

Land Hunger?

V. B. Karnik

L EFTIST propagandists and politicians usually talk about the land hunger in the country and demand that immediate steps should be taken to satisfy it. Many a time even those who should know better are taken in by this leftist clamour and join hands with them in demanding land for the landless.

In the first place, let us consider if it is possible to provide land for all the landless in the country. The number of landless people in the country is, according to an estimate of 1969, over 103 million. Where is the land which can be distributed amongst this large mass of people so that each of them can get a piece which he can cultivate fruitfully? Land, it need not be stated, cannot be created. The per capita availability of land is going down in the country rather than going up. In 1955-56 it was 0.47 hectares. In 1961-62 it went down to 0.42 hectares.

As things stand, farms in India are too small. According to the National Sample Survey, 16th Round (July 1960-July 1961), 40.7 per cent of farms belong to the category very small to small of upto 2.49 acres each; and 34.1 per cent to the category small to medium of 2.50 to 7.49 acres. It is only 25.2 per cent of farms which fall in the category medium to large of 7.50 acres and above. It is these facts which led the American scholar, Prof. Michael Lipton to the conclusion that there is little scope in India for "distributist land reform". He pointed out that as of 1960-61: "Already one in five operational holdings was smaller than 1 acre, 63 per cent were smaller than 5 acres and only 1.1 per cent were over 50 acres."

There is urgent need, therefore, of consolidation rather than of fragmentation. If land were to be distributed amongst the landless, it will lead to terrible fragmentation of land, each landless person getting less than an acre. There is a limit below which it is not economical to cultivate land. A large mass of farms in India are uneconomic holdings. They are cultivated not because it pays to cultivate them but because they are the only source of income to the family, howsoever pitiful it may be. The area limit of economic farming will differ from region to region and accord-

ing to the irrigated or non-irrigated character of the land. But if agriculture is not to be ruined and is, on the other hand, to grow and prosper, it will be necessary to keep that limit in mind and not to encourage any move that will reduce the size of holdings below that limit.

Absentee landlordism is an evil which must be eradicated. The Abolition of Zamindari Acts were enacted with that end in view. They must be strictly enforced and, if there are any loopholes in them which enable the Zamindars to retain control over land, they must be plugged. Similarly "land to the tiller" is a highly desirable form of land reform. The Tenancy Acts and the Ceilings on Land Acts were enacted in order to attain that objective. It is true that the Acts have not been implemented honestly and vigorously. All political parties and all Governments, Congress as well as non-Congress, are responsible for this grave dereliction of duty. It is to be hoped that the deep discontent that has developed in the countryside and the cynical manner in which some opposition parties are exploiting it will compel the Central and State Governments to shake off their lethargy and implement the Acts expeditiously with such modifications as may be necessary to defeat the attempts of landlords and their friends to frustrate the objective of the laws. In some areas like the tribal areas it may be necessary to devise other measures for restoring land to their original owners. Every right thinking person will enthusiastically support all such measures.

It may be remembered, however, that even after the vigorous implementation and enforcement of the Ceilings Act, the surplus land that will become available for distribution will be too little to satisfy the so-called land-hunger of the landless. According to an estimate of the Planning Commission, land found to be surplus is only about 2 million acres. There is a demand now that the ceiling should be lowered and it should be per family rather than per individual. While considering the demand, it will be necessary to keep in mind the limit below which cultivation will become uneconomical. The demand, even if conceded, is not likely to increase substantially the quantum of surplus land. It follows, therefore, that even with a low ceiling and its strict enforcement the problem of land for the landless cannot be solved.

Another point to be kept in mind is that mere allotment of land does not help the landless. They will

require in addition the implements, the seeds, the manure and a hundred other things before they can put the land to profitable use. They will need in addition knowledge and experience which alone can make them good farmers. Have leftist propagandists and politicians ever thought of these things and how to make them available to the new owners of land? It is not difficult to distribute whatever little surplus land is available amongst some of those who need it; but it will be ten times more difficult to place at their disposal the essential requirements without which they can make little use of the land that they may get. But, after all, this will solve the problem only for a few of the lakhs of the landless poor.

The landless poor in the villages are not hungry for land. Their so-called hunger for land is a creation of leftist propaganda or an expression of the inability of the poor people to think of any other device to secure the wherewithal to exist. In Indian history all villagers never owned land nor did they all work on land. Many villagers had their own independent professions as carpenters and blacksmiths, as weavers and potters, as washermen and cobblers and as cartmen and cowherds which enabled them to earn their livelihood without ever working on land. It is the destruction of these professions which made them all dependent on land. All economists are agreed that land cannot bear this immense pressure and that steps must be taken to reduce it by drawing away a large number of people from agriculture. What the leftists now propose doing is directly contrary to this. In the name of land-hunger

they plan to make more people dependent on agriculture which will amount to increasing misery in the villages and then making all villagers share it equally.

There is hunger in the villages; it is a hunger not for land, but for gainful employment. Not many villagers are anxious to work on land; they neither have the capacity or training nor the inclination. To force them into agriculture will amount to adding to their misery and helplessness. They will prefer non-agricultural occupation and employment. It is the country's failure to develop rural industries and village handicrafts that is responsible for the grinding poverty of the people in the villages. It is this failure which must be rectified expeditiously. It is not possible to give land to everybody, for the total stock of land is severely limited. But the scope for providing occupations and employment in rural and agriculture-based industries and handicrafts is unlimited and it is to that field that attention should be directed and not to further fragmentation of land in order to make it available to everybody.

In a feudal society, possession of land was the only means of acquiring status and influence in towns and villages. We are rapidly growing out of that social order; and in any case it is not desirable that we should encourage the habits of mind and prejudices associated with it. In the new social order of equality and progress that will develop in villages it should be possible for everybody to hold his head high and earn a decent livelihood without possessing even an inch of cultiv-

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Notes

Anniversary of Invasion

CZECHOSLOVAKIA has just completed two years of its naked domination by Russia. The domination began with a military invasion against all canons of international law and rules of behaviour between civilized States. The invasion was condemned all over the free world but, imprisoned as it is behind its iron curtain, it had no effect on Russia.

As a result of the invasion and the consequent Russian domination, there was an end to the attempt to give "a human face" to Communism. The attempt was being made by the intellectuals and other progressive elements in the country under the leadership of Alexander Dubcek. Dubcek, the leader of the reform movement, has since been deprived of all authority and is not allowed to remain even an ordinary member of the ruling Communist Party. The Party as well as the Government is now firmly in the hands of those Czechoslovaks who are prepared to do the bidding of Moscow. Russia appears to have succeeded completely in her design to crush the forces of reform.

However, the silent opposition of intellectuals and workers and artisans to the Russian action is continuing. It has taken many forms, the most potent amongst them being indifference to work. It is having a deleterious effect on production and on national economy. In many places there is non-co-operation, more particularly with Russian authorities. The flame of resistance is thus kept alive. It gave concrete proof of its existence and of its appeal to the people's mind by observing a quiet no work programme on August 21, the anniversary of the Russian invasion.

Strike in Durgapur

The eleven-day strike which took place in the Durgapur Steel Works was not an industrial dispute in the ordinary sense of the phrase. It was a blatant attempt on the part of the Communist Party Marxist to impose its will on the administration of the Steel Works and as a consequence to establish its domination over the entire area. It was a crucial fight for the party and therefore it threw all its strength and resources into the fight in order to win it. Intimidation and terror were practised on a wide scale in order to keep workers away from their places of work and secure the submission of the authorities of the plant and of the local area.

The management of the Works and the Government of Bengal and its representatives in Durgapur deserve

to be complimented on their firm handling of the situation. The firm handling paid and the C.P.M. was required to call off the strike unconditionally. It is to be hoped that the firmness will continue and that the C.P.M. will not be again allowed to terrorise the workers.

The call for the strike was issued by a recognised C.P.M. union; the subsequent hartal and bandh in support of the strike were organised by a coordination committee of local trade unions. There was an attempt thus to give a trade union an economic colour to a political battle. Nobody was, however, deceived by that trick. The C.P.M. has lost an important political battle. It is for others now to take advantage of the defeat and rescue the workers and the people of Durgapur from the stranglehold of that party. What happened in Durgapur can be repeated in other parts of Bengal.

Alliances and Counter-Alliances

The mid-term election in Kerala is providing an interesting pre-view of what may happen in the country at the time of the next general election. The election is due in 1972, but may take place earlier if the Prime Minister so decides. At the moment there is little prospect of the Prime Minister deciding to hold it earlier. But whether it takes place earlier or later, the picture is not likely to be any different.

In the Kerala election, there is a large number of small and big parties, but no party, not even the Marxist Communist, is in a position to contest all seats and hope to win a majority of them. Every party is anxious to join an alliance. There are two main alliances, one led by the C.P.M. and the other by the C.P.I. Both are trying to draw into their net as many other parties as possible. The Congress is divided into three parties, the Kerala Congress, the old Congress and the new Congress. The Kerala Congress was part of the mini-front which ruled the State until the announcement of the election. Recently it broke away from the front and is now casting its eyes for new allies. The old Congress is moving towards an alliance with the C.P.M.-led front through the intermediary of the S.S.P. The new Congress, on the other hand, may have an alliance with the C.P.I.-led front. Some of its prominent workers are, however, opposed to the plan as the Muslim League is a constituent of that front.

It is difficult to predict what shape the alliances and counter alliances will assume in the end as the determining factor in the case of all parties is not any programme or policy but the chances of winning seats. The same consideration will prevail with all parties at the time of the fifth general election. The contest will be not between conflicting programmes and policies, but between parties anxious to have a small or big share in power.

West Asia-Combat Of Illusions

Arvind A. Deshpande

IT is something to be grateful that a ray of hope has at last appeared on the dark West Asian scene as a result of acceptance by President Nasser and Israel, of U.S. proposals for a 90 day limited cease-fire and negotiations through Dr. Gunnar Jarring. There are many obstacles to lasting peace in this region. The most formidable obstacles are the illusions nursed by both the parties. It is too early to predict the outcome of this peace move. What is however, regrettable is that some political commentators in India should rush to the Press and question the motives of the parties involved in this conflict. As it is, with our official policy which is not non-aligned in this case and is patently pro-Arab, India can do very little to help bring peace to this region. So, any further partisan approach and comments by political commentators will do further harm than good.

The present negotiations can bring lasting peace only if both Israel and Egypt decide to give up some of their illusions. Israel, which is certainly a brave little nation must give up the illusion that force can solve its problems with its neighbours. At one time it was hoped by the Israel leadership that by attacking Egypt it could bring down President Nasser from power. But its pre-emptive attack in 1967 has only resulted in President Nasser seeking aid from the U.S.S.R. rather than surrender or give up power. It is also paradoxical that Israel, which is carrying out the democratic experiment and is in every sense a modern State, should treat religion as a form of nationalism. It is too late in the day to found States based on racial or religious doctrines. Sooner or later Israel will have to come to terms with people belonging to other religions and races and even make them honourable citizens of Israel.

One more illusion which the Israeli leaders will have to give up is the illusion of having "secure and guaranteed frontiers". Once the Arab neighbours agree to recognise Israel's right to exist as a sovereign State, any talk of permanent and secure frontiers will become meaningless. We have reason to feel relieved that the extremist Gahal Party has at last left the Israeli Government and left the moderates free to pursue the ideas of peace.

President Nasser and the Arabs will also have to give up some of their long cherished illusions. They must accept the fact that it is impossible to destroy a whole race or a people. Where Hitler and Stalin failed, the Arab nations, even with their combined strength, cannot hope to succeed. The idea of destroying or removing Israel from the map must be buried. It must be admitted however, that in the circumstan-

ces obtaining in West Asia President Nasser has taken a serious risk in agreeing to work for a negotiated settlement with Israel, and every attempt must be made now not to undermine his position.

The most important factor that, however, remains to be taken note of is the question of the Arab refugees from Palestine. A whole generation of Palestinians has grown up in refugee camps and their leader has almost assumed the power and position of a head of State. There are over twelve lakh Palestinian Arab refugees who have been deprived of their land, hearths and homes. They have not been rehabilitated in the neighbouring Arab countries. In fact their misery and plight have been exploited against their own interest. To Indians who have seen the partition in 1947, this figure of twelve lakhs refugees does not seem very frightening. But this number implies danger to a small nation like Israel. It is true that settlement between U.A.R. and Jordan on the one hand and Israel on the other will come as a shock to the Palestinian refugees and might demoralise them leading to some reckless action by them. So, the main task in the coming months is to persuade these unfortunate and disinherited people to learn to have a stake in peace in the region.

The future of the city of Jerusalem is also an important factor in the negotiations. This city will have no future if all the parties involved adopt a past-regarding attitude. Like all the cities of the world, Jerusalem is also destined to become an international city. The Arabs and the Jews can help this process only if they adopt a modernistic outlook and refuse to be guided solely by religious considerations.

Those who wish well of the Jews and Arabs can only hope that Dr. Jarring will not give up his efforts in the face of these formidable obstacles.

Gibbon once said of his history: "I have depicted the triumph of barbarism and religion." One can only hope that future historians will not be compelled to say this of the Jew-Arab conflict.

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BY V. B. KARNIK

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Birth Of The Indian National Congress

A. G. Mulgaokar

IN the wake of 1857, variously called now, generations of Indians were attracted to the idea that the connection of Britain with India was providential dispensation and that any future lay alongside Britain for India. The impact of the system of Western education which had been introduced earlier had already begun to have a very severe if limited effect. This was, of course, largely in consequence of the teachings of the 18th and 19th century British political writers. With this result that whenever any Viceroy or high official made a false step its repercussions resounded throughout the country. Even so a large number of Indians must be wondering today how it came about that by the 40s of the 20th century the Indian National Congress which had been founded only in 1885 had come to a position where it could, legitimately and reasonably, claim to speak on behalf of the Indian nation. It is, therefore, of great importance that of the beginning of this organisation, particularly of its birth, full and reliable information should be available. Therefore, the book, *New India 1885*^a by Briton Martin, Jr. is a very valuable contribution to our knowledge. This book is one of those rare productions which have succeeded fully in the purpose which the author had in view, namely, to give an authentic survey of the preliminary circumstances and those that attended the establishment of the Indian National Congress, how it took its name and what contributed to the great success it achieved right from the beginning.

For a book of this kind to be successful in its purpose it must have at least three merits. It must be a good case-study in the sense that it gives detailed information of the surrounding circumstances, it must analyse the events as they transpire and correlate them; also it should be a good narrative, without the historical perspective being lost sight of. All these this book achieves and achieves superbly and that is why it is a fascinatingly interesting book. But it does something more; the author at no stage loses his objectivity nor does he obtrude his opinions or offer unnecessary comments. The conclusions are the reader's. It is sad to think that the author did not survive to see the completion in book form of his great labour. Thanks, however, to the devotion and industry of his wife the book has now appeared and all those interested in India's political history will do well to read it. It will prove particularly useful to those of the younger generation aspiring to a politi-

cal career, for without understanding how exactly the agitation in the eighties ultimately took shape in the form of the Indian National Congress it will not be possible for them to understand the subsequent events.

The author points out that, in the first place the policies of Lytton had an unpleasant impact throughout the country. The most prominent being the Press Act against the vernacular press. Now a circumstance which would be noted about this is very typical of the times. The educated few had fewer jobs than they were qualified for so that a large number had taken to journalism in the Indian languages and some in the English language. It may surprise many to know that most of these papers had a large following, if not circulation. The reason was this, for one subscriber anything from ten to a hundred were the audience to whom the subscriber spread the message. So that whenever anything of importance was commented on it was largely known and widely discussed. Lytton was followed by a name with which the present generation may not be very familiar but at that time was known to be of an outstandingly popular Viceroy, Ripon. What view he took of his predecessor's actions in India was summed up by him in the following words, "the whole effect of Lytton's administration was to give an impression, right or wrong, that in all ways—in foreign policy, in finance, in such matters as the Vernacular Press Act and the Arms Act—the interests of the natives of India were sacrificed to those of England." Therefore Ripon was anxious to remove this impression from the minds of the Indian people. He realised that the small class of "highly educated natives" well schooled in the English language and in English political thought, whose number was increasing annually must be satisfied. He felt that these men were "mature, competent, moderate and loyal, they were not to be distrusted or deluded by Delhi darbars, imperial titles and rubbish of that sort". In his opinion their ambitions were legitimate and in keeping with their education. He also felt that was the way to keep the repeated pledges of Parliament over the past fifty odd years.

He had, no doubt, drawn his inspiration from his Chief, Gladstone. He, therefore, set about seriously to carry out what he had set before him as his objective and to this end he constantly consulted leading Indians like Dadabhai Naoroji, Bonarjee, Telang, Mehta and others. Ripon's endeavours resulted in a removal of Lytton's discriminatory measures because Ripon himself agreed with the grievances expressed by the educated Indian leaders. Ripon settled quite a number of

^a *New India 1885*, Briton Martin, Jr. Oxford University Press, Bombay. Rs. 55/-.

outstanding questions which had plagued India's foreign policy at the time, like the Afghan question, but he went further and resolutely opposed Gladstone and his Cabinet when they wanted India to pay the cost of the British Indian troops sent to the Suez to help suppress the Arabian Padshah's uprising and when they wished to revert to Lytton's forward policy in Afghanistan. It is wellknown how he introduced radical reforms in local self government which turned, an earlier Viceroy, Mayo's scheme into one of "political education" for the Indian people. Another reform about which the present generation may know little or nothing is Ripon's efforts, known as the Ilbert Bill, intended to clothe the Indian subordinate judiciary with powers to try Europeans. He also wished to reform the scheme under which the Covenanted Civil Service was recruited so as to make it possible for a larger number of Indians to enter it. Perhaps it may not be known today that for all these measures, and particularly for the Ilbert Bill, Ripon earned the ire of his own countrymen in this country to such an extent that it is known that there was to be an attempt to kidnap him and ship him off to England. That this did not succeed of course, is history but nevertheless it had its repercussions. The bitterness engendered was so terrific that Ripon had finally to leave, making room for a new Viceroy, Dufferin.

Dufferin's arrival in this country synchronised with the departure of Ripon. So that Dufferin was an accidental witness to the signs of great affection in which Ripon was held in by the Indian people. His departure from Calcutta to Bombay, where he took a ship, was one continuous carnival, and it made such a terrific impression on any one who witnessed it that it was hardly forgotten. Dufferin who seems to have witnessed one part of it was so impressed that he seems to have determined to earn a similar one for himself. So he let it be known that he was largely going to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor. The Indian section which had got embittered over the failures of Ripon's attempts to introduce radical reforms in the Indian administration was watching verily to see how Dufferin was going to shape as Viceroy. They were naturally unable to make up their mind, one way or the other until they had some definite indications as to the policy likely to be pursued by Dufferin. Unfortunately for Dufferin one after another events took place as a result of which he successfully disappointed Indian opinion, already embittered. Indians saw in Dufferin's ways and actions that he was out to repress Indian opinion and disappoint Indian ambitions. In the meanwhile events among Indians were taking shape all over India. There

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Determined Will Of Ghosh Regime Pays Dividend

Analyst

THE day Mrs. Indira Gandhi visited the refugee camps in West Bengal (August 22), that very day the attendance in Durgapur steel plant had returned to normal. At Durgapur the C.P.M. had entrenched themselves and a real political struggle between Authority and the C.P.M. was going on for quite some time. As long as the U.F. Government was functioning the C.P.M. had almost a free hand and the Central institutions were not able to enforce discipline and secure production unless the C.P.M. agreed to these. With the fall of the U.F. Government the C.P.M. increased its pressure and the issues were more politically-oriented. The C.P.I. the S.U.C. and the I.N.T.U.C. had some pockets of trade union influence and, sensing that they would be wiped out of existence, they began to resist C.P.M. pressure. But the C.P.M.'s strategy was part of an all-State plan to paralyse the Government and the Durgapur struggle was only a strategic battle.

Fortunately the Centre and the State Governments thought it better to face the challenge posed, rather now than later, and made all the arrangements. The indefinite strike call given by the C.P.M.-led unions from 12th August mainly on the issue of removal of the Industrial Security and C.R.P. forces precipitated the struggle. With the strong arm of the Centre and the State administration and with the open political opposition by the C.P.I., the I.N.T.U.C. and the S.U.C., the strike collapsed after eleven days and the C.P.M. had to call off the strike unconditionally. Thus the C.P.M. received a severe political blow at the ground of its choosing.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi should have therefore gone to Durgapur on 22nd August itself and addressed the workers, so that the political gain would have been clinched very clearly and openly.

Earlier there had been the two-day strike of the Electricity Board's employees. This again tested the nerves of the Administration and it won quite well, although some dislocations of power were there in some of the districts.

Now there is the threat of the three-day strike of the State Government employees (August 26-28) followed by the plan of surrounding the Secretariat with lakhs of peasants on August 31. Here again, greatly encouraged by the Durgapur fiasco, the State Government seems to be determined to counter the challenge and take the bull by the horn. Already many sections of government employees have opposed the

strike. The eight-party combination has opposed it too. The Congress (R) and the Bangla Congress also have appealed to the employees not to go on strike. The employees who absent themselves will face immediate suspension. The army has been alerted.

In view of these all round efforts and particularly in view of the strength of will shown by the State Government, in contrast to the past, perhaps the C.P.M. will get another political defeat, if the strike fails.

Meanwhile, the Naxalites also had a rude shock when their debonair leader, Kanu Sanyal was arrested without a fight and when he asked for A class treatment in jail. The police has now taken to a more political method in searching out the Naxalites and their hideouts, and bomb-making centres are being discovered in quick succession.

Thus this whole month had been very critical and now the situation is slightly better. Credit for this must primarily go to Mr. B. B. Ghosh and his regime. They have worked hard, they kept their head steady, and they explained at proper time why certain steps are being taken and why certain demands could not be met. Credit is also due to Mrs. Indira Gandhi for her full and unambiguous and unhesitating support to the B. B. Ghosh regime.

But, as I pointed out in my last article, all this is administrative success, negative in the sense of holding and defending the State in peace. The political vacuum remains. How is it to be filled?

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Land Reforms-Political Or Economic?

Dear Sir,

In Kerala there is a definite break-down of law and order. But to those who have viewed Bengal with no anxiety may not view what is happening in Kerala as unlawful or a disturbance of the peace. Ever since Jan. 1, 1970 when the new Land Reforms Act came into force no landed property is secure. Plundering the crops by the Communists, Right and Left, is the order of the day. Grabbing land and daylight robbery of agricultural crops is not considered by the Police and the Communist-led Governments as an offence. The justification for this is that there is a provision in the Land Act that a hutment dweller known as *Kudikidappukaran*, a mere squatter on land, admittedly without any right or title or interest in land, is given the option of purchasing on a mere illusory compensation, 10 cents of land including the site of his hut. But instead of taking the steps prescribed in the Act for the purchase of this land, the Marxists and other parties are vying with each other to grab this land and take the yield from these and even the adjoining lands of the owner, under the pretence of securing for the *kudikidappukaran* the 10 cents he has to purchase.

Law's delays make legal remedies ineffective. The Socialist parties as well as the Communists consider that, if they grab the land for the *kudikidappukaran*, they will get the votes of these landless people whose number is no doubt considerable. Those who do not know the system of land holding in Kerala may think that the land owners in Kerala are like the Zamindars and other landlords of other States especially of North India, who own square miles of land let out on lease and live luxuriously on the rent paid by cultivators. Perhaps this is what still obtains in other States. Perhaps this is the reason for the constant appeal by some Central Ministers to hasten land reforms. In Kerala the average family holding is only 3.23 acres. The so-called landlords who live on rents were only a handful and they have ceased to exist. Ninety four per cent of the landholders are actually "tillers of the soil." The cry "land to the tiller" has no meaning in Kerala. It is already in their hands and ownership. Dr. G. D. Patel in his book *The Indian Land Problem and Legislation* states that in Kerala "holdings are generally uneconomic and are therefore insufficient for the maintenance of holders". It is also stated that in Kerala, "the man-land ratio is very low when compared to the rest of India. This state is pre-eminently a land of small holdings". It is consolidation, not frag-

mentation, that is needed for the development of agriculture in Kerala. Agricultural products raised in Kerala are mostly commercial crops. The present land reform in Kerala is purely a Communist programme for liquidating the farmers so that collective or co-operative farming may be forced upon the people. It is purely a political programme to capture votes of the landless, disregarding the economic ruin resulting from it.

There is no meaning in crying for Land Reform in Kerala. No Government which is interested in the economy of the country will think of putting every man on land. Agriculture is still the backbone of the economy of India. Fragmentation to such an extent as to divide the land per head will spell the ruin of agriculture. Any land reform in India has to be based on the economic viability of the ceiling fixed for a family or an individual. The advocacy of Land Reform has no meaning unless it be based on economic considerations. But the Indian Politicians seem to be looking only to the political aspect, especially to capture the votes of the landless. Herein lies the mistake.

Ernakulam
August 10

E. P. VARGHESE M.A. B.L.

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able land. Work in fields will be adequately remunerated through protection of agricultural wages. Those who cultivate lands as tenants will be granted security of tenure on the payment of a fixed and reasonable share of the produce. And the owners of not-too-small and not-too-big family farms—experience all over the world has proved that a family farm is the most efficient system of agricultural production—will be provided every assistance and encouragement for improving and increasing agricultural yields. That is the way to the solution of the land problem and to the solution of the much more fundamental problem of rural poverty and misery.

Agriculture is the foundation of Indian economy. Unless that foundation is strong there can be no progress of trade or industry and no improvement in the lot of the people. After centuries of gross and criminal neglect, agriculture is at long last receiving some signs of rejuvenation. This is the time when all efforts should be concentrated on placing agriculture on sound footing in order that it may, from a means of bare sustenance, develop into a growing and prosperous industry. The ill-advised leftist agitation of land-grab will hinder and frustrate that most essential process.

Review

Under Two Masters

N. B. Bonarjee, Oxford University Press, Rs. 25/-.

MR. BONARJEE is a retired member of the Indian Civil Service who served under British rulers for twenty-two years and in Independent India for nine years. He thus served under two masters and that fact explains the title of the book.

The book is not meant to be autobiographical, though the first few chapters give a good deal of information about the family background, the early years and the school and college education of Mr. Bonarjee. For most of this period, Mr. Bonarjee was in England and was brought up and educated like an English youth. He came to know India intimately only when he returned to the country as a member of the I.C.S.

The main purpose of the book is to describe the British system of administration and how it functioned and to bring out the difference between that system and the one adopted after Independence. Mr. Bonarjee is naturally all for the British system with its impartiality, its aloofness and its strict discipline. No doubt, it yielded many good results, and many members of the I.C.S. were hardworking and conscientious and men of ability and integrity. But it should not be forgotten that the olympian manner in which it functioned was possible only as long as the country was ruled by foreign masters.

After Independence and more particularly under a democratic regime, the system had perforce to undergo many fundamental changes, both in its outlook as well as in its mode of functioning. It is true that the new system is not yet fully evolved. The main obstacle in the way of that evolution is the retention intact of many of the forms and procedures and rules and regulations devised during the British regime. That has made the system very cumbersome and rigid without the saving grace of ability and impartiality. Possibly, the so-called steel frame left behind by the British was not an unmixed evil. Possibly, it might have been better if it had been rejected and replaced by an altogether new system in consonance with the active, as distinguished from the passive, role that the Government has to play in the social and economic life of the country. Mr. Bonarjee would not, however, accept this view. He is too much wedded to the old British system of administration. It is British mainly because they introduced it in India; they did not make a fetish of it in their own country.

Another object of the book is to attempt "a general estimate of British rule in India". On that topic the author has many refreshing things to say. They are of particular interest because, to begin with, Mr. Bonarjee's estimate was no different from the usual

nationalist estimate. It is the mature thought of later years which persuaded him to change it. He is now convinced that the British were by far the best masters that India could have had. He has compared their rule with that of the French and the Dutch and the Americans and found that it was far more beneficial than that of others both from the point of view of popular welfare and political progress. His verdict on British rule is as follows: "So far as the British in India were concerned, I doubt if exploitation, pure and unadulterated, was the only purpose of British rule. More detailed examination would probably show that in addition to leaving behind solid constitutional foundations for the construction of a sound democracy, the British bequeathed to India an industrial base, capable of expansion and backed by a tradition of sound finance, a stable rupee and the sum of Rs. 1,200 crores in the till".

Mr. Bonarjee has hotly contested the statement made by many nationalist leaders that the British rule was a "police state". It was certainly not a police state of the Tsarist or Hitlerite type. It cannot be denied, however, that it left India terribly poor and emasculated. Some economic progress took place but it was mainly such as would serve the interest of British imperialism. Some advance was achieved, but in the latter part of the Raj it was very slow. People were progressively associated with the Government, but the process was halting as well as painful. The verdict on the Raj will, therefore, be a mixed one, neither too complimentary nor entirely condemnatory. That more or less is the position of Mr. Bonarjee.

Mr. Bonarjee has invited attention to the conflict between India and Bharat, the conflict between modern trends and atavistic trends rooted in ancient philosophy, culture and tradition. In a telling sentence he has described the paradoxical position as follows: "Ancient Mother India of the twentieth century B.C. is as much a part of India of the twentieth century A.D. as the Atomic Energy Plant and the Oil Refineries at Trombay." That is the difficult position that the leaders of the country are facing and that may to some extent explain the weaknesses and defects of the manner and method of their rule.

The book gives ample evidence of Mr. Bonarjee's competence as an administrator. It gives equal evidence of his competence as a writer. The two have combined to make it an outstanding contribution to a discussion of the role that the British rule and its administrators have played in the making of modern India.

V. B. K.

Industrial Workers in the U.S.S.R.

Edited by Robert Conquest, Frederick A. Praeger, New York, \$ 6.25

THE book gives in a concise form all relevant information about the life and conditions of industrial workers in Russia. The information is based upon

studiously collected official data and their objective evaluation by Western scholars.

On all the aspects that are covered, namely, employment, wages and norms, labour discipline, working hours and trade unions the attempt is made to trace and describe the developments that have taken place in the course of the last fifty years of the revolution. It is clear from the information that is given that, in spite of their so-called scientific Marxism, the Russian rulers had no set formula for tackling the problems of industrial workers and that they had to try out various solutions from time to time.

And the main problem yet remains to be solved, the problem of the integration of workers into the communist society. Mr. Conquest has in his Editor's Preface drawn pointed attention to the fact that "the Soviet proletariat appears to be more 'alienated' in Marx's sense than in most other countries." The position is due to the basic contradiction between the desires and aspirations of workers and the theoretical position of the Communists that "the Party, and its State, and its Plan, represented the true interests of the working class".

The book has not dealt with the question of the

political oppression of workers, of the forced labour camps and of the terror that was let loose upon them and their leaders under Stalin. It was regarded, it appears, as outside the purview of the book.

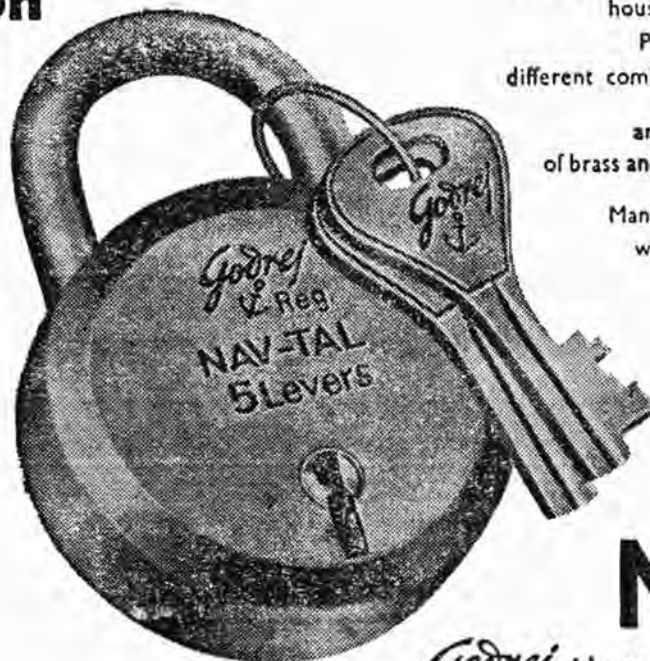
The book forms a part of the Contemporary Soviet Union Series. It is as objective and well-documented as other books in the series.

V. B. K.

BOOKS RECEIVED

1. *Indian Polity, A Plea for Reform*, R. A. Gopalaswami, Nachiketa Publications Ltd., 22, Sleater Road, Bombay 7. Rs. 26/-.
2. *The Warren Court*, Archibald Co., Oxford University Press, \$ 4.95.
3. *Dimensions of Industrial Relations in India*, Edited by Dr. B. S. Bhir, United Asia Publications Private Ltd., 12 Rampart Row, Bombay 1. Rs. 20/-.
4. *Britain and the United Nations*, Central Office of Information, London.
5. *The Secularist*, Bulletin of the Indian Secular Society, 4, Joothica Housing Society, Sleater Road, Bombay 7.

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(Continued from page 6)

was already in Madras the Mahajan Sabha, in Calcutta the Indian Conference and in Bombay the Presidency Association with which the cream of a cosmopolitan Indian leadership was associated. There was also the Sarvajanik Sabha of Poona of a few dedicated men who had been corresponding with the intention of pooling their efforts for the purpose of holding a common platform.

In the meanwhile a deputation which had been sent to England had returned empty handed to add further to the disappointment growing in the country. There had, of course, been several other questions in the country itself over which Lord Dufferin had taken a very reactionary attitude. One such question had been over the strong desire of educated Indians to volunteer for military service. Matters had become complicated as a result of three Indian gentlemen having first been admitted in Madras, of all places, and subsequently being turned out. Behind all these efforts for a common platform had, of course, been the father figure of Allan Octavian Hume, who had himself been a very high official in the civil service and would normally have ended his career in the Viceroy's Council but was ignominiously thrown out because of his Indian sympathies. Fortunately, for a considerable time Hume was able to keep in touch with both Ripon and Dufferin and was able to convey to them the viewpoints of educated Indians. It was only after it had become clear to Hume that no amount of intercession with the Viceroy would have any effect that he added his earnest appeal to those able to do so to hold a joint session on a common platform of the various organisations in the country. Associated with Hume were of course, others like Weddenburn and Wordsworth whose memory needs to be cherished by Independent India. So in the event a session was decided upon and the name "Congress" preceded by the two words "Indian National" was decided upon on the basis of the association of that word with the American counterpart of Philadelphia origin. It is a mistake commonly encountered to believe that the Indian National Congress came into being with the encouragement of Lord Dufferin who wished for a body of Indian opinion which would represent to government Indian aspirations and in general stand as a breakwater between government and the people. Nothing could be further from the truth, in fact, the author has brought out very clearly that Dufferin was sorely disappointed that the organisation should have come into existence and no pains were spared by the then and subsequent officialdom to bring about the organisation's early end. That it ultimately survived of these efforts

is wellknown and lived to usher in 1947, the era of Independence.

While all this makes excellent reading and also important reading for all politicians, one cannot escape remembering the great names associated with the Congress. The book has as its front piece an excellent photograph taken on the occasion of the first session, and we see there some of the great names of those associated with the political movement, Dadabhai Naoroji, Phirozshah Mehta, Telang and several others, all donning the headaddresses of their respective communities. It makes an excellent picture but it saddens one to see to what low levels the Congress whether Right or Left, Original or Ruling, has descended today. One wonders whether the names which come up today when the words Indian National Congress are uttered as its top ranks can compare in sheer patriotism and integrity with those that founded the Congress in 1885.

A Bad Precedent

AN unpleasant and sinister precedent has just been established at the World Fair in Osaka, Japan—EXPO 70. Six Girl-hostesses from Czechoslovakia have been refused aid in obtaining political asylum in Canada by the Japanese authorities.

The reason appears to be due to no irregularity in the demand for asylum but to an agreement which has been made by the Japanese not to allow the World Fair to be used for the purpose of facilitating defection from Communist countries. It even appears that the United States has been prepared to underwrite this for the duration of the fair. This, the oddest aspect of the affair, is reported in a dispatch from Selig Harrison in the British daily, *The Guardian*, in these words: "It is understood that US officials are under instructions to 'cooperate fully' with Japanese Government agencies in the event of attempts at defection."

But Japan is a democratic country, which prides itself on giving primacy to the Rule of Law and protection of the rights of the individual. Surely in these circumstances such an action towards helpless citizens of a country occupied by Soviet armed forces flouts these democratic principles. However important the World Fair may be, to the Japanese and to us all, it is certainly not worth this much.

—*Swiss Press Review and News Report.*

With Many Voices

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

—Tennyson.

If the opposition is reckless in Indira-baiting, Mrs. Gandhi's followers are equally reckless in building up a personality cult.

—Commerce, August 1.

Socialism and democracy cannot survive together for a very long time.

—M. R. Masani, *Indian Express*, August 3.

Hall hath no fury like a toppler scorned.

—Editorial in the *Pioneer* (Lucknow),
August 14

Infantilism in excelsis, only thus can the censure-motion against the Government on the opening day of Parliament be described.

—Opinion, August 4.

Let the dialogue between the democratic socialists and the communists start again.

—N. G. Goray, *The Indian Monitor*, August 8.

What do they know of Russia who only Europe know?

—*The Economist* (London) August 15.

The chances of world peace improved considerably last week with two major, perhaps historic, moves: the initialling of the agreement between Russia and West Germany, accepting Europe's existing boundaries; and the cease-fire in the Middle East.

—*The Observer*, London, August 9.

To the Editor.
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The Centre's doles, whether in the form of political support or cash grants or industrial licences, are influenced not so much by national interest as by party interest.

—Durga Das, *The Economic Times*, August 11.

The abuse of political power to enrich party chests and gather funds for elections is one of the most dangerous forms of political corruption.

—V. K. Narasimhan, *Indian Express*,
August 12.

I am now an insignificant person in what is at present an insignificant country.

—C. Rajagopalachari, *Swarajya*, August 22.

In the present Indian context radicalism by itself is not a revolutionary concept. It is only a smoke-screen for inertia, inaction and lack of vision.

—G. K. Reddy, *The Hindu*, August 18.

The Indian socialists have rarely shown any grasp of reality.

—J. B. Kripalani, *The White Star*, August, 1970.

Two years ago today the hopes and aspirations of the Czechoslovak people were trampled under the might and fury of Russian tanks.

—*March of the Nation*, August 22.

The people threatened by the Naxalite terror take refuge not in Sarvodaya but in the R.S.S.

—K. H. Prabhu, *Opinion*, August 18.

It is not our youth but our politicians who have to rise above slogans.

—Nandan Kagal, *Indian Express*, August 20.

Unless reforms can improve life for the bulk of the Indian people, the bomb could replace Mahatma Gandhi's spinning wheel as the symbol of the Indian masses.

—*Time*, August 24.

If we were today living in the era of late capitalism, then it is also the era of late communism.

Dr. Klaus Mehnert, *The German Tribune*,
July 16.