

SEPTEMBER 1954

The Art Of Non-Conforming

by Malcolm Muggeridge

(Editor of *Punch*)

It has been said that, under Malcolm Muggeridge, "Punch" is being jerked into reality, the only basis for humour. His earlier journalistic assignments were with the Manchester Guardian and the Daily Telegraph.

Originally an educationist Mr. Muggeridge came to India to teach English literature in Travancore and later revisited the country as one of the editors of the "Statesman." He is "a man who has laughed a lot, seen the world, measured and analysed affairs from Washington to Tokyo, with stops at Moscow and Calcutta."

Mr. Muggeridge is a member of the International Executive of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, and "Freedom First" is proud to have secured the exclusive rights for publication in India of this article, which was originally published in "Vogue" magazine in the U.S.

IF I were to write, as I have sometimes thought I might, the Confessions of a Non-Conforming Man, they would begin with an assertion that the mid-twentieth century, far from being a period of enlightenment, has been notable for credulity and servility to a quite exceptional degree. It would be necessary, I should go on, to go back at least to the Dark Ages to find a generation of men so given over to destruction, superstition, and every variety of obscurantism. Over large parts of the world the institution of slavery has been re-established in a particularly cruel and callous form. At the same time, huge areas, formerly dependencies of Britain and other West European countries, are rapidly and evidently falling into chaos and ruin. Two atrocious wars have laid waste and impoverished Western civilization, whose leaders have been constantly outwitted, and whose assets, moral as well as material, have been recklessly squandered. At the same time, amidst these horrors, and confronted at every turn with evidence of his ineptitude, Twentieth Century Man has continued to pin his hopes on the untenable and obsolete doctrine of progress, convinced, apparently, that in

him the life process has attained its apogee. So ludicrous a spectacle has rarely, if ever, been seen on earth.

Questioning, thus, the basic assumptions of the age, the Non-Conforming Man cannot but find its pretensions particularly derisory. Ironically, ignorance seems to grow with education, and freedom seems to decay to the accompaniment of protestations of devotion to its cause. Charlatanry, he observes, flourishes as perhaps never before, and decay of belief in a deity, or in any transcendental concept whatsoever, leaves, not a vacuum, but a capacity and a readiness to believe in anything, however nonsensical. He notes that established pundits, in such circumstances, grow ever more reckless in their assertions, and dictatorships ever more unbridled in the cruelties and lies whereby they maintain themselves in existence. Nor can he hide a smile when, for instance, the absurd Webbs are sanctified for detecting a "new civilization" in the Kremlin's cruel empire; when a new dawn is seen in the eerie light which atomic explosions cast into the sky; when the outworn and outmoded conclusions of a Karl Marx provide a dogma, and the partial, and often superficial, conclusions of a Sigmund Freud have, like Marx's in the field of history and economics, been furbished up into a philosophy of life which they were in no wise fitted, nor, indeed, in Freud's case intended, to become; above all, when, while mental homes, slave labour camps, and psychoanalysts' waiting rooms alike fill to overflowing, politicians of all parties and exponents of all ideologies vie with one another in proclaiming the coming to pass of the most forward-looking, peace-loving, humane, prosperous, and enlightened era the world has ever known. Civilization presupposes the integrity and inviolability of each separate human being, and it is contemporary neobarbarisms like Fascism, Nazism, and Communism, which have sought to destroy the individual in favour of the collectivity. Institutional Christianity, even when least practised, has clung to the concept of separate souls, all infinitely and equally precious in the eyes of a Creator, who has numbered the hairs on each head, and who knows when each sparrow falls to the ground. By

contrast, the materialists, the power-worshippers, the demon-demagogues of our time, insist that individual men and women are no account, and have no destiny of their own to work out apart from mankind's.

Against such a trend, the impulse not to conform constitutes a kind of resistance movement, whose practitioners, as the claims of collectivism augment, are liable to be forced to become *masuisards*, living cautiously on the fringes of society, and only occasionally and discreetly disclosing their true attitude of mind. Yet how important, how necessary they are; without them, collective assumptions may pass unchallenged, and there may be no one to puncture the pretensions of established authority.

The Gadarene swine raced as a herd for the cliff over which they were to hurl themselves to annihilation, but Bunyan's Pilgrim proceeded alone, or at most with one companion, along the difficult way from the City of Destruction to the Delectable Mountains. The basic failure of our time, future historians may well decide, has lain in the too ready acceptance of current orthodoxies, whether through fear of being suspected of rebelliousness and consequently punished, or just as a result of succumbing to mass persuasion. The independent, non-conforming mind is visibly becoming rarer. Conformity is more and more the order of the day, inevitably bringing with it that subservience to prevailing fashions of thought, values and behaviour, which prepares the way for—to use the sombre expression originated by Belloc more than four decades ago—the Servile State.

To a civilized and free mind any *enforced* orthodoxy must be abhorrent. It is inconceivable that the last word should ever be said about anything, or that history should ever reach any sort of finality. Non-conforming is a recognition that Man and all his works are inherently imperfect, and therefore susceptible to criticism, if not ridicule. It is tremendously invigorating, adding a quite special spice to life. As a habit of mind, it is greatly to be recommended.

We know from the past that mass or mob judgments have nearly always been mistaken. As Hitler and other demagogues have abundantly shown, unhappily the democratic process can be perverted to bring about its opposite—enslavement—by means of substituting collective judgments for the summation of individual judgments on which true democracy must ever rest. True democracy, in fact, *requires* a non-conforming citizenry. Its worst and most dangerous allergy is the impulse to conform. The greatest and most enduring achievements have been due to individual skills and insight. Why, then, should we suppose it to be otherwise today? Shakespeare, rightly, always made the mob ignoble, cruel and unstable. His mobs laud a Coriolanus or a Caesar one moment, and shout for his blood the next. On Golgotha, likewise, the mob easily forgot the first Palm Sunday, and called for the release of Barrabas, obediently echoing the cry: "Crucify him!" In such circumstances, the temptation to conform is very great indeed. Even one of the Apostles, Saint Peter, succumbed to it.

Nor is it only on dramatic occasions that this temptation presents itself. In, for instance, matters of taste it is constantly operative—whether to follow

inertly a prevailing popular fashion, or, what is even more insidious, to go along with some dreary little *avant-garde* coterie, irrespective of one's personal judgment or predilection. Yet what exhilaration, what a sense of life's salty tang, when the decision not to conform is taken! What a wonderful sense of freedom on becoming released from the necessity of repeating, let alone believing, the vast rubric of the Century of the Common Man. It is like driving monotonously along a turnpike road, mile after weary mile, and then suddenly realizing that all around are expanses of delicious and varied countryside to which access is readily available.

Jonathan Swift, a Non-Conforming Man if ever there was one, devised his own epitaph, which was to be set forth on black marble, "in large letters, deeply cut and strongly gilded." It was to say to any traveller who visited his tomb in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, that Swift was now lying where "his furious indignation can no longer lacerate his heart" (*ubi Saeva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit*), and that the traveller should seek to "imitate, if he can, this strenuous defender of manly liberty" (*imitare si poteris strenuum pro virili liberate vindicem*). The words are immensely touching when one thinks of their writer's splendid attainments, and of the many disappointments which befell him. By the time the epitaph came to be used, his furious indignation had become insupportable. In his last years, poor Swift was mad. It is a danger which besets the non-conforming temperament, liable, as it is, to set up internal stresses and strains. In the same way that slum children, removed to the English countryside to get them away from the blitz, moaned and groaned for the pavements, the noise, the teeming squalor of the streets whence they had come, so individual morale can collapse in withdrawal from that spiritual slum, the collectivity.

Another danger of a like nature is exemplified in the character of Don Quixote, whose creator, Cervantes, like ourselves, lived in a period of deep social

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FREEDOM FIRST

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Notes

Profession And Practice

FOR him who seeks to educate the public mind on the real nature of international communism, there is no better friend than the communist himself. Scarcely has the ink dried on Chou-En-lai's adherence in New Delhi to the five principles of peaceful co-existence when the Government of which he is the head has proceeded to disabuse those who might have been taken in by the high-sounding platitudes embodied in that proclamation by actions which reveal the meaning that Chou-En-lai and his kind attach to these words.

Non-intervention in one another's affairs, it will be recalled, was to be one of the five pillars of peace in Asia. On July 29 and July 30, Peking Radio repeatedly broadcast an article which had appeared in the *People's Daily* newspaper over the name of the Thai expatriate Pridi Phanonyang, former Premier who had in recent years been known to have absconded to communist territory. In that broadcast, Pridi appealed to the Thai people to overthrow their Government. A more outrageous example of interference by the State Press and Radio of one country in the affairs of another it is hard to imagine.

In case there should be people in this country misguided enough to hope that, while Peking would be guilty of intervention in the affairs of Thailand, it might desist in the case of India, they might ponder the fact that Dr. K. I. Singh, the Nepalese communist who sought unsuccessfully to overthrow the Nepal Government by an abortive revolt and then fled to Tibet, was recently the guest of honour at a banquet in Peking. According to the New China News Agency, the reception on July 25 was organised by the China Peace Committee.

It has, of course, been no secret that this Nepalese traitor had during the last two years been functioning in Tibet across the border organising guerilla bands against the Government of Nepal. His being officially

feted by the Chinese communist leaders in their own capital is all the more shameful and offensive an act towards Nepal, and towards India which looks after Nepal's international relations, because the Chinese authorities in Tibet had given a solemn promise to the Government of Nepal that if K. I. Singh crossed into their territory they would hand him over to the Nepal Government as an absconder from justice. Simultaneously with the news from Peking come reports from Khatmandu that the communists and their friends have started demanding that K. I. Singh should be allowed to return to Nepal all the better, presumably, to serve his Chinese and Soviet masters.

India now knows what weight to attach to Chou-En-lai's pious professions and what kind of "friendship" to expect from the communist masters of China. In case the larger breach of faith involved in the Chinese invasion of Tibet in violation of the pledges given to the Government of India had been forgotten in certain quarters, Chou-En-lai has obligingly provided a reminder. There is an old Chinese saying: "The first time you deceive me, it is your fault; the second time, it is my own."

A Mayor's Appeal

THE Mayor of Hanoi appealed on July 28 all the "great cities of the free world" for funds and material aid to help to rescue those Vietnamese in Tonkin who wish to escape from the clutches of communism, and pointed out that citizens could not be moved to South Vietnam unless they had some buildings in which to shelter. It is estimated that as many as two or three million Vietnamese will want to leave Red River Delta in order to avoid oppression at the hands of the dreaded Viet Minh regime. Apart from the immense operation of transporting such masses of unfortunate people driven from their homelands, the task of rehabilitating them by giving them necessary implements and tools to set themselves up, whether as farmers or artisans, indicates the massive nature of the aid required.

This is a challenge to the conscience of the free countries of Asia even more than to those further away. Will the Mayors of leading



—AHMED IN *Hindustan Times*

Indian cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras respond to this call for humanitarian aid? Our concern for our neighbours in Asia will be judged by them not by our professions for their welfare but by the manner in which we respond to a call of this nature.

Dr. Lin Comes Back

IT is good news that Dr. Lin Yu-tang, the eminent Chinese writer and humanist who has a large circle of admiring readers in this country, has been appointed Chancellor-designate of the new Nanyang University in Singapore which is expected to start functioning soon.

Dr. Lin has had a varied career, having been the Professor of English in Peking University, having founded and edited no less than three Chinese literary magazines, having worked in UNESCO in recent years and being the author of several significant and enjoyable books.

A modern philosopher who has succeeded in harmonising the main streams of Eastern and Western thought, Dr. Lin has managed to preserve a light heart and gaiety. Three grains of Realism, two of Dreams, two of Humour and one of Sensibility, according to him, make an Englishman. Russians he rates as R/2, D/4, H/1 and S/2 and Chinese R/4, D/1, H/3 and S/3.

"I am a bundle of contradictions and I enjoy it," says Dr. Lin. He will find plenty of contradictions around him in Singapore and in the countries of South and South-east Asia. His return to Asia and his presence in our midst will be a source of strength to those who share with Dr. Lin his abiding faith in the values of freedom and his firm opposition to totalitarianism whether in his own unfortunate country or elsewhere.

T. U.s Restored In Guatemala

LAST month, we carried an article on "Red Dictatorship in Guatemala" by Ruben D. Villatoro. Now comes news from Guatemala that Villatoro has been elected as president by a National Committee set up to reorganise the entire labour movement—which had been reduced to a communist labour front—on the basis of democratic trade unionism in accordance with the principles accepted by the I.C.F.T.U. Ruben Villatoro, who had been forced into exile by the ousted communist-dominated regime, has invited all trade unions in the country to co-operate with the new committee. Lovers of freedom throughout the world will wish success in these efforts, since strong democratic trade unions can do much to ensure the restoration of the country's economy and the preservation of democracy against attack from totalitarianisms of the Right and the Left.

Bevan Through Chinese Eyes

"THE time of crisis is not the time for peaceful delegations of well-intentioned busybodies to wander the world", wrote a London daily commenting on the Attlee-Bevan visit to Communist China, Undeterred by cautioning voices in their own country, the Labourite visitors are, however, already the

guests of the Chinese communist dictatorship. Their comments and impressions will be awaited with some interest, but meanwhile it might not be without interest to know what the Chinese communists themselves think of Mr. Aneurin Bevan.

The official biography of Mr. Bevan in the 1953 edition of the *Modern Encyclopaedia* published by the Chinese communists lists him under the category of "Foreign Reactionaries" in the company—God and Bevan forbid—of Winston Churchill, Herbert Morrison, Anthony Eden, and Ernest Bevin—and not in the section "Foreign Personages" which is reserved for such characters as William Gallagher, Charlie Chaplin and the Dean of Canterbury. According to the *Encyclopaedia*, "Mr. Bevan wears the outward cloak of Socialism to hide the face of an agent of the bourgeoisie... he hoodkinks the British people, hinders the revolution of the British working men, is in fact working in the interests of the British capitalists. He, with Mr. Attlee, and the like, is just another one of the badger (sly) gang."

Titles Again

ON Independence Day this year the Government of India resumed the old practice of publishing an Honours List. During the British regime an Honours List used to be published every year. The regime used to honour in that fashion its faithful followers and loyal servants. Precisely for that reason, the nationalist movement developed a particular antipathy towards the Honours List and used to regard with grave disfavour all those titled gentlemen whose names used to figure in it. In the first flush of enthusiasm after the attainment of independence the Constituent Assembly decided to abolish all titles and to place all citizens on the common level of Shri. It appears, however, that the new rulers could not carry on too long without an Honours List. The list has come back and we are even told, though unofficially, that a particular title conferred by the Government of India is equivalent to a particular title of the British regime. A number of people will be happy at this reappearance of titles.

There is, however, a danger that some disappointed aspirant or public spirited citizen wedded to social equality and opposed to castes of any kind may take it into his head to test the constitutional validity of this practice of conferring titles. Article 18 of the Constitution prohibits the State from conferring any titles except a military or academic distinction. Many of the present awards quite clearly have nothing whatsoever to do with military valour or learning and are a flagrant breach of the Constitution of the Republic. The Article, if invoked in court, may spoil the fun both for those who confer titles and those who receive them.

Indians In The Communist Circus

A FELLOW-TRAVELLING academician, Prof. A. N. R. Phatak, who has attended many communist-inspired conferences in Asia and Europe, has in the Marathi weekly *Vividhritta* given some interesting information about the exploits of Indian delegates

whom communists send to those conferences. According to him the delegates behave in a manner which hardly does credit to the country that they represent. He is particularly critical of the leader of the Indian delegation which attended the so-called Peace Conference in Berlin. Replying to a welcome that was accorded when the delegation visited Prague he is reported to have described it as a great German city and thus exposed his ignorance of both geography and history. Weeping in public was another speciality of his. He wept when the delegation was taken on a visit to the Soviet war memorial in Berlin, but the sobbing and the weeping did not stop him from delivering a long speech which bored everybody. He wept loudly again when the delegation reached Moscow, the reason being that Stalin was dead. The leader had the monopoly of speech-making and in his speeches and answers to questions he gave such wrong information about India that other members of the delegation had to hang their heads in shame. Amongst themselves the delegates were not a happy family. There used to be many quarrels amongst them and many a time they could not be kept away from members of other delegations. The delegation was thus responsible, complains the academician, for lowering the prestige of the country. He has therefore advised communist leaders to be more wise in their choice of delegates. His leaders can, however, hardly take his advice, for what they need are stooges and dupes who will dance to their tune and not intelligent and responsible men who can represent their country.

A Disillusioned Visitor

ONE of the recent visitors to Soviet Russia has returned very much disillusioned. This does not usually happen, for particular care is invariably taken to select reliable persons for the free trip and lavish hospitality that go along with an invitation to attend a communist-sponsored conference. The gentleman who is disillusioned is Mr. Sreekantan Nair, M.P. Mr. Nair cannot be accused of any bias against Soviet Russia. He is the General Secretary of the Revolutionary Socialist Party and went to Soviet Russia as the representative of the United Trade Union Congress. Both organisations are wellknown for their leftism and their fellow-travelling tendencies. At a press conference that he held after his return he revealed how he was asked to delete the slogan "Inquilab Zindabad" and two other portions from the speech that he had prepared for delivering at the eleventh congress of Soviet Trade Unions. It is wellknown that freedom of speech does not exist in Soviet Russia, but it was not realised that speeches of distinguished foreigners visiting the country would also be subject to censorship.

Referring to life in Soviet Russia Mr. Nair said: "I cannot say it is a very free life." Elaborating the point he said: "From cradle to creche children are trained in collective action and implicit obedience," and iron discipline amongst workers is maintained

through trade unions. This is some revealing light thrown on the reality of the situation in Soviet Russia by a person who cannot be accused of harbouring any illwill or prejudice against that country.

Colette

MANY a reader in this country must have learnt with deep regret of the passing away of Colette on August 3, at the age of 81, in her Paris apartment at the Palais Royal.

Sidonie Gabrielle Claudine Colette Gauthier-Villars de Jouvanel Goudekot is a name that would not attract attention except for its length, but the simple name, Colette, was one of the most famous in France.

Her stature was recognized when she was elected the first woman president of the distinguished Goncourt Academy. Her fifty-odd novels and scores of short stories were as popular with housewives, shop girls and labourers as they were with so-called intellectuals.

But her writing was not intellectual. Her forte was the delineation of women's problems of love and she lived as passionately as she wrote. Sex was never forced to take a back seat in her writings which were further embellished by a piquant style and sparkling dialogue. Speaking of the frankness with which she wrote of love, licit and illicit, one critic observed that an Englishman might feel she had lowered love to the level of sensuality, whereas a true Frenchman would feel she had elevated sensuality to the level of love.

ENCOUNTER

Literature Arts Politics

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The Dream He Lost

by Philip Spratt

[Mr. Philip Spratt gives a glimpse in this article of how he was attracted to the Communist Party and why after a long period of active work he left it. Mr. Spratt joined the communist movement after graduating from Cambridge and came to India to organise it. He was the most prominent accused in the Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case. He left the Party after spending years in jail as an undertrial prisoner and convict. He is now settled in Bangalore and is working as a journalist, being associated with Mysindia. He is one of the Honorary Secretaries of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom. — Editor]

IT would be absurd to pretend that I joined the Communist Party, or that I left it again, from purely rational considerations. There is often, I suspect, an element which can be called neurotic in these decisions, and there certainly was in my case. However, political and ideological factors had their place. The atmosphere after the first World War in Europe was suffocating. The West seemed hopelessly decadent: Russia seemed the hope of the future. It was only a few years later that communism was all the rage in intellectual circles. I joined somewhat earlier (1924), but doubtless from the same sort of motives.

Without going too far in self-justification, I can say that there was a good deal of truth in the left-wing criticism of British and generally of Western life. It was a bad period. The shake-up of the war seemed to have had no effect on our rigid, narrow-minded, class-bound society. It did in fact have big effects, but they were working themselves out under the surface, so to speak. At the time, prospects seemed bleak. The Conservatives under Baldwin and Labour under MacDonald were equally uninspiring. British industry was in a rut; unemployment was heavy; the Empire was seething with protest; but nothing was done. The dominant note in the arts was despair. America under Harding, and France under Poincaré, were no better. The cutting, cynical analysis of Marx and Lenin and Radek seemed unanswerable.

I read a good deal of Marx and the rest, and in that mood swallowed it almost without criticism. Not entirely, for I remember study classes in which I made critical remarks. In the easy-going atmosphere of the British Communist Party these excited little comment, except from a rigid Scottish theorist. But my criticisms were made from within, not with destructive intent.

Coming to India at the age of 24 was a magical opportunity. I was on my own, with what I regarded as an important job. I enjoyed my two years of hectic activity — speaking, writing, leading strikes, conspiring. Though my part in it was exaggerated by the Government of India reports, and by the prosecution in the Meerut Case, it was on the whole successful.

I remember however receiving adverse impressions, which were ignored at the time but may have left a trace of discomfort. One was the necessity of stirring up other people to protest. Some of the strikes were genuine; some were engineered by us. In one of

these fictitious strikes, in which I took a very active part, the workers suffered badly. I think I was slightly uncomfortable about our claim that we were acting for the masses. I made the claim when talking to a police officer at Meerut. I remember his supercilious smile. It was difficult to reconcile with the intrigue and suspicion within the left-wing movement.

I received a similar jar as early as my sedition case in Bombay (October or November, 1927). The judge was very fair, and I was acquitted by the jury and released. I went to the Commissioner of Police to get back my property, and he remarked: "I hope you appreciate the way you've been treated. You know what would have happened to you if you had done this in Russia, don't you?" I would not admit it, but I did know.

One of the defence counsel in the Meerut Case made the remark: "You communists have not understood India." That rankled, too.

The events of this type which had the most immediate effect was the opening speech by the prosecuting counsel at Meerut. It was a political speech, in which he exposed some of the glaring fallacies which communists habitually commit in argument. I prided myself on a scientific habit of mind, and his criticism was unanswerable.

The atmosphere in the Meerut jail was not encouraging. We were given extraordinary liberty, and used it to quarrel and intrigue. Everybody behaved more or less badly. Worse was the behaviour of the Communist Party outside, which, without the excuse of jail, was torn with faction.

I reacted by turning against politics. I lost interest in the newspapers, and ceased to follow the quarrels of the Communist Party groups outside.

I next turned against the communist philosophy, especially the dialectic. I wrote altogether what amounted to a fair-sized book on this subject. It was the point the prosecuting counsel had made: twisting desires into facts by means of the dialectical phraseology. But of course the error is broader than that. I decided that the dialectic has no validity, except as a very rough outline of a theory in biology and psychology; and that it is in any case incompatible with materialism. The Marxian philosophy is untenable. I also realised that the ethical theory (I was not thinking of the practice) of Marxism is shaky. In fact it is as incoherent as the general philosophy.

In internment I wrote a book on the Mahatma.

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Malenkov Invites You To Attend

by "Croebos"

I THINK it was Arthur Wellesley who said that the battle of Waterloo was won in the playing fields of Eton. Wellington when he said this meant it to be an eulogy on the public school system of England, but the Reds, with their genius for twisting things or of only understanding what suited them, have construed it as emphasising the importance of sports to a nation.

The communists have not met their own Waterloo yet, but I do recall with amusement a report of a broadcast from Moscow where this quotation was used to show that the British used school boys in the front line to fight their battles. This, according to the broadcaster, was typical of the decadent democracies of the West, but he omitted to mention that these school boys won the battle. I do not know whether later on he added that the British won because Wellington had as his advisor at Waterloo a Russian army officer, nor do I know whether, according to the broadcaster, the victory was due to Wellington having come across a battle plan prepared by a bygone Russian genius.

However, it must be said to the credit of the Red countries that they have succeeded in recognising the power and potency of organised sport though not its pleasure. In the Iron Curtain countries today, sport is considered to be a part of the Youth Movement and it is normally organised under the aegis of bodies like the World Conference of Democratic Youth and the International Union of Students. One would be inclined to laud this activity if such movements were confined to the development of youth and their character and not used as potent weapons for poisonous propaganda.

Indications there are of late that India has now come within their orbit. It is an accepted fact that the standards of sport behind the Iron Curtain have now vastly improved with the result that they are in a position not only to hold their own against the best that America or Britain could field, but even to get the better of them. It is, therefore, perplexing that Indian athletes are frequently invited to participate in these continental countries. Why we should be asked to go abroad without the ghost of a chance of achieving anything is rather intriguing. Even then, one would appreciate it if invitations were extended to our best sportsmen. But usually that is not the case.

Another intriguing feature of such invitations is that we, in this country, scarcely ever learn the results of these so-called sporting events. The only thing that we do hear about is the wonderful time the visitors had behind the Iron Curtain, the easy life and conditions there, the excellent food and such other claptrap. The recent case of Ranbir Bhandari comes to mind. He has been invited to visit Moscow by the Committee of Physical Culture and Sport in the Soviet Union. Bhandari is, however, nowhere near the top of Indian table-tennis today and the Table-Tennis

Federation of India has rightly protested that Bhandari should have been invited without their knowledge and consent specially so because the claims of more qualified players had been overlooked. The Federation has, therefore, made it clear that Bhandari's trip to Moscow has not its blessings, but that has not made the Committee of Physical Culture and Sport in the Soviet Union change its plans.

Another case in point is the invitation extended to a team of university students to the World University Summer Games organised by the International Union of Students in Budapest. Very favourable terms were offered to the team but they were asked to provide for their air passage from Bombay to Budapest. An appeal was made to the Government of India for Rs. 25,000 needed by the team for air travel, but the request was turned down. The organisers of the Summer Games, however, promptly came forward with a fresh offer of a one-way air passage, besides the original terms for boarding and lodging, and a return sea passage. The extra cost of about Rs. 30,000 involved in this offer did not make the organisers hesitate in having a second-rate Indian contingent in Budapest.

Looking at this picture, one wonders what countries believing in the democratic way of life are doing in this field. A time was when the western democracies, specially in Europe, held sway in all sports, but now a sort of apathy seems to have come over them as far as organised sport is concerned. Millions of dollars are spent by western democracies for the visit of cultural missions, women's organisations and such other bodies, but as far as organised sport is concerned, its potential in goodwill, its scope for camaraderie between the youths of different nations, its lessons of tolerance and give and take are completely neglected. We scarcely ever hear teams from democratic countries interchanging visits for the sake of goodwill and prestige. Even in large organised meets like the Empire Games, it was possible for India to send only four men because of lack of finance. Yet, at the same time, a ten man team could easily go to Budapest and money was no question.

The time has now come when greater control should be exerted over the comings and goings of Indian representatives of sport and it should not be possible for anybody to accept invitations from foreign countries when he is not qualified to do so.

It is also high time that a rich democracy like the United States paid greater attention to this part of Communist activity. With a comparatively very small amount it would be possible to combat this menace, but, at the moment it seems that the Americans are more interested in spending billions in other directions when a few thousands would earn them the thanks of the youth of the whole free world.

The Anxiety Of Modern Man

by Denis De Rougemont

OUR first question: "Why is modern man afraid of freedom?" would require a long examination of the conscience of our civilization, an analysis going back several centuries into our history, and perhaps some psychoanalysis. Meanwhile, let us simply consider the mid-20-century European in the framework of his everyday circumstances. Let us take a young man about to make his start in life.

He sees himself thrown into a world in which he has difficulty in finding his way. Everything is too big, too complicated, too variable. Everything is possible in theory, but there are no signposts to point the way, or if there are, they seem to contradict each other. What career is he to choose, for instance? Formerly a draper's son became a draper; a nobleman's son became an officer; a peasant's son became a peasant. Today, with a bit of luck he can become everything. But everything urges him to do something different from his father: he calls this emancipating himself from the prejudices of his family or his background. Very well, he emancipates himself, but to what end? Here lies the problem. He is governed by a feeling of arbitrariness. Bourgeois morality is no longer a help; it can no longer provide a clearly-defined code. Contradicted by current practice—based as this is on prudent cynicism—by psychoanalysis among the well-to-do, by Marxism among the proletariat and by the general materialistic attitude of translating everything into terms of money—but the value of money fluctuates—morality has lost its coercive power and its prestige. Practically speaking, the vast majority of our contemporaries are guided neither by custom nor by principles nor by religious faith. Yet never has the need for clear and unassailable moral positions seemed so urgent as now, in the dizzy complexities of modern life. A young man at the outset of his career is a prey to anxiety, to material and moral insecurity. Where is he to find a human group that can be depended on to protect him and defend his interests? His family is either breaking up or vegetating in some province. What path is he to follow in the choice of a career? And how can he live without some kind of aim or inspiration? Why this rather than that, if in principle everything is possible?

To the anxiety of these uprooted, isolated, bewildered human beings, collective passions and totalitarian systems have responded. To begin with, local and instinctive patriotism has been ousted by nationalism; political passions have usurped the place of traditional convictions. But nationalism and the partisan spirit would have failed to provide a rule of life and a discipline of thought and action for the common — except in times of war or revolution — had they not, after the first World War, allied themselves with the social problems. What Mussolini and Hitler after him, both strongly influenced by the example of Lenin, had the grim intuition to under-

stand, before anyone else did, was that mass man lives in the dread of insecurity, or arbitrariness, and that he has reached the point of *wanting to be set free from a freedom that holds no meaning for him*. They realized that modern man wants a leader (Duce, Fuehrer, Caudillo, Father of Peoples) who will dictate his conduct to him and justify it, leaving no room for discussion, no fear of mistakes, thus delivering him from the pangs of choosing and the risk of regretting his choice. It was no inherent wickedness or perversity that led so many in Europe to become Fascists yesterday and is leading them to Communism today. It was the need, obscurely felt by their entire being, of a principle of unity, duty and security, that the dictatorships alone proclaimed themselves ready to supply.

As long as the Western democracies fail to take stock of their fundamental inadequacy in this matter, they can never understand the true nature of the temptation which results from it—the totalitarian temptation. Their polemic against dictatorships and their libertarian rhetoric will be vain, or will only turn against them, if they cannot offer mankind a reassuring sense of order.

Arthur Koestler tells how, after the publication in France of "The Yogi and the Commissar," three different students wrote to him in approximately these terms: "Dear Sir, I believe your description of Stalinism to be a correct one. As a result, I am joining the Communist Party. The discipline and efficiency to be found in it are the very things I was looking for."

This explains why so many people, in our time, having fled from a freedom that left them defenceless and distraught, decide for tyranny and plunge fanatically into it believing that it stands for order, or at least a setting in order. Here we touch the secret of the real, the only force of persuasion at the disposal of totalitarian regimes.

It would be wrong of us to laugh at this kind of attitude. Its causes lie deep in the psychology of modern man, on both sides of the Iron Curtain. It would be a mistake to conclude that this same modern man is by inclination a slave. He is simply looking for some discipline that will give him reassurance. Not that he likes discipline for its own sake, but he needs it precisely inasmuch as it *rescues him from his freedom*. For freedom implies the constant obligation of individual choice, and discipline absolves him from this. It absolves him also from the risk, inherent in choice, of making a mistake, a risk increased by the complexity and instability of modern life; lastly, discipline absolves him from the feeling of his individual *guilt*, the relic of a morality that can no longer give him positive reasons for living. The man who feels vaguely guilty, though uncertain of the reasons for his guilt and unwilling to admit it to himself — such a man naturally shrinks from the

risks that freedom involves. He hides himself away behind a party code, a collective code, rigid discipline, the infallibility of a leader. Henceforth it is the leader who will assume the burden of all mistakes, all sins; he will transform them into truths and virtues, as long as his Party is in power.

There exist, in modern man, unconscious tendencies pushing him violently in an opposite direction to his demands for freedom and progress, which have dwindled into mere words, a matter of routine. If one praises freedom as a concept, contrasting it indignantly with the totalitarian tyrannies, one does not really convince him. One reaches only a part of his brain, and the forces driving him are entirely different ones. Against all the evidence one can muster, even if one places it before his very eyes, something in him revolts. Scarcely ever does he confess as much, even to himself. He gives all sorts of reasons — not very plausible ones — to explain the superiority of dictatorship. First of all he denies that they are dictatorship at all. Then he maintains that if they are such, it is only for a brief, somewhat difficult but indispensable transition period. Finally, he believes that these dictatorships are preparing a far more concrete series of freedoms than those enjoyed by the West. It is of no avail, then, to show him that the truth is precisely the contrary to all this. For the deep-rooted motive of his conversion to dictatorship, the motive he cannot confess, is that he is escaping from freedom, seeking a refuge from it, and perhaps from himself also, from the arbitrariness of life, and that he finds in this *Ersatz* of order by the totalitarian dictatorships.

The flight from freedom, while essentially a mental and emotional attitude, is however, encouraged by several material circumstances. Before any other form of psychic treatment is undertaken, these material circumstances must be modified. I am referring to the social insecurity which still reigns in our more or less liberal and more or less capitalist democracies.

As long as every human being is not assured of a certain vital minimum, as long as he lives in daily fear of losing his home, his job, his wages, and consequently all possibility of making plans for the future — as long as modern man is or feels himself to be, in this situation, *he will fear freedom rather than desire it.*

CHOUING THINGS OVER

(Chou En-lai Fetes Attlee Group—Newspaper headline)

I see that Clement R. and Nye
Have broken bread with Chou En-lai:
They tasted shark fins, bamboo shoots,
And nibbled at his lotus roots.
Oh, lotus-eaters, have a care
In chewing Chou's enticing fare—
For heaven's sake, don't swallow whole;
Put grains of salt in every bowl!

—Gene Sosin in the *New Leader*

(PHILIP SPRATT—Continued from page 6)

I applied some of the Marxian categories, and came to pessimistic conclusions, but what appealed to me was his ethical attitude, and the fact that he understood India.

At the time of my final release (June, 1936) I had decided that the communist theory is gravely defective, and that I disliked communist political practice and wanted to take no further part in it. But I had not come to an adverse conclusion about communist policy in the broader sense. In fact the popular front and the Soviet peace policy seemed hopeful.

About the time of my release the great purge got going in Russia. I was accustomed to doctrinal disputes and expulsions and character-assassination, but "physical liquidation" was a shock. I could not believe the confessions. An acquaintance of mine, a member of the British Party, was accused and sent to a camp, and presumably died there. I heard about another friend, Freda Utey, somewhat later. I was impressed by Lyons' *Assignment in Utopia*, which I read at this time. I knew Lyons' record, and the book seemed to be eminently truthful.

These events finally dissolved my identification with communism and the Soviet Union. I was still further disillusioned by the very suspicious deal with Hitler, and the attack on Finland. It was then that I first wrote articles in the press strongly criticising Soviet policy.

Even then I still felt hopeful about the East-West alliance after the Nazi attack on Russia. It seemed possible that they would continue to work together after the war, and so preserve peace, and that each side would to some extent correct the other's faults.

Their failure to do so, and the fearful danger that we face in consequence seems to me entirely a result of Soviet policy. Nobody could have tried harder than Roosevelt did to bring Stalin round to a peace policy. Truman carried on in the same spirit, and even offered to internationalise atomic energy. Russia refused, for no reason that can command any respect.

This deliberate decision to plunge the world back into chaos, and very probably atomic war, for the sake of a gambler's chance of world power, seemed to me nothing short of a crime—the biggest crime that even the Soviet Government has committed. I saw no extenuating circumstance. The other powers were all eager for peace, disarmed, and offered every reasonable concession. When it became clear that the Soviet Government was solely responsible for the breakdown of peace and the danger of war, I ranged myself among its open enemies.

I. C. C. F. NEWS

Under the auspices of the Bombay Committee a public meeting was held on Monday 30th August, at which the noted Negro journalist from the United States, Mr. Carl Rowan gave a talk on *A Free Press In A Free Society*. Mr. R. V. Moorty presided over the meeting.

*

Mr. V. B. Karnik has been elected a member of the Executive Committee and one of the Honorary Secretaries of the ICCF.

Review

The Invisible Writing:

An *Autobiography* by Arthur Koestler, Colin's with Hamish Hamilton Ltd., London, 1954. sh. 21/-

AN autobiography is generally not easy to review. Usually it is a record of the author's personal experiences. It is hard for the reader to share them with the author. But if that is true with very many autobiographies, it is not so with this one. Koestler's is a political autobiography, and the experiences that he has recorded in this volume are not only his own; at least two generations of socialists and liberals have had similar experience though most of them have not been recorded. That is why Koestler has called his autobiography a "typical case-history of a Central-European member of the educated middle-classes born in the first years of our century." The fact that this is a typical case-history makes this book a case apart from the general run of autobiographies.

The present volume covers the period from 1931, when the author became a member of the German Communist Party, to 1953. However the period between 1931 and 1940 was the most decisive in his life and therefore most of the book is occupied by the events that occurred during that period. It began with the membership of the German C. P. and ended with his flight to England from occupied Europe.

In this book we are told the tragic story of Europe in the '30's. In its pages we meet the victims of that monstrous Utopia—socialism in the U.S.S.R., of Nazi terror in Germany, and the unfortunate victims of the Spanish Civil War, the only war that was fought with idealism by Western liberals—but idealism that was misplaced, and misused by Stalinists. Mr. Koestler was intimately involved in all these tragic developments. After becoming a member of the German C.P. he went to Soviet Union and returned with many unanswered questions. On his return he found that he had become a political refugee. The Reichstag had been burnt by the Nazis and Hitler was ruling supreme. With great skill he explains how the elaborately constructed secret *apparatus* of the German Communist Party went to pieces within a matter of hours of Hitler's assumption of total power. The unanswered questions with which he had returned from the U.S.S.R. might have brought about his break with the communist politics of cloak and dagger, but the rise of despotism in Germany postponed it for five more years. Koestler continued to work with the German Communist Party in exile. He went to Spain when the civil war broke out and after five months was arrested by the Nationalists. It was in the death cell—he was sentenced to death by Franco—, Cell No. 40, that the final spiritual break with communism came.

The author is one of a few highly gifted men. In this book he tells us of his visit to Soviet Central Asia, of his encounter with beautiful Nadeshda — and her tragic denunciation by Koestler himself. Here he tells the tale of his work in Paris with various agencies of the Comintern: the "Muenzenburg Trust,"

INFA - Institut pour l'Etude du Fascisme, and Alex Rado's news agency. Insight in human psychology enables Koestler to explain some of the complex motives and causes of his own actions; it helps the reader in understanding human behaviour better. Finally there is an intimate account of some of the communists who met with death at the hands of the G.P.U. either because they had the misfortune of becoming "traitors" in a system which they themselves had established.

It is his understanding of psychology that led Koestler to offer an original explanation of the baffling phenomenon of the ridiculous confessions made by some of the top ranking Bolsheviks in the Moscow Trials of the '30's. In *Darkness at Noon* he suggested that men like Rubashov, or Bukharin, signed dishonourable and false confessions because dialectically they were led to believe that their confessions were in the interest of socialism in the U.S.S.R. Subsequent evidence has proved the accuracy of Koestler's explanation.

The spiritual transformation that took place in cell No. 40 in Seville made the author discard the moral concept of "The End justifies the Means". But it did not immediately affect his loyalty to communism. Again, causes for this gap between spiritual change and its influence on the author's actions are admirably stated. It takes time to discard a faith that one has cherished over a period of years even though one begins to see its inadequacies. After seven years with the German Communist Party Koestler resigned from its membership in the Spring of 1938. He disliked the Comintern, and the Stalin regime; but he still believed that "the foundations of the Workers' and Peasants' State had remained solid and unshaken, that the nationalisation of the means of production was a guarantee of her eventual return to the road of Socialism; and that, in spite of everything, the Soviet Union still represented "our last and only hope on a planet in rapid decay." Stalin-Hitler Pact of 1939 rudely destroyed this pious hope. Readers will find his discussion of the psychology of a communist in the process of rejection of his faith very illuminating.

The experiences that Koestler has gone through are varied. Disillusionment with Utopia has not distorted his outlook on life. "Having denounced Nadeshda, I never denounced anybody again, neither as communist nor later as an anti-communist. What happened to me at Baku made me into a bad communist, and a bad anti-communist, and thereby a little more human. I had my first glimpse of the invisible writing."

The invisible writing — it is really not so invisible — on the forehead of our free civilisation is that it will be destroyed by the forces of brutal totalitarianism unless men begin to face the unpleasant realities of the supreme conflict of our time.

We are faced with a threat to freedom and liberty from the worst type of totalitarian tyranny that mankind has as yet witnessed. Koestler's autobiography should help the people of the free world to appreciate the stakes involved in civilisation's encounter with 20th century barbarism.

GOPAL KRISHNA

(THE ART OF NON-CONFORMING—cont'd from p. 2)

change calculated to disconcert and bewilder. Don Quixote made the fatal error of taking flight from reality. His refusal to conform with a *zeitgeist*, and an environment to him both incomprehensible and distasteful, led him to withdraw into a past, which he deluded himself into believing was still extant. Absurdly accoutred in rusty armour, and mounted on his scraggy nag, Rosinante, he rode forth into his own fantasy, with disastrous consequences to himself and to others. It is not difficult to think of his equivalents, today—those leanfaced humanitarians, for instance, who munch nuts and still believe, with Rousseau, despite all the evidence to the contrary, that human beings are naturally good, and have only to be left to their own devices to create an earthly paradise.

If, however, the Non-Conforming Man may become enraged, as in the case of Swift, or fall into undue eccentricity, as with Don Quixote, or even into despair and madness, at his best he exemplifies true sanity. A good example is Paulinus, who, aware that Roman civilization had collapsed, chose to tend a particular shrine, to keep alive one clear lamp amidst gathering darkness. His serenity when his world was falling to pieces around him finds expression in his writings, and is a source of comfort and inspiration still. This is non-conforming at its very best—a refusal to be swept along by contemporary follies and vain hopes; likewise, a refusal to surrender to the terror and hopelessness generated when human societies and institutions take on unfamiliar shapes, and emit strange sounds, like furniture in a child's bedroom when the light has been put out. A Non-Conforming Man today is in a very similar case to Paulinus. He, too, has seen the treasures of civilization sacked, and, what is worse, perverted, and the barbarian sweep forward in a seemingly irresistible rush; he, too, has come to doubt the applicability to contemporary circumstances of the values, beliefs and loyalties which guided the conduct of his forbears; he, too, has been disconcerted and appalled by the apparently limitless capacity of his contemporaries to be deluded, and to content themselves with bread and circuses when their very existence is threatened. And he, too, must choose his shrine, must light his lamp, and keep it burning.

There is one last aspect of non-conforming which, naturally, appeals to me personally. Non-conforming is the basis, the very fount of all humour. A totally conformist society never laughs—laughter itself being a kind of criticism, an expression of the immense disparity between human aspiration and human performance. As such, it is intolerable to all orthodoxy-enforcers, from Torquemada to Stalin.

The circus clown is made to look different from his fellow-performers. He falls over, he stands on his head, he grimaces and rides absurd bicycles. Yet what would be a circus without him? How especially the children would miss him, however, daring the trapeze artists, however majestic the lion-tamer! It is worth noting, too, that Shakespeare's fools are given some of his most sagacious and poetic lines. The non-conforming Fool proved, in the end, King Lear's

BOOKS IN BRIEF

A *Handful Of Blackberries* (Cape, sh 12/6) is both sad and saddening. Perhaps both are inevitable. It is not that Signor Ignazio Silone has changed, but circumstances have; and yet, the more they change, the more they remain the same. Despite the incidental brilliances, the pathos and the pastoral beauty, admirers of *Fontamara* and *Bread And Wine* must expect to be disappointed in a record of disillusion—the disillusionment that follows a false dawn—that *A Handful Of Blackberries* is.

The desire to recapture the great performances of the past is endemic in every playgoer. If there was only one that we might see, which should we choose? Salvini as Othello, Bernhardt as Phedre, Irving as Shylock, or Kean as Richard? Mr Arthur Colby Sprague, whose theatrical scholarship always commands respect, has played with this hypothesis and the result, *Shakespearean Players And Performances* (Black, sh 15/-) is a pleasant, if not always a quite satisfying exercise in reconstruction.

The Confidential Clerk (Faber, sh 10/6) is not the play that the more exigent of Mr T. S. Eliot's followers expected him to write. They hoped for some bolder illustration of his own theory that verse can do in the theatre not only all that prose can do but also something more. By disciplining poetry even more severely than he did in *The Cocktail Party* and selecting a more popular theme Mr. Eliot leaves this hope in abeyance.

Hui-Lan-Ki's *The Story Of The Circle Of Chalk* (translated by Frances Hume, Rodale Press, sh 21/-), a late thirteenth-century play from the Mongol dynasty has never been translated into English direct from the Chinese. It survives now as a curiosity from which something of the dramatic and moral conventions of its place and period may be learnt.

Cuba honoured Ernest Hemingway on his fifty-fifth birthday with the highest award this nation ever gives to a foreigner. Blue-ribboned gold medal of the Order of Carlos Manuel de Cespedes "honours those who have worked for the progress of mankind."

The Baltic problem, the editors of *East And West*, a Quarterly Review of Soviet and Baltic Problems (Alliance, London, No: 1, 1954, sh 2/6 per number) believe is not the concern of the Baltic nations only but of the whole of the western world. To keep this problem "from falling into oblivion will be one of the objects of this magazine." The other one will be to stand as sentinel on the borderline between East and West.

R. H.

most tender, understanding, and faithful friend, when all the conformists had abandoned him to his fate.

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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.

You are by this kind of peace doing nothing more than feeding the giant. Is it not conceivable that the giant may one day turn round and say: "I will now consume you?"

—Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in the Council of States,
August 26, 1954.

Senator McCarthy was as bad as a communist. The majority of Americans regarded him as dangerous and gallop polls had revealed the public hated him. Mr. McCarthy was a demagogue who rode on the crest of fear and suspicion caused by the storm and stress of international events.

—Mr. Carl Rowan, as reported in
Hindustan Times, July 15, 1954.

Geneva was about as much a victory in the diplomatic field as Dunkirk in the military.

—The Economist (London), July 13, 1954.

The only co-existence that is likely to remain peaceful is one that is based on strength and unity.

—The Economist (London), July 13, 1954.

It takes two to co-exist.

—James Burnham in the *New Leader*,
August 16, 1954.

Chinese Communism is a counter-revolutionary, reactionary movement which has more in common with both Nazism and the tyranny of the Mongols than it does with the socialism of Mr. Attlee.

—*New Leader*, July 26, 1954.

It was up to the democracies to prevent Indo-China becoming the Czechoslovakia of Asia. The agreement meant that 17 million people had lost their right to choose their destiny by free elections.

—Mr. Trygve Lie, former U.N. Secretary-General,
as reported in the *Bombay Chronicle*,
July 27, 1954.

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

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The terms for European countries to sign a treaty of non-aggression and collective security with Russia were rather too much like the invitation of the walrus to the oysters to take a walk along the briny beach. We do not want all to be eaten up.

—*The Manchester Guardian*, July 27, 1954.

Beware of the Pied Pipers!.....Before the war, so many Burmans were so ready to follow the seductive piping of the Japanese.....And it led....to the Japanese occupation...Yet, even now it seems that many of us have not learned the lesson. All over the world, pipers are chanting new tunes that open by entrancing visions of imaginary wonderlands.....that would only bring ruin.

—U Nu's preface to the English edition of
Burma Under the Japanese by Thankin Nu.

Any friendly overture by the communists to Japan would not be made for friendly motives and should accordingly be treated with caution.

—Mr. Katsuo Okumura, The Vice-Foreign Minister,
as reported in the *Hindustan Times*, August 2, 1954.

With the aging Mao Tse-tung in poor health, Peking is witnessing the opening stages of the struggle for the succession.

—Editorial in the *New Leader*, August 2, 1954.

The issue is not how to find an alternative to the hydrogen bomb, but how to win the cold war.

—Salvador de Madariaga in the *New Leader*,
August 9, 1954.

'We are armed and arming,' a Soviet diplomat reportedly said to a Western colleague a few years ago, 'because if you do not arm we shall fall upon you, and if you do you will starve your masses and have a proletarian revolution.'

—Salvador de Madariaga in the *New Leader*,
August 9, 1954.

I suggest that some Asian States might be following different policies if they were in the same position vis a vis Communist China as Thailand and the Philippines.

—Mr. R. G. Casey, Australian Minister of External Affairs, as reported in *Hindustan Times*,
August 11, 1954.

It is with dismay and almost with a sense of betrayal that people in this country hear Red China calling for determined action to liberate Formosa. If Chou-En-lai is going to start something over Formosa it will become impossible to avoid the conclusion that the communists only make peace in one place in order to make war in another.

—*News Chronicle*, (London), August 16, 1954.