

Kerala—A Lesson In Legend Building

By "Atreya"

LEGENDS constitute the most powerful weapons in the armoury of communist strategy and technique. Kerala constitutes a powerful legend in communist strategy for India.

The first legend about Kerala was about the "first popular ministry of Kerala". Should this legend be questioned by the fact of earlier democratically-elected Congress ministries, there is the magnificent alibi for the "accuracy" of the legend, viz, "The Communist Ministry is the first popular Ministry in Kerala after State reorganisation." But this legend has not been seriously questioned even though the communists polled a very minority total vote. Congress too rules in the Centre and many States on the same minority total votes.

The second legend is the one about communists being automatically equated with "people". Opposition to communists is "anti-people".

The third legend is about "autonomy" (gradually leading upto sovereignty) of States in relation to the Centre.

The fourth legend is about "functioning within the four walls of the Indian Constitution". Tied up with this legend is the one about the Amritsar Thesis of the Communist Party of India on "Transition to Socialism through democratic and peaceful means."

The fifth legend is about the integrity, and austerity of communists as individuals compared to other partymen.

The sixth legend is about their exclusive capacity to solve all problems facing humanity whether in Kerala, or India or the world.

Above all the main legend is about the inevitability of communism not only in Kerala or India, but, the whole world.

These legends have been alternately projected in relation to Kerala with a cynicism and contempt of people which only the communists are capable of.

Counter legends generated by Congress, Praja Socialists and other parties have only gone to contribute to the communist legends. One such is the pet belief universally prevalent among Congress leaders

that the peculiar, rarified and cosmic atmosphere exclusively Indian would make humanists and democrats out of communists and communism is bound to lose its sting once set in the political environments regulated by the Indian Constitution, and the "non-violent" traditions of Indian heritage.

Kerala, it was fondly believed, would tame the communist shrew and make her genuinely democratic and peace-loving. In fact, the certificates issued by the Prime Minister last year in Finland that the Kerala Communist Government was acting with propriety; the compliments given by President Prasad on August 15, 1957 in Trivandrum that "I am happy that this great experiment in your State is going to serve as a great lesson not only to other States but to the country as a whole as an example of co-existence ... ; and the kudos given by a true "socialistic Congressman", Mr. N. V. Gadgil on communists "eradicating corruption"—all represent this type of attitude.

How facilely the communists have encouraged these legends and counter-legends to suit their purposes can be now evaluated.

For instance, the fallacious assumption that having to function within the four walls of the Constitution would seriously inhibit communist subversion of democracy has just been successfully blasted. In every one of the series of incidents reported from Kerala, the communists could provide an alibi under the Constitution.

When non-communist trade unions had to be liquidated, this could be done quite effectively under the four walls of the Constitution. When political opposition has to be intimidated or even completely decimated, this could be accomplished within the four walls of the Constitution and under the Amritsar thesis. As to the verdict of people in elections for the future, the communists could ensure even this under the present environments.

There were sneers from many non-communist circles in India when charges were levelled against the Communist regime of manipulating and inflating electoral rolls. The very same question has been raised in a West Bengal constituency where the Congress is in power and the communists vociferously pointed out how this was and could be done in relation to West Bengal. About Kerala, of course, the communists dismissed these allegations as the frustrated ravings of a defeated party!

The machinery that has to administer election law and procedures is the executive machinery. An analysis of the limitations of the present administrative

machinery will give an eloquent story on how electoral rolls could be manipulated.

When at Amritsar Congress of the Communist Party, it was proudly proclaimed that the Kerala Communist Party has been able to double the party membership and raise 25 lakhs of rupees *within one year* for the limited purpose of propaganda work alone, the enormous significance implicit in this was completely lost on the country. Even the all powerful Congress Party ruling in all States and at the Centre could never raise for its State party in one year a fraction of this huge amount. How could the communists do this in Kerala alone?

The answer lies in the "progressive measures" initiated by the Communist Government. Soon after taking over power in the State, the Ministry announced that all State contracts for such works as minor irrigation, labour contracts, road building, handloom sales, felling of trees from forests will henceforth be given only to "People's" Cooperative Societies. Within a short period, scores of communist-controlled co-operatives mushroomed up to bid for Government contracts and the kick-backs the party got from these contracts represents a form of organised corruption unknown even to the most cynically corrupt Congressman in any State.

These unpleasant facts are only gradually coming to light. But their lessons seem to be lost on everyone. Impersonal killings usually do not shock human conscience. That is why liberal statesmen "deplore" or "deprecate" violence. But calculated and cold blooded murders could not be swallowed. This was probably why the execution of Imre Nagy shocked many who were not so shocked by the earlier Russian savagery in Hungary. Similarly, Pandit Nehru until the first week of August was not so shocked about Kerala affairs which he hitherto described as conflict between two political parties. It was only when 5 Congress partymen at Varandarapilly and one PSP worker near Trivandrum were brutally murdered by armed Communist Party jathas that the Prime Minister was deeply shocked, and went out for an outright condemnation of the regime and the Party. For this he has invoked the wrath of the C.P.I.

The Kerala issue is now successfully clouded by

other issues projected as red-herrings. The Police firing in Lucknow and Ahmedabad and the issue of Centre *vs.* States' rights on which the Communist Party stakes its all, will be projected to prevent any ripping of the Communist coir curtain of Kerala. This issue can also be used by Reds to force a united front from below in areas like Maharashtra and Gujarat where the linguistic passions are so favourable to communists and so much against the Centre. In Madras, the present language controversy on Hin can be merged with the cry of the communists.

Ever since the day the communists took over power in Kerala, they have sedulously generated the impression that Kerala is more or less an independent sovereign nation-state. Covertly, E.M.S. has been projected as the head of a sovereign State "negotiating with the head of the Union Government. Relations between Centre and State are subtly projected as more in the form of "Treaty" relations than a Constitutional relationship within the Indian union. Their recent gesture of "inviting" Prime Minister Nehru to visit their State to look and see things for himself smacked of an implicit assumption that they were willing to condescend to the extent of inviting the Chief of a different "Nation" to visit and pronounce fair judgement on the affairs of the "new Indian people's republic". All this hue and cry planned by the Party on the issue of "intervention" smack of the same line that international communism takes in international affairs about "foreign intervention." In this context it is worthwhile citing the following extract from the resolution of the Communist Party Executive meeting held recently in Trivandrum:

"The issue before the people was whether the Congress Party could be *allowed* to use its authority over the Central government for its partisan ends and set at naught the democratic verdict of the people of Kerala." (*Hindu*, August 13, 1958)

The Communist Party's official weekly *New Age* made it clear in its issue of August 15:

"...The onward march of the people against Congress policies is not possible without a defence of the Kerala ministry Popular pressure must compel the Left parties within Kerala to ... join with the democratic forces to defeat the Congress game."

It is in such a set-up that the Kerala Government tends to promote or sabotage India's foreign trade. In the plantation industry, the communist policies are so aimed and directed that India's foreign exchange position would deteriorate. Simultaneously cashew and pepper deals are put through with the Soviet Union with the Kerala Government encouraging cashew and pepper industries on the one hand and the Party getting its kickbacks from the merchants after the deal is put through.

Kerala represents an advance field headquarters for communist subversion of India. The existence of this base made Mr. E.M.S. Nambudiripad to proclaim a warning to everyone. This was no indiscretion or idle threat. This was a notice, a notice of confident strength, not of a last ditch losing battle. The warning has been given. Will free India heed it?

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Notes

Alarming Picture

TWO adjournment motions which were moved in Parliament on its opening day have served to highlight the dangerous situation that has developed in Kerala under the Communist Ministry. One was moved by Dr. K. B. Menon, prominent leader of the P.S.P. in Kerala. It sought to raise a discussion on "the serious situation arising out of the failure of the Kerala Government to function in accordance with the Constitution." The other moved by the leader of the communist group, Mr. S. A. Dange, sought to censure the Prime Minister and other Ministers for 'interfering' in the administration of Kerala by 'one-sided' statements.

Both motions were ruled out of order on technical grounds. It was agreed, however, that a discussion on the Kerala situation was desirable and it is likely that a suitable procedure may be evolved to enable Parliament to discuss the issue. The discussion, if it takes place, will enable the people at large to get a clear picture of what is happening in Kerala.

The picture as it has emerged out of the statements of Congress and Praja Socialist leaders and reports of disinterested observers is, indeed, alarming. In a recent speech in Ernakulam, Mr. K. A. Damodara Menon, the President of the Pradesh Congress Committee, charged that the Communist Party had placed itself above law. He alleged that Communist Party members were murdering, assaulting and intimidating political opponents chiefly Congress workers. He mentioned that militant volunteer corps of communist labour unions, including tappers' unions, went round in jeeps and trucks during the recent students' agitation, assaulting, intimidating and terrorising school children and the general public. Another charge levelled by him was that the right to transfer officials was being used by the Government to intimidate them to submit to party bosses. Praja Socialists and other opposition leaders corroborate these statements and make many other equally serious charges against the Ministry.

An independent observer, Mr. B. G. Verghese also tells a similar story. In the course of an article in *The Times of India* he writes: "In several areas of the State that I have just visited there is a widespread feeling of insecurity, a fear that life and property are not safe and that a person can no longer always depend on the police for protection or on the courts for justice." Another conclusion reached by him is: "In sixteen months, the Kerala Government has succeeded in identifying the Party with the State. The popular impression is that what is being witnessed is Government of the Party by the Party and for the Party."

This is a shocking state of affairs and the Government of India which is charged with the responsibility

of upholding the Constitution and ensuring freedom and equal rights to citizens all over the country cannot adopt a complacent attitude when they are being thus imperilled in one part of the country.

Hypocritical Cry

THE Communist Party of India is opposed to any probe by the Central Government into the condition of lawlessness prevailing in Kerala. The Party bases its opposition to the probe on the ground of the autonomy of States. The General Secretary of the Party, Mr. Ajoy Ghosh stated in the course of a statement: "When we oppose a probe by the Centre, we defend the Indian Constitution and democracy. What is on trial in Kerala is not Communism but the Constitution. A probe by the Centre will be an intervention in the autonomy of the State. Any undemocratic action against the Communist Ministry, which is a symbol of the future, will be considered an attack on democracy and the common people of the State."

This is, indeed, a strange pose for the communists. They have all along been the upholders of a strong centralised State. All communist Governments are strong centralised police States which do not allow the least autonomy to any of their constituent parts or regions. A demand for autonomy is regarded as a treachery to the State. In view of this record, their present advocacy of the right of autonomy is, to say the least, sheer hypocrisy. This hypocritical cry in favour of the rights of States as against the authority of the Central Government will not carry conviction to anybody.

The Communist Party forgets moreover that the Constitution of India, though federal in character, has cast a specific responsibility on the Union Government to see that the Government of a State is carried on according to the provisions of the Constitution. Article 335 has cast that responsibility upon the Government of India. India is one country and fundamental rights are guaranteed to citizens all over the country. If any of those fundamental rights are denied to citizens in any part of the country, the Central Government has not only the right but the obligation to intervene.

What is suggested at the moment is only an inquiry and not any direct intervention. Why should the Communist Party fight shy of an inquiry? If, as they say, they have nothing to hide, they should welcome an inquiry. If the inquiry establishes that there was no lawlessness or feeling of insecurity in the State and that there was no violation of fundamental rights, it is its opponents who will be exposed and the hands of the Ministry will be strengthened. The very fact that the communists are so nervous about the inquiry and oppose it so vehemently strengthens the suspicion that there are many things which they desire to hide from the gaze of independent observers. In communist countries the rulers usually raise an iron curtain and hide what they are doing from the eyes of the world. The Communist Party of India would have liked to raise an iron curtain around Kerala. The Constitution having stopped them from doing

that; they would at least like the Central Government not to go too near and see for itself what is happening in the State. The cry about the Constitution and Indian democracy being endangered by an inquiry is just silly and preposterous.

Perrenial Problem

AS years go by the food problem is becoming more and more intractable. This year, according to official calculations, the country is facing a food deficit of 6.7 million tons after taking credit for all imports that it may be possible to secure. The production of food grains this year was only 62 million tons as against 68.7 million tons produced last year. While there has been a fall in production there has been an increase in demand, over a million tons being accounted for merely by the increase in population. On the other hand foreign exchange difficulties put a severe limitation on the imports of foodgrains. All this has made the problem more serious this year than what it was last year.

There was an angry debate in Parliament over the problem in the course of which Congressmen as well as others severely criticised the Government for their failures and shortcomings. The Minister for Food and Agriculture had a hard time defending the policies and actions of his Ministry. His excuse that the Constitution had placed the primary responsibility in regard to food production on the States was too feeble to merit any attention.

The debate has yielded one useful result. It is a frank confession by the Prime Minister that he did not realise a year or two ago the importance of agricultural production as he did now. He said: "Speaking for myself I learnt a bitter lesson slowly and painfully. I realise now that there is nothing more important than agricultural production, more especially food production." He said that it was absurd for a Government to take shelter behind a bad monsoon and assured that the Government and the Planning Commission had now realised that there was nothing more important in India than agricultural production. At another place the Prime Minister explained how a sense of complacency had set in in the earlier stage of the Second Five Year Plan owing to the increase in output that had taken place during the First Plan period and how it had led to a shift in emphasis in favour of industrial development. It was now realised, he said, as never before that the "basis even of our industrial advance is a stable agricultural foundation."

This is a very welcome declaration. But if it is to be acted upon, it will be necessary for the Government to effect a radical change in its economic thinking. The emphasis in economic thinking has been so long on the development of heavy industries which has resulted in a woeful neglect of the immediate needs of the people. If the peasants are to be persuaded to produce more it will be necessary to give them in larger quantities the goods that they need, consumer goods as well as such goods and services as manures, seeds, irrigation facilities and credit. There

is an acute shortage of consumer goods as well as of fertilisers and other essentials. The former Finance Minister, Mr. C. D. Deshmukh, said at one place that the Government should have spent more money in putting up fertiliser factories than in building steel plants. One may legitimately ask Mr. Deshmukh why he did not think of this when he was in charge of the finances of the country. But that would not affect the validity of the suggestion. And the suggestion is merely illustrative. The main point is a new direction to the thinking on economic problems, more emphasis on developing agriculture, the basic industry of the country, than on building steel plants and machine-manufacturing factories. Unless this change takes place, the Prime Minister's statement will remain a pious declaration and the perennial food problem will continue to plague the people and the Government.

Asian-African Writers' Conference

A SECOND so-called Asian Writers' Conference is in the offing. It is going to be held at Tashkent in Soviet Russia. Its scope has been enlarged this year by the inclusion of African writers and it is going to be called Asian-African Writers' Conference.

The first Asian Writers' Conference was held in New Delhi in December 1956. It was arranged as a communist show. But the last minute intervention of Prof. Humayun Kabir and the heroic efforts of Indian writers like Mr. Vatsyayan and Mr. Padhye prevented it from being altogether a communist show. The delegations from other Asian countries were, however, predominantly communist in colour, active efforts having been made to keep non-communists out of the conference.

Meeting as it will be on Soviet soil, the second conference will be far more blatantly communist. Non-communist writers will not find it possible to go there, while communist writers will be provided all facilities to go there and parade as the representatives of their respective countries. To keep up appearances a few non-communist writers will be invited and may be accorded travel facilities and generous hospitality, but they will be there only to lend respectability to a communist show.

The Executive Committee of the All-India Centre of the P.E.N. deserves compliments for taking immediate notice of this sinister move and sounding a note of warning to Indian writers. In the course of a statement published in the August issue of *The Indian P.E.N.*, the committee has stated: "As the acknowledged representative body of Indian writers, the All-India Centre of the P.E.N. wishes to make it clear that it cannot be a party to moves savouring of political exploitation of writers or their organisations. Freedom of expression is a fundamental principle of the Charter of the International P.E.N. to which all national Centres and individual Members subscribe. It is well-known that the writers of Soviet Russia and other totalitarian countries do not unfortunately enjoy such freedom of expression. The fact that when the first conference of the series met in Delhi ad-

hoc arrangements were made and the P.E.N. All-India Centre was not asked to nominate the Indian delegation as should have been done, would appear to indicate that there was a desire to by-pass the representative organisation of Indian writers. To this aspect of the question we should like to call the attention of the members and "Friends" of the P.E.N. Centre.

"In view of the auspices under which the Asian and African Writers' Conference is being organised, its place of meeting and other circumstances, it would appear that political inspiration plays a big part in the entire move. Politics has, however, no place in the P.E.N. organisation. In these circumstances the Executive Committee thinks it appropriate to sound a note of warning to bona-fide Indian writers who may be inclined to participate in the movement. It is essential that those writers who are Members of the All-India Centre of the P.E.N. should know the background of the proposed Conference and understand the implications before they decide to associate themselves with it."

It is to be hoped that Indian writers will take due notice of this warning by the Indian P.E.N.

Fitting Tribute

RAMAN Magsaysay Foundation deserves to be complimented on its decision to grant its first award to Acharya Vinoba Bhave. The Foundation was established last year to perpetuate the memory of the President of the Philippines, who died an untimely death in an air accident, and to uphold the ideals that characterised the life of the late President. The citation accompanying the award states: "Acharya Vinoba, like the late President Magsaysay, is a humble man who has abiding faith in the basic goodness of human character and the tempering effect of the human conscience. This frail, retiring disciple of Gandhi who works in the non-political sphere, now is in his seventh year of walking through India asking those who have land to share it with those who do not. He has sought nothing for himself, least of all recognition for his achievements, and has won the high respect of his countrymen." This is a fitting tribute to the great qualities of Vinobaji. The grant of the award will be universally acclaimed in India and all over the world.

Some Home Truths

IN the course of a speech at Dhulia, Acharya Vinoba Bhave told a few home truths about how political parties behave which deserve to be noted. He referred to the working of the party system and said the political parties in the country failed to reform each other because they all pursued the same aim of capturing power. If one party, he said, chose a candidate for election to a legislature by virtue of his being a member of a predominant caste another party would select a similar candidate to oppose him. Thus parties, in their craze for power, often fostered communalism, defeating the very purpose of democracy.

He blamed political parties for the recent outbreak of violence in parts of Gujarat and said that a non-violent society could never be established so long as political parties vied with each other for mass popularity. He said that in order to consolidate their influence among the masses political parties sometimes even sought to control the minds of students by organising volunteer corps as limbs of their parties. Such attempts amounted to betrayal of democracy; they were like stabbing democracy in the back, he declared.

It is true, as pointed out by Vinobaji, that the democracy that is now established in the country is borrowed from Europe. It will be unwise to insist that it must have in India all the features and characteristics that it possesses in European countries. Some of them are the products of the peculiar conditions obtaining in those countries. It will be desirable to subject them to a careful scrutiny and to make any changes that may be necessary to suit Indian conditions. Any such scrutiny undertaken by Vinobaji and his colleagues will receive the cooperation of all democrats.

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Towards Economic Democracy

by M. R. Masani

NO reasonable person would cavil at anything that Democratic Socialists say if social justice and the happiness and welfare of the people could be secured through the kind of philosophy they proclaim. There is, however, a point at which one finds it difficult to follow their line of thought. They argue that it is not enough to talk in the abstract of human liberties or individual freedom, but that one must think of the exercise of these freedoms in a concrete situation. To the extent that excessive inequalities in society limit the freedom of the individual, they are right. Their thesis is that a planned social order is consistent with the furtherance of individual freedom and of political democracy. One would not question this provided one defines the limits of planning.

Many who do not call themselves Socialists also believe in planning within the four corners of democracy. The point of danger is reached, however, when the economy becomes essentially a Command Economy and one where the freedom of choice of the producer, the investor and the consumer is paralysed by the domination of the planner, the expert and the bureaucrat. To this the socialist answer is that so long as free political institutions survive, so long as Parliamentary Democracy is there, so long as adult franchise is there, so long as an independent judiciary is there, so long as the Constitution is there, we can afford to move full speed towards the Command and totally planned economy.

I am a firm believer in parliamentary government, but I fear I cannot claim that any Parliament, whether in Great Britain or elsewhere, has yet been devised or created which can democratically control processes of far-reaching economic planning. The incapacity is inherent in the nature of the decisions that have to be taken by the planners.

One has merely to look at the nature of decisions which have to be taken if an over-all economic plan has to be democratically discussed and voted on in Parliament. A few examples of the kind of priorities or order of values that would have to be decided by democratic vote are: How many cattle should be reared in a particular year and how many should be slaughtered? What crops should be sown next year, how much of each cash crop and how much of each foodgrain? How many trucks should be allowed to be put on the road, and how many private cars? What are the social equities between the demand of the child for milk and the right of the farmer to a fair price? Should the employed workers in employment be kept at low wages or should there be mechanisation, with higher wages for the workers on the job and greater amount of temporary unemployment? There are hundreds of similar decisions, involving complex philosophical or metaphysical questions of right and wrong, to be made by a parliament if it were to try and sit in judgement on what is good for you and me and what each of us needs next year to be happy.

The moment somebody else decides how you should be happy, you can take it that your liberty is in danger.

This is not something abstract. On the contrary, it is those who argue that a totally planned economy can be democratically administered who are being abstract and theoretical. They are not facing the fact that political and constitutional safeguards are no guarantee of economic or political liberty once the freedom of choice of the individual is surrendered to a set of planners or experts. And that, unfortunately, is what total planning must involve.

What then is the guarantee of political and economic freedom? The lesson of history is that power can only be checked by countervailing power. There is no way of rationing power not even by means of a most beautiful Constitution in the world. For instance, the Soviet Constitution has been described as "the most democratic Constitution"—on paper. And yet we know that there obtains in point of reality the most brutal, undemocratic tyranny in the world. This ugly reality obtains not because Stalin was a monster or because Khrushchev is one, but because of the economic system of centralised State Socialism or Capitalism. The militant Socialist leader of Britain, Aneurin Bevan, has observed that "Stalin became a tyrant because he was all powerful and not all-powerful because he was by nature a tyrant. He grew into tyranny because the character of the Soviet Constitution enabled him to do so." I would amend this statement only by adding that not the character of the Soviet Constitution alone but that of the Soviet economy also enabled him to do so. Mr. Bevan could not afford to say that because then he would have to stop being a Socialist.

It is the concentration of economic power in the hands of a few people that ends political democracy. No paper safeguards or courts of law can prevent the surrender of this political and economic freedom when there is only one employer, viz., the State, only one trader, the State Trading Corporation, and only one trade union, the Government's Labour Front. It is this that has driven Mr. R. H. S. Crossman, British left-wing Socialist, to point to "the Socialist's dilemma" that in trying to liberate human beings, which all good Socialists try to do, they themselves increase the danger of tyranny. His words are: "The State bureaucracy itself is one of these concentrations of power which threaten our freedom. If we increase its authority still further, shall we not be endangering the liberties we are trying to defend? The growth of a vast centralised State bureaucracy constitutes a grave potential threat to Social democracy. The idea that one will be disloyal to Socialist principles if one attacks its success or defend the individuals against the incipient despotism is a fallacy."

Many democratic Socialists in India continue nonetheless to insist that there can be socialism without

bureaucratic despotism. They should read Mr. Milovan Djilas' book, "The New Class", which is pretty conclusive on the point that all known attempts at liberating individuals through State socialist methods have failed and must fail, because they only result in creating a new ruling class more brutal and more exploitative than that which they have destroyed. Gandhiji was able to see this long before even the most mature of democratic Socialists in India. Today, many of us, led by Jaya Prakash Narayan seek to follow his line of thought.

In order to appreciate the concept of economic democracy and ascertain in what conditions it can thrive, let us take briefly the examples of various members of the economic community. For instance, the worker. In an economic democracy, the workers exercise the right to organise trade unions and the right to strike. Last year in Parliament, we had a very amusing position when the Socialist Government of India, which professes to have the interests of the workers at heart, wanted to take away the right to strike of millions of State employees in this country on the ground that the interests of the Five-Year Plan and the Government must come first and the rights of the workers must be subordinated to interests of the Plan. There were only two elements which were prepared consistently to reject this thesis. On the one hand, there was the Communist Party which, while paying lip sympathy to the Plan, wanted to wreck it, and disrupt the economy of the country so that, in their desperation and misery, the people might adopt the Communist path. And on the other side was myself, a believer in Free Enterprise, who realised that the freedom of enterprise and the freedom of the worker are very closely interrelated and that one cannot function without the other.

Those who believe in a totally planned economy are precluded from arguing against the truncating of the rights of free trade unions and the workers' right to strike. I believe in the right of strike. I believe in the right of the worker to choose his job, to change his job, to stop working individually and to stop working collectively. This is all part of the laws of the market. The laws of supply and demand lay down that every man has a right to give or withhold his labour. No Socialist regime in the full sense of the word can ever allow that right, because the socialist planners decide at what job you and I are most needed. When the State is the sole employer, we become corrupted slaves instead of being free citizens who have the right to give or withdraw their labour. That is why all communist countries—and they are the only logically State socialist ones—have destroyed the right to strike, which is made punishable by death, and have destroyed all trade unions as instruments of collective bargaining.

What is economic democracy for the peasant? It is his right to own his land and to say: "This land is mine, and I shall decide as to what I shall cultivate on it and what I shall not cultivate." The moment his right over the plot of land is taken away and somebody dictates to him in the interest of the Second or Third Plan what and how much he will grow on that

land, he has lost his economic freedom. That is why the peasant fights like a Trojan against collective and so-called co-operative farming which is foisted on him in Russia, China and elsewhere in the name of socialism.

Let us examine the role of the investor. Economic democracy means the right to invest your savings if you want to or to blow them up in buying whatever you want. Any system of society that insists that you save your earnings or any part of them is the negation of economic democracy. The right of the investor to invest or not to invest and how to invest is a fundamental freedom.

Finally, there is the consumer. We are all consumers. Economic democracy for the consumer lies in the freedom of choice to buy what he wants, abstain from buying what he does not want, and to buy at a price that is acceptable. The only system which gives you as a consumer this right is that where the laws of the market prevail. Through the law of supply and demand, the consumer influences the pattern of production. The sum total of all the consumer preferences that are daily exercised is the pressure on the producer to decide what commodity to produce and what to stop producing.

So far, no system to equal the operation of the laws of the market has been devised. That is because these laws are a reflection of human nature and an expression of enlightened self-interest. Economic democracy is guaranteed where the citizen goes to market and casts his ballot, not once in five years for Parliament, but every morning, afternoon and evening. That is why in communist Yugoslavia and even in Communist Poland to-day there is frequent and appreciative reference in articles on economics to the laws of the market. That is why in Yugoslavia there is the talk of "Trusteeship" by those who run the factories.

To say all this is not to argue for undiluted *laissez-faire*. While the laws of the market must prevail, while individual freedom must come first, there are limitations that are necessary in the interests of avoiding economic anarchy, preventing rapacity, and mitigating social injustices. The role of the State to regulate economic activity to the extent—but only to the extent—necessary is accepted by all of us. That is why I believe that the alleged clash between Democratic Socialism and Private Enterprise in India to-day simply does not exist except in the confused minds of Marxists who want to keep alive an antithesis that died in the nineteenth century. The real struggle is between the free way of life and totalitarian communism. I believe that a planned democratic order is possible, provided the planners know where to stop. We have to feel our way, step by step, to the mixed democracy.

The preservation and growth of economic democracy call for a system of checks and balances, which is provided by autonomous social forces. These are free peasant proprietors, free trade unions collectively bargaining for industrial workers and finally free enterprise running factories and industries and competing to serve the needs of the community. People's enterprise is thus the foundation of economic freedom.

The Light Of Personality

by Rev. T. Mascarenhas

ONE of the handicaps in the modern way of speaking is to use the word 'individual' when we mean 'person'. It is a handicap, because today we hold no brief for the individualist philosophies of the capitalist period. This handicap is noticed by Jacques Maritain, who says: "See with what religious pomp the modern world has proclaimed the sacred rights of the individual, and what a price it has paid for that proclamation. Yet was there ever a time when the individual was more completely ruled by the great anonymous powers of the State, of Money, or Opinion? What then is the mystery? There is no mystery in it. It is simply that the modern world confounds two things which ancient wisdom had distinguished. It confounds *individuality* and *personality*."

Suppose you look at an electric light and speak of it as a bulb, you leave out of the definition something bright and existential, viz. the light. So also, if you speak of man and call him an individual, you leave out the very light of his existence, viz. his being as a person. To carry the analogy further, a bulb is like an individual, because it is a unit enclosed within itself but divided from all other things. *Individuum est quod est indivisum in se, sed quod dividitur ab alio*. This connotation of being enclosed itself and divided from others is really a worry (not a mystery) to the socialist. This worry will not afflict a socialist if, instead of the word 'individual' he uses the more ancient word 'person'. The 'person' connotes not division but *relationship*. When the electric bulb is switched on, you have necessarily to think, not of the enclosing globe but of the current. In the current which sustains the light in the bulb you have an existential and fundamental relationship.

If you stand in a bus queue and get a ticket, you are marked as an 'individual', viz. a ticket-holder entitled to a seat. As such, you have no face or feature. If, at this stage of the argument you grant that a man's 'speciality' comes from his person, from his subsistence as a spiritual being endowed with reason and free will, then you know that the word 'individual' falls short of the full element in man, his best self, which comprises both his freedom and social being. That word 'individual' always connotes possession of something *apart* from others, with no counterbalance of relationship. It is also based on the quantitative factor, which knows nothing of the spiritual *sharing*: because in spiritual things, such as *knowledge*, we can share with others without losing anything; nay more, in things of *love* (assistance, co-operation), we can share with others and thereby, through richer relationship, be ourselves enriched.

Let us go back to the man who bought a ticket and travelled home in the bus. Till he reaches home, he is only a unit in a collectivity. But on crossing his threshold, he becomes a 'person'. He is now no more a faceless individual. He is a husband or a father, or both. He is loved by his wife, not because of the

ticket he holds, but because of the features of body and soul that emanate from his person. I would like to speak of his dignity—that is too solemn. I would like to describe him as a 'bundle of rights and duties'—that would be too political. I would like to tell you that he is a poet, or artist or accountant, as if that mattered most to his wife and children! I do not know how it is. But existentially, the best part in man, the pith of his personality, is also expressive of his *relationship*. This dual facet of 'person' and 'relation' should help lift a socialist from the bog of 'individualist' terminology.

I now leave the reader to make his leap outside the home and formulate a man's relationships with his community, race, country, state, and even the world 'family of man'. But let us not forget to learn certain lessons from the home. Firstly, a man is *born* in a certain home, community, cultural and linguistic group, etc. All his relationships are not contractual. Some are existential. Some are traditional or cultural or customary, inasmuch as he is part of a social organism. A great many of his relationships are also contractual. In being a member of the state, many of his relationships are existential and fundamental, inasmuch as he is vested with inviolable rights, termed 'human rights'. And many of his duties towards the state are fundamental, not contractual, inasmuch as he is born a citizen.

Socialism is most laudably concerned with 'sufficiency' of rights, freedoms, jobs, food, houses, education, supplies etc. It wants this sufficiency to reach every member of the state and community. In enunciating the minimum rights and means of living, it achieves a certain egalitarianism inasmuch as it compels the haves to bow down to the 'have-nots'. It also claims the rights to exercise certain compulsions in the name of the 'common good', conceived in the above egalitarian sense. All this is excellent. But let it not look upon its compulsions either as a necessary evil, or a diminishing of rights, because this sufficiency of the minimum in rights and means of living is really a comprehensive good. Look how a good father and mother treat all children as equal in the sharing of their love or of the cake on the table. It is the sharing which is the good, as against *individual* selfishness. A family which does not have this sharing is found to be unhappy, every single member thereof.

Therefore, if sharing is the justification for socialism, even in the above egalitarian and centralised sense (all the children are under the father who sees that each has at least enough), then I plead that the word 'person' be brought into use, as it gives the basis of certain rights, sufficiencies and equalities through its connotation of essential relationships. A *personalist* philosophy and terminology is more vital to socialism than to monarchy and capitalism. Socialism has to deal, not with a conglomerate 'common good', but a network of common weal, done in a common measure to the weal of each and every *person*.

Review

Inside Russia Today

by John Gunther, Hamish Hamilton, Price 25s.

EVER since John Gunther first hit the headlines with his best-selling *Inside Europe*, he has never had to look back. With every successive "inside" book of his, he has gained in stature as a political journalist of the first order. *Inside Russia Today*, described as his most challenging assignment, is his latest and perhaps the best of them all.

Within the space of its 550-odd pages, Gunther presents in an objective manner an extremely informative and fascinating account of Soviet life in its vast extent and baffling complexities. A glance at the list of contents is enough to impress the reader with the sheer scope and magnitude of Gunther's task. Here you will find chapters, to mention only a few, on the Sputnicks, on Moscow, on the Soviet peoples and their leaders, on de-Stalinization, on Soviet science and education, and on peace and co-existence; in other words, on all those subjects that are today agitating the minds of the politically conscious people in what is rather loosely described as the free world. And it may well be said of Gunther that he touches nothing that he does not adorn.

For Gunther is known for a style of writing that is at once terse and lively. Take this for example: "Moscow is the city where, if Marilyn Monroe should walk down the street with nothing on but shoes, people will stare at her shoes first.... Clothes have no shape; but then neither have most Russian women". Could anyone else in Gunther's profession have driven the point home in a more vividly imaginative manner or with such economy of words? Apart from the liveliness of his writing, Gunther's political observations too are shrewd and penetrating. A couple of excerpts taken at random should suffice to illustrate the point. Says he speaking of education in Russia: "The Russians have the most formidable educational machinery in the world, but they are also the most ignorant people in the world about affairs outside their own country". Then again: "One point of marked interest and importance, which is often neglected by Americans, is that a country may become friendly to Moscow not merely by reason of Communist subversion or blandishment, but because... the Soviet system appears to offer more than ours."

Thus a massive array of facts pieced together from widely scattered sources—from newspapers, official reports, books and articles on Soviet affairs, and so on—are interspersed with first-hand impressions, observations, anecdotes and tidbits to form a mosaic that in its design and execution is very much Gunther's own. The outcome is a book that is, to quote someone else, "hugely alive and readable".

This is not to say that *Inside Russia Today* is flawless in every way. It has certain defects and shortcomings for which the author has had his share of brickbats too. For instance, it is a valid ground for criticism that a good many of his ideas will appear too familiar to those who keep abreast of contemporary

political writings by well-known experts on Soviet affairs. On the other hand, the dubbing of the book by some of his critics as superficial and of Gunther as "master of the once-over-lightly" is equally undeserved. Gunther is no scholar, to be sure. And he has never pretended to be either creative or intellectual. Indeed, on the very first page of the book under review he has been modest enough to describe it as "a reporter's job", though in point of fact it is a lot more than just that.

Be that as it may, there is no denying that in his power to marshall the most important or the least known facts about a country and present them with arresting lucidity, Gunther has no equal. Without this giant of a journalist and his "inside" books, which have made him justly famous, contemporary political literature would have been much the poorer. It is, therefore, no mean recommendation to say of his latest work that of all Gunther's books, *Inside Russia Today* is the greatest.

AZIZ MADNI

The Interplay of East and West

Barbara Ward, W. W. Norton and Company Inc. New York, Price \$3.50.

THE book contains Sir Edward Memorial Lectures, delivered by the authoress at McGill University in Canada in 1955. These lectures are, in a way, extension of those delivered by India's Vice-President Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, a year earlier at the same campus, under the same endowment and on the same subject. The theme—the relationship of East and West—is not only interesting historically and politically, but is also of great significance in the context of the present world situation. For more than hundred and fifty years, East was dominated by the West and it was natural that Asian nationalism arose as a reaction against the Western domination. Unlike European nationalism which bred mutual hostility and conflict between the Western countries, leading to two devastating World Wars, Asian nationalism has tended to foster mutual sympathy and understanding between the nations of the East. Although nationalism is now an outdated sentiment, its emergence in Asian form has proved progressive and dynamic and has shown great potentiality of development into political and economic democracy.

Mrs. Ward after discussing the points of conflict between the East and West, pleads for complete co-operation between the two. Mrs. Ward is conscious that while the West is advanced, the East, barring one or two countries, is backward. She, therefore, wants West to share its prosperity with the East. She observes: "...we in the West, a group of nations including Western Europe, North America and non-Asian British Commonwealth are in fortune and resources the lords of the earth. We are as wealthy in relation to the rest of the world as was, say, Andrew Carnegie in relation to his steel workers. Thus in a world made physically one by our Western science we occupy the position occupied hundred years ago by the privileged and the wealthy within domestic society. The problem is: do we complete the analogy?

Do we recognise that we saved freedom in the West by sharing wealth and opportunity with the mass of people *within* the state and must now do the same with the masses across the frontiers whose poverty and hopes are, if anything, greater?"

Mrs. Ward is genuinely apprehensive that some of the Asian countries in their anxiety to achieve modernisation, may be inclined to follow Russian model. According to her, therefore "the hope for more liberal methods... lies in the success of the Indian attempt to transform their system by basically democratic means." She makes an objective assessment of India's Five Year Plans and observes "What is more, the biggest emphasis in the social revolution in India has been put, not upon collectivising the peasant, not upon forcing him into a pattern which permits the state to exploit him without redress. On the contrary, the Plan (Second Five Year Plan) attempts, by means of widespread land reform and of village self-help, to raise the whole tempo of village life and to do it on a basis which has long been accepted in India—the basis of self-government and self-help at the village level."

The main theme of the book is the advancement of human solidarity and the winning of world peace. The authoress states that so far the principle of human solidarity has been applied only within the framework of national frontiers. "But now that we have invented the atomic bomb and the inter-continental missile, we have created a physical unity which goes far beyond frontiers. In the sense of physical nearness and neighbourhood, all mankind is now a single community. The question is, therefore, whether the principle of solidarity which has saved our domestic community has any relevance to the new world wide unity of mankind."

The authoress not only answers this question in the affirmative, but emphasises that the real test of human solidarity lies in the advancement of the backward nations of the East to the level of the advanced countries of the West.

ADAM ADIL

Indian Planning and the Planning Commission

D. R. Gadgil, price Re. 1.

Voting Behaviour in the United States

Frederic D. Ogden, price 50 nP, Published by Harold Laski Institute of Political Science, Ahmedabad.

THESE are two small pamphlets published by the Harold Laski Institute of Ahmedabad. Both are transcripts of lectures delivered under the auspices of the Institute.

Dr. Gadgil has devoted the major part of his lecture to a discussion of the successes and failures of the Planning Commission. As the Chairman of the Panel of Economists set up by the Planning Commission, Dr. Gadgil had ample opportunities to observe closely the working of the Commission and as such the views expressed by him deserve the utmost consideration.

He is frank and forthright in his appraisal of the work of the Commission. He has given due credit to the Commission for its theoretical work but, in other respects, such as putting together detailed plans,

formulating objective criteria, watching the progress of the Plan and advising right policies, Dr. Gadgil asserts, "the Planning Commission has failed and continues to fail all along the line".

Dr. Gadgil has analysed the root of the failure. According to him, "the root of the failure lies in the process by which the Planning Commission, essentially only an advisory body, has come to mix itself with the actual process of the formation of public policies even in matters other than of development." A little later he is more specific. He says, "It is the power complex of the Planning Commission or its members, their natural desire to exercise power and patronage like Ministers that are chiefly responsible for the neglect by the Commission of its main functions and for a needless extension of its activities over many irrelevant fields".

To remedy these defects Dr. Gadgil has made two suggestions; one is to change the composition of the Commission bringing in younger persons and leaving out both the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister, and the other is to provide that it has "no longer any executive functions" and is not "mixed with the essentially political process of final policy-making." These are eminently useful suggestions, which some others have also made.

The other pamphlet gives some interesting information about the voting behaviour of citizens in the United States. Prof. Ogden has given the information hoping that "techniques of operating a democratic governmental system" will be as useful to India as techniques of developing modern industries. Unhappily, there is not in the country as much interest about the former as about the latter. The information given by Prof. Ogden is of a rather elementary nature. It will, however, stimulate interest. The bibliography given at the end of the pamphlet will help readers to satisfy their interest.

The Laski Institute has already published a number of pamphlets and books on political and economic problems. The two pamphlets under review are a valuable addition to the series.

V.B.K.

I. C. C. F. NEWS

The Madras group held a public meeting on 16th July at the Sastri Hall. Mrs. Rukminidevi Arundale presided and prominent amongst the speakers were Mr. J. B. H. Wadia, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari and Mr. Khasa Subarao.

D. R. S. NEWS

"Socialism Today" was the subject of an interesting seminar held on August 11 and 12. About fifty persons attended the seminar on both the days. Among those who participated were Professors A. B. Shah, Ram Joshi, and Athavale, Messers Rohit Dave, S. R. Mohan Das, M. B. Shah, Surinder Suri, Ashok Desai, P. Chatterjee and Dr. Shelat. Mr. R. V. Moorthy was in the chair on the first day and Mr. Adam Adil on the next day.

C.P.I.—A Soviet Sattelite

The following is a letter written by twenty three Bengal members of the Communist Party of India to the General Secretary of the Party. A cyclostyled copy of the letter was circulated by the writers amongst members of the Party.

Dear Comrade;

We are 23 members of the Party from Bengal. We are taking the unusual step of writing this cyclostyled letter to you without disclosing our identity, as we think that the matter is of grave urgency and should be known to other party members as well. What is important is not *who* wrote it but *what* is the issue raised in the letter. We hope that both you and other members of the party will give serious attention to it instead of trying to track us down and then hound us out of the Party.

We refer to the question of independence and integrity of the Communist Party of India. The recent remarks of Jawaharlal Nehru regarding the Party's first sending a goodwill cable to the Yugoslav League of Communists and then sending another cable after a month criticising it needs greater dispassionate notice by our party than has been the case. Of course you have issued several statements and articles in the party press in order to counteract the effect created in the public mind by Nehru's remarks. But we strongly feel that neither has the public been impressed by our disclaimers nor a large section of the party members.

For, the facts seem to stand out very grotesquely in spite of the passionate defence of our action. Here are the bare facts:

- March 14 — The Yugoslav Programme was released.
- March 19 — CPI sent the Goodwill Message to the Yugoslavs.
- April 5 — Soviet Communist Party withdrew their original acceptance of the Yugoslav invitation.
- April 19 — Moscow Radio broadcast the condemnatory article on Yugoslav programme appearing in *Kommunist* at least twice.
- April 19 — CPI sent its cable criticising the programme of Yugoslavs.
- April 20 — CPI's latter elaborating its cable of April 19.

This circumstantial evidence shows that the Party made up its mind about Yugoslavia after learning of the CPSU's decision.

It is possible that the CPI has been in agreement with the CPSU's point of view about Yugoslavia even earlier. But the crucial point is: *Why did it decide to send those critical cable and letter of April 19 and 20?* The Yugoslav League was holding its national congress and had sent us fraternal invitation. Was it really in good taste first to send a goodwill message and then to criticise the sender? We are certain that the considerations that *compelled* you to send these critical and highly improper and undecorous communications were something unusual and must be explained politically. The party leadership has not been able to explain this conduct satisfactorily and

in the absence of the same we are left with the strong impression that the Party felt it necessary to act in the manner it did in order to indicate publicly that it is with the Soviet Union in condemning Yugoslavia.

Even if you had agreed with the CPSU's point of view, could you not keep quiet? If the CPI was not sending its delegation to discuss the problem with the Yugoslavs informally, as you told them you could not, then was it proper to send this critical communication? If it was a matter of fundamental disagreement as you think it was, it could not naturally have been straightened out by a mere declaratory letter. But the fact that under this situation when even diplomatically it would have been enough to keep silent, the Party leadership thought fit to act in the matter it did, exposes the Party as a political satellite of the CPSU.

This is not a new charge against our Party. And all of us are conscious of it. And lately we have all been trying to so behave and express ourselves that this deepest impression from the public mind is removed. But this particular act at least has clearly confirmed in many minds, very unfortunately, that our Party is only an instrument politically in the hands of the CPSU.

We want to know clearly and unambiguously whether our Party is completely independent of the CPSU or not. Further we would like to know why the Party did send that cable and that letter of April 19 and 20 to the Yugoslav League.

There is still another connected matter. If our Party is really and genuinely independent, how is it that we never find anything in Soviet Union or People's China worth our criticism or differing from? If we have independent eyes and independent minds, can it be possible that we receive exactly the same impressions and draw exactly the very same conclusions about such big societies as the Russian and the Chinese as the CPSU and the Chinese CP receive in their respective countries? Or are we becoming "conditioned", in the words of Mr. Khrushchev?

You will, we know, tell us that it is the science of Marxism-Leninism which helps us reach the same conclusions. But are not the Polish, the Italian, the American Communists also Marxists-Leninists leave alone the Yugoslavs? Why then these shades of differences?

The point we are driving at is very crucial and straight-forward. If we Indian Communists are genuine in our calling ourselves independent and honest, those professions can only be tested if we call a spade a spade and examine the Russian, the Chinese, the Yugoslav, the Polish and other societies and criticize them without fear or favour just as we do the American, the Indian, or the British societies. When we talk about civil liberties, Opposition Parties, free

elections, etc. in this country and take full advantage of these rights to the extent we can have them, we must equally boldly and unambiguously criticize their absence in the communist countries. We may have failed to do so in the past; we may have hid many things not only from the public but also from amongst ourselves. But today it would be dishonesty and hypocrisy if we call ourselves an independent party and yet our mind, our emotions and our conduct remain dependent, slavish and servile.

We do hope that our frank and straightforward words will shake us up from our set grooves of thought and you will initiate a proper discussion of these issues. Some of us have been discussing it amongst local members. But there is such an atmosphere of fear lest one slips out his real sentiments that a frank and full-hearted discussion is impossible. But this is an issue which touches the basis of our political existence and as such we approach you to initiate the discussion among the members assuring them that no action will be taken for any expression of opinion.

We remain ever loyal to the ideal of communism,
Yours Comradely,

The 23 Members from Bengal

P.S.—As we hesitated and hesitated to circulate this letter among the members, news about the execution of Imre Nagy reached us. The news was from Moscow, not Budapest. Possibly even the Hungarians learnt about it from the Moscow radio.

What is the reaction of our Party leadership towards this? Why is it keeping silent? Will it have the courage to speak out and condemn those vile and base methods being perpetrated in the name of Communism?

In one case we expected you to show courage at least to keep silent, and in another we expected you to have the guts to speak out. Have you not failed miserably in both?
Calcutta, June 28th, 1958.

To the Editor,
FREEDOM FIRST,
C/o Democratic Research Service,
127, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Bombay 1.

Please enrol me as a subscriber to FREEDOM FIRST.
I remit the annual subscription of Rs. 3 | Rs. 2 for
members of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom.

Name:

Address:

Signature

A Resignation From Bengal

A PROMINENT member of the Party from Bengal, Mr. Amal Kumar Ganguli, M.L.A., resigned a few days back his membership of the Party. In a press statement giving reasons for his resignation Mr. Ganguli said that he was unable to agree with the present leadership of the CPI on certain vital political issues.

He was torn between the conflict of engaging himself against the party according to his own way of thinking to serve the best interest of the country and to continue to serve the Party in the stereotyped way by giving up his honest opinion. Unable to bear this conflict he decided to resign from the Party. Mr. Ganguli said that he differed from the policy and technique adopted by the Party on the following questions:

1. The anti-Congress slogan of the CP and its cry for alternative Government are against the interest of national solidarity. This anti-Congress slogan is rather helping the reactionary forces within the Congress. The present situation in India requires a National Government and such a government can only be formed on the basis of national unity.

2. The attempt to form coalition with the PSP, Forward Bloc and such other leftist parties is meant for misleading the people. The party has no programme for forging national unity. It is also not sincere in its efforts to bring about such a unity.

3. The lure of parliamentary politics has contaminated the party leadership and deviated the party from its revolutionary programme. It is gradually becoming an ineffective entity. It is misusing the popular belief that socialism can be established through peaceful means.

4. On the question of refugee rehabilitation the party is following a negative and sectarian policy which is detrimental to the national interest, though this problem in West Bengal was one of the biggest national problems.

Mr. Ganguli writes: "Efforts are being made to maintain the leadership of a certain clique on the ground of organisational solidarity and party discipline. In the name of achieving international working class unity the party has completely subjugated itself to the Communist parties of USSR and China. This sort of leadership is something different than the one conceived in Marxism or Leninism. It is harmful to natural prosperity and international working class solidarity. In this respect reference can be made to the blind support given by the CPI to the execution of Imre Nagy, former leader of the Hungarian CP and other non-humanitarian acts of the Soviet party. This has proved the sterility of the CPI. If the CP fails to find any answer to the conflict between old social structure and socialism then it has no future. That is why I am unable to find myself in complete agreement with the Party's policy. The leadership of the CPI has failed to enlighten me and clarify the confusion created in my mind by the activities of the Soviet Party. In the circumstances it will not be possible for me to render any useful work from within the Party. Hence I have decided, though regretfully to resign my membership of the Party....."