

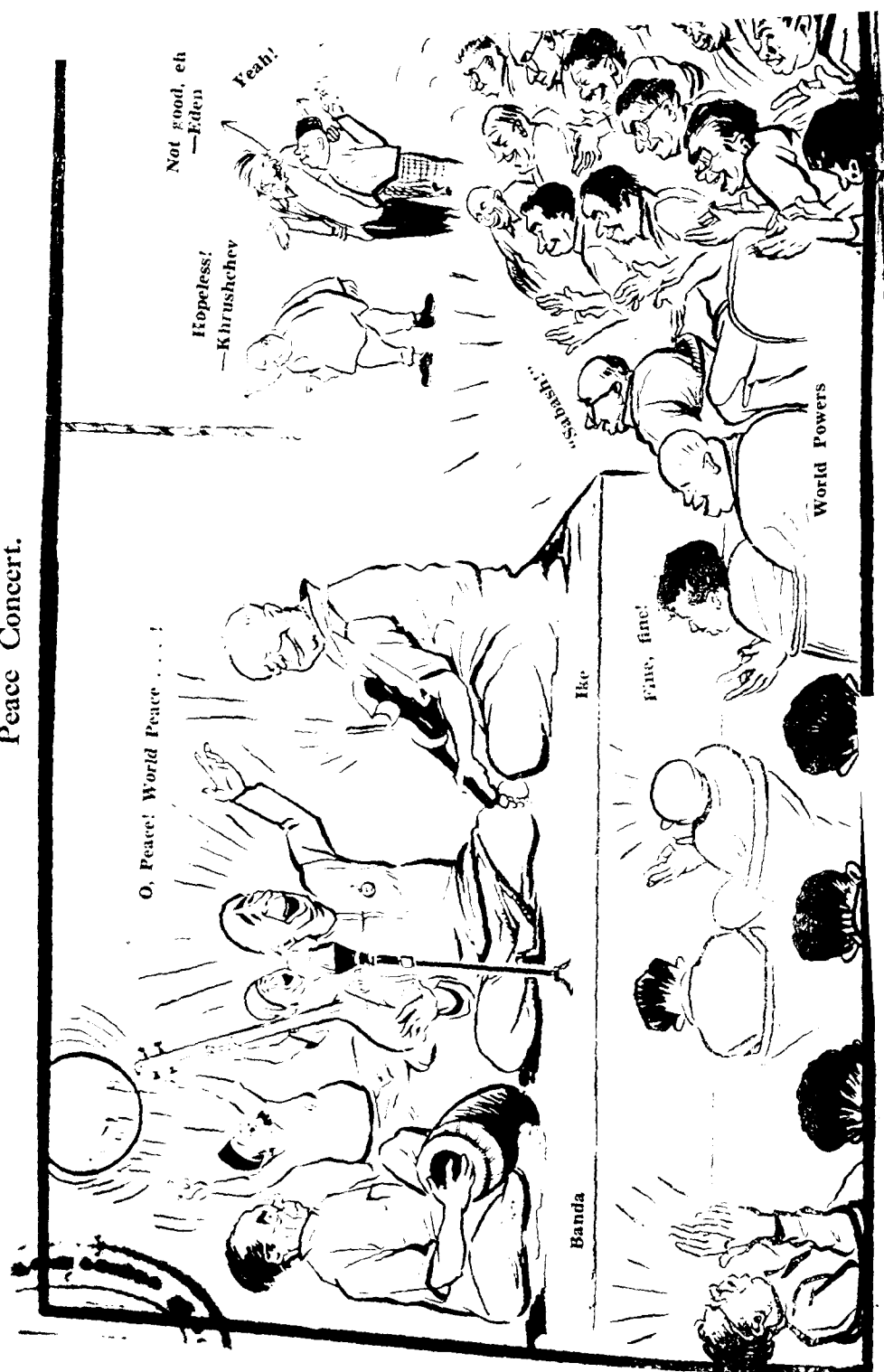
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SWATANTRA

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THE WEST IN RETREAT

WITH the withdrawal of the last contingent of Anglo-French forces from Egypt, the *status quo* has been restored—but only superficially. Credit has been taken for this satisfactory termination of an ugly episode by a variety of individuals and agents. Public opinion, the UNO, M. Bulganin's threat of reprisals, the U. S. President's unadvertised but effective censure of the aggressors followed by the application of sanctions have all doubtless had their share. It seems fairly clear now that the Western powers had been misled by their intelligencers into the belief that the threat of invasion would synchronise with a palace revolution which would have eliminated Nasser from the scene. That eventuality which did not materialise would have put an altogether different complexion on the intrusion of the outsiders. Had it been the intention of the British to stage a come-back as 'colonial exploiters', they had a golden opportunity on the morrow of the nationalisation of the Suez Canal by a stroke of Nasser's pen. Their intervention at that earlier point might have given them a colour of legality which would have put them on a par with the breakers of international law who also claimed a sort of legal absolution for their expropriatory act. That Anglo-British intentions on that earlier occasion were essentially pacific may be inferred from their resentful acceptance of a *fait accompli*.

The vacillations of American policy and the increasing evidences of Nasser's double-crossing of the Western powers by his secret deals with the Soviet put an altogether different complexion on the situation, and the decision to mount a punitive action was obviously risked in the expectation of America's eventual acquiescence in it for long-range and ideological reasons. In this again, Anglo-French policy-makers counted without their host. The result has been a spectacular exhibition of world unanimity of opinion such as it never achieved till then and is unlikely to achieve again. In the parallel instance of the reconquest of Hungary to form part of the communist orbit, not only has there been an infirmity of purpose but also a confusion of aim which has served to emphasise the cleavage between the East and the West from a somewhat novel angle. Pandit Nehru's special pleading for the Soviet government, though it shocked Western opinion, is valuable as an indication of the oriental assessment of the value of freedom and the democratic way of life in their pristine purity. Frankly speaking, the East sets little store by them, specially after it has been largely indoctrinated with the priorities and urgencies of the communist way of life.

But the problems of the Middle East which led to the outbreak of hostilities still remain for solution. Those who imagine that the U. N.

organisation will help to help one age in this area. The matchsticks of the Arab dictators for hegemony on the other, are allowing their optimism to swamp their sense of realities. Far from the prestige of the U.S. having shot up in the Middle East, the indications point to a sinking movement which hopes to circumvent the U.S. and immobilise it instead of allowing it to secure any stronger foot-hold in the area. The hesitations of the American State department to come out into the open as under-writers of the Baghdad Pact are an indication of the dilemma that faces the American policy-makers. In other words, the loss of face which has been sustained by Britain and France has inevitably affected American prestige as well. If it came in openly on the side of the Baghdad powers, it puts itself out of court with the Arab world in the abstract; but if it left them to fend for themselves, it would be tantamount to handing them over to the Soviets on a charger.

While we have no tears to spare for the decline and retreat of the West, we are concerned with its repercussions on the orientations and alignments of Eastern nations among themselves. Under the appealing slogans of Asia for Asiatics, we have been making politic surrenders to the Juggernaut of communism in the mistaken view that thereby we would be drawing out its fangs. An undue obsession with quantitative results, a slick opportunism which tinkers with the administrative machine to force spectacular diktats and a general discounting of imponderables and their place in the build up of national character are making us into hollow men. There are too many loose-ends about for us to take a complacent view of our prospects both immediate and remote. The Prime Minister's foreign tour has been a triumph from the demagogic point

of view. But its enduring results are wholly speculative.

It is a thousand pities that the constant holding up of the rich as scapegoats should promote the dangerous illusion that the El Dorado of Planning could be achieved with the demoralisation of the private sector. Nobody will fight for money-bags—not even the money-bag owners themselves. But there are other values than purely material ones, and they have always played a silent but effective role in the build-up of national morale. It is when we turn to this aspect of our present situation that we are seized by despondency for our future. The Kashmir question has become the King Charles head of our politics. It is futile at this stage to canvass its rights and wrongs. All that matters is that Pakistan seems determined to make a grievance of it, and hale us before the world organisation as a defaulter. But these rents in our armour are unnoticed in our rapt contemplation of our supposed high standing in the estimation of other nations. To offer to mediate in the case of Suez is good; but to come to terms with Pakistan on all issues, great and small, would be infinitely better.

The retreat of the West has not been accompanied by the advance of the East to any stable or prepared positions of vantage. The reasons for it are implicit in the immiscibility of most so-called Asian nations through geographical and emotional factors which bid fair to keep them isolated from one another in essentials. This situation plays into the hands of Soviet Russia which, with its satellites on the one hand and its evangelists on the other, is secure in its empire and assured of its expansion with the inevitability of gradualness. Looking round us in this country, it is a depressing thought to acknowledge that there is no compact or coherent opposition to it which may supplant it before it is too late.

SIDELIGHTS ::

WHILE the noise and dust thrown up by the de-Stalinization ritual still continue to distract the mind and obscure the view, the Sixth Five-Year Plan of the Soviet Communist Party has been released to the press. It is prefaced by some observations on the limitations of planning which must shock the faithful all over the world. The worst individualist and most case-hardened entrepreneur has nothing harsher to say about the classic frailties of planning than this document. The bureaucracy is said to have been guilty of inefficiency, incompetence and waste. Estimates are said to have been boosted artificially, and then frequently revised without regard to availability of resources. Claims are also said to have been made out of all proportion to actual achievements with a view to gull public opinion. Consumer goods continue to be in short supply after a generation of undisturbed totalitarianism. There is talk of promoting decentralisation in the interests of making more effective use of local talent and material. Above all, the officials in charge are exhorted to prove that socialist economy can outstrip its capitalist rival by showing a higher *per capita* production. This does not look like celebrating the jubilee of planning, but sounds more like a Jeremiad against it!

All these phenomena are already manifest in the anatomy of our own planning. We have merely to add corruption to the other infirmities which have been so candidly acknowledged by the Soviet bosses. The trouble with us as with the Soviet people is that we are being brought up on great ideas which have degenerated into

assumed the role of a hierarchy claiming infallibility in direct proportion to its infirmities. An air of factitious urgency has been imported into the entire field which is inspired by political considerations. It will be remembered that the demotion of Malenkov was said to have been due to his ill-advised relegation of heavy industries to a secondary place. Once again heavy industry has been given highest priority; and it is ominous because it is a well-understood euphemism for intensifying arms production. We too are set in the same direction towards the same goal, and hence our obsession with heavy industries in current plan-frames. Whether we are going to fare any better is a very doubtful question.

Historians have been meeting to air their views on the perennial issue of what constitutes history. In the speeches and papers read on such occasions, one may notice two contradictory tendencies at work. Everybody begins with a conventional lip service to the demands of Truth in all historical writing; and then everybody follows it up by suggesting that our history should reflect our latest doxies. What is Truth? asked Pilate and would not wait for an answer. The truth quite probably was that the man whom he appealed to for clarification refused to answer. The fact is that if there is such an abstract thing as truth, it has a disconcerting way of undergoing chameleon changes with the lapse of time. The philosopher was right when he declared that 'history is a fable that is agreed upon.' So every generation is anxious to correct the fable of history to its own advantage. But fortunately all historians have been romancers and

so give us visions or pageants which inspire or please us. European history has its schools, and therein lay its saving grace. We are in danger on the other hand of promoting parrotry in the name of history, to the detriment of entertainment and edification at once. A still more serious danger of 'nationalising' history is that it may become unreadable. That would be a worse tragedy than reading so-called false history.

Another point: What gave cohesion and purposiveness to our past history was a body of thought, feeling and consciousness which had a territorial and imaginative vogue of unrestricted amplitude, since it subordinated the temporal to a universal view of the human predicament. Now that we have almost completely jettisoned our ancient heritage as so much junk, the new history that may come into being as a command performance may have neither a body to be kicked nor a soul to be damned. The point to bear in mind is that history may become propaganda, when the vision of the few becomes the faith of all; but mere propaganda can never become history.

The bill to establish Tamil as the official language alternatively with English is a logical development of our linguistic decadence. It is doubtful if legislation was necessary to bring about a change that might have been achieved by a departmental order. It is perhaps to safeguard ourselves against the unexpected eruptions of litigiousness which is so much a national failing with us. In the consequential arrangements envisaged as a result of the change-over, there are two lacunae which deserve to be dealt with. The first of them is an urgent need for effecting a like change-over in the higher reaches of our education. Unless the two tests *pari passu* would either languish or a first top-sided development. As a first step, official encouragement should be

given to the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in all subjects in our colleges and universities. Even English literature could be taught through the Tamil medium more excitingly and fruitfully. The analogous instance of di-glott harmony long since achieved between Tamil and Sanskrit may be remembered as an incentive.

The second provision relates to the future supplanter of English for all-India official purposes. Just as we shall be using English and Tamil for all our requirements, so there would be other states which would be using English and their local language for their needs. Those areas which by accident of contiguity will have to use Hindi both for their local as well as for their inter-state purposes may arrive at a point (sooner than others) when they may find it easy and necessary to dispense with the use of English altogether for administrative purposes. When correspondence from those areas comes to us in Hindi, we must be in a position to deal with it on our own. This would mean the introduction from now on of a nucleus in the ministerial service competent to deal in and with Hindi. To the true-born Tamilian who has been long waiting for his tongue to come into its own, this may seem unpalatable. But as the most fanatic or irreconcilable of his kind cannot visualise any future, near or remote, when the whole of India might come to use Tamil for inter-state purposes, he must see and bow to the logic of necessity.

Sometime ago, we had the good fortune of being visited by a distinguished American doctor who has made a specialty of curing deafness by a novel and simple surgical operation. Most of the four of the chief and supplied charge.

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It is odd that our Central Government made no attempt to keep him in the country for a little longer so that his ministrations and technique could be better availed of and studied. Dr. Rosen, for that was his name, was by all accounts a remarkable man; for the way that he shunned publicity and did his work silently proves him out of the ordinary. It was said that the hierarchy of the medical profession in the country frowned on his peripatetic ministry, and even tried to get from patients fees to enable them to meet the specialist. At one

stage it was said that Dr. Rosen refused to have anything to do with any patient brought in by any doctor! Allopathy has many glories to its credit; but the blot on its scutcheon is its trade union spirit and the promotion of a vested interest in disease. This is another melancholy illustration of how we are good at copying the evil in the institutions we borrow from the West.

AJAY

(Sethu is away on a holiday and will resume this feature on his return.)

ART CENTRE FOR NEW YORK

PLANS are actively under way for an integrated cultural centre that promises to be a distinguished addition to New York. Known as the Lincoln Centre for the Performing Arts, it will group the city's opera, music, theatre and dance into one neighbourhood.

One of the leading ideas of the centre is that the various arts comprising it should stimulate each other, opening up new intellectual and emotional vistas for the enrichment of the city and the nation.

The project is part of a redevelopment programme, which, in a few years, is to create a city-within-a-city. An area of approximately 50 acres will be occupied by 12 modern 20-storey apartment buildings containing more than 4,000 moderate-priced apartments; shopping zones; a new hotel and office centre; a major theatre district; the Manhattan division of Fordham University, with its campus; and the proposed art centre.

According to the present master plan, the centre will be built on a park-like area between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues. A new home for New York's Metropolitan Opera is to raise in the centre of the arts area, beyond a large, circular plaza. Facing the plaza, on the south side of the circle, there will be a new concert hall for the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, and on

the north side, a theatre and music centre for plays, concerts, operettas, light opera, and ballet.

The approaches to the plaza from Columbus Avenue are to be flanked by a museum designed to house the collection of music instruments now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and opposite it, a library housing the New York Public Library's collections on music, dance and drama. There will also be an education building, to be occupied by the centre's school for the performing arts.

Five theatres are planned for the two blocks still farther north. These will not be in the centre's jurisdiction as they will be commercial theatres while a basic requirement for the arts centre is that it should be a non-profit enterprise.

Much of the credit for the original concept of a unified arts centre goes to the men who manage the affairs of the Metropolitan Opera Company and the New York Philharmonic-Symphony. They began to envision a fully equipped modern centre for all the performing arts.

Much planning still remains to be done, and many changes will probably emerge in the months ahead. Optimists say it will take three years to complete the centre, but it will more likely be four or five if all the units are to begin functioning simultaneously, as now planned. —U.S.S.

PEDLAR'S PACK

NEXT to slogans we live on headlines these days. An 'Asian Writers' Conference' sounds impressive, though when you come to ponder its significance, you are left with a comparatively innocuous racket promoted by some estimable people who wish to make themselves public without making themselves known. You arrive at the concept of Asian writers by the simple process of agglutination. All of us who are born in Asia are Asians and all those who can write in the entire area are writers: Ergo Asian Writers!

We have been so long intimated by the term 'European' that it is chiefly as a counterblast to it that we are devising these distinctions which make no difference. Writers are said to have foregathered from all Asian countries, but they had to depend upon English for their mutual intercourse.

In an inaugural speech, Rajaji made confusion worse confounded by appealing to writers to eschew politics. He indulged in one of his comparisons which in Dogberry's phrase was indeed 'odorous.' If writers eschewed politics, then they would have to commit suicide. Valmiki dealt with nothing but politics, and so did Shaw till the other day. If neither of them is to be considered a man of letters, then literature itself becomes emptied of meaning.

The writers themselves gave a hefty exhibition of being inflamed by politics. For the dichotomy of our time between freedom and regimentation gave rise to an acute difference of opinion among them. In the end unanimity was said to have been reached by the approved device of emptying the bath with the baby. If the so-called writers who acquiesced in such a decision want my opinion, then here it is frankly: they are not worth their salt. Both art for art sake and art for the proletariat sake are beside the point. Only when art is for the artist sake and under an uncontrollable impulse to communicate does literature

take shape. All the rest is sawdust.

During his interviews with President Eisenhower, Pandit Nehru is said to have explained all about Panch Shila to his host who was much interested in the idea. He is said to have offered to buy it and wished to know the price. Pandit Nehru assured him that it was priceless:

As often as I had a hunch, I'd send out a feeler,
Just when they added up to Panch, I called them Shila:
You may take them, though they're priceless
For with them you can make the world 'vice-less'.

In the French Chamber of Deputies, the Foreign Minister admitted that an agreement has been reached with Israel to construct a canal through Israeli territory linking up the Persian Gulf with the Mediterranean.

Soon after the withdrawal of the Anglo-French forces from Suez, the Egyptians came out of their houses and demolished the statue of Lessup, the French Engineer responsible for the construction of the Suez Canal. News-items:

Patriots have smashed the statue of Lessup
Thus adding, instead of clearing the prevailing mess-up:
Though exiled from its stand over Suez
The spirit now goes to where the Jew is!

Mr. Chou En-lai, the Chinese Prime Minister, objected to reporters referring to Taiwan as Formosa. He appealed to them to call it by the former name.

Here is Chou En lai saying with a hue and cry:
The isle for the liberation of which we strive on
Is known to us as Taiwan:
I protest, and beg of you no more, sir,
To call it Formosa!

LIBRA

MONSTER MONOPOLIES REGAIN POWER IN JAPAN

By CARLTON FREEMAN

THE keystone of Japan's aggressive, militaristic policies of the past was the zaibatsu, the giant family-owned industrial combines whose hungry tentacles embraced almost every phase of the national economy. Imperialism was indeed the life blood of the zaibatsu—and therefore of the government these trusts virtually controlled.

Recognizing the role of the trusts in fomenting World War II, the Occupation regime dissolved them in 1947, splitting them into hundreds of tiny independent spinter companies. But like magnetized fragments of a shattered block of steel, these small firms are reamalgamating today in what is referred to in Japan as the "zaibatsu renaissance."

Recollections of the tremendous power for evil that the old trusts represented have stirred up considerable fear among Western observers in Japan that the re-emergence bodes ill for the nation and the rest of the world. On the other hand, it is generally agreed that their comeback is, at least to a certain degree, inevitable and even necessary if Japan is to strengthen and stabilize its post-war economy. The only question now being asked is: "How far should and will the renaissance go?"

Actually, it is not likely the combines will ever become the monopolies they once were. For, the head of the zaibatsu monster was chopped off by the dissolution. The ruling families were shorn of their stockholdings—in each case more than 90 per cent of the investment in their numerous enterprises—which were redistributed among thousands of investors. The new centres of zaibatsu power are banks which are rapidly strengthening their hold on the companies with

which they had been associated before the dissolution. The instrument of control: Credit. These banks are lending freely to their old partners—but with tautly drawn strings attached.

At the same time, ex-zaibatsu enterprises are being knitted together again by mutual ownership of stock, interlocking directorates and control of subsidiaries. These new bonds can hardly be compared with the stifling grasp of the old ruling families who despotically exercised their will through all-powerful holding companies. But the new zaibatsu might grow into unmanageable monopolies once again in a position to force an expansionist policy on the government. On the other hand, if sufficiently regulated and restricted in their activity, as the government promises they will be, they could help to bring a new era of prosperity to Japan based on non-imperialistic practices.

A Unique System

The zaibatsu system in Japan—both the old and the new—is unique in the world. European countries and the United States have their versions of the trust, but they are markedly different from the Japanese variety. For one thing, nowhere else has the combine been so intimately affiliated with the national government. The zaibatsu leaders have established close relations with every government from the time when it was controlled by feudal lords to the present.

Moreover, unlike most Western trusts, zaibatsu activities have never extended beyond the boundaries of the nation and areas controlled by it. Thus it has represented—and still does—a tremendous force for nation-

nalism. Despite the obvious dangers, even those who strongly supported the Occupation dissolution policy now agree it was a mistake to break up the combines so completely. For it became economically impossible for many of the fragmented units to survive. They lacked the administrative machinery, the leaders, the capital and the experience required for successful operation. But the most important factor of all in their failure was the abandonment of deeply rooted Japanese business tradition.

The intensely competitive situation created by the sudden establishment of independence for hundreds of tiny firms would have been difficult enough for a Western capitalist state to weather. Such a situation could not possibly be tolerated in Japan, whose whole modern history—economic and otherwise—has been notable for its lack of individual expression. It could not, at one blow, give up the principle of co-operation and integration that had for so long guided the growth of its capitalistic system.

Imperialistic phs

The zaibatsu was, indeed, the embodiment of this principle. In leading the government along imperialistic paths that offered new markets and sources of raw materials, it helped Japan within the last 80 years to compete for colonial power and prestige with the European nations, which had divided up among themselves most underdeveloped areas of the world even before Japan got started.

During the last war companies owned or controlled by 15 zaibatsu families produced 69 per cent of the locomotives, 69 per cent of the aluminium products, 11 per cent of the steel, 50 per cent of the paper and pulp, 50 per cent of the raw silk, 49 per cent of the chemical dyes, 30 per cent of the gunpowder and 20 per cent of the rayon yarn and fabric of Japan. At the time of dissolution, the four largest combines—Mitsui,

Mitsubishi, Sumitomo and Yasuda—owned among them 24.5 per cent of all the paid-up capital of all stock companies in Japan. This figure reached 35.2 per cent counting six other major families—Ayakawa, Asano, Furukawa, Okura, Nakajima and Nomura.

Though these monopolies were broken up by the dissolution order, the government, on winning back independence in 1951, wasted no time in beginning to put the pieces together again. Anti-monopoly regulations were loosened, mergers and the formation of cartels were openly encouraged. This industrial reconsolidation campaign reached a peak last summer when the Japanese diet (parliament) passed a bill paving the way for the establishment of cartels almost without restriction. The most significant mergers achieved so far have resurrected the Mitsubishi Shoji and Mitsui Trading Co., the powerful pre-dissolution trading firms of Japan's two leading trusts. The former was re-established in July, 1954, and the latter one year later. Together they are clearing houses for about 18 per cent of Japan's foreign trade and an even greater share of the nation's domestic trade. Within a couple of years, their domination of foreign trade may approach that of the pre-war era, when they accounted for 30 per cent of such commerce.

The Mitsui Trading Co., comeback story is one of the most spectacular of the zaibatsu renaissance. The original firm was broken up into almost 200 tiny units by the dissolution order. Many of them died off, but one—Daichi Bussan Kaisha—struggled on, though backed by only a few hundred dollars in capital put up by its dynamic president, Yasutaro Niizeki, a junior director of the original Mitsui Trading Co. As soon as Japan became independent Niizeki began absorbing one splinter firm after another until his company—which recently reacquired the Mitsui name—reached its present level of

strength. Actually, the most remarkable thing about the reviva of the Mitsui Trading Co. is that it has been achieved as the result of the shrewdness and persistence of one man—Niizeki. The role of the Mitsui bank has been relatively small as it is in a weakened condition.

A Healthy Sign

There is evidence of a fundamental change in the thinking of zaibatsu executives. For example, before dissolution, the relationship between the manager and the employee was virtually that between officer and enlisted man, and indeed the pyramid-like organization itself was about as complex as an army division. But today these feudalistic barriers have broken down to a large extent and,

in general, there remains only the paternalism of the old system to remind one of the past. Employees—including managers—get free housing, low-cost lunches, free vacations, free hospitalization and other benefits.

The new zaibatsu is thus fostering company pride and loyalty among its personnel without making them feel they are part of a militaristic or dictatorial organization. This itself is a healthy sign. It could mean that zaibatsu will confine its future activities to peaceful, non-imperialistic pursuits. It may indeed have learned its lesson. But one must, nevertheless, keep in mind that a snowball, when it begins to roll, is not easy to stop.

Theatre

"NINATHATHU NADANTHATHU"
By K. Dhanapalan; Directed by R. L. Lingaraj; Presented by The Theagaraya Fine Arts Academy on 25th December at the Sir Theagaraya Kalamandapam, Washermanpet.

THE members of the Theagaraya Fine Arts Academy proved that for a successful play an excellent story, individual histrionic talents and beautiful scenes are not so necessary. The success of their play *Ninathathu Nadanthathu* was essentially due to their remarkable teamwork. The play was not dominated by the hero, the heroine and the villain. In fact, they had very little to do on the stage. The emphasis was on the so-called supporting characters. The performance of the character actors immensely contributed to the success of the play.

Thathalingam Pillai who promised his sister at her death-bed that he would give his only daughter, Kamala, in marriage to her son Sekhar does not keep his words when an offer of alliance from a rich person comes to him. But in

the end, he learns that the rich bridegroom is out of his wits and consents to the marriage of Kamala with Sekhar.

Though the story was weak, the dialogue was well-written. The opening scene which depicted the love of Kamala and Sekhar was not necessary and this could have been deleted.

Excellent performances were from R. S. Varadarajan, R. L. Lingaraj and P. S. Seethalakshmi. Varadarajan who acted as the mad bridegroom gave an unaffected and first-rate performance. Lingaraj as the father and Seethalakshmi as the step-mother of Kamala were both impressive and they were completely at home on the stage. A. F. T. Arasu as Sekhar, S. M. Raman as Sekhar's friend, Balu, and A. Gopal as Kuppanna Sastri acted well. Except for one or two, all the others played their parts well. The play was a successful production of which the Theagaraya Fine Arts Academy could well be proud.

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THE CONDUCTOR

THERE are conductors and conductors. There is, for instance, the lightning conductor which, I hasten to say, is not my present theme. Nor do I intend to expatiate on the musical variety who, armed with a baton like Prospero's wand, evokes out of a motley crowd of instruments an artful assortment of fractional tones, quavers, trills and allied nuances of orchestration to mount bravura effects. To my profane and uninstructed intelligence, he seems a gratuitous incubus on the performing artist who achieves his happiest effects through inspired improvisations. I cannot imagine a conductor associated with or superimposed on one of our own star-spangled sets of vocalist bittressed by violinist-drummer-kanjira-ghatam-moresing support which treat us to the *recherche* ardours of Carnatic chamber-music. Let me also eliminate the stage-conductor who is such a power behind the scenes and who gets—specially in amateur theatricals—a perfunctory vote of thanks in a hurried after-thought at the close.

I rather intend this to be a tribute to the bus-conductor of our metropolitan Government transport. I take him in the singular though there are about a thousand of his species including reserves in service. By virtue of my diurnal associations with them, and their almost type-reactions to their fluid clientele, they have become as familiar to me as my own kith and kin. You, dear Reader, who are as competent to draw his portrait as any one else will please make out my imperfections with your tolerant comprehension.

In the first place, our conductor is an over-worked, under-paid (I have not yet come across the official who is willing to acknowledge that he is perhaps over-paid) but hard-boiled individual whose ironic suavity and

acidulous humour—stigmata of the universal cockney—are as effervescent as a newly opened soda-water bottle though much more lasting. He is the lynch-pin of the entire transport system, for he alone keeps the buses moving. We have heard and seen buses breaking down, of drivers being at fault; but never once has there been any reported failure of a conductor! His operational efficiency is cent per cent; for he is the only money-collector who, with a minimum of office-trappings yet succeeds in squaring his accounts up to the minute and on the spot. His record must force our Income-Tax department with its supernumerary, over-paid and under-worked staff whose tale of arrears grows, like the snow-ball, from year to year, to hang down their heads in envious admiration. I cannot think of a more inspiring exhibition of *nishkama-dharma* than the zeal with which these conductors collect the cash and pass on to their employers without pegging any sort of claim for any sort of commission or perquisite for themselves.

He is always youthful-looking whatever his age, and he wears his uniform with a jaunty *insouciance* which confers on its ill-fitting shape a predetermined purpose or aim. It is then dogs-eared at the cuffs and looks sadly in need of washing and pressing. The more self-conscious of theaternity sport a dirty handkerchief round the neck less in the interests of hygiene than in those of some obscure notions of sartorial elegance known only to the fashionable elite. They wear their peaked caps tilted such angles as to make them cling gently to the nape of their necks.

They are provided with leather pouches with long and sturdy straps, are found carrying them suspended round their necks. Instead, the struggles about them while

they either impound them under their arm-pits or jingle the contents up and down in their search for and determination of change. They carry in their left hand a wad of tickets of varying denominations, and shuffle them back and forth to fish out the required carton in every case. As the bus passes stage by stage, those which are *functus officio* for the time being are relegated to the rear. They have a way of accumulating between their fingers already overburdened with ticket-pads one-rupee notes folded longitudinally, and flaunting them with impunity. I think they must be getting a thrill out of such bravado.

The conductor's memory for faces and exact change is uncanny. Sometimes he would expect you to give an exhibition of your own mathematical skill and memory power; but more usually, he dispenses small change with the precision of a robot. I have never come across a single instance of a dispute as to the quantum of dues to be paid to the fare-nor has the conductor been at any time the victim of pick-pocket attentions. Why passengers also should be the targets of these enterprising and light-fingered gentry is not the conductors who at any given moment carry in their pouches much as a couple of hundred rupees is a mystery to me. I can only suppose it to be an unconsidered instance of co-existence of two classes of people whose only point of difference would seem to be a matter of biology!

The conductor's control of his terrain is unaffected by the rations of Newton's laws of motion. Through all the panting and creaking and wheezing prod of the bus, reeling round corners or changing gears with stertorous gasps and grunts, what time the less and over-crowded passengers are non into one another with invidious intimacy, you may behold conductor standing statuesque im-

mobile like an erect Buddha or making his entries in his log-sheet with nothing to hold on to except his will-power.

He has a repertory of whistles and allied signals which are a veritable cornucopia of cacophony. Some may remind you of the dots and dashes of the Morse code; others would imitate the trills of birds, while the majority of them would be essays in ventriloquism—for they remind you in some vague, inchoate fashion of sounds which you had already sampled in other contexts. Their announcements of completed stages have a funereal finality which stabs you with the elegiac note in an incongruous milieu. At peak hours, however, you are condemned to experience the torments of Tantalus, for but after bus would heave into view only to lumber along without a stop. Once in a way we may be lucky enough to encounter a conductor who treats his bus as if it were the *Pushpaka Vimana*; he allows us all to get in on the principle of 'the more the merrier!' His affable hospitality is accompanied by a grim smile at the contemplation of such voluntary suffering embraced with such ferociously competitive zeal. The others who go away unheeding the waiting 'q's' earn the gratitude of the press who are in the moving purgatory at

(Continued on page 34)

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PITFALLS OF THE GREAT

By SYED A. SATTAR

DO you grumble because your friend hasn't yet answered your letter? Well, leaving letters unanswered is not uncommon. It is in a way inevitable. The individuals concerned cannot always be held responsible.

Netaji Subash Chandra Bose had this habit. The pile of letters would mount on his table day by day, and instead of replying to them, he would quietly relegate them to the waste-paper basket. He was also—despite being a military man—scandalously unpunctual. Unpunctuality is, however, attributed to a certain chemical composition of mind which makes it impossible for the individual to keep pace with time. Always he lags behind. And you should learn to forgive your delinquent friends.

Mahatma Gandhi wrote the most awful handwriting, preaching at the same time what he never practised i. e. to write a good hand! Napoleon's handwriting was illegible. But he was impudent enough to declare: "My thoughts run too fast for my pen." Other examples of *poor penmen* are Fox, Charles Lamb, Conrad and Maugham, all of whom felt a sense of shame at their handwriting—Lamb in fact described his as an 'inveterate clumsiness'.

Ford's Lamentable English

No doubt, Henry Ford was a great genius and a motor magnate whose autobiography *My Life And Career* is an American classic. Yet his English was till his youth lamentable. Here is an extract of a letter he wrote in his early days:

"I again take the pleasure of writing to you a few lines. It seems like a year since I see you. It don't seem much like cutter sleighing there is a great many Sick in this neighbourhood I called on five sick

persons this afternoon three in one house."

Mark the obvious pitfalls and be consoled if your English happens to be pidgin!

H. G. Wells, with all his vigorous style of writing, his splendid grasp of facts and a most fascinating mind had an 'unarithmetical temperament.' To solve even the simplest of mathematical problems was to him a headache. He had a sieve-like memory which could not remember names, dates and numbers. Although he spent the better portion of his life tramping about London, he nevertheless confessed in his 65th year: "If I wanted to walk from Hex-ton to Chesla, without asking my way, I should have to sit down to puzzle over a map for some time."

Genius, you should remember, acts often in a queer way. Not infrequently it blossoms forth only when the individual has passed his youth. Walter Scott, Jonathan Swift and Thomas Alva Edison are excellent examples in point. Scott was not brilliant in his youth. Indeed, one of his professors in Edinburgh University said of him, "Dunce he was, and dunce he would remain." Dear Swift, the master of impeccable English prose, was ploughed in the Dublin University. As for Edison, it is common knowledge that his teacher marking him down as an incorrigible dullard, turned him out of the class.

Nehru And Churchill

The life of Mr. Nehru as well as of Sir Winston Churchill, exemplify the same truth. Throughout his academic career, Mr. Nehru scarcely shone; he came out of the examinations, as he himself says in his *Autobiography*, 'neither with glory nor with ignominy.' Similarly, Sir Winston was no prodigy. As a matter

fact, when he appeared for his first written examination, he left the answer paper blank—he couldn't answer even a single question! Yet, it is curious that the same man poured out millions of words at great speed, gusto and grace. We can say with Samuel Smiles, "Precocity is quite as often a symptom of disease as indication of intellectual vigour in youth."

No, I am not exalting the dunces on that account! What I should like to drive home is that if your son or daughter happens to get plucked in an examination, do not fuss or fume on that account. Marks in the examination are not the true test of one's intelligence. Besides, who knows your son or daughter will not distinguish himself or herself at a future date?

Intemperance and Intelligence

Intemperance is perhaps an essential condition of intellectual vigour. Rousseau, Shelley, Kemal Pasha and Katherin Mansfield—to mention a few—were voluptuous in the extreme. Rousseau and Kemal, in fact, led an adventurous life, wandering about the streets, ogling and drinking. They knew no sanctity of life.

Ugliness might also be described as a hall-mark of genius. Socrates

had a decidedly uncomely face; Edward Gibbon had a ridiculous rather, a Pickwickian appearance; and Dr. Johnson was, to say the least, hard-featured. Bernard Shaw also lacked physical grace. He was thick-skinned. When Mr. Hannen Swaffer, a noted spiritualist, invited him to a table-turning seance, he replied: "Thanks—but I gave up the table-turning in my childhood."

Mr. Swaffer was also a past-master in the art of repartee. He rejoined: "As you are in your second childhood I thought you might like to come."

Lord Curzon and General Kitchener were impetuous. Once a dispute arose between them, which they resolved to settle through fighting a duel. In the duel that followed, Kitchener was floored. Promptly, he chucked his post as the commander-in-chief, and left for England, crest-fallen.

Verbal fight is only civilised war. In this field Jinnah remained unbeaten. A high-court Judge once admonished him and said: "Mr. Jinnah, remember that you are not addressing a third-class magistrate." Mr. Jinnah retorted: "My Lord, allow me to warn you that you are not addressing a third-class pleader." Jinnah was supremely arrogant especially towards those in authority.

SOVIET LAW AND THE PRESS

By SERGE L. LEVITSKY

SIXTEEN articles of Chapter X of the Soviet Constitution are devoted to "fundamental rights and duties of citizens." Article 125, which covers freedom of the press, reads as follows:

In conformity with the interests of the working people and in order to strengthen the socialist system, citizens of the USSR are guaranteed by law:

- (a) freedom of speech;
- (b) freedom of the press;
- (c) freedom of assembly, including the holding of mass meetings;
- (d) freedom of street processions and demonstrations.

These civil rights are ensured by placing at the disposal of the working people and their organizations printing presses, stocks of paper, public buildings, streets, communication facilities, and other material requisites for the exercise of these rights.

The text of this article itself contains the limits of the exercise of these rights; they may be exercised only "in conformity with the interests of the working people." It is the Communist Party which determines what these interests are, in its capacity as the "leading core" of the workers (Article 126). On the other hand, the clause concerning the "strengthening of the socialist system" implies that freedom of the press may not be used against the Soviet state and the government, which are the embodiments of the socialist regime, nor against the Communist Party, which is its guardian.

Thus, according to the direct meaning of the Constitution, the population is merely granted the right to uphold the established system, not to

criticize it. The nature of freedom of the press was best expressed by Andrei Vyshinsky in his textbook *The Law of the Soviet State*:

In our country, naturally, there is no place, nor can there be any, for freedom of speech, press, and so on for the foes of socialism. Every sort of attempt, on their part to utilize [it] to the detriment of the State—that is, to the detriment of all the workers, must be classified as a counter-revolutionary crime to which the provisions of the Criminal Code are applicable.

Vyshinsky himself cited Article 58, paragraph 10, "or one of the corresponding articles of the Criminal Code," as the texts applicable to the "foes of socialism" who try to use the freedom of the press in their own interests. However, apart from the articles applicable to "counter-revolutionary crimes" the Soviet Criminal Code also contains several articles punishing traditional violations of freedom of the press.

Article 58 of the Criminal Code provides as follows:

Propaganda and agitation involving appeals to overthrow, subvert or weaken Soviet authority, to commit any counter-revolutionary crime, as well as the circulation, preparation, or storage of literature with such contents, is punishable by deprivation of liberty for a period of up to two years. The same offence committed in time of war or mass disturbances, or through the abuse of religious or national superstitions of the masses, or in a state of war, or in localities placed under martial law, is punishable by the measures of social defense defined in Article 58 of the present code.

This means that all punishment up to and including the death penalty may be applied in such cases. More

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over, it should be noted that the advocacy not only of violent overthrow of the Soviet system, but also of any alteration to the system, is considered prohibited agitation. The text quoted singles out "religious and national superstitions." Whenever written propaganda and agitation opposes official Soviet policy on religion and on the Soviet nationalities it automatically becomes a counter-revolutionary act. Such crimes are punished with particular severity. However, if no counter-revolutionary intent can be proved, Article 58 is not applicable; instead, Article 59 is preferred which provides as follows:

Propaganda and agitation aiming at the instigation of national or religious hostility or discord, as well as the circulation, preparation or storage of literature of this kind, is punishable by deprivation of liberty for a period of up to two years. The same acts, if committed during a state of war or at a time of mass disturbances, are punished by deprivation of liberty for not less than two years with total or partial confiscation of property; in the case of particularly aggravating circumstances, the penalty may be raised to include the supreme measure of social defence: death by shooting, with confiscation of property.

Thus, the offender is no better off if he is just an ardent believer than if he pursues a counter-revolutionary goal. Those who engage in religious propaganda violate, moreover, Article 24 of the Constitution which permits atheistic propaganda, but only allows religious observances without "religious propaganda." It is true that the Soviet government allows exceptions to this rule. However, the publication of religious literature is confined almost entirely to books used in worship. According to one source, Soviet authorities have allowed Protestants to print Bibles from plates sent to the Soviet Union

by the British and Foreign Bible Society. A Soviet monthly publication, *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, contains very little information about religious life in present-day Russia. The usual fare consists of telegrams sent and received by the Patriarch, a column on the contribution of the Russian Orthodox Church to the Peace Campaigns, an essay on some past event in the life of the Russian Orthodox Church, an occasional book review, and so on.

The articles quoted do not apply to "Soviet nationalism," which is not only allowed, but encouraged by various means as the expression of Soviet patriotism, particularly since the beginning of World War II.

"Criminal Intent"

According to Soviet jurists the content of the counter-revolutionary crime includes the writing as well as the reproduction of counter-revolutionary literature. It is sufficient for such writings to be completed and intended for circulation. Criminal intent may be purely implicit, or "veiled," to use the terminology of Soviet jurists. It is not necessary for persons assisting in the preparation of such literature to have a particular counter-revolutionary aim in mind. In the case of storage, a crime has been committed if the persons concerned realize that the stored literature is counter-revolutionary agitation and propaganda.

We may add that even when the law requires proof of criminal intent to overthrow the regime, Soviet courts often content themselves with the existence of potential danger in the article or speech. On the other hand, Soviet courts often consider the parentage, social origin and economic circumstances of the accused person before reaching a conclusion about guilt. The "class-enemy" will be presumed guilty.

In addition to penal legislation, the Soviet government has also applied extra-judicial measures for repressing crimes against the regime. The

organs of the MVD could impose sentences up to and including the death penalty without formal trial of the accused. Regular courts had no control over the conduct of these proceedings, which could even judge persons *in absentia*. According to Soviet sources these special powers of MVD organs were gradually taken away after the death of Stalin.

Slander and insult must be distinguished from so-called criticism and self-criticism, in which a person, a group of persons or an institution are explicitly called to account for not carrying out their jobs properly. Such criticism is among the most important functions of the Soviet press and is encouraged by authorities in every possible way. The persons thus criticized cannot bring action before the courts even if the accusations are entirely devoid of truth, Soviet legislation not recognizing the "right of reply," since criminal intent must exist in order to prosecute, and Party zealots who criticize their fellow workers and citizens or superiors are presumed to have furnished the information *bona fide* even if it be false. It is true that Soviet newspapers complain that the exercise of "socialist criticism" often becomes slander, pure and simple. Soviet law does not consider the publication and circulation of defamatory information as libel even when it is based on fact. For Soviet authors, the collection, publication and circulation of such information amounts to rendering a public service.

Scope of Criticism Limited

Nevertheless, there are very strict limitations on the scope and nature of criticism allowed. The Party line and government policy may never be challenged; only their execution by lesser bureaucrats may be criticized. In this way the Soviet government is able to control the loyalty of the lower echelons of administration and at the same time give the citizens the impression that they have a voice in the conduct of public affairs. Perso-

nal grievances can thus be aired and accumulated tensions relieved without harm to the regime.

Finally, Articles 185 and 190 deal with violations of the rules concerning the duplication and circulation of products of the press, censorship of photographs (Article 185), and rules established for the opening and exploiting of printing plants, lithographic presses, and similar establishments (Article 190). Violations in both cases entail correctional labour for a period of up to three months, or a fine of up to 300 roubles, provided the offender is not guilty of a more serious crime, such as a counter-revolutionary act.

The rules which Article 190 thus protects completely neutralize the provisions of Article 125 of the Constitution. The last paragraph of that article, as we have seen, regarded the "placing at the disposal of the workers and their organizations of presses, stocks of paper, . . . and other material requisites" as the best guarantee of the freedom of the press. Yet do Soviet workers really have free access to printing presses, stocks of paper and other material requisites enabling them to make full use of their freedom of the press? The law of 1932 provides the answer. It states explicitly that printing offices of any kind, including those using duplicating machines, such as hectographs, as well as those dealing with printing equipment may be maintained only by government agencies, co-operatives, and public organizations. These latter are completely under the control of the government; they alone are provided with stocks of paper. However, even government agencies require a special permit for the acquisition of printing equipment or the use of printing offices, and they exercise their printing activities under strict supervision and are bound to a periodic accounting and reporting on the paper and type metal.

—The Bulletin

When poetry is as good as this, it does not matter much whether Rouveyre prints it upon Whatman paper or whether it steals to light in blurred type from some press in Bhowaniore."

Her genius for learning and mastering languages not her own could be seen also in her translations under the title *A Scene From Contemporary History* dealing with the speeches of Victor Hugo and M. Thiers, and a few poems by the former. Besides other translations, mainly from the French, there are an unfinished romance in English entitled *Bianca, or the young Danish maiden* vaguely autobiographical in its pathos, and a later discovery, that of a complete novel in French *Le Journal de Mademoiselle Arvers*, a truly remarkable feat.

Legacy

Toru Dutt's mature and most characteristic work is, however, *Ancient Legends and Ballads of Hindustan*, which she re-tells, in her mellifluous numbers, the tales of Savitri and Sita, Bhavya and Prahlada etc., told her mother from the countless book of Hindu epics and mythology, and and folklore. These poems, which breathe the spirit of Hindu piety and devotion tempered by Christian grace and are characterised by a Vedic solemnity and simplicity," according to Edmund Gosse, "be

ultimately found to constitute Toru's chief legacy to posterity."

Though the essential point of the original stories is not lost sight of, the dauntless young poetess does not hesitate to inject something of her own 'never say die' spirit into the heroes and heroines. There is a curiously mystic touch in the legend of *Jogadhya Uma* in which one has a glimpse of the elusive maiden who takes the shell bracelet and disappears into the waters of the lake. The seven miscellaneous poems at the end of the volume are the shortest and sweetest of her writings in verse. The nostalgic sketch in sonnet of her Baugmaree garden house is matched by the facetious piece in which the palm is given to the lotus, flower among flowers, "rose-red" and "lily-white" in one. But unique in many ways is "Our Casuarina Tree" of which she prays:

... and though weak the verse
That would thy beauty fain, or fain
rehearse
May Love defend thee from
Oblivion's curse.

So too, will Toru Dutt's work be saved from the curse of oblivion in spite of the occasional traces of immaturity in expression and lapse of metre and idiom, for here was genius engaged in a struggle of victory with ignorance and inexperience.

MAN WITH THE TURBAN

THE man with the turban was on his legs on the stage. As the presiding dignitary of the show he had been disturbed from his peaceful slumber in the cushioned seat provided for him, to say a "few words" before the last scene of the play brought to an end the evening's entertainment.

In fairness to the man with the turban it must be said that he did not mean to sleep, but nature is a hard taskmaster and he had to obey its iron discipline. He had exceeded his daily quota of public meetings and this was one too many. When he arrived to fulfil his engagement, the drama had already been in progress for over an hour and he apologised to the organisers who graciously told him that they did not expect him earlier, he being such a busy and important person.

They led him to his seat, gave him literature connected with the play and withdrew. He glanced at the title of the play, made a mental note of it and then looked at the stage. An old man was lying on the floor and it appeared to him, was in great distress. With him were a young woman who was smiling in triumph, and a young man who looked sad and kept on looking at the man on the floor with obvious concern and sympathy. The young man was, however, strong and determined to carry out some mission which was about to be entrusted to him.

The man with the turban—or if you would prefer we shall call him Mr. Turban for short—took in all he saw in the space of a second and yawned. That was a danger signal. It was time for bed. He tried hard to resist what he knew was inevitable and what must grieve the chaps who so kindly had asked him to preside over the evening's function. But he argued within himself, they only asked him to preside, they did not say he should not sleep. It was quite

possible to preside and also to sleep. In fact he could rely on the wisdom of the Speakers of Parliaments who presided and also snatched arrears of sleep in between long bouts of speeches only waking up to give rulings on points of order such as whether it was parliamentary for a member to sleep in the House. He remembered that in one instance the Speaker had quoted May's *Parliamentary Practice* and ruled that sleeping was permissible provided the member did not snore. Well, there was no danger of his snoring, Mr. Turban thought, and he would be well within his rights if he slept without causing inconvenience to anyone.

He had had a strenuous day and no wonder he was tired. He had left home early in the morning and had been in harness so to speak ever since, jumping from one place to another, speaking and speaking. It was a season of speeches and he had his share of them. He was strict in his daily habits and never deviated from them except in extraordinary circumstances. He got up at 4 a.m., bathed, adorned himself with the caste mark on his forehead, arms and chest and adjourned to the prayer room where he loudly read from the Ramayana for 15 minutes. Coffee would be ready for him in two big tumblers. He drank coffee as though it were a meal and in fact it constituted his breakfast.

He went to the verandah, drew up an easy chair and picked up the morning newspaper. He gave it a first reading, folded it and had it under his arm and taking his walking stick set out on his travels. This being the month of *Marghazi* when bhajanas and discourses are the order of the day, his diary was full of engagements. He could speak on any topic and discourse on any subject. The only things he could not do were perhaps to sing and dance.

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but he could speak on them without a doubt.

He was a professional speaker with this difference that he did not accept money but offered his services voluntarily whomsoever wanted them. Past sixty, he would welcome the gathering on behalf of the Young Men's Association and he would propose the vote of thanks on behalf of the Old Women's Association. He was the president of numerous associations, existent and non-existent and secretary and vice-president of many others.

It is said that he never missed a public meeting. It is related of him that one evening he walked into a marriage pandal thinking some meeting was being held there. When he realised his mistake he quickly retreated and went to the adjoining pandal where in fact a conference was being held and he was completely at home there. Cynics have said that the doctors have prescribed Mr. Turban at least half-a-dozen meetings as part of his daily diet and when in the lean season meetings and conferences are hard to come by, Mr. Turban's health takes a steep plunge downwards.

Mr. Turban is not exactly popular with audiences who suffer him and tolerate him as part of the price which all audiences have to pay. They always hope he would confine himself to proposing the vote of thanks for then they could slip away without losing much. Once it happened that when he started proposing a vote of thanks to the distinguished speakers of the evening, the vast audience started trooping out, but he was still on his feet and did not realise that he was talking to an empty hall until the president, who

perforce had to stick to his seat for the sake of decorum, enlightened him on the revealing fact. After that, it was widely believed that Mr. Turban avoided proposing vote of thanks as far as possible and changed over to welcoming the gathering for which

there was no time-limit and which audiences must put up with if they were not to miss the main speakers.

Mr. Turban could be resourceful and clever when the occasion called for it. The secretary of a newly-formed association, seeing Mr. Turban's name appear so often in the newspapers, decided to invite him to preside over the inaugural meeting of the association. He went to his house and made known his desire. Mr. Turban was only too glad to accept, but he knew what the public reaction would be and so he asked the secretary if he had invited the press to cover the function. When told that invitations had been sent to the press, he advised the secretary to go personally and invite the reporters for they might take it into their heads to 'miss' the meeting.

When Mr. Turban set out on foot to the meeting place two miles away, he took a bet with himself on whether there would be an audience and if so how much. He was sure of four including himself, namely, the secretary, the welcomer and the vote of thanks proposer. If the reporters, even at least one of them, came that was added strength. The meeting was advertised at 6 p.m. and he timed his walk to reach the meeting place on time, but he need not have bothered for he was the first to arrive. This did not inconvenience him at all and he was not new to such a situation. To face such emergencies he always carried with him a copy of the morning newspaper and a blue pencil with which he marked and edited it for his future use. He now took out the paper, pulled out his reading glasses and began to read from where he had left it.

At half past six the secretary hurried in and fussed over Mr. Turban, apologising for his late-coming. For the next half an hour no one arrived and then a man, who appeared to be a reporter, peeped in and seeing that the hall was sparsely populated he was about to withdraw his head

when Mr. Turban and the secretary together made a dash for him and pulled him in. They firmly took hold of his hands on either side of him and led him to the dais. They waited for another 15 minutes and finding the situation had not improved decided to commence the proceedings.

The secretary welcomed the gathering and he thanked the press for so generously accepting their invitation to be present. He then formally asked the president to inaugurate the association. Mr. Turban rose, put his hands in his coat pocket and rescued a typewritten speech of six pages which he began to read. He had gone as far as "Brothers and sisters, friends, comrades, mothers and ladies and gentlemen", when the reporter mildly suggested to him that they might take the speech as having been read and the copy given to him. This seemed a capital idea to Mr. Turban and he patted the reporter on his back for his wisdom.

The secretary said he had some resolutions to move. It was a ticklish problem and required one more person to second all of them. He came out and looked into the street, hoping that somebody they knew would pass that way and he could be commandeered to second the resolutions. Unfortunately, the street could not be more deserted than if there had been a curfew. Reluctantly they returned to the hall and then a bright idea struck Mr. Turban. "Why, our reporter friend can himself second the resolutions. I think that will be the ideal solution" and he proceeded to implement the decision. The secretary removed the resolutions and the reporter was forced to say: "I second". The president now brought the proceedings to a close by telescoping his concluding remarks with the vote of thanks. He congratulated the secretary on coming forward to serve the community through the new association which he was sure would attract the support of the young men and women of the locality.

The next morning the newspaper whose representative had attended the meeting carried a fair-sized report of the president's address and the resolutions. It is Mr. Turban's boast that the resolutions created a stir in Parliament where one member referred to them while accusing the Government of neglecting the welfare of the people.

He was sleeping soundly and the play was fast drawing to a close. The organisers were faced with the task of waking him up gently and telling him that the time for making a speech had come. The secretary sat in the chair next to him and began nudging him. Mr. Turban perhaps thought it was the bug which was tickling him and he gave it a further thought. The secretary increased the pressure till at last Mr. Turban woke up with a start and looked around. The secretary smiled politely and told him that after the current scene he would have to up the stage and say a few words and they had only one more scene left before the play ended.

Mr. Turban remembered that when he last saw the play there had been some emotional domestic scene and he wanted to know from the secretary the further course of the play and how it had ended or was going to end. Posting himself with this valuable information, he got up on the dais and spoke. He spoke for an hour stressing mainly the importance of strengthening families and on the great work India was doing in the cause of world peace. He would have gone on in that strain if there had not been a sudden outburst of applause. Mr. Turban knew the symptom and he had been a professional speaker for 30 years for nothing. He hastily concluded his remarks saying that he would not wish to stand between them and the last scene of the drama which he was sure they had tremendously enjoyed.

WHY THERE IS ONLY ONE PARTY IN THE USSR

(We extract the following from the "Soviet Land". The Communists in Russia are confronted with the same problem as the Congress Party men in India. With just a few changes of proper names the ruling party in India can use this article to justify their one-party rule in India.—EDITOR)

HISTORY has shown that the number of parties in a country is an actual result of social development, in other words, a natural and not an artificial phenomenon.

For example, the S. R. (Socialist-Revolutionary) Party strove, allegedly, to represent the interests of the peasantry. The slogan "Land and Liberty" was inscribed on the banner of this party. But although the Socialist-Revolutionaries called themselves socialists, in essence there was nothing socialistic in either their programme or tactics. The Socialist-Revolutionary Party proposed to divide up the land among the peasants without infringing on the landlords' property and without offending large landowners. In reality this party served as the ideologist and organiser of the rich peasants, the kulaks.

The working class had its own party, founded by V. I. Lenin.

As a result of the three revolutions which took place in Russia from 1905 to 1917, the people saw the real face of each political party.

It is known what fate awaited the kulaks of capitalists and landlords. In wielding the sword against the kulaks, they doomed themselves to destruction.

The Socialist-Revolutionary Party retained a somewhat different position. It supported the working class and kept alongside the people during the fight as the fight was directed against the tsarist autocracy.

The opportunist essence of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party was fully revealed after the February Revolution of 1917, when its representa-

tatives, participating in the bourgeois government, defended the inviolability of capitalist possession and came out for the continuation of the imperialist war "to a victorious end," dragged out the solution of the problem on the confiscations of landlords' land in favour of the peasants.

The political face of this party was especially clearly seen after the victory of the socialist revolution. At that time, a certain part of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, calling themselves "left", united with the Communists in order to preserve their influence among the peasants who sympathized with the Communist Party. The "left" Socialist-Revolutionaries were included in the Soviet Government. But shortly after this, they perfidiously attempted to engineer a rebellion against Soviet power. During the Civil War, a great number of Socialist-Revolutionaries supported the army of foreign interventionists. They were included in white guard governments and organized kulak uprisings against Soviet power.

Naturally, the people rejected this party. By their anti-popular actions, the Socialist-Revolutionaries themselves undermined and destroyed the political basis for their existence in the country.

Thus the answer to the question becomes clear: why is there only one Party, the Party of Communists, in the USSR?

By its selfless struggle for the interests of the working people, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has proved that it is really the only party which holds the interests of the peo-

ple above everything else and has won the confidence and the support of all Soviet men and women.

Uniting in its ranks the best members of the working class, the peasantry and the intelligentsia, the Communist Party evolves a policy which expresses the vital interests of the entire Soviet people. This reflects the unity of the Party and the people in the Soviet state.

But it is not only a matter of wholehearted political confidence on the part of the working people in the Communist Party. The point is that in the Soviet Union a socialist society has been built, and the economic and political bases for the existence of hostile social classes, standing opposed to one another, have been liquidated, and consequently, for a party expressing the interests of these classes.

BOOK REVIEW

A CRUSADE AGAINST THE COMMON-WEALTH (Being a record of the political work of Republican H. D. Rajah). By Nilkan Perumal. Published by The Swatantra Jyothi Publishing House, 3, P. S. Mudali Street, Madras-17. Price Rs. 3.

THIS well-got up and readable account of the political career of H. D. Rajah, M.P., is a discreet blend of facts, inside information and first-hand contacts with the personalities who are prominent in the public eye. Mr. Perumal has scored many successes in a kind of potted biography which is sympathetic without being adulatory, factual without being dull, expository without being pedantic or solemn. The title of the book has a certain topicality, for it is intended to emphasize the continuing radical fervour of Mr. Rajah who, unlike the bulk of satiated nationalists in the country, still stands out for the elimination of all kinds of foreign exploitation of our country's resources.

Mr. Rajah's earlier career as a firebrand and much-wanted man by the C. I. D. at inter-provincial levels is sketched briefly and vividly. The present generation of youth might note with more than ordinary interest how he had rubbed shoulders with the more colourful leaders of the earlier era. Had he been content to play the role of a 'yes-man' he too might have been one of the mob of ministers who are now too much with us!

But Mr. Rajah has always been an intellectual with an abiding interest in ideas and political systems both for their own sake and as means to achieve desirable political ends. His approach to public questions is marked by robust common-sense and devotion to first principles; and his speeches in the Rajya Sabha have been welcome diversions in addition to being hard-hitting performances from the debating point of view. Today he is one of the most active figures in the slowly forming front against the Congress party. He denounces it for exploiting the personality cult for unworthy ends, and has been drawing attention to the fascist trends which are corrupting it and demoralising the country.

Mr. Perumal intersperses his narrative with delightful asides which bring out the personal charm and clubbability of Mr. Rajah. A discriminating patron, a generous helper of struggling stragglers and lame ducks, an ideal host, he is unspoiled by success which has come in search of him while he went in search of the poetry of politics! He is young enough to look forward to a future in which he may serve the country in responsible positions. Even without reference to such a prospect, his present labours in the promotion of an opposition to the party in power are in the highest national interest.

A WEEK IN THE HIMALAYAS

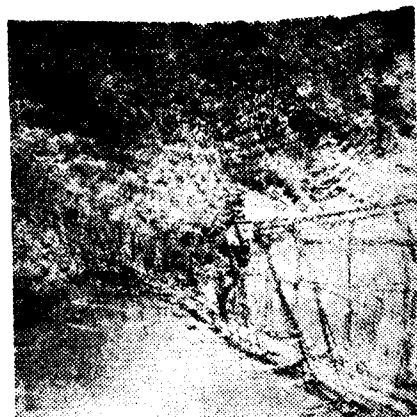
By Capt. G. N. S. CHARI

LEAVING Joshi Mutt on the morning of 8th June, we climbed down about a mile to reach Vishnuprayag and crossed the Dhaul Ganga to the Alaknanda once again. From here to Hanuman Chatti, at the base of Badrinath, the going was not hard compared to over 2,000 ft. incline in three miles that lay ahead of us from Hanuman Chatti. We reached Hanuman chatti (8,000 ft.) completely tired, ate our lunch and relaxed for a while before resuming the march. As at almost every resting point, there is a *prayag* at Hanuman Chatti, the tributary here being the Khiraun Ganga. After a wash in its icy waters, we started on the stiff climb to Badrinath at an elevation of a little over 10,000 ft.

Temple at Badrinath

We were getting nearer and nearer the Himalayan snows, and we could see glaciers hanging at odd angles from almost every peak within sight. Snow brought down by avalanches during the last winter remained unmelted at many points near the route, and at places lay across the Alaknanda, spanning it to form a natural snow bridge. For many of us it was the first contact with snow, and we exulted as we walked over it or poked our sticks into the snowmouths on the hill side from which little streams emerged. We crossed the last of the hills at about 1 p.m. and Badrinath came into sight, at a distance of a mile, with the temple on the right bank of the river amidst a cluster of houses. We crossed the Alaknanda first and then a tributary to enter the main bazaar at the end of which is the temple.

The temple itself and the image of Vishnu within were unimposing, particularly to one coming from the South. The temple has special significance and importance as a place of



The precarious bridge over the Alaknanda at Gobind Ghat.

pilgrimage, by virtue of its being located in the sacred Himalayas. The hardship undergone in reaching it, especially in the olden days when all the 170 miles from Rishikesh had to be walked, invests it with a unique status among the many holy places of the sub-continent. The image of Narayan is placed exactly above a hot spring whose waters flow into the Tapta Kund, right in front of the temple and within a few yards of the ice-cold Alaknanda. The hot water is a great boon to the pilgrims, who refresh and purify themselves in it before going into the temple to offer worship. The panoramic view of Badrinath, with the Nar Parbat behind the temple and the Narayan Parbat in front on the river's eastern bank, with the 21,000-ft. Nilkanth peak overlooking the temple from behind is something to which no description or photograph could do justice. Clad in eternal snows, Nilkanth the queen of Himalayan peaks glitters like gold at sunset and sunrise against the sky's blue, a blue of such clarity and texture as we never see in the plains.

The pilgrimage part of the hike over, we started off at 8 a.m. on 9th June to the village of Mana, two miles along the Alaknanda above Badrinath and the last village twenty-six miles short of the Indo-Tibetan border. We expected the place to be full of picturesque traders from Tibet, but were disappointed to be told that it would be a month or two before they started coming.

From Mana we proceeded further some three-and-a-half miles to see the Vasudhara Falls, the 400 ft. drop of a mountain stream which joins the Alaknanda. Before reaching Vasudhara we crossed the last important tributary of the Alaknanda, the Saraswathi. The crossing was over an astonishing freak of nature—a bridge of living rock which spans the river firmly like the work of any modern engineers. We also crossed two glaciers, slippery but not dangerous because the slope was gentle. It was only another five or six miles from Vasudhara to the source of the Alaknanda, which is the junction of two torrents from the Shatopanth and Bhagat Kharak glaciers respectively. The great river has been named after Alkapuri, the place of origin and the legendary home of Lord Indra. But the approach to Vasudhara had been very tough going, and the sun's heat, despite the altitude of 12,000 ft. very severe.

The Precarious Bridge

The next day, 10th June, we left Badrinath and started on our return journey after a last look at the Nilkanth Peak, brilliantly lit by the rising sun. It was mid-day when we reached Gobind Ghat, and we found that the rear party left behind by Maj. Dhillon, who had started from Badrinath with about a dozen GCs the previous evening, was preparing to leave for Hemkund and the Valley of Flowers. Four of us, including Maj. K. L. Verma, the oldest but also the most enthusiastic member of our party, set off at 3.30 p.m. on the 4,000-ft. climb over seven miles to Ganghrea, the

camping place for the night. Govind Ghat (6,000 ft.), at the confluence of the Bhyundar and the Alaknanda, is named after Guru Gobind Singh.

To reach those spots, one has to cross the turbulent Alaknanda at Gobind Ghat over a precarious bridge—an intricate combination of steel wires, rusty with age, ropes and oddly shaped planks many of which had rotted and given way. Literally fearing for our lives, we crossed this bridge and began to follow the Bhyundar Ganga upward along its course. Except for a small village a mile after Gobind Ghat, the valley was utterly desolate. We marched along, none speaking a word to the others because we were tense with the idea that we might not make Ganghrea by nightfall. We grimly picked our way through the dense vegetation. Cliffs, black and dripping with moisture, loomed menacingly overhead. As darkness closed in steadily on us, we remembered that this valley was infested by bears. The unspoken thought crossed the mind of each of us that we might have to sleep out in the open forest. The rock-strewn path was difficult to negotiate, and it was becoming increasingly difficult to pick out the way at intersections of tracks by looking for the shoe marks of the earlier party.

We must have been a mile from Ganghrea when we saw two men coming down. We hailed them and discovered that they were the guides who were to take the party next day to Hemkund, sent by Maj. Dhillon to look for us. With a loud '*Badr Vishal ki Ja!*' to express our sense of relief, we followed them to the base camp at Ganghrea. By now it was bitterly cold, and we were weary. But we felt revived by reunion with the main party, and soon were in the best of spirits as a camp fire was lit and the GCs came out with their community songs. We turned in for the night immediately after a good dinner, because the much tougher climb to Hemkund

(4,000 ft.) in three-and-a-half miles awaited us early in the morning.

We were up at 4.30 a.m. on that memorable 11th June, and started off even without a cup of tea since it was necessary to reach Hemkund before the clouds came up and spoil the view. The climb was the hardest of the entire hike. The earliest to reach were some GCs and Maj. Dhillon, who made it in three hours, while the last of us reached the lake a little before 9 a.m. Ganghrea was at the same elevation as Badrinath, about 10,000 ft. On the way to both the places we had seen the tall pines and cedars which adorn the Himalayas. Now, beyond Ganghrea, we saw for the first time the white birch with its flesh-like skin on the trunks which our ancients used as writing material known as Bhoj Patra. But all tree vegetation suddenly ceased as we went up beyond 12,500 ft. Thereafter we found only small plants with multi-coloured flowers, offering their mild but unearthly scents to the painstaking visitor. It was a wonderful blend of perfumes which filled the air.

The real thrill of Himalayan climbing awaited us a little distance from Hemkund, when we had to cross a massive and very steep glacier which, unlike the two we had crossed on our way to Vasudhara, inspired terror in our hearts as we looked at the breadth of 150 yards which we had to negotiate. One false step would have meant hurtling down a thousand feet or more to almost certain death. Having got past this obstacle, we saw the Laskhman Ganga, a tributary of the Bhyundar, overflowing from the near end of the lake and coming down in several falls of varying heights. The lake itself (at an elevation of a little over 14,000 ft.) suddenly came into view after the last steep climb. With its waters shining blue, green and sparkling white at different places, the lake was like a precious diamond set in the crown of the Himalayas.

More than a mile in circumference, it is overlooked at the back by two snow-covered peaks from which glaciers hang into the water. In front, the Lakshman Ganga emerges into the valley, directly facing the Nilkanth peak which looks even more magnificent from here—though farther away—than from Badrinath. On either side of the lake are the diminutive temple of Lakshman and a small Gurudwara.

We were lucky in the weather, which remained cloud-free and fine throughout our stay of nearly three hours. We gazed on the gleaming white glaciers reaching into the lake, the thick encrustation of ice on the water itself at the farther end, and the thinner flakes of ice—transparent and colourless—which we could touch and crystalline, and we split them up and played with them like children. One could contemplate the beauty of the scene for hours without getting satiated. For sheer grandeur and perfection of shape and colour, Hemkund excels any man-made wonder of the world.

We had our first cup of tea for the day at this exclusive picnic spot, followed by a leisurely breakfast. Thus fortified, some members of the party, including Maj. Dhillon, tried to attain a 15,000-ft. peak beside the lake in order to have a better view of the whole valley in front and to see the Gauri Parbat peak on the other side of the lake, while some of us proceeded back to the base camp at Ganghrea. The adventurous party nearly made the peak, but an impassably steep glacier stopped them, since they were without any snow equipment. On the way back, while skirting round the hills beside the lake, two of the GCs—Joshi and Kohli—had a narrow escape after slipping and sliding down a stretch of snow. Undeterred, the party proceeded after lunch to the Valley of Flowers, a vast meadow which comes into full bloom only in September but which, they declared

was a feast to the eye even in June.

While those who went to the Valley of Flowers spent the night at Ganghrea, we who had left the lake earlier went down to the Gurudwara at Gobind Ghat. The rest joined us on the morning of 12th June and we set off together for Joshi Mutt which we reached in the afternoon for our first really comfortable rest at the appointed P. W. D. bungalow. The next day we made the 19-mile march to Pipalkoti without any difficulty, thus completing exactly seven days in the hills and 110 miles of trekking.

On 14th June the official party headed by Maj. Dhillon left for Kedarnath, while the rest of us with a few GCs returned by bus to Rishikesh. After spending the night there we got back to Dehra Dun on 15th June. Meanwhile, the party to Kedarnath (11,760 ft.) proceeded via

Chamoli, Mandol, Tungnath and Gaurikund, and returned via Gupt Kashi and Agasth Muni to Rudrapur, from where they took the bus to Rishikesh. Altogether, they had done a further 104 miles of trek, taking in a little over five days, and returned to Dehra Dun on 21st June.

So ended our strenuous but rewarding holiday. The rivers and heights of the Himalayas are a sufficient attraction for anyone who has a feeling for the beauty of Nature. No one who would claim to have seen India can afford to miss them. It should be easy for anyone, in the Services or outside, who happens to be in Delhi or near about in the summer months, to make the trip to Badrinath at a cost of less than Rs. 100, and to Kedarnath also for another Rs. 50. Hemkund, however, should be regarded as a 'must' in any case.

(Concluded from previous issue)

ANCIENT CUSTOMS HAMPER WOMEN'S PROGRESS IN INDIA

THERE are today many factors retarding the progress of women in this country, having their roots in age-old prejudices and customs sanctified by traditions, virtually nullifying the concept of equality recognised in the Constitution.

While the Constitution might have accorded recognition to the concept of equality, in reality there is a wide divergence between theory and practice. If the position of Indian women is to be improved, it is essential that several basic handicaps from which they suffer must be combated. For this a beginning should be made by none other than the women's organisations themselves. The first and foremost factor hampering women's progress is the attitude of many families towards the education of the daughter. It is understandable that in a country like India, where the vast majority of

even middle-class families find it hard to educate their sons, the question of education of daughters should be neglected.

Women's Education

Anything except the barest educational opportunities for women is still regarded as a 'waste' by families who pride themselves on their 'advanced' outlook. The underlying reason for this attitude, no doubt being that since women will eventually have to marry and set up a home, money spent on their education is not likely to pay "dividends" as in the case of sons. "Dividends," in the monetary sense, perhaps, there is none. But in the sense of enrichment of the human personality and increase in happiness, the answer is yes. Until and unless this prejudice, nurtured through centuries, is broken down, there can be no hope of improvement of the status of women in the

country. The status will not depend on the laws enacted by the Parliament or the opportunities theoretical or otherwise granted, but on the lives which they lead.

Dowry System

In a country as poor as ours where girls do not make any material contribution to the family's earnings, it is perhaps natural that they should have come to be regarded as a burden. This is all the more so as the dowry system is still widely prevalent in the country. Poor and even middle-class families are often ruined in trying to get their daughters suitably married off. In some form or other the dowry system exists in a few other countries but nowhere is it found in such a virulent form as in India. In France, there is the "dot" (dowry) which has to be given at the time of the marriage and in England at the time of the settlement of property. In Japan, working girls sometimes work and earn money to marry. Today, as is well-known even for middle-class families, the dowry demanded may range from Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 5,000 and for richer classes anything from Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 40,000 or more. There are many degrading features connected with the system. Helpless illiterate girls are sometimes subjected to ill-treatment by the in-laws in the hope of extorting further sums from the girl's parents.

Though this social evil deserves the strongest condemnation, little is being done to combat it in some of the States like Bombay and West Bengal and even in South India where it is seen in its worst forms. This system, as long as it persists, will hinder the emancipation of women. One of the best ways of combating it is to give women the education and training to enable them to earn their living, so that they can be independent. But feudal customs will never be discarded as long as women's organisations

do not take the initiative in arousing social consciousness against such customs.

In these circumstances, despite the fact that the Constitution in recognition of the concept of equality has thrown careers open to women, in actual fact, only a handful of women have been able to make headway in any field. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that the majority of families still have a prejudice against their daughters' working. This springs from the age-old belief that daughters should be sheltered as much as possible until they are married.

Training For Career

Most families are still apt to look down on working women. Allied to this is the fact that few women have the training necessary to make an independent career. Should they even wish to go in for such training even when it is no hardship on the part of their families to bear the expense, they are on the whole likely to be discouraged from doing so. A change of attitude is definitely needed on the part of parents if more careers are to be thrown open to women. This is all the more necessary in our country where an immense amount of work has to be undertaken in the years to come. It can be successfully tackled if men and women are allowed to participate equally in the nation-building task.

There are several other factors which also have a deterrent influence on their progress. Some may seem quite unimportant to be included in this list of basic handicaps, but sometimes, seemingly unimportant factors can make a great deal of difference. For instance, no effort is made to encourage sports in this country. Some may even consider it "unfeminine" for women to take part in sports, such as hockey, tennis and badminton or in events like running

long jump and high jump. A change of attitude is needed on the part of those who do not encourage the participation of women in sports. Such participation would, not only promote the trend towards self-reliance, but also help maintain health and one's good looks. There is little doubt that all schools and colleges should be encouraged to pay far more attention to sports. It should form an integral part of the curri-

culum, in the wider conception of the role of education.

It is only when a concerted effort is made to overcome these prejudices by women's organisations that some of the main obstacles to the progress of women in this country can be removed. Only then can that atmosphere be created where they can attain their full stature.

—The Bharat Jyoti.

COSTLY GAMES

By M. P. JOHN

THE only time I take an active part in games is when my cycle dodges the children playing in the streets.

The last occasion when I played a real game was on the Independence Day, when I played cricket with my children. The improvised cricket-field was my room. The game ended when my son hit a boundary and broke the family mirror. That meant seven years of bad luck.

Since then I have left strict instructions with my children that they are not to play any game beneath the status of Leap Frog. I call Leap Frog a dignified game because in it all the players take active part.

Cricket is different. Only one player plays at a time—the person who bowls. Another simply keeps his bat in front of the wicket. Can you beat it, they do not even find a more dignified name for this than "block-ing". Hours pass by. The other players are in the pavilion, sipping co-co-cola and signing autograph books. Thousands are watching and munching nuts. Then comes the climax. The man holding the bat gets fed up—and hits! The whole morning he ought to have been hitting but didn't. So the crowds cheer and cheer. The gents throw their hats high in the air. The ladies wave their handbags till their lunch falls

out. And the umpire says it is time for lunch!

Races are not so slow. At least the horses show plenty of horse-sense. All the horses taking part run, and all of them do their best. They know that the winners will get a year's feeding expenses, beautiful homes, complete with carpets and mosquito-nets, and a few servants to attend on them.

The horses seem to be so enthusiastic about running that I guess all of them would reach the winning post at the same time—but for the handicaps placed on them. They are handicapped by having to carry jockeys on their backs, with their own tips about winning, and to see that the jockeys are still on their backs when reaching the winning line.

Mathematically speaking, if you put a rupee on a horse, eight annas go to the Government, four annas to the Race Club and the balance to your pocket. But the man who says that is not called a mathematician. He is called a pessimist. The optimist goes to the races to clear his debts. He anyway has the consolation that the Race Club allows him to run and to jump, to shout himself hoarse—a full sixteen annas worth for every rupee.

There is yet another game I am trying my best to appreciate. It is

boxing. One hits another till he is dead. Thousands cheer and egg him on to pure and simple murder. If the victim is not dead, the umpire allows him to get up and take more hits. In Europe boxing is held in high esteem. In fact, before each Bill is passed, the honourable members of the Parliament rise up and punch each other.

I may be wrong in all these comments about sports, because I never could afford to watch any. As a genuine reporter I am only writing on what I have not seen. However, in the name of truth, I must admit that I have once taken part in the applause when the score was changed to hundred on the cricket score board in front of a newspaper office.

You will now understand why I felt exceedingly happy when they con-

(Continued from page 14)

the thought that their lot would not be worsened still.

Sometimes we may come across a conductor who complains of a paucity of half anna pieces, and wafts oral I. O. U's all round. Being the vulnerable party—the alternative is to get down which is too dreadful to contemplate—we are content to await his pleasure. But more often than not, you forget the trifle in the exquisite relief of getting out of the bus, and perhaps recollect the loss three days later while getting down at some other point in the routes which criss-cross the city. I have thus cast some odd crumbs on the waters. Let me hope that Charon—the patron-saint of all conductors—would ferry me, when my time comes, across the dreaded river free of charge.

The conductor in mufti is like the angel without his wings—so rare that you cannot spot him at all. You may however recognise him inferentially by the deference which bus-drivers show to him, by slowing down or

structed a Stadium in the City. A colleague of mine then pointed out that pavement dwellers deserved priority in expenditure. I did not agree. Here was the Government affording facilities for sports to poor people like me, and that called for my appreciation. I attended the opening ceremony. The speeches by the leaders ushered in a new era of games.

But alas, that was the last time I ever saw the inside of the Stadium. All entries, ever since, were by tickets at prices I could not afford. And I dare not climb the surrounding trees for fear that my son may be up one of those.

You think it is a big joke that a poor man like me still entertains hopes of playing games? I don't. And I also resent your hint that jokes are something inferior to serious matters.

stopping at all odd points of the route with a view to give him a lift. In that respect, he is like V. I. Ps—for the traffic is held up for his convenience! I have watched many conductors in their undress—their faces wrinkled with care and their eyes betraying a far-away, hunted look which is the hall-mark of even the proletariat ground down by *samsara*. The conductor's role in society marks one of the halts of the middle-class bourgeoisie in their steep incline to self-immolation.

I do not know if the Government has devised any special emblem to signalise the existence of the Transport department. If it is not too late, I would suggest the setting up of the 'Unknown Conductor' as the mascot of the youngest service. Even a statue in his honour would not be amiss; for in the long run it would be cheaper to give him a stone than a living wage for which he is beginning to clamour more and more noisily and frequently.

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ECCENTRIC FASHIONS IN DIVORCE

By SUBHASH J. RELE

THE unpredictability of marriage is vastly intriguing. In some places marriage has a disconcerting habit of turning into a misadventure no sooner it takes place. It is indeed but scant wonder that from time immemorial divorce codes and customs have invariably fascinated mankind. The idiosyncracies of divorce codes moreover, reflect the eccentricities of our present mundane ways of life.

Divorce may be a common ailment but it can affect people in surprisingly different ways. It may seem odd to know that the Romans had a very queer method of getting divorces. Plotting against the regime was the common ground for divorce. The majority came to nothing, but if a husband or wife could prove that the other had taken part in a plot, divorce was automatic.

The divorce codes in China are infinitely beguiling. The Chinese, however, had them more than two thousand years ago. Under it a wife may be unobtrusively divorced for any of these causes: barrenness, lasciviousness, inattention to parents-in-law, loquacity, thievishness, ill-temper and inveterate infirmity. A Chinaman had to prove that his wife was guilty of any of the several sins. It is enchanting to know that divorce for any other reason was legally punished by eighty blows of the bamboo. In Japan a husband may divorce his wife for the same reason as in China, but the privilege is seldom used.

The Tahitian has a character all his own. It was more frequent for him to cast off his first wife and take a more youthful partner than it was for him to live with two wives. In

some parts of Malaya a man, without any second thoughts, turns away his wife as soon as she becomes ugly from hard work and maternal cares. Among the Sinhalese sickness is the most usual reason why a husband repudiates his wife.

Tribal Customs

In Tonga a bizarre and vexatious marriage custom prevails. A husband dismisses a wife by simply telling her that she may go; a Chinook husband can disown his wife according to his caprice; most Australian aborigines could drive a wife away at any time and a simple word from a Caribbean husband served to terminate the union. In some bizarre parts of New Guinea and the Marianne Group, marriages were dissolved without any ceremony and at the will of either party and the same custom prevailed among Island Columbians. It is a curious phenomenon that husbands and wives among the Indians of Guatemala and the Moxos of South America frequently part from each other from mere whim.

Among the colourful aboriginals of Australia divorce ritual is elaborately primitive and nebulous. The little aboriginal to be divorced stands alone at the foot of a tree. The whole tribe gathered in a circle, watches closely and carefully, for they will be both judge and jury. Forty paces away from the perplexed girl stands her husband enigmatically armed with ten spears—he has ten chances to prove his case. At a given signal the man throws his spears deliberately, one by one. The girl, though breathless and battling, does not run away but with all the cunning at her disposal, she

moves from hither and thither, dodging the spear. If the husband misses all the ten aims—the girl is free and divorced. In this age of practical rationalism this sounds rather outlandish.

A Turkish law is equally simple and elegiac. A Turkish husband wastes no time in dilly-dallying. When he wants a divorce, he has just to push his wife bodily out of the house and she is divorced. Among certain native tribes of Central Africa a man has only to carry his wife out of his hut and place her on the ground in front of it and she is divorced. Fantastic? Unbelievable? Perhaps. But more fantastic and unbelievable are the divorce customs in some other parts of the world. In Siberia a husband has to do no more than tear off his wife's veil in the street and they are divorced. In Indo-China fool is taken with the help of a pair of sticks. A marriage can be divorced if a husband breaks a pair of three chopsticks in the presence of a couple of witnesses. There is an analogous ritual among tribes of Red Indians of America. They too dissolve their marriages by breaking some sticks, which are tied significantly in a bundle at the time of a marriage and preserved in the household since then, as a symbol of the marital union. The Malaysians are so fond of changes that a man frequently marries and divorces the same woman three or four times in the course of his life.

Strange Divorce Codes

Don't ever fancy that the laws of divorce operate everywhere in favour of the male species alone. There may be several who are inclined to laugh at the idea but half-naked jungle tribes in some parts of East Central Africa recognize the right of a woman to break the nuptial tie if one's husband fails to sew her clothes. Sounds strange. But stranger are the divorce codes prevalent among the Shans of Burma. In Burma a drunkard can be turned out of the house by his wife.

We wish all our readers, advertisers and subscribers a very happy and prosperous New Year.

Oddly enough, not only does she thereby become free to wed a second time but she is also entitled to retain all the cash and chattels of the divorced husband. The law is impudently effective. It leaves one wondering as why the same code is not applied in India. It will definitely make Prohibition a success. Again the wife can demand a divorce, if her husband ill-treats her or is incapable of supporting her.

Divorce codes in Tibet are strangely lackadaisical. They have provided for equal rights for the sexes in the matter of divorces. Both parties to a marriage have to agree if there is to be a dissolution. Another quaint code is that a divorced person cannot remarry in Tibet. In Morocco, however, a Mohammedan woman can divorce a man only by fleeing to another man's abode.

Some divorce laws are loquaciously vague and have more terminological ornamentation about them. The law governing divorce among the Jews, recorded in the Book of Deuteronomy, is really fascinating. It stipulates that, "when a man hath taken a wife and married her, and it comes to pass that she finds no favour in his eyes because he hath found some uncleanness in her, then let him write a bill of divorcement and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house, and when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife." The word "uncleanness" which literally means "nakedness in aught"—was incomprehensible to many. No wonder in later times created a lot of controversy.

FILMS

By V. P. SATHE

THE Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Indian Talkie which began on the 16th and ended on the 22nd proved a tame affair with neither producers nor stars evincing any enthusiastic interest. The inaugural function at *Liberty* itself was rather poorly attended with artistes, directors and producers belonging to a particular community almost boycotting it. The speeches made on the occasion were also tame. The morning shows of the classics, arranged at different theatres, proved a flop with a very poor attendance in spite of wide publicity. Some of the exhibitors had illuminated their theatres, but the illuminations also lacked the gusto and colour demanded by the occasion.

The lack of enthusiasm on the part of the film people was also evident at the symposium held by the Film Journalists. Though the hall was full, as David remarked, the attendance of the film people was almost negligible. Yet the symposium was noteworthy for the excellent speeches made by the spokesmen of the film industry. The symposium began with a lengthy speech by Shri Bhatt, the Chairman of the Censor Board. Instead of speaking on the subject of 'Film and the Nation,' he confined his speech to the function of the Censor Board. The speech was rather 'dry.' In contrast, Shri Chardulal Shah's speech was explosive. He defended the film producer in an aggressive manner and answered the critics of the industry in dynamic and strong words.

He decried the manner in which Income Tax was levied on film producers. He blamed the arm-chair critics of films in India and averred

that far from encouraging crime, the film had helped to reduce it. The films have contributed most to the spread of Hindi, the national language; and as to the charge against films for not confining to classical music, Shri Shah stated that when even our Prime Minister admitted that he was not attracted by classical music, it was difficult to expect the film producer or the picturegoer to be vitaries of it. Chetan Anand pleaded that the main purpose of the film was entertainment and the lowest of the love film, as long as it provided good entertainment, served a good purpose. He was against all loose talk of culture. David went a step further; he said that there is no culture today, not even agriculture! He cited British authorities to prove that the charge against films for encouraging juvenile delinquency was wrong and demanded a study of the audience reaction, to guide the industry as well as the Government. Kamini Kaushal cited the example of China and the Soviet Union which she visited recently. She said that both these nations had shown how the film can be used for educating and enlightening the people. Summing up the arguments, Raj Kapoor said that he believed in making ideal films and there were many obstacles in the way, but he and his colleagues would fight them. He said that today, the Indian films were being shown all over the world and they would continue to bring other nations into closer cultural contact with India.

Shri Shantilal Shah, Minister, for Education, Bombay, who presided over the occasion, admitted the importance of films in spreading Hindi language, defended the entertainment tax policy and pleaded for 'free enterprise' as against Government control over the industry, in the name of democracy and freedom of expression. He also expressed his surprise at the terms the producers agreed to in their finance agreements;

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he also said that the artistes were paid too much.

Friday was observed as Ladies' Day and on Saturday, a star show is being held at Vallabhai Patel Stadium. While reserving the comments on this show for next week, I must state that I was pained to hear that most of the stars were in no mood to co-operate with the organisers of the show. In fact, one of them told me that they were insulted, booed and shouted at by the so-called stars who believed that they owed nothing to the film industry.

Personality of the week

The film journalists stole a march over the organisers of the talkie jubilee again by honouring the oldest pioneer of the film industry—87 year old R. G. Bhatavdekar. He had cranked the movie camera long before Dadasaheb Phalka. At the symposium, this grand old man was specially invited and introduced to the audience and garlanded.

The old man was dressed in typical Maharashtrian style with red pugree and long white coat. It was revealed that he had taken a newsreel in 1902 when Shri R. G. Paranjpe, the first Indian wrangler of Cambridge University returned to Bombay. He also shot some other newsreels which were screened at the Gaiety Theatre, Bombay. Later he worked on a camera and handed it over to one Shri Patankar.

This old man who shot the first movie in India is alive and healthy even now. The film journalists scored a scoop in spotting him and bringing him into the limelight on such an appropriate occasion.

Picture of the week

I. S. Johar seems to have hit the bull's eye again in his latest offering *Hum Sab Chor Hain* for Filmistan, for the picture seems to have caught the fancy of the picturegoers alright.

The picture itself is, however, not very distinguished as a work of art or motion picture craft. The main story revolves

one of whom is married to a rogue and the other who escapes from the clutches of some clever crooks and finds a job in a theatre, is rather loosely knit, and full of improbabilities. What is worse, it tends to pull into boring patches at times. Yet it has its exciting moments and interesting situations which enliven it.

It is interposed with the usual quota of song and dance numbers. The songs are by I. S. Johar and Majnu. For once, Johar scores over O. P. Nayyar.

For, while O. P. Nayyar's tunes lack the usual vigour, Johar's songs, though borrowed, are excellent and he executes them with a deftness that deserves a special tribute. The adventures of Karka and Pharka superbly played by Johar and Majnu are the life of the film; though they are crooks, they succeed in winning the heart of the audience and the court scene in which they defend the heroine is *piece-de-resistance* of the film. The only pity is that they do not appear often on the screen and the main story does not revolve round them.

The main story is spun round Bimla and Kamla, rather the former who gets a job in a theatre and falls in love with the proprietor. Kamla is thrown overboard into the sea in an altercation with Deepak, her husband. Bimla who has undergone a punishment, thanks to Karka and Pharka, comes on the scene and Deepak exploits her resemblance with his wife to save the situation. Bimla has to suffer a lot and so has the other sister, until in the court she is tried for murder of Deepak and all things are cleared. Seth Dhirajmal Shantidas, who is the father of these two twin sisters, is also a lovable character played well by Badri Prasad. Nalini gives a good account of herself in the roles of Kamla and Bimla. Shammi Kapoor, Amita and Pran give adequate support to this film made in typical Filmistan style.



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PETER PAN-DIT ABROAD

Scene: No. 10, Downing Street:
Time: Soon after Pandit Nehru's arrival in London *en route* to Washington; Two Prime Ministers—one of a great country shrinking to its geographical size and the other of a big country having greatness thrust upon it—are having a *tete a tete*.

what it's worth. Need I say more?

Sir Anth: This Suez Canal has no further interest for us. But isn't it odd that you have never spoken about the future of Israel? By the way, have you an embassy at Tel Aviv?

Sir Anthony: Good to see you again, my dear Pandit (the last word is pronounced as if it rhymed with *stand it* or *bandit*.) Seems ages since we last met.

Pandit: N-N-No . . . not yet . . .

Sir Anth: And yet you've been badgering America to recognise China. If only you'd explain the mystery of it!

Pandit: How *de co*, Sir Anthony? I dared not hope for this meeting . .

Pandit: There's no mystery at all, Sir Anthony. The Arabs hate Israel, and I'm friends with Arabs chiefly because they and I dislike Pakistan for different reasons. Further, Israel is a small, very small country; it makes no difference whether you recognise it or not. But look at China, its hugeness, its numbers and all of them are communists—and they're on my door-step. How can I afford to displease them . . . ?

Sir Anth: (wagging a finger with mock-solemnity) Pray don't rub it in. It was I that was on tenterhooks. For I feared to be snubbed in private as I had been snubbed in public.

Pandit: (breezily) All in the day's work, Sir Anthony; but I assure you, you have no truer friend than me. I would fain continue to be friends with you and your great country.

Sir Anth: I see—the big battalions—all over again!

Sir Anth: In that case I must pray to be saved from my friends. But mind you, we can take a beating—specially when we have not been beaten.

Pandit: If you like to put it that way; actually it's Asia for Asiatics which decides me there; otherwise I would miss the bus, you know. I look forward to my meeting with Ike to explain all this to him.

Pandit: However let's look forward to the future.

Sir Anth: Happyman to have one. I have only a *cast*. I hope you will succeed where we have failed. If I am not being too inquisitive, what is your own blue-print for the Middle East?

Sir Anth: There again, it's a sore point with me. For much as we all hereabout dislike Ike, I was willing to pocket my pride and wait on him. But d'you know, he has cut me dead with a 3000-mile far-away look. However I hope I shall meet you again; that would be like seeing the President himself at second-hand.

Pandit: I know my limitations, Sir Anthony. Our country has no strength or power, and can only claim some sort of moral authority which we derive from our leader. It's at the world's disposal for

Pandit: Certainly with pleasure. And may I repeat it again: I think this Commonwealth is a jolly

good idea and I mean to stick to it, just to prove to the world at large that I bear no malice.

Sir Anth: It's so good of you to say it. But—er—fact is—there's growing pressure in my party for getting out of the Commonwealth.

Pandit: (taken aback) What d'you mean? Britain getting out of the Commonwealth!

Sir Anth: Exactly. Now that we're played out, we fade out. They want you to run the show with Pakistan and Ceylon for company. Believe me we shall watch with sympathy your leadership of it.

Pandit: But my dear Sir Anthony, I don't mean to get out of the Commonwealth—really and truly . . .

Sir Anth: I'm afraid it may not be possible to accommodate you. We shall lose the next general elections, and Labour will get in thereafter. One of their first acts would be to wait in deputation on you, and give you *carte blanche* as to the best way of disbanding the NATO and pulling down all curtains . . .

Pandit: I think you're pulling my legs, Sir Anthony . . .

Sir Anth: Not at all, dear Pandit; and this is merely advance intimation that I am giving you. I hope you will have a fine flight and return safe. *Au Revoir.* (And with that the two emerge on the steps of 10, Downing Street, and smilingly pose for the inevitable photograph.)

SCENE II

Scene: Gettysburg Farm: Another *tete a tete* between President Eisenhower and Pandit Nehru. For fuller descriptions of the farm and its extent, contents and amenities together with the romantic antecedents of an Angus bull, the reader is referred to

the luscious descriptions in the dailies of the relevant dates.

Ike: Welcome Mr. Prime Minister to my modest little farm; actually as you know I've only a half-interest in all this show.

Pandit: You call this modest, Mr. President! It's magnificent, wonderful, and your hospitality breath-taking—superb, colossal, astounding . . . Indeed I must ask your marvellous journalist-chaps for a loan of some more suitable adjectives of which they seem to possess a lot!

Ike: Ha—ha—ha! Wal, I'm so glad you like it all. Mind you the Republicans don't wish to be thought behind the Democrats in welcoming you. Folks here think a fine lot of your country and your great leader—Mahatma Gandhi . . .

Pandit: Frankly I'm overwhelmed . . .

Ike: Make yourself at home, Mr. Prime Minister. We're going to have an entire day all to ourselves . . .

Pandit: (flattered) I know—for our talks—I feel so diffident, Mr. President.

Ike: Gosh, No! The papers will do all the talking; let's relax and enjoy ourselves.

Pandit: (uneasily) Of course. But the world is boking forward to the outcome of our talks, and the international situation is already looking up as a result of . . .

Ike: (hastily) True very true. The dear fellow Dules has all the tricks up his sleeve. Tell him all you feel about things in general.

Pandit: I will; but I thought that a private discussion with you about such urgent problems as the recognition of China, scrapping of all military pacts, Goa, Alge-

Ike: And Pakistan, and Kashmir and goodness knows what else. All these keep the papers busy, soae writing about them one way and some another. But *Amurica* wh go it alone if need be. With th. UNO if possible—without it if necessary. W've risked British anger, though we hated to do it. Does it convey nothing to you Mr. Prime Minister?

Pandit: (taken aback) I see what you mean . . .

Ike: Yeah—there is the other side to the hedge or ditch or curtain; and the assignment of each of us is to mind our own frontiers—to tend our garden and keep the peace with our neighbours before we preach it abroad. See my point?

Pandit: But you don't know Mr.

President how much we've had to put up with our neighbours. A cantankerous lot, medieval in outlook . . .

Ike: I sympathise with you; it's always the other fellow, isn't it? It's the same all along the line. Well, well, mere talk is so enervating; let's have something to eat . . .

After dinner they tuck themselves warmly in two rooms and doze away over the latest thriller. Twelve hours pass in the twinkling of an eye, and they come out refreshed, and hand out the briefest communique recording the wide area of agreement between them left undisturbed after their Marathon discussions of world problems!

L. N. S.

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LOVE ON THE GUITAR

His hair was dishevelled, and he was playing wildly, crashing zig-zag . . . crash upon crash . . .

KUMAR had just finished feeding the little fish in the glass tank. That was a duty he always performed in the mornings with infinite pleasure. He lit a cigarette and sank into a chair.

The blind girl and her mother would come in any moment. They were always punctual. And then he would play slowly, gently on his guitar to the delight of the blind girl.

He threw both his legs across the table in a carefree manner and puffed out rings of smoke. Someone knocked at the door. "Come in" he said, getting up from his chair.

The door opened and Shanthi came in. Shanthi and Kumar were classmates several years ago. They were good friends then.

"Good morning," Kumar said, advancing towards her. "Good morning," she said, stretching out a hand. He was about to extend his hand, but the next moment he brought his palms together in the oriental fashion. With his keen, observant eyes, Kumar detected her face change colour. She, too, brought her palms together and smiled. He knew it was a forced smile.

Both of them were in the room, seated near each other.

"Are you happy, Kumar?" Shanthi asked.

Happy? . . . the question! Could he tell her it was none of her business NOW? . . . it concerned him and him only. But some years ago . . . yes, then her question would have made sense. Now it had not. He had not given her happiness. Now there were other

Angus bull, the reader is referred to

things to give him happiness . . . the little fish, the blind girl, the dogs, cats . . . every split-second of life's time.

"Kumar, aren't you happy?", she asked again, wondering at his silence.

As for being happy, no one need teach him now . . . why should others ask him anyway? . . . about his being happy or not! How inquisitive these humans!

The cigarette butt burnt his fingers. He threw it out of the window.

"Why Kumar, aren't you happy here? Won't you tell me?" she asked anxiously and took his hands in hers.

Why was she holding his hands? He couldn't even feel the touch of her fingers! . . . everything seemed benumbed!

Kumar extricated his hands from hers. Shanthi bit her lips.

"I am quite happy, Shanthi. In fact, I believe I am the happiest man alive today," he said gaily.

Why did he remove his hands? . . . even earlier he hadn't shook hands with her, but merely saluted in the oriental fashion. Perhaps, he was very much angry with her.

"Are you really happy?", she asked.

Kumar laughed. Her face changed colour. "He has no regard for me, now," she thought.

Are you sure you are not half as happy as I am, Shanthi. The words pierced her ears in a challenging way. She was shocked.

Would he have spoken like that before? she thought. He seemed to have a touch of sarcasm lurking in his words? . . .

of all money
ria, Cyprus . . .

She met the challenge with equal force. "How can you measure my happiness, Kumar?", she asked.

Kumar lit a cigarette, sent out a dense cloud of smoke and said, "Shanthi, real happiness cannot be found in married life. Matrimonial happiness is a defiled one. Fake. In single life one gets lots of happiness. One is never worried."

She smiled. To hell with his philosophy, she thought. Always cynical of others! Poor, frustrated chap. He had always a philosophy to suit his needs.

"You are too cynical, Kumar," she said.

"Cynical?"—Kumar said to himself. She would never understand him. If she had only understood him then . . .

He sent forth rings of smoke. He always loved to do it, when he was ruffled—and watch the pale-bluish rings of smoke become larger and larger and finally disappear leaving behind a void, an airy nothingness.

Some voices were heard outside. Kumar looked through the open doorway. The blind girl and her mother were coming. "Excuse me, Shanthi," he said smiling and went towards the door.

The rays of the morning sun had delightfully lit up the bluish-green waters in the small glass tanks. At one end of the beautiful aquarium were a lovely pair of Veil-Tail Goldfish, gliding betwixt the green aquatic plants; near it a pair of Siamese Fighters, which when excited assumed all the colours of the rainbow; a little further away a host of tiny, swift-moving Platys and Swordtails; and at the farther end a lovely pair of blue Kissing Gouramis.

They were there in the room—all four of them. The blind girl sat next to her mother on a sofa.

Kumar was playing the guitar. Slowly, gently. It was a doleful note. The blind girl and her mother were listening. Shanthi too.

What's all this?—a blind girl and a grey-haired woman? . . . and Kumar

playing the guitar? Didn't he now look very different from what he was a few minutes ago? Now he looked soft, tender, cheerful.

Kumar was concentrating on the strings of the guitar. Now and then he looked across at the blind girl.

"I think it's going to rain," the grey-haired woman said, looking at Shanthi.

"I, too, think so," Shanthi replied.

Kumar was strumming the guitar, his eyes rivetted on it. He didn't seem to care whether it rained or not.

Darkness crept into the room stealthily as clouds gathered high up in the sky. Now and then the occasional, faint rumblings of distant thunder punctuated the music of the guitar. But Kumar went on unmindful of the noise around.

There was a heavy blowing outside. Strong gusts blew in sporadic outbursts slamming the doors and window shutters. A dry mango leaf caught in a current of wind floated into the room, swung in mid-air and then shot down involuntarily on to the floor.

Shanthi coughed and Kumar looked at her. Suddenly his deft fingers moved swiftly. The note rose higher and higher. Kumar was crashing on the strings violently. The note was rising . . . rising . . . rising . . .

The blind girl, her mother and Shanthi were shocked. Kumar went on crashing . . . crashing . . . the note reaching a crescendo . . .

Small globules of perspiration broke into tiny streamlets across Kumar's forehead. His hair was dishevelled and he was playing wildly, crashing zig-zag . . . crash upon crash . . .

The clouds darkened and then the rain came, at first a drizzle, then a slight shower and finally a torrential downpour. The noise of thunder could now be heard closer than before. It rattled and roared. But Kumar appeared to be deaf.

Shanthi got up and going near Kumar called out "Kumar" . . . "Kumar." But in vain. "Kumar, will

you stop for a minute, Kumar?", she pleaded. He didn't hear her words; he couldn't.

The grey-haired woman also went near Kumar. She shook his shoulders. She shook him harder. But no response. Kumar was crashing still more fiercely.

The blind girl pressed her hands flat against her ears. What's the matter with Kumar today, she thought. Why was he playing so violently?

"Kumar" . . . "Kumar" . . . Shanthi cried out. Outside, the thunder roared menacingly, the blowing was furious and the rain fell in heavy showers.

. . . Cring-crang . . . cring-crang . . . cring-crang . . . BANG! . . .

Two strings snapped up. The guitar rolled to the floor with a crash. Kumar fell sideways and Shanthi held him. But, as if instinctively, he wrig-

gled out and fell on the floor by the side of the guitar.

Kumar lay unconscious in the mental asylum. The doctor came in.

"How is he, doctor?"—Shanthi asked anxiously.

"Well, how are you interested in the case?"—the doctor enquired.

"I . . . I . . . I am his sister . . .", she stammered. She wanted to tell a lie. And she did it.

The doctor looked suspiciously. She's telling a lie—he thought. These young people, that's what they say. Perhaps, they must have been interested in each other.

"Please, doctor . . ." Shanthi was impatient.

"It's a rather serious case, madam"—the doctor said. Then he added as an afterthought: "It looks as though he has been playing Love on his mind's guitar for long . . . and now a few strings have given way."

matter of fact, I have been doing my little bit to realise this objective for the last three months. Despite many practical hurdles, I am continuing my efforts. In this connection, I have contacted (by means of letters) a few important persons and hope to contact a few more who might be helpful in the task.

I am enclosing a copy of the letter written by me to Rajaji in this regard and also his reply, for reproduction in your journal. I have not lost hope in the cause. With the co-operation of some important men in the political field I am hopeful of achieving some good results.

But, there are serious limits to what a man like me can do in such a big task like this. It needs many honest individuals who should strive ceaselessly and unitedly to achieve this great objective. I am much encouraged by many articles and editorials that have been appearing in your esteemed weekly for the last two months on this theme. Among the editorials I value the one which appeared in the issue dated September 22 1956 entitled "Prevent One Party Rule" as an inspiring one. I also attach importance to these three articles: the one by "Kongot" entitled "Rajaji is Rising," the

other ones by S. Narayan entitled "A New Party To Promote Free Enterprise," and "Socialism Vs. Private Enterprise." The first two appeared in the issue dated November 10th and the last one in the issue dated October 27th. It is needless to say that all these writings have whipped up my enthusiasm and caused in me a deep desire to do something in the matter even under the most hard and difficult circumstances that I am placed in.

I may state that I was a government servant in Revenue Department in South Kanara District as clerk for about 8 years and I resigned in March this year in order to devote my time completely to the cause of the country. I cannot, however, claim that this particular thought (regarding opposition parties) was in my mind when I resigned. All the same, there was some deep desire to devote myself wholly to the cause of the country. I have given up in toto the idea of associating myself with the ruling party in any form though this has meant a great personal loss. I believe nothing great and enduring can be accomplished without throwing away the shackles of self-interest. I have completely pledged myself to the service of the country.

I want to contribute my mite to the cause of building a strong opposition party. For that purpose, we need not start new parties at all. All that is needed is to unite such of the existing opposition parties and groups as agree to a minimum set of principles. I do not know to what extent I may succeed. However, I feel that this is not a matter in which I can do much. I think this is a most patriotic and sacred task that has got to be performed by many. I hope and trust that you will lend your valuable co-operation, support and help to realise this laudable objective. I think I can expect the same help from the gentlemen who contributed the articles mentioned above.

A. S. KARANTH

Copy of Sri A. S. Karanth's letter dated 9th October 1956 to Mr. C. Rajagopalachari.

Respected and Dear Sir,

It gives me great satisfaction that in recent times intelligent people have been thinking in terms of an opposition party in the interests of democracy in India.

This thought has taken hold of me to the exclusion of all others like the Kasargod affair in which I take a passionate interest and has been restless for the last several days. In an attempt to contribute my meagre efforts to realise this ideal I have contacted a prominent person in the city very recently. I have my limitations. But on that score I shall not give up my efforts. I feel it is a sacred duty and has got to be performed at all cost.

I am extremely happy to read from the papers the report of your address at Gandhigram on the 7th October pointing out the need for a separate political party to serve as an effective opposition to the party in power. I need not say that I have found my own thoughts echoed there in forceful language and I have the highest admiration and regard for you. Surely, what the country wants now is a party having as its members men of strong character and principles. Such a party as you hinted at should be neither communal nor communistic but must be built on strong and enduring democratic and free principles. It should not commit the fatal mistake of dismissing religion and spirituality as "private matters" and having nothing to do at public and social levels. Such a party, I think, will be a tremendous success in this country and is sure to win a large number of seats in the elections.

The Communists are quite out of the picture (as they deserve to be) as they have no roots in the soil. The socialists and other like-minded parties are composed of a set of people who in the event of success are prone to commit the same mistakes or perhaps worse. It is obvious that communal parties are no solution, as they breed dissensions and disunity in the country. It pains me deeply when certain congressmen brag of the achievements of the party and forecast their success in a smug way. The nation is tired of the near dictatorial methods adopted by the Congress Governments. The sole reason for all the mad adventures we see today is the absence of an effective Opposition Party to take the reins of government if the necessity arises.

It would be a fine thing, if some honest men join together and form a party soon. It is my earnest desire that your party must take a leading part in this

CORRESPONDENCE

Need For an Opposition Party

The formation of a party to oppose the Congress in the coming elections is the need of the hour. It is indispensable in the interests of good government and of democracy. If the large majority of the people of this vast country are to feel the glow and sunshine of independence this must be undertaken at once. The radical solution to all problems lies in driving out of power by means of elections the present corrupt and inefficient regime and its henchmen. This is possible only if there is unity among the opponents of the Congress.

The pity of it is that there are too many opposition parties with divergent policies, most of which are undemocratic and totalitarian in outlook. Among them there are some democratic elements also whose co-operation would be valuable in forming a new party. Communists and the so-called socialist elements have to be excluded as their structure and policies are unrealistic and oppressive. I have been reading your weekly with great interest ever since you began championing the cause I have referred to. As a

great task. The country looks to its wise men. May be, they may have to sacrifice their comforts and undergo hardships. But unless they do so, there is no hope for the country. I hope, sir, that you will bestow your valuable thought on this and do the needful. I am prepared to meet you personally.

(Sd.) A. S. Karanth.

Copy of Rajaji's reply dated 10th October 1956 to Sri Karanth.

Dear Sir,

Your letter of 9th. I agree with you.

But I am not young enough for taking a lead in organising what we desire. Moreover, those who wish to oppose should take up the work, not one like me, who wants an opposition but not to oppose himself.

Please, therefore, do not try to meet me. There is nothing to be gained by it.

(Sd.) C. Rajagopalachariar.

Tamil As State Language

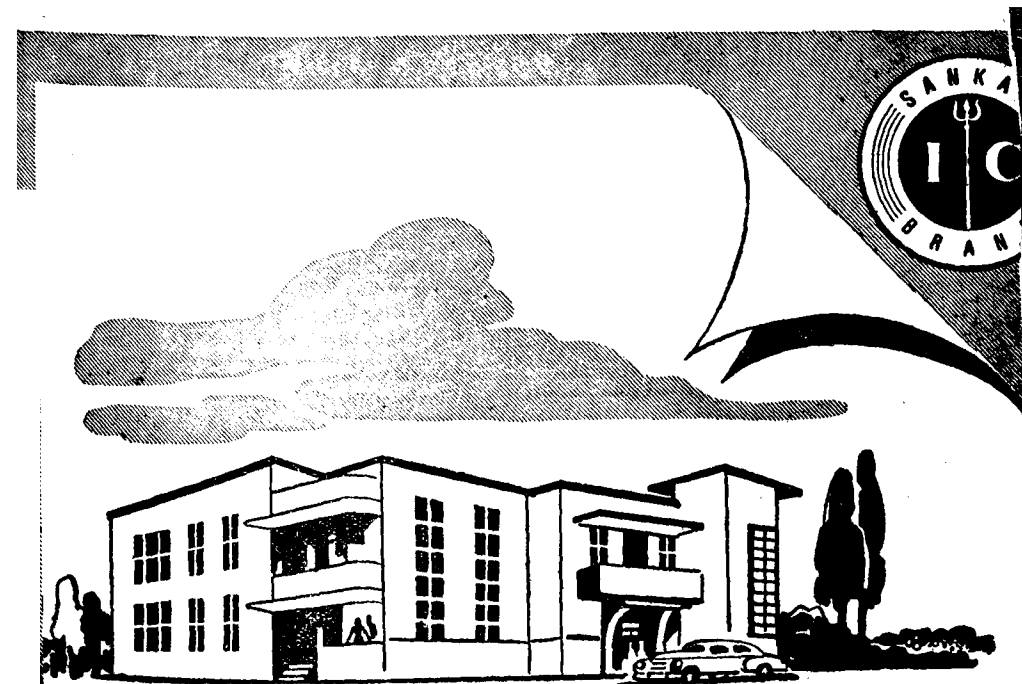
The Madras Official Language Bill seeking to make Tamil the official language of Madras State, published a few days ago, is undoubtedly an epoch-making piece of legislation. But, the measure is none too surprising since it might well be a sort of political stunt adopted by the party in power with a view to appeasing a vocal section of the Tamil public who have been agitating since the re-organisation of States not only for introducing Tamil as the state language but for changing the name of the State into Tamilnad. One could easily have anticipated the present legislation from the recent trend of policy pursued by the Government. For the first time, the budget speech was delivered in Tamil in the Legislature a week ago in accordance with the desire of a vast majority both inside and outside the Legislature. The statement of objects and reasons appended to the Bill contains an apology for the measure in as much as it defends it as strictly in consonance with the spirit and letter of Article 345 of the Constitution, which empowers every state to decide upon its official language. Section 3 of the Bill, however, envisages the continuance of English in all acts, ordinances, bills and other proceedings of the Government. The Bill is expected to be placed on the statute book.

close of the present session of the State Legislature.

That Tamil cannot replace English in the administrative sphere at least for some decades to come is a well-known fact. We have been accustomed to a highly developed system at all levels of administration which is inherently sound and practicable enough for all our purposes. It would be blind folly to abolish by a stroke of the pen all that is best in such a system and tread an uncertain path for gratifying a false sense of patriotism. It is provided in the present Bill that experiments will be carried on with a view to examine the administrative feasibility of the Tamil language in the districts as has been done in Tiruchirapalli since 1948. This plea for experiment may be a strong argument against the hasty introduction of the Bill now.

Again, the powers that be wish to encourage Tamil not only at the expense of English but at the expense of the other languages also, as is evident from the recent G.O. regarding the teaching of Sanskrit and other oriental languages in schools. One fundamental fact that should be borne in mind in this regard is that Tamil can never progress by the suppression of the other languages. The history of Tamil proves amply that it has drawn extensively upon and flourished side by side with its sister tongue as one of the beautiful languages with a fine touch of classicism and a hoary tradition. The Renaissance of Tamil has now become a fait accompli and the Tamil language can come into its own and grow to its full stature only in unison with the other languages of India and not in splendid isolation. The continuance of English as the official language will never retard the progress of Tamil as the popular language of the people of Tamilnad. When all this is said, our leaders should realise that the way to popularise Tamil is not by making it the official language in a heated emotional fashion. Linguism has been the curse of our national life and our leaders have allowed it to grow stronger day by day with the result that we in the South are today placed in a serious dilemma of choosing between the devil of Hindi imperialism of the North and the deep sea of Tamil fanaticism in the South.

R. CHELLAPPA



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