

# QUEST

a bi-monthly of arts and ideas

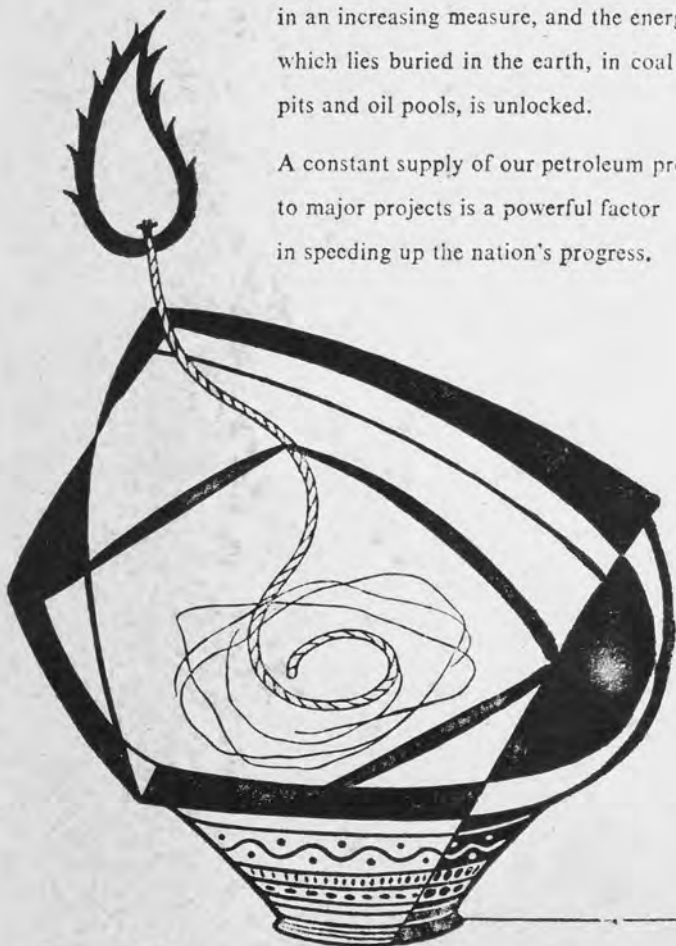
edited by: **NISSIM EZEKIEL**

Dec. '56 - Jan. '57    vol. II no. 3

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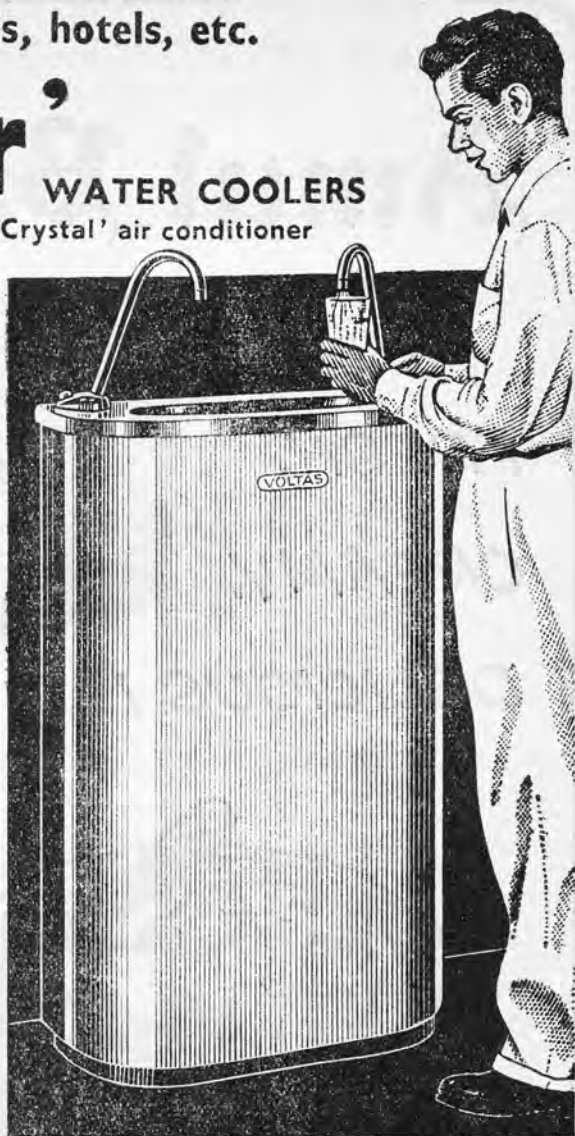
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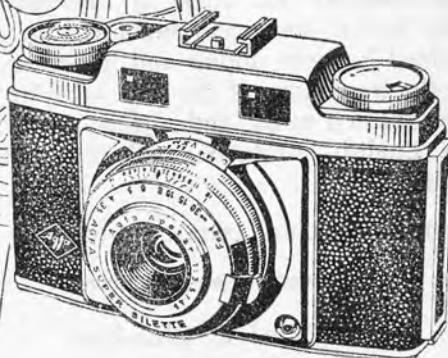
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A prize of approximately Rs. 1,350 is offered for the best short story from any of the Indian languages submitted in English translation. The prize will be divided between author and translator, Rs. 1000/- to the author and Rs. 350/- to the translator. If the prize-winning entry is translated by the author, he will be entitled to the entire prize money. Copyright of the prize-winning story in English translation, will vest in the Congress for Cultural Freedom and QUEST.

THE COMPETITION WILL BE CONDUCTED FOR THE CONGRESS BY QUEST

The following have kindly agreed to serve as judges:

Nirad C. Chaudhuri  
Sudhin Datta  
R. K. Narayan  
Nissim Ezekiel

### Terms and Conditions:

1. Entries must be by living authors. The competition is open to Indian nationals only, though translators need not be Indian nationals.
2. Entries should be English translations of short stories from any of the Indian languages. Length: 3,000 to 7,000 words. The story should not have been published before in English. Translations may be by the author himself or by someone else. One writer may submit only one story.
3. The last date for submission of manuscripts is January 31, 1957. The judges' verdict will be announced in QUEST of April 1957. The winning entry will be published in QUEST which shall also have first option on any other entries considered suitable for publication at its usual rates.
4. Manuscripts should be typed in double spacing on foolscap paper with a minimum of 1" margins on all sides. Handwritten manuscripts will not be accepted.
5. Manuscripts cannot be returned.
6. The judges' decision is final. The prize may not be awarded if no entry reaches the required standard.

*All entries should be addressed to the Editor, QUEST, Army & Navy Building, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 1, with the envelope clearly marked 'Short Story Competition Entry'.*

# QUEST

Advisory Editors: NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI  
SUDHIN DATTA  
D. G. NADKARNI

a bi-monthly of arts and ideas  
EDITOR: NISSIM EZEKIEL  
Dec. 56 - Jan. 57 Vol. II No. 3

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QUEST is published once every two months in August, October, December, February, April and June, at Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 1. Re. 1/- per issue, annual Rs. 6/- (six issues). Annual Subscription in U.K. 12s; U.S.A. \$ 3; France 450 francs; Italy 984 Liras; Ceylon Rs. 7 & 50 cents; Burma Rs. 7/8; Germany 7 Marks; Israel 12s; Pakistan Rs. 7/8; Japan 567 Yens. Advertising rates on application.

QUEST is sponsored by the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom.

REVIEWS EDITOR: MRS. LAEQ FUTEHALLY  
BUSINESS MANAGER: MRS. INDU P. SARAIYA

**I**T is my lot again to raise my voice against our distinguished Prime Minister. The trend of our foreign policy in the past few days has seriously disturbed me. The world has witnessed in recent days two examples of the most cynical assault on human freedom; one in Egypt and the other in Hungary. To Egypt Mr. Nehru's reaction was immediate and firm and righteous. It was a reaction of which every Indian and freedom-loving citizen of the world could be proud. But for many days there was not even a whisper heard from New Delhi about Hungary. Then one fine morning the papers reported Mr. Nehru's chief advisor on foreign policy, Mr. Krishna Menon, as having stated that the Hungarian question was a domestic affair of the Hungarian people. It was an astounding statement that left me aghast.

In the meanwhile the Hungarian revolution seemed to be rolling forward from success to success till it seemed to have reached its final goal of victory. Then came the anti-climax. The Russian army swooped down and set the seal of doom upon that unfortunate country. Prime Minister Imre Nagy was arrested and in true Stalinist fashion a stooge was put in his place to carry out the bidding of the invaders. It was at that last stage when the curtain was being rung down on the last act of the Hungarian tragedy, that Mr. Nehru spoke out at the Unesco Conference. It was a futile gesture because it was too late. The Hungarian struggle for freedom had started on the 22nd October with huge demonstrations of thousands of students. On the 24th Imre Nagy was carried to power on the rising crest of revolution. Mr. Nehru did not break his silence till November 5. It took him two weeks to make up his mind about an event the significance of which should have been clear to any person acquainted even slightly with the situation in Eastern Europe. Nevertheless Mr. Nehru's belated gesture was a heartening token of the fact that India's conscience was not dead and Mr. Menon's was not the authentic voice of this country.

But the Unesco speech seems to have been the product of a passing mood, for our other actions have given it the lie. When the first resolution on Hungary was adopted by the UN, India surprisingly enough had abstained. A report from New Delhi explained that instructions had not reached our permanent representative in time. But Mr. Krishna Menon subsequently contradicted that report and revealed that the abstention was deliberate. Then came Mr. Nehru's astonishing speech at the Calcutta AICC. Evidently Mr. Nehru had second or rather third thoughts and revised the opinion expressed earlier at the Unesco Conference. Finally came the crowning piece of this shameful story, namely India's opposition to the second resolution on Hungary and Mr. Menon's speech of the 9th. A more perverse and false view of the situation could have hardly been imagined. As an Indian I hang down my head in shame that a spokesman of my country should have gone so far in cynical disregard of the truth and the fundamental principles of freedom and peace that are said to guide our international conduct.

There are today two Imperialistic systems in being. One is the old system of Western Imperialism, the other the new system of Communist Imperialism. We can easily identify the first, having seen its features from close quarters. But the other seems to deceive some people. The Eastern European nations have often been described by Mr. Nehru and Mr. Menon as sovereign states, while it has been clear to everyone who tried to find out the facts that they were nothing but Russian satellites ruled by Russian stooges. If this was not clear before, Krushchev's recital of Stalin's crimes should have removed all doubts. Even after that if any doubts had persisted, they should have been removed by the happenings in Poland and Hungary.

To apply one set of rules to Egypt and another to Hungary is to make use of a double-standard which to say the least is unworthy of this country. The sooner we renounce the double-standard the better for India's honour and peace of the world and for goodwill among nations.

## INDIAN COMMITTEE FOR SOLIDARITY WITH HUNGARY

P. O. Box No. 1094, Bombay, 16th November, 1956.

In order to give expression to the widespread feeling of sympathy and solidarity with the brave people of Hungary in their heroic struggle for freedom and in order to bring the facts to the notice of the Indian public, an Indian Committee for Solidarity with Hungary has been established.

Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan has accepted the Chairmanship of the Committee. Mr. R. V. Murthy and Mr. S. A. Sabavala will be the Honorary Secretaries. Among the initial members of the Committee are:

|                        |                                                                   |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sir Homi Mody          |                                                                   |
| Mr. Tulsidas Kilachand | M.P.                                                              |
| Asoka Mehta            | M.P.                                                              |
| Gangasaran Sinha       | Chairman, Praja Socialist Party                                   |
| Morarji Vaidya         | President, Indian Merchants Chamber                               |
| Purshottam Trikumdas   | Advocate, Supreme Court                                           |
| Purshottam Thakkar     | I.N.T.U.C.                                                        |
| P. K. Sawant           | I.N.T.U.C.                                                        |
| Jaipal Singh           | M.P.                                                              |
| Miss Maniben Kara      | Vice-President, Hind Mazdoor Sabha                                |
| Mr. V. B. Karnik       | Hind Mazdoor Sabha                                                |
| Dr. A. J. Shellat      | President, National Union of Students                             |
| Shanti Patel           | President, Bombay Committee All India<br>Dock Workers' Federation |
| Mr. Rohit Dave         | Chairman, Praja Socialist Party, Bombay                           |
| M. R. Dandawate        | Secretary, Praja Socialist Party, Bombay                          |
| R. J. Mehta            | Secretary, Bombay State Hind Mazdoor<br>Sabha                     |
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| M. R. Masani           | Author                                                            |
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| Raja Kulkarni          | Cotton Mill Mazdoor Sabha                                         |
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| Dinoo Ranadive         | Yuvak Sabha                                                       |
| H. R. Pardiwala        | Bar-at-Law                                                        |
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| Mrs. Safia Natarajan   |                                                                   |
| Mr. B. P. Wadia        |                                                                   |
| M. Harris              | Journalist                                                        |
| A. D. Gorwala          |                                                                   |

You are invited to join the Committee. There is no membership fee.

## Message of *the Congress for Cultural Freedom* TO THE INTELLECTUALS OF HUNGARY

The Congress for Cultural Freedom expresses its profound respect for the insurgent intellectuals of Hungary and salutes them for the example set by their courage. Their struggle for the truth has shattered the edifice of lies which was Stalinism and has begun the process of reuniting them with us in a community of intellectual values. Their action, in many cases bearing witness against their past, confirms the authenticity of the ideals which in 1950 this Congress has proclaimed in Berlin against the mouthpieces of totalitarianism. Whatever their economic and political plans may be, we trust that a respect for truth will inspire them with the resolution to establish institutions that are consonant with human rights, the dignity of the person and the freedom of thought.

Looking towards that future, we offer them our fraternal companionship.

Below is the text of the message cabled to Prime Minister Nehru on October 28, 1956, by *the Congress for Cultural Freedom*:

"APPEAL TO YOU TO ENGAGE YOUR MORAL AUTHORITY AS THE  
COMPANION AND DISCIPLE OF GANDHI TO STOP THE  
MASSACRE OF THE HUNGARIAN PEOPLE. YOUR ROLE AS A  
MEDIATOR COULD CONTRIBUTE TO A CEASE-FIRE AND THE  
WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN TROOPS."

Signed by:

*Salvador de Madariaga*  
*Denis de Rougemont*

*Stephen Spender*  
*Nicolas Nabokov*

### LAST MESSAGE OF HUNGARIAN PATRIOTS

We are reproducing below the last message sent out from Radio Budapest by the Hungarian patriots before the Russian army overran that unfortunate country on November 4:

ATTENTION ATTENTION DEAR LISTENERS YOU WILL  
HEAR NOW THE MANIFESTO OF THE FEDERATION OF  
HUNGARIAN WRITERS. THIS IS THE FEDERATION OF  
HUNGARIAN WRITERS. TO EVERY WRITER IN THE WORLD  
TO ALL SCIENTISTS TO ALL WRITERS FEDERATION  
TO ALL SCIENTISTS ASSOCIATIONS TO THE INTELLECTUAL  
ELITE OF THE WORLD WE ASK YOU ALL FOR YOUR HELP  
AND SUPPORT. THERE IS BUT LITTLE TIME. YOU KNOW  
THE FACTS. THERE IS NO NEED TO GIVE YOU A SPECIAL  
REPORT. HELP HUNGARY HELP THE HUNGARIAN PEOPLE  
HELP HUNGARIAN WRITERS SCIENTISTS WORKERS  
PEASANTS AND OUR INTELLIGENTSIA. HELP HELP HELP.

K. K. SINHA

## **Indian leftism**

*a reassessment*

**L**EFTISM has a peculiar flavour and appeal of its own to the youth of this country. Often we hear of 'leftist unity' as a slogan for rallying a large number of local or all-India political groups and parties. Lately we are again finding that an earnest effort is being made to popularise the slogan to develop an alliance against the ruling party in the country. Whether such periodic efforts succeed or not is not of crucial importance. What is of greater and more significant import is the fact that this appeal of Leftism exerts an influence on the urban youth, the educated middle class and the intellectuals. After the opening up of the post-independence era, it has become necessary to make a reappraisal of the values and attitudes reflected in Leftism and to find out whether and, if so, to what extent, Leftism has still to play an effective role in the future. But before this question can be satisfactorily considered it is appropriate to review briefly the historical roots of Indian Leftism, so that the issue may be considered in its proper setting.

In the earlier years of this century the slow and cautious pleadings for constitutional reforms made by the elder politicians in their annual holiday-sessions of the Congress or the Liberal party were confronted, on the one hand, by a strong popular agitation in Bengal against its partition and by the emergence of secret societies

committed to political terrorism. One represented a kind of populism which expressed itself through mass meetings, boycott of British goods, promotion of everything Swadeshi, etc. Bengal was represented emotionally in the image of a Holy Mother, and passionate appeals to resist the rape of the mother by the foreigner were being made. The partition of Bengal was the immediate provocation to inculcate a spirit of nationalism and patriotism, India having been substituted for Bengal as the Mother. When the immediate provocation died down, the already ignited emotions of the Hindu youth were engaged in the task of liberating the country from foreign domination. Individual terrorism began to be accepted in addition to the parallel efforts of elder statesmen as a method of creating political situations by which concessions could be wrested from the foreign rulers. Of course, publicly the constitutional protagonists reaped the harvest, but the 'revolutionaries' were convinced that without their creating a situation of terror concessions would not have been forthcoming. During the first World War the idea of armed insurrection had emerged out of the failure of romantic expectations from acts of individual political terrorism.

With Gandhi's entry in Indian politics, both of these methods—constitutional agitation by leaders of the profession and

individual acts of terrorism by secret societies—were supplanted. Gandhi's contribution lay in making the masses *participate* in certain forms of simple, easily performable acts by even the most illiterate, acts which by large scale propaganda and publicity were associated with a political significance. The advocates of the earlier forms of political activity—the Liberals as well as the Revolutionaries—were extremely critical of Gandhi's method. But the latter emerged as predominant over the older modes of expression mainly because it was the only mode then offered by which masses obtained a sense of physical participation in the movement for Swaraj in addition to an opportunity for vocal expression of their hatred of foreign domination through mass meetings.

Bardoli and Champaran were experimenting grounds for Gandhi and as such they were eminently successful from the point of view of evolution of novel methods of political action. The 1920-21 period of Non-Co-operation launched by Gandhi on the issue of the Khilafat and Swaraj took the form of boycott of British goods, burning of foreign cloth, boycott of schools and courts, picketing of liquor shops, hartal, etc. Thus the entire urban population was covered by the sweep of the movement in contrast to the other movement of well-to-do lawyers and doctors in major cities and a few hundred secret society members. This sudden expansion of the volume of the political movement without adequate political education created a very unstable psychological situation in a background of post-war depression and protracted discontent of the peasantry.

THE Russian Revolution had already taken place and its slogans and success and the name of Lenin, its architect, created a magical effect on the minds of the educated. As a consequence, while Gandhi was considered as being in advance of those

whom he succeeded, his disciplining principles of non-violence, constructive work, and Charkha were not appreciated by the 'revolutionaries' who had by now joined the Congress. The Trade Union movement had also begun at this time and the Marxist ideology in which the 'proletariat' was shown to be more important than others and 'revolution' and 'the general strike' as new methods began to grip the minds of the revolutionaries and other radicals.

When the Non-Co-operation movement was dramatically withdrawn by Gandhi as a 'Himalayan blunder' and more normal conditions slowly returned, the trend to parliamentary activities emerged afresh, and the Swarajists led by C. R. Das, Motilal Nehru and Vithalbhai Patel entered the reformed Legislature and thus kept alive political life, howsoever ineffectively. Side by side with this, trade union and communist activity increased in tempo as also the older methods of terrorism. Marxist literature and the Communist approach slowly made headway and the idea of revolution in the communist sense was becoming popular among the political intelligentsia. Peasant revolts began to take larger dimensions since the Great Depression of 1929.

The major political event during the twenties was the country-wide boycott of the Simon Commission. That was another form of expression for public attitudes—the black-flag demonstration. The political situation was getting explosive. Gandhi launched his Salt Satyagraha with the famous Dandi March—the breaking of a law of the mighty British Empire symbolically. Even the breaking of it was as important as the March. Similar symbolic acts were taken up all over the country with a little extension into the villages. The emotional impact of the symbolic conflict was great in the mass mind, but the economic situation, specially in the countryside, was so acute that the leftists demanded the extension of

the movement into a no-rent campaign. But Gandhi did not agree to do so.

By the time this movement petered away and thousands were clapped in prisons, a great stress was laid on the political education of this new generation of 'political workers' in prison. The Meerut Conspiracy Case contributed largely to this process and Marxist literature was avidly read by them. This led to a more political and organisational crystallisation of forces. The Congress Socialist Party was founded with great hopes and it soon became the platform of all 'leftists', non-Gandhists, revolutionaries, communists and radicals. Leftism established a broad platform of its own at this stage.

THE experience of the C.S.P. was not happy considered as an expression of a united 'Left' front against the 'Right', meaning the Gandhists and the Parliamentarians. The main reason lay in the fact that unity was not based on clarity of vision. Vagueness of ideas, methods and ideals persisted, and conflicting view points were never reconciled. This seemed inevitable in the circumstances, and there was no larger sense of understanding that the C.S.P. was to be and could be only a broad, almost undefined, trend of opposition to the Right. Any strong move to press for clear-cut ideology for its acceptance would only help to break and split its ranks. And this is exactly what happened. The Socialists, the Radicals and the Communists fought ideological battles inside it or outside and the platform of the Left remained disunited.

The Second World War provided a new experience. Initially, Gandhi started his 'individual satyagraha', which was not much of a success. There was a demand for making the best use of the critical situation in which the British were placed. Then the August '42 movement took place on the eve of which the Congress leaders were

arrested. It generally took the form of dislocating communications and taking over railway stations, police stations and district and sub-district seats of authority on a country-wide scale. It would be difficult to characterise it as a Gandhist struggle; nor did it get the opportunity to develop into an insurrection or revolution. While this was going on, the Radicals actively supported the War and the Communists joined in this after the Soviet Union was attacked. The Forward Bloc, consisting of the followers of Subhas Bose, never had a clear-cut set of ideas; they were mostly romantic and melodramatic in their behaviour. During the war they supported Bose's attempt to conquer India with the help of the Japanese.

As the War was coming to a close with the Britishers on the winning side, the Congress leaders became desirous of getting back into the seats of power (at least in the provinces where they had resigned earlier during the war). In some places they actually did so and even 'prosecuted the war effort'. Negotiations got started, as the British were keen for some sort of a major political settlement. No efforts were spared by the Congress leaders to get full power for themselves by a voluntary transfer of power. The question of a satyagraha or struggle was not even mentioned. The anti-fascist nature of the War and the post-war aims of the Allies were creating a favourable climate for India to press for its demands, one of the influencing factors being the extremely deteriorating economic situation of Britain itself. The Leftists as such had nothing much to say, except the Radicals who pressed for acceptance of such power as was offered with efforts to create a political situation which would necessitate full transfer of power. They believed that the post-war era would compel Britain to evacuate India on its own, and what seemed to them as more important then was to assure that power thus transferred

went more into the hands of the people than to politicians and parties.

Transfer of power took place in 1947 and for all practical purposes it was to the Congress party in a partitioned India. The Leftist parties took interesting attitudes. The Radicals dissolved their political party on the ground that the party system came in the way of true democracy, of government of the people and by the people. They have practically gone out of the picture of political action, though their ideas and ideals continue to be expressed in the name of Radical Humanism. The Communists at first did not believe that power was actually transferred and they condemned the Congress as being still in alliance with British Imperialism. They declared 'war' on the government. The resulting clash was in isolated pockets of peasant struggles and, after a period of endeavour to establish a Yenan, they wriggled out of the situation greatly weakened and demoralised.

Slowly the Communists recognised Indian Independence and began to participate in parliamentary life. In this they succeeded by concentrating their energies in areas where they had tried to dig in during the insurrectionary phase. Now, with a change in Russian policy to win over the neutralists and Nehru to their side, the C.P.I. is steadily giving up its former position and may soon ask its followers to work with the Congress if not join it formally. The Second Five Year Plan and its execution may provide a plausible excuse. The Socialists, having come out of the Congress, joined with another split group from the latter and, as the P.S.P., have tried to develop themselves as the Parliamentary Opposition in the parliamentary tradition. But the ideological implications of Parliamentary Opposition having not been squarely faced, it found itself divided between the revolutionaries and the parliamentarians, the insurrection-

ists and the democrats. It has lately split again and the revolutionists have formed a separate Socialist Party.

**T**HERE have been alliances between the various leftists during the last election, of which the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Peoples Democratic Front (PDF) are prominent. But their experience has not been very happy. The Hyderabad PDF as well as the Travancore-Cochin UDF constituents have charged the Communists with unreliability and attempts at domination—charges that are not novel in any sense. The PSP always experienced extreme uneasiness in working with the Communists.

With the popular agitations against new provincial boundary decisions of the Government, specially in Bombay State and West Bengal, an anti-Congress front and alliance has grown up. An effort is being made to use this recent event to dislodge the Congress in these regions. This recent Leftist unity is therefore again being invoked.

With this rapid survey of Leftism in India, it may now be possible to go into its basic attitudes. Leftism is a curious amalgam of various strands of thoughts and experiences, traditions and practices. It has imbibed ideas from the terrorist, insurrectionary, conspiratorial tradition. It is inspired by an attitude which holds parliamentarism in contempt. It revels in mass agitations, hartals and strikes. The romantic appeal of the Russian Revolution by armed insurrection and capture of the citadels of power by masses and deserters from the army in an upheaval has a magical effect. Lenin is held in the highest esteem by all who call themselves leftists, and his clever and crafty ways of getting into seats of power and holding on to them 'for the cause of the Revolution' is highly appreciated.

Leftism in the different phases of its

history felt at home in such situations and with such programmes as boycott of schools and courts, boycott of foreign goods and burning of foreign cloth, mass meetings with fiery denunciation of British rule or white domination etc. It did not relish Gandhi's other items of work or rules, such as prohibition, the Harijan movement, Charkha and Khadi, village uplift, village industries, etc. Leftists appreciated the fact that Gandhi widened the range of public participation in politics but wanted to enlarge the scope of his programme and methods so that they led to a general rising and violent overthrow of the British. They did not like disciplining the masses but wished to liberate them from all their inhibitions and incite them to be passionate and to sweep away all institutions of British power. Leftists from the thirties were associated with Socialism, if not Marxism; the class struggle approach was generally accepted and the industrial workers were considered far more 'important' than other classes.

After independence the situation had to be slightly reorientated. Radicals can now hardly be called leftists.

**A**MONGST the socialists some generally agree to the pre-independence attitudes but there are others who look up to Gandhism for inspiration. They are accepting Sarvodaya as their goal, although they have not yet made clear whether it can be reconciled with the class approach of Marx. But there is a new trend i.e. one against statism, against too much planning and centralisation. While Congressmen are now in power and accept Gandhi as their source of inspiration, there has developed a radical movement among Gandhists led by Vinoba Bhave. His Bhoodan movement lays stress on anti-State, community-based, decentralised power and economy with the inherent right of *Satyagraha* for each individual. Some of the socialists are half-inclined that

way, while some Congressmen do not like to give full recognition to this individualistic and *Satyagraha-oriented* movement, which may undermine the foundations of national discipline and stability as well as large-scale planned development of natural resources.

But Leftism as it now stands is confronted with a severe crisis. Its main attitudes, both programmatic and methodological, still consist of (a) Anti-imperialism, (b) Socialism and (c) pro-Soviet feelings. While there are differences of opinion on each of these issues among the Leftists themselves, the Congress stands fully committed to all three. To-day, the Nehru Government is known for its anti-West attitude to such an extent that the Western Powers consider India more pro-Soviet now than ever before. India is considered to be a leader of the 'anti-imperialist' group of powers in the U.N. The close collaboration between Russia and India in the programme of Indian industrialisation could not have even been imagined a couple of years ago. Even the C.P.I. is perplexed as to how to adjust itself to the fast pace at which Indo-Russian collaboration is developing. The Second Five Year Plan is proof of the Socialistic nature of the new Indian economy that is being built. The Industrial Policy, Nationalisation of Insurance, State Trading, the new State Enterprises in basic industries, etc., are additional evidence. Nationalisation of the Indian economy is taking place at a pace that not even the boldest of 'Left' economists could anticipate. The private sector is alarmed and overwhelmed already.

This being the case, where lies the distinction between Leftism and Rightism to-day, except in minor details?

On the other hand, there is a serious difference of opinion among the Leftists themselves. Quite a growing section of them considers that imperialism is not merely

western but also Soviet and one must be vigilant against *both*. The one is old and receding but the other is new and aggressive. There is also a growing awareness of the fact that Socialism is not enough or not a desirable ideal if it means a centralised all-powerful State with political as well as economic power concentrated in its hands.

**T**HE other historical association with Leftism remains to be considered. It is the idea of Revolution. Revolution in the larger and broader sense means a rapid and all-pervasive social change. In that sense such a change is coming about in India, though one may or may not like the emerging pattern. If we compare the India of to-day with the pre-independence stage of development, we find quite a far-reaching contrast. Agrarian laws have undergone a profound change; the credit system is being overhauled; a chain of warehouses is being built; the Community Development Programme has covered almost one-third of the countryside—a vast programme of better living and industrialisation on a large scale has been launched; technical education is expanding at a rapid rate. In sum, the entire economic foundation is being renovated without the experience of a serious dislocation or breakdown.

In this process the whole atmosphere of agitation for freedom, of bitterness and frustration, of pent up emotions and inferiority complex that enveloped the thirties and forties is absent. Contrasted in this manner, there is no doubt that *revolution is already under way in India*, not a revolution that lands us suddenly and overnight into a world of utopia but *a process of rapid social change from the very foundations*. In fact this is the substance of revolution that Leftism was striving for. Leftist revolution meant a centralised state with strong party and personality-oriented leadership, state control and state planning of all major fields of social life. India is

already well advanced in this programme. What more does Leftism want in essentials?

Even so it is a fact that the tradition and outlook of pre-Independence Leftism persists. It now expresses itself in terms of anti-Government and anti-State attitudes, in terms of an anti-Congress bias and anti-centralisation as against the pull towards increasing provincial autonomy, in terms of anti-bureaucracy, in terms of mass agitation with local or temporary issues of popular discontent like increasing food prices, etc., in terms of linguistic cultural chauvinism, in terms of hartals and aggressive processions dislocating traffic, breaking police rules and inviting lathi-charges, and in terms of disorganising civic life.

What is the rationale of all this? Where does this process lead to? Does the Leftist seriously believe that Congress rule is really not backed by the people through free elections, that it needs to be over-thrown through 'revolution'? Is it just a continuation of the past tradition of anti-governmentism due to sheer habit? Or is it only a method of attracting public attention towards the opposing group as a step preparatory to elections? There may not be one single cause or motivation but rather a combination of various urges. But given the present political context, namely, a perspective of parliamentary politics, is it not time to disabuse once for all from one's mind the idea of revolution of the insurrectionary type or of the putschist type as being the only form of revolution?

Leftism has two aspects, one programmatic and the other methodological. The Leftist programme has, fortunately or unfortunately, been taken over by the so-called Rightists which means that Leftists have won a moral political victory. The method of capture of power by revolution therefore is needed no longer, unless it means that a particular group must come to power. Thus, on either count, historical

Indian Leftism has lost all *raison d'être*.

A new Leftism, both in ideals and methods, may emerge. But so long as it does not (and also, in order that this new Leftism may emerge), it is the historical task of Indian Leftism of to-day to erase from its mind and public activity its older habits and outlook and forms of reaction to events, so that the field is left clear for a new and more relevant contest of ideas and ideals. Otherwise the danger is great: the danger is to democracy itself.

In the name of false Leftism may arise anti-democratic forces to incite the masses, dislocate the stability of political, economic and social life of the country on minor issues of popular discontent, and thus create temporary situations of political disequilibrium in which determined groups may make desperate attempts to come to power in the name of holy revolution and thus turn back the wheel of Indian progress.

## The Second Asian Socialist Conference

### Some impressions

THE 2nd Congress of the Asian Socialist Conference met in Bombay in the first week of November, an eventful week otherwise since it saw the Egyptian crisis flare up and the Poles and Hungarians rise in revolt against the Soviet power. The Congress, however, left the impress that it failed to see the wood because of the trees. Speakers referred to the dangers of World War III but no one seemed to note that the United Nations had been gravely undermined, with three of its effective four Big Powers challenging the U.N.'s authority. When the elections in the U.S.A. brought in Eisenhower with a Democratic majority in both houses of Congress, the fourth Big Power itself was weakened for prompt action as well. The Asian Socialist Congress contented itself with a strong resolution on Poland-Hungary, a mild denunciation of aggression in Egypt and a pathetic appeal to disputing parties in West Asia to settle their quarrel peacefully.

Israel and the Arab nations cannot do more than insist on their points of view. Moshe Sharett, the Israeli delegate, sprung a surprise on the Congress by denouncing at the inaugural session the French and British Governments for interfering in Egypt. Only a few days earlier, Israel had

said—and the British Foreign Office denied—that Israeli forces were acting in co-operation with the Anglo-French forces in Egypt. The assertion, therefore, was taken as a diplomatic evasion of an uncomfortable fact. A series of resolutions on points of conflict in the Afro-Asian region indicates that the Asian Socialists cannot firmly set aside political issues on which no decision is possible without alienating one delegation or the other. But the Conference is young, and with the years one might expect all the delegations to attain the degree of maturity which, for instance, the Burmese delegation under the able U Ba Swe has shown.

Asian Socialists hold office in two countries—Burma and Ceylon. In others the ruling party follows policies which are not dissimilar to those obtaining in Burma and Ceylon. If an alignment were to take place on ideological grounds the Conference would have far greater strength. The special problems of Asian Socialists as contrasted with Western Socialists relate to land reform and anti-colonialism, and to developing under-developed economies. Somehow one gathered the impression that most of the delegations maintained close contact with their governments, thus

suggesting a strong national bias. Apart from this, the Indonesian, Burmese, Ceylonese and Indian delegations appeared to share a common outlook, taking a lead in the anti-colonial stand.

The work of the Conference was carried on in committees—anti-colonialism, economic, political and organisational. The opportunity to compare various methods adopted in Asian countries was greatest in the economic committee which has recorded its findings at length. The organisational committee admits that after independence the Socialist parties have lost some of their vigour and it has drawn up a programme of applying concepts of democratic socialism to day-to-day work. There is a warning not to attach too much importance to parliamentary work while recognising the importance of parliaments in the democratic system.

The evening seminars held by the Congress were well attended. On November 8, Shri Jaya Prakash Narayan, the profound and gifted leader of the Indian Socialists, raised some basic issues when he called for a new orientation for Socialist Parties. Shri Jaya Prakash is a persuasive speaker whose utterances often bewilder the audience because of the originality of his approach. If his exposition had been left over for discussion the next day, we might have had some useful argument from the foreign delegates to whom most of the ideas came with the force of novelty. As it was, there was little discussion. Unlike the conventional Socialist, Shri Jaya Prakash attacks the profit motive at its lowest and broadest base, contending that with a change here the apex cannot maintain itself. If it might be expressed in a brief sentence, welfare, to Shri Jaya Prakash, is more important than well-being. In the past, the co-operative society has been possible in small communities which have lost all. Shri Jaya Prakash holds that it can be achieved in large

societies. One gathered that the attraction of this concept held him from giving his time and energy to active politics.

It is not to the Congress itself but to the forces it released that one looks for its greatest achievement. On the organisational side, there was room for improvement. Meetings scheduled for some time invariably took place long afterwards. The dislocation of communications consequent on the Suez crisis and the Middle East conflict delayed the arrival of some delegations. But the Prime Ministers of India, Burma, Indonesia and Ceylon met in Delhi immediately at the close of the Asian Socialist Congress, and the statement on Hungary and Egypt which was issued by them bore the obvious marks of U Ba Swe's drafting. It was an advance, a decisive advance, on previous statements by the Indian Government in so far as condemning Soviet force on Hungary was concerned. At the same time, a committee 'for Indian Solidarity with Hungary' was formed at Bombay under Shri Jaya Prakash Narayan's lead. The Committee launched an educative campaign which was unprecedented in Indian politics.

That Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru should have been impressed by Hungarian resistance is due in no small measure to roused Indian opinion. Mr. Nehru's statement in Parliament recently echoes forcefully some of Shri Jaya Prakash's most powerful sentiments and sets forth the Hungarian resistance as a challenge to the very foundations of Communism. The double standard that Shri Jaya Prakash deplored, has been on this issue at least definitely abandoned by the Indian Government. It is not a victory for the Socialist leader; it is a complete conquest. And what Mr. Julius Braunthal of the Socialist International said of him is amply borne out: Shri Jaya Prakash Narayan stands out as one of the great moral forces of Democratic Socialism today.

S. NATARAJAN

# Cultural Relations With Russia

## Western Proposals And Soviet Replies

*We are indebted to the European Cultural Centre, Geneva, for this valuable statement. It is a summary of the Centre's Bulletin No. 2, Vol. IV, (July 1956).*

EDITOR

**D**URING the month of October last year, the world Press spoke of 'Molotov's 17 Niets' at Geneva. It then appeared that the question of cultural exchanges between the free world and the Soviet Union had been finally settled in the negative because the 17 Western proposals on this subject had been rejected outright by this official spokesman of Russia's leaders. It seemed there was nothing more to talk about until the Kremlin decided to propose a more honest 'détente'.

This point of view turned out to be a mistaken one for the following three reasons:

1. It was inaccurate to maintain that the 17 Western proposals relating to cultural exchanges were uniformly rejected. (See summary of proposals and Soviet replies on page 26).
2. There is no reason why the free world should hold back from taking the initiative in the cultural field simply because the Russians did not pursue the actions hoped for after their official overtures of last summer.
3. The wish to communicate with the free world and to know what is happening there is very strong among Soviet intellectuals and artists and makes it our duty to continue patiently to ply our efforts to meet this desire.

Moreover, a few weeks after Mr. Molotov refused to permit distribution of foreign reviews in the USSR, the Kremlin announced its authorisation for the free distribution of some 50,000 copies of the Washington review *America*.

The collective dictatorship of the Soviet Union had delivered its own 'Niet' to Mr. Molotov and not to the *America* review. Consequently the hopes contained in our point of view have been reinforced.

Having said this, the idea of cultural exchanges and what this term actually means needs clarification.

For the Soviet leaders, there is no doubt that cultural exchanges have the primary purpose of gleaning from the free world the scientific and technical information lacking in the USSR.

For others like Soviet author Ilya Ehrenburg they are merely an occasion to depict the Soviet dictatorship in a light which flatters our intellectuals in certain of their prejudices and in their desire for peace thanks to their dual ignorance of the realities of the Stalin and post-Stalin regimes.

For Soviet intellectuals like Sholokhov one can imagine that these exchanges help satisfy a long-frustrated need to know what is being done and thought elsewhere, to breathe for a few moments in a different atmosphere.

For us, they are only a natural and necessary form of the exercise of the intelligence in an atmosphere of freedom and cordiality. Our desire for exchanges stems from the Western vocation of universal curiosity, of exploration of the world and of man, of genuine dialogue.

The two first forms of 'exchange' are dishonest because they only go in one direction; their purpose is to receive without giving, and to convince only in order to rule, without the slightest respect for the other partner in the dialogue.

Only the last two forms of exchange are considered, and will give rise to our concrete proposals.

FOR anyone who attempts to fix the place that Russia occupied in the past, or discern the one that may be reserved for her in the future of Europe and the world, it is important above all not to let himself be petrified by the Medusa face she has turned to them for the past thirty-eight years. These years do, indeed, weigh in the scales of history, and with a leaden weight, but they cannot outweigh a millennium, nor alter its essential meaning. Under the Gorgon's stare, one is tempted to forget that Russia's appearance amid the peoples of Christendom dates from 988, and that her relations with the West have not always been what they are under her present masters. One forgets that over the last two centuries her rulers never ceased to consider her a part of the 'European concert'. One forgets that the Russia of today, to the extent that she turns away from the West, or turns toward it only to defy it, far from remaining faithful to her past, is expressly denying it: in ceasing to call herself Europe she ceases to be Russia. And as long as she persists in this denial, as long as this defiance lasts, she will bring nothing to the world but destruction, and will herself remain sterile

except, at most, in the realm of technology and applied science. If she is not to compromise her future, and that of Europe, she needs one thing above all: to become European again.

But if those Russians who are still free to think for themselves find all this perfectly obvious, this is not true of most Westerners, who generally know all too little of pre-revolutionary Russia, and are thus led to mistake the mask she wears today for her eternal features. Indeed, this is an error entertained not only by journalists without much education but by writers of merit, and by historians, some of them among the most celebrated of our time. It is true that those historians whose special field of study is Russia's past have not been deceived, but they are not the men who form the general opinion of educated Westerners. These educated Westerners are frightened by the U.S.S.R., not without reason, and they are inclined by that very fact to consider the past of the Russian world as something completely foreign to that of the West. But this view is false, and must be recognised as false from the outset, if one wishes to reflect on Russia's potentialities, for the latter are the result of her whole history, and, in their positive elements, they owe nothing to the very latest phase in that history.

In spite of its already long history, Russia is younger than the West. This is because until the revolution the great mass of her people hardly participated in history. Since then they have participated under constraint, and in a way rigorously imposed on them by their present masters, but the day will come sooner or later when they can participate freely and in their own way. That way will certainly differ in many respects from the way in which the old intellectual elite and the old ruling class of the country oriented Russia's destinies and conceived its place in the world. But there is no reason to suppose that the

Russian people, once rid of the constraint which now weighs on them, will disavow their past, and in particular throw overboard the memory of the two centuries from Peter the Great to Lenin.

The new elite will not be one if it does not draw its support from the only epoch which offers it a still largely usable heritage, from the only epoch which does not literally and figuratively speak a language as obsolete as that of old Russia. But, behind this epoch lies not the more distant past of eastern Christianity but also that of the West, which profoundly influenced the Russia of Petersburg. One cannot open Pushkin without glimpsing, through his pages, perspectives which are largely Western; Gogol, Tolstoy and Dostoevski are inconceivable outside a heritage which is none other than that of the West. The two pasts have become indissoluble, and the two futures, as soon as Russia can dispose of its own, will be indissoluble too. For when Russia is free to continue her recent past, she will do so not only out of love for it but even more, because of the great future possibilities which she will find sketched out or promised in that past.

Modern Russia, since Peter the Great, has only outlined what the new Russia can bring to perfection, a task which might take as much as several centuries. As proof of this, I need only mention the Russian literary language, which did not take shape until the 18th century. It is far from having reached the stage of development attained by the literary languages of Western Europe, but due to this very fact, it contains latent riches which are perhaps exhausted elsewhere. The same is true in many other fields of artistic and intellectual expression. The new Russia has before her unlimited prospects of creation. And certainly, as we see only too well, it is possible, by using all the means of constraint available a very powerful State, to make her

sterile, but not to make her produce works which are both valid and non-European.

**R**USSIA'S future is either an indefinite perpetuation of the totalitarian prison-camp we see now, or else it is Europe. But this is also Europe's future: to be nothing or to be really European. If it is the first possibility that comes to pass, then we need no longer talk of either Europe or Russia, for both their pasts will only be the past then, nothing more. But if it is the second, an increased interpenetration may take place between Russia and the West, including both Anglo-Saxon and Latin America. This new osmosis, which need not necessarily degenerate into a formless *mélange*, since it will by no means be the expression of an unlimited syncretism, will enrich Russia as well as the West and rejuvenate the whole of European civilisation. The Russian people will bring to it the simple and spontaneous qualities they still keep, that naive vigour which the spirit needs when reasoning is no longer enough, when it is called on to create. But let us not deceive ourselves, this is not the only thing they possess, and which they are capable of adding to the common store of a civilisation which, in its profound sources, is not foreign to them, and whose continuity needs to be assured.

In the course of long centuries the Russian people have been so profoundly marked by the Christian faith that this imprint remains on them even when that faith is forgotten, and their present masters, in spite of all their efforts, have not yet succeeded in effacing it. As long as there is a Christendom—and certainly it still exists, in spite of appearances, and constitutes the essential foundation of what we call Europe whenever we are not speaking merely geographically—as long as there is a Christendom which is the heir of the ancient and the medieval world, Russia, in

so far as it is Christian, and in so far as it is a continuation of that other Russia which also shared in the common heritage, will be included in it. And the day when it can once again take its effective place in Christendom will mark the dawn of a new future for Europe and the world.

OUR natural tastes as European intellectuals, interested in what differs from us, our deepest convictions, whether religious or humanist, and our desire for peace—all these would lead us to propose to the Soviet leaders, and even to demand as one of the fundamental democratic rights, the *completely free exchange of works and of individuals*—which is also called, less concretely, the free exchange of ideas. It is, indeed, this sort of free exchange that we are attempting to establish not only with the different cultures of Asia and Islam but also to re-establish among our own European nations.

Nevertheless, we are well aware of the fact that Soviet culture is based on the unitarian and authoritarian principles which most of the Tsars affirmed (without always strictly applying) but which prevail to the highest degree under the present regime, for clear historical reasons which Mr. Molotov restated at Geneva with remarkable frankness. We bow to the obvious fact that such a culture cannot now, without denying itself, accept the principle of completely free exchanges, and therefore of free public and private discussion; for this would amount to accepting the specific viewpoint of the West, and thus betraying the mission which Soviet ideology assigns to culture in the State.

In other words: if a dialogue 'in the Western style' were accepted by the Russians, there would be no more Russo-European dialogue, properly speaking, for the Soviet intellectuals, having accepted our presuppositions from the outset, would

have ranged themselves in spirit on our side, and would cease, by that very fact, to be genuine representatives of their regime.

This paradox is as real as it is awkward. It forces us to come to closer grips with the very special nature of the dialogue for which we are seeking a basis, no matter how narrow and precarious.

We will eliminate on principle all the proposals which might contain a political trap or conceal a propaganda manoeuvre—for example, the elimination of jamming, the complete suppression of censorship, the free sale of newspapers.

We will go further toward meeting Soviet wishes. In the proposals that follow we will drop the requests found 'unacceptable' by the Soviet leaders—and already rejected by them—when they were presented recently at Geneva by the Western Ministers. For example: the publication of reviews in the respective capitals, the creation of information centres open to all, the free exchange of students, a fair rate of exchange for the rouble, freedom of travel for *individuals*, scientists, students, professionals, etc.

As free intellectuals and democrats, we consider these requests normal and reasonable: let this be said in all clarity.

But we also see that it is out of the question for them to be accepted, even partially, by the Soviet *leaders*, under present conditions and according to the logic of their dogma of the State.

If they asked us to send them delegations of writers appointed by our governments and representing the official doctrine of 'bourgeois imperialist' capitalism and its single Party, we should have to refuse; we have nothing like that. In the same way, we cannot demand free discussions with independent individuals and representatives of different political tendencies or schools of thought in the U.S.S.R.; nothing like that exists there, at least officially.

We must therefore think of something

else, find other formulas of approach assuming that there are still possibilities.

Theoretically, it may seem that this basic situation itself precludes the possibility of any real dialogue. The common ground, the indispensable minimum of shared language and presuppositions, seems wholly lacking.

Nevertheless, the desire for exchanges and contacts expressed by many Soviet intellectuals (for example, in Sholokhov's letter) and by the Soviet leaders themselves, is also a fact. It leads us to think that, practically, something may still be attempted—and therefore should be.

WE will confine ourselves, in what follows, to proposing forms or modes of contact which do not seem to us open to the objections, very logical from their point of view, made by the Soviet leaders, through their spokesman at Geneva, to the proposals of the Western Big Three.

## II. PROPOSALS

The projects we have worked out are precise and modest, they are unspectacular and do not, in our opinion, lend themselves to exploitation by the press or propaganda of either side.

They are of three different types:

- limited seminars bringing together writers, composers or teachers;
- *mixed teams of scientists* working together on joint research projects;
- travelling *exhibitions* of contemporary paintings, performances of modern musical works, film showings; exhibitions of publications (books, works of art, magazines) in the great centres.

With the help of some examples, we will now consider these tentative proposals in more detail — remembering that they are all open to modification and improvement. They are working hypotheses, not a rigid plan to be accepted or rejected.

First let us examine the possibility of a seminar or Round Table bringing together Russian and Western writers.

This possibility has always existed in the West. However, nothing could be done until it was also declared desirable on the Russian side. This has just taken place.

The novelist A. Sholokhov published an article several months ago in which he stated that, thanks to the spirit of Geneva, the growth of cultural ties would be 'enormously stimulated'. And Sholokhov added: *'The writers of the whole world should have their Round Table.* We may have different opinions, but one thing should bring us together: the work to be accomplished in the service of mankind. And I can say that we Soviet writers sincerely wish that our relations with all writers were as close and friendly as the more and more solid ties that link us with our colleagues in many countries of the East and West.'

It can therefore be seen that Sholokhov's intention is to bring together, at this Round Table, not merely Russians and Western Communists (which has already been done, as he indicates, in a very 'solid' manner) but Russians and non-Communists of the East and West.

Wholeheartedly accepting the principle of this invitation, let us try to see how such a Round Table could be brought into being without either side having the impression that the occasion has been 'rigged' or its results predetermined, either by the very framework of the discussions or the composition of the group.

*General theme:* 'The social role of the writer.'

*Place:* A hotel or a private residence, in the country, in Western Europe (for a first meeting, in any case).

*Preparation:* Several weeks or months before the meeting, each side would propose two subjects which it would like to see treated by the other side, and two subjects which it would like to treat itself.

This would make a total of eight subjects. After elimination of subjects considered inappropriate by one or the other side, or of possible duplicates, six subjects should be left. Each would then be introduced by a report written and translated in advance. And each would furnish the theme and the starting-point for a day of Round Table discussions.

All those subjects would be eliminated which one or the other party considered liable to encourage (to adopt Mr. Molotov's terminology) 'subversive propaganda, imperialism, racism, atomic war or hatred between people.'

*Subjects:* By way of example, subjects like the following (some of them very general and others more precise) might be proposed and accepted by the Western side:

1. *Social responsibility or 'art for art's sake'?*
2. *The role of the writer in 'self-criticism' (of the society in which he lives, which publishes him and reads him).*
3. *The writer's condition and the power of money.* (Does the writer suffer from this power in the free world? To what extent? Has the Soviet writer been liberated from it? At what price?)
4. *The duty of orthodoxy and the right to heresy.* (In the works of writers, not in general.)
5. *The writer before the peasant condition.* (Novels on the collective farms in Russia, on the agrarian reform in Italy.)
6. *European writing on the U.S.S.R. and Soviet writing on Europe.* What each thinks of its portrayal by the other. Should this form of literature be encouraged? If so, how can it be improved?

All these are 'burning topics', but they seem to us to provide a measure of agree-

ment large enough to make it really interesting, or useful, for each side to explore the degree and nature of the disagreement.

*Supplementary activities:* Reading of works by the two parties, freely commented on and discussed, might take place in the evening. Visits to libraries, bookshops, museums or places of literary interest might be organised outside the meetings.

It is not impossible that *all* the subjects we have just suggested (merely as examples or working hypotheses) might be considered inappropriate by the Soviet writers, for reasons which we do not now know. In that case, we would wish to be told at least:

1. Why and in what way they have been considered unacceptable;
2. What would be the subjects considered acceptable.

Thus even the rejection of the themes we propose might lead to an interesting discussion.

On the Soviet side it will undoubtedly be asked why we are so eager for this dialogue. Let us answer frankly in advance.

Innocent as the subjects may be which both parties finally accept, we do not think such a dialogue will be useless:

Because it is a response to a desire expressed with growing insistence by a very large number of Soviet intellectuals, and by their authorities in the course of certain official meetings;

Because it would permit direct human contacts, far from all publicity and therefore free of all obligatory demagoguery;

Because this would give both sides an opportunity to rethink their acquired certainties and to take fuller cognizance of their implications;

Because it would force the participants to revise some of their prejudices, and thus contribute to peace.

Seminars of a similar type could be organized in other well-defined fields, for example:

- a. *Seminar of teachers and educators,*

taking as its general theme *education for peace*, and for special subjects: educational institutions and teaching methods in the U.S.S.R. and Europe; the psychology of childhood; juvenile delinquency; education for human solidarity, etc.

b. *Seminar of composers and musicologists*, examining the problems of contemporary music and its role in modern society.

### III. CONCLUDING REMARKS

If the authorities of the U.S.S.R. should answer these proposals with a flat rejection or absolute silence, intellectuals of the free world would find themselves forced to believe that the Soviet proposals for cultural exchanges are empty of all concrete content and any real intention of achieving serious results.

In that case, everybody would know who is responsible for the continuation of the cold war, which is war itself on the cultural level.

This, however, would not change our propositions.

We have nothing to fear, for our part, from completely free exchanges. That is why we are ready to accept exchanges

which would be free on our side but 'authorised' on the Russian side. And this out of simple realism, because of our desire to achieve *anything, however little, that may serve the cause of peace*—an objective which is untiringly proclaimed by the Russians.

We are conscious of the wide and ever-increasing pressure exerted by a part at least of the Russian intelligentsia for cultural exchanges—whether free or controlled does not much matter—but for real cultural contact between the West and Russia.

Exchanges of official propagandist-delegates, whose every step will be carefully watched, do not much interest us, for the simple reason that they do not correspond to the concrete desires of our own and the Russian people. They belong to an era that history has now made obsolete, and whose spokesmen, in Russia itself, will inevitably sooner or later, either be brought into line or be condemned.

Only the peaceful future of our relations as people of the free world to people of Russia, and as culture to culture, is vitally important to us.

(Please turn over)

WESTERN PROPOSALS  
(Oct. 31, 1955)

SOVIET REPLIES  
(Nov. 14, 1955)

- |                                                                             |                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Elimination of censorship                                                | <i>No</i>                                                              |
| 2. Opening of information centres                                           | <i>No</i> (interference in internal affairs)                           |
| 3. Publication of reviews in respective capitals                            | <i>No</i> (implicitly)                                                 |
| 4. Free sale of newspapers, books, magazines                                | <i>No</i>                                                              |
| Exchange of the same                                                        | <i>Yes</i> in principle, by agreement                                  |
| 5. Exchange of official publications                                        | <i>Yes</i> according to individual cases and agreements between States |
| 6. Exchange of films                                                        | <i>Yes</i> (same reservations)                                         |
| 7. Exchange of exhibitions                                                  | <i>Yes</i> (same reservations)                                         |
| 8. Elimination of jamming                                                   | <i>No</i> (implicitly)                                                 |
| 9. Exchange of radio programmes                                             | <i>Yes</i> with reservations                                           |
| 10. Facilities for press correspondents                                     | <i>No</i> answer (implicit <i>No</i> )                                 |
| 11. Facilities for tourists                                                 | <i>Yes</i> for officially organised groups                             |
| Fairer rate of exchange                                                     | <i>No</i> (interference in internal affairs)                           |
| 12. Facilities for individual travel by scientists, students, professionals | <i>Yes</i> according to individual cases                               |
| 13. Organisation of congresses of scientists, students                      | <i>Yes</i>                                                             |
| 14. Exchange of 'each country's best' in the fields of sport and culture    | <i>Yes</i>                                                             |
| 15. Exchanges of students                                                   | <i>Yes</i> with reservations                                           |
| 16. Freedom of movement for diplomatic missions                             | <i>No</i> answer (to be treated by direct negotiations)                |
| 17. Exchange of facilities for air traffic                                  | <i>No</i>                                                              |

S. R. TIKEKAR

## **failure of broadcasting in India**

*some crucial issues*

**T**HE progress of our broadcasting service has not been impressive. With the resources of a Union Government, with the Indian population as its listeners, and with the great variety in our musical and cultural heritage, far greater achievements were expected. The total of domestic receivers in use in India (to judge from the licences in vogue) does not exceed a million. For 26 broadcasting stations and over 25 years of departmental management, this is not a good performance at all. For our vast rural population and with the low percentage of literacy, the radio has an extensive scope for playing a dominant role in the life of our people. Instead, it is merely existing somehow, without making any valuable contribution to the enrichment of our cultural life.

There are about 3,000 schools all over India which provide listening facilities to their students. The number of radio sets in rural areas for community listening is about 11,000. By whatever standard, from whatever viewpoint, these are not satisfactory figures. Our dissatisfaction is greater when we know that listening is possible

only for about an hour a day (in the case of schools, during working days only) and not all the sets are in good working order all the year round.

All this speaks ill of the state service. The total broadcasting budget is in the vicinity of Rs. 40 million a year. A breakdown of the amount exposes the defects in the working of All India Radio. It is saddled with a top heavy central administration; there is little if any initiative left to station-directors. There is also the heavy burden of providing external services at the cost of home broadcasting. The publications of AIR, unlike those of the BBC, are a burden; they are running at a loss. Much of the copyright material of AIR is lying in go-downs, unused, uncared for.

What then are the impediments in the way of AIR making the progress expected of it? Where is the shoe pinching? Why is it not possible to remedy the defects?

A state, howsoever efficient and progressive, is a most unsuitable agency for providing the fare that broadcasting requires. It has to *entertain* listeners, and that entertainment is quite different from the normal

form. Complicated technicalities intervene between the performing artistes and the unseen audience. Then again, the radio audience has the power to switch off, to walk away as it were, the moment the performance shows signs of becoming boring.

However, if properly constituted and given freedom from red-tape, there is no reason why the broadcasting department of a government should not rise to the occasion and properly discharge the responsibility devolving on it. The Government of India unfortunately seem to think on entirely different lines. They have a training course and a special cadre for the police force in charge of maintaining law and order. To look after the wealth of forests, they have a regular Forest Service. But for broadcasting, they seem to think no special training or aptitude is necessary. It may sound unbelievable but it is true that All India Radio is working today with the majority of its staff untrained for the service for which it is specially recruited. For such a huge organisation and for this sort of complicated mechanical handling, in fact 'playing' with an extremely powerful toy, adequate training facilities ought to be provided. For the present, there is a sort of staff-training school in Delhi but it does not meet requirements fully.

In addition to the handicaps inherent in a bureaucratic set up, the Ministry responsible for AIR is showing a peculiar tendency to avoid enquiry into the problems of broadcasting, to suggest ways and means of making AIR more popular, more efficient and more public minded. Many proposals for such an enquiry, made even on the floor of the Loka Sabha, have been brushed aside.

There have been two enquiry commissions for the film industry, one for the press, and many for education, while there is not one for broadcasting. Admittedly, it is a far more complicated service; its technique is also fast developing. In other words, it is

changing rapidly. To be able to keep pace with such a science for the service of man, full, exhaustive enquiry ought to be useful in guiding the planning of AIR expansion. Far from welcoming such demands for an enquiry and deriving benefit from it, the Ministry is adamant in refusing to see light. Worse still, there are no administration reports of AIR, the one for 1939, under its first Controller of Broadcasting, being the first and so far the last on record. Is it the fear of being exposed that is haunting the Ministry? What else could prevent it from meeting the legitimate and reasonable demand for an enquiry?

Another factor that has contributed to AIR's failure to achieve its rightful place, is the constant change in executive and administrative personnel. It has not been possible to maintain any continuity of policy that is needed in a service of this type. Very useful and valuable experience gained by working is lost with the change in heads of departments. Of late years, the Ministry seems to prefer untrained and inexperienced personnel for responsible posts in AIR.

**H**AVING achieved wonderful results in industrial, commercial and other spheres it should not be difficult for our Government to cope with the requirements of broadcasting. But unfortunately, some thing is wrong somewhere. All India Radio remains a static, unimaginative institution.

It is a pity that cheap radio sets to suit Indian conditions are not available here. We say radio invades the home; it has to invade the far off cottage also. It must reach the poor villager if it has to rise to its full stature. In the absence of any continuous, attractive programme on the medium wave, one-band (cheap) radio sets will not be popular. Unless the plan of expansion of broadcasting services is clearly and definitely known, one-band

radio sets will not be assembled here. Even then the import duty on parts necessary for assembling, must be proportionately adjusted. Issuing of licenses has to be made simpler and easier. It might even be wiser to have no licences till radio is widely established so that a better revenue be collected later. All this requires co-ordinated, long term planning between many ministries in Delhi.

In place of the highly centralised administration, a little more 'regional autonomy' would be able to show better programme planning, better listening; and the staff too would be trained in handling the affairs of the station themselves, instead of depending on Delhi for guidance every now and then.

When a station arranges a series of talks, it has first to obtain the approval of Headquarters. Programme publicity also being centrally managed, the items are fixed many months in advance, with the result that topicality is not the strong point of AIR talks. Not all artistes and speakers are able to keep up appointments made so early. Planned listening under these conditions becomes impossible. If after more than 25 years of departmental management, and eight years under self-rule, this simple preliminary requirement to make planned listening a habit is not achieved, what are other achievements worth?

The power of the radio is unlimited in the sense that it can cater to an unlimited audience and the phonetic impact, properly administered, can work wonders. That power is limited in the sense that listeners can switch off their radio at will. To keep the listener listening, to keep the radio tuned to a particular service, is the strength of any broadcasting organisation. Propaganda or departmental publicity must therefore be administered in cleverly measured and still more cleverly sugar-coated doses. Otherwise, if the listener chooses to switch off when the most important broad-

cast is on, radio cannot be the power it is claimed to be. The key to popularity in broadcasting lies in keeping the audience tuned in.

ANOTHER form of central imposition is in the form of the relay of certain items and of translation and production of others. News is already centralised in the sense that all news—in many languages—that we hear on AIR is broadcast from Delhi. Although news so served for all-India consumption ceases to be news for a particular region, the centralised service deprives each station of its training facility for radio-commentators. They are essential in a broadcasting service for outside broadcasts and radio reporting.

When features and plays are ordered to be translated and produced from a master-script, little scope is left for the producer's ability. The Buddha celebrations brought this new defect to the front. Most of the features about Buddha's followers, their study here and the pilgrim's progress etc., were all translated from one master-copy (written by a hot favourite perhaps!) and all stations were asked to fall in line. Where then is the variety which is the soul of broadcasting? And what special purpose do the producers serve when such a procedure is followed?

About music too, there is misunderstanding of the problem and mishandling of the situation. It is the policy of AIR to discourage what is known as film-music and popularise the classical variety. The way chosen for implementing this policy was anything but tactful. Launching a tirade against film-songs was the surest way of making them more popular than they have been otherwise. The result of this official 'opposition' to film-music was the greatest surprise to AIR. Film-songs were patronised by newly organised groups of listeners; loud-speakers were put into commission

to play film-songs, and an outside agency that is broadcasting recorded music to India, expanded its transmitting activity to play more film-songs. By banning it, like the forbidden fruit, film-music was made the sweeter! Little did AIR realise that the catchy tunes and lilting music could pave the way for a love of classical music. It was easy to switch over from light to classical music. But when there is no 'ear' for music, imposition of classical music, which requires some basic understanding to be able to appreciate, is a sure way of losing listeners for AIR.

On the whole the result of AIR's partial ban on film-songs seems to be the increased popularity of an outside broadcasting agency at the cost of AIR. A compromise formula on film-music soon came into operation and regular broadcasts of selected film-songs was resumed. To supplement it, AIR appointed light music units, to produce suitable songs of the lighter variety as the Ministry realised, not too late perhaps, the necessity of it for a broadcasting organisation. If only this wisdom had dawned earlier.

**A**N interesting side-light on the film-music episode is that the word-content of the light and classical music that is broadcast by AIR is at times more objectionable than that of film-music. If however all the songs, classical included, were subjected to the same screening committee for approval, it is doubtful whether any appreciable number, other than pure *Bhajans*, will at all be available for broadcasting. By bringing the names of *Radha* and *Krishna*, classical or light songs cannot be rid of objections applicable to film songs.

About the content of radio-features and playlets, much can be said. For stage-performances, there is a sort of police censoring, presumably for 'political' considerations, and this is an old British legacy. Obviously there is a great difference bet-

ween the stage-play and a play for broadcasting, the latter requiring far greater care in censoring, before being put on the air. The stage play is generally for a limited number of adults, who are drawn out of their homes to witness it while the broadcast play invades the home and very likely, because of its powerful impact, attracts juvenile audiences more.

The contents of the two therefore cannot, for obvious reasons, be the same. But for the radio play, there is no special censor; any one in charge of the section 'okays' the script and it 'goes'. It is a regular complaint against Bombay station that the features it puts on the air are morbid; they contain, among other things, death-scenes portrayed in great detail, extramarital relations, powerfully expressed, suffering of the sick and the wounded, shrieks of ghosts and the like. The same sort of complaint is raised against other stations also. But there is little, if any, improvement in the situation, and the over-all standard of radio plays is low. No effort is made at training feature-writers for broadcasting, since here again, as in AIR itself, technicalities are neither recognised nor respected. The personal judgment of the man (it is often a raw youth) on the spot counts. And the rapidity of transfers in the AIR set-up from one section to another is simply amazing. It only confirms the belief that training and experience gained by handling the job, are not considered of any merit in AIR. Otherwise it would be difficult to justify such drastic and quick transfers within the station or from one station to another.

It was expected that AIR would give some lead in respecting copyright. In point of fact, there is more of the tendency to exploit rather than adequately pay for material used for broadcasting. What the BBC does is really worth imitating. If more transmitters are used for a broadcast, the fees are proportionately higher. But

AIR does not recognise this simple principle. Even for national broadcasts of music where more than 30 transmitters are used the fees paid to the artistes have no relation to the number of stations relaying or to the number of transmitters which carry it. Similarly about talks: when more stations relay the same item the fees paid to broadcasters have no relation to stations using the item. AIR is expected to show the way by respecting authors' and performers' rights. Here we have the most enlightened of departments of the Government of India, laying down precedents for wide and continuous exploitation!

It might be asked why writers or musicians then don't protest against gross injustices of this sort. The answer is not far to seek. AIR is following a clever policy in employing writers, poets and musicians, and their appointments are at the 'pleasure' of the Ministry; they are paid out of the Minister's discretionary grant. They are made without reference to the Union Public Service Commission. With such a tempting carrot dangling before them, where is the strong-minded author or musician who would pick up a quarrel with the Ministry on a technical issue? Indifference to the monetary aspect is an established virtue with most of our writers and artistes at least for outward show. And the consciousness of one's rights and the will to fight for them in the interests of one's profession has not yet taken root among our artistes. It is too much to expect them to stand up against the Union Government for such a *small* matter involving a few rupees!

Precisely for these reasons, the Government of India, as represented by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, were expected to give a lead in safeguarding copyright. As is the experience elsewhere in the world, authors' and musicians' societies are the only effective and practical way of copyright protection. The

Ministry therefore was expected to foster such societies. Actually, its attitude came as a shocking surprise to many. It was at the time when performing artistes, mostly from Bombay, had formed into a sort of a union as a protest against AIR's unreasonable attitude in auditioning some top-ranking artistes. It was a grand achievement from the organisational point of view and the beginning of a powerful society could have been made. But the Ministry encouraged black-legs, used all its manpower and resources to break the spirit of the artistes and offered jobs to those who would break away from the organisation. The rest of the sad story and the sadder role played by the Ministry need not be told.

HAVING said so much about the programme aspect of AIR, something about the engineering side must be said. After all, broadcasting is a function of two sections working in close co-operation: the engineering and the performing. Without the help of the one the other has no basis for working. Both naturally have an equal status and they together make radio the power it is: for entertainment, for information, for education and above all for enabling man anywhere to talk to man everywhere.

Just as in the administrative sphere there are bickerings between the civil and the military wings of a government, so also in the broadcasting world conflicts take place between the engineering and programme sides. After many years of equality of status, the balance seems to be tilted against the engineering staff. But that is only a small matter in the whole controversy.

Throughout AIR, there is discontent among the engineering staff and there are many reasons for this. The main reason seems to be overwork. The *Estimates*

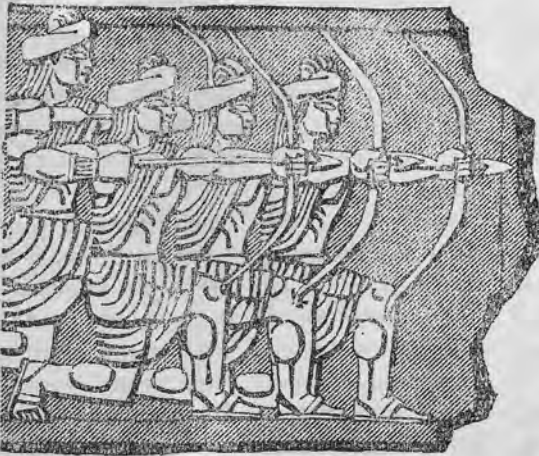
*Committee's Report* on the working of All India Radio (12th Report) exposes the defect: 'There were 84 vacant posts,' it is noted in the Report, 'of assistant engineers and technical assistants on 1st Sept. 1954.' (p. 53). The departmental practice generally is to sanction the barest minimum; this shortage of staff amounting to over 20% of the engineering personnel, assumes grave proportions. To keep pace with normal progress and expansion, there is always some temporary staff. When even the sanctioned strength is not recruited, the pressure on the existing staff is tremendous, what with the erection of new high-power transmitters and the opening of new stations.

The concentration of transmitters in Delhi is open to grave risk, particularly the high power ones with which AIR girdles the globe. Such powerful equipment must necessarily be housed in a place of safety,

far away from frontiers. Similarly, erecting of high-power short-wave transmitters in coastal cities like Bombay, Madras and Calcutta is not an economical proposition. An all-round greater economy and ease of operation will be achieved if they are located in a central place like Hyderabad or Nagpur. It is mainly for such problems that an enquiry commission is wanted to collect technical data and provide guiding principles.

How long is the Ministry going to grope in the dark and learn by the simple trial and error method one does not know. Perhaps the belief in the omniscience of the department is responsible for this state of affairs. Very likely, it thinks that it knows everything and that there is nothing new for it to learn. Whatever it is, we do want our broadcasting service to be quite up-to-date and to rise to its full stature in the discharge of its responsibilities.

## Surprise at Thermopylae



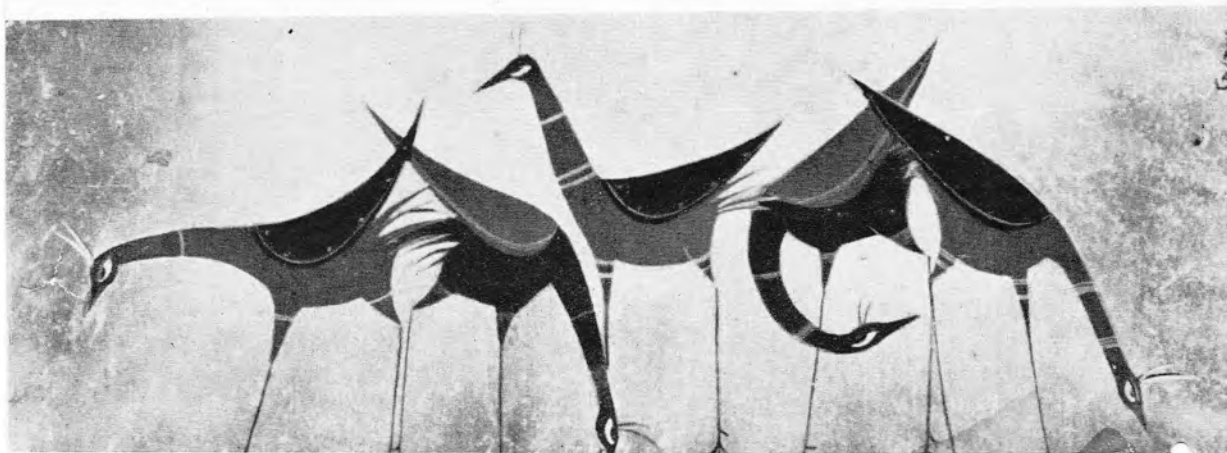
When Xerxes, the mighty Persian emperor, invaded Greece in 480 B.C. he had with him a company of Indian archers. These Indian archers used a new weapon—a steel-tipped arrow which had been brought all the way from India. History records that the Greek army was surprised by the superior arms of Xerxes and was defeated in the battle of Thermopylae.

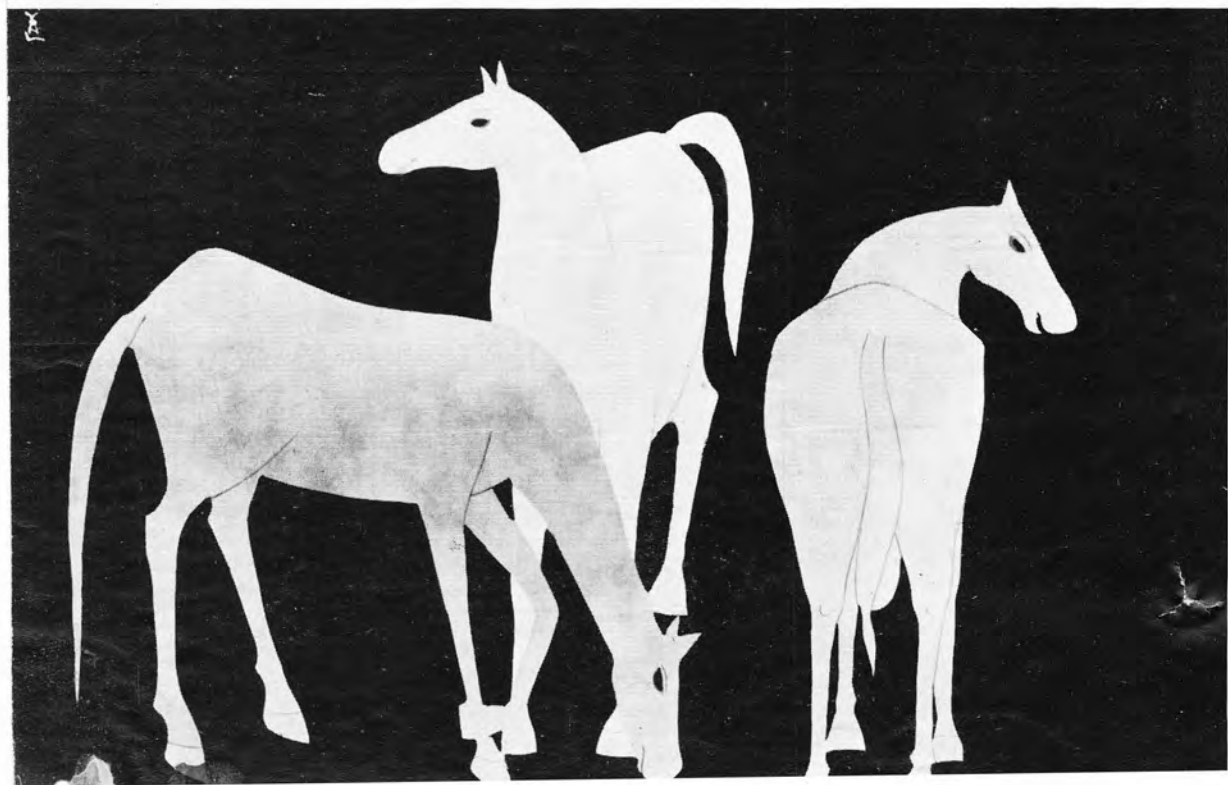
*Today, once again, steel is very much to the fore in the nation's thinking, but with a different intent. The country's steel-making capacity is being rapidly enlarged, not for purposes of war, but for peace and development.*

**TATA STEEL** SERVES THE NATION



Paintings by RASIK RAVAL





DEVENDRA PRASAD  
SINGH

## ***China and panchshila***

*the ideal and the reality*

**T**HE concept of Panchshila which primarily stands for peaceful co-existence and non-interference in the affairs of other States is such an ideal one that no country can possibly object to its adoption as a guiding principle in its relations with other States. India can take legitimate credit for popularising it, and today it has become a fashion to express allegiance to it. Our relations with the People's Republic of China are supposed to be based on it. Most of the treaties which have recently been concluded between different countries of the world allude to it. The importance of this concept consists in the fact that the world today is largely divided between two power blocs which could destroy the world unless they agree to co-exist peacefully despite differences of ideologies. The splitting up of the atom has placed in the hands of the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., and some other countries such tremendous powers

of total destruction that there is no escape from the acceptance of the ideal of Panchshila.

Although the big powers are careful to avoid trouble which may develop into sizable wars, interference by them in the affairs of other countries proceeds unchecked. This interference goes on so long as it does not involve risks of a conflagration. *China adheres to Panchshila only in this limited sense*, as is evident from her attitude to and her activities in her neighbouring countries. Burma, Laos, the Malayan Federation, Singapore, Siam, Nepal and even India are victims of China in the sense that they are subjected from time to time to the undermining of their sovereign status and incursions into their territories by China either by military intervention or through the activities of its agents. The delay in the complete fading away of Western Imperialism and the appalling

poverty in which the Asian countries are submerged make it easier for China to extend its subversive activities in these countries.

There is hardly any doubt today that the hold of the Western Colonial countries has nearly vanished and whatever little remains cannot endure much longer. But the West is so tenaciously holding on to small territories after having withdrawn from its sprawling empires that the democratic institutions for which it stands are getting discredited in the countries of Asia and Africa. Democracy has not grown firm roots in the under-developed areas where the real problem is one of unrelieved poverty. The living standard in all these countries is so miserable that except for a small group of educated people no one there attaches any great value to democratic institutions. The one obsession of people is to secure freedom from the grinding poverty which afflicts them.

CHINA is supposed to be making great strides in the economic fields, and in India as in most other Asian countries, incessant propaganda goes on in favour of what China is achieving in raising the living standard of its people. It is but natural for the poverty-stricken population of the Asian countries to be drawn to these over-painted achievements of the Chinese Government and even to feel an irresistible attraction for the totalitarian ideology which prevails in China. The inevitable consequence is the lessening of whatever faith there is in democracy and the paving of the way for the success of the subversive movements engineered by Communist China. The price that the peoples of the Asian countries will have to pay for shutting their eyes to these grim realities may lead to the loss of freedom either as a consequence of the setting up of Communist governments or through subjugation.

Burma is supposed to be on very friendly terms with China. But the facts which have recently come to light are very disturbing. The government of Burma is experiencing great difficulties and even humiliation owing to the incursions of Chinese troops into Burmese territories. The Sino-Burmese border was demarcated by a Boundary Commission appointed by the League of Nations with Col. Iselin of the Swiss Army as its head. This Commission produced its report in 1941. In June 1941, Great Britain and China exchanged notes accepting, with slight modifications, the Iselin Line as the definition of their common frontier. The present boundary between China and Burma defined by the Iselin Line is not being recognised by Communist China. Communist troops have often crossed Burma's borders in the past but in every case they withdrew after Burmese protests, Peking attributing the incidents to errors of local commanders. Burma's Communist paper, *People's Daily*, of August 4, 1956, has said: 'The Chinese army units have always been stationed within their present position in a spirit of friendship. Under these circumstances, there is fundamentally no such question as crossing into the territory of Burma.' This is the answer given by the Communists to the statement issued by the Burmese Foreign Office confirming reports that Red Chinese troops had established out-posts in North East Burma.

As disquiet was mounting, Premier Ba Swe, at a Press Conference recently insisted on the withdrawal of Chinese troops before negotiations were undertaken to redraw the boundary between Burma and China. The Burmese Government are hard put to it to suppress the subversive activities of the local Communists. The invasion and occupation of portions of Burma's Wa and Kachin States by Chinese Communist troops emboldens the local Communists and makes the task of the Burmese

Government extremely difficult. It is widely believed that during the last general elections the Communist party of Burma received generous financial assistance.

The number of Chinese immigrants is on the increase. At present the number of the Chinese population in Burma is nearly one million while it was a little less than three hundred thousand in 1948. Nearly all the trade and business which the Indians in Burma owned and managed have passed into the hands of the Chinese now. The branches of the Chinese banks in Burma extend liberal credit facilities to the Chinese residents for their business. The English language daily of Burma, the *Nation*, states: 'All the illegal immigrants have been tutored to say that they are refugees from unbearable conditions under Communism. Perhaps one or two in ten thousand are telling the truth. The rest are spies, subversives and colonists, whose entry into our country, if unchecked, will mean our national and racial obliteration.' Most of the newspapers of Burma have openly attacked Chinese policy in regard to Burma and there is a near panic in the country. It is becoming more and more clear that China is trying to force Burma into the Communist orbit. *There is a five-coloured map of China which shows certain border areas of Burma as well as India as being Chinese territories.* The Burmese area so annexed is that of Kachin and Wa States. The 1953 edition of the map carries a marginal note which states that there is controversy between Burma and China regarding Wa and Kachin States and then concludes ominously, 'This matter can certainly come to a thorough and reasonable settlement after the establishment of a People's Burma and the complete victory of the Asian "People's revolution".'

Today, China occupies 1000 sq. miles of Burmese territory.

The McMahon Line, which defined India's border with China is also disputed

by Communist China. One instance at least was revealed in Parliament of Communist troops having invaded India. But as in the earlier instances in Burma, these troops have withdrawn under protest from the Indian Government. On the borders of Himachal Pradesh, which is an unsettled area, the Communists are developing a well-integrated machinery of administration on their side. In the treatment of the people who belong to the same stock as across the border in India, they show such preferential treatment as to make the disparity in conditions of living as between the two sides of the border very telling. It is also reported that the C.P.I. has organised a special machinery to deal with these border areas.

**T**HERE is a sizable Chinese population in Malaya and Singapore. The influence of the Communists is quite substantial in these countries. In Singapore, the Government have stripped bare the burrowing penetration and infiltration into cultural institutions with which the disciples of Peking have in the past year gained an ascendancy among the young. The agents of Peking have been greatly surprised by the revelations made by the Singapore Government. But they have not given up the fight. On the mainland of Malaya, Communists who took to the gun rather than the pen and now seem to be regretting their choice of weapons, are struggling to remain intact as a force. They are definitely on the defensive but the terrain in which they function enables them to continue their activities, although on a smaller scale. The Chief Minister of the Malayan Federation only recently met the Head of the Police in Thailand to devise measures for the suppression of the Communists on the borders of the two states.

Local Communists everywhere in Asia receive encouragement and even guidance

from Peking. The Chinese Government plays a very suitable role. They try to create an impression in the outside world that they are interested in the Chinese population becoming the loyal citizens of the country in which they live. But it is common knowledge that they are secretly enjoined to put the motherland of China first. At the moment the Chinese talk of racial unity in Malaya in which the Communists might have political freedom. Commenting on this, a writer has said: 'China tolerates a last remnant of Capitalism and private enterprises in her present economy but fully intends to wipe them out in the end. In just the same way, she believes that Malayan independence (which China advocates), Malayan unity, and a united political front will be *stages towards the Malayan People's Democratic Republic*'.

The main instrument of Communist work in Singapore has been the Chinese Secondary School Students' Union. With the help of the Union, the Communist ideology is instilled into the minds of the young Chinese. The Singapore Government, which was formerly hesitant, has now taken up the challenge and is fighting stubbornly to stamp out the growing influence of the Communists and through them of China in their country. The Schools which the Union controls have been closed down, although the Chinese students there are trying to resist the control of the Government over these schools. These Chinese students are openly defying the Government of the country in a most unconstitutional manner. When the mainland of Malaya gets its independence next year, the Communists are determined to be a force there.

In Laos and Cambodia also, the Communists have gathered strength, encouraged by Peking in various ways. Laos may completely fall a prey to Communist manoeuvres in the near future and cease to be a really free State. Agreement was reached

recently between the Royal Laotian Government and the rebel Communist *Pathet Lao*, by which the latter has been recognised as a legal party and assured participation in the Government and the army. A coalition Government with Communists in it will eventually pave the way, as in many other countries, for a naked Communist regime. When this happens, the absorption of Laos in the Communist empire will only be a matter of time. The Government of Cambodia also, in spite of its natural policy, is having considerable trouble with the Communists. The Chinese Government is playing its part as usual and so the Communists in that country are causing embarrassment to the Government. Those of us who are familiar with Communist tactics know what fate is going to overtake Cambodia in the not too distant future.

NEPAL is another country to which China is giving some attention. When the Chinese Government signed an agreement in Peking some months ago to give aid of Rs. 6 crores to Nepal, some people in Nepal characterised it as the 'first flush of Chinese love for Nepal.' The Nepal-China treaty which was concluded in Kathmandu a few months ago has appeared to many in Nepal as preparing the ground for the eventual penetration of Chinese influence in the country. According to the terms of the treaty, China will be able to open trade agencies in Nepal and also a Consulate of some importance. This will inevitably give the Chinese an opportunity to build up their influence in Nepal where democratic institutions have only just begun to be established.

Nepal is extremely poor and has a tradition of autocratic rule extending over a long period. The Government of Nepal is slow and inefficient and has signally failed to capture the imagination of the people.

Conditions for the growth of Communism exist in the country—a backward economy, extreme poverty, an unimaginative administration and absence of democratic traditions. There are violent incidents also on the Nepal-Tibet border. The boundary between Nepal and Tibet is not clearly demarcated and so it becomes easy for the Chinese to cross into Nepalese territory. Good roads in Tibet are being constructed up to the Tibet-Nepal border. Reports sometimes trickle in of army concentrations and movements near the border. As the Nepal Government is slow and does not have the necessary machinery, it is not easy to ascertain the truth or otherwise of these reports. But recently, trouble has been reported from Mustang, a North-Western district of Nepal bordering Tibet. It is said that raiders from across the border have been looting the district. The raiders must obviously be from Tibet, and it will be a little surprising if they penetrate into Nepalese territory without the connivance of the Chinese authorities in Tibet.

**W**HEN Tibet was incorporated in the People's Republic of China, it appeared that Nepal would be allowed to remain under democratic influence and that China would not cast covetous eyes on her. But the signs are ominous. The Nepal Communists have, since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and China, started visiting China for indoctrination and instructions. The aid which China has recently granted to Nepal is believed to be intended for being spent partly by the present ruling party in Nepal in the coming general elections. The present Government is favourably inclined towards the Communists whose leader, at one time in a

United Front, is the present Prime Minister. The Communists of Nepal may obtain a share out of the Rs. 6 crores that China has given to Nepal. What is even worse is the likelihood of part of this money trickling down to the funds of the Indian Communists during the next general elections in our country. India's Prime Minister some time ago declared in Parliament that the Himalayas in Nepal constituted our defence also. One wonders if one can be so sure of this now.

So China's influence in its neighbouring countries is steadily growing. Reports of Chinese success in industry and agriculture and of rooting out of corruption from the country's administration have created a predilection in the Asian countries for Chinese methods. Not trained yet to love freedom and democracy, the peoples of Asia, who have little knowledge about what is happening inside China except what they get from the handsome reports of all round progress in that country, are apt to be misled and ground may be prepared not only for the emergence of totalitarian trends in these countries of Asia but also for the extension of the Chinese empire. This menace can be successfully combated only if India and the other democracies of Asia progress uninterruptedly and build up economic prosperity without sacrificing freedom. In this noble task, the generous support of the western democracies is needed, and the Western countries also must help dispel the prejudice that is taking too long to disappear by withdrawing as quickly as possible, from the remnants of their vanishing empires. If freedom and democracy are to be preserved, nothing short of a drastic change in the West's attitude and complete vigilance on our part is required.

# PREUVES

*a monthly magazine edited by*

F. BONDY

**DECEMBER  
ISSUE**

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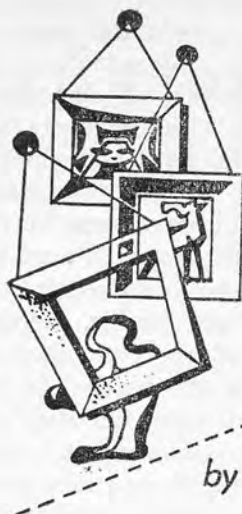
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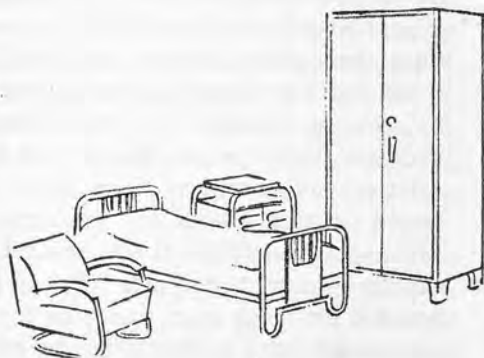
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# SATYAGRAHA & DEMOCRACY

## A Problem Of Political Obligation

by T. Andhyarujina

AT the time of the Satyagraha campaign against the enactment of the Rowlatt Bill Sir William Vincent is reported to have told Pandit Malaviya that Satyagraha had great potentialities of evil, to which the latter is said to have retorted, 'And also of good'. In the years succeeding independence our national leaders no less than our intelligentsia seem to be gradually veering round to the view of Sir William. In the wake of the multitudinous campaigns of Satyagraha that have characterised these years the Congress President has made a courageous and opportune reappraisal of the weapon of Satyagraha and restricted it to matters that affect 'the very foundations of the State or its Constitution'. Some have ruled out Satyagraha altogether as being incompatible with democracy. Others have thought that in the context of present circumstances individual Satyagraha alone should be tolerated. In this article an attempt is made, in terms of political obligation of the citizen to the state, to show how far an individual under a free government is justified in resorting to Satyagraha to obtain redress.

Satyagraha in terms of obedience to the state may be best explained in Gandhiji's own words:

'The individual obeys the laws of the state to which he belongs not out of fear of the sanctions but because he considers them to be good for the welfare of society. But there are some occasions, *generally rare*, when he considers certain laws to be so unjust as to render obedience to them a dishonour: he then openly and civilly

breaks them and quietly suffers the penalty for their breach.'<sup>1</sup>

Stated thus, Satyagraha is a theory of obedience to the state conditional on the laws of the state being 'good for the welfare of society', and as such contains an idea going back to the Greek *Polis*. History is full of examples of individuals who have defied authority to preserve their principles. Socrates refused to stop preaching philosophy when he was ordered to do so by the State. 'Men of Athens', he said, 'I honour and love you, but I shall obey God rather than you, and while I have life and strength I shall never cease from the practice and teaching of philosophy'. Daniel disregarded the laws of the Medes and the Persians which offended his conscience and willingly submitted to his incarceration. When Thoreau preferred to go to jail rather than pay an iniquitous tax he was giving practical expression to the belief that the individual is not bound to obey a law which is unrighteous.

The same idea of resistance to an unjust law finds expression in the theories of political obligation propounded by political philosophers. John Stuart Mill postulates two spheres of conduct. One sphere of conduct of anyone is that which concerns others. The other sphere is that part of his conduct which concerns himself. In the latter sphere the individual is sovereign and is not necessarily bound to obey the law of the state. Blackstone thought there could be no validity in a law which was

<sup>1</sup> Punjab Disorders. A Personal Statement.  
(Author's italics)

not 'co-eval to the law of mankind'. Similarly the Scholastics of the Middle Ages believed that a law which was contrary to 'Natural Law' could be 'legally' disobeyed. The French publicist L  on Duguit argues that obedience is conditional on the law conforming to the Rule of Right (*r  gle de droit*), which itself is deduced from the 'basic fact of economic solidarity'.

In a recent book<sup>2</sup>, Sir Ernest Barker thinks that the protestant is justified in disobeying the law if it does not square with the 'idea of justice' which the state must in all its actions represent. In so far as the law does not conform to the 'idea of justice' the question of a 'super-obligation' over and above that due to the state arises.

It will thus be noticed that Satyagraha has in common with these theories the notion of disobedience to an obnoxious law. It differs from the rest in its emphasis on non-violence and truth. A repugnant law, according to its ethics, can only be truthfully and non-violently resisted. To resist it otherwise is to seek redress by immoral and unjustifiable means.

Its root meaning is holding on to the truth: hence Truth-force. I have also called it Love-force. In the application of Satyagraha I discovered in the earliest stages that pursuit of truth did not admit of violence being inflicted on one's opponent, but that he must be weaned from error by patience and sympathy. For what appears to be truth to the one may appear to be error to the other. And patience means self-suffering. So the doctrine came to mean vindication of truth not by infliction of suffering on the opponent but on one's own self.<sup>3</sup>

It is this emphasis on the moral side that gives Satyagraha its niche in the theories of political obligation to the state. The first practical application of the theory in South Africa to redress the anti-Asiatic laws prevalent there revealed its efficacy, and we have Gandhiji's testimony that the non-violent aspect of the movement and the refusal of its protagonists to make common cause with the European disgruntled elements and thus embarrass the government, won the respect of General Smuts who called it a constitutional movement. In the second place Satyagraha differs from the other theories in being not exclusively a theory of obedience to the State. To its author it was an *all-pervading principle of life*.<sup>4</sup> It could be used to remedy wrongs between nations as well as wrongs within the nation. He had repeatedly made it clear that Satyagraha was not a weapon to oust the foreigner out of India. 'My non-violence would not prevent me from fighting my countrymen on the many questions which must arise when India has become free', he had said<sup>5</sup>.

IT was natural that the active propagating and practicing of a theory of disobedience to a repugnant law would strike a responsive chord in the minds of the masses at a time when all authority emanated from an unrepresentative foreign government and every action of the government was anathema. Amidst the turmoil of pre-independence days it hardly ever occurred to us that the advocacy of such a doctrine would serve us in bad stead when India became free, that impelled by whatever motives it was like an insidious disease undermining the respect of the future citizen of free India for all authority, and that the methods that are adopted to *end* evils may not validly and profitably be used to *mend* evils.

The years succeeding independence have

<sup>2</sup> *Principles of Social and Political Theory* (Oxford, 1951).

<sup>3</sup> Punjab Disorders. A Personal Statement. M. K. Gandhi.

<sup>4</sup> Speech advising temporary suspension of Satyagraha at Bombay on 18-4-1936.

<sup>5</sup> Young India. 30-1-1930.

seen the metamorphosis of Satyagraha into a cult of disobedience and resistance. No one denies that conditions may sometimes demand disobedience to authority even under a democratic government<sup>6</sup>. But such cases are, as the Mahatma put it, in his definition of Satyagraha quoted above, 'very rare'. Only in rare cases may an Antigone defy a Creon to bury her brother, or a Hampden 'with dauntless breast' stand up against a despot and refuse payment of unjust ship-money. Indeed, there is a general duty to obey the law: but there are limits to that duty. It is only when the limits of political obligation are reached when to obey the law would be tantamount to countenancing something which the state should not only not represent but never represent and when that obedience is exacted in spite of all remedies which a democratic form of government sanctions, that disobedience can be justified.

We need not stride out to offer Satyagraha because the state has in our opinion wrongly adjusted linguistic boundaries or because a university has wrongly dismissed a student but I think we may do so if our temples and churches are wantonly pillaged and destroyed or if we are all reduced to serfdom by an oppressive totalitarian state. In a democracy, Satyagraha is not so much a theory of resistance as a theory of the limits of endurance. It is heartening to note that some of our leaders have made a revision of the role of Satyagraha in this direction. The Congress President, for example has this to say of the new role of Satyagraha:-

'In the context of democracy or democratically run institutions, there is generally speaking very little occasion for Satyagraha. In the first instance even if a person fails to convert his opponent, there is the machinery of the election, and the election finally settles for an organisation as between who is right and who is wrong. The question of Satyagraha can only arise

from the perpetration of an act or undertaking which destroys the very foundations of the state or its constitution. Otherwise there is a remedy in the election and it must satisfy all.'<sup>7</sup>

THE grave dangers to India from the present trends in Satyagraha can hardly be exaggerated. The danger is two-fold—first, the undermining of the rule of law, and secondly, disrespect to authority and the eventual denial of its legitimacy.

We have fortunately inherited from the British a priceless asset of a democratic government—the rule of law. The rule of law is in its essentials embodied in our constitution. The concept of the rule of law is most difficult to define but it may be described generally as a society in which men are content to govern their actions by resort not to force and violence but to the ordinary machinery of the law.<sup>8</sup> When, therefore, men are in the habit of redressing every wrong or grievance of theirs by recourse to resistance to the authority concerned and not by recourse to the normal processes set up by the constitution or inherent in the working of a democracy, it is clear that the method of coercion is substituted for legal methods and persuasion and the rule of law is being steadily set at naught. The fact that the weapon of Satyagraha demands non-violence does not of itself rule out that Satyagraha may become coercive. Our pinchbeck democrats who now and then lustily shout for Satyagraha must realise that coercion and non-violence are not exclusive of each other and that there may be such a thing as coercive non-violence. The Mahatma in all his greatness had admitted that his Rajkot

<sup>6</sup> For the case for political disobedience in a democracy see Harold Laski, *Dangers of Obedience and other Essays*. Harrap.

<sup>7</sup> The Rationale of Satyagraha by U. N. Dhebar in *The Times of India* Bombay, 21-9-1955.

<sup>8</sup> Jennings, *The Law and the Constitution*.

fast had involved an element of coercion and as such was not befitting the method of Satyagraha. Is it too much to say that lesser men than the Mahatma and others less scrupulous than him may find and have found Satyagraha a convenient coercive instrument for gratifying their own ends or sensationalising their views?

To the English jurist Dicey, passive resistance and conscientious objecting appeared to be 'a new doctrine of lawlessness' that was considerably contributing to the decline of the 'ancient veneration for the rule of law in England'. Whatever the motive, the deliberate breaking of the law was *per se* an immoral and unjustifiable act, he maintained.<sup>9</sup> Making allowance for Dicey's Austinian outlook on law, the danger would appear to be greater to India than to England when it is noted that nowhere in India is there an 'ancient veneration for the rule of law' but at best only an incipient respect for it.

It may be asked, in what way can there be a danger to the legitimacy of all authority if the individual does Satyagraha by disobeying and resisting a *particular* law which he conscientiously feels he ought not to obey. The answer is that this is so, first, because the disobedience is not restricted to the impugned law but often extends to the breaking of some entirely extraneous law as a token of protest against the former. Secondly, the answer is in the words of Sir Ernest Barker:-

'There is more in question than the breach of political obligation at a *particular* point. The resister who defies the law is also disturbing (and incidentally encouraging others—less scrupulous than himself and more intent on private ends—to dis-

turb) the general scheme of law and order and the general validity of obligation'.<sup>10</sup>

OUR Satyagrahi may justify Satyagraha from another view—what he calls the democratic view. If democracy, he argues, is the government of the people, it must govern according to public opinion, and since public opinion (or what he thinks is public opinion) does not favour a particular act or law, the government should not carry out that act or enact that law. If the government persists, then disobedience is justified. This is a common but fallacious argument which betrays a fundamental lack of understanding of the working of democracy. The assertion that a democratic government rests on public opinion is only a half truth and like all half truths in politics it may assume dangerous proportions. We ought to generally realise that the extent of government which is necessary for the welfare of a civilised society cannot permanently co-exist with the effective belief that deference to public opinion is in all the sole and necessary basis of a democracy. Further, the consent on which a democratic government is based is—and this is the point our ardent Satyagrahi has missed—a general consent and not a particular consent for every act of the government. As A. L. Lowell puts it, '... the consent required is not a universal approval by all the people of every measure enacted, but a consensus in regard to the legitimacy of the ruling authority'.<sup>11</sup>

THE conclusion, then, is that Satyagraha in a democracy can only be a theory of the limits of political obligation. The individual is rarely justified in resorting to satyagraha for redressing wrongs. He is justified only when the *limits* of political obligation are reached. Satyagraha should be the

<sup>9</sup> Dicey, Introduction to the study of the law of the Constitution. Eighth edition: page xli.

<sup>10</sup> *Principles of Social and Political Theory*. Oxford, 1951.

<sup>11</sup> Public opinion and popular government (page 9).

medicine and not the daily food of the government. A succinct conclusion can be Bertrand Russell's *Authority and the Individuals*:

'...respect for law is an indispensable condition for the existence of any tolerable social order. When a man considers a social order to be bad he has a right and may have a duty to try to get it changed, but it is only in rare cases that he does right to break it. I do not deny that there are situations in which law-breaking becomes a duty. It is a duty when a man profoundly believes that it would be a sin to obey.....Obedience to the law, there-

fore, though not an absolute principle is found in the following quotation from one to which great weight must be attached, and to which exceptions should only be admitted in rare cases after mature considerations.'

Our leaders who have in the past never hesitated to admit their mistakes must impress on the people a need for the revision of the role of Satyagraha in the context of present conditions. The revision will no doubt be an agonising reappraisal. It may even mean some iconoclasm and some introspection on the part of some. But surely the trouble will be worth the results.

---

### PRESENCE

The face is in the book and on the stair  
 The face is smoke and fear and drowning afternoon  
 All lying tense about the air  
 The face is a muddy dare asking me to breathe.

I see pages of place (God pity that act)  
 I assess a sane sound world of scream  
 For nameless saints I am a bear for thought  
 I count Christ by dozens through the window snow.

What violent echo hides behind my need to touch?  
 (In what sherry seminar did I leave my love?)  
 There is wood on my feet  
 Dread in my mother's dreams and in her hands.

The face is a holiday of why  
 Each time we die we hold it once  
 So let the fire rub on me again  
 God's ice is my only road.

A. WILBER STEVENS

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## Open Air Theatres

EXPERIENCE of the use of open-air theatres for Marathi plays has been generally unfavourable. Prominent personalities of the Marathi stage like Keshavrao Date and Chintamanrao Kolhatkar who were interviewed some time ago by the Marathi weekly *Mouj* about the Bombay Government's scheme to assist the development of drama, agreed on this question though they differed on many other points.

There is only one open-air theatre in Bombay\* being utilised at present for the presentation of Marathi plays—that of the Mumbai Sahitya Sangh. There is no doubt that this theatre is widely patronised, being booked for months in advance, not only for Saturdays and Sundays but

even for week-days. The explanation for this can be found in the fact that there is no other theatre available in the locality, which is thickly populated by Maharashtrians. Neither actors nor spectators appear, therefore, to have much of a choice in the matter.

In fact, this theatre suffers from all the disadvantages of open-air theatres everywhere, and in addition has other faults which could have been avoided. The first and the most obvious defect is that it has to be kept closed for the duration of the monsoon. Fortunately for Bombay, the winter is not very cold, but at Satara, which possesses an open-air theatre built by the Municipality with Government assistance, this cannot be used during the winter either. Obviously the reduction of the period during which the theatre can be utilised for its primary purpose is very undesirable.

Even though the Sahitya Sangh's theatre can be utilised in winter, it is not without vitally affecting the actors who perform in it. The majority of Marathi plays are musical in the sense that they contain a number of songs. Formerly no singer would

\* Since this was written, another has been built in the compound of the Elphinstone Technical School by the Bombay Municipality. It is described by Uma Anand in her report on the International Theatre Conference (Page 54). A third will shortly be declared open in the Victoria Gardens. Judging from plans and photographs of the model prepared by the architect commissioned to build it, this may be the only reasonably satisfactory open-air theatre in Bombay. (See *The Indian Builder*, November 1956) EDITOR

agree to sing in the open without protecting his or her throat with a muffler but of course such protection is not possible on the stage and this results in affecting the singer's voice adversely. The same effect on the actor's voice is found in historical plays acted in the 'Grand Manner', which are so popular in Maharashtra.

The difficulty in the case of modern plays is less direct but none the less significant for that reason. In an open-air theatre, it is found almost impossible to establish that bond with the audience which is so essential for the spirit of the modern play. Denied the 'Grand Manner' of the old historical drama by the character of the modern play, the actors find it impossible to produce any concentrated impact on the audience; there is a diffuseness of atmosphere which is highly disturbing to the sensitive actor, leaving him with a sense of frustration.

It is a characteristic of an open-air theatre, which aims at catering to a reasonably big audience, that the physical distance of the major portion of the audience from the stage is quite large. The finer points of acting, the subtler facial expressions, are lost on the audience.

At the Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh's theatre all these difficulties are accentuated by its subjection to external disturbances and its inadequacy of equipment and facilities. An open-air theatre should avoid a noisy site. In the present theatre, the conversation of passers-by, and even the ringing of the office telephone, provides a background which makes it impossible to build up the atmosphere conducive to the proper appreciation of any play. The conditions essential for the presentation of a good play are just not present—both from the point of view of the actor and of the audience.

A particular defect of the present theatre which may be incidentally mentioned is the non-availability of a dimmer which

is essential to the presentation of many plays. Nor is it possible for the producer to hire one, unless he organises an entirely new stage-lighting scheme. This is likely to be very expensive and hence there is no effort to have any sort of modern lighting. It may also be mentioned that it is not even possible to obtain complete darkness on the stage, if the moon is non-cooperative! In addition, light from street lamps enters the theatre and the Sahitya Sangh has put an electric lamp over the portrait of one of its ardent workers, the late Dr. Bhalerao, who no doubt did much for the regeneration of the Marathi stage. Whether he himself would have approved a step which might hamper the production of a play in this way is to be doubted. The Sahitya Sangh has further spoiled the effect of the proscenium arch by having disproportionately large gold letters depicting its name right across it. The big boards having advertisements painted in bright colours, erected on both sides of the stage, are also disturbing.

The back-stage arrangements in this theatre are poor. There are only two very small dressing rooms and there is no proper make-up room. There is also no place where the actors can rest between scenes or meet friends after the show. Of course such defects are avoidable. The only good point about this theatre is that it has a large stage.

The disturbing elements which have already been mentioned and the fact that the finer points simply do not get across to the audience make it very restive. Unable to concentrate because of outside disturbances, which at times include community singing of *Bhajans* in the vicinity, they create a disturbance themselves. Both actors and audience take some time to settle down after each such interruption. This is not to blame the audience but the circumstances that make it restive, and these circumstances are derived from the

fact that the theatre is an open-air one.

The Sahitya Sangh plans to build a modern well-equipped closed theatre, implying a recognition of the defects inherent in open-air theatres. Experience of the open-air theatre in Bombay points clearly to one conclusion. If funds are inadequate to build many closed theatres, it would be better to build a few small well-equipped closed theatres rather than to go in for a large number of open-air theatres which have proved their complete unsuitability for their primary purpose: the development of drama.

ASHA BHENDE

### East And West At Baalbek

THE 'desert Orient', as Racine once called it, emerges again in splendour. Upon leaving behind the steaming bath of Beirut, we enter the cool altitudes of apple and pine trees from where one overlooks the sea that lies in its waning azure. The twisting road is the favourite sporting-ground for the breathtaking display of the talents of the Lebanese chauffeurs. Although indolent by nature, the possession of a Cadillac transforms them into wild beasts that cannot tolerate the humiliation of being outstripped. And before long we are on our way down to Bekaa, the Caelesyria of old, granary of the Roman Emperors. After Chtaura, the road unwinds in a straight line over a plain where the sun is powerless against the enchanting air. And in the distance we can already see the columns of the Temple of Jupiter, pink beneath the brilliant sky.

Baalbek, the legendary site of the Earthly Paradise, City of Solomon, and also of Baal, before becoming that of the Sun, a sacred place which the Gods have never ceased to frequent. And it is Heliopolis that it remains for eternity with its 'chaos of bygone splendours, strewn with porphyry and

marble, an ocean of columns, capitals, architraves, volutes... those vast imposing proportions, sturdy and grave, that could shelter entire peoples, and, covering the whole, six columns on high proudly supporting the arc of Jupiter Sol—this is logical, conformable to the human mind, of a nature to receive and fire men's souls. One of the world's greatest prayers, a prayer dazzling with light, arises there on the heights of Anti-Lebanon.'

There, at the corner of the grand esplanade of the Temple, Maurice Barrès loved to muse, near a small pond that the Arabs built so that they could listen to the murmuring of the fountain while contemplating the green oasis which, 'with astounding youth rocks its poplars, its apricot and pear and nectarine and nut trees. Brilliant, moving, cooled by the divine river that splashes and winds at its feet, this greenery surrounds, assails and presses the high and terrible walls.'

Here Lamartine wept for his daughter... On this wounded marble, Pierre Loti, in his vanity, carved a name forgotten sooner than that of Caracalla, the cruel and ostentatious sovereign who erected that assemblage of temples and courts and himself officiated before the worshipping crowds, at the central altar in honour of the Sun God.

The horizon is ringed on both sides by the line of the mountains, those of Lebanon still dotted with snow and those of Anti-Lebanon, bare and sterile. When the all-too-brief twilight falls, these slopes are a sheet of colour ranging from pink to deep blue.

It was in this sanctified place, at the frontier of the Orient, that Greco-Roman art blossomed forth, for the last time, into an astonishing baroque, a flowering in which were married the colossal and the exquisite. Why call decadent an art that was the last manifestation of an imperial will to unite the world in order and peace?

The coming of evening brings with it the swarm of motor-cars; the Palmyra Hotel cannot contain all its visitors. But when the projectors light up the ruins, the town recedes into the background. Presently, beneath the starry sky, the temples—which we see as their architects never did—remain alone, mutilated, but fixed at the climax of their splendour.

One can never laud sufficiently the art with which Francis Savel gave voices to these columns and blocks, 'fallen here below from some obscure disaster'. The stroller in Baalbek 'calls up from the depths of the centuries an echo of the artful hymns that the processions chanted in honour of the Sun.'

This echo resounded with singular beauty at the Second International Festival. The first week, which was devoted to music, provided an opportunity for the conductor Léon Barzin and the pianist Wilhelm Kemp, in particular, to display their exceptional gifts. The second week, given over to the English theatre, revealed to the public the great talent of Robert Atkins (How odd it was to have chosen *Hamlet*! What aberration could have chosen this Low Empire setting, bathed as it was in a cool moonlight that sharpened every contour, for the mist-wrapped towers of Elsinore?)

The high point of the 1956 Festival—as of last year's—was the six performances of the three French plays that Jean Marchat and his troupe performed before 15,000 spectators who had come not only from the nearby countries of the Middle East, but from all over the world.

Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, in Georges Beaume's smooth yet high-sounding translation, unfolded its drama of purity and ambition on the high steps that made it possible for the actors to move from the great court of the altar to the Temple of Jupiter.

*The Infernal Machine* was the occasion

of the triumph of Jean Cocteau, for two evenings poet turned ambassador of art—Parisian art, witty, incisive and ambiguous that reconstitutes a Greece in its own likeness.

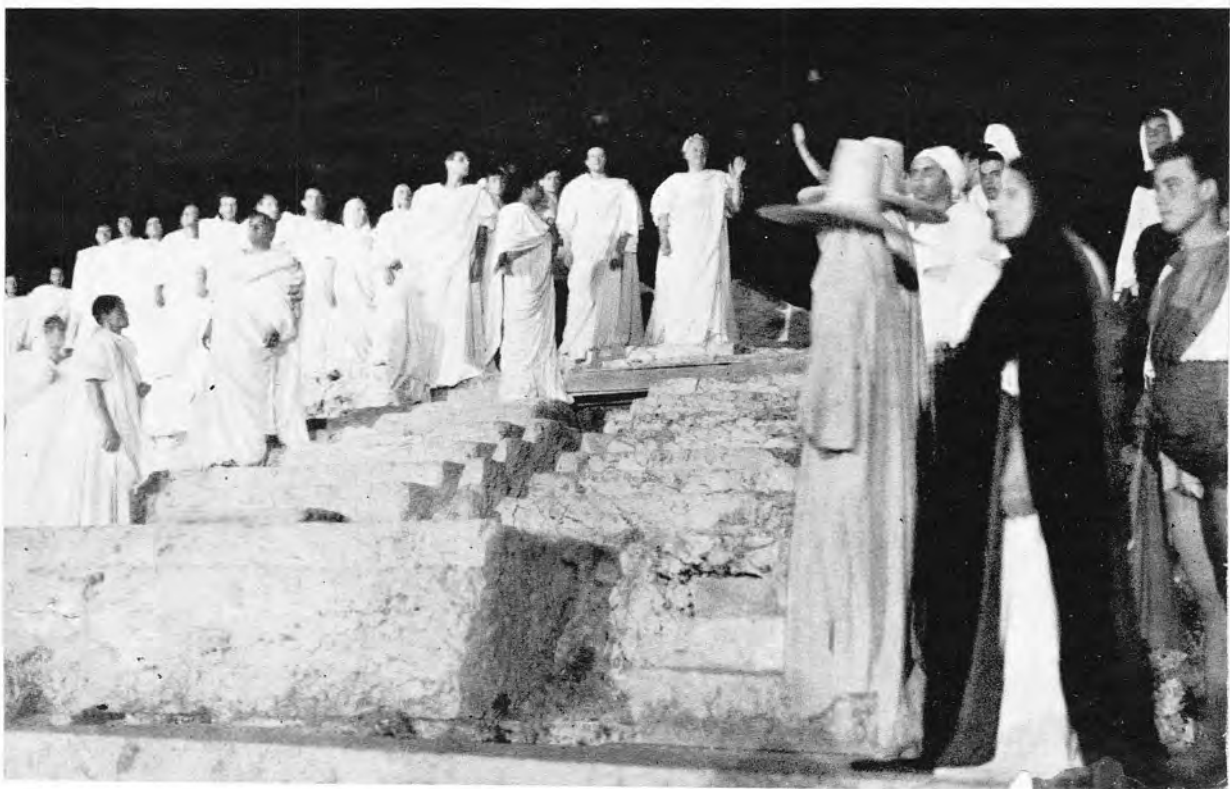
Thanks to the admirable Germaine Montero and to Paul Guers, the wheels of the Infernal Machine ground with implacable precision in the Temple of Bacchus, an almost intact monument that seems to have actually been designed to serve as a theatre. The Gods who were worshipped there demanded a stage-setting; that of Jean Marchat highlighted the flesh-coloured stones. And the star-spangled canopy that dominates the eternal story of Oedipus seemed a huge chandelier.

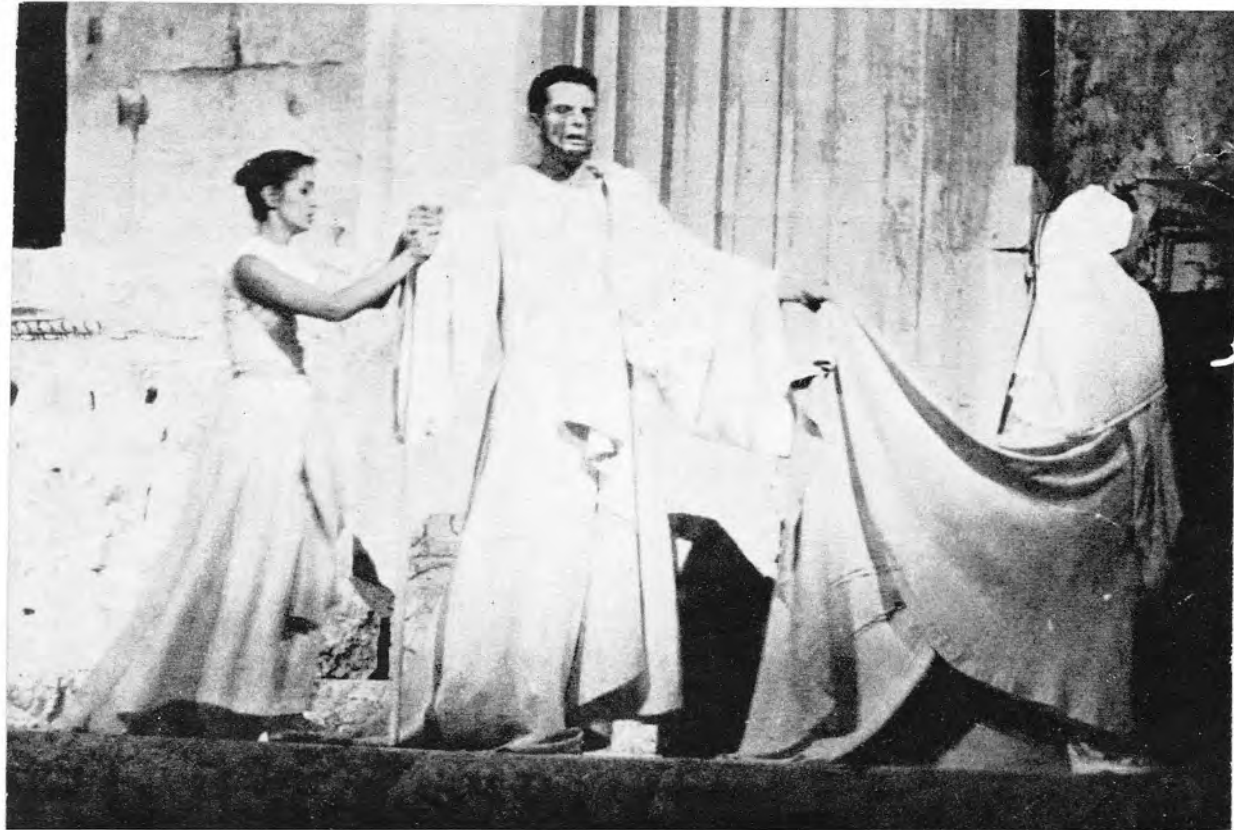
There was also Racine's seldom-performed *Mithridates*, directed by Jean Marchat in masterly fashion.

At each performance, the audience fervently applauded the organizers of the Festival and the entire troupe. At a time when the Suez affair was entering a critical phase, these demonstrations assumed a special significance; they were the clear manifestation of a will not to cut one's self off from the living springs of western culture. There could be no doubt that the Lebanese authorities, like the Festival Committee, wished thereby to assert courageously the place of a small country whose role, nevertheless, can be quite important. Divided though it is into more than thirty Christian and Moslem sects, an Arab-speaking country in which English as well as French are spoken even among the masses (since the end of the Mandate, France has regained part of its traditional prestige), torn between a sincere feeling of solidarity with its neighbours and a clear awareness of its European intellectual kinship and of its economic interests, Lebanon is a miracle of balance, a kind of Middle Eastern Switzerland. But in order to remain stable, this



*Two scenes from Julius Caesar with Jean Marchat as Caesar, in a performance at the Baulbek Festival (See page 47)*





*Baalbek Festival. Two scenes from Jean Cocteau's 'The Infernal Machine' (See page 47)*



equilibrium requires a political balance among the Great Powers.

But the moon is growing dim. We must wind our way to Beirut and go back over the Bekaa Desert where one meets only a few frightened jackals and belated flocks of goats led by biblical herdsman. The columns of Heliopolis disappear. But for a few evenings East and West have met. And that is the most important result achieved by the Festival.

RENE TAVERNIER

### Cairo Interlude

**I**F you visit Cairo, you will of course have to go and see the museum. And there, jostled by a large and noisy crowd, you will have to gawk dutifully at the treasures that have been found in the tomb of Tut-ankh-amon. This will prove exhausting business. When you have had enough, slip to the room which adjoins it on the side of the large staircase. This room will be deserted—it always is—and very restful. And you will find that the ancient manuscripts it contains are far more interesting than the masses of gold and jewellery that oppressed poor old T. A. Amon, even in death.

Going through that room is like going through the various sections of a large-sized Sunday newspaper, for there is something to suit every mood and every taste. If you are a normal human being, your first interest will be in the gossip section, so go to case 23 and read about the high jinks in the baths. A long strip of paper about a foot long and four inches wide, dating from the 3rd century B.C. and possessing two impressively long tears, relates the complaint of Philista, a Greek lady, against Petechon, a bath attendant, who, while she was bathing, thought it funny to pour a pail of boiling water on her, thereby scalding her stomach and left thigh, and endangering her life.

Poor Philista, what an indignity! But at least she had the consolation later on of showing her scars to her intimate friends and saying, 'These servants! I really don't know what they are coming to nowadays. . . . . And I tell you, she was actually laughing. . . . .'

As for Petechon, she soon got over the drastic punishment meted out to her and she would recount her prank with relish. 'You know Philista, the Greek? No? Well, you're lucky, I can tell you. A first class bitch, if ever there was one. She would come to the baths as if she owned them, playing the grand lady to us, when we all knew her husband keeps that third rate restaurant in Rameses Street. And she was always complaining too. The water was always too hot or cold. Well, one day when she asked for more water, shouting, "And make sure it's not cold like last time!" I decided that I'd had enough. So I took the pitcher of hot water and let her have it. You should have seen the look on her face! And then her screaming, fit to bring the roof down. I thought I would die laughing. . . . She complained of course. . . . said her life had been endangered, which was complete nonsense. . . . .'

Continuing with the talk of the town, case 24 has a rather more serious and sober item. It is a letter from John to Phoebammon, 'breaking off the engagement between Euphemia his daughter and Phoebammon, on account of the latter's misconduct.' The incident took place in the 6th or 7th century, but one can see from the heavy handed writing that the father had nothing to learn from the fathers of the Victorian era. He is obviously saying in his most pompous manner, '...It has come to my attention that recently you have been consorting with certain persons notorious for their wild behaviour, and that in their company you have. . . . I must make it clear that the engagement between you and my daughter must be regarded as being at an

end and I do not wish to hear the subject mentioned again. I must forbid you entrance to my house and desire that you hold no further communication with my daughter....'

And Euphemia? Did she accept all this with Ophelia-like meekness or did she protest? Perhaps she rebelled to the extent of continuing to see Phoebammon clandestinely....perhaps she ran away with him....perhaps they lived happily..

Or perhaps Phoebammon, gnashing his teeth in anger, went and got himself a magic incantation, such as there is in case 40. This contains in a thin lead tablet about 8 inches by 5 'a magic incantation in Greek in which Posidonios invokes the infernal powers to gain for him the complete and exclusive favours of a woman, Heronous.' Originally there were two wax figures fastened to the tablet, but these have disappeared. One wonders if the incantation served its purpose. Old Posidonios doesn't sound a very attractive character and on the whole one hopes that the infernal powers let him down.

One would have thought that administrative procedures and problems would have changed somewhat since the Saqqara VI Dynasty, but evidently they haven't. At least the relations between those in the field and those at headquarters were exactly what they are today in any part of the world. Here is an official complaint made by the officer in charge of the quarrymen at Tura near Helwan addressed to headquarters. It is written on an oblong parchment in bold hasty hieroglyphs.

'Year 11, First month of summer, Day 23.

The Commandant says: An order has been delivered to me from the Vizier to bring a detachment of the gangs of Tura to draw clothing in his presence at the palace of Memphis. I protest against the place chosen for this purpose, for a courier is coming to Tura shortly with a stone barge who could bring the clothes to us. More-

over, I have to spend six days at Memphis with this detachment before clothes are issued to it—a great hindrance to my output of work—and one day is enough time for this detachment when it draws clothes. Therefore I suggest that the courier be instructed accordingly.'

And the Commandant, having sent this off, went back to his work muttering, 'These bloody incompetent fatheads who sit on their fannies all day long at H.Q.... getting tied up in their own red tape.... and then they expect us to keep to the work norms of the 50 Year Plan.'

The reply to the protest does not exist but it must have gone something like this: 'Year 11, Third month of summer, Day 18.

Reference your mem. of First month of summer, Day 23. I am directed to state that your request was given careful consideration and the Vizier, taking into account all the relevant factors involved, decided, as an exceptional measure, to consider it favourably. However, it was brought to our attention that unfortunately the stone barge involved had left some weeks ago and owing to these circumstances, it was not found possible to comply with your request.

In view of the above mentioned circumstances, I must repeat the instructions conveyed to you in my note of the First month of summer, Day 15, and request that you bring a detachment of the gangs to draw clothing at the earliest possible date. I would add that as the white ants are eating up these clothes and causing considerable destruction, this matter should now be treated as urgent.'

For those who believe that form-filling is a modern curse and for those who believe that income tax is a recent invention of the devil, there is much consolation to be found in case 38. This has a dark-coloured clay tablet from the Ptolemaic period, and is a tax receipt from the State Bank.

On it, 'a general acknowledgement was written beforehand by a scribe, and the date, name of payer and amount were filled in subsequently.' The whole thing has the same forbidding look as an income tax form today.

And finally it is time to turn to the comics. So to case 9 where there is a papyrus of the XIXth Dynasty with a comic strip which might have come straight from our day and age. It shows cats and mice talking and behaving like human beings, no doubt illustrating some instructive moral.

Disney, Walt Disney? That young upstart who came four thousand years later—did he draw cartoons too?

AAMIR ALI

### A Letter From Calcutta

WHO does not know Prof. J. B. S. Haldane, the distinguished biologist? He has been doing research here for some time, but he is more fond of animals than of men. The members of the bovine community have lately been so much on the increase on Calcutta's busy thoroughfares, made busier by the progress of the Second Five Year Plan, that even such great cow-worshippers as the *Marwaris* and animal-lovers like the *Jains* had begun to raise their haughty eye-brows when they were impeded in their journey by the animal-goddesses lazing on the streets. But our dear Professor Haldane argues fervently that this Indian 'pattern of living with nature' has a benevolent design of its own. When somebody pointed out the harmful effects on man of this peculiar style of co-existence of man and cows, the biologist Haldane exclaimed: 'Why, why should they be removed from the streets of Calcutta? I love them and love them to be in the streets. Only I would like them to be a bit more plump.'

'But they often obstruct the fast-moving

vehicular traffic', the professor was told. He replied, 'All the better. They at least help in slowing down the speed of the motor-cars.'

'Do you know that many Westerners make fun of these cows and bulls in Calcutta streets?'

'Nonsense. But do you know that in America they have recently celebrated the millionth motor accident?', he hit back.

Lately the Calcutta police have been trying all sorts of permutations and combinations with traffic rules and traffic lanes and traffic lights to cope with a fast-increasing vehicular and pedestrian traffic. They have in desperation warned both. Why don't they temporarily appoint Prof. Haldane as a Special Commissioner of Police in this harried metropolis, so that he could mobilise the bovine community (at least) to solve a problem in which man has failed? He is known not only to sympathise with the animal world but also to understand their language and culture. It will be such a bold new way, if it succeeds; and India can then claim it as a 'special genius' of her own. Haldane is trying to become an Indian by nationality, and if this succeeds, everything will fit in neatly. Only if Mother Cow behaves herself!

There are many in this country who would in their heart of hearts congratulate Mr. Munshi's Vidyabhavan for the publication of *Religious Leaders* at the right time. If it had been published in 1957 it would have been too late! For the elections would have been over. A single para in this book provoked the Muslims to violence virtually in the whole of Northern India and, in spite of their political and social inhibitions since the partition, even in this secular state, they got an opportunity to 'flare up' and thus feel a sense of 'release'. This outburst gave them a sense of their existence even now as a 'community'; and to the godless C.P.I. an occasion to fraternise and represent the Muslims' grievances to

the Government of West Bengal. And it also gave to the R.S.S., the Hindu Mahasabha and their like a great handle against the Congress during the forthcoming elections. All in all, it is Mr. Munshi, in spite of his apology, who deserves congratulations from both the followers of the Prophet and of the Gita and also of the anti-god Prophet Lenin, for his having overlooked a para! Even the Muslim League of Pakistan should send him a telegram thanking him for providing it with a straw before it got drowned by the results of its own actions and omissions. Just a para and what potency it had!

The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture has grown into a popular centre for intellectuals of many nationalities to meet each other and exchange their views on cultural problems. There was an interesting talk the other day on the Concept of Indian Art by Dr. Nihar Ranjan Roy, the well-known Indologist of the Calcutta University. According to the *Upanishads* and the *Brahmanas*, he said, whatever man makes, in whatever way man tries to express himself, is *Shilpa*, if it is in harmony with *Prakriti* or nature. And then Dr. Roy pointed out that the range of 'making' conceived by the *Upanishads* covers not only imaginative creation in letters or visual form but also the social pattern and even the act of the mother in rearing up her child or the act of procreation itself. Dr. Roy pointed out that this basic, comprehensive natural concept pervades Indian thought right through to Dadu and Tagore. But in the middle ages, religious and iconographic considerations were superimposed on the Upanishadic definition of art. The concepts of *Nirvana*, *Moksha*, *Kaibalya* of Buddhist, Jain and Vedantist origins, that is, formlessness, he pointed out, are against the original concept of art which is essentially related to form. The *Upanishads* continually emphasize the affirmation and refinement of con-

sciousness as the aim and purpose of art. *Jiban Mukti* is nothing but the highest form of consciousness. *Anandam*, *Rasa*, *Chetana* are words of similar content. Dr. Roy categorically stated that in the classical Indian view, Art has nothing to do with Beauty; the word does not at all occur in the older literature. He pointed out that the phrase *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* has never been used in the classics; it is an importation from the West in the 18th century—truth, goodness and beauty. What has been actually used is: *Satyam*, *Shivam*, *Advaitam*.

This was indeed an interesting, if not provocative, analysis and historical review of the Indian concept of art, even to such a person uninitiated in this field as myself. I hope Dr. Roy will elaborate it some day and provoke some of the experts in the field into a discussion. I am certain many more than the select coterie of Indologists would be interested.

After *Pather Panchali*, Satyajit Roy's second venture, *Aparajita* arrived in the midst of a queer mixture of suspense and expectation among film-lovers. Satyajit himself might have shared in this animated suspense. The obvious question in the public mind was: Would *Aparajita* be as good as its predecessor, or even better? Or, was *Pather Panchali* a fortunate accident? It is with this trepidation that I went to see the film. I share the popular opinion that while as a technical piece of film art, it is of high quality, even as good as *Pather Panchali*, it does not compare with its predecessor as a *human document*.

But it is one thing to judge *Aparajita* and another to appraise the talents of its director. For in his second venture he suffered from several disadvantages. *Pather Panchali* was the first of its kind; *Aparajita* was its sequel. Therefore, much of the novelty of the story and background had worn out. *Pather Panchali* had an overwhelmingly rural background of Bengal

where vegetation is luxurious; it thus provided an occasion to capture a greater degree of nature's beauty to enrapture the eye of the filmgoers who mostly hail from the cities and towns and who have a nostalgic craving for the rural setting even as an aesthetic escape. *Aparajita*, instead, represented a hard struggle for existence and growth in the midst of poverty and slum-life in the naked, stony and cruel atmosphere of the town. I think therefore that the real talents of Satyajit are still to be measured. *Aparajita* is good, by all counts. But it could be better.

One wonders why the story of the original novel was severely mutilated. It would be bad judgement in my view if *Aparajita* is again followed immediately by another film based on the last part of the novel. The real test for Satyajit would come when he lays his hand on a story which is not merely documentary in style but has a serious plot. It will be interesting to see how this most recent and brilliant meteor in the Indian film world shapes and grows. Anyway, *Aparajita* was an important cultural event in Calcutta this season.

Another great cultural event for the Bengalis was the All-India Bengali Literary Conference, although its location this time was outside Bengal—Agra. This is an annual occasion for our well-known, rather elderly, literary personalities to gather and deliver addresses on different aspects of Bengali literature and culture. This year Debesh Das, Humayun Kabir, Probodh Sanyal, Kalidas Nag, Sri Kumar Bannerjea delivered the chief addresses. Most of these were of the traditional rapid-review type of talks, not very critical or brilliant in themselves. But the most outstanding address was by Sri Kumar Bannerjea, in which he reviewed the condition, temper and style of Bengali literature. Let me quote just one paragraph:

'As for the young poets in the new style, they are a curious growth in a tradition-

bound land like Bengal. And it is remarkable how quickly they caught up the tone and accents of post-war English poetry. An utter disillusion, a world-weariness without bottom or measure seized hold of their souls and moved them to poetic utterance, oblique, allusive, enigmatic. The graces of style, the sense of rhythm as reflection of an inner harmony they repudiated with a nonchalance bordering on contempt. Their images, similes and metaphors are unconventional to a degree and owe almost nothing to the poetic past of the country. To them the future is all dark and uncertain and provocative either of gloomy forebodings or of nostalgic yearnings. And yet in the midst of this all, we seem to hear the emergence of a new poetic soul that sees a far-off glimmer of light at the end of the long tunnel of the prevailing confusion. A new poetic mission, a new imaginative awareness struggles to be born amidst this clatter of technique and preoccupation with the unlovely pageantry of life. The gifted phrase, the keen bladed sentence, rare snatches of melody, occasional acute criticism of life, and sudden, blurred visions of the new order that is expected reveal that something is taking shape behind the dark curtain of negation and bewilderment. We are witnesses to the birth-throes of a new poetical soul in Bengali literature.'

Then he ends with the following, very crucial, question:

'Is it possible to retain the salt and savour of each individual soil while conforming to the unity of the world-pattern? Can we strike our roots as deep if we write for the whole world as we can if we write for our own people? Should we be national first and international afterwards if we are to give of our best? These are questions which face Bengali literature at present with a greater insistence than perhaps in many other cases precisely because it has pushed forward beyond its geographical

boundaries and has planted one foot definitely on the other side of the line. We must wait on time and on our future trend of development for an answer to this all-important question.'

KAUTUHALI

### The International Theatre Conference

**W**HEN I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man I have put away childish things'.

Thus, St. Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians.

I do not know what constitutes the period of childhood of a nation. We are frequently reminded that 1947 saw the birth of a new India. Yet it is also spoken of as a 're-birth' since our historic memory, too conveniently remembered, is as frequently resurrected for us to rest upon or shelter behind. Now, nine years since the Republic of free India came into being, we seem to have entered upon, not so much an innocent period of childhood, as a prolonged and difficult adolescence which leaves one baffled and bewildered and impatient for the responsibilities of maturity. And it seems to me to be time for us either to assume these responsibilities, fully aware of the seriousness of doing so, or of acknowledging frankly that we are not yet capable of it.

It was in 1953, at the fifth Congress of the International Theatre Institute that the idea of holding a world theatre conference in India first took shape. This was finally decided upon at the Technical Congress of the I.T.I. held in Yugoslavia in 1955 and the date October/November 1956 was fixed. Thus the Theatre Centre, or as it is now known, the Bharatiya Natya Sangh, had ample time to plan and carry out a smooth, well-organised conference. This, however, was far from the case. As is becoming routine for anyone who has

attended the many recent festivals, conferences, and other large functions, everything seemed to be left to the last few days. No one was certain as to how many delegates were coming, or who they were. On the day of the opening session at C. J. Hall on October 29th, up to the very last minute, in fact while delegates, observers and guests were filtering into the hall, all was confusion and chaos, robbing the occasion of any dignity or order.

The speakers at the inauguration, were, as could be expected, civic and government dignitaries. I realise that it is necessary to interest the citizens of Bombay, and the Government of Bombay, in the importance of the Theatre in our country. Yet this insistence on Government and civic leaders presiding at all our functions seems to me a childish one—as though nothing could assume seriousness or significance unless it had an official seal upon it. It seemed to me a pity specially on this occasion since, though a layman can take an intelligent interest in a specialised field, his views must of a necessity be general and vague. Hence nothing of much significance was said in the speeches; nothing, that is, that every one present was not already acquainted with or at least (in the case of the foreign delegates) aware of.

I had hoped therefore for greater maturity and 'specialised' argument, during the discussions based upon the two papers: 'Theatre for Youth' and 'Theatre for the People'. Here again, however, it was only to be further thwarted. Firstly the paper 'Theatre for Youth': I could not discover who exactly was responsible for it. Secondly, and this is true of both papers, the discussions ignored the papers, which did not seem to serve any purpose, other than having given the delegates time to go through and (perhaps fortunately) forget what they had read. The paper on Theatre for the People was meant to have been the work of Mr. Gerson D'Cunha. I

say 'meant to be' as Mr. D'Cunha seemed to be so upset about the re-editing of the matter he had given—re-edited and printed without his approval—that he refused to be responsible for the final results.

In the session I attended upon this subject another fact obtruded upon one: were the delegates discussing the general topic of Peoples' Theatres in their respective countries? Or were they discussing the problem of a Theatre for the people of India? Several foreign delegates contributed to the former—some tried to contribute to the latter. A few suggestions were made by Dr. Mulk Raj Anand about village theatres in villages; to bring out foreign technicians-cum-producers-cum-writers to work in them, and thus to help India contribute to what Dr. Anand said was the 'theatre of imagination'.

There is of course a tendency to put a tag to everything. A while ago one was not well up in theatrical terms if one did not refer to 'realistic theatre'—or in film language if one could not bring in 'neo-realism.' Now, since the plays of Brecht have infiltrated through the Iron Curtain, those who are up to scratch must of course drag in 'theatre of imagination'. Also why must we assume that we have not men and women of talent who, if given the training, could not better serve our own people, in their own language and understanding the manners, myths and customs as they do. Why must we import foreigners, who, however talented they may be, would have to work a life-time before they could get, so to speak, under the skin of the people about them.

And then again, this insistence upon taking the theatre to the villages. In this country one might almost say it would have to be the other way about. No doubt it would be a wonderful thing for every village to have a small well-equipped theatre of its own. But, let us make no mistake about it, as far as our villagers are

concerned, their roots are deep and living and they express themselves with fullness and vigour at every village 'mela', in their dances, songs and tamashas. It is our towns that need re-vitalising first, for they have lost their theatrical past and seem to have no well defined future.

The session Theatre for the People wound up by resolving to preserve and foster the folk art of the country; by putting up a proposal for the UNESCO Conference to consider and facilitate the exchange of theatrical companies, information and trained experts.

The Theatre for Youth broke up into two further groups, Theatre for Children, and Theatre for Youth. While discussing the latter Mr. Ayaz Peerbhoy is reported to have said that 'the artistic policy would depend upon the ideal of the country; that basically the purpose of education was to instil in a child or youth a sense of discrimination—good from evil. If this be the basic criteria of all value it would become the highest expression of Buddhistic philosophy, or help us to formulate an artistic policy. There would not be then two standards of aesthetics, for in essence aesthetic value would depend on basic value which cannot be different on a human level. The artistic policies should therefore be those of creating understanding, not of a set of values, but total values'. I quote the entire paragraph to show its admirable play on words. The meaning I leave you to fathom. Personally I feel Mr. Peerbhoy should leave well alone, and give up games he should have long outgrown.

The proposal to set up a Theatre Faculty of Asia to (1) study different dramatic forms of Asia (2) to conduct research in Drama technique, and study its development and decay (3) to conduct research and the compilation of information (4) to conduct post-graduate courses in dramatics (5) to train teachers and conduct workshops and seminars for playwriting, sounds

excellent on paper. How far it would be practical remains to be seen.

So much for the actual sessions. The entertainment arranged for the foreign delegates with a view to showing them something of 'our rich cultural heritage', seemed rather to illustrate the oft-repeated groan 'alas, we have no real live theatre in India today'. Except for the much appreciated 'Panchatantra' by the Little Ballet Troupe the rest was a shoddy affair. This one item attracted merited attention, and I hope the interest evinced will materialise in the shape of an I.T.I. or UNESCO sponsored tour of Europe. The shows were held in the Open Air Theatre of the Elphinstone Technical School—an example of how poor we are in theatres! This apology

for a theatre is nothing more or less than a monstrously ugly structure—the auditorium left untouched—a flat open space upon which rickety chairs were haphazardly placed. It doubtless proved the strongest argument India had for the crying need for theatres.

Finally I must add that most of Bombay's—and indeed India's—theatre personnel was absent from this Theatre Conference. Theatre Centre has been in existence for many years. But it seems it still remains an infant whose cries, though loud, are not yet intelligible to the theatre world of its country. There is much work such an institute could do, if it would. But first it must learn to 'put away childish things' and become adult.

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## correspondence

### *Anti-Americanism*

To The Editor, QUEST.

Sir,

I read with great interest, Mr. D. D. Karve's letter in your issue of October-November 1956. Mr. Karve commented on an earlier letter of mine discussing the complicated phenomenon of anti-Americanism. This is a subject which calls for treatment beyond the space available in a letter. Just as I could not give my full views on the subject in my communication to you, so, I do assume, Mr. Karve did not give his full views. Here, I ask space to write further on this subject and, specifically, with reference to Mr. Karve's letter.

First of all, I might state that I am well aware of the envy which we Americans induce and excite because we are a rich people. This is inevitable, and there is no question in my mind but that we often contribute to arousing or intensifying this emotion. When I was in India, I perceived that it was painful and humiliating to some Indians to hear Americans speak of their countries, as well as others in South East Asia, as backward and under-developed. I wished that I could find a substitute word for either of these. Both of them have reference to economic and technological development, however, and I can think of no better words. Nevertheless, the pain and sense of humiliation which constant use of these words can cause is real.

There are a few facts and truisms which I think have bearing on the subject. No one chooses his parents, his heredity, the color of his skin. The fact that a person has been born in America is an act which has causes outside of the individual's area of control. The easiest manner in which to think of the people of a nation is *en bloc* or in a monolithic sense. This means to

regard the people of a nation in terms of a cliché or a set of clichés. And when this is done, it is easy to turn on the faucets of prejudice and even of dangerous hatred. One form of anti-Americanism grows out of such sources. It is mixed up with criticisms of specific acts of policy of the American government. I often believe that we may have escaped from the age of superstition only to live in the era of the cliché, and I sight the cliché rampant in other countries as well as in my own.

Concerning our wealth, a few facts might be cited. We are the favoured children of history. Our ancestors conquered a virgin continent. Our colonial revolution gave us freedom and control of our own destiny. But also the wealth of America is based on work and much hard work. This is relative. In a hotel in Bombay, the servants work in a manner which no American, of any color or background, would long tolerate. This is the result of many factors, of course. But in terms of standards, attitudes, possibilities and technical development, Americans have worked to produce their wealth. And in the course of American developments, many have fought, and even at the risk of life, to gain a more fair share of the fruits of that wealth in America. This is notably true of our trade unions. Many Americans have had to work, and hard, to acquire any culture or cultivation which they have attained. We have all not been born with silver spoons in our mouths, if I may use a very commonplace phrase which is often uttered here in America. And finally, while it is true that a number of Indian intellectuals must do as many of us did in order to write and to think, I found others whose standard of living is far higher than my own and whose ease and comfort matches that of many rich Americans.

I do not envy them this. I do not envy some of my Indian friends their five servants, their car and their large homes.

But if I acted on the simple motives of envy, which have so often been directed towards all of us Americans without knowledge of the individual facts of our lives and our pasts, I could feel as do some anti-American Indians and Europeans, and I would only be contributing to the closing of my own mind and an increase of the world's bank of prejudice and high class imbecility. There is, to coin a metaphor, more prejudice and educated imbecility in the world than there is gold in Fort Knox, Kentucky.

Mr. Karve remarks that I did not touch upon two important factors which make the U.S. unpopular among people of the world. To Indians and probably to other Asians and Africans, the phenomenon of the U.S. standing on the side of Totalitarian, Imperialistic and Racist powers like Spain, Portugal, South Africa and, to some extent, France, presents a vivid contrast to the U.S.S.R. in the Assembly of Nations'. Yes, I understand this, and I readily grasp that Mr. Karve does not fall for the dual standard of morality in judging nations which is one of the features of neutralism (I am not arguing that India should abandon neutralism however.) But my letter was addressed not to all Asians and Africans, but to intellectuals who read a magazine such as QUEST. Some of this I took for granted. And just as a complicated position on foreign policy cannot be explained to many Asians and Africans, so is the same true in Western countries. We have our difficulties of explaining Indian policies to many Americans. We live in a country where there is freedom of expression and where public opinion is highly influential. We have to convince. I understand how Asians and Africans are absorbed in their own problems, and not in understanding America. But Americans are absorbed in their own problems also. Something like 168,000,000 Americans are not experts on foreign policy, Spain, Portu-

gal, France, India and all of Asia and Africa. And it is difficult for us to explain aspects of Indian policy and the diplomacy of Mr. Krishna Menon to many Americans as it is for Mr. Karve to explain some features of American policy.

Further, there is a difference between the policies of a government, especially in a democratic state, and the entire life of a people. And this is a distinction which I think should be made again and again. And it is not made by intellectuals in many countries.

I well understand (or at least I hope I do) the self-absorbed attitudes of colonial peoples. But when they will give moral endorsements to a kind of Louis Napoleon and Mussolini named Colonel Nasser, and scorn a democratic nation like Israel, and when they will demand in the highest moral terms the relinquishment of Goa to India and remain silent about Latvia, Esthonia and Lithuania which the Soviet Union has enslaved, I cannot accept their morality at face value. It is partial. I happen to be one of the many Americans who has fought in many ways for complete equality in America. But I distinguish between equality and a reversal of roles, and sometimes, I suspect that there is great danger of a reversal of roles. A cult of superiority appears at least threatening to break out among the opponents of colonialism.

There are many policies here in America and elsewhere which I most certainly do not endorse, except perhaps in odd moments when I may have not spoken my considered judgment. But other governments also give support to un-democratic governments. Briefly, one correctible source of misunderstanding would be the abandonment of a dual or double standard of judgment.

All at once, we cannot write, convince and urge 168,000,000 people to effect a change in foreign policies concerning half

of the countries in the world. You in India who might disagree with the foreign policies of your own government could not achieve this. And I would think I were foolish if I started demanding that you try. But it is attitudes of this kind which create misunderstanding, waste time in fruitless and usually empty polemics, and produce a gross misuse of a wonderful human organ, the mind.

What has concerned me has been the danger of a rupture of the links of feeling between the people of various countries. And some of our best friends abroad have helped in this rupture. Many of us in America have gone out on a limb in the fight for a foreign policy which we considered good and sound. We have sustained political defeats in our efforts and struggles. And at times, it has been too much for us to listen to some of our best and good friends. There is an old and worn out cliché of anti-Semitism: 'Some of my best friends are Jews'. Some of my best friends are anti-Americans, and they are this, not in terms of sound criticism in terms of policies and on the basis of making distinctions, but rather by making a mélange of ideas and stereotypes, and even getting themselves choked up with a few slogans.

No one, except a distorted person, wants seriously to be disliked. But at the same time, I, at least, would not go about trying by checkbook and slogan to win quick liking for myself and my country. I would like to see, however, respect grow among intelligent people and I would be modestly pleased if I could contribute to establishing or conducting intelligent discussion of issues with frankness and clarity.

Concerning America's richness, what should we do? Should we dismantle our productive apparatus? Should we tell the American workingman that that for which he works is to be abandoned? Many of my friends and acquaintances abroad tell me of the peculiarities, politics, difficulties,

in their own country. But some of them speak as though we might not have our own difficulties. Nations which themselves act in terms of self-interest speak in the language of abstract morality concerning our policies. And much froth is wasted in this manner.

Finally, the climates of opinion in America appear to be changing. Whether many Americans be right or wrong, they are making up their own minds and they are expressing it. 168,000,000 or so people, who can say what they think without fear of a secret police putting them in jail or murdering them, do not have unanimity of mind. They shouldn't. And what they think in this country counts. Many people abroad are simply unrealistic in their views concerning America. And it is this that I should like to make clear.

Yours etc.

New York

JAMES T. FARRELL

### *Rewriting of Indian History*

To The Editor, QUEST.

Sir,

Mr. Satindra Singh raises some unanswered questions (Vol. II No. 2) in the field of Indian History and writes at length about nothing in particular. What indeed is he driving at?

He begins with the *History of the Freedom Movement*, brings in the *Shahnama*, *Maya*, and *Karma*, and deals with three books—two booklets and a book to be precise—by 'historian-politicians'. Further he introduces a still greater variety of topics, Brahmanism, Buddhism, cottage industries and orthodox historians. He traverses far and wide in Toynbee fashion on a world-wide canvas, without however pin-pointing any issue.

In Mr. Singh's opinion, there are no historians in India. There are also no organisa-

tions capable of handling Indian history. Very likely, he has not seen any books on the subject that are already in circulation. Four volumes of *History and Culture of the Indian People*, by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, bring the story upto 1000 A.D. Surely this is not a post-freedom scheme! Many scholars have co-operated in the unique attempt and those that have seen the volumes feel proud of our achievement in this field.

Similarly, *History of India* in three volumes by Prof. Nilakanta Sastri of Madras is quite handy and well-written. One-volume editions of our history there are many. On different aspects of northern dynasties, on particular rulers and periods, on Indian expansion outside India, on many socio-economic aspects of different ages... there is enough work done by Indians and on the whole, our historians have done well. There is not the least ground for despair as Mr. Singh seems to indicate. There will always be room for improvement and for a better performance. But what has so far been achieved is substantial and scholarly.

Which of the books on Indian History Mr. Singh has seen and found so desperately wanting, he does not say. The ones he has picked up for comment are obviously not by historians. In fact it is surprising that in such an article he should introduce two booklets and a book, and judge all Indian histories and historians on the basis of that scanty material.

All that Mr. Singh has conveyed is perhaps his vague impression and his generalisations do not show that he has studied any book of Indian history. Perhaps he belongs to that class of people who always complain about some thing, without having any specific idea about what they want or what would satisfy them. Need such writings be taken seriously?

Yours etc.

Bombay

D. N. DESHPANDE

## *Recent Trends in Indian Economy*

To The Editor, QUEST.

Sir,

John Strachey winds up his essay on *The Indian Alternative* (published in the October issue of *Encounter*) with the words, 'that anything less Left-Wing than the present plan would not really have a chance in the Indian situation'. In spite of his sympathetic assessment of the Indian economic scene, he is constrained to add that 'even from a democratic socialist point of view, it is possible to view the present trends with apprehension. According to Mr. Deshmukh, the insurance companies were nationalized, not only for any particular economic advantage, but for "ideological reasons".' Indeed, if Mr. Black's letter to Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari is viewed in the present context, the outlook is particularly gloomy. In this letter, I wish to highlight certain fallacies of the Planning Commission in the spheres of the rural sector and deficit financing.

Professor Dantwala, who was holding a high post in the Planning Commission till recently, has referred to the parallelism which is perhaps implicit in the Indian and Chinese approaches. And he pertinently asks whether India will not slide into the path of collectivism. According to the bosses of New China, collective farming is 'the highest stage of cooperation'. The Planning Commission Report states that 'the cooperative sector will be enlarged until the management of the entire land in the village becomes the cooperative responsibility of the entire community'. Professor Dantwala significantly comments: 'If the aim of land reforms is to abolish individual ownership in land and entrust its management to village Panchayats... the slogan "Land to the Tiller" sounds out of tune with the real intentions of the plan-

ners in India. It is really surprising how our delegations become impressed with the agrarian pattern in China', where individual freedom has been ruthlessly crushed. One wonders whether the Indian Government believes in co-operation or compulsion'.

It is known that deficit financing of the order of 1,200 crores is to be raised out of the proposed outlay of 4,800 crores. Whatever explanations the Government might advance, the rise in prices and the consequent hardships imposed on the people are due to the effects of deficit financing injected into our economy, during the last few years. In a country like India, the time-lag between capital outlay in the form of 'created' money and productivity will contribute to an increase in money supply without a corresponding increase in goods and services.. The inflationary spiral thus generated will promote hoarding and thus impede the growth of our economy. The poorer sections of our society will suffer most. If the Government does not reduce the size of the plan and the contemplated magnitude of deficit financing, the only alternative would be to nationalize the entire structure of banking in India. Then it would not be a 'new type of socialism based on democracy and individual freedom,' but a new pattern of totalitarianism.

Even now it is not too late to put an end to some of these dangerous 'Left-Wing' tendencies which, if unchecked, might result in India sliding into the totalitarian camp. Our aim must be maximum economic development through industrialization without loss of individual freedom. It is high time we throw away the obsolete totalitarian apparatus of forced economic development by adopting undemocratic methods.

Yours etc.

Madras

A. RANGANATHAN

## *An Indo-Pakistani Literary Miscellany*

To The Editor, QUEST.

Sir,

I believe that creative writers can transcend barriers of prejudice and suspicion and help in creating an atmosphere of peace and goodwill between the two neighbouring countries, India and Pakistan. This belief has made me undertake the compilation of an Indo-Pakistani miscellany of poems, sketches, short stories and essays in English.

The main purpose of this miscellany would be to present to readers in the two countries and abroad a golden sheaf from the literary harvest of the two countries—a sheaf that will be valued, it is hoped, not only for its literary merit but for the spirit of goodwill breathing through it.

Translations of exceptional merit from Indian and Pakistani languages will be included in the miscellany. I would be particularly interested in contributions with an Indian or a Pakistani background. Contributions should preferably be less than 5,000 words. All material included in the miscellany will be paid for. I may mention here that Messrs. George Allen & Unwin, London, are interested in the miscellany.

It would not be possible to complete this onerous, though pleasant, task without the friendly co-operation of writers. As it would not be possible to contact all personally, I would appeal to them to write to me.

Suggestions for this miscellany will be greatly appreciated. All letters and contributions should be addressed to me at Kondivre, Ratnagiri District, Bombay, till Feb. 18 and thereafter to the Press Club, Dacca, Pakistan.

Yours etc.

Dacca, Pakistan

A. L. KHATIB

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## book reviews

### SIX KEYS TO THE SOVIET SYSTEM

by Bertram D. Wolfe

### WOMEN IN ANTIQUITY

by Charles Seltman

### THE SETTING SUN

by Osamu Dazai

### AESTHETICS AND LANGUAGE

edited by W. Elton

**SIX KEYS TO THE SOVIET SYSTEM** by Bertram D. Wolfe (The Beacon Press, Boston, \$3.75)

MR. WOLFE'S reputation as an expert on the Soviet system is well established. In 1953, when Malenkov was still the top man in Moscow, he predicted the rise of Khrushchev. Earlier, in 1946, when Stalin was recognising Chiang exclusively, he prophesied a Red victory in the mainland of China. But it is not merely his predictive ability which gives Mr. Wolfe what distinction he enjoys today; he combines in him vast learning with the power of penetrating analysis.

*Six Keys to the Soviet System* is remarkable chiefly for its analysis of the inner logic of the development of the Soviet state. No attempt is made in this review to summarise the contents of the book. Rather the attempt is to draw attention to the timeliness of the publication of Mr.

Wolfe's study, to relate it to the current controversy on the Soviet Union, particularly as the controversy has developed in the last few months, and thus to get the reader interested in reading the book itself.

How are we to explain the growth of Soviet totalitarianism? Is it reasonable to explain it in terms of the personal traits of an individual of great stature, viz., Stalin? Can we explain it in terms of Capitalist encirclement? Or, is the explanation to be found in the inner nature of the system itself?

Khrushchev's famous indictment of Stalin last February blamed the crimes of the Soviet system on the dead dictator. Khrushchev traces the development of a man who was marked out for his rudeness even in his early career when Lenin was still alive, and who became in later years the very embodiment of brutality. In his

February speech, Khrushchev was at pains to impress on his audience that the excesses committed by Stalin cannot be blamed on 'class enemies.' 'Stalin used extreme methods and mass repressions,' Khrushchev pointed out, 'when the revolution was already victorious, when the Soviet state was strengthened, when the exploiting classes were already liquidated and Socialist relations were rooted solidly in all phases of national economy, when our party was politically consolidated and had strengthened itself both numerically and ideologically. It is clear that here Stalin showed in a whole series of cases his intolerance, his brutality and his abuse of power.... After the war the situation became even more complicated. His persecution mania reached unbelievable dimensions.'

But Khrushchev's presentation of the problem did not go to the root of the matter. Even loyal communists found it unsatisfactory. 'The explanation cannot be found except through a careful investigation into the way in which such a state of affairs came about,' declared Togliatti, leader of the largest Communist Party in Europe outside the Soviet bloc. 'We cannot accept as satisfactory the position adopted by the Congress..... At one time, all that was good was due to the superhuman positive qualities of one man; now all that is bad is attributed to the equally exceptional and even staggering defects of the same man.' This line of thought threatened to develop into a broad criticism of the Soviet system itself, rather than of an individual who happened to preside over it, and found much support among 'left' socialists, such as the Nenni group, who carried the line further than communists could afford to tolerate.

Frightened by this ominous trend, as also by events in Poznan and elsewhere—it is difficult to think of any alternative explanation—Moscow has now taken up a defen-

sive attitude, as embodied, for instance, in the joint statement issued after the recent visit to the Soviet Union of leaders of the French Communist Party.

The text of the Khrushchev speech, as released by the State Department of the U.S.A., has not yet been formally repudiated, though Moscow has carefully avoided confirming it, thus reserving the right to disown in future such parts of it as it may consider convenient. But the communist world has already fallen back on an earlier line of blaming the mass repressions in the Soviet Union, the suppression of liberties in that country, on class enemies, on capitalist encirclement, and of playing down the personal responsibility of Stalin, without, however, wholly absolving him of all guilt.

But if it was an error to throw all responsibility on one man, it is, again, a mistake to explain the growth of Soviet totalitarianism in terms of the intrigues of class enemies and capitalist intervention. There can be no doubt that capitalist intervention during the days of the Civil War, and later on, the rise of Nazism, are factors to be taken into consideration in explaining certain features of Soviet Communism. But these factors notwithstanding, no positive correlation can be established between the degree of regimentation marking the Soviet system and threat to the system by external forces at corresponding stages.

'In the early days of civil war, intervention and famine', writes Mr. Wolfe, 'when the State was most in danger, Art was most free. The State did not begin to dictate in detail until the danger had passed, just as the Menshevik Party was not finally outlawed until the Civil War and the Polish War were safely over..... In the war years of 1939-45, when the State was once more in danger and its very survival was in question, there was a new era of comparative liberalism. Then censorship relaxed and poets like the gentle Akhmatova,

silenced for more than twenty years, were encouraged to write again and given a chance to be published. But no sooner was the danger safely past than the Soviet dictators began a renewed war on other peoples. The year 1946 saw Zhdanov delivering not only his declaration of war on the rest of the world at the newly revived Cominform, but also his declaration of war on Soviet artists, writers and musicians in Leningrad.' (p.99-100).

If, therefore, neither capitalist encirclement, nor the personal traits of an individual, can explain the development of Soviet totalitarianism—though these may have influenced this development to a certain extent—the key to the understanding of totalitarianism must be sought in its inner nature. In a democratic society, free institutions act as a check on each other, and the trend towards concentration of power is thus counteracted. Dictatorship, by removing such checks, creates a special

situation in which effective power comes to rest with an individual, or an uneasy alliance of individuals, dominating the Central Committee, which in its turn dominates the Party. When such a party is armed with an ideology which equates morality with partisanship, so much so that it feels entitled not only to spell out a new future but to rewrite the past to suit its interests, then we have already the basis of totalitarianism, which is something more than mere dictatorship.

What are the prospects of the development of democracy in the Soviet Union in future? Since the Revolution, the spread of education has been most remarkable, despite some restrictive effects of Marxism-Leninism on scientific research and philosophical speculation. There are reasons to believe that in the coming years the material hardship of a low standard of living in Russia will also be considerably alleviated. In the resulting situation, more

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people may start thinking on their own, *the more so if cultural exchanges between Russia and the rest of the world can meanwhile be multiplied.* Some of these new ideas will no doubt be at variance with the fundamentals on which the Soviet system rests. How will the system react to the early indications of the growth of such ideas? One can only speculate rather than answer such a question. But the speculation itself must be rooted in an understanding of the present Soviet system, and this is where Mr. Wolfe's book comes in.

**AMLAN DATTA**

**WOMEN IN ANTIQUITY** by Charles Seltman (Thames and Hudson, 18s.)

**R**ECENTLY attention has turned repeatedly on the status—past and present, of women; and this book is a further anthropological addition to the inquiries in this direction. Despite the totally un-

justifiable generalisation of its title, the orbit of the book's activity is largely limited to those civilisations which sprang up, mostly before the advent of Christianity, on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean. The vast world which co-existed outside this sphere, which must necessarily have had its quota of women, whatever else it might have lacked in common with the Mediterranean world, has been summarily omitted.

Within his restricted area, however, Dr. Seltman has, with both humour and acumen, traced the wavering status of women, conditioned by the prevailing social modes, and has interpreted from existing remains of the graphic arts, the current trends and tastes in feminine beauty, as also their main preoccupations. In Paleolithic and Neolithic times, for instance, he discovers that the marked differences in masculine and feminine characteristics were determined by the functions nature allotted to them. Women, being improvisers, it transpires, are congenitally addicted to unpunctuality. (Any modern woman who invoked this still basically tenable excuse, would, needless to say, be asking for trouble!)

The Pharaohs, by the mere act of marrying the nearest relation of the last ruler, who usually turned out to be his own sister, proved this inevitable acceptance of the equality of the sexes. The incestuous implications, quite obviously, did not exist for him. From the Cretan figurines which have been unearthed, it seems that that civilisation, in turn, had few doubts about the innate capacity of its womenfolk. For they were given equal opportunities, even before a bull; and Cretan women apparently made as good bull-fighters as the men—for the *corrida* did not, as is popularly assumed, originate in Spain.

But it is for the Spartan models that the author has the most unequivocal praise. 'At no time in the world's history,' he says,

'can women have been so contented, so healthy and so happy as they were in ancient Sparta.' Since women were accepted in the general scheme of things, and the emphasis was on the martial, there was little scope for the psychological complexities which often characterised the more repressed societies of later civilisations.

As regards Athens, there are two somewhat conflicting opinions. Plato, who accepted only an abstract intellectualised conception of woman, contrasted with Aristophanes who had a more realistic approach to the functional aspect of sex and women generally, and whose opinions seem to meet with the author's approval more readily as being more truly reflective of the age. Finally, with the New Age, synonymous with 'Hellenistic', when the basic patterns of Greek thought as such had emerged, and there was a cultural unification attendant on the triumphal progress of Alexander the Great, there came the 'New Woman'. Modern conceptions on the subject have been largely derived from this Greek model. In many ways the most interesting part of the book is a diversionary analysis of the more abiding achievements of Alexander, and this is the section which brings the book nearest, for a fleeting moment, to India.

With the Romans the attitude to women was again different. 'Roman history supplies a picture of women attaining gradually more and more liberty, a higher legal status, and greater power and influence.' After the establishment of Pauline Christianity, this was eclipsed in lengthy fulminations about Woman as the incarnation of sin, and the 'religiously induced horror' led to a morass of psychological neuroses and endless complexities.

Religious concepts too, paralleled the approach to the human. Among the Greeks the popularity of female Divinities fluctuated, rather in the manner of the modern share market, with their current social and

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political requirements, and produced a corresponding reaction to their human womenfolk. The Christianity of the Middle Ages discounted the mortal woman, and the sole recognition of anything approaching the feminine was embodied in the cult of the Virgin Mary. The coming of 'humanism' once more swung the pendulum in the direction of the Greeks.

The sources the author draws on for his research are extant literature and figurines and reliefs on vases. From the former there are excessive quotations, while illustrations of the latter decorate the book profusely.

The Greek figures which appear in the book cover many social strata and range from the fully draped to the artful deshabille. The Ajanta frescoes, which in their own way reveal social undertones, also display quite artlessly the human form, wherever necessity demands. It is also a paradoxical reflection that whereas the

apoplectic misogynism of Manu condemned the Indian woman to an inferior legal status, and certain factors of historic circumstance led to her being immured in drapery and excluded from the public gaze, the sculptor of the same human forms has continued to happily disregard the donning of attire which he considers neither artistic nor necessary. We are fortunate to have escaped a period of reforming zeal and religious censure such as that of the Europe of the Middle Ages.

And finally, it is difficult to resist the feeling that Dr. Seltman's investigations, which apparently were published earlier in a paper-bound volume in a more attenuated form than the present version, might have had more point if his theories were more fully expounded instead of categorically stated, and if the facts had been more scientifically and less arbitrarily marshalled, so that one was not continuously given the impression of swift, snappy generalisations being deduced from inadequate data.

KOBITA SARKAR

**THE SETTING SUN** by Osamu Dazai.  
Translated by Donald Keene (New Directions, \$3.00)

A THOUSAND years ago Lady Murasaki wrote in her diary: 'On my way through the corridor (of the palace) I had to pass before a group of nobles, and I was ashamed. The colour of the lining of my kimono was not quite right and I am afraid they may have noticed it.' The civilization which had so long ago reached this high aesthetic pitch has continued unbroken till the present time. For all the violence in the history of Japan was really superficial and incidental, as the balance of power shifted between the Emperor and his barons. It could not affect the core of their civilization. For its real core was aestheticism—an aestheticism which dominated every facet of life.

What would be the effect, on its protagonists, of these hundreds of years of acute almost painful sensitiveness to physical beauty? When a whole caste had perceptions which were chiselled to so fine a point, was it conceivable that they would be able to fit themselves into the fast, sharp, changed world of today's Japan?

When, after the war, Osamu Dazai called the Japanese aristocracy the 'Shayozokur' or 'people of the Setting Sun', he coined a phrase which became, at once, a part of the Japanese language. The feeling and interest which the book aroused all over the country was not solely due to the fact that it was a well-written and moving work. It was due to some extent to the fact that he succeeded in bringing to vivid life a situation of which the nation was already sympathetically aware.

For, at very long last, the sun had indeed begun to set on the aristocracy. It was not the war which was responsible for this, nor even the military defeat. The same code which laid down that it was necessary to sit immobile for several hours for the ceremony of drinking tea had imbued its followers with a fanatical courage as well as a curious indifference to suffering—their own as well as others. And so the aristocracy might have endured the shock of the surrender, even of the occupation. What they could not face was poverty, squalor and ugliness.

*'Any man who criticizes my suicide and passes judgment on me with an expression of superiority declaring (without offering the least help) that I should have gone on living my full complement of days is assuredly a prodigy among men, quite capable of tranquilly urging the Emperor to open a fruit shop.'*

This is from Naojis' Testament in which he tries to explain his death. The beautiful family home, the treasures, the lands, the power and the standing are all gone. All

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that remains is his blood. 'I am an aristocrat,' he says in despair. And in an attempt to coarsen himself, to mix into his fibre something from a commoner clay, he takes to drugs, to drink and to women. But it is no use. He ruins himself as a man but he cannot escape being an aristocrat. He hates and despises his own fineness but he is incapable of compromise. So, 'I will die by way of apology to Mama', he writes in his diary. For when a Samurai committed hara kiri it was never as an escape, but always as an atonement for some mistake, as an offering to redeem some inexplicable failure.

His mother, the, last Lady in Japan falls into an illness and willingly dies. It is Kazuko the sister who is the truly tragic figure for she still has the will to struggle and resist defeat.

The whole book is less than 200 pages long in large type. It is not so much a novel as a description, with the help of flash-backs, diaries and letters, of the atmosphere and circumstance of the disintegration of an old family.

The author of this book himself had a life and death which were similar to that of his hero. It is likely that a great part of it is his own story; for only those who feel the deep intimacy of what they are writing can have the courage to put before the reader nothing but the bare bones of their thoughts and feelings. Restraint has

always been a major virtue in Japanese literature as well as in everything else, but Osamu Dazai moves us by his sparseness.

Mr. Donald Keene has succeeded in creating a truly admirable translation. He has also written an excellent introduction. The book was not really meant for a foreign audience. Nor will it, to those who do not know Japan, materially enlighten them about it. A new and brash people might even wonder what all the agony is about. Well, even if they do not understand it, the agony has, at least, given them a beautiful book with which to while away an idle hour.

LAEEQ FUTEHALLY

**AESTHETICS AND LANGUAGE** edited by W. Elton (Basil Blackwell, 21s.)

**AESTHETICS AND LANGUAGE** is a companion to *Logic and Language*, two volumes of which have been before the public for some time. Like the two preceding volumes, it is a collection of essays which have appeared in philosophical journals and have now been brought together so that they are readily available to the general public. What the ten contributors share is an approach to aesthetic problems rather than any common body of doctrine.

It is generally agreed by philosophers in the present century that the greater part of writing on aesthetics is nothing but verbal moonshine. For all that, successive writers on aesthetics, from Clive Bell to Mrs. Langer have not hesitated to add their mite to the existing humbug which passes for aesthetic theory. (Incidentally, I speak with the greatest respect for both of them). The reason for this is not far to seek. Each writer has attempted to formulate a full-fledged theory which will explain every aspect of aesthetic experience and will provide a single criterion for judging the merit of works of art, ranging from a Naga beer mug to the Four Quartets of

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T. S. Eliot. Thus, although the writers I have mentioned have had illuminating things to say about some of the arts, their theories have added to the general confusion merely because too much simplification has been attempted.

As against this, Mr. W. B. Gallie, in the first essay of the book on *The Function of Philosophical Aesthetics* argues that the function of the well-informed sceptic is not necessarily to preach a theory but to point out the limitations of particular theories, to defend the uniqueness of particular art-objects rather than to lose it by means of some general doctrine.

This, then, is the key-note of *Aesthetics and Language*. The particular theory which takes the brunt of criticism is Expressionism as propounded by Croce. No less than three essays are devoted to a direct criticism of aspects of this doctrine, while it is obviously at the back of the minds of others in their formulation and criticism of particular issues. Mr. Gallie compares two different conceptions of the function of aesthetics; that envisaged by Croce and that envisaged by the critic of today brought up on a diet of conceptual or linguistic analysis. Miss Beryl Lake, a research scholar, discusses the theories of Croce and Clive Bell in an essay entitled the *Irrefutability of Two Aesthetic Theories*. This is the sole contribution to the present collection which has not appeared in print before. In her well-argued essay, Miss Lake contends that when Croce speaks of the arts as Intuitive Knowledge or Bell of art as Significant Form, they are actually making purely verbal assertions about the word *art*, though they have tried to give the impression that they are pointing to an empirical, distinguishable and unique feature of art. Intuitive Knowledge or Significant Form become synonymous with the word *Art*, thus making the theories of these writers irrefutable—and, one must add, pointless.

Readers familiar with the works of

## Franco and the University . . .

. . . is the title of bulletin No. 5 published by the International Committee on Science and Freedom. In this issue we have tried to analyse the deeper cause of the recent disturbances in the Spanish Universities which have shaken the *Caudillo* and given the rest of us new hope for the future of Spain. Contributors include Salvador de Madariaga, Fernando Valera (Minister in the Spanish Government in Exile), Enrique Gironella and others in close touch with developments in Spain.

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The Committee on Science and Freedom, sponsored by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, exists to promote academic freedom. Copies of the Committee's bulletin are obtainable, free of charge, from The Secretary, Lime Cottage, 818 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, 20, England.

Professor Bouwsma will find here another elusive and amusing essay in his *The Expression Theory of Art*. It all starts at a concert when Octavo, a naive fellow but a lover of music, remarks to his philosophical minded friend Verbo, 'The music was sad.' For the next thirty pages we follow Verbo's attempts to puzzle out what could be meant by the statement. Is it like 'Cassie is sad' or 'The news is sad' or 'This is a sad passage' (in a book) when the passage is read with feeling. In the end he thinks that perhaps the 'The music is sad' is more like 'He has a sad face,' and what the latter sentence means itself looks like a puzzle!

Professor Ryle's paper on *Feeling* distinguishes some seven different uses of the verb, to feel—'I feel hot,' 'I feel my way,' 'I feel that truth is beauty' and so on. One principal way in which we talk of feeling is what Ryle calls the perceptive use, such as 'I feel my way,' 'I felt for the coin which had found its way into the seam of my coat,' etc. Another principal usage is what may be called the emotive use, 'I feel sad,' 'I feel like laughing,' etc. Ryle discusses the difficulties of assimilating a number of uses of the verb *to feel* to either of these principal usages. Particularly tantalizing are expressions of the kind 'I felt a tickle' and 'I feel that truth is beauty.'

This last is especially relevant to the student of aesthetics: As Ryle says, 'It is a philosophical misfortune that . . . many theorists have assimilated feeling to emotion, as though the possession of strategic flair or cultivated taste in ceramics were akin to being a chronic worrier or being easily vexed or scared. The hapless artist seems to have suffered the worst from this muddle. He is sometimes alleged to be having some emotion or other (other than that of being thoroughly interested in his job) whenever he is doing his work or at

least to be in some unexplained way reviving or recalling some emotion which he previously had.'

Another group of essays is devoted to the criterion for evaluating works of art. Two of these are by women, Margaret Macdonald of London University and Mrs. Knight whose recent broadcasts in the BBC have aroused considerable controversy. Mrs. Knight's contribution on *The Use of 'Good' in Aesthetic Judgments* is an admirably clear discussion of a fundamental question. She argues that there is no one criterion which can be used to evaluate all the different types of art. There are, or ought to be, specific points that we look for in a particular kind of art-object and quite different points which make for excellence in another kind of art object. It is rather like judging in a dog show! Miss Margaret Macdonald, while largely in accord with Mrs. Knight discusses some points in which she finds herself in disagreement in her essay entitled *Some Distinctive Features of Arguments Used in Criticism of Arts*.

Although I have not mentioned the contributions of Professors Passmore and Isenberg, of Stuart Hampshire and Paul Ziff this does not mean that they are not worth careful study. Mr. William Elton provides a useful introduction in which he draws together the common threads which can be found in the writing included in this volume. One minor criticism of the editing is the apparent lack of order in the placing of the various essays. Surely Hampshire's article, *Logic and Appreciation*, which enquires whether there is any scope for a subject such as aesthetics, should have come at the beginning rather than at the end of the book. All in all, *Language and Aesthetics* is about the best of similar collections dealing with recent trends in philosophy.

P. C. CHATTERJI

## Contributors to this issue

K. K. SINHA (Calcutta) edits the *Journal of Power and River Valley Development*. He is active in India's Radical Humanist Movement and has contributed widely to Indian and foreign periodicals. This is his second article in QUEST.

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ASHA BHENDE is a well-known actress of the Marathi stage. She is associated with her husband Atmaram Bhende in the avant garde theatre organisation, KALAKAR.

AAMIR ALI is on the staff of the International Labour Organisation, Geneva. He contributed 'I See A Bull Fight' to QUEST Vol. No. 3 (December 1955).

A. WILBER STEVENS edits the American literary periodical INTERIM. He is at present Fulbright professor at University College, Mandalay, Burma. Attended the recent International Theatre Conference in Bombay as a member of the American delegation.

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Reports of Conferences convened by  
the Congress for Cultural Freedom

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## Science And Freedom

The Hamburg Conference of 1953 included a discussion of the social and moral obligations of the scientist and the freedom of science in the West. "One of the greatest concentrations of leading thinkers in the natural sciences ever to meet under one roof"—*Manchester Evening News*.

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## The Soviet Economy

The first of a series of booklets arising out of the Milan Conference of 1955 on "The Future of Freedom". Contributors include Raymond Aron, Colin Clark, Bertrand de Jouvenel, Edward Shils, Peter Wiles and Bertram D. Wolfe.

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