

The Crisis And Its Lesson

by V. B. Karnik

THE crisis that had developed in Kerala has been solved for the time being through the intervention of the Central Government. It could be solved because there was a democratic government at the Centre which had the right and the obligation to intervene and protect the democratic rights of the people. But for the existence of such an overriding authority and its timely action, the crisis might have developed into a civil war between the communists and a handful of their supporters on one hand and the large masses of the people of Kerala on the other hand.

There is no doubt that in the conditions that existed in the State the civil war would have ended in a complete rout of the communists. The Communist Government had no army of its own. It could not under the Constitution, whose limitations it had to accept, altogether deny to the people their fundamental rights of freedom of speech, assembly and organisation. It could not altogether stop the activities of opposition parties. It had not completely succeeded in converting the administrative machinery into a tool of the Communist Party. Besides, the people's movement began before the communists could firmly entrench themselves and manifested a unity and a determination which were beyond their contemplation.

The prospect of a civil war was not, however, unknown, or unpalatable to the communists. They had talked about it many a time. Even the Chief Minister had held out before the opposition parties the threat of a civil war. To the communists any activity against their Government is unlawful and treasonable activity. They do not accept the right, which is inherent in every democratic society, of opposition parties to agitate for a change of government and to secure it through peaceful and constitutional means. It happens, therefore, that once communists get into power they make it impossible for others to dislodge them. The Communist Ministry in Kerala was slowly but inexorably moving in that direction. The wrath of the people and the watchfulness of the Central

Government prevented it from accomplishing its purpose. A popular upsurge swept it out of office before it could develop a civil war on its own terms and destroy its opponents.

What happened in Kerala, has, as the Prime Minister stated in the course of the debate in Rajya Sabha, a lesson for all of us. It should compel us to re-examine the problem of the functioning of the Communist Party in a democratic set-up and the dangers involved in allowing it to assume power in any of the States of the Indian Union. In the course of his speech, the Prime Minister did some loud thinking on the subject which should receive the close attention of all democrats.

The generally accepted position in the country has so far been that the Communist Party is like any other party and that if it wins an election it should be allowed to form in the normal course a Ministry and establish its Government. It was on the basis of this reasoning that the communists were allowed to form their Ministry in Kerala after their success in the general election of 1957. There were a few voices which even then pointed out the dangers to democracy involved in allowing an anti-democratic party to assume the reins of government. But few and powerless as they were, they were ignored and disregarded. It is to be hoped that after the experience of the functioning of a communist government in Kerala they will be now heard with greater attention and respect.

The central point that the Prime Minister made in the course of his speech was that "The Communist Party was not a national party like other parties". The communists, he said, do "not function in the soil of India, but have ideological and mental contacts outside". The difficulty arose not because of their economic creed but because of "the technique of action which has been associated with the Communist Party, the technique of action which was laid down when there was no democracy anywhere in the world". The world has changed, the conditions are different, but the communists "cannot get out, of their steel-frame of thinking and action". "Facts", he asserted, "do not make any difference to their steel-frame". The communists are trained and conditioned to do things in a different way and as such they could not fit into the Constitution.

The Prime Minister then elaborated as follows the basic difficulty that arose as a result of the functioning of the Communist Government in Kerala: "The difficulty that faces us is rather a basic one. It is how far a party like the Communist Party, which is some-

thing more than a national party..... and which therefore depends for its thinking and working, not on national and internal factors, but on external and supranational factors, how far that type can fit in and have some measure of give and take and cooperation with the other groups and parties in India and the conditions existing in India." The Kerala Government, he pointed out, had functioned on party lines in spite of its desire to remain within the Constitution owing to its very "training and conditioning and the pressures exercised by others". It was this functioning on party lines which created the feeling of insecurity and injustice amongst others, which in the end led to the tremendous mass upsurge which brought about the fall of the Ministry. The communist government was in communist parlance a "people's Government". But under that Government, the Prime Minister pointed out: "The Communist Party and their adherents and supporters were the people. Others were something slightly less".

The problem that the country has to face now is how to deal with a party which is trained and conditioned to work in an undemocratic manner, which believes in "encouraging more and more conflict" and which while in office runs the administration on party lines. The party has moreover no faith in democracy and is pledged to utilise all institutions of democracy for the purpose of destroying democracy. Can such a party be placed on the same footing as other parties which believe in democracy and are pledged to defend and advance its cause? Can such a party be allowed to take advantage of the institutions of democracy when its avowed aim is to destroy democracy and establish a dictatorship?

The obvious solution of the problem would be to deny the party the rights and privileges which belong to a political party in a democratic society. It could

be even denied a legal existence. Many countries have adopted that course and secured themselves against the subversive activities of the communists. But denied legal existence, the communists may operate in an underground manner and may also work under different names and through different organisations. The legal prohibition of the Communist Party may not, therefore, yield the necessary result. The concrete steps to be taken against the party will depend upon a variety of circumstances. Steps which have proved effective in one set of circumstances may not prove equally effective in other conditions. What is important, however, is to demarcate the Communist Party clearly and distinctly from all other parties, to be conscious of its anti-democratic aims and intentions and to warn the people of the danger that it constitutes to their rights and liberties. If this awareness of its role is constantly kept alive in the minds of the people, the Communist Party will not succeed in its attempts to destroy democracy. The crisis that developed in Kerala will have served a useful purpose if it brings home to the country and its leaders the basic fact, so well stated by the Prime Minister, that the Communist Party is not a national party like other parties. Once that fact is clearly grasped, it will not be difficult to devise ways and means for safeguarding the democratic institutions of the country against the subversive activities of the communists.

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Swatantra Party

by K. S. Chetty

IT is an indisputable fact that the coming of the Swatantra Party has made an impression on the public and intelligentsia as has no other party in the recent past. The reason for this is that, unlike other political parties which have come into existence in the post-Independence era, Swatantra is the only party which has an original philosophy and programme and, therefore, the only one capable of providing an alternative to the Government of the day. All the other parties have had policies which are based on a dogma derived from the political philosophy of Europe of the 18th and 19th centuries. They are Marxists-cum-socialists-cum-communists in varied dilutions. Secondly, their outlook has been entirely materialistic which has provided no scope for the introduction of spiritual values in the body politic. And lastly, their authors and leaders have been at pains to create the impression on the public that they stand for the under-dog — the common man and, therefore, ipso facto they are the sworn enemies of organised private enterprise, big business and individual liberty.

For the first time in the post-Independence era, a party has come into being which has kept itself clear of these shibboleths and promises a rational, clear-cut and dynamic leadership. As Rajaji so aptly stated: The aim of the party is to break the hypnotic "mantra-tantra" created by the present Government with "swatantra" which stands for individual freedom and emancipation. Mr. M. R. Masani echoed the same feeling with a touch of genius when he said "We shall seek to guide the country back from Nehru to Gandhi." The first thing which strikes us about the Swatantra Party is that it is not based on a dogma or a creed. It is based on a realistic appraisal of the dangerous trends in the country's public life, and takes into cognizance the fact that in the ten years since Independence, the country has rapidly deteriorated in all aspects of life. In this connection we quote from Mr. Masani's speech in which he so precisely and accurately summed up the position as follows:—

"The Congress adventures in joint-farming, land ceiling and State monopoly in the foodgrains trade are calculated seriously to injure food production and the harmony of rural life. The evils of interference by political bosses in the administration of the country and the pressure they bring to bear on officials in regard to such things as licences have demoralised the officials and destroyed public confidence in the government of the day. Most people hold the view that this has established itself as a malignant growth in the body politic. We have, for every one of us to see, the parade of the public sector, with some notable exceptions, achieve the double distinction of

being expensive and inefficient. The middle class is being pulverised by the inevitable consequences of excessively high taxation which affect not only those directly taxed but every consumer below and by an inflation that is steadily creeping over them. The investors are being taxed out of their investable surplus. The poor are made to pay more for the necessities of life through heavy excise duties. The expansion of our Plans and the shrinking of our resources make simultaneous progress. New constraints on the people's enterprise are systematically imposed and justified by reference to a doctrine. Intolerance does not simply occur; it is being elevated into a principle. In the result, the main features of our economic life today are fear, hesitancy and uncertainty as to what the government will do next."

The coming of the Swatantra Party, therefore, marks the end of agitational, dogmatic and slogan-mongering politics and the beginning of an era of mature, realistic and healthy politics. The Swatantra Party is not fooled by the out-dated dogmas of the 19th century Marxist philosophy, and its leaders, unlike those of the present Government are too intelligent to ignore the fact that Europe, including the countries behind the iron curtain, has already tried and is moving away from the shibboleths of collectivism and, therefore, they are not prepared to allow our country to be committed to these outmoded dogmas. Whereas ostensibly the Congress Government has tried to create a socialistic pattern of society, in actual fact its policies will result in the destruction of private enterprise, the elimination of the farmer, the liquidation of the trader in the food grain business and the taxing out of existence of the investor. Rajaji in his cryptic manner summed up the position as follows and thereby showed, most convincingly, that the entire approach of the policy-makers of the present Government was based on deception and dishonesty. He said his criticism of Congress policies and tendencies and their inevitable consequences was that the Congress began with a false conception and made promises on that basis which were necessarily incapable of performance. When its sympathetic critics wanted the Government to be more efficient than it was, and do the impossible, it was led to make more promises in place of the old promises. The whole business which was faulty at the base and at the superstructure, led to the people being made victims of one deception after another. Mr. K. M. Munshi also expressed the same feelings when he showed how changeable Mr. Nehru's Government was. The Congress first pledged itself to a co-operative commonwealth. This was substituted by a socialistic pattern of society and recently the Congress had announced that it stood for social-

ism. Mr. Munshi, therefore, posed the question "What will come next if this process towards totalitarianism and a constant state of uncertainty and anxiety in public life is not halted?"

The second characteristic of the Swatantra Party's programme is that for the first time since Gandhiji, it presents to the public a spiritual rather than a material political philosophy. It aims to bring back to public life the essential elements of Gandhian ideology, namely, individual freedom, decentralization and the concept of trusteeship of wealth. The present Government has deified "artha" in the monstrous form of the state leviathan into a demigod and have exterminated "Dharma" from the body politic. Rajaji very rightly said that although the Congress may not admit the charge, he would assert that what they did was to lower the value of Dharma and to raise the value of money and of greed, and that the Planning Commission may not have been able to achieve its object of raising the standard of living, but one thing they had definitely achieved was that they had succeeded in increasing the amount of greed in the country. We quote Rajaji:—

"Illusion and megalomania were the consequences of this corruption produced by power at the top. They attempted to change the personal law regarding succession and make fundamental changes which would totally dislocate the structure of life at the very base. They desired to banish religion and God from Indian life. They sought to regulate life in fields where regulation was unknown. They sought to disturb the fundamental agricultural economy of our country."

The Swatantra Party intends to arrest this dangerous headlong rush towards greed and corruption and ruthless centralisation and it substitutes these with a positive programme based on Gandhian ideology which has its roots in the spiritual and cultural traditions of this country and not in the half-baked uncertain neurotic materialism of the 19th century Europe. Mr. M. R. Masani summed up these aims of the Swatantra Party as follows:—

"Whatever enlarges individual liberty and the dignity of the individual, whatever enhances the area of a man's freedom of choice, and also whatever limits the dangers of bureaucratic despotism, whatever limits the concentration of political and economic power in a limited number of hands is a positive policy."

This brings us to the next point: attitude towards big business and organised private enterprise. For the first time again in post-Independence politics, the Swatantra Party has openly declared that it finds nothing wrong as such with big business and organised private enterprise. As the Treasurer of the Party, Sir Homi Mody put it in his inimitable witty manner. "The Congress despises big business but respects its purse; the Swatantra neither despises big business nor money from its purse." It is an indisputed fact that if there is one section of the economy which has shown remarkable strength, resilience, enterprise and progress in spite of the obstacles put in its way,

it is this private sector. India historically has a long and unbroken tradition of freedom in commerce and industry and the periods of her efflorescence in culture have also been marked by the skill and genius of her trade and industries. In a pattern of economy which bases itself on Gandhian ideology of individual freedom and decentralisation, private enterprise becomes a noble and respectable participant and not the blackguard which the Congress and other Marxist and socialist parties have made it out to be. Rajaji has, in fact, stated publicly that he wished it were true that large funds donated by businessmen were coming into the Party's coffers.

As the Swatantra Party is the only party in the political arena in this country today which is not only not committed to socialism or communism of one brand or another but rather is its sworn enemy, it naturally is the only party capable of giving effective opposition to the Government of the day. Some doubts, however, have been raised in this regard and to quote one we give below an extract from an editorial of the *Hindustan Times*:

"The statement of principles also avoids precision on other areas of policy-making, notably foreign policy, for the transparent reason that the party as at present composed would be incapable of keeping together under a severer definition of its disciplines. This may be a prudent way to make a beginning but unless Swatantra makes up its mind about where it wants to stand on the major issues of our time and shows the courage in the process to shed some of its present props its future as a mass party must remain uncertain."

This paper raises the doubt that the Swatantra Party will not become an effective opposition if it does not make up its mind about the way it stands on major issues. It is very necessary to point out, however, that what this paper considers to be the weakness of the Party is precisely the source of its strength. Rajaji in particular has to be congratulated for the genius which has inspired the clause of the Party's Principles, which reads as follows:—

"The Swatantra Party holds that democracy is best served if every political party allows freedom of opinion to its members on all matters outside the fundamental principles of the party. It, therefore, gives its members full liberty on all questions not falling within the scope of its principles."

And as Rajaji said, the freedom guaranteed in this clause might look trifling, but actually it is of great importance and it can easily be seen that by keeping an open mind on issues like foreign policy, prohibition, linguistic States and other controversial political matters, the party ensures that the ultimate policy will not be based on a dogma or a creed or the whims of a few fadists sitting in the Cabinet or the Working Committee or the Planning Commission, but rather on an enlightened and dynamic public opinion. Admittedly, much heart searching and diligent reasoning will have to be undertaken before such policies can be evolved, but what is creditable is this, that

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The New Left In Britain

by A. V. Sherman

JUST off Soho Square, nerve centre of London's film-land by day and her night life until the early hours, Britain's "new left" has established its headquarters: "The Partisan Coffee House", a political club-cum-café, which faithfully reproduces the bohemian left-wing café atmosphere of the "red thirties". Revolutionary socialism is decked out in its time-honoured long hair, sweaters, sandals, jeans and coloured shirts; impassioned voices strive to pierce the din; a fair proportion of Afro-Asian students, enjoying the special fuss made of them, add colour to the scene. Mingled with the Marxists, it must be confessed, is the usual influx of semi-intellectuals, hangers-on, and underworld characters who appear to sympathise with all forms of social protest, but whose "solidarity" puts the organisers in something of a quandary.

The "new left" is the most recent of the procession of left-wing "revivals" or "ginger-groups" which have been a familiar feature of the British socialist scene for the past half century. Revivalist groups appear to grow naturally out of the inevitable discrepancy between the doctrines calling for immediate attainment of universal equality and well-being, which move the socialist activist, and the necessarily prosaic character of the British Labour movement's achievements.

Their life-cycle seems to follow a standard pattern. They begin with a burst of creativeness and energy, and evoke sympathy throughout the whole movement; later they fall foul of the hard centre, and decline. Some of their members return to the mainstream of labour activities—often to leading positions—some gravitate to the extreme left, others leave the labour movement or political activity altogether. (Comets like the "New Party", the ILP as an independent party, the popular front group led by the late Professors Laski and Cole and Sir Stafford Cripps, the "keep left" group, socialist fellowship, the "Bevanites" and the "victory for socialism" group flash across labour history and disappear.)

Like all revival groups the "new left" is impatient about Labour's slow progress and penchant for compromise, and demands that domestic, foreign and colonial policy be guided exclusively by what it calls socialist principles, instead of expediency.

The "new left" has, however, a number of characteristics which distinguish it from earlier left revivalist movements. In the first place it is "post-Budapest". Throughout the 1930's and '40's left-wing groups had come under a greater or lesser degree of communist influence, whose slow decline in the fifties was accelerated by the mass exodus of intellectuals and students which followed the disclosures of the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party and the invasion of

Hungary. The "new left" has been formed round a nucleus of members or sympathisers of the Communist Party, who were shocked by the events of 1956 into reconsidering their approach to socialism, and sought to rediscover a humanist socialist tradition.

It differs in age and social composition from earlier revivals: its members are mostly in their twenties and thirties, and almost exclusively intellectuals (in the sense of having undergone higher education and working in an academic or related field). Unlike earlier generations of left-wing intellectuals, who came largely from middle and upper class backgrounds and the older universities, a large proportion of the "new left" come from working class or lower middle class families, and studied at provincial universities.

Whereas earlier revival groups placed great stress on organisation—whether inside the Labour Party or outside, the "new left" has set out to influence and educate the labour movement through its publications, lectures and other activities, and has not sought to build up an organised membership. And whereas other revivals were almost exclusively chiliastic, believing that the main task was to bring the Labour Party back to the well-known principles of true socialism from which it had strayed, the "new left" has been shocked into the realisation that fresh thinking, research, and analysis, "a study of contemporary capitalism as a social and economic system, a rapportage and critique of the 'culture' of post-welfare Britain, a study of the nature of humanist society, and a re-examination of the values and attitudes of socialist humanism" are needed.

Like earlier breakaways from the Communist Party, in the early stage of their development, the new left is imbued with considerable energy, comradeship, and a feeling of new-found freedom. They soon attracted or found common cause with intellectuals on the left fringes of the Labour Party since its electoral defeats, and which have led to considerable pigeon-holing of nationalisation and other traditional socialist measures.

They are best known for their lively quarterly *Universities and Left Review* (soon to be amalgamated with a related publication, *The New Reasoner*, into a bi-monthly) and their political club-cum-café, of which they hope to establish branches in the provinces.

As is customary with recent ex-communists, the new left still hopes to avoid what it calls the "sterile anti-communism" shown by earlier ex-communists and by the Labour Party leadership. To this end it has ignored many of the problems raised by the existence of communist states and parties; how long it will be able to continue like this is another matter.

It has inherited the dilemma of all groups which set out to re-think socialism. On the one hand, it aims at subjecting all ideas to rigorous analysis: "not just a simple return to the original sources of socialist thought, but a real redefinition of aim...uncharted field, etc." On the other hand they put the socialist faith itself above question: "never to overturn the tradition of socialist thought or to brush aside, in search for a contemporary tone, the experience of the recent past...we look for the genuine confrontation of socialist values and contemporary experience... a perspective for socialist and humanist transformation...." They reject both Stalinism and the welfare-state (which they call "social-bureaucratic state capitalism") but never ask whether the fault may not lie with contradictions in the socialist idea itself.

Its active figures, as I said, spring mainly from the new intellectual proletariat who received a university education, thanks to the welfare state, only to discover that the inflation of university graduates (especially from the newer universities) has undermined the status and income that graduation traditionally offered. They are perched mainly on the lower rungs of academic life, lecturers and assistants in provincial universities, postgraduate students, teachers, Workers Educational Association lecturers, left-wing journalists. They find themselves just beyond the periphery of the establishment; near enough to see the workings of power and privilege, but too far to participate. Though it would be unfair to suggest that personal frustration provides the main or conscious motivation for their orientation, its influence can often be felt.

The new left's very freedom from the responsibilities of power and its "sense of outrage", (to use the term coined by a contributor to "Conviction", a series of essays which was a kind of New-Left Manifesto), though they can easily lead to brashness and "anti-mindedness", often lead to critical insights which provide a valuable corrective to the self-satisfaction and smugness which are strong in both major parties, and in British public life as a whole.

Whereas both parties must, by the nature of things, practise the "art of the possible", the new left can afford to stress the moral aspect of issues, and appeal to the human conscience.

Among the issues to which they have devoted study and activity are the concentration of political and economic power in Britain, social mobility, under privileged groups, colonial affairs and nuclear warfare.

Like "revisionist" currents inside the Labour Party, the new left questions the value of merely going on transferring economic power to the State, but their conclusions are diametrically opposed. They call for the evolution of "some more positive notion of 'community' and 'co-operation'—some society...in which men and women can find a meaning for their lives through greater control over their work and leisure... workers' participation and how we can give it concrete meaning in a society in which even these revolutionary ideas are threatened by technical advance... does it require a reversal of the whole trend towards

centralised direction?... if so, does this not involve a critique of the emphasis and directions of industrial society and culture?"

In pursuance of this aim they have produced interesting studies on the concentration of economic power in Britain through interlocking directorates, family holdings, and political ties; with greater emphasis on the social and political ramifications and implications than similar studies carried out in the U.S. a generation ago. They have demonstrated how wealth, education, and social status form a largely self-perpetuating system which has not even been dented by Labour's reforms, and which has succeeded in absorbing potential counter-elites. They have published some telling studies of the cheapening of mass culture, and the misdirection of economic effort by use of advertising and mass communications media, with the result that durable consumer goods, entertainments, services and imitations of upper-class living have proliferated at the expense of health, education, nutrition and the creative use of expanded leisure.

Their studies on what they call the 'submerged fifth', old-age pensioners, widows, cripples and chronically ill, hard-core unemployed, show that there is no room for complacency in this aspect of social policy.

They first gained prominence among the general public, thanks to their agitation on nuclear-policy questions.

Together with pacifist groups and public figures they organised the "Aldermaston Marches" (to and from a nuclear weapon establishment) which have become a household word, and which aroused keen controversy over the whole issue of nuclear warfare in far wider circles than those which were ever likely to accept the new left's panacea of unilateral renunciation by Britain of nuclear testing and weapons. They have been active in organising public opinion on colonial affairs, including Central African Federation and South African *apartheid*.

Thanks to their freedom, so far, from organisational vested interests, and their still fluid doctrinal position, they have become something of a centre of attraction and debate for other left-wing splinter groups on the fringe of the Labour movement, and survivors of earlier revivals.

So much for their qualities; their limitations are painfully obvious. The most glaring, perhaps, is their ill-disguised nostalgia for earlier decades when the left had, or appeared to have, an open and shut case, when fascism, mass unemployment and under-nourishment were there to fight.

Some of them even go so far as to lament working class assimilation to middle class tastes, values and ways of life. Welfare state prosperity, they complain, has been "bourgeoisifying" the workers, transforming their social role from that of collective producers into individual consumers, corrupted by bourgeois values.

Their dressing up of the traditional working-class worship of left-wing intellectuals in new anthropo-

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Bhilai Steel Project

by S. R. Mohan Das

HAVING been fed through the Five-Year Plan publicity material, the R-Day and I-Day newspaper supplements on the grandeur of the Bhilai Steel Project, one cannot help being impressed and proud of this vast and sprawling project and its township. When seen from a plane at night, the bird's eye view is indeed impressive.

Recently I visited Bhilai, not as a tourist, nor as a pilgrim to the holy shrines of our projects, as the Prime Minister exhorted to the people of India, but as an invitee and guest of some of the workers of Bhilai Steel Plant. These workers are ordinary people, young boys trying to make good. Their relationship with me came about accidentally in Bombay. These good brothers were being trained as apprentices in the various factories in Bombay, and were participants along with me, in a workers' training programme in Bombay. They applied their training, not only in their jobs, but in trade unionism, when they reached Bhilai and joined the Plant as workers.

Even with a pilgrim's perspective on the Bhilai shrine, the very first few hours in Bhilai bring about a complete disillusionment of the shrine and the God enshrined there. The first thing that strikes a visitor in Bhilai is the frosty impersonality of the mammoth giant. The "Project" dominates everything. This is strikingly evident when we realise that every form of activity is dominated by the "Project". The Project and the administrators have the decisive role in determining the lives of a majority of the inhabitants of the township, whether it is a question of movement, eating habits, social and other type of activities, entertainment etc. Even the privileged class of the Project bosses, in spite of having a very comfortable life in terms of material and social welfare, are dominated by the Project.

In Bhilai one sees not merely the impersonality of a huge industrial enterprise, but the more terrifying impersonality of an unidentifiable State owner of the Project. The frightfulness of this is felt not so much by the privileged class of the "Socialist Project", but by the thousands of ordinary workers who do not find it easy to identify their employer or management. What Mr. V. K. Krishna Menon prescribed as a thesis for Public Sector workers is actually in operation in Bhilai. Mr. Menon had said:

"Trade union leaders should consider the difference between workers engaged in State-owned industries and those working in private undertakings. Workers in State-owned industries were partly its owners and as such they had a dual capacity." (*Hindu*, March 24, 1958).

The high officials of the Bhilai management, with no restrictions on budget for the Project, have not

only been uninhibited in their spending, all for the Project, but do not have to compute the results of their spending, the returns for their spending. But when it comes to wages and working conditions, the "owner workers" have, in line with Mr. Krishna Menon's fine distinction between State-owned and private-owned industry, to put up with any arbitrary decisions the managements make.

Hundreds of highly-skilled and diploma-holding technicians were lured for employment in Bhilai by recruiting officers all over the country with promises of "a bright future and handsome remunerations not existing in any industry at present." From all over India, hundreds of such technicians, young boys, were recruited, sent to various private-owned factories for apprenticeship training for a year and were then brought to Bhilai on a pittance of a salary in the grade of 60-3-90 and given a life of real hell without any living quarters, practically no food arrangements, no transport facilities, and made to fend for themselves somehow.

Meanwhile, at Bhilai itself, direct recruitment of workers, even if illiterate, took place. If such directly recruited workers possessed a mere formal certificate even from a small retail machine shop, they were recruited as operatives on salaries more than double that of the diploma-holding, highly trained and experienced technicians.

There are 30,000 Project employed workers, and additional 30,000 temporary workers in Bhilai. For all this work force of 60,000 the only medical facility available is a hospital in Sector X where all the big officers, engineers and Russian technicians live. Sector X is at least 5 miles from the sectors where many of the workers live, and in the hospital there is a never-ending queue for medical attention.

Transport facilities are almost nil in the sprawling town of immense distances.

Unlike in Rourkela, in Bhilai, the priority for construction was for the Plant itself rather than the township. While the big officers' quarters and administrative offices were built along with the Plant, quarters for workers were placed much lower down in the priorities. This anxiety for completing the Plant first at the cost of the township and the amenities necessary for a township, resulted in such oppressive conditions of work for the workers that can rarely be matched elsewhere.

Bhilai is a completely strange place to almost all the workers of the Plant, who have come there from all over India. Coming to a strange place, to a completely new and difficult environment, the workers did not get even as much consideration as is being currently given to 1 cwt. of pig iron produced by the Plant. Not even verbal solace was offered to

the workers reaching Bhilai and reporting for duty. On the contrary, when they complained timidly, they were told by some of the officers to report for duty or resign and go back. Skilled workers were available in plenty in India, they were taunted.

The General Manager would not even give an interview to the workers who were being roasted alive in the 110 degrees heat of the summer in the tents and for months would not even reply to their pleas until when the timid workers could not keep quiet and had to have a massive protest demonstration before the General Manager to give their spokesmen an interview.

Conditions have since improved somewhat thanks to this organized attempt by the workers. The General Manager and the Deputy General Manager have tried to be helpful after the initial rigidity, but they too are subject to the impersonality content of the Project. On certain very minor questions only they can be of any effective help, but on almost all issues, the tendency is to "pass the buck" to the State-owned corporation, which in turn passes the buck to the Steel Ministry, which in turn will pass it to the Parliament to finally land on the "Janata" who "own the enterprise"!!!

The I.N.T.U.C. has organized a very weak and ineffective union, made worse by the General Secretary of the Union being given special facilities in his working conditions by the management in the form of a high grade, undeserved promotions and no restrictions on his working hours in any manner.

The A.I.T.U.C. (communists) has decided not to operate any union in Bhilai for the obvious reason of not embarrassing the management of a Soviet-aided Steel Plant. The communists have resolved to concentrate their activities in the "Imperialist-aided plants" in Rourkela and Durgapur, as well as the "capitalist-Tata" Plant in Tatanagar.

The Soviet personnel in Bhilai are very well behaved and respected. They are very reserved, very formal and correct in their behaviour. They hardly indulge in any fraternisation with Indians and strictly keep to themselves. They hardly fraternise among themselves too. They have been very helpful to workers in the Plant, but even when being helpful it is with the cold precision of impersonality and formalism.

The "new class" of the Socialistic Pattern project have all the benefits and comforts. They have air-conditioned quarters or equally comfortable accommodation, easy transport facilities and power to commandeer project resources for their "class" welfare. Sector No. X represents this "New Class" in Bhilai.

The Indo-Soviet Cultural Society has a strong unit in Bhilai. Thousands of copies of "Soviet Land" in English and Hindi are distributed free to the top officials and workers. In a drab new steel town with no opportunities yet for intellectual pursuits, the "Soviet Land" represents exciting reading material.

The General Manager and the Deputy General Manager of the Bhilai Steel Project are experienced

administrators, but for a steel plant, mere administrative experience alone is not enough. They have therefore to be dependent on technocrat bosses for all important decisions about the Project. At the same time they are thrust with the prime responsibilities for the project without necessarily having the capacity to take independent decisions.

These are some of the realistic aspects of the Bhilai Steel Project which can only be seen through the eyes of the "worm" in the ground looking around and above it. The "worm's-eye view" has no glamour in that it is denied the splendour of the big chimneys and furnaces of the Bhilai Steel Project and the impressive spectacle of the vast and sprawling township which a bird can so easily view!!

(Continued from page 6)

logical terms—their contrast between what they call "bourgeois competitive culture" and "socialism, the working class idea of society as a collective democratic totality, an extension of the working class solidarity family"—suggests fetishism rather than rational sociology. Their continual nagging demands for "workers' control" and "workers' participation from the shop level up", in face of 15 years of apathy or even hostility to workers' control by the organised workers, strengthens the impression of "outsiders" (a popular non-left term for the new welfare-state graduates who have acquired middle class aspirations and tastes without the income or status to satisfy them) invoking the working class for their own group interests.

Another weakness is their self-righteousness and *gaucherie*; their refusal to recognise that any critic of left-wing socialism can be honest or have a case worth examining seriously. As one of the more self-critical among them complains, in the course of a telling study of the material inducements to conformism in the academic world, "to often a leftist attitude has satisfied some colleague as virtuous in itself... the left in the past has been inexcusably slovenly in its intellectual habits..." In general they have still to slough off "all or nothing" attitudes they brought with them from the Communist Party, and to learn to give and take and share ideas with other schools of thought, without which they will remain an isolated sect.

In general the new left appears to be a transitional phenomenon. Some of its members will carry their criticism of Marxism to its logical conclusion, till they realise that a Victorian thinker, however talented, cannot serve as the exclusive mentor for a world outlook; some will be absorbed into Labour's main stream, others into the middle and upper reaches of academic life, while some that I know will probably remain eternal "revivalists", attaching themselves hopefully to each new revival. It appears that such groups are an inevitable concomitant of the Labour movement, and presumably meet some spiritual need, and serve as a symbol of divine discontent. At all events the new left is far closer to British values than the Communist Party from which it sprang and whose influence it has partly replaced.

Visit To East Germany

by F. R. Allemann

FOR a decade now the West Germans have been on good, if perfunctory, terms, with their "*armen verwandten*," their poor relations, on the other side of the zonal frontier. They sent them parcels whenever the communist regime placed no special obstacles in the way, admitted the refugees to the amenities of the Federal Republic, and encouraged by radio broadcasts those who remained there not to abandon their belief in "indivisible Germany." In general, the Germans in the West have exhibited a rather tactful sympathy with the life and hard times of their Eastern brethren.

Two years ago I spent an evening in Leipzig with two East German scientists and neither made any secret of the fact that he was in "opposition to the regime"; but both assured me that as far as their academic life was concerned they had no particular difficulties. Since then both have been removed from their university chairs for "political unreliability." The more prominent of the two men fled to the West; the other was lucky enough to find a job in the research laboratory of a large industrial concern.

The growing "purge" of the universities and scientific institutions—until recently the refuge of what the Germans under both dictatorships have come to call the "internal emigration"—is only one symptom among many of the way in which the Ulbricht regime is gradually but implacably tightening up the screws wherever they had (for various practical reasons) been left loose. Nothing reveals this better than the increasing intervention of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) in the affairs of the schools and colleges; even in the ideologically irrelevant faculties, following the party line counts for more than competence, although here and there I could still find oases where scholars with "bourgeois" views were still able (for the time being) to keep their posts.

This is what is happening among the top intellectual echelons, and the pressure lower down is more fierce. Employees in "People's Factories" whom I have been meeting for years on my brief excursions into the zone, and whose fair and unemotional judgement I have come to value, assured me that in the last year there has been a striking increase in espionage by the State Security Service (SSD); more and more frequently, workers, housewives and pensioners have been arrested and brought before the courts for "critical remarks." They are to serve the rest of the population as examples of the risks of expressing discontent.

People have become more cautious, and even grumbling is done in half-hints and suggestions, which can, if need be, be innocently explained away.

If the political pressure has grown more and more

severe, economic pressure has been substantially relaxed.

The supply of goods is unmistakably larger and more attractive; there is a greater variety of food, textiles, furniture and even (though only in modest quantities) luxury articles. Besides, the various governmental price-reductions are beginning to show results. In restaurants, for example, meals are not nearly so good as in the "golden West," but they are no longer noticeably more expensive, and if manufactured goods still seem excessively costly, they are of better quality than before.

These are, of course, only pleasant externals, and they do not eliminate shortages. Every now and again the simplest necessities of everyday life just disappear. Sometimes there are no potatoes; sometimes butter vanishes from the shops for days or weeks. The machinery of distribution, planned in a detailed over-bureaucratic way, and treating all consumers as submissive subjects, is still unable to take the place of the "capitalist" market-mechanism; time and again it simply breaks down at one-point or another. After more than ten years it has still not mastered the art of ensuring a smooth flow of goods from the producer to the consumer (not to speak of adapting itself to the buyer's requirements). And now, as before, I have heard the usual complaints about the wretched quality of this or that commodity. Shoes, for example: A consignment of West German shoes, and not the best either, turned up in Leipzig a few weeks ago; they were put on sale, the shops were jammed, and there was a literal pitched battle among the customers at the sales-counters.

Still, this kind of thing is no longer the rule. By and large supplies have reached a decent level; and that means that the consumer does not feel quite so helpless and forlorn, even when some of his needs remain unsatisfied. He does not have to snap up everything offered him simply because it's there to be bought and there is no more reasonable way of spending his *marks*. Now that the worst deficiencies have been made up, there is some point in putting money aside and waiting for something better to turn up (and to-day "a bargain" does not mean cheaper, but something of quality). Demands rise with the standard of living just as much in the "socialist" East Zone as in the "capitalist" West.

All this means that the poor relations, the "*armen Verwandten*", in the East, are no longer quite so poor; they are getting on. It isn't prosperity, and real comforts are few, but East Germany is no longer that vast slum which a few years ago it seemed to be.

It would not be surprising if the unmistakable and indisputable economic progress made in the Soviet zone of Germany had cut the props from under the

opposition to the communist regime. But in point of fact there is scarcely any sign that hostility to the State has died down.

It might perhaps be different if there were any comparable loosening, however slow and gradual, of the political strait-jacket. But no sign of that. On the contrary. The State and the Party are interfering more and more in personal life, the "social" demands made on the individual are greater—for as the economic position of its citizens improves, the total State is making its totalitarian claims more emphatic.

And this is resented all the more keenly because the rising living standard is provoking the same reaction in the East as it once did in the West, namely, a growing need for relaxation. Now, when after years of privation the first fruits of their labours can be tasted, people want the peace and leisure to enjoy them; and it is precisely this which the system grudges its citizens, now more than ever before. It is precisely now that it fears they will stray into "bourgeois" paths. To meet this danger it has no other resource than to step up its claims on the individual, to give him less elbow-room, less time for himself, just when he feels the need for them most acutely. And so, by its own totalitarian misconduct it destroys its own chances of "winning the masses," or at least of conciliating them.

But that is only one aspect of the complex, intricate psychological process now at work in the East Zone. For if, on the one hand, detestation of the SED regime is undiminished, on the other there is the growing recognition that there are no calculable prospects of getting rid of that regime. Communist rule is disliked more than before (if that is possible) because it is felt as more oppressive; but at the same time the illusions which up to now gave confidence to its opponents have been lost.

True, even two years ago I met many in the Zone who doubted whether reunification, which was their longing and their dream, was really possible. Since then these doubts have consolidated into a gloomy certainty (and more especially among the most alert and clear-headed) that the division of Germany can no longer be changed. A feeling of powerlessness is spreading. For more than a decade an unrelenting inner resistance to the regime was maintained. The opposition, deprived of hope, is declining into resignation.

Precisely because of this resignation, I think, the Western speculations about the possible consequences of a new popular East German rising to be completely off the track. A people rebels only when it believes that the rebellion makes sense. The great majority of the East German population appears to have lost this belief. They came out on to the streets when they felt that the oppressor had become weak and unsure of himself. Today he seems to them stronger than ever. The Leipzig worker who with glowing eyes spoke to me about the demonstrations of June 17, 1953—to my astonishment he himself brought the conversation around to this subject—looked at me uncomprehendingly when I asked him, "Could there be another June 17?" I shall not easily forget the tone

in which he replied, "But we're not that stupid."

They are not that stupid. They are, on the contrary, very proud to "know what it's all about," to read the signs of the times. "Believe me, the Russians will never get out of here of their own free will," a student from Thuringia said to me. "Do you think we deceive ourselves about that?" No, they don't deceive themselves any longer in the Zone. From time to time, vague cloudy hopes spring up: Can the West let all this happen? Here and there resignation is transformed—and this struck me as something new—into the desperate pastime of weighing chances of a "military solution." But by and large, they contemplate the future with a cool pessimism. They no longer expect things to change very much. "Just trying to get along," a girl student put it, shrugging her shoulders casually.

Here and there, too, I came across the first signs that some of those who no longer expect anything from the West are beginning to come to terms with the regime which they don't want but under which, for better or worse, they have to live. "Perhaps, after all, the communists are right." I heard that only once, from an engineer who left me in no doubt about how unhappy he was with the thought. But I could not quite get rid of the idea that many others who cheerfully cursed the regime were coming around to ask themselves, quietly, desperately, whether after all Ulbricht and Grotewohl and their army of functionaries did not have, as they claimed, "the laws of history" on their side.

Is this simply the product of propaganda? Hardly. The astonishing resistance of the East Germans to the indoctrination which dogs them at every turn continues to dumbfound me afresh on each visit. These people have not only immunized themselves against the slogans and speeches and banners; they have learned how not to see and hear. This was brought home to me by one surprising observation: Not a single one of the many people with whom I talked showed the slightest reaction to any mention of "the Peace Treaty," although for months the separate peace treaty has been the chief subject of a gigantic *agitprop* campaign pushed on every conceivable channel. But they talk about Berlin. Will the road to Berlin—for them, when they need it, it is the escape route to the West—really be sealed off? That was the burning question. I found literally nobody, among old friends or new acquaintances, who failed to speak at once about this new anxiety. In theory, of course, we have known for a long time what the existence of a "free Berlin" means for these 17 million. But only here (and only now, when the existence of that "island" seems threatened for the first time in ten years) does one really see the desperate idealism. Leipzig was still decorated in Khrushchev's honour. Huge red banners flaunted slogans, in dozens of variations, about "West Berlin, Headquarters of War." But the people who read these words day after day think of West Berlin's cause as their own. It is difficult to imagine what they will feel if ever they had to take it as a "lost cause."

—Reproduced from *New Leader*

SWATANTRA PARTY — Cont'd from Page 4

the party's principles allow opportunity for the formulation and expression of such opinions. And they do not close the door to fresh thinking as has happened in the Congress Party.

One question has been asked "Why cannot the Congress be reformed from within; why is it necessary to create a new party?"

The answer is that the developments which have taken place in almost all institutions in this country whether political, religious or cultural have been such that the area of materialism in them has increased to dangerous proportions with the simultaneous decrease or even disappearance of the spiritual values which sustained the institutions and, therefore, the area of evil looms so disproportionately large that what little is left of the good has been completely overwhelmed. These remarks apply equally to institutions like Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's Shantiniketan, Sri Aurobindo's Pondicherry Ashram, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya's Benares Hindu University and Swami Vivekanand's Ramakrishna Mission. Gandhiji's Congress is no exception. All these bodies are defunct, de-spiritualized, lacking in personality and expression and are merely hanging on to the dead cast-iron frame work of the institution. They are beyond redemption. And the only alternative is that these institutions should be substituted by new ones.

What strikes one most about the Swatantra Party is this, that with a stroke of genius, it captures and gives feeling and expression to the tribulations and anxieties which our country's public life is experiencing. Whoever reads the statement of principles of the party cannot help feeling that they give expression to the anxiety of every thinking individual in this country. But what is even more creditable is that the party does not merely stop with a feeling of apprehension at the fearful state of affairs; it has boldly gone forward and has given a positive direction to politics. It is necessary that the public should come forward energetically to become members, volunteers and workers for the tremendous task which lies ahead and it is equally necessary that big business should donate freely in order to help the party organise its programmes. It is also necessary that the party should consider having a daily newspaper of its own to give expression to its policies and thoughts. This last proposal we feel is most important as has been proved in the case of Gandhiji and Lokmanya Tilak, who so successfully educated the public by their journalistic activities.

A criticism has been made that the Swatantra stands for laissez-faire, which is an out-moded and impracticable theory in politics. This criticism, of course, is completely invalid, because anyone who reads the statement of principles will immediately note that what is intended is not that the State should be completely done away with, but rather that its journey towards totalitarianism, regimentation and interference in public and private life should be halted. In fact Clause 10 of the statement states that the State

would have a role to play in heavy industry which is necessary to supplement private enterprise and in the starting of those new enterprises which are difficult for private initiative.

Another criticism has been made that the Swatantra Party is nothing but an extension of the Forum of Free Enterprise. This has been denied publicly by the Chairman of the Forum, Mr. A. D. Shroff, but as Sir Homi Mody said, "Even if the party is an extension of the Forum of Free Enterprise, so what?" If what is intended by the criticism is that the party is backed only by capitalists and is only intended for capitalists, then this criticism is baseless. The statement of principles states that the party stands for the preservation of the freedom of the small and self-employed artisans, craftsmen and traders, who are in danger of losing their occupational opportunities by reason of the policy of Statism. Also all the speakers at the convention stressed the fact that the party is broad-based and looks to the common man and not to vested interests for support.

It was a refreshing and inspiring experience to attend the convention of the party on the 1st and 2nd August at Bombay. The 'pandal' and sitting arrangements were first-class for which the entire credit should go to Mr. Masani, the energetic and talented Chairman of the Reception Committee. What so impressed one was the fact that the speeches of the leaders like Rajaji, K. M. Munshi, Prof. Ranga, Mr. Masani and the various delegates from other States were so well-informed and to the point, and one immediately felt that the attitude of the speakers was one of humility and of enquiry. This was a refreshing change indeed from the monotonous, droning, patronising soliloquies of Congressmen generally whose speeches usually excell and vie with one another in one respect and that is in their length and their boredom.

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

—Tennyson.

✓ In Kerala they (communists) were the people. The Communist Party and their adherents and supporters were the people. Others were something slightly less. It is an old story. Every one is equal, but some are more equal than others.

—Prime Minister Nehru, *Times of India*, August 26.

This time the Centre has intervened (in Kerala). But the people are going to intervene last.

—S. A. Dange, *Times of India*, August 19.

Communism has one big virtue and that is the normal socialist approach in favour of the underdog. There is much in communism that is good for you to learn, certainty in the advance the communist countries have made.

—Prime Minister Nehru, *Hindustan Times*, August 20.

Democracy in this country, if it is to be a democracy, must be a toilers' democracy.

—S. A. Dange, *Times of India*, August 19.

The Constitution does not provide for a Yenán, even a constitutional Yenán; the communists in their over-anxiety to provide themselves with a Yenán, which would provide them not only a political but a financial base, sought to pulverise other political parties.

—*National Herald* as quoted in *Thought*, August 22

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So far as we are concerned, the McMahon line is the frontier—firm by treaty, firm by usage and right and firm by geography.

—Prime Minister Nehru, *Times of India*, August 14.

I do not see why China would have any aggressive intentions towards India.

—M.C. Chagla, Indian Ambassador in U.S., *Indian Express*, August 25.

If Congress goes the Kuomintang way—which God and Mr. Nehru forbid—then the Indian people will be forced to seek relief in the Chinese solutions.

—Blitz, August 22.

Indians for all the "inefficiency" of the democratic institutions they want to maintain, need no longer fear that they are slipping behind China, agriculturally or industrially.... There is no evidence they are: there is no reliable evidence at all.

—*Manchester Guardian*, August 27.

Khrushchev to Harriman: "Gromyko only says what we tell him to. At the next Geneva meeting he will repeat what he has already told you. If he doesn't, we'll fire him and get someone who does."

Khrushchev to a Reporter (asking what he thought about Geneva): "I don't think at all. We have a Russian saying: 'Let the horse do the thinking, since it has a big head.'"

Khrushchev to Nixon: "Gromyko is not an idler. He is a very good man."

Nixon to Khrushchev: "We have great respect for Mr. Gromyko. As you said earlier he looks like me, but he is better looking."

Khrushchev to Nixon: "Only outwardly."

Couvé de Murville to Gromyko and the other ministers: "We are in complete confusion. We have reached a point at which neither side knows what the other is talking about."

—*Life Magazine*, August 3.

In exactly the same way as Nehru has dealt with Kerala, the West wants to overrun the German Democratic Republic by means of so-called free elections.... The Kerala instance demonstrates what free elections look like in the view of capitalists. When they win the elections they say that there were free elections, when they lose elections they were no free elections.

—Karl Edward von Schnitzler, Commentator-in-chief of the East German broadcasting system, *Deutsche Korrespondenz*, Bonn, August 10.