

Hollow Triumph

V. B. Karnik

ALL over the world there is deep sympathy for the trials and tribulations of the brave people of Czechoslovakia. There is hardly any doubt in anybody's mind about the character of the action that Russia and the four other Warsaw Pact countries took against that small nation, though some like the Government of India refrained from giving it its proper name for one reason or the other.

The march of the armies of Russia, East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria into Czechoslovakia was nothing but pure and simple aggression is clear as daylight. It was aggression even according to the definition of the term suggested to the United Nations by Russia herself.

It is a grave tragedy that the world, including the super power, the United States of America and big powers like England and France, could do nothing to help Czechoslovakia in her hour of need. They kept quiet contenting themselves only with sending protest notes and passing denunciatory resolutions. This proves that small and militarily weak nations cannot expect any help from big powers in resisting aggression unless it affects the vital interests of one of them. The two super powers appear to have divided the world into their respective spheres of influence and there appears to be a tacit agreement between them to turn a blind eye to whatever one of them may do within its own sphere of influence.

The people of Czechoslovakia, however, left the world in no doubt about their reaction to the invasion of their country. The force that was used was so mighty and overwhelming that military resistance was out of question. They therefore resorted to passive resistance very much on the lines suggested by Mahatma Gandhi. The resistance was effective to some extent. It compelled the rulers of Russia to release the imprisoned leaders of the people of Czechoslovakia and hold parleys with them regarding the governance of their country.

As a result of the parleys a makeshift arrangement

has been evolved. President Svoboda, Prime Minister Cernik and the First Secretary of the Communist Party, Dubcek have been allowed to retain their posts. But they were required to drop a number of their colleagues, such as, the Interior Minister, Joseph Pavel, the Vice-Premier, Ota Sik and the Foreign Minister, Jiri Hajek. The liberalisation programme, which began in January and which was the main cause of the Russian rulers' wrath, has not been abandoned in words; but severe restraints are placed upon it as evidenced by the imposition of censorship and the installation of a number of pro-Russian Stalinists in important positions in the Communist Party and the Government. Moreover, the occupation army will continue in the country for a long time to come to see that the will of the invaders is carried out.

This equivocal and uneasy position cannot continue too long. The liberal communist leaders of Czechoslovakia who desired to humanise their Communism cannot continue their programme of liberalisation and the same time please the Russian invaders. The latter will compel them to abandon their liberal ideas and programmes and to revert to the pre-January status quo of Stalinist terror and regimentation. This will alienate them from the people; and the people may choose new leaders and under their leadership begin again their struggle for freedom and human dignity. Though suppressed for the time being, it can be never put down permanently. It will raise its head again and again until it succeeds.

The military might of Russia has triumphed for the moment. But it is a hollow triumph that it has secured. Within Czechoslovakia itself the position is uncertain. A friendly and loyal people who had strong ties of affection and esteem has been turned into a bitter foe who will not forget and forgive for "a hundred years" what Russia did to it. Outside, she has stood out as a naked military power who has no regard for the sovereignty and independence of nations. Even major Communist Parties like those of France and Italy have condemned her action. She has lost the confidence of all nations excepting those who are dependent upon her in one way or another. The *detente* for which she was striving for over ten years is pushed far in the background and it will be years before the United States and other countries will begin to consider it a meaningful possibility. In the meanwhile, the nations of Europe will have to take steps to increase their

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Let The World Know

(A Report on the happenings in Czechoslovakia in the first few days of the occupation, reproduced from the Times Literary Supplement)

WHILE the Czech publishing houses, printing houses, schools, and universities were being occupied by Russian troops, and while the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and even the Prague University Library were being "placed under the supervision of occupation tanks" (as a Czech radio commentator ironically noted), writers and journalists were being hunted and, when found, arrested. According to eye-witnesses, many have gone underground; according to the Czechoslovak clandestine radio, many have been imprisoned. So far, no names have been made known. What is known, however, is that thanks to the holiday season quite a number of writers were abroad: the Fourth Writers' Congress rebels Ivan Klima, Pavel Kohout and A.J. Liehm, as well as Ivan Svitak, Jiri Mucha, Josef Skvorecky, and others. The film directors Milos Forman, Jiri Weiss and Ivan Passer are outside the C.S.S.R. Eduard Goldstucker and Ludvik Vaculik, on the other hand are certainly in the C.S.S.R. and hopefully still unharmed, as both seemed to have been present at the first sitting of the extraordinary fourteenth Congress of the C.P.C.S., held on Thursday, August 22. Both were elected to office.

The holding of the Congress and the smuggling of nearly 1,000 delegates from all parts of the Republic to the secret plenary meeting in Prague was a feat of unparalleled courage, secrecy and coordination. This feat, no less than the perfect functioning of a large network of clandestine radio stations, presupposes the existence of a huge underground. In fact, it seems as though the whole nation has gone underground. In Czechoslovakia the western students' dream of a whole society governing itself seems to have come true. There is unity, solidarity, cooperation "of all for the sake of one, and of one for the sake of all." Professor V. V. Stech, talking to a Czech radio journalist outside the Prague Cathedral last Sunday, described the situation as "history taking place in us, around us, in front of our very eyes. The nation has ceased to be an abstract image and is becoming a concrete physical force which electrifies every individual."

The fight the Czechs and Slovaks have put up is as unique as it is astounding. "We are beginning to master this curious dialogue with the occupants", a Slovak radio commentator tersely announced, "this dialogue between foreign tanks and unarmed patriots." Fearlessly, with great self-control the Czechs and Slovaks are managing to ignore the guns, the tanks, the provocations, the horrendous rape of their country. Their

weapons against brutal violence, lunatic irrationality, "Byzantine semantics and the logic of the steppes" (as they were aptly described by the same commentator) are, quite simply, truth and reason.

In spite of all their courage and cunning, the struggle of the Czechoslovaks could never be effective were it not for the radio stations (which quite properly, identify themselves as "legal and independent"). Through their channels news can freely flow in and out of the country and circulate within. During the first few days they were on the air almost continuously. It was possible to sense the atmosphere in Czechoslovakia from the tone of voice of the many announcers, so very different from the usual mixture of professional crispness and boredom. The Czech and Slovak voices went through a whole scale of emotions. At first they were stunned, then gradually shocked, horrified, hurt, disgusted, angry, ironical, tough. By Saturday they began to sound more relaxed.

By Sunday the earlier quick rotation of stations gelled into a more-or-less regular distribution of time slots, and the former flood of coded and straight messages and announcements was minimized. Something approaching regular programming began. Precisely at 12 o'clock there were the usual midday church bells of Prague, followed by a poem, written by Frantisek Helas at the time of Munich, denouncing the "hard hooves" of the invaders. No new poems have been read but a number of protest songs are being composed almost literally under the muzzles of the Russian guns and from time to time they are broadcast along with the hard news, the defiant slogans and the pleas to Western listeners that we "Let the world know what is going on here". This is one of those songs:

The morning was peaceful
Like any other morning
Over the roofs the sun appeared
The day has now begun.
Who would have thought
That birds of prey would suddenly burst out?
Is it a nightmare? Look at the sun!
You have tanks
We have the truth
And our finest hour
You have only power
To beat and betray
I only sing a song
And this is what I say:
Go away, go away!

To Sing With The Angels

G. L. Mehta

THEY thought," she half sobbed, half chanted, "they'd make us howl with the wolves to the end of time, but someday we'll sing with the angels again—with the angels."

So ends the enchanting and moving tale by Maurice Hindus of Nazi dismemberment of Czechoslovakia thirty years ago¹. Once this woman Annichka had faith in the world. Life was simple and beautiful. "We even bragged our conscience—yes, bragged of it." But what good was it when in a near-by country millions were willing to die so that this life should be no more. And yet, as her companion Vladimir, reminds her, millions the world over were willing to die so that this life should always rule the world. It was her uncle who used to say—"Either we are all dead or we are all free." That's what he believed and died for. And, Vladimir ruminates, when three hundred and fifty years ago, Czech leaders and thinkers were killed off and the Habsburgs thought as Hitler now thinks that the Czechs were finished as a people, forever and ever, and the spirit of Huss who made so many of them *love freedom more than life*, would no longer haunt and torment them. But in the end, the spirit triumphed and they had a Masaryk and a Benes and a Republic. And now it is Hitler against Huss—and Huss is immortal.

And the couple escapes to operate secret radios all over the country so that people can hear the news, and carry out sabotage on railroads and in munition factories and stocking secret arsenals until the day of redemption comes. Till then, they will struggle and suffer and sacrifice so they can sing with the angels which can only be when they are free and the Nazis are defeated.

Earlier—exactly twenty years before—Czechoslovakia had been an independent nation. President Masaryk has told the story of the struggle and emancipation of his land.² From his youth he believed that life without faith loses strength and certainty. If people could understand each other, he remarked, we should have democracy at one stroke; without mutual understanding, without tolerance, there is no freedom. For him, politics despite its organisational aspect contained an element of poetry because of its creative force. Politics, too, demanded a balance between reason and feeling. Masaryk went through the fiery ordeal for his country's independence and thought that such conflicts contributed to national conscious-

ness and intensification of spiritual life. Eventually, he was grateful to Fate for the fullness of his life and the fulfilment of his life's mission. "I may say that office confirms and completes everything I have believed," he says after his election to the presidency which was the culminating point of his life, "so that I have not needed to change one item of my faith in humanity and in democracy, in the search for truth, nor in the supreme moral and religious command to love men." He could tell himself that in the incessant struggle for a better nation and people, he was on the right side—this conviction was enough to make his life beautiful and happy.

But though President Masaryk died a happy man, Jan Masaryk, his son, had to face other foes. Totalitarianism wore another mask. Communists having never come to power by the free suffrage of a people, Stalinist Russia manipulated a coup through its agents and quislings. Only now the full details of the nefarious plot are being known to the people of Czechoslovakia and the world. Benes, its President, died of a broken heart after the communist betrayal. Jan Masaryk, the old President's son, who was then reported to have committed suicide was, there is little doubt now, brutally murdered. Stalin's agents were present at the trials and dictated, directly and indirectly, various sentences and punishments for political opponents. Czechoslovakia which during the inter-war years (1920-1939) was the most progressive and democratic country in Central Europe, again, came under an alien aggressor's heels. This was 1948, ten years after Hitler's conquest, thirty years after its birth as a Republic. The essence of democracy is faith and it is the habit of free men to trust. But the principles of democracy are exploited and prostituted by militant communism to subvert and destroy democracy itself. "Communist morality is the morality which serves the (communist) struggle" wrote Lenin. He instructed his followers "to use any ruse, dodges, tricks, cunning, unlawful methods, concealment, veiling of truth" to achieve communist aims. So, in Czechoslovakia, as elsewhere, at the appropriate moment, previous solemn promises were broken, allied parties and non-communist politicians were denounced, violence flared up, the rigidly controlled party machine was set in motion against the infiltrated and disorganised forces of democracy. Thus was conquest accomplished—what Korbel calls "conquest by co-existence".

¹ *To Sing With the Angels* by Maurice Hindus (1941)

² *President Masaryk Tells His Story* as recounted by Karl Capek (1934)

³ *The Communist Subversion of Czechoslovakia 1938-1948* by Joseph Korbel (1959)

For twenty long years have workers and peasants, intellectuals and students and ordinary citizens of Czechoslovakia suffered the blight of tyranny, the economic and ideological domination of a powerful, ruthless neighbour. But the stirrings of freedom came—people yearned for the right to think, to agree, to debate, to differ. And nationalism is as much a challenge to communist imperialism as to capitalist imperialism. There is nothing, however, the orthodox communist fears more than freedom. "Men fear thought as they fear nothing else on earth," wrote Bertrand Russell in his *Principles of Social Reconstruction* over fifty years ago, "fear it more than ruin, more even than death. Thought is subversive and revolutionary, destructive and terrible; thought is merciless to privilege, established institutions, and comfortable habits; thought is anarchic and lawless, indifferent to authority, careless of the wisdom of the ages. . . . Thought is great and swift and free, the light of the world, the chief glory of men." But it is precisely the freedom of thought that totalitarians, whether on the left or the right, fear and wish to suppress. Glibly and insincerely the 22nd Congress of the communist party recognised the right of each communist party to blaze its own trail to socialism. Yet when the time comes—whether in Hungary or Czechoslovakia—the pretence is given up. No one shall deviate by a hair's breadth.

For once, Soviet Russia found that Dubcek's whole strength lay in the immense popular support he enjoyed and, indeed, gained by standing up to the Russians. No appeals could be stage managed from paid hirelings or Stalinist loyalists to justify Soviet intervention. Neither was it easy to create a myth of counter-revolution. What eastern Europe apprehends, as the *Economist* said recently, is not counter-revolution but counter-evolution: peaceful changes to rule by popular consent. Fear of such a confrontation, apart from its hopeless entanglement in Viet Nam has prevented America taking interest in what has tacitly and for all practical purposes become a Soviet sphere of influence. No pressure other than armed invasion could be exercised since Russia wields hardly any moral influence. And thus, once again, twenty years after the Communist take-over, the Czechs who were about to sing with the angels are being compelled by comradely artillery, tanks and planes to learn to howl with the wolves. But as Vladimir told Annichka, Huss is immortal. The Czechs will rise again. In Byron's memorable words,

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Bequeathed from bleeding sire to son
Though baffled oft
Is ever won!

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Press Strike—Its Implications

M. R. Pai

DURING the recent strike in newspaper establishments, a reporter working in a news agency complained to this author: "Look at these irresponsible bank employees. Yesterday they went on a pen-down strike and paralysed the work of banks. We could not get our salary cheques cashed. What a hardship to many people who look forward to the salary day!" The same evening, a bank employees' union leader complained to this author: "These journalists have no sense of duty. Yesterday we had a magnificent demonstration. Our members are bitter that because of newspaper strike the public has not become aware of this successful demonstration."

Both narrations point out to one lesson: These days, organised sectional interests can hold other sections of the public to ransom by indulging in strikes and using techniques which paralyse economic activities. But, this is a weapon which cuts both ways. In the end, nobody is better off. Can we not find a better way in our democracy to solve grievances without impairing general freedom while exercising one's own freedoms? As a well-known U.S. Judge once said: "A man's fundamental right to wave his walking stick stops where another man's nose begins."

The two-month strike of journalists has ended, but has left behind several issues to be solved.

In the first place, the strike was ill-advised and ill-prepared, even from the trade union viewpoint. Journalists had got whatever they wanted. Non-journalists had made substantial gains, and negotiations on a unitwise level with employers could have got them further. But, such an approach was given up in favour of agitational approach.

No preparations for strike were made in advance. Neither the employees were told to build up a small kitty of savings, nor a relief fund for strikers built up. The strike was called precipitately. In one leading Bombay group of publications, for instance, till 4 p.m. the leader was advising everyone that there would be no strike. But before evening closed, the decision had been reversed.

The journalists, who went on strike to support non-journalist employees, felt let down as the strike dragged on. They had drawn their salaries before 10th of the month, while workers drew about 65% of current month's salary on 22nd before going on strike, thus increasing their holding power. As the strike dragged on many journalists literally starved. In fact, they had virtually asked for it when they allowed communist leadership to lead them into this trap to suit the political ambitions of leaders and serve the communist cause.

Whichever way the strike went, it served the communist books well. If the strike succeeded, then the vital newspaper sector of the economy came under the grip of communists. Most of the proprietors being ideologically blind, some journalists on reporting side and news desk already tamper with news and views to suit their ideological inclinations. While the proprietors get choice abusive epithets like "Press Barons", "vested interests", "monopolists" from Reds and their allies, it is the party hacks in the Press who further the cause of totalitarianism by distorting or slanting news, or suppressing news not to their liking. For instance, it was recently found by a Calcutta daily that 10 out of 16 reporters were card-carrying members of communist parties who had no compunction in twisting or suppressing news and views critical of communists, and presenting their bosses and parties in the best light, violating all canons of journalistic ethics.

If the strike failed, as it ultimately did, the communists still gained in creating discontent on which they thrive. A number of journalists walked into this trap.

It is surprising that even educated employees should depend on outside leadership for guiding their own affairs. But such a situation was inevitable.

Over the years, many journalists in India have considered themselves not as members of a noble profession, which they really are, but only like artisans like carpenters or plumbers. They have wrongly banded themselves into trade unions, with the consequence that the natural pride of a man of a noble profession, is not reflected in their work.

An important aspect of the strike, flowing from this basic defect in approach, is the gross disrespect to the reader and the general public. Journalists as members

"THEY THINK WE ARE FRIGHTENED..."



—Courtesy: National Herald

of a noble profession owe a duty to their readers — their real employers — and the general public. The free and full flow of information is a pre-requisite for successful working of a democracy. It is significant that even in communist dictatorships, the first flashes of freedom appear from the writers and journalists, though the Press and authors are put in the straight-jacket of censorship and party discipline.

By going on strike, Indian journalists have done a great disservice to the cause of democracy. As an illustration, one may refer to the two major issues on which public discussion was muted by the Press strike. Russian military aid to Pakistan and the military conquest of Czechoslovakia by U.S.S.R. and other Warsaw Pact members, as also the equivocal stand of the Indian Government, transpired during the Press strike. Vigorous public discussion on these problems of vital interest to the Indian democracy did not take place as many publications were affected by the strike. Is it any wonder that there has been a strong suspicion that the strike was precipitated at a moment when communist Russia would have considerably lost face in India, and that the strike was prolonged to preserve this news vacuum?

It is high time that outside leadership is banned in trade unions, particularly where educated employees are members. It is also high time that the public, which showed no sympathy to strikers, asserted its right as readers and citizens in a democracy. Most important of all, the responsible journalists — and there are many who are silent for fear of non-conformism — asserted themselves, got rid of the leadership of a politically-oriented vocal minority, and put the Press back on the right tracks. Their failure to do so, and early at that, will be a great disservice to the cause of freedom and democracy.

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defensive potential thus leading to a ruinous armaments race. Distrust and hostility amongst super powers and big nations that had begun to disappear will get a new lease of life and the spectre of the third world war will reappear on the scene. Piqued by the adverse reactions of Rumania, Yugoslavia and Germany to her action in Czechoslovakia, Russia has already begun to threaten those countries. Those threats will have to be countered; otherwise what happened in Czechoslovakia may be repeated elsewhere.

Apart from military measures, what can to some extent counter those threats is the rousing of strong public opinion in all parts of the world against the type of action that Russia resorted to in Czechoslovakia. It must receive instantaneous and unambiguous condemnation all over the world, particularly in the countries of Asia and Africa. If a mighty voice of protest rises in all parts of the world it will have some effect on the most cynical of dictators. In the case of Czechoslovakia, countries like India did not play their part as manfully as they should have done. There was no question about the reaction of the people of India. It was one of anger and disgust. But the Government of India faltered. That gave a bad name to the country and provided some excuse to the invaders. That must not happen again. That is the duty cast upon freedom-loving forces in the country. It is to be hoped that they will not fail to perform it.

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To Our Friends In Our Midst

Josef Schweik

(The first leading article, penned with savage irony, by the Good Soldier Schweik after his appointment last week, on retirement from the Service, as editor of Rude Pravo. Translation by Tibor Szamuely, reprinted from Sunday Telegraph, London.)

DEAR Comrades! Our glorious newspaper, as you will have noticed, has resumed publication under a new editor—myself. I think it is highly appropriate, therefore, to preface this first statement of editorial policy by extending our warm fraternal and comradely greetings to all citizens and permanent residents of our Republic: Czechs, Slovaks, Russians, Poles, Democratic Germans, Hungarians and Bulgars.

In the past fortnight we have all lived through stirring times—times which, I hope, none of us will ever forget. We have witnessed an historic demonstration of the unshakable unity of the Socialist nations. Twenty years ago our late revered leader, Comrade Gottwald, declared that: "Czechoslovakia will remain with the Soviet Union for eternity." It is thoughtful of the Soviet comrades to have reminded us of this promise today.

The Soviet Army has come to our country as our friend and trusted ally. What a striking contrast to the brutal invasion of Nazi Germany 30 years ago. The Germans (the Nazi Germans, that is) were our enemies: they summoned our President to Berlin, browbeat him into signing an invitation, and then entered our country. But the Soviets, as true allies and revolutionaries, need none of these obsolete bourgeois conventions: they felt free to enter our country first, and then invite our leaders to Moscow—taking them there at their own expense and solicitously assuring their safety by means of the new "M.A.N.A.K.L." model Soviet safety-belts—where our comrades signed the agreement as a pure formality, of their own free will.

Let us be frank: it is good to have our friends in our midst. The sight of our German comrades, in their distinctive uniforms, will awaken particularly poignant feelings of nostalgia among members of our older generation. But, of course, as Marx said, everything changes, everything develops, and we have seen that our young people are far more excited by the sight of the Soviet uniform. Such is life, and long may it remain such.

Unlike the decadent youth of capitalist societies, our young people have shown a great sense of responsibility. Their welcome to our guests has been in the finest traditions of Czechoslovak hospitality, in a high-spirited atmosphere of fun and merriment. How we chuckle at the comradely pranks of changing street names and road signs, of pretending not to under-

stand Russian, and of putting out a great variety of humorous welcoming posters. It was good to see that our Russian friends, too, entered into the spirit of the game by pretending that they were in West Germany and even playfully firing off the odd shot from time to time.

Our people know that the Soviet Army is quite different from Imperialist armies. Its object is not to wage war, but to struggle for peace. And we have seen that it is ready to struggle for peace, if need be, until not a stone is left standing.

But we must also face the fact that certain misconceptions have arisen among the more backward parts of our population. For instance, some people have been puzzled by a recent Soviet statement describing Comrade Dubcek as leader of a minority grouping. Yet in this, as in everything else, the Soviet leaders are completely correct. Comrade Dubcek is the leader of a minority grouping: of 14½ million Czechs and Slovaks, to be precise—a very small minority compared to the 240-million-strong Soviet people.

And, as the bearers of an ancient democratic tradition, we should be the first to understand that a minority must accept the will of the majority. Indeed, this merely emphasises the profound democratic nature of the Soviet system, which protects the rights of minorities and accepts their existence. We have not, after all, been abolished or required to disband—as would have happened, for instance, in Neo-Nazi West Germany, where the Communist party is even prohibited. But are Czechs and Slovaks prohibited? Of course not.

This situation can be remedied in the proper democratic way—by the minority becoming a majority. As soon as we Czechoslovaks acquire a majority over the other comrades, our views will surely prevail. There are other methods, but it would take too long to go into that now.

Certain other misunderstandings must also be patiently cleared up. Some people, for example, compare Moscow with Munich. What nonsense! Why, Moscow is much larger than Munich, and it is not even situated in Bavaria. Nor should any incorrect deductions be drawn from the fact that Soviet tanks, just like the Nazi tanks of a horrible bygone era of occupation, bear the sign of the swastika. The diffe-

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IF I WERE A CZECH

M. K. Gandhi

(Extracts from an article Mahatma Gandhi wrote when Nazi Germany invaded and occupied Czechoslovakia in the latter half of 1938)

I PRESENT Dr. Benes with a weapon not of the weak but of the brave. There is no bravery greater than a resolute refusal to bend the knee to an earthly power, no matter how great, and that without bitterness of spirit and in the fullness of faith that the spirit alone lives, nothing else does.

Science of war leads one to dictatorship, pure and simple. Science of non-violence can alone lead one to pure democracy.

I want to speak to the Czechs, because their plight moved me to the point of physical and mental distress and I felt that it would be cowardice on my part not to share with them the thoughts that were welling up within me. It is clear that the small nations must either come or be ready to come under the protection of the dictators or be a constant menace to the peace of Europe. In spite of all the goodwill in the world England and France cannot save them. Their intervention can only mean bloodshed and destruction such as has never been seen before. If I were a Czech, therefore, I would free these two nations from the obligation to defend my country. And yet I must live. I would not be a vassal to any nation or body. I must have absolute independence or perish. To speak to win in a clash of arms would be pure bravado. Not so, if in defying the might of one who would deprive me of my independence I refuse to obey his will and perish unarmed in the attempt. In so doing, though I lose the body, I save my soul, i.e., my honour.

But, says a comforter, "Hitler knows no pity. Your spiritual effort will avail nothing before him."

My answer is, "You may be right. History has no record of a nation having adopted non-violent resistance. If Hitler is unaffected by my suffering, it does not matter. For I shall have lost nothing worth. My honour is the only thing worth preserving. That is independent of Hitler's pity. But as a believer in non-violence, I may not limit its possibilities. Hitherto he and his likes have built upon their invariable experience that men yield to force. Unarmed men, women and children offering non-violent resistance without any bitterness in them will be a novel experience for them. Who can dare say that it is not in their nature to respond to the higher and finer forces? They have the same soul that I have."

This inglorious peace should be my opportunity. I must live down the humiliation and gain real independence.

History Repeats Itself

Czechoslovak history seems to repeat itself. In his memoirs, George F. Kennan quoted a dispatch he wrote from Prague in March 1939, after the entry of Nazi troops into the city. Remarking on the Czechoslovaks' decision not to resist the invaders, he wrote that this national resolve "perhaps most important of all has preserved for the exacting tasks of the future a magnificent younger generation—disciplined, industrious and physically fit—which would undoubtedly have been sacrificed if the solution had been the romantic one of hopeless resistance rather than the humiliating but truly heroic one of realism."

This was also true of Czechoslovakia in 1968 after the 229 days of the democratic spring.

—Tad Szulc, *New York Times*

Protest in Moscow

In Moscow last week a small group of Russians gathered in Red Square, sat down and unfurled banners reading: "Hands off the C.S.S.R.!" (the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic), and "Long live a free and independent Czechoslovakia!" The outcome was predictable—and prompt. Police rushed up and arrested the demonstrators, whose number, included Pavel Litvinov, 30, grandson of the late Soviet Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov; Mrs. Yuri Daniel, wife of the imprisoned Soviet writer; and Mrs. Natalya Gorbanevskaya, a well-known poet.

Released after her arrest, Mrs. Gorbanevskaya, said in a letter mailed to foreign correspondents in Moscow that some in the group were beaten by the police officers. But, she added, "My comrades and I are happy that we were able, even briefly, to break the sludge of unbridled lies and cowardly silence and thereby demonstrate that not all the citizens of our country are in agreement with the violence carried out in the name of the Soviet people."

—A news item in *New York Times*

What is Communism?

Before the Czechoslovak crisis a joke making the rounds in East European capitals asked:

"What is Communism?"

Answer: "Communism is a system for turning socialism into capitalism."

A Czech reflected last week, "This joke is now hideous because it is exactly what the Russians claim our democratic Communism was doing—turning socialism into capitalism."

The New York Times

Dilemma For The Kremlin

WITH their tanks all over Czechoslovakia the Russians still have the mastery of the country if they choose to exercise it, but so far they have not done so. There can be only one reason for the indecision with which the Russians have behaved since the invasion, and that is a deep division of counsels within the Kremlin. Certainly there have been miscalculations as well. It was assumed that a puppet government would spring fully armed from the ranks of "loyal Communists" as soon as the tanks entered Prague, and, when that did not happen, that President Svoboda could be cajoled into dropping the leading men in the existing party and Government. It was then assumed, after Mr. Dubcek and his team returned from Moscow, that both they and the citizens at large would recognise what was required of them and act accordingly. This they have not done. But these miscalculations need not have deterred the Russians if they had been united about what they were trying to do. The Czechoslovak situation now presents the Kremlin with another crucial dilemma of precisely the kind it faced before the invasion. In the past few days the Moscow press has returned to the threatening tone it adopted three weeks ago. It looks, therefore, as if further moves to crush the Czechoslovak Government and party may be under debate.

The successes of the reformist leadership have been both important and surprising. Even an incomplete list is enough to make the Russians ponder. Mr. Dubcek was condemned in "Pravda" as a Right-wing opportunist. He and his closest colleagues, Mr. Cernik and Mr. Shrkovsky, were captured and roughly handled. A few days later they were back in their old jobs in Prague. Then the Central Committee met to choose a new praesidium. It chose a largely liberal one. "Rude Pravo," the party organ, then carried not self-criticism by liberals of their past mistakes, but a recantation by its former editor, Mr. Svestka, of his old hard-line position and an assurance that it had not been he who had called in the Russian troops. Censorship has been accepted but with apologies to the public and promises not to write what is not believed. And in all official statements "normalisation"—the key word of the Moscow communiqué—has been taken to mean the departure of Russian troops, not any particular change in Czechoslovak policy.

On the positive side the Russians can show only the resignations of General Pavel and Professor Sik. Set-backs though these are to the cause of the reformation, they hardly justify an act of aggression. When the Moscow communiqué was issued we said that it could mean anything the Russians wanted it to mean, and so it can. But by the vagueness of its terms it also gave the Czechoslovaks room for manoeuvre. They have done nothing contrary to the agreement.

In the meantime Moscow has been shifting its ground. At one time 40,000 counter-revolutionaries were said to be roaming Czechoslovakia in bands. Nothing has been heard from them for a while. Then the Soviet Embassy in Prague was being overwhelmed with letters from Communists asking the Russian troops to stay because revisionists were still in office. Then it was discovered that NATO had had a plan to take over Czechoslovakia and, in retrospect, this was given as the reason for the Soviet occupation. None of these spurious tales disguises the fact that Czechoslovakia is as normal as it is likely to be under an occupation army, and that the Warsaw Pact troops should now leave. But "normalisation" means different things to the Kremlin and Mr. Dubcek. In Soviet eyes normality will not have returned until Czechoslovakia becomes the sleepy and obedient backwater that it was before.

It is hard to estimate the effect on Russian policy of the international storm of protest which the invasion caused. Much of this must, of course, have been discounted in advance, but Yugoslav and West European Communist comment has been particularly discouraging to the Russians. It should not be supposed, either, that all the satellite countries were equally enthusiastic about turning back the clock in Czechoslovakia.

Some Hungarian official comment has been noticeably reticent, even apologetic. Hungary has spent many years in a cautious programme of domestic reform in an attempt, not altogether unsuccessful, to restore its prestige as a civilised member of the European family. To be forced into line alongside so archaic a figure as Herr Ulbricht is damaging to Hungary's national interests. If it is consulted, Hungary is likely to advise restraint in any further action against the Czechoslovak leadership.

Whatever Russia's friends advise, however, the decision whether to impose further limits to Czechoslovakia's freedom of action will have to be taken by the 11 men of the Soviet politburo. The signal lack of success of the operation so far may strengthen the hands of those, thought to include Mr. Kosygin and Mr. Suslov, who tried to understand what was happening in Czechoslovakia and to work with the grain instead of against it. For this is the heart of Russia's problem. The Kremlin may not be able to occupy for long the middle ground between Stalinism and the sort of democratic socialism with which the Czechs and Slovaks were experimenting. Instinct and fear in Soviet leadership say "Turn back." But the forces which want to go forward are growing all the time.

The next few days should decide whether the Soviet Union cuts its losses in Czechoslovakia or proceeds to heap further damage on its reputation.

—Courtesy, *The Guardian Weekly*

Reviews

Challenges to Secularism

by A. B. Shah, Nachiketa Publications, 148 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 1. Rs. 3.75

WHEN I first read Professor A. B. Shah's article on the cow slaughter issue, now forming part I of this book, I was reminded of a remark purported to have been made by a French diplomat in India. He told his Indian friend that in France things often get serious but rarely or almost never disastrous while in India things are almost always disastrous but never serious. The actual debate on the cow slaughter is not perhaps taken seriously by the majority of the Hindus and the ban, like prohibition, will fail but the issue might lead to disaster any time which means arson, looting and so on.

Hindu sacred law, specially the more authoritative works, sets down both the views without bothering about consistency. In fact as late as in the 8th century, Bhavabhuti has referred to killing of the cow and its progeny. So one wonders if it is really possible to convince the orthodox Hindus who actually demand ban on cow slaughter for certain other reasons. They think that the identity of the Hindus as a community will be lost, the moment the age-old Hindu loyalties to the Vedas, fair complexion, cult of the rivers and cow worship are given up.

Professor Shah would have done well to answer the argument put forward by some serious Hindu thinkers that in India we cannot preserve any sentiments or sensibility without making it a part of the piety or religious duties. Even so, one important thing that his article does is to prove again, if proof were needed, that citizens can still challenge a religious leader in the Hindu society. In this sense, Professor Shah is carrying on the tradition of reformers like Justice M. G. Ranade and Raja Ram Mohan Roy. His most convincing argument against demand of ban on cow slaughter is of course the democratic argument which has been voiced by Mahatma Gandhi quoted in this book. He says "just as Shariat cannot be imposed on the non-Muslims, the Hindu law cannot be imposed on the non-Hindus". In fact Professor Shah has done

well to improve this by saying, in effect, that Hindu law *should not* be (it can be of course) imposed on non-Hindus.

The other subject dealt with in this book is really more important from the humanitarian point of view because it deals with the destiny of 47 million Muslims in India. Many people have discussed this subject. In fact Mr. Nirad Chaudhury, in his brilliant essay on the Muslims in his book *The Continent of Circe* has said that though in terms of absolute numbers they are not a smaller minority, but judged by the position they hold in the relation to their numerical strength, they might be said to be the least of the minorities. Professor Shah also refers to the more important development, namely, that to keep a separate identity, the Muslims have always fallen back on the basic principles of Islam, namely, the solidarity of all Islamic countries. Again, many others have rightly referred to the tragedy of Muslims arising out of their belief that their religion does not permit them to be under the rule of non-believers. While most of the others refer to this tragic dilemma of the Muslims and leave it at that, Professor Shah goes further in suggesting a way out for them and that is to begin a critical enquiry into their beliefs and scriptures. As Professor Shah has rightly said in one of his answers to the many questions put to him by a Muslim friend, it should be remembered that the shortcomings of one culture cannot be the defence of those of another. He has also done well to quote from the findings of the Munir commission which show that leaders in Pakistan are becoming bold and question some of their old beliefs while in India we do not have enough leaders in the Muslim community to do this work. Even here Professor Shah should write a little more on the question of separate identity for a community. It is hoped that he will continue his good work and bring out more books on such fundamental issues.

Arvind A. Deshpande

1. *The Czechoslovak Crisis*

Edited by D. B. Karnik, Oriental Foundation, Bombay. Rs. 5.

2. *Nazism and Communism*

Edited by Pradip Bose, Samajwadi Prakashani, 235, Jodhpur Park, Calcutta 31. 25 P.

3. *East European Turmoil and C.P.I.*

Edited by Pradip Bose, Samajwadi Prakashani, 50 P.

MR. D. B. Karnik has rendered a useful service to the cause of democracy and freedom by bringing out this book on Czechoslovakia. This book would prove very useful to the general public and to the students of international affairs in knowing the whole story because they could not follow the

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events during the crisis as most of the national newspaper workers were on strike and very few people could get foreign newspapers or journals to know what was happening in Czechoslovakia.

Again like a good journalist Mr. Karnik has given a chronicle of events and statements by leading public men and allowed these to speak for themselves. He has avoided, as far as possible, giving his own comments on the crisis though the quotations he has chosen show that his heart is in the right place. Like Mr. Jethmalani, who has written a foreword to this book, we too do not know whether the crisis has ended or not. In any case the subject is so important that it will be discussed for a number of years to come and Mr. Karnik's book will provide useful background material for those who discuss this subject or choose to write on it. Altogether a good job and a timely publication.

The other two booklets are from the Samajwadi Prakashani, Calcutta and are written by Mr. Pradip Bose. In his booklet *Nazism and Communism* Mr. Bose has tried to show that there is hardly any difference between the two in so far as they give rise to dictatorship and work for the suppression of individual liberty and freedom. He calls these political philosophies as dated philosophies which would soon be "consigned to the dustbin of history." It is difficult to agree with this view as Communism is very much there and kicking, while Nazism is in fact collective madness which might be shown by any human group in any country.

Since Nazism and Communism almost use the same methods of torture and suppression, Mr. Bose thinks that it is wrong to term them as extreme left or extreme right. I wonder how many intellectuals will agree with this view. In any case, his "model" showing Communism and Nazism meeting at one point will interest some people.

The other booklet of Mr. Bose will be read with greater interest by political commentators. It seems Mr. Bose still has some faith in the Communists like a few other good socialists, one of whom, recently wrote an open letter to the C.P.I. members to give up their dependence on the Communist Party in U.S.S.R. and join democratic socialists. Thus Mr. Bose patronisingly calls the C.P.I. adolescent in its outlook though it is 45 years old. A leading newspaper which possibly takes the C.P.I. to be a mature organisation called its stand on the Czechoslovak crisis "shameful". The truth perhaps is that the C.P.I. members are neither adolescent nor freedom loving people but only hardheaded Communists like their colleagues in the U.S.S.R. It is therefore futile for good socialists like Mr. Bose and others to expect the C.P.I. to condemn U.S.S.R. for what it has done in Czechoslovakia. In any case we must thank Mr. Bose for educating public opinion on the role C.P.I. has played during this crisis.

A. A. D.

(Continued from page 7)

rence between the two armies can be grasped even by a child: the Nazis had put on the swastikas themselves, whereas these swastikas were painted by our own people, for reasons best known to them.

While on the subject of misconceptions, I cannot refrain from mentioning something which concerns me personally: the question of my highly esteemed predecessor, Comrade Svestka. Comrade Svestka, as we all know, was one of those loyal Czechoslovak comrades who appealed to our loyal Soviet comrades to overthrow the loyal leadership of Comrade Dubcek, to whom we are all loyal. What could be more straightforward than this? Yet Comrade Svestka's loyalty has been rewarded in our country by abuse or, at best, by silence.

Thanks to our Soviet friends we remain part of the Socialist camp. Indeed, it is in our part of the Socialist camp that most Socialist peaceful armed forces are now concentrated—which means, as the great Marxist military theoretician Frederick Engels pointed out in 1886, that we are now a Socialist concentration camp.

Our task today is to express, in unmistakable terms, the feelings of gratitude which animate us all. The Soviet Union has proffered us its helping hand—we must return this gesture of friendship by giving them our hand back (or the back of our hand, to use the more colloquial Czech phrase). They have not dragged their feet in coming to our aid—and we in turn must give them the boot as soon as possible.

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

Communist government on the Russian model has proved to be a return to medieval autocracy complete with the inquisition and the torture chamber.

—Jo Grimond, MP., *The Guardian Weekly*, August 29.

In its relations with the non-communist world it (Soviet Union) appears primarily as a great power and only incidentally as a communist power.

—*Economic and Political Weekly*, August 31.

A nation such as ours, which allows itself to be guided solely by reason, will not perish.

—Alexander Dubcek, *The Observer*, September 1.

The crowning irony of the situation is that German troops should be marching into Czechoslovakia under Soviet aegis. What a world one might exclaim!

—V. P. Dutt, *National Herald*, September 4.

A cynical understanding between the two Great Powers does exist, whereby each may play the rogue elephant unopposed within its own sphere.

—*New Statesman*, September 6.

For the time being Soviet Russia's violence has succeeded in suppressing the Czechoslovakian liberalization movement.

—C. Rajagopalachari, *Svarajya*, September 7.

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The Czechs face the fact that nothing really counts against tanks.

—*Economist* (London), September 7.

Over 18,000 tanks, 1,000 planes and 6.5 lakh soldiers—that was the force of occupation that was imposed upon the little country of Czechoslovakia.

—Asoka Mehta, *Janata*, September 8.

"We waited for you six years (through World War II).

"We were your allies for 20 years.

"We will hate you for 1,000 years!"

—Posters in Prague, *U.S. News & World Report*, September 9.

From what I have seen of occupation in Czechoslovakia, if this is defence of socialism, then slavery is better.

—Soma Nath Lahiri, CPI leader of Bengal, *The Mail*, September 9.

This talk of hawks and doves in Kremlin makes no sense. In that league no dove ever gets to the top.

—*U.S. News & World Report*, September 16.

Was Barry Goldwater four years ahead of his time? Every reading of the nation's temper suggests that he was.

—*Time*, September 20.

I consider it (the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia) pure aggression of the sort that is defined in terms of international law as a war crime.

—Jean-Paul Sartre, *Time*, September 20.

One cannot suppress the yearning of nations for freedom with tank divisions. Thought cannot be shot dead.

—Jan Prochazka, *Free Press Journal*, September 20.

Russia is the imperialist power of the 20th century.

—John Grigg, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, September 20.

Night is falling on Czechoslovakia. But, darkness is blackest in the mind and heart of Soviet Russia.

—Frank Moraes, *Indian Express*, September 21.