenburg makes it clear that culture can only suffer ruin when those who create it are subject to Government control: "Even if the king is an angel, his government destroys art, not because it bans the subject of a painting, but because it crushes the soul of the artist.... People wish to please a minister or vice-minister, their immediate superior. Even though these ministers be the most honourable men in the world, toadyism, flattery and obsequiousness will still develop."

Why do writers, and others who create, need freedom? Ehrenburg answers without recourse to Stendhal:

"It is, as if the writer were discovering man, and a discovery is not an invitation, it demands enthusiasm and inner freedom on the part of the person who is searching for it. If society had been able to tell Newton, Copernicus, Mendeleyev or Einstein what they were supposed to seek and what they were supposed to find, their genius would have been wasted and their discoveries would not have taken place."

Few Soviet readers will miss the implication that Tsarist Russia, where Mendeleyev lived, and America, where Einstein spent a large part of his productive life, could offer the individual more freedom than does the Soviet Russia of today.

What of those who, during Stalin's time, were (like Ehrenburg himself) forced to be instruments of the crimes which were committed? Stendhal is even made to speak in their behalf: "At fault is the society which demands hypocrisy, punishes for truth and stifles large feelings on behalf of a multitude of conventions."

According to Ehrenburg, the greatest lessons of Stendhal are to be found in his "exceptional truthfulness." He adds: "That is perhaps for us the main

thing—not only for writers, but for all people of the mid-20th century: The more passion there is in one's attractions and repulsions, the more insistently will conscience—yes, and reason—demand the truth.”

The essay by Ehrenburg stresses that Stendhal was a rebel: “If Stendhal were alive among us now, he would probably long fail, as a dilettante, to be accepted into the Union of (Soviet) Writers.”

Ehrenburg also uses his article to poke fun at the stilted, cautious literary language which has become standard in the Soviet Union. He shows how contemporary Soviet translations of Stendhal's *The Red and the Black* have been embellished with needless qualifications and bumbling amplifications, often doubling the length of individual passages.

Perhaps the most subversive passage in the essay, from the standpoint of the Party that has just reasserted the Stalinist claim that a Russian flew the first successful airplane, is Ehrenburg's comment on the subject of patriotism:

“Stendhal loved his motherland but he did not approach it with lying praise or pseudo-patriotic fuss. He was too chaste to beat his breast and cry at the crossroads of Europe about the superiority of France. The argument about Stendhal's cosmopolitanism is the old argument about the true character of love for one's motherland: Is such love connected with neglect of other peoples, with exaltation of the weaknesses and faults of one's own countrymen, with anathemas and toasts... He (Stendhal) said that human unhappiness originates in lies. For him, the writer's work was the service of truth. He wished to reconcile justice with that freedom which seemed to him inseparable from human happiness... He wrote: ‘One must learn to flatter no one, not even one's people.’”

If Ehrenburg's article is a ringing shout of defiance, the August 22 *Literaturnaya Gazeta* attack on it, by an obscure individual named Tamantsev, is hardly more than a whisper. Tamantsev criticizes the article vigorously, but refrains from attacking either the character or the motives of its author. Moreover, he ignores most of the more telling points made by Ehrenburg, concentrating his fire on relatively minor “shortcomings.”

It is difficult to conceive of Ilya Ehrenburg as the champion of freedom and justice, but—whatever his motives—there can be no doubt that at present he is

standing up and slugging it out, not merely with “Stalinism” but with the present leadership of the Soviet Union. Khrushchev, in particular, is currently reaffirming many of the principles which Ehrenburg has made his target in “Lessons of Stendhal.”

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Hungarian Writers In India

THREE distinguished Hungarian writers paid a short visit to India on their way back to Europe from Tokyo, where they had been to attend the international Conference of the P.E.N.

The first to arrive was Mr. Paul Ignótus, who was a member of the Presidential Board of Hungarian Writers' Association, which was at the head of the revolution which took place in Hungary last year. He has been a wellknown journalist and author since the early Twenties. He was in Hungary until 1939, when he had to leave owing to the persecution of the Nazis. From 1947 to 1949 he was Press Attache and Councillor of the Legation of the Hungarian Republic in London. However, when he returned to Hungary in 1949 he was arrested by the Rakosi Government and kept in prison for about 7 years.

Mr. Ignótus was in Calcutta from September 18 to September 23. During his stay in the city he delivered a number of lectures, the most important of which was a lecture at the Calcutta University. Prof. Amlan Dutta presided. There were a number of questions at the end of the lecture which Mr. Ignótus answered very effectively. From Calcutta Mr. Ignótus went to Delhi where he had an interview with the Prime Minister, Mr. Nehru. He met a number of people in Delhi and also addressed an informal meeting at the Asian Office of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. Mr. Ignótus paid a short visit to Madras and then left for Colombo.

Mr. George Palocz-Horvath and Dr. Paul Tabori were in Calcutta for three days in the last week of September. They addressed a number of meetings. Mr. Palocz-Horvath was a member of the Communist Party and took a prominent part in the activities of the Writers' Association as well as many other organisations. He was arrested by the Rakosi Government when he was Secretary General of the Hungarian United Nations Association. He was sentenced to 15 years' hard labour but was released in 1954 by the Imre Nagy Government. He is a prominent writer and has written several novels as well as books on current history and colonial affairs. He contributes to several journals.

Dr. Paul Tabori was born and brought up in Hungary, but he has settled down in London since 1937. He is a wellknown script writer of films and is now the International Secretary of the British Screen and Television Writers' Association. He is the Chairman of PEN Centre of Writers in Exile.

After Calcutta Mr. Palocz-Horvath and Dr. Tabori will visit Bombay and Delhi and at both places they are expected to address public meetings as well as informal gatherings of writers and others.

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Our Vote On Hungary

by V. B. Karnik

OUR vote in the United Nations on the issue of Hungary has again given a rude shock to democratic opinion all over the world. In view of our past record on the issue one cannot say that the shock was altogether unexpected. There was hope, however, in some quarters that the unanimous and unambiguous character of the Commission's verdict would persuade us at long last to line up with the free nations to condemn Soviet suppression of the Hungarian revolution. After the Commission's report there could be no doubt about the character of the revolution or about the military intervention of Soviet Russia. And yet we abstained on the resolution which received the massive support of 60 nations and was opposed only by Russia, her satellites and Yugoslavia. Our action was in striking contrast with that of Burma. Burma had moved an amendment substituting the word 'condemn' by the word 'deplore', and yet when the amendment was defeated she did not feel offended but voted for the resolution.

The arguments advanced in support of the action are specious as well as illusory. Mr. Arthur Lall, our permanent representative at the United Nations, stated in the course of the debate: "It is in our view not only no use, but definitely detrimental to the consideration of issues to allow unfriendliness to manifest itself." Explaining why India refrained from condemnation, he said: "If we were to succeed in finding a solution, it would be necessary first to create and zealously to maintain the kind of atmosphere which is essential if a solution is to emerge at all." Expressing India's hope that the Government of Hungary would remove restrictions and set at liberty their political opponents, he said: "We feel that we can in a friendly way address this hope to them by way of persuasion." He expressed a similar hope about Soviet Russia: "We also feel that the Soviet Union will extend its cooperation and assistance in bringing about an improvement in the situation regarding which so much concern has been expressed in this Assembly."

The argument would have had some force if the hope so naively expressed by our representative had evoked any response from Russia or Hungary. But far from holding out any hope of liberation or improvement, the two countries roundly condemned all those who did not agree with their version of the happenings in Hungary. The condemnation embraces India as well for, along with many other nations, we also do not accept the Russian version. We regard the Hungarian struggle as a people's revolution and we disapprove of the Russian intervention. In view of this conviction and in view of the Russian and Hungarian refusal to effect any changes, we should have stood by our conviction and vindicated it by our vote in favour of the resolution.

Our refraining from condemnation would have had some sense if we could have suggested any more

effective way of securing the withdrawal of the Russian army from Hungary. If condemnation of Soviet Russia was a "negative approach" we should have suggested some more positive approach. Our references in this connection to what happened on the Suez issue are misconceived. England and France, who were condemned then for their aggression against Egypt, obeyed the resolutions of the United Nations and effected the withdrawal of their forces. Soviet Russia, on the contrary, continues its occupation of Hungary in flagrant defiance of the directives of the world organisation. The puppet regime that it has set up in the country has intensified its reign of terror. The people have been deprived of all their rights and liberties and thousands are being persecuted in jails and other places of detention for their heroic struggle against the Russian army of occupation. A tragedy has been inflicted on a nation and is being perpetuated by the force of arms. Does not this course of action, deliberately pursued in defiance of world opinion, call for condemnation? We have been loud with our condemnation of much less serious happenings of that type. The question can be legitimately asked—why this soft-paddling of issues when Soviet Russia happens to be the guilty party?

On the issue of Hungary the Government of India was accused of indulging in double standards by no less a person than Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan. The accusation was repeated by many others. The Prime Minister and other spokesmen of Government angrily repudiated the charge. But it has been a mere verbal repudiation. Our actions have not so far proved that the charge is baseless. The recent debate in the United Nations was an opportunity to prove to the world that we applied the same standard to all nations and were not influenced in our decisions by extraneous considerations. Here was an unanimous report of five eminent men, two of whom represented an Asian and an African nation, holding Russia guilty of aggression and of brutal suppression of a national revolt of the Hungarian people. We had no serious complaints against the report; we did not contest the facts set out in the report or the conclusions reached by the Commission. And yet we refused to take the next logical step of condemning the aggressor on grounds of mere expediency. We thought the condemnation would not serve any useful purpose.

The condemnation may not immediately secure the withdrawal of the Soviet army and the solution of the Hungarian problem. Communist countries are not in the habit of so readily responding to the wishes of the world organisation. They do not have much respect for world public opinion. Having imprisoned their people behind an iron curtain and shut them off from all contact with the outside world, communist regimes can for some time ignore hostile public opi-

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KERALA COMMUNISTS ARE DIFFERENT... (from page 2)

India, while it has many sympathisers abroad, has also found critics who have taken exception to Mr. Nehru's role as a party leader, his intolerance of criticism, the way he and his party behaved in the last General Election and, above all, the absence of a conceivable Opposition in the country. Much of this is valid criticism and touches Mr. Nehru at a raw spot. So, as he did in Sweden recently, the Prime Minister upholds the Kerala development as proof of democracy in India. Opposition is not merely tolerated but is allowed to get into power. What more democracy can there be anywhere in the world? In other words, Kerala is a showpiece not merely for the Communists but for the democratic Prime Minister. Here lies another source of Communist strength in Kerala.

How does the Communist strategy spell itself out in these circumstances? After describing the two varieties of reaction which the Kerala experiment has been evoking, Namboodiripad told the plenum meeting of his party that the aim of his government was to belie both the expectations. If, out of despondency and a sense of frustration at not being able to accomplish spectacular tasks, the Kerala Government, he explained, resigned in a huff it would be obliging its Congress rivals as did the earlier P.S.P. Government in Travancore-Cochin. The Congress would ask for nothing more than that because it would prove that the slow pace of social change in the country was inevitable in a democracy and that the Communists failed miserably where the Congress was struggling on. If, on the other hand, the Communists turned constitutionalists and accepted the limitations of the Constitution as abiding, they would provide the Congress with a handle to attack them. So a *via media* between these two extremes would have to be pursued by the Communists.

What is this *via media*? Kerala's loquacious Law Minister, V. R. Krishna Iyer, provided the answer to this question. He told me in an interview that the Prime Minister's impatience with the slow processes of democracy and his preparedness to put up with speedy administrative action even if it did not always conform to the letter of parliamentary democracy provided the Communists with a chance to succeed in Kerala. Then he described how he had anticipated Mr. Nehru in some matters, even if they be trivial ones. One was doing away with uniformed servants to chaperon Ministers. Krishna Iyer said on the very day he assumed office he decided that he would have no *daffadar* to follow him. He circulated a note on the subject among his colleagues and asked the Chief Secretary to write to the Provincial Service Commission to discontinue forthwith the recruitment of *daffadars*. A few days later followed the Prime Minister's note on the subject to the Chief Ministers of States!

Similarly in the case of Mr. Nehru's suggestion that Ministers should not fly flags on their cars. The Kerala Government again anticipated him! As for voluntary cuts in Ministers' salaries, irrespective of the facts of the situation, the Kerala Government has earned

a lot of favourable publicity and is regarded as a precursor of the Centre's austerity drive. By facts of the situation I mean to stress that what the Kerala Ministers have lost on the swings they have more than made up on the roundabouts. And I mean it from the monetary point of view. For instance, while it was widely publicised in the Press that the Kerala Ministers had cut down their salaries to Rs. 350/- a month the Minister for Public Health, Dr. A. R. Menon, and Krishna Iyer still draw Rs. 500/- a month. During April 1957, Dr. Menon had drawn Rs. 700/- as salary, the same as that of previous Congress Ministers in the State. And Rs. 500/- was the salary of P.S.P. Ministers in Travancore-Cochin in 1954-55, about which very little was said, though the additional allowances the P.S.P. Ministers received were much less than what the Communist Ministers today draw. Between April 5 and June 10, 1957, Namboodiripad had received Rs. 3,301.34 nP by way of salary and allowances, which was a little more than what his Congress predecessor had drawn with a salary of Rs. 700/- and a fixed travelling allowance of Rs. 250/- per month!

To revert to Krishna Iyer's exposition of the Kerala Government's political strategy there was the question of doing away with the law's delays about which the Prime Minister also feels strongly. It was only in the third week of September, addressing the Law Ministers of the States, that Mr. Nehru pleaded at length for speedier justice. In June itself, Krishna Iyer revealed to me the outline of a plan he had worked out for speedier and cheaper justice. It consisted of establishing a network of village courts with elected judges (to be chosen from among members of village panchayats) and appointed legal members. The latter would come from briefless lawyers who were far too many, an arrangement which would help economically that section of the population. These village courts will have civil jurisdiction to dispose of disputes involving up to about Rs. 3,000 and appeals against their decisions can be preferred to the District Munsiffs.

In short, the Communist strategy works both ways. Thanks to the scant regard of the Congress Governments for civil liberties and the fundamental principle of an independent judiciary, Communist lapses in these respects fail to register themselves on the public mind. Thanks again to the Prime Minister's flair for speedy progress transgressions of the letter of the law by the Communist Government will bear the stamp of progressiveness.

Summing up, where does one draw the line between Congress democracy and Communist democracy? How does one distinguish between Nehruism and Namboodiripadism, for, after all, Kerala Communists are different from Communists elsewhere in India, who are themselves different from the Chinese Communists, who are again different from the Russian Communists who are now living down the reputation of Stalin who was, at least on his deathbed, "a man of peace"?

Our Language Problem

by Adam Adil

IN the wake of the publication of the Language Commission Report and the appointment of a Committee of both the Houses of Parliament to make recommendations to the President on that Report, the controversy whether Hindi should replace English as the official language of India by 1965, has once again been revived. The protagonists of Hindi from North India insist that the target date for the general change-over from English to Hindi, as originally fixed, should be adhered to, while responsible leaders of public opinion from non-Hindi speaking areas, especially from South India, are of the firm opinion that the target date is inadequate and hence should be extended according to the convenience of non-Hindi-speaking people.

Two of the 21 members of the Language Commission have appended dissenting notes to the Report. One is Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee and the other Dr. P. Subbarayan. Both these members have submitted that the question of progressive use of Hindi for the official purposes of the Union should be kept

OUR VOTE ON HUNGARY — (from page 7)

nion. But even they are not altogether immune to it. Echoes of the condemnation reach in course of time the imprisoned people and set in motion forces which compel communist Governments to revise their policies. The resolution on Hungary may not be therefore altogether ineffective. It would have been much more effective if it had our endorsement. Our country enjoys a special position in Soviet Russia and our condemnation of their Government's actions in Hungary would have had a particular impact on the people. Our abstention will make it possible for the Soviet Government to misrepresent our position to their people and to minimise the significance of the condemnation.

Apart from the effectiveness or otherwise of the resolution, there are moments in world history when it is essential to proclaim the truth. The proclamation may not be heeded immediately but it may eventually change the course of history. What happened in Hungary last year is pregnant with that possibility. It may be the beginning of the end of communist tyranny. We call ourselves the followers of the prophet of truth and non-violence. And yet on the issue of Hungary we have all along shied from telling the truth. In the recent debate in the United Nations Assembly we had another opportunity of telling the truth about Hungary unequivocally and unambiguously. It is a matter of deep regret that we again missed the opportunity. It is gratifying, however, to note that we voted in favour of inscribing the Hungarian question on the agenda of the new session of the General Assembly that has just begun. It is to be hoped that we shall decide to tell the truth and stand by it at least on that occasion.

in abeyance for the time being. According to Dr. Chatterjee the choice of Hindi as a language to replace English for pan-India affairs has been "hasty". Public funds, he adds, from all over the country are being diverted towards the development and propagation of Hindi and this cannot but be resented in non-Hindi States. The retention of English, according to him, will not be against the best interests of the free Indian people. He suggests the retention of English side by side with the Indian languages, great and small. Dr. Subbarayan is of the opinion that the official language which is to be adopted eventually, must be a language which is fully developed and till such time "we must perforce continue to use English." If the country has to preserve its independence and progressively develop, adds Dr. Subbarayan, any steps taken to introduce an official language other than English "must take into account whether its immediate introduction will hamper the economic and industrial progress." If the Commission's recommendations are sought to be implemented by the Union Government, proceeds Dr. Subbarayan, it will result in "immediate imposition of Hindi on non-Hindi speaking people, leading to confusion in public life as a whole." The relegation of English to a secondary place in our education and public life will certainly not be for the good of the country. According to him, the medium of instruction at the University level, should be English till such time as Hindi gets equipped for replacing English as the medium of instruction.

Further, fifty members of Parliament representing areas where Hindi is not commonly spoken, including Congress members, have submitted a joint memorandum to the Prime Minister opposing the main recommendations of the Language Commission. They have suggested that the replacement of English by Hindi as the official language of the country should be postponed for 25 years beyond the date proposed by the Commission, namely 1965, to prepare the public for this important linguistic change.

Although one is inclined to consider sympathetically the Note of Dissent to the Language Commission Report that the target date for the general change over from English to Hindi is inadequate and hence be extended, one will have to admit that ultimately English will not be in a position to occupy the same place in the educational and administrative set-up in the country as it is occupying today. Hence, the country will have to be prepared, speedily yet without inconvenience to the non-Hindi language groups, to meet the ultimate eventuality of the linguistic change-over. In view of this fact, the recommendations of the Language Commission deserve to be, by and large, welcomed. This is not to minimise the importance of English to India in national and international fields. In fact, the study of English must be

universally encouraged, and even at certain stages of secondary education made compulsory. Further, the scientific and technological terms in English, which have become common usage in India must be liberally introduced in Hindi as well as in regional languages. The influence of English literature and culture, which has gone a long way in revitalising the Indian life and ideas, politically and socially, should be integrated more profoundly, with the intellectual and spiritual makeup of the Indian people.

Writing in *Hindustan Times* (August 14, 1957) Mr. C. Rajagopalachari has taken a very balanced view of the language-problem. With regard to the claims of Hindi, he states: "Passing on to the question of the official language, the biggest language-group of the people of India is the Hindi speaking population. This may be admitted straight away. If India is to be one people, in politics, in commerce and in arts, Hindi is the one language that must claim attention from all the people of India beside their own regional language in whatever part of the country they may be living. It is impossible to confine the literary, the cultural or political activities of the people within the boundaries of a linguistic area. If an Indian citizen desires to be cultured and educated in a true sense, he must be able to express himself and feel at home wherever he may be in India." With regard to the place of English, he points out: "It is absolutely important that we should maintain the study of English and conserve what we have achieved in that respect. English is an international medium of great value and as far as we are concerned it is the language of modern science. The knowledge of English possessed by the educated people of India is a great national asset—and should not be thrown away." As a solution to the language problem, Mr. Rajagopalachari states: "We must find a way out of the difficulty which will come as near to justice and fairplay as possible. There can be no better solution than having Hindi and English together to function as the official language of the Union. The history of the last two hundred years will justify this solution as based on fairplay and conducive to equal convenience to all."

It is necessary, therefore, to take a balanced view of the language problem. Fanaticism on both the sides will go counter to the interests of our country. That Hindi should be universally popularised, taught and adopted as a national language, none can object to. But the protagonists of Hindi should advance the claims of that language in such a manner as to evoke least resistance from non-Hindi speaking people. This can be done if the protagonists of Hindi have patience and are prepared to consider the claims of regional languages with broad-mindedness and in a spirit of give and take. Again, Hindi should be as simplified as to be easily spoken and understood even in the remotest villages of South India. Therefore, the tendency of making Hindi high-flown should be checked at all costs.

With a little more tact, tolerance and less fanaticism on the part of its protagonists, Hindi is sure to be accepted by all as the national language without resistance.

The Hindi Commission Report

The following are extracts from a statement to the press made by Mr. Kodanda Rao.

OF the twenty members of the Official Language Commission, two, namely, Dr. S. K. Chatterji and Dr. Subbarayan, submitted Dissenting Minutes, which together may be treated as the Minority Report.

The Majority seem to have been greatly impressed by the views of Mahatma Gandhi who had said that English was a "foreign" language, that it had made Indian children "practically foreigners in their own land", and prevented the growth of "our vernaculars". Though independent India has now the power, the Majority did not recommend the immediate abandonment of the "evil". They themselves wrote their Report in the "evil medium" and took credit for recommending that no restrictions should be placed on the use of English for all or any of the official purposes of the Union!

While the Majority admitted that "a language is not the property of any particular nation and obviously belongs to all who speak it" (p.33), they were nevertheless obsessed with the superstition that English was a "(foreign" language which would be replaced by an "Indian" language, Hindi! "Foreign" and "Indian" apply to political nationality. But a language has no nationality, even as it has no religion, race or sex. To speak of a language as "foreign" or "Indian" is a lamentable superstition.

It is not necessary that all Indians should learn Hindi in order to follow national affairs. Whatever be the language in which national affairs are conducted, they will be read in the regional languages by the great majority of the people of India, even as the speeches in the United Nations, whatever be the languages in which they are made, are read in all parts of the world in their local languages. Bi-lingualism of the Regional language and English will serve all the good purposes which the Majority approve and avert all the evils which bi-lingualism in the Hindi areas and tri-lingualism in the non-Hindi areas are bound to produce.

The Majority spoke sense when they concluded that language was the loom, not the fabric; only a vehicle of thought, not the thought itself.... It is not language but education that is aimed at in the schools; it is not language but good government that is aimed at in the field of public administration; it is not language but justice that is sought in the law courts. That which lends itself to the most convenience is the correct solution of the language problem in the various fields. (p.269)

If only they had followed their own assessment, they would have supported the Minority and included English among the "Indian" languages, retained it for higher education and administration, equalised opportunities for the Hindi and non-Hindi peoples, strengthened the unity and emotional integration of India, and promoted the rapid progress of India in all fields of human endeavour and enabled her to participate in world affairs with an advantage.

Letters to the Editor

Sir,

The overwhelming success of the Christian Democratic Party in the recent General Elections in the Federal German Republic indicates the trend of political opinion in Western Europe. In spite of threats and abuses from no less a person than Mr. Khrushchev, the Germans have expressed their full confidence in Chancellor Adenaur. No wonder, therefore, that the communists world over have become furious; for a slap in the face of the Soviet Boss is an insult for every communist which he is unable to swallow.

Apart from the economic prosperity brought about by Dr. Adenaur's Government, the foreign policy of the Chancellor has induced the voters to elect his party for yet another term. In spite of the Social Democrats' promise to try for German reunification the voters preferred to cast their lot with Christian Democrats. The reason for this is quite obvious. While Dr. Adenaur wants free elections in both parts of Germany, he is not prepared to prejudge the issue by declaring that the reunified Germany will keep aloof from NATO. He wants the issue to be decided by the freely elected parliament of the reunified Germany. This is in keeping with democratic traditions. The Social Democrats were in favour of keeping reunified Germany aloof from NATO; and perhaps it is this attitude of the Social Democrats that made the voters go away from them. It is really surprising that the Social Democrats made such commitments knowing fully well that the U.S.S.R. will refuse to honor any such commitment if she finds that she is losing ground.

Thus, free elections are the only means of re-uniting Germany. The voters of Western Germany have endorsed this stand of the Christian Democrats three times in last ten years. The people of Soviet occupied East Germany have not been given a single opportunity of expressing their views on the vital question of re-unification. If they do get such an opportunity their verdict will be obvious.

The efforts of the Soviet bosses to terrorise West Germany's voters have not borne fruit. So their lackeys all over the world are saying that the elections in West Germany were not free and that Nazi methods were used to bully the voters. According to communists, no election is fair in which they get a beating.

G. G. NATU

Sir,

In the issue of the *Freedom First* of September 1957, Mr. Adam Adil expressed some opinions that should either be corrected or combatted.

Referring to the cultural conditions of the country Mr. Adam Adil writes "The place of English has not yet been determined on an all-India basis and Hindi fanatics have made a fetish of the national language and are attempting to foist it even at the expense of regional languages." It was better had he been quite explicit.

It was expected of all countrymen to have realized

by now that India must have a national language by the very logic of her Independent Status. By that very logic the national language must be an Indian language having affinity with the cultural heritage of the country. If Mr. Adam Adil accepts this, one would like to know from him as to which regional language should take the place of national language? It must be clear to him that English cannot take that position killing the very spirit of cultural freedom and national regeneration.

Then who are the Hindi-fanatics and where and how are they marring the interest of regional languages? What position does he want to be determined for English and how will that help the regional languages? It appears that Mr. Adam Adil does not want any Indian language to become the national language and wants to retain English as before. But that will not be freedom, neither first nor last.

K. S. SINGH

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With Many Voices

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

—Tennyson.

The wealth tax in effect would amount to the payment of a death duty every year by a person who has wealth.

—Dr. Ramaswamy Mudaliar, M.P., *Times of India*, September 5.

I think it is time that Soviet spokesmen behaved like adults rather than petulant children.

—Howard Fast, *New York Times*, August 25.

The nation with which you want to make peace must be at peace within herself for that peace with you to be worth the paper it is written on.

—Salvador de Madariaga, *Thought*, September 7.

Russia is no longer the old Churchillian mystery in a riddle wrapped up in an enigma. It appears well on its way to becoming a theory supported by a footnote and wrapped in a bibliography.

—Melvin J. Lasky in *Encounter*, September.

They (Chambers of Commerce) have let down everybody because some of them have followed ways which are not right and others, who have done right, do not have the courage to tell the country the truth.

—Dr. Ramaswamy Mudaliar, *Times of India*, September 5.

Certainly everyone has a right to write about what he wants and how he wants. But does everything that is written have to be printed in a magazine? A magazine is not a mail-box.

—Quoted from *Izvestia*, September 3, *New York Times*, Sept. 4.

The U.S. is sceptical of these arrangements with the Soviet Union for "hands off." What they are apt to mean is our hands off and their hands under the table.

—John Foster Dulles, *Times of India*, Sept. 11.

To the Editor,
FREEDOM FIRST,
C/o Democratic Research Service,
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Bombay 1.

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members of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom.

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Even opportunistically peace is better than war.

—Prime Minister Nehru, *Shankar's Weekly*,
September 8.

✓ Co-existence for the communists is only a preliminary to their opponents' non-existence.

—*Times of India*, August 30.

✓ Oh communism where is thy sting, oh Congress where is thy victory?.....

—Dr. Ramaswamy Mudaliar M.P., *Times of India*
September 5.

....The best defence for India lies in protecting Mr. Menon against himself.

—"Satyam", *Thought*, September 14.

....Pakistan is the Government of India's sesame that opens all doors.

—*Thought*, September 14.

The philosophy of Vinobaji is a kind of "spiritual communism".....

—B. Ramakrishna Rao, Governor of Kerala,
The Hindu September 15.

India is not divided into classes based upon wealth but into castes based upon birth.

—Acharya J. B. Kripalani, *Janata*, September 15.

† for one frankly, explicitly and clearly do not believe in co-existence within the national sphere:

—Dr. Ramaswamy Mudaliar, M.P., *Times of India* September 5.

We use equivocal slogans and thereby seek verbal united fronts. Without our knowing it, the semantic Trojan horses carrying the Marxian dogma enter our mind and will.

—K. M. Munshi, *Times of India*, Sept. 15.

I believe the pressure of the vote combined with an activated, strengthened and united trade union movement will oblige any Government in India to move towards an egalitarian social order without the intervention of the class struggle.

—Acharya J. B. Kripalani, *Janata*, Sept. 15.

Free Enterprise is the rule of Dharma and is an essential attribute of a Welfare State.

—Prof. B. R. Shenoy, *Indian Express* Sept. 17.

To work in the shade of so unpredictable an influence as Menon's is my concept of hell on earth.

—"Satyam", *Thought* Sept. 21.