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Editor: Ajoy Ghosh

India's Path
AJOY GHOSH

Labour Policy
RANEN SEN

Kalidas
RAM BILAS SHARMA

Minimum Wages
V. D. CHOPRA

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Eight Annas

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EditorialTRIUMPH OF MARXISM-LENINISM
IN CHINA

One of the most important events of international life is taking place in Peking. The Eighth Congress of the Communist Party of China will not only sum up the record of world-shaking achievements but chart out the line of advance for a country which is one of the makers of contemporary history. The reports, discussions and resolutions of this Congress need to be studied and pondered over not only by every Indian Communist, but equally by all patriots and democrats.

The road traversed by our Chinese comrades has been a long, difficult and glorious one. It has been a literal Long March, covered with sacrifice and heroism, from the darkness of foreign and feudal oppression to the new dawn of the people's rule. Starting with 100 members in 1921, hounded and persecuted, fighting, losing and in the end winning, the Chinese Communists now number over ten millions and lead over 680 millions along the road to mankind's future—socialism.

As the great leader of the Chinese Communists, Mao Tse-tung pointed out in his opening speech at the Congress:

"In the eleven years since the Seventh Congress we have, in this great country with its vast territory, huge population and complex conditions, completed the bourgeois democratic revolution and we have also gained a decisive victory in the Socialist revolution. It has been proved in practice in these two revolutions, that the line followed by the Central Committee of the Party from the Seventh Congress up to the present time is correct, and that our Party is a great Marxist-Leninist Party which has attained political maturity."

Mao Tse-tung went on to say: "The victories of the revo-

lution and construction in our country are victories of Marxism-Leninism. Close integration of Marxist-Leninist theory with the practice of the Chinese revolution is the ideological principle consistently followed by our Party."

These words need to be studied again and again by those who claim that Marxism is "out-moded," who try to make out that recent events have confirmed the "predictions" of the critics of Marxism, who claim that Marxism is "unsuitable" for the countries of Asia. Not only the trail-blazing feats of the Soviet Union and its mighty Communist Party but the tumultuous happenings in China give the lie to their claims. It is only by following the philosophy and teachings of Marxism-Leninism as their guide that the people of China were able to shape their own destiny. Without the granite ideological basis of Marxism-Leninism the Chinese Communists could never have accomplished their titanic deeds. Let the petty scoffers at Marxism provide a single example of any of their "theories" or "philosophies" helping the accomplishment of anything even remotely comparable to this.

The reports of the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party make clear that in the fullest sense of the term to them Marxism is not "a dogma but a guide to action." Comrade Liu Shao-chi in the report of the Central Committee states: "To enable our Party to continue to maintain its correct and sound leadership in the future, the main thing is to see to it that Party organisations and Party members make fewer mistakes stemming from ideological *understanding* ... since the petty bourgeoisie constitutes the majority of the population of our country, the feelings and sentiments of this class often influence us, and exert pressure on us. The bourgeoisie likewise influences us in various ways. The Party must regularly carry on inner-Party education so as to prevent the bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideologies from impairing its political purity. Our mistakes not only have their social roots, but also have their roots in the faulty understanding of reality."

Summing up the historical experience of several years, Liu Shao-chi concluded: "The above-mentioned historical experience gained by our Party fully demonstrates that, in order to ensure the smooth advance of the Party's work and

and to avoid major mistakes, the key lies in overcoming subjectivism ideologically." It is this non-dogmatic, creative attitude to Marxism-Leninism, the rigorous application of it to the realities and characteristics of China that laid the ideological basis for all the victories.

China's transition to socialism is replete with lessons for the international working class movement, for all forces and groups standing for socialism.

Liu Shao-chi pointed out that after the conclusion of the anti-Japanese war, the Chinese Communist Party had tried to bring social and political reform in China by peaceful means. It conducted peaceful negotiations with the Kuomintang on several occasions, but the latter, with the aid of the American imperialists, launched a civil war. "Unlike the reactionaries, the people are by no means war-like. Even during the war, wherever it was possible to achieve liberation peacefully, we strove, made approaches and conducted negotiations to this end, and we did achieve peaceful liberation. But when the people were compelled to take up arms, they were completely justified in doing so. To oppose the people taking up arms and demand that they submit to the attacking enemy would be following an opportunist line. Our Party followed the revolutionary line and today we have the People's Republic of China."

Following the completion of the bourgeois democratic revolution, the peaceful transition to socialism has commenced, the rich details of which are available in the reports and speeches. But what stands out for all to see is the utter falsehood of those who assert that Communists and Marxists are "wedded to violence," that "they know only to destroy." It was the Kuomintang of Chiang Kai-shek who forced the civil war on the people, and it was following his overthrow that the people were able to fully express their boundless creative capacities.

In many places the Chinese leaders make it abundantly clear that it was the seizure of power by the working class, heading a broad united front which included the national bourgeoisie, that constituted the essential prerequisite for the great advances now being made. The experience of China is a powerful indictment of those who believe in the

“gradual growing over” into socialism, who ignore the basic question of class power.

Liu Shao-chi says: “All states in the world are organs of dictatorship. The essence of the question is which classes exercise dictatorship over the other classes. All landlord-bourgeois states are a form of rule by a minority over the majority, by the exploiters over the labouring people. Our people’s democratic dictatorship is the dictatorship of the masses of the people, headed by the working class, over the reactionary classes, reactionary cliques and the exploiters who oppose the Socialist revolution. Ours is a democracy that belongs not to the minority but to the overwhelming majority—to the workers, peasants and all other labouring people, as well as those who support socialism and love their country.” Outlining the phases through which this state power has passed he adds that at present, “such state power, in its essence, can only be the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

Pointing to the broad democratic character of the new state power, Liu Shao-chi says: “We must realise that the dictatorship of the proletariat requires not only that the proletariat should exercise strong leadership over the state organs, but also that the broadest masses of the people should actively participate in the state organs.... The dictatorship of the proletariat is always a definite form of alliance between classes. The scope of the class alliance may vary with varying historical conditions.”

The report of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party paid great tribute to the historic role that India and other countries of Asia are playing in the cause of preserving world peace. It reiterated that one of the cornerstones of the foreign policy of the Chinese People’s Republic is the Panch Shila. It pointedly referred to the enormous significance of the break-up of the colonial system and the resurgence which today sweeps Asia and Africa. It expressed warm support to the stand of Egypt in asserting her sovereignty over the Suez Canal.

Not only in the main report, but in speech after speech, reference was made to the tremendous help—material, political and moral—rendered to China by the Soviet Union.

The great message of proletarian internationalism—one of the great gifts of the workers to mankind—rang out from the rostrum of the Congress. With characteristic humility, Mao Tse-tung said, "So, we must be good at studying. We must be good at learning from our forerunner, the Soviet Union, from the people's democracies, from the fraternal Parties in other parts of the world, as well as from the peoples the world over."

Communists and progressives in India will study the illuminating documents of the Chinese Communist Party Congress in order to learn more about our great neighbour, learn more about Socialist transformations in a great Asian country, learn more about the power of Marxism in practice. This Eighth Congress will not only immensely benefit the Chinese people, illuminating their path and steeling their will, it will stimulate fresh thought, open new avenues in the world as a whole.

22 September 1956.

On India's Path of Development

AJOY GHOSH

The articles by Modeste Rubinstein entitled "A Non-capitalist Path for Underdeveloped Countries" (See Appendix) has attracted some attention because of the attempt that they make to analyse the forms of economic development that are taking place in India.

Some of the formulations made in the article are perfectly correct. For example, it shows the difference between India on the one hand and the United States and countries of Western Europe on the other and rightly points out that state capitalist enterprises in India under present conditions play a progressive role. It may be mentioned here that this has been the thesis of the Communist Party of India also, as can be seen from the following :

"We must clearly realise that while the extension of the state sector and the nationalisation of certain concerns in today's America may have no progressive significance whatsoever, in India the extension of the public sector in order to develop heavy industries has got a progressive significance."

(Some Questions of Party Policy, p. 57)

Hence it is that our Party has consistently supported all steps taken by the government for extension of the state sector.

Nevertheless, despite these and a number of other correct observations that the articles make, the general trend of the articles is wholly misleading and the main thesis that they put forth is without foundation.

The articles, after stating that objective possibilities exist in India, for taking to the path of socialism by peaceful methods, a statement with which there would be general agreement, make the astounding assertion: "That path has been advocated for many years by Jawaharlal Nehru."

Approvingly quoting the Avadi resolution of the National

Congress, the author attempts to prove the thesis that the resolution "is expressive of the attitude of the Congress leadership and of the government on a number of key economic reforms." The case that is made in favour of the thesis cannot however carry conviction to one who has studied the political and economic realities in India.

The "commanding position of foreign capital" (mainly British) in several vital sectors of Indian economy such as coal, jute, oil and tea, is admitted in the article as also the position of Indian monopoly capital in some other sectors. But their political and even economic implications are ignored. No importance is attached to the fact that the main profit-making concerns remain in the hands of private capital.

Profession and Practice

The author quotes from the Avadi resolution that there should be equitable distribution of national wealth but does not care to mention to what extent this pious declaration has been given effect to.

As is well-known and has been mentioned in several articles, the net income from factory industries in India increased from Rs. 550 crores to Rs. 760 crores between 1950 and 1954. The total increase in wages and salaries, however, was only from Rs. 232 crores to Rs. 249 crores while the profits distributed as dividends, rents, interest, etc., increased from Rs. 318 crores to Rs. 510 crores. The share of wages and salaries in the net income declined from 42 to 33 per cent, while the share of profits increased from 58 to 67 per cent.

And while these profits were being made by intensification of the exploitation of workers and also at the cost of the consumers, the proportion of direct taxes whose burden mainly falls on the richer classes declined, while the proportion of indirect taxes grew. According to the Taxation Enquiry Committee's report, if all taxes levied by the central, State and local bodies are taken into account, direct taxation declined from 45 per cent in 1944-45 to 24 per cent in 1953-54. The revenue collected from sales tax whose burden falls on common people increased from Rs. 8 crores in 1939-40 to Rs. 62 crores in 1952-53 and is expected to reach Rs. 70 crores in 1956-57.

The index of industrial production between 1946 and

1954 increased by 46.5 per cent. But the index of average number of workers rose in the same period by only 6 per cent.

Despite the stupendous increase in profits and in the productivity of workers as revealed in the above figures, the government did not think it necessary to compel the capitalists to grant adequate wage increase. All trade union leaders, including the leaders of the government-backed Indian National Trade Union Congress, have exposed the hollowness of the plea that the industries cannot afford such wage increase. Facts and figures quoted by trade union leaders on the basis of the publications of the government and of the Reserve Bank of India have not been challenged by anyone. Yet all that the Second Five Year Plan has to say is that "studies should be undertaken to see whether there is any scope for wage increases even at the present level of productivity." (*Second Five Year Plan*, p. 579)

Which class has profited most from the economic policies of the government—this is a question which any Marxist, any serious student of economics has to examine in order to determine whether the path taken by a government is the path of socialism or even of democratic planning. Unfortunately, Modeste Rubinstein does not even pose the question.

Second Plan

The Second Five Year Plan has declared certain objectives and laid down certain principles. These objectives and these principles have been welcomed by patriotic-minded Indians—not because they bring about socialism but because, if carried out, they will help to strengthen India's national economy and bring about some improvement in the condition of the masses. Nevertheless, the actual methods which the government has proposed not only intensify distress of the people but jeopardise the very declared objectives of the Plan.

This is seen most clearly in the methods by which finances needed for the Plan are proposed to be raised. Deficit financing on a vast scale (1,200 crores of rupees) and crushing burdens on the people—such are the proposed methods, in the main.

Already, the effects of these methods are evident. In an editorial published on 7 May 1956 the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, a paper which generally supports the National Congress and

the government expressed concern at the "joint operation of the excessive price rise and the imposition of heavy indirect taxes" and warned, "Unless the prices come down to a reasonable level and the current method of levying taxation is replaced by a more just and equitable system the increase in national income, instead of adding to the common man's prosperity will result in making the rich richer and poor poorer."

The process has gone unchecked since then. The imposition of new excise duty on cloth in August 1956 which has already sent cloth prices soaring is the latest blow against the people. Prices of everyday necessities, above all, foodgrains are mounting rapidly threatening millions of people with semi-starvation.

On 31 August 1956 the same day when the new excise duty on cloth was imposed, a question was put in the Parliament by a member asking why the central government wanted to pay to the foreign owners of the Kolar Gold Fields in Mysore, a higher rate of compensation than that proposed by the Mysore government. The government's reply was that "it would not be in public interest to reveal details of the negotiation."

Such is the concern for the people and such is the concern for the monopolists on the part of a government which claims to stand for socialism.

All these facts find no mention in the articles by Modeste Rubinstein. Nor does the author think it necessary to pose the question as to whether and to what extent trade union rights, democratic rights and civil liberties are being safeguarded and extended. The attempt to brutally suppress working class struggles as in Darjeeling, Kanpur, Amritsar, Orissa, the launching of thousands of cases against working class and peasant cadres, the mass shooting as was indulged in Bombay and Ahmedabad—all these are ignored. It seems to be assumed that these have no relevance to the question of "path of development."

Agrarian Question

But by far the most astounding thing in the articles which claim to examine "forms of economic development" in India is that they practically make no reference to the agrarian

question—the key question in India. This is not accidental. It follows directly from the whole basic approach.

This is not the place to examine in detail the agrarian policy of the government. As the Political Resolution of the Communist Party of India adopted at its Fourth Congress points out the government of India “strives to curb feudal forms of exploitation, transforming feudal landlords into capitalist landlords, and create a stratum of rich peasantry that can act as the social base of bourgeois rule in the countryside.” At the same time, this policy is carried out in such a way as to preserve and consolidate the alliance between the bourgeoisie and the landlords.

This is seen in the heavy compensation that is being paid to the landlords whose land is acquired and also the way the land problem is treated. As regards compensation, “the sum involved,” writes Sri H. D. Malaviya, Secretary of the Political and Economic Research Department of the All-India Congress Committee, “anywhere in the neighbourhood of Rs. 550 crores will remain a constant source of anxiety for the State exchequers for years to come.” Sri Malaviya fully agrees with an American expert whose opinion was sought by the government of India that “compensation at current rates will load the peasant with considerable debts.”

Landlordism under various names and in various forms has long been the worst feature of our economic life. An article published in August 1955 by Sri Krishna Ballabh Sahai, the revenue minister of Bihar, estimated that 2.54 per cent of the holdings in the State cover 7 million acres or 25 per cent of the total agricultural land. In Madhya Pradesh, 3.44 per cent of the holdings cover 30.5 per cent of the land. Sri A. P. Jain, minister in the central government, has recently stated that 60 per cent of our peasants own only 15.5 per cent of the total cultivable area, while 5 per cent of landholders own 34 per cent of the land.

The high rent which peasants have to pay together with heavy taxes and other dues drive them to contract debts at usurious rates. Dr. Raj of the Delhi School of Economics has calculated that “perhaps as high as 800 to 1,000 crores rupees of the income generated in the agricultural sector every year is appropriated in the form of rent and interest.” This evidently is an underestimation.

What has been done in the course of nine years when the Congress has held absolute power? The Second Five Year Plan itself while waxing eloquent over what has been done, has nevertheless to admit certain facts.

“Progress in the regulation of rents has been slow and in several States lags behind.” (*Ibid.*, p. 189)

“During the past few years there have been instances in some States of large-scale ejection of tenants and of ‘voluntary surrender of tenancies’ ... Most ‘voluntary surrender of tenancies’ are open to doubt as bona fide transfers.” (*Ibid.*, p. 185)

As regards ceiling on holdings, it is admitted that very little progress has been made in respect of the so-called private lands. Taking advantage of the deliberate procrastination on the part of the government, the landlords have resorted to fictitious transfer and other means on such a vast scale that very little land will be left by the time ceilings are imposed—even if they are imposed at all. The open sabotage of the proposal for ceiling by the Bihar government, which has evoked the wrath of all honest Congressmen in the province, the blunt rejection of the very idea of ceiling by the UP government tell their own story. The *Times of India*, owned by the multi-millionaire Dalmia, in an editorial of 10 August 1956 criticising the dilatory tactics of the government on this issue, asks the question: “Must the question of ceilings await the accession to power of some other party which will do what the Congress has promised for the past 25 years?”

No useful purpose would be served by giving more facts. What has been stated should suffice to show the utterly untenable nature of the main thesis presented by Modeste Rubinstein in his articles.

It is one thing to state that capitalism is not popular in underdeveloped countries and its possibilities are limited. It is a totally different thing to assert that countries like India which are striving to develop an independent economy and with that objective in view, strengthening the state sector, have already thereby taken to or are moving towards a non-capitalist path. Unfortunately, Modeste Rubinstein fails to make a clear distinction between the two.

Government Policies—Communist Analysis

We do recognise that the economic policy of the Government of India is different from the policy that was pursued by the British government. We have pointed out in our Political Resolution that "the Government of India is a bourgeois-landlord government in which the bourgeoisie is the leading force" and that "its policies are motivated by the desire to develop India along *independent capitalist lines*." (my emphasis).

We have further stated:

"With this aim in view, the government strives to weaken the position of British capital in our economy. It strives to curb feudal forms of exploitation, transforming feudal landlords into capitalist landlords and create a stratum of rich peasantry that can act as the social base of bourgeois rule in the countryside. It strives to extend and develop the state sector, which in the existing situation is essential for the development of capitalism itself. These aims and the measures resulting therefrom inevitably bring the government into conflict with imperialism, with feudalism and sometimes with the narrow interests of sections of the bourgeoisie, as was seen in the case of the nationalisation of life insurance. They also lead to conflict of policies, as seen in the entire controversies over the problems of industrialisation.

"These conflicts have a progressive significance in relation to the democratic movement. They increase the possibilities to move the government, by mass pressure and by strengthening popular unity, in the direction of democratic reforms and against concessions to reactionary forces.

"With the increased efforts for industrialisation in the conditions of today when the urge for national reconstruction among the people as well as the mass movement are both growing, these conflicts cannot but further sharpen making it possible for the democratic movement to secure the adoption of a number of measures that weaken the position of foreign capital in our economy as also that of the position of Indian reactionary forces in our political and economic life.

"The Communist Party is vitally interested in such developments and strives to strengthen them, for they help in strengthening the democratic movement and in consolidating and extending the democratic front. Every step that is

taken by the government for strengthening national freedom and national economy, against imperialist, feudal and monopoly interests, will receive our most energetic and unstinted support." (*Political Resolution*, pp. 21-22)

The Government of India, abandoning its earlier policy of total dependence on imperialists, has entered into economic relations with the USSR and other socialist countries. It is defending the cause of peace and taking a resolute stand against imperialist warmongers. All this strengthens our national economy, our national independence and heightens our national prestige. These measures are fully in accord with our national interest, with the interest of progressive forces all over the world and hence the Communist Party wholeheartedly supports them.

At the same time, conscious of the limitations of independent capitalist development in India in the present context, we have stressed that:

"... It would be a profound mistake to consider that the sharpening of the conflict between imperialism and the Government of India, of the conflict between feudalism and the needs of bourgeois development and the attempt of the bourgeoisie to strengthen its position in this conflict, have already led to or can by themselves lead to the internal policies of the government becoming popular, democratic. The bourgeoisie seeks to strengthen its position not merely in relation to imperialism and feudalism, but also in relation to the popular masses. It seeks to resolve its conflict with imperialism and feudalism at the cost of the people.

"Therefore, while opposing imperialism and attempting to weaken its grip over national economy, the bourgeoisie simultaneously maintains its links with British capital and gives facilities for further inflow of foreign capital. While striving to curb and weaken feudalism, it simultaneously maintains its alliance with landlords, against the democratic forces and makes concessions to the landlords. While striving to industrialise the country, it seeks to place the burdens of economic development mainly on the common people. While extending the public sector, it simultaneously pursues policies of support to monopolists in their attacks on the working people and adopts many measures which enrich the monopolists and thus help them to strengthen their position in important spheres

of our life. While calling upon the people to cooperate in the task of national reconstruction, it simultaneously strengthens the bureaucratic apparatus, places main reliance on it, refuses to extend democracy and to adopt measures that would improve the conditions of the people. These are policies that weaken and shackle the very classes that are the most resolute defenders of peace and national freedom—the classes without whose initiative and creative activity the nation cannot be rebuilt.

“Due to all this and the divergence between the aims of industrialisation and the methods adopted by the government to achieve these aims, the process of development of the country acquires a slow and halting character, marked by twists and turns, giving rise to sharp conflicts and profound contradictions. They retard the sweeping away of the obstacles that stand in the way of India’s development. They impose colossal burdens on the people, impoverish them, thus preventing stable and continuous expansion of the internal market.

“In executing these policies, the government not only attempts to placate the people by making concessions and granting some relief, but often resorts to repressive measures also. In the day-to-day struggles of the masses as well as the struggles waged by the people on democratic issues, the Congress government often resorts to wholesale arrests, lathi-charges and even terror by shooting. The brutal suppression of the struggles in connection with the SRC Report, the killings of Patna students, the firings on tea-gardens workers of Darjeeling, the mass arrests in several places in connection with day-to-day struggles, all these reveal the callous character of the government in relation to the masses when they dare to resort to action in defence of their rights and interests. The struggle against this suppression, the struggle for protecting and extending the democratic rights, forms an integral part of the struggle for uniting the people.

“In these circumstances, the task of building national unity for peace, for defence and strengthening of freedom, for national reconstruction, for defence of the vital interests of the masses and for extension of democracy is an extremely complex task. It demands support to the government’s stand in relation to the struggle for peace and efforts to strengthen it further. It demands support to all those measures of the

government, which weaken the position of imperialism and feudalism, curb monopoly and strengthen national economy. It demands the bringing of pressure on the government in order to accelerate the pace of industrialisation and the adoption of measures related to this task. It demands vigorous combating of the policies of compromise with and concessions to foreign capital, landlordism and monopoly interests. It demands determined struggles against the government for improvement in the condition of the life of the people. It calls for vigorously combating and defeating the repressive measures of the government and securing the protection and extension of democratic rights. In order that the Communist Party may pursue such a revolutionary and flexible policy and play its rightful role as the builder and spearhead of the democratic movement, it must come forward as an independent national force. It must act as a party of opposition in relation to the present government.

“Guided by the interests of the country and the people, the Communist Party will extend whole-hearted support to the government in its policy of defence of peace and in every measure that the government takes to reduce the dependence of Indian economy on imperialism. But it will oppose the serious concessions the government makes to foreign capital and will mobilise the masses with a view to curtailing these concessions.

“The Communist Party will support every measure the government takes against feudal landlords and for the land reform measures it has proposed. It will mobilise the peasantry and our people against their sabotage by landlords’ interests in the States’ governments and the bureaucrats linked with them, and for a consistent implementation of these proposals through the democratic cooperation of the peasant masses and their organisations.

“The Communist Party will resolutely fight against the government’s policies of support to the monopolists’ attack on the working people, which result in fresh burdens on the masses. It will fight its anti-democratic policies that suppress democratic rights and civil liberties, disrupt the trade union movement and deny trade union rights. It will organise the mass movement of workers, peasants and other democratic sections with a view to defeat and reverse these policies as

well as to secure relief for the people and to improve their conditions." (*Political Resolution*, pp. 22-24)

Such is our analysis of the policies of the government, based on objective study of facts. Such is the policy which the Communist Party of India follows in order to unite the masses of our people in the struggle for peace, democracy and socialism.

Transition to Socialism

Modeste Rubinstein's articles not only give an incorrect picture of the economic situation in India, they also suffer from other defects. Whatever the intention of the author may be, the articles strengthen some erroneous concepts about socialism that have recently gained currency in certain circles.

It is undoubtedly true that the massive achievements of socialism in the USSR and the epoch-making advance registered in China have had a powerful impact all over the world and especially in underdeveloped countries and have enormously strengthened the ideas of socialism not merely among the working class but among the peasantry, and other progressive classes and sections. It is equally true, as already stressed, that the extension of the state sector plays a progressive role in these countries. All this however does not justify the thesis that by declaring socialism as their aim and by developing the state sector, these countries can launch themselves on a "non-capitalist" path of development.

Rubinstein admits that "steps to develop state industry are not, in themselves, of a socialist character." Unfortunately, however, this perfectly correct thesis gets practically negated by other formulations in the same article.

In support of his analysis about the developments in India, Modeste Rubinstein asserts that "socialist development is bound to differ in accordance with the conditions prevailing in different countries." No one will dispute this formulation. But what is virtually ignored in the article is the profound truth that "Whatever the form of transition to socialism, the decisive and indispensable factor is the political leadership of the working class headed by its vanguard. Without this, there can be no transition to socialism."

(*Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the Twentieth Congress.*)

The historic formulations of the 20th Congress of the CPSU about the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism arm the working class movement all over the world with a weapon of exceptional power. This formulation of the 20th Congress is fully in accordance with Lenin's teaching that "Marx did not commit himself—or the future leaders of socialist revolution—to matters of form, to methods and ways of bringing about revolution." At the same time, there is a serious danger of these formulations being understood in an incorrect way which is contrary to the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism—principles which are equally valid for *all* countries.

"Socialism is inconceivable," wrote Lenin, "unless the proletariat is the ruler of the state." (*Ibid.* p. 365). The essence of this thesis as we have seen, has not been negated but on the contrary has been reasserted by the 20th Congress of the CPSU.

In what sense then, one may ask, did Lenin consider state capitalism, even under bourgeois rule and even in advanced capitalist countries, to be an advance? The answer is given in Lenin's well-known article, written a year before the October Revolution, "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It": "State monopoly capitalism is a complete *material* preparation for socialism, the *prelude* to socialism, a rung in the ladder of history between which and the rung called socialism, *there are no intermediate steps.*" (Lenin's emphasis, *Selected works*, Vol. 2, p. 114)

Earlier, in the same article: "... given a really revolutionary democratic state, state monopoly capitalism inevitably and unavoidably implies a step or several steps towards socialism!" (*Ibid.*, p. 113)

After the revolution, Lenin combating the "lefts" showed how state capitalism with the *working people in power* can help to create conditions for transition to socialism. The example of China fully corroborates this thesis of Lenin.

The bourgeoisie, no matter how radical and progressive, cannot build socialism which is based on new property relations. Power in the hands of the democratic masses led by the proletariat—this is the essential condition for the building of socialism. The replacement of bourgeois-landlord rule by the rule of the people headed by the working class—with-

out this, socialism is inconceivable. The actual methods of conquest of power will not be the same in all cases. New historic possibilities have opened out of effecting the transition to socialism in a peaceful way: and it is the duty of all Communist Parties, all forces standing for socialism to strive their utmost to realise this possibility. But it would be utterly incorrect to hold that this is the same as the theory of "gradualism," the theory of socialist "elements" gradually growing within the capitalist state and ushering in socialism.

Further, the Leninist thesis that the bureaucratic state machine of the bourgeoisie cannot be the instrument for the exercise of power by the toiling masses and for the building of socialism—this thesis also retains its full validity. The precise method of eliminating the old state apparatus may be different and spread over a much longer period than was the case in Russia after revolution. But in order to build socialism the old state apparatus has to be replaced by a new system—one in which real power is vested in popular elected organs. It is worth noting that under the Nehru government, which claims to stand for socialism, the bureaucratic-police apparatus has not merely been kept intact but its power and scope have steadily grown.

To conclude: There undoubtedly exists a non-capitalist path of development for the underdeveloped countries like India. But it would be an illusion to think that the present government, headed by the bourgeoisie, can advance on that path. The Communist Party of India does not suffer from such illusions. Therefore, while fully recognising certain possibilities of advance in the existing situation and while fully supporting all measures of the government which help to realise these possibilities and strengthen the cause of peace, national freedom and national economy, the Communist Party simultaneously strives to strengthen the forces of democracy and socialism in our country so that power passes into the hands of the democratic masses led by the working class. That alone can complete the tasks of the democratic revolution with the utmost rapidity and advance the country towards socialism.

Appendix

A Non-Capitalist Path for Underdeveloped Countries

MODESTE RUBINSTEIN

I

What will be the path of economic and social development of the economically backward, and now independent, countries of Asia and Africa? The question is being debated by economists, sociologists, politicians and journalists. An abundant literature on the subject has appeared in the West.

There are two points of view among the ruling elements of the United States. Some monopoly spokesmen maintain that political independence should not essentially change the economic and social pattern of these countries. That opinion is perhaps most saliently put in the study "The Political Economy of American Foreign Policy," which follows the State Department line. The underdeveloped countries, the study intimates, should remain underdeveloped for all time, or at any rate, should not advance beyond the status of purveyors of cheap raw material and food for the industrial nations and markets for their manufactures. This is an attempt to perpetuate colonialism in a slightly refurbished form and prevent Asia and Africa from breaking out of economic backwardness and dependence.

The other point of view is that the Asian and African countries will develop rapidly along capitalist lines and will thus help to rejuvenate the senile capitalist system.

The fallacy of both predictions lies in the fact that they take no account of the aspirations of the people of the underdeveloped countries, who are determined to solve this all-important question independently. Another thing these predictions leave out of account is the conversion of socialism into a world system embracing European and Asian countries with over a third of the world's population. This is a fact of epochal importance: the ideas of socialism, first given practical embodiment in the Soviet Union and now being applied in several other countries, have a powerful appeal for all nations, particularly for those of Asia and Africa which, having broken out of colonial dependence, stand at the historical crossroads.

The socialist achievements of People's China are exerting an especially powerful influence in the two continents. It was established at the third session of the National People's Assembly last month that the original plan of socialist economic reconstruction had been completed ahead of schedule. The socialist sector is now the dominant force in the Chinese economy, and this is a sure

guarantee of successful transition to socialism. It has been demonstrated in practice that the people's-democratic system in China makes it possible to carry out socialist reconstruction by peaceful methods.

This is how the international implications of China's socialist achievements are assessed by an American expert, Hans J. Morgenthau, director of the Centre for the Study of American Foreign Policy at the University of Chicago, in an article in the *New Republic* of April 16:

"Nobody who has recently travelled through Asia with his eyes open can fail to be impressed by the impact which the emancipation of China from Western dependence and the restoration of her power as a nation and as a civilization is making upon all of Asia from Japan to Pakistan. What Asians admire and respect in China is what seems to them the fulfilment of the aspirations of all of Asia: to be masters in their own house and to prove themselves to be equal, if not the superior, of the West."

Those who believe that the alternative before the Asian and African countries is either to remain virtual colonies or choose the path of capitalist development, are taking a very narrow view, to say the least. For in both continents there is a clear understanding that economic backwardness is due to the long years of colonial domination. That is why India, Burma, Indonesia, Egypt, Ceylon and many other nations are so vigorous in their opposition to colonialism and to all other forms of imperialist oppression or foreign monopoly dictation.

Freed of colonial tutelage, the Asian and African countries are confronted with many complex economic, social and political problems. These involve governmental structure, economic (particularly industrial) development, cultural advancement, liquidation of feudal survivals, the nationalities question, and many more. Properly speaking, these are the same problems that had to be faced, in one or another degree, by the countries now classed as highly developed. Some found capitalist solutions, others followed socialist patterns. Which of these two will Asia and Africa choose?

This article will deal principally with the economic aspect of the problem, and more specifically with the forms of economic development in one of the major Asian countries, India.

India's Development

Foreign capital is still strongly entrenched in the Indian economy, holding commanding positions in such branches as coal, jute, oil and tea, and controlling a substantial portion of the engineering and electrical engineering industries. Native monopoly capital controls the relatively highly-developed cotton industry, also iron and steel, cement and several branches of engineering. Many Indian monopolies are closely linked with foreign financial interests.

It would, of course, be naive to expect monopoly capital to strive for socialist reconstruction. Nevertheless, in India, which is advancing along the road of independent political and economic development, the objective possibilities exist for obviating the continued growth of monopoly capital and, by peaceful methods, in conformity with the will of the overwhelming majority of the people, taking the socialist path.

That path has been advocated for many years by Jawaharlal Nehru. In his *Discovery of India*, Mr. Nehru describes the activities of the National Planning Committee initiated by the Indian National Congress in 1938. Under his chairmanship, the Committee laid the groundwork for planning economic development after independence and the formation of an independent national government. The first target was industrialization, without which India would stand no chance of wiping out poverty and unemployment, building up a proper national defence and tackling the job of economic reconstruction. Members of the Committee could not agree on the principles of India's future social system, but, as Mr. Nehru remarks, "it became clear to me that our plan, as it developed, was inevitably leading us towards establishing some of the fundamentals of the socialist structure."

Further consideration of social problems led Mr. Nehru to the following very significant conclusion, which he made in the thirties: "Inevitably we are led to the only possible solution—the establishment of a socialist order, first within national boundaries, and eventually in the world as a whole, with a controlled production and distribution of wealth for the public good."

After independence and proclamation of the republic, all these questions reappeared in much more acute form. India's millions were giving thought to what course their country should follow, and the realization was steadily gaining ground that continued development of capitalism would not solve any of the economic and social problems. From this followed that socialism offered the only way of overcoming economic backwardness, unemployment and poverty. There were, naturally, various interpretations of socialism.

The growing appeal of socialism found expression in the resolution which the House of the People adopted in December 1954. It reads in part: "The objective of our economic policy should be a socialistic pattern of society and towards this end the tempo of economic activity in general, and industrial development in particular, should be stepped up to the maximum possible extent."

The Indian National Congress, when it met at Avadi in January 1955 adopted a resolution declaring its basic aim to be the "establishment of a socialistic pattern of society" where:

- a) the principal means of production are under social ownership or control;
- b) production is progressively speeded up;
- c) there is equitable distribution of the national wealth;
- d) there is progressively fuller employment so as to lead to full employment within a period of ten years.

The fact that the Avadi resolution called for a "socialistic pattern of society" and not for "socialism" gave rise to a heated discussion of what the economic basis of that society would be.

The predominating view was that such a society could be based only on social ownership of the principal means of production. But the opinion was also expressed that it should be based on the handloom. Others affirmed that Indian socialism must be based on the "big Indian family" and complete decentralization of production. Still another opinion was put forward by G. D. Birla, prominent spokesman of Indian monopoly capital. Addressing the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry in 1955, he said that

a socialistic pattern of society had nothing in common with socialism as such, and that the supreme embodiment of this pattern should be sought in Britain and the United States. These statements are not fortuitous; they are evidence of differing viewpoints, determined by definite class interests, on the future development of India.

But however differently interpreted, the Avadi resolution is expressive of the attitude of the Congress leadership and of the government on a number of key economic reforms. The government's policy is primarily to accelerate industrialization and build up a state-owned heavy industry producing means of production. It is set forth (with certain essential reservations) in the Second Five Year Plan and in the resolution on government industrial policy submitted to the House of the People on 30 April.

The resolution stresses the need to expand the state sector and establish a growing cooperative sector. The state sector, it says, should embrace all basic branches of industry, including those of strategic importance, and public utilities, and other major industries requiring capital investment, which under present conditions can be supplied only by the state.

The state sector does not yet play a decisive part in the economy. The Minister for Planning, Mr. Nanda, states in his report to the Congress Committee that output by state industry is less than three per cent of the national total. If agriculture and certain other branches are excluded, it accounts for about 11 per cent in manufacturing, mining and transport. "It is obvious," Mr. Nanda says in the report, "that the public sector will have to be enlarged greatly in order that it may occupy a significant place in the economy of the nation."

The state sector now extends to the following:

1. Railway transport;
2. Air transport, nationalized in 1953;
3. Integrated hydro-engineering projects, of which the biggest are the Bhakra-Nangal in the Punjab, the Damodar Valley development in West Bengal and Bihar, and the Hirakud project in Orissa.
4. More than ten big and medium-size industrial enterprises built in recent years. Of these the most important are: the Chittaranjan locomotive plant, the Sindri nitrate fertilizer plant, the Visakhapatnam shipyards; the Perambur carriage works near Madras, the Bangalore engineering works, the Rupnarayanpur cable factory, the Delhi DDT plant, the penicillin plant at Pimpri near Poona, and the thorium and uranium processing plant on Trombay Island, near Bombay.

All these enterprises, equipped with the latest machinery, are already in operation and are successfully nearing their rated capacities. State-owned factories are still few but, as N. S. Khrushchov remarked, in them one sees "the contours of India's future powerful industry, bulwark of her independence, of her national might."

The state sector in heavy industry is being considerably enlarged under the Second Five-Year Plan, chiefly by the erection of three iron and steel mills to produce one million tons of steel a year each. The biggest, the Bhilai mill in Madhya Pradesh, is being built in cooperation with the Soviet Union. The plan calls also for the construction of three state-owned nitrate fertilizer mills, a large plant producing heavy electrical machinery and a number of units in the industries manufacturing means of production. The underlying

purpose is rapid industrialization, with emphasis on the development of heavy industry mainly—but not entirely—in the state sector.

These steps to develop state industry are not, in themselves, of a socialist character. State-owned enterprises—railways, for example—exist in several capitalist countries. They are state-capitalist enterprises. However, in India, as in other economically backward countries that have recently embarked on the path of independent development, state-capitalist enterprises assume a special character. It would be a mistake to equate them with state-monopoly capitalism in the United States or Western Europe. American state-monopoly capitalism is an outgrowth of the private monopolies, which are eager to exploit not only their own people, but the people of other countries as well. It is, therefore, a servant of the expansionist policy of the colonialists, and its role is entirely reactionary.

On the other hand, the purpose of state-capitalist enterprises in India is to facilitate industrialization and general economic development. They help to strengthen India's independence, and to weaken the positions of imperialism. Consequently, state-capitalist enterprises in India, under present conditions, play a progressive part. At the same time, Indian state capitalism differs from its counterpart in China, where it is being consistently employed by the people's government to expedite the building of socialism.

Lenin repeatedly emphasized that state capitalism is a step towards socialism. But further steps are required too—steps that will substantially change the ownership of the means of production, ensure a considerable increase in output, fuller employment, a larger national income, higher living standards for, and higher political and public activity by, the working people.

The Indian leaders believe that the building of a "socialistic pattern of society" will require much time. In opening the debate on the Five Year Plan in the Council of States in May, Premier Nehru declared that India's development would be a process of absolute and relative growth of the state sector, which would thus come to control an ever larger share of the nation's economy.

The present international situation and the fact that India has such friendly neighbours as the USSR and the People's Republic of China, on whose experience and economic cooperation she can draw, lead one to believe that, given close cooperation by all the progressive forces of the country, there is the possibility for India to develop along socialist lines.

But, of course, between possibility and reality lies a complicated path which will require much effort and the overcoming of considerable resistance from the reactionary forces, particularly the forces of international reaction. India's advance along the socialist path will evidently be slower than that of, say, China, and, as is obvious from what has been said above, will differ in many respects. But only dogmatists can fail to understand these peculiarities and try to squeeze realities into their own artificial schemes. Socialist development is bound to differ in accordance with the conditions prevailing in different countries. The multiplicity of forms of socialist development is but a reflection of the multiplicity of the historic, economic and social conditions in various countries.

II

The achievement of political independence squarely faces every underdeveloped country with the all-important problem of determin-

ing the direction and pace of social and economic development. The People's Republic of China, the Korean People's Democratic Republic, the Mongolian People's Republic and the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam are firmly embarked on the socialist path. In other former colonies in Asia and Africa the problem is being searchingly discussed in government councils, parliaments, universities, labour and other organizations, and by scientists, writers and businessmen. Of course, their views vary widely, but the significant thing is that there is almost no open advocacy of capitalist development. Even organizations that speak for the national bourgeoisie—chambers of commerce, business conferences, etc.—avoid advocating such development. The only ones who favour it are publications controlled by foreign monopoly interests.

The capitalist path is not popular in underdeveloped countries. This is partially attributable to the fact that Asians and Africans quite rightly associate capitalism with colonialism, and colonialism, in whatever shape or form, is abhorred and detested. But there are also other considerations.

The underdeveloped nations are anxious to overcome their economic backwardness in the shortest possible space of time. Hence, the all-out effort to build an integrated national economy, industrialize the country, extend its transport facilities, raise agricultural levels, improve living standards, wipe out mass unemployment, and so on.

The very independence of these new Asian and African States depends upon the quick accomplishment of these tasks. For they have no desire to remain agrarian and raw material appendages of the imperialist powers or, to use an expression current in Asia, to be the wood choppers and water carriers of the industrial capitalist nations.

Can capitalism accelerate their advancement? Can it help them to achieve their chief goal—integrated development of the national productive forces?

Most of the underdeveloped countries possess enormous natural resources—water power, a wide range of minerals, fertile land, valuable tropical woods, etc. But utilization of these potentialities on any appreciable scale requires, as a rule, substantial initial outlays and planned effort over a period of many years.

Will foreign capital supply the necessary funds? Obviously not. Western financiers have no interest in promoting the economic advancement of Asia and Africa. By its very nature, capital seeks quick returns, and under present-day conditions its motto is often "after us, the deluge." In most Asian and African countries the national bourgeoisie is economically weak and unable to compete with the Western monopolies. For all these reasons, it is only the governments—and moreover governments that aim not at ensuring the capitalists' profits, but at economic development and higher living standards—that are in a position to make these big investments and initiate long-term construction efforts. Let us examine some of the concrete aspects of the problem.

Many of the underdeveloped countries are richly endowed with hydropower resources. The total hydropower potential of Asia (without the USSR) is estimated at 1,000 million kw.; the figure for Africa is 700 million kw., and 600 million for South America. But only a tiny fraction of this reserve has been tapped. Even in

India, which is ahead of other underdeveloped areas in this respect, only about 1 per cent of available water power has been developed.

Effective and rational application of water power is possible only in integrated projects supplying electricity, irrigation, flood control and water transport. This requires not only very costly installations, but planned and coordinated development of the various branches of the economy. In short, it calls for a well thought-out long-range economic strategy. Properly speaking, the advanced capitalist countries have nothing comparable to such combined development plans based on large-scale hydropower projects. For the big trusts and banks are reluctant to tie up their capital in schemes that will pay off many years later, especially when their effect is expressed not so much in dividends as in a general heightening of economic standards.

True, reference is sometimes made to the Tennessee Valley Authority in the United States. It has been advertised as the "ideal of economic democracy," and even as a "socialist island in the capitalist world," but neither of those descriptions is valid.

The TVA received large government funds for the construction of a series of hydrotechnical projects, and thrived at a time when the American monopolies urgently needed large quantities of cheap electric power to expand production of explosives and other war goods. When that factor ceased to operate, the TVA lost its former significance.

Several Asian countries, notably India, have chosen a different path, namely, planned integrated development of available hydropower resources for the benefit of the nation. The central and state governments are erecting a number of combined hydroengineering works, including such major undertakings as the Bhakra-Nangal system, the Damodar Valley development, and the Hirakud project. The same pattern is to be followed in Burma, Indonesia and Egypt.

Egypt's outstanding project is, of course, the famous Aswan Dam. When completed, it will produce up to 10,000 million kwh. per year, increase the national arable by one third, prevent devastating floods and sharply raise revenue from agriculture.

Similar projects could be launched in other parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America. But they are well-nigh impossible in a private-enterprise economy. It is characteristic that no Western firm has evinced any interest in large-scale hydropower development in India or Egypt. Local private capital has neither the desire nor the means to undertake construction which will pay back only after a period of many years.

The Western powers display interest only if there is some chance of making these projects pay off politically. That has been their approach to the Aswan plan. Egypt was promised financial assistance, but on condition that she consented to foreign control of her finances and economy. The Egyptian government indignantly rejected these shackling terms, and Washington and London lost all interest in the Aswan scheme and withdrew their offer of financial support. President Nasser exposed their policy when he told a public meeting in Alexandria on 26 July:

"The imperialists do not want to see us an industrial nation capable of producing everything we require. I cannot recall any instance of American aid designed to further industrialization. There have been no signs of that; American aid has other objects."

This episode of the Aswan Dam is striking evidence that any underdeveloped country which hopes to receive disinterested Western assistance in solving its vital economic problems is working under a delusion.

Atomic energy, primarily for generating electric power, is another very important factor in the development of economically backward areas. Most underdeveloped countries lack sizable or conveniently located deposits of coal and other fuels, but many have deposits of atomic raw materials. India, for instance, has huge reserves of thorium in monazite sands in the coastal areas of Travancore-Cochin and other States. Prime Minister Nehru has said his country must make a leap from the age of dung fuel to the age of atomic energy. Indian scientists are already working on an extensive programme of research and experimentation in preparation for that leap.

However, it cannot be made on the basis of private enterprise, as the experience of the United States clearly demonstrates. For ten years now, American corporate interests have been holding up large-scale construction of atomic power plants, preferring to concentrate on production of atomic weapons. Resistance by the electric concerns, anxious to retain their profits, has played a big part. The underdeveloped countries, on the other hand, are endeavouring to employ atomic energy as a basic factor in developing modern techniques and raising national living standards. Obviously, the job is far too big for local private capital, and atomic energy is bound to develop as a state-owned industry.

Much the same applies to mineral resources. Most underdeveloped countries, as mentioned above, possess rich and varied deposits. Prospecting, however, is only just being started and has to be developed on a much larger scale before actual mining operations can begin. Here too, local private capital cannot contribute much, and foreign capital will step in only if there is a clear prospect of quick and huge profits. It readily develops deposits that do not require much investment. One example is Middle East oil, where big profits are being made on remarkably small outlays. That explains the monopoly scramble for control of the Middle East fields.

Capitalist concerns that undertake prospecting in underdeveloped countries (for handsome remuneration) not infrequently conceal or falsify their own findings. Several years ago an American oil company was given a concession to prospect for oil in West Bengal, one of the potentially richest parts of India. It was given especially favourable terms, and its activities were highly publicized, but so far the practical results have been nil. India has decided to entrust prospecting in other parts of the country to a government organization employing foreign experts.

The foreign monopolies are still less interested in the industrialization of underdeveloped countries, particularly in their heavy-industry development. More, their policy is deliberately to prevent industrialization. Witness the conditions laid down in a report submitted to the U.S. Congress in June 1955 by the Hoover Commission: "In the 'Asian-African arc,' with the possible exception of Japan, no large manufacturing projects be undertaken and no large industrial plants constructed, except for production of strategic materials; otherwise all industrial aid be confined to small industries."

That should kill all hope of foreign monopoly capital assisting the industrialization of economically backward countries.

The national bourgeoisie, with few exceptions, possesses neither the means nor the technical facilities for building up heavy industry.

The conclusion to be drawn from all these facts is that in underdeveloped countries heavy industry, especially iron and steel, power, engineering and chemicals, can develop only as part of the state sector. That view is fully confirmed by the record of the past few years.

The previous article noted that in India, power and heavy-industry development was financed by the State. In Burma, the key industries and mines are state property. In Indonesia, all the major projects of the five-year plan (1956-60) will be built by the central government, with local governments and private interests concentrating on smaller undertakings. The same system is being followed in Ceylon, Egypt and elsewhere. Nor is this being done out of ideological considerations. It follows logically from the experience of post-war years, which shows that underdeveloped nations cannot, under prevailing conditions, build heavy industry by customary capitalist methods.

The same applies to agriculture. All the underdeveloped countries are predominantly agrarian, with the vast majority of the population living in rural areas. Farming techniques are backward, harvest yields low, and animal productivity lower still.

Capitalist penetration in agriculture leads to mass impoverishment of the tillers, deprives them of their land, tends to develop a one-crop farm structure which makes the country entirely dependent on imports for its food supply. The big plantations are usually foreign-controlled (tea in India and Ceylon, rubber in Malaya, Indonesia, etc.), and are a source of rich profits for a small group of capitalists. For the peasant population they mean brutal exploitation and appropriation of the best land; for the nation as a whole they spell reduction of food-crop areas (as in Ceylon and several Latin-American countries).

As often as not, modern capitalism retains and supports pre-capitalist, feudal survivals and hinders consistent agrarian reform. Yet, the experience of China convincingly demonstrates that a rapid rise in agricultural production is possible only through far-reaching land reform and the development of consumers', marketing, credit, producers' and other cooperatives.

Based on the activity of the masses and systematically assisted by the state, the cooperative movement can liberate the small peasant (and the handicraftsman and artisan) from landlord and usurer oppression, enable him to employ more efficient farming methods and increase productivity. Under certain conditions, cooperatives in underdeveloped countries can become the nuclei of a new economic type, the rudiments of a new, non-capitalist system. Premier Nehru has repeatedly pointed to the vast prospects for cooperative development, and President Nasser has appealed for an end to feudalism and monopoly rule, and the creation of a "cooperative socialist society" in Egypt.

What must be particularly emphasized is that the all-round and stable advance of agriculture in economically backward countries is possible only on the basis of industrialization, only when industry is in a position to provide the requisite number of machines and implements, mineral fertilizers, insecticides, irrigation equipment, etc. Industrialization and agricultural development are inseparably connected.

The people, the workers, are the chief production factor in any country. What would capitalism bring the working folk of underdeveloped countries? Only greater unemployment—which even today is a difficult social problem—and greater exploitation to multiply the profits of native and especially foreign monopolists. Moreover, statistics show that foreign concerns export the larger part of their profits.

The economic plans now being evolved in a number of underdeveloped countries can be carried out only with the active participation of their workers and peasants, their young technical intelligentsia, scientists, students, etc. But this is only possible if the labour effort of the masses goes to promote the welfare of the people, not to swell the profits of foreign capitalists and the domestic monopolies tied with them.

That is why the capitalist path meets with so little support in these new independent countries. On the other hand, there is a constant search for new forms of social and economic advancement. The capitalist path, the negative features of which are so obvious has no appeal for the masses and for progressive-minded political leaders.

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Linguistic Survey of India

S. N. MAZUMDAR

Last year the Government of India, to be more precise, the central ministry of education announced that a scheme for the survey of the important languages of India is under preparation. This decision has been taken by the government as a result of suggestions received from some quarters. A conference of orientalist held in Poona in 1953, passed a resolution emphasising the need for undertaking a new survey of the different languages spoken in India. Moreover some members of Parliament, particularly the veteran journalist Sri Rama Rao and the author of the present article, have made this demand.

Need for Survey

A survey of the languages spoken in a country is not a matter of academic interest only. To say the least, it is necessary for an efficient and democratic administration to have an

idea of the various languages and dialects spoken in the country. This is all the more true of a multilingual country like India. Even the British administration had undertaken this task of gigantic dimensions, although in a half-hearted and limited manner. This remark should not however be construed as an attempt to underestimate the pioneering work done by British scholars, some of whom were also administrators.

For us, however, the approach to the question cannot remain limited to the needs of an efficient administration. In India there exist side by side not only different languages but also groups of languages belonging to various linguistic families. Then again we find that the different languages are at different stages of development. Side by side with highly developed languages there are also very backward and comparatively less developed languages.

It is not only a question of languages. We have various linguistic groups, each possessing a complex of language, literature and culture with distinctive traits and heritage, while at the same time sharing certain common traditions and cultural patterns.

Aid to All Languages

One of the most urgent problems in India today which demands an answer, theoretically and practically, is that of the interrelation between the different languages and their development. Should we allow each of them equal rights and opportunities for unfettered development or encourage the development of one or a few at the cost of others? What should be the attitude to the languages which are undeveloped and backward?

All shades of progressive opinion are united on the answers to the above questions. Our aim should be to help the development and full flowering of all the different languages, including these which are regarded as the most backward today. To create conditions where every linguistic group will be able to develop freely the distinctive traits of their language, literature and culture will mean the laying of a granite foundation for the lasting union of hearts among the people speaking the different languages.

In that atmosphere of fraternal help and cooperation

every language will develop the wealth of its rich traditions and thus contribute its best to the common treasurehouse of Indian culture. On the other hand, each will in its turn draw richly from the great common heritage and thus push forward its own development. It is a two way process. There must be expanding interchange among the various languages and literatures of our country.

Even during the current stormy controversy over the reorganisation of States the importance of the role of language in the life of a people has not been denied by anyone, including the opponents of the principle of linguistic States. Language, as we know, is the collective historical product of the people speaking it. The knowledge and experience of whole generations are embodied in it. The special characteristics of that people, which are the products of the peculiarities of historical and social development are reflected in the language, in the characteristic mode of thought, mode of expression, in word and sentence formations, in idioms and phrases, in proverbs and sayings.

Thus the basic vocabulary and grammatical structure of a language, however, undeveloped, have a distinctive living personality so to say. That is why the best medium of instruction is the mother tongue. Only if one has the opportunity to absorb new and modern ideas through the medium of one's own language and its distinctive modes of expression, can one make them a part of one's being.

In order to help the development of the different languages it is first of all necessary to have factual and systematic information about their respective stages of development, their special characteristics as well as historical background. In deciding the scope of the survey, an idea about the earlier efforts that have been made and the results so far achieved will be of help.

Earlier Attempts

The first attempts at a survey of the modern Indian languages can be traced back to Amir Khusru in 1317. He cited the names of the following languages as spoken in the different parts of the country, e.g., Sindi, Lahori, Kashmiri, language of Dugar (Dogra), Dhuar Samandar (Kanarese), Tilang (Telegu), Cryerati, Ma'bar (Tamil), Gaur (North Bengal),

Bengal, Audh. Since then these attempts, however limited and defective, can be traced through Abul Fazal to the earliest European pioneers in this field Terry, Freyer, Ogilby, Daniel Messerschmidt and Schulze, up to Sir William Jones in 1796.

It is well known that modern comparative philology dates from the discovery of Sanskrit by European scholars and the consequent recognition of the existence of the Indo-European family of languages by Sir William Jones in 1796. His speculation about the modern Indian vernaculars and also about the connection of Sanskrit with the languages of Europe gave a further impetus for study and investigation in this direction. His speculation as regards modern Indian vernaculars was proved to be mainly erroneous by later research, but his conclusions about the existence of a connection between Sanskrit and the European languages were converted into a certainty by the labours of Franz Bopp in 1816 and the publication of his comparative grammar in 1853. In William Jones's time the existence of the Dravidian languages as a distinct group was unknown.

William Carey, who translated the New Testament into Bengali in 1801, J. Marshman and W. Ward gathered specimens of 33 Indian languages. At this time also the existence of the Dravidian group as a distinct entity was unknown. Moreover, these gentlemen made no distinction between language and dialect.

The contributions of Brian Houghton Hodgson are outstanding. In 1828, he published an article on the language, literature and religion of the Baudhas of Nepal and Bhutan. Later on he published a series of papers on the ethnology of Nepal and a comparative vocabulary of sub-Himalayan dialects in 1847. His papers, full of varied and accurate information regarding nearly every non-Aryan language of India and her neighbours, are even now regarded as classics. He compiled comparative vocabularies of nearly all the languages of the Tibeto-Chinese group spoken in India and also of the Munda and Dravidian languages. He was the first Englishman to use the term Dravidian but he also included the Munda group in it.

His favourite theory was about the common origin of all the languages explored by him. In order to establish that theory he compared these to many languages of Central Asia.

His theory has not been accepted by later investigators, though a Hungarian philologist came to the conclusion later that the Munda group belongs to the Finno-Ugric group, which is an offshoot of the Tibeto-Chinese family of languages. The existence of the Munda group as an independent family was established by Max Muller in 1854 in his letter to Chevalier Bunsen.

In 1856 William Hunter published the comparative dictionary of the languages of India and Asia.

During the period 1838 to 1874, many grammars and comparative vocabularies of the various better known Indian vernaculars came out. Major Leech compiled grammars of Brahui, Baluchi, Punjabi, Pashto, Bundeli and Kashmiri. Sir Erskine Perry, chief justice of Bombay, in 1853 published a paper on the geographical distribution of Indian languages. He divided these languages into two categories: (1) languages of the Aryans or Sanskritoid in which he included Hindi, Kashmiri, Gujarati, Bengali, Marathi, Oriya, Konkani and ten dialects; he looked upon Punjabi, Lahuda (called by him Multani), Sindhi, Marwari as all dialects of Hindi, and Maithili he treated as a dialect of Bengali; (2) languages of a civilised race of the south which he termed as Turanian or Tamiloid. He altogether ignored the Austro-Asiatic group and did not even mention Munda. Many of the forms of speech which were looked upon as mere dialects by Perry have since been recognised as independent languages.

Stevenson's comparative vocabulary of the non-Sanskrit languages and the vocabulary of the vernacular languages were published in 1856. It is he who for the first time treated with great acumen the question of the borrowing of Dravidian words by the different Indo-Aryan languages as also the ethnical significance of such borrowings. In spite of the many errors in his conclusions he pointed out a new line of investigation.

Outlines of Indian Philology was published by Beames in 1867 and the comparative grammar of the Aryan languages in India in 1872. Dr. Hoernelle's first essays were published in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* in 1872. His grammar of Eastern Hindi compared with the other Gandian languages were published in 1880. In 1874 Sir George Campbell had published a set of vocabularies collected by local officials.

Mention must be made here of the Russian investigator Dorn who compiled the first serious grammar of Pashto. The only existing grammar and vocabulary of Newari is the work of another Russian.

Another landmark in the study and investigation of Indian languages was the publication by Pater W. Schmidt of his brilliant work *Die Mon-Khmer Vokker* in 1906. This established the connection between the Munda groups and the languages of Indo-China and Indonesia, Khasi coming in between these two groups. Pater Schmidt termed this group of languages extending from the hills of central India to the eastern island off the coast of South America as the Austric family of languages. He divided the languages of this family into two broad groups: Austro-Asiatic which are spoken in India; Austronesic which are spoken in Indonesia, Melanesia and Polynesia.

First Government Survey

It was only in 1894 that the Government of India undertook a serious systematic survey. Before that the Oriental Congress held in Vienna in 1886 had passed a resolution urging the Government of India to undertake a deliberate and systematic survey of the languages of India. The survey itself was conducted under the guidance of Sir George Grierson, the debt to whom is acknowledged by all the subsequent investigators in this field. Grierson was assisted by another distinguished scholar Sten Konow during the final stages of the work. It took a number of years to compile and classify the results of the survey, which were later compared with the results of the 1921 census and published in several volumes in 1927.

But in spite of the tremendous contribution made by the survey towards the study of Indian languages, it suffered from several defects and limitations. Its very basis was strictly limited in character and scope. It contained a collection of specimens from the different languages and dialects spoken in the different regions. A standard passage from the story of the Prodigal Son was selected for the purpose of being translated into every known dialect and sub-dialect spoken in the areas covered by the operations. A second specimen, a piece of folklore or some other passage in narrative prose

or verse selected on the spot and taken down verbally was made available. There was a collection of standard lists of words and test sentences originally drawn up by Sir George Campbell. The collection was made by officials who had no knowledge of the subject, not to speak of the history and social conditions of the people. The great Dravidian group of languages were left out of the scope of the survey.

Grierson himself admits these limitations and remarks that the survey was a mere collection of facts and a classification of the languages surveyed into the different linguistic families. He also pointed out the difficulties about differentiation between a language and a dialect. About the so-called numerous dialects of Hindi, he pointed out that any attempt at classification would be confronted with radical differences of idiom and construction. All these need further investigation.

In the survey many languages, particularly those spoken by the tribal peoples in the Himalayan regions were relatively ignored. Moreover, many changes have taken place since the results of the survey were published. Many forms of speech which were then treated as dialects, are today claiming recognition as languages. Some of the languages which were then treated as backward have made great strides towards development. Some of the theories developed by Dr. Hoernelle and accepted in a modified form by Grierson, viz., that about the two different migrations of the Aryans based on the differences between the languages of the outer and inner band, have been proved to be erroneous by the researches of some Indian investigators.

Some Principles

Above all, the efforts of these pioneers lacked the noble perspective which we have before us today. That makes not only the aim different but must of necessity be reflected in the method followed. From what has been said about the role of language in the life of the people, it is clear that in order to have a correct scientific appraisal of the history of a language and its characteristics, it must be studied in close relation with the history of the people speaking that language. Only such a study can throw fuller light on the original features of that language.

Secondly, it is not sufficient merely to classify the languages into the different linguistic families. It is necessary to

study the historical interconnections and interactions between different languages belonging not only to the same family but also to different families. So far the study of this aspect has been confined only to that of borrowing or loan words.

Moreover, a comprehensive survey conducted with the proper perspective will help to discover many ties which are shared in common by the different linguistic groups in our country. Recent researches in philology have helped to discover many a valuable fragment of Indian history which point to the intimate connection which existed even in times immemorial between the different peoples of our country.

Dr. S. K. Chatterjee's monumental work on the development of the Bengali language can be taken as an example. He has shown how Bengali, which is a branch of the Indo-Aryan family, acted as a force causing the fusion of three different linguistic and racial groups into one. The prototype of Bengali was transmitted to the regions which now comprise the Bengali-speaking areas only during the Mauryan period. Before that the different regions were inhabited by peoples speaking different languages belonging to three distinct linguistic families, namely the Dravidian, the Austric and the Tibeto-Burman. They were respectively known as the Dravidas, Nishadas and Kiratas. Gradually through the centuries all these peoples came to adopt the Aryan form of speech, viz., Bengali and were fused together to form a common nationality. But though they adopted the new language, the old ones did not vanish altogether without leaving their imprint. They left their marks on the Bengali language itself in the some of the idioms, in place names, in the method of pronunciation and above all in the vast stock of words designated by the linguists as Deshiya words. They left also the traces of their culture complexes in the customs and rites of the present Bengali people.

Thus this discovery has helped to show that the genius of the Dravidian, Austric and Tibeto-Burman speaking people respectively have made their contributions to the development of the genius of the Bengali people, their language and literature. The researches of the late Professor Jean Prusilsky on the pre-Aryan and pre-Dravidian elements in Indian languages and culture have opened up vast possibilities for investigation in this direction.

Such a survey is essential, above all, for a concrete programme of help and assistance to be rendered to the development of the undeveloped and comparatively backward languages, especially for the languages of the tribal peoples.

Government's Labour Policy

RANEN SEN

Following independence, the working class wanted to build a new India—an industrialised country, where poverty, unemployment and the inequitable distribution of wealth would not exist. The workers knew that this India of their dreams could not be built in a day. But they expected some relief from exploitation and oppression immediately after independence. So the workers in many industrial centres of West Bengal demanded "independence bonus" of the employers after 15 August. The hard-pressed workers in different industries entered upon a struggle to improve their conditions (e.g., textile and engineering). They took the path of organisation and struggle against the terrible threat of retrenchment and unemployment (e.g., military accounts and government office employees, defence factory workers, etc.).

A sense of pride, happiness and freedom following liberation mingled with the revolutionary spirit of the post-war days. Class struggle did not flare up immediately but it began to smoulder.

To determine its policy, the Government of India called a number of conferences with delegates of capitalists and workers. The idea of industrial truce or peace and the industrial policy of 1948 emerged from these conferences.

Post-Independence Policies

The Congress leaders and cabinet ministers stated two things:

— There must be increased production. Poverty-sharing

would help nobody. More production would mean greater wealth which could then be shared out.

— There must be industrial truce or peace, so that production might increase. Labour-capital conflicts must be reduced. Where any dispute arose the government would act as the third force. With this aim the amendment of the Industrial Disputes Act, etc., was undertaken. Mediation, arbitration, tribunals and such other methods were to be followed by the workers.

Meanwhile, with the dawn of independence, was founded a central trade union organisation inspired by the Congress leadership and controlled and managed by Congressmen. The Congress leadership disrupted the AITUC. This new trade-union organisation gave wholehearted support to government policies.

Actually this split reached down to the ranks of the working class. Out of their faith in the national leadership and love for the Congress, quite a large section of workers joined the INTUC. On the other hand, the government appointed some industrial tribunals and boards to consider the need and possibilities of a wage increase in the case of some of the lowest-paid sections of the workers (jute, textiles, and engineering tribunals in West Bengal, conciliation board in the coal industry, etc.). Workers and employees whom this arrangement could not satisfy were sought to be terrorised through repressive measures. The Basanti and Sri Durga cotton mills strike in West Bengal and military accounts strike are glaring examples of this latter policy.

Changed Situation

As a result of this many-pronged governmental policy, the situation changed in some respects.

Firstly, the talk of industrial peace and higher production lulled the workers to some extent (specially because of INTUC propaganda). It must be admitted that Nehru's slogan "produce or perish" roused an echo in the people's mind. That is why regulations could be tightened everywhere in the interests of higher productivity and the work-load increased, despite the workers' protests.

Secondly, the tribunal awards raised wages and dearness allowance in a certain measure. The workers' movement gra-

dually turned towards tribunals. Strike and lockouts fell in number, as may be seen from the following figures:

1947	...	1811	industrial	disputes
1948	...	1259	"	"
1949	...	920	"	"
1950	...	814	"	"

(*Indian Labour Gazette*, December 1955).

Thirdly, repression was unleashed to a greater or lesser degree against the workers in most industrial areas of India, wherever they rose against governmental policies.

Production suffered badly as a result of the crisis in agricultural and industrial production, caused by many factors, during 1948-49 and 1949-50. The prices of commodities were on the increase. The working class cost of living rose.

Working Class Cost of Living Index (1939 = 100)

1946	1947	1948	1949	1950
275	309	339	348	349

(*Record and Statistics*, October 1954).

In this period, too, the number of workers employed in organised industries decreased somewhat. Unemployment became a heavier burden on working class families. Consequently the slight rise in wages between 1948-50 was cancelled out by higher prices and greater unemployment, and the status quo was stabilised at a low level.

That is why Sri V. K. R. V. Rao has said that taking the 1931 cost of living as the base, the workers' wages in 1951 were about the same as in 1931. The whole of the increase in national income since independence up to 1951, has in fact gone into the pockets of persons with an annual income above Rs. 25,000.

In a word, since independence the policies of the Indian government have not brought about higher real wages, but a higher rate of unemployment and restriction of trade union rights. As a result, industrial disputes increased in 1951 and partly in 1952. There were 1,071 such disputes in 1951, involving 6,91,321 workers. For 1952 the figures are 913 and 8,09,282. The government could not solve any of the problems in a workers' life.

First Plan

Since 1951 the First Five Year Plan came into force. Its aims were—increased production, an increase in the national income, equitable distribution of wealth.

Governmental policy in the period of this Plan really consisted of these principles:

- No wage increase without a higher rate of production.
- Industrial disputes to be avoided. (Governmental interference in disputes became more pronounced.)
- The decision as to recognition of trade unions to be left entirely to the employers.
- Help in bringing into being rival trade unions at the initiative of INTUC leaders, and active assistance in getting the employers to recognise them.

Consequently, there was no rise in wages in spite of production being stepped up in most industries. Wherever wages rose, as in tea gardens, it was the outcome of bloodstained struggles. Even in those cases (e.g., banks) where the Labour Appellate Tribunal award recommended higher wages, the government vetoed the increase. The bonus, a section of workers in Bombay and Ahmedabad received as a result of negotiations with the INTUC unions, has a defective basis—all mill hands do not get this bonus and those who do are deprived of their fair share.

Under the First Five Year Plan, real wages did not reach the 1940-41 level. The wage index in 1940 stood at 108.6 and in 1941 at 103.7 (1939=100). The index for 1953 and 1954 respectively was 99.9 and 102.1 (*Indian Labour Gazette*). But in this very period production went up by about 43 per cent, at an annual rate of about 8.6 per cent, whereas wages rose by 14 per cent, or about 2.8 per cent per year.

And yet, between 1951 and 1954, the profits of big business were considerable, except for 1952 (when the end of the Korean War led to recession). During this Five Year Plan, employment opportunities did not appreciably increase. A study of the employment and production index shows that employment opportunities (jobs) did not increase very much since 1951 (actually they decreased in 1954). But industrial production went up from 107.2 to 153.6 and productivity from 78.8 to 113. The unemployment problem was not solved but intensified. A total of about 62,000 workers were thrown out

of work in West Bengal during the First Five Year Plan period.

Despite the Plan's promise to level down the inequity in distribution of wealth, inequality grew. The higher national income is a farcical concept to workers and employees whose income is the same as before. Official estimates of the per capita increase in income are unreliable, since the calculation of the Government of India's Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) and the Planning Commission are at variance.

According to the CSO the per capita income, in relation to the present cost of living index, was Rs. 281 and Rs. 262.1 respectively for 1953-54 and 1954-55, i.e., per capita decrease of Rs. 22 on the average. But according to the Planning Commission there has been an increase from Rs. 286.9 to Rs. 294.8, i.e., by Rs. 8. Now who is to be believed? Anyway, it is indisputable that there was no increase as far as the lower strata of society are concerned.

On the other hand, trade union and other democratic rights, instead of extending in this period, were narrowed down. Due to the non-recognition of unions, collective agreements were rare; except for trade unions which backed the government; few other unions were recognised by the employers.

Since the Industrial Disputes Act was not really framed in the workers' interests, its operation did not help them in most cases. On the contrary, it operated against the workers' right to strike. The standing order rules have been the employers' weapon to crush worker militants, who are being thrown out of factories in all parts of India under these very rules. Large-scale repression has been directed against the working class. Almost everywhere the employers, their gangsters and the government are active. Examples are unnecessary.

In brief the position is:

— There was no rise in wages in spite of increased production and government tore up its promise that higher wages should follow higher production.

— With retrenchment and unemployment on the increase in the town and countryside, the government's previous pledges to check both remained on paper.

— Trade Union and other democratic rights were restricted in practice. The situation is different only in places where

the workers have stood up for their rights in a united and organised manner.

Second Plan

The Second Five Year Plan has been drawn up with laudable aims and objects. But a glimpse of how the Plan is going to be operated leads one not unreasonably to fear that not only will the working class not benefit under the Plan, but its very objectives as a whole may flounder.

The working class, like other sections of the people, will undoubtedly suffer from the effects of over-taxation and inflation. On the other hand: what provision is there in the Plan for a fair wage, let alone a living wage, to the workers? How does the government view their trade union rights in this Plan? What is the government's policy towards retrenchment? How is the unemployment problem to be solved?

In both plans, the important role of labour has been stressed. The state of things under the First Plan has already been discussed. That there will be no fundamental change in official policy under the Second Plan either, has been admitted in the Plan itself.

Despite all the lip-service to socialism, it has been made clear in the Plan that the socialistic society is to be based not on increase in the remuneration of the worker, but on the ideal of "social service." The significance of this will be apparent if we analyse what has been said about higher wages.

Without admitting the immediate necessity to raise wages in view of the increased production, the Plan states that a wage policy should be decided upon in order to draw up a structure of higher real wages. It is said that to determine fair wages is difficult in practice. In a roundabout way, and on the plea of the marginal units (small industrial concerns), it is argued that to raise the wages of industrial workers would be difficult.

According to the Plan, wage increase should be made dependent not on the present level of profits and production, but on still higher production. Not immediate increase in wages, not even a wages commission to determine wages in the context of the present wage-rate, profits and prices, but collection of data on this question for five years to come is the approach of the Plan. Thus during this five year period

there will be no actual increase, nor any recommendation for such increase in wages. The whole question is to be shelved in the name of collection of data.

According to the Plan, the trade union's demand to consolidate dearness allowance with wages cannot be met, as the cost of living index is supposed to be out of date. So this demand too is side-tracked. It has been said that nothing can be done at present besides having a tripartite wages board. With regard to bonus and similar questions, too, the sole recommendation is for careful investigation. Pending this, the status quo will be maintained—the workers will be deprived of bonus.

Rupees 150 crores are ear-marked in the Plan for modernisation of industry (jute, cotton and sugar mills). As a result of this, the Kanungo Committee has admitted, about 1,80,000 workers would lose their jobs in the textile industry alone. About 30,000 jute workers have already been sacked and 20-30 thousand more will be. The work-load has increased and will increase further in every industry. Evading all these issues, the Plan only talks in a vague way about rationalisation.

As for the demand to abolish the contract labour system, raised by all labour organisations, the Plan recommends examination of this demand, but no effective steps have been taken to meet it. The vicious effects of the contract labour system are well-known to every worker today.

Democracy and Employment

Under the cover of democracy in industry, a wonderful provision for democracy has been made in the Plan. With fulsome praise, the Bombay, Ahmedabad and Jamshedpur types of agreement has been recommended for general acceptance.

The workers' responsibility for production, joint management of concerns, joint advisory boards and so on have been suggested in the name of democracy. But the issue of recognition of unions has been evaded. Certain conditions are laid down for the recognition of representative unions, but the Plan has nothing to say about what exactly is a representative union, and whether the workers' views will be accepted as the criterion in this matter, which is the basic problem of

industrial democracy today. By denying this, big business and the government are extending recognition only to unions which back their policies—even if those unions are representative of about 5 per cent of the workers concerned.

The government's intention to carry on with this policy is seen in the fact that the Plan, stressing the theme of industrial peace and discipline in factories, states that it is not enough for a union to have a large following. To secure recognition, the union must also undertake to maintain discipline and uphold the rules. The labour department's and the employers' idea of discipline is to be found in the standing order rules, under which any worker may be sacked for alleged breach of discipline.

Behind the jargon of democracy in industry and the socialist society, the Second Five Year Plan has made wonderful arrangements for the workers' comfort:

- No wage increase, not even by way of a suggestion.
- No trade-union rights. Curbing the workers in the name of discipline.
- No plan to check retrenchment.

With long-winded perorations about unemployment the Plan concludes that in the next five years unemployment will not be wiped out, but will increase. According to their own figures, there are at present 50 lakh unemployed persons in the cities alone. At the end of the Plan this will rise to 70 lakhs, even if the promise to create employment for a further 80 lakhs of people is fulfilled. It can be safely said that the jobs for 80 lakhs will remain largely on paper.

The question of the workers' right to strike is skilfully side-stepped in the Plan. But there are hints that strikes of any kind (pen-down and stay-in strikes, as well as slow-down) will not be tolerated. This is made more clear by railway minister Lal Bahadur Shastri's speech in the Lok Sabha on the Kharagpur and Kalka railway strikes. He has said there should be no strikes during the next five years.

In a word, the government wants to sacrifice the working class at the altar of the bosses' profits, but with incantations about socialism and democracy in industry.

Move for Unity

The workers are becoming only too keenly aware of the real face of this labour policy. In spite of internal dissensions,

official smoke-screens and repression, there is, once again, a growing desire for unity. Once again, the workers are coming out in united struggles. There were 772 industrial disputes in 1953, 840 in 1954 and 1,166 in 1955. The first two months of 1955 have indicated that even if last year's rate is not surpassed, there will be no slackening—that is, industrial disputes are on the increase. There are comparatively frequent strikes in developed industrial centres like Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. This means that the more advanced and organised workers are taking the lead.

Expressions of this unity and militancy are seen all around. United unions are being organised in different industries and they have placed the demand for trade union unity before the four central organisations, e.g., the Bank Employees' Association's recent suggestion, the Hind Mazdoor Sabha's recent resolution, the latest resolution of the UTUC, the recent nine-point unity resolution of the AITUC General Council.

Despite the pressure of a section of the leadership, and the ministers, the INTUC leaders' speeches at Surat also point in this direction. There is no doubt that the middle leadership of the INTUC in many States and the mass of workers everywhere want unity and united action. The united union of railwaymen is about to materialise. This shows that the workers are exerting pressure on their leaders.

Though unity is not round the corner, it may be said that rich possibilities exist today. It is, therefore, essential to make a bold bid for unity, scrapping sectarian outlook and methods. It is possible and necessary to defeat the government's reactionary, anti-labour policies with the weapons of workers' unity and struggle.

Kalidas

RAM BILAS SHARMA

Kalidas is one of the immortals of Indian literature. The exact period of his life and work is subject to dispute but the area of dispute is limited. He lived and wrote not earlier than the second century BC and not later than the sixth century AD. Perhaps with the immortals a few centuries earlier or later do not matter very much. He wrote in the Sanskrit language which according to some was never a spoken language and according to many was not a spoken language in the times of Kalidas.

His *Shakuntala* is known most universally; at least through Goethe's praise, it is known even to those who know nothing else about literature, Indian or foreign. *Vikramorvasi* and *Malavikagnimitra* are his other two plays dealing with similar love themes. *Meghaduta* has been a favourite of poets and Rabindranath Tagore wrote a whole poem on it. *Kumarasambhava* is an epic of love and war and *Raghuvamsa*, according to most scholars, his maturest work, tells the stories of the kings of the Raghu dynasty. *Ritusamhara* is one of his earlier works dealing with the beauty of seasons from an erotic angle.

Depiction of Passion

Of the nine *rasas* of Indian poetics, *shringar* or eroticism is the favourite *rasa* of Kalidas. The poetry of *shringar rasa* does not exclude love but it is more concerned with passion, with the physical beauty of woman, with lust than with the spiritual aspects of love. *Shringar* is said to be the *rasaraja*, the king of *rasas* and Kalidas is treated as the supreme poet of the most universal of passions, the sexual passion of man and woman. There is a popular legend that Kalidas became a leper after writing *Kumarasambhava* since therein he talked so freely of the sexual pleasures of the god Shiva and the god-

dess Parvati who is the mother of all created things. To atone for his sins, he wrote *Raghuvamsa* and by singing of the deeds of the kings of the sacred dynasty, he got rid of his leprosy.

Since spiritualism is the essence of our cultural heritage, he seems to be standing almost aloof from it; only recently a learned scholar Basudeva Sharana Agrawala has tried to prove that his eroticism conceals the philosophy of yoga. But this truth can be discovered by yogis only and it is safer to place very carefully expurgated editions of his texts in the hands of the young!

As if woman by herself were not evil enough, he adds such things as moonlight, music, flowers and wine to excite the passions of frail humanity! Not only men drink, women also defy prohibition! As the prince Aja passes through the town with his bride Indumati, women with eyes rolling in intoxication of *asava* (wine) and not the beauty of Aja and Indumati flocked to the windows. Aja of the sacred dynasty of Raghu recalls on the death of Indumati how the two had drunk wine together. Shiva's conjugal happiness is not complete until he succeeds in making Parvati drink the wine he offers. When such is the practice of sacred kings and gods, one need hardly mention the conduct of less divine creatures in his poems.

Kalidas's characters enjoy life and enjoy it with a vengeance. Many of them are polygamous and courtesans frequently add to their delights, filling with dance, music and amorous glances even the sacred atmosphere of Shiva's temple at Ujjain. Kalidas delights in describing women in all postures, in describing the various signs of sexual pleasure on their bodies, including the marks of the lovers' nails on their breasts. There is a king Agnivarna, the last in the glorious line of the Raghus. He leads an unrestrained life of sensuality and dies of consumption. That is a fitting commentary on the poetry of lustfulness created by Kalidas and other Sanskrit poets.

Feudal Sensuality

Is sensuality a feature of the national character of ancient Indians? The old folk-tales do treat of love and also of sexual pleasure but the theme is generally individual sex-love and not unrestrained lust. In the sensual elements of his poetry, Kalidas was reflecting the sensibility, the taste and the morals of a particular class, the feudal class of his times. In no way does it reflect the popular culture of the masses. The tradition

of sensuality continued in the works of the later feudal poets and was uprooted only gradually with the advance of the modern Indian renaissance. There was a conflict not only in ideology but also in the sphere of taste and sensibility. Different flowers blossomed in the same garden but in course of time, the poisonous ones were plucked and thrown out.

Sensuality such as is found in Kalidas is not possible without the degradation of the position of women in society. His women are very often passive in character, mere objects of the pleasures of men. In Greece, "the degradation of the women recoiled on the men themselves and degraded them too, until they sank into the perversion of boy-love, degrading both themselves and their gods by the myth of Ganymede" (*The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*). There was no myth of Ganymede in India. Kalidas is very much different from the love-poets of ancient Europe, for "sex love in our sense of the term was so immaterial to that classical love poet of antiquity, old Anacreon, that even the sex of the beloved one was a matter of complete indifference to him." (*Ibid*).

In more recent times we have had certain Anacreons in India who following an alien tradition have glorified boy-love in poetry. Kalidas and the whole of the Indian poetic tradition, feudal or popular, have not a trace of this perversion. Nor does Kalidas compare unfavourably with the writers of European renaissance, with Chaucer, Boccaccio, Rabelais, and even Shakespeare. Kalidas has nothing of their crudity, vulgarity and obscenity, and in describing artistically sensuous beauty and its joys, they are no match to the great Indian poet. Even if Kalidas had been nothing but a sensuous poet, he would yet mark a big advance in world literature. As it is, he is something more than that.

Romantic Sensibility

B. S. Upadhyaya in his *India in Kalidas* notes the romantic character of Kalidas's poetry. Romanticism does not reflect social relations as they are, at least it does not glorify them; it rather expresses longings which are not fulfilled in life, the desire for a world of beauty and love which is more imaginary than real. Kalidas is a poet of romantic sensibility, if ever there was one, and this explains the spell he cast on poets like Rabindranath and Nirala.

This implies a certain dissatisfaction with contemporary social life. And yet apparently this is not so. He recognizes the divine right of kings, their right to conquer other lands and extend their empires; for his kings, land is a source of worldly pleasure. The sanctity of *varna*-system is acknowledged; everyone is enjoined to follow the occupation of the caste in which he is born. The *shudra* Shambuk tries to practise austerities and is therefore punished with death by Ram. He accepts all the myths of the *Puranas*, making the four-headed god Brahma kiss the six-headed god Kumar, son of Shiva. Not only this, in many of his poetic conceits, specially in the description of war-scenes, he shows invention without beauty. Two soldiers behead each other on the battle-field; their ethereal bodies fly to heaven and watch from there their trunks still dancing on the earth! In certain places in *Raghuvamsa*, his epic hardly differs from the dull narrative of a *Purana* (though not all *Puranas* are dull). His art bears the stamp of his age, of the taste of the ruling class of his times. And yet that is not the essence of his art.

Description of Love

Kalidas fails in describing men as rulers but he succeeds in describing them as lovers. He fails in rousing pious devotion while describing the life of the gods but he succeeds in describing their life of love. In supporting the *varna*-system and other conventions, he followed the social laws of his age. His heart, however, is not there. He is always running away from court-life to nature. It is not an accident that Dushyant finds his true love far away from his court. Shiva and Parvati love each other on the Himalayas. Urvashi, the sweet-heart of Vikram turns into a creeper and the lover embracing the creeper in his grief discovers the real Urvashi in his arms.

His women are often the offsprings of unions which do not follow the traditional laws. Shakuntala is the daughter of Menaka, an *apsara* or divine courtesan and a king. Urvashi is also an *apsara*. Indumati was an *apsara* in her previous birth. They are often cursed by their preceptors and religious teachers and love becomes a punishment for them. They may be punished but they are divine creatures. Shakuntala, abandoned by her lover, finds protection with her divine mother. Kalidas creates beautiful fairylands for his heroines; the wife of the *Yaksha* in *Meghaduta* lives in *Alaka*, the land of ideal beauty,

full of music, flowers and eternal love. No doubt Kalidas is a romantic dreamer.

It is true that his heroes are often polygamous but when in love, it is always love for the one only. Such is Dushyant's love for Shakuntala. But Kalidas has other lovers. The *yaksha*, who addresses the cloud with all the grief of a heart in separation, has only one love in life, the maiden of *Alaka*, lovely like the first creation of God. Aja has only Indumati, Kama has only Rati, Ram has only Sita and Shiva has only Parvati. Kalidas not only glorifies individual sex-love but also, what is so rare, married love.

Indumati was the housewife, Aja's counsellor, his friend and disciple in the fine arts; robbing her, cruel death has robbed him of every thing. Kalidas sings not only of *kama* but also of *prema*. Not only the man loves, woman also loves with her whole being. Not only the woman suffers in separation, man too suffers like her. Love is an affair of mutual consent. The consent of the lovers precedes that of the parents. Love precedes marriage, which is the consummation and not the beginning of love. This is the case with Aja and Indumati, Dushyant and Shakuntala, Shiva and Parvati and others. It is love at first sight when passion is shy and has not yet turned into lust. Youth blossoms like a flower on the creeper-like body of Shakuntala. With unsurpassed feeling, the poet describes the tenderness of this first love. Again and again he returns to the theme, always saying something new on a theme old as poetry itself.

Dignity of Woman

He loves the beauty of woman but his heroines are not the queens of feudal princes, dressed in all their resplendent gorgeousness. Like Shakuntala and Parvati, they are at their best without artificial decorations. Beauty is the natural concomitant of youth and love flows through their veins like the sap of life itself. The song of love becomes the hymn of life. And this is the essence of his art, this great tenderness for all life, his love of life in all its manifestations of beauty. Both man and nature feel the throb of life. As the young *Kadamba* flowers thrill with the vital sap within, so did Parvati feel the gush of pleasure at the first loving gaze of Shiva.

Motherhood is the natural fulfilment of this love. In many

a passage, the poet describes the beauty and dignity of woman as she nourished a new life within her womb. This respect for womanhood is the finest feature of the great humanist tradition of Indian poetry. Kalidas shows full awareness of this and at times improves upon it. Ram was able to conquer his great foe Ravana owing to the great devotion of Sita. When Sita is banished by Ram, Kalidas makes the poet Valmiki say : "Ram is the destroyer of evil, he is truthful and does not boast of his virtues; yet because he has banished you, he is the object of my anger." When Dushyant fails to recognize Shakuntala in the court, she calls him *anajja* or *anarya* which is a very disrespectful term for the husband. She is not one of those who would cringe before their husbands, even when abandoned by them.

Though pathos is not his *forte*, Kalidas strikes a new note in his poetry when he describes the departure of a girl from her parental home for her husband's. In feudal society, the departure of the girl from her old home is nothing short of a tragedy. She goes to new surroundings which she has never seen. She finds all her childhood affections suddenly torn by the roots. This tragedy touched the heart of Kalidas and he has excelled himself and all other poets in the fourth act of *Shakuntala*. Shakuntala leaving her parents' home is full of a touching regard not only for them but also for the creepers she has reared and the young deer she has nourished. Through Shakuntalā, the poet here speaks for himself. He loves the *tapovanās*, the forest-abodes of the sages because here animal life too is respected. The hunter cannot molest the pet animals of the sages. He must lay aside his bow and arrows as he enters their precincts. Leaves and flowers are the favourite decorations of his heroines.

Nature supplies him with most of his metaphors for which he is justly famous. He loves the ocean-tide at the rise of the moon, the grandeur of the snowclad Himalayas, the ripe corn bending in the fields, clouds in all shapes and forms and the sweet smell that emanates from the earth drenched with the first showers. He is the poet not of abstract nature but of Indian nature. He loves to describe the various rivers and mountains, big and small of the north and the south of his country. Ram calls the river Sarayu the nurse of the Uttarkosalas and feels that she longs to meet him like his own mother. Even the poets of more recent times might well envy him this love of nature.

Philosophy of Reality

With his fine poetic sensibility Kalidas combines a keen philosophical outlook. Not for him is the world an illusion. In the very first verse of *Shakuntala* he speaks of god Shiva as manifest in the form of fire, water, air, earth, sky, etc. In *Kumarasambhava*, he calls him *vishvamurti*, the lord whose image is the world. Shiva is his favourite deity but he is not an invisible power. He manifests himself as the world of reality perceived by our senses. To adore man and nature is to adore him. This outlook is different from the popular idealist notion that the world is an illusion. This enables the poet to concentrate his attention on affairs of this world and be indifferent utterly and absolutely to the affairs of the next.

This outlook also enables him to treat myths as myths and not as religion. Unlike the ancient Greeks, Indian mythology furnishes him romantic imagery to which he adds other popular legends, as the flowering of the *ashoka* tree at the touch of a woman's feet. He is not a poet of patriarchal society when knowledge of the world is still very limited. He knows that the crescent grows into the full moon because of the rays of the sun and the shadow in it is that of the earth. He knows that there is no thought without language; speech and meaning are inseparable. He is well versed in grammar often borrowing metaphors from that source though he also violates grammatical canons according to poetic exigencies. All this shows incidentally that India's philosophical heritage should not be identified always with consistent idealism.

This keen intellect, however, he keeps in the background. He allows full play to his imagination which is not unsubstantial but treats of the sensuously perceived material of nature. One of his finest fancies occurs in *Kumarasambhava* where Shiva is engaged in love-talk with Parvati: the pale moonbeams are tender like the fresh sprouts of corn and Shiva could pluck them and make ornaments for Parvati's ears! And he feels the subtle power of words; particularly their music with the same refined sensibility. He is the most melodious of all Sanskrit poets, often making music express what words cannot.

Not without reason he is called *kavikulaguru*, the teacher of all poets. His world is more limited than that of the great epic-poets Vyasa and Valmiki, the authors of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. He lacks the vigour of their narrative, their

fine dramatic qualities. They depict a life of action as he does not. For this reason, he has not been such a force in our culture as they have been. Nor does he know of the agony and strife of humanity in any measure like Bhavabhuti and Tulsidas. His world is more limited but in this world he is supreme. His genius is fundamentally lyrical. He cannot construct his epics like Valmiki but he surpasses him in lyricism.

Literature and Ideology

Is the work of Kalidas the ideological reflection of the economic and political system of his times? Literature reflects ideology but it is not merely ideology. Kalidas reveals the outlook of the feudal class not only in his political ideas but also in certain aspects of his sensibility, his sensuality for instance. But as is the case with many a poet of class-society, there are contradictions in his sensibility. These engender his dreams of *Alaka* and the Himalayas, even his dreams of ideal kings who have established one sovereign domain over the land from the Himalayas to the ocean. Caste, class, religion, nationality have divided man from man. And yet the poets working within the bounds of all these have created something that will live for ever with the Man to be.

Kalidas sings to this man of the future also. Like the Indian lotus which is also called *pankaja* for its roots lie in the *panka* or mud, Kalidas's humanism blossoms in the mud of ancient feudal society. The old relations between the princes and the people are dead; dead is the theory of the divine right of the princes and the priests. But Indian humanity like Indian nature is still alive. The love that united the hearts of Aja and Indumati, of *yaksha* and his wife, of Dushyant and Shakuntala—that love still flows in the hearts of the Indian people. The mountains and the rivers which the poet saw we see still. The clouds, the southern and the eastern breeze, the change of seasons all this could still delight us if we were less worried than the poet. His respect for womanhood, his fine perception of beauty in man and nature, his love of the music of language, all this appeals to us today also as it appealed to others in the past.

The source of his inspiration is life. His deep love of the beauty of life, his tender regard for young life as it grows like the corn from the earth, his joy at all that is lovely in man and nature—this humanism will find its fulfilment only

in a society from which the greatest ugliness, human exploitation, has been removed. Hence one may be sure that Kalidas will continue to be read and admired in the future also and shorn of its fanciful or feudal trappings, his humanism will be translated into reality.

Principles of Minimum Wages

V. D. CHOPRA

Wage fixation in India has had a long history. Till very recently, the right of the workers to a minimum wage was not even formally recognised. The Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery Convention (1928) of the ILO which recommended to its member States, the desirability of setting up machinery for the fixation of minimum rates of wages in certain industries, was not ratified by the British rulers of India on the grounds of practical difficulties. The Royal Commission on Labour in India (1931), which made passing reference to the problem of minimum wages, suggested a policy of gradualness as there might be many trades in which minimum wage may be desirable but not practicable. This shows how the foreign rulers treated the question of fixation of minimum wages. But with the growth of the trade union movement in our country, even during the British rule the concept of minimum wages forced its way forward.

In 1934 after a prolonged general strike, the Bombay Millowners' Association fixed a schedule of minimum wages for certain categories of operators in the cotton mill industry. Later on, in 1937 the Bombay Textile Enquiry Committee was appointed. This committee assessed that the minimum wage for a typical family of husband, wife and two children should be between Rs. 50 and Rs. 55 for Bombay, between Rs. 45 and Rs. 50 for Ahmedabad, and between Rs. 3 and Rs. 5 less than Ahmedabad for Sholapur. Similarly in Bihar, the Labour Enquiry Committee of 1937, after taking into account the earning of the workers observed that the earnings of the miners were too low. Taking into consideration the normal needs of an average worker

to maintain his family consisting of a man, wife and three children, and the minimum expenditure required for the worker at the pre-war prices, the committee fixed the wages of the workers of the coal mines.

Again, in 1940 the Rau Court of Enquiry was constituted in order to ascertain the rise in the cost of living of the lower paid staff of the G.I.P. Railway since the outbreak of the war. The committee came to the conclusion that Rs. 25, Rs. 30 and Rs. 35 per month represented the subsistence levels for a family consisting of 3.0 consumption units in a city like Bombay, in urban areas, and in semi-urban areas respectively, according to pre-war prices. Full neutralisation of the rise in the cost of living was recommended at or below subsistence level.

The trend of the conclusions of these committees shows that in the pre-war period, the subsistence level was made the basis for the fixation of minimum wages.

Post-War Period

In the post-war period, the demand for the fixation of minimum wage gathered momentum and this was due, among other reasons, to the awakening among the workers. In fact the major working class struggles in the post-war period took place on the issue of increase in wages. Thus with the growth of the trade union movement, the concept of minimum wage also underwent a progressive change.

In the post-war period, when the railwaymen of India gave notice of a countrywide general strike, the Central Pay Commission (CPC) was appointed and the report of this commission was signed on 5 May 1947. The CPC recommended a minimum wage of Rs. 30 per month for the least skilled worker in central government undertakings. In its report CPC made the following observation: "We think that at present we can only aspire to rise above the 'poverty line' in the first instance." (p. 31). While explaining the poverty line the CPC said that "the poverty line may be drawn at the line below which an individual would be undernourished or it may be drawn well above the nutritional minimum, at a point where a choice of diet and the chance of some cultural life or recreation will also be possible." (p. 31).

For the first time it was recognised at least formally

that the minimum wage should also provide for some measure of recreation. It is significant to note in this connection that the recommendations of CPC did not satisfy the railwaymen either in the matter of wages or in the matter of dearness allowance. This is reflected in the fact that during 1949, organised railwaymen everywhere demanded enhanced pay scales.

The United Provinces Labour Enquiry Committee, 1946-48, made another comprehensive enquiry, which deserves special reference. This committee described the minimum subsistence level "as the level at which the family could not afford to spend a penny on railway fare or write a letter to an absentee child and attend to a sick child, etc., without sacrificing physical efficiency." The subsistence plus level was described as the level at which the income was sufficient not only for physiological existence but also for some elementary social necessities. The committee came to the conclusion that it could not recommend a figure lower than Rs. 30, on the basis of the pre-war level of prices.

The latest pronouncement on the principles relating to wage fixation is contained in the Report of the Fair Wages Committee published in 1949. This committee has defined the minimum wage as follows:

"We consider that a minimum wage must provide not merely for the bare subsistence of life but for the preservation of the efficiency of the worker. For this purpose, the minimum wage must also provide for some measure of education, medical requirements and amenities." (p. 8). This committee clearly laid down that "if there is any trade which can subsist only on paying unduly low wages permanently, it is no economic or industrial asset to the country or state and that the sooner it is closed, the better." (p. 67)

Thus we see that the concept of minimum wage which has been evolved in the recent years, clearly lays down that a worker is entitled to a minimum wage which ensures not only bare subsistence of life but also provides some measure of education, medical requirements and amenities. This guiding principle has been accepted by the various industrial tribunals in the recent years, and there is enough material available to determine what should be the minimum wage in today's conditions.

The various central trade union organisations have ex-

pressed their views that the concept of minimum wage, which has so far been accepted, is nothing short of a concept that condemns workers to a starvation wage and chains them to degradation and brutal exploitation by the capitalists. Hence the AITUC and other central trade union organisations reject any idea or move which is calculated to keep the present wage structure at the starvation level. The quantum of minimum wage should be determined on the basis of certain indispensable minimum requirements with regard to food, housing, clothing and other items.

Size of Family

One of the problems central to wage fixation is the determination of the size of the family, in respect of which the wage is to be fixed. With regard to the size and composition of a workers' family, divergent views have been expressed by various enquiry committees. In our country where unemployment is ever on the increase—thanks to the closure of factories both partial and complete, and also due to large migration of agricultural labourers and poor peasants from the villages due to evictions and the prohibition policy of the government resulting in total loss of jobs for lakhs of toddy tappers, and also the collapse of village industries such as handlooms—the dependants of the wage earners are increasing. Further the obligations incidental to the joint family system compel the worker to remit some portion of his earnings to certain dependants who might be living away from his place of work.

Anyhow, for the purpose of fixation of wages, we take into account only family members as a unit, consisting of husband, wife, three children and one dependant. We do not accept the basis adopted by either the Pay Commission or Fair Wages Committee, both of which have fixed 3 consumption units as the limit for a family. In this connection, it is interesting to note that in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, England and other places, the average family is usually taken as a man, his wife and 3 children.

The Pay Commission fixed the basic wage of Rs. 30 for a family of 3 consumption units, while Justice Rajdhyaaksha was of the opinion that an average working class family in India comprised more than 3 consumption units. According to the Uttar Pradesh Labour Enquiry Committee of 1948,

the minimum wage has to be fixed in respect of a worker with an average family consisting of 1.2 adult males, 1.1 adult females and 1.2 children. The Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee defined a family as one consisting of a man, his wife and 3 children. In 1948, when an enquiry was made by the government of Madras into the family budgets of the labour class in Madras city, it was found that the limit of a labour family was 4.92. Sri Venkat Ramayya in his report on the textile industry in Madras was inclined to adopt however a higher figure. Sri Adyantayya has adopted 4.92. as a unit of labour family.

Another question on which authorities differ is regarding the number of earners per family. In Australia, England and other places, the earnings of the wife are always excluded from calculations. During the family budget studies made by the Bombay Textile Enquiry Committee, it was found that out of the natural families, 71.65 per cent in Bombay and 74.40 per cent in Ahmedabad had to depend on the earnings of only the head of the family.

The conclusion, therefore, is that the adult male should be held responsible for the support of the family and his wages should be adequate enough to maintain the family. Any supplementary income which at times a wife might earn is only an extra income. Often when a wife is also an earning member some relative will have to look after the household and the family will have to incur expenses on this.

Dietic Norm

Dr. Aythod, nutrition expert, Coonoor, laid down a minimum standard of daily intake of about 2,600 calories for an adult man which would cost Rs. 5 to Rs. 6 per adult at pre-war prices, excluding some of the items such as sugar, etc., for which he would allow 25 per cent extra. Dr. Aythod's "well balanced diet" is that of a vegetarian and as most of the workers are non-vegetarian, their diet is bound to be costlier.

At its twelfth meeting held in New Delhi on 24 November 1944, the Nutrition Advisory Committee of the Indian Research Association worked out a well-balanced diet according to which an average family would require Rs. 25-4-2 per week as expenses for food alone. The Nutrition Advi-

sory Committee held that a manual labourer required about 3,000 to 3,600 calories as daily intake. The Uttar Pradesh Labour Enquiry Committee has accepted 3,000 calories as the ideal requirement for Indian workers, while Dr. Mukherjee would have it between 3,000 to 3,750 calories for workers in factories.

Dr. Mukherjee has criticised Dr. Aythod's estimate of energy requirement of an Indian worker in the following words: "The acceptance of Dr. Aythod's norm of only 2,600 calories for an Indian worker in all kinds of industries would involve severe bodily exhaustion and decline of the power of resistance which will contribute towards industrial inefficiency, greater absenteeism and prevalence of disease and mortality." Dr. Mukherjee estimates Rs. 30-13 as the minimum required for a family of 4.2 persons or 3.4 consumption units, while another authority arrives at Rs. 38-3-3 for a family of 5.4 persons or 4.4 consumption units for a sugar worker's family in Uttar Pradesh, at the pre-war level of prices.

Dr. Aythod's dietic norm is, by consensus of opinion, considered to be insufficient. By adding 25 per cent more, it will be found that the cost of diet for a family will amount to Rs. 33, according to the pre-war level of prices.

On the basis of price levels during 1947, S. R. Deshpande worked out the cost of diet per week per family at Rs. 11-1; Rs. 12-8 and Rs. 14-6-3 for plantation workers in Assam Valley, Surma Valley and Bengal respectively.

The cost of diet per consumption units per day has been worked out at Rs. 0-7-8½ for Assam, Rs. 0-7-8 for Surma Valley and Rs. 0-9-3½ for Bengal. The enquiry was conducted in 1947 when the cost of food index was 125. It rose upto 151 in 1953. Even taking the lowest figure of Rs. 0-7-8 the cost of diet in 1953 would rise upto Rs. 0-9-2 per unit per day and for a family of 4.4 consumption units, food expenses alone would amount to Rs. 75-10 per month.

Housing

The National Planning Committee of the Congress (1939) suggested the norm of 100 square feet of housing space per person, which means 400 square feet for a family consisting of 4 consumption units.

It should be our aim to raise the workers wages to a

level which would enable him to secure such accommodation in the near future. However, we realise that it may not be possible to provide 400 square feet per family and hence demand that as an immediate step, the provision in the minimum wage should be made for 240 square feet as the housing space per worker's family. On the basis of the Divatia Committee's estimate of the pre-war expenditure of Rs. 12 per 180 square feet, the expenditure today in no case would be less than Rs. 15 in smaller towns and Rs. 20 to Rs. 25 in bigger cities.

Clothing, Fuel and Lighting

The National Planning Committee (1939) laid down the norm of 45 yards of clothing per adult per year. It may not be possible to achieve this norm at once. Hence in the minimum wage provision should be made to enable a worker to buy 15 to 20 yards of cloth per year for each adult unit of his family. For this item alone a sum of Rs. 10 per month will be required.

Expenditure on fuel and lighting is an essential human need. The Divatia Committee takes an expenditure of Rs. 3-6-3 on this item. It is based on the actual amount spent by a family. This amount, however, is the result of considerable domestic economy, necessitated by the prevalent starvation wage level. Hence, in the minimum wage at least Rs. 5 per month should be provided for fuel and lighting.

Miscellaneous Expenditure

This should form the last and an essential item in considering the fixing of a minimum wage. In this group are included various items like education, medicines, amusements, conveyance, etc. The Divatia Committee has estimated the "minimum expenditure" on these items as coming to Rs. 8 to Rs. 13. This estimate is based on actual expenditure of an average worker's family in Bombay 24 years ago (Family Budget Studies—1932-33). In this estimate the specific item of amusement accounts for an average expenditure of only two annas and four pies in Bombay and takes no account of payment of interest on debt, occasional expenditure on medical aid and medicines is ridiculously low and

is put at about three annas per month. In short, this item too reflects a starvation wage. Even on the basis of this estimate, it is obvious that a worker has to spend at least three times more on these items now, as compared to pre-war. However, as an immediate step an expenditure of Rs. 20 per month should be fixed for these items.

The following table sums up the above analysis:

1. Food — 3,000 calories and 4.4 consumption units	..	Rs. 75
2. Housing — 240 sq. ft.	..	Rs. 20
3. Clothing	..	Rs. 10
4. Fuel and lighting	..	Rs. 5
5. Miscellaneous group	..	Rs. 20
		<hr/>
TOTAL	..	Rs. 130

This clearly shows that minimum wage ranging from Rs. 100 to Rs. 130 should be taken as the basis for the fixation of minimum wage. It is obvious that any wage which is less than this, is not minimum wage as is understood today but a starvation wage. Hence the demand for a national minimum wage of Rs. 100.

Immediate Steps

An analysis of the industrial disputes during the last few years shows that the demand for increase in real earnings has become one of the major demands of the Indian working class. Unless this demand of workers is conceded, industrial relations will continue to worsen.

We are in principle opposed to the view that a wage increase is conditional upon rise in productivity. But even at the existing level of productivity, the workers are entitled to get an immediate wage increase. The rise in the index of productivity during the first Five Year Plan has been about the order of 43 per cent, the index of real earnings has risen to the order of only 14 per cent. It is because of this that industrial relations during the period of First Five Year Plan remained strained.

In 1951, 1,071 industrial disputes took place, in which 691,321 workers were involved and in 1955, 1,166 industrial disputes took place, in which 527,676 workers are involved. Out of 1,166 industrial disputes, which took place in 1955, 23.7 per cent were on the issue of wages and allowances and 16.7 per cent on the issue of bonus.

These facts clearly underline that in order to achieve the aims and objectives of the Second Five Year Plan, an entirely new approach has to be made for the fixation and revision of minimum wages. Our Constitution enjoins on the state the responsibility for securing by suitable legislation and economic organisation, or in any other way, for all workers, industrial or otherwise, work, a living wage, conditions of work, ensuring a decent standard of life and full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities. The Second Five Year Plan has also laid down similar objectives.

Unfortunately this orientation has not been made so far. As an immediate step in this direction, it is necessary that an immediate interim wage increase of 25 per cent should be given to all the workers. The AITUC in its Indore meeting in September 1955 raised this demand. The INTUC has also very recently made a similar demand. Practically all central trade union organisations have on various occasions pressed for this demand. It has become a pressing demand of the entire working class of the country, and it must be conceded.

Book Review

IS THERE A WATCH TOWER ?

HERETICS AND RENEGADES by Isaac Deutscher. (Hamish Hamilton, London)

Though a collection of articles and reviews written over a period of some four years (all of them before the revelations made at the XX Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) there is a refreshing unity of attitude in *Heretics and Renegades*. Concerned as he has been with analysing the history of the international Communist movement, Deutscher in this collection has shown again his scholarship and his ability to rise far above the sneers and the smears of the more common run of "students" of Communism.

There is a grasp of events, a subtlety of analysis and in many ways a great realism which repays the most careful study

of the book and, which calls for a critical examination of the more facile interpretations of Soviet and Communist history, which many other Marxists have made. The range of the articles shows an admirable versatility—from comparisons with the French Revolution to the economics of Socialist emulation.

Deutscher's critique of the Koestler-Orwell neurotic "god-seekers," who failed their god, is devastating. Without denying an apparently real basis for their soul-searchings, he makes clear the *social* significance of their frenzy, their transformation from heretics to renegades—the ex-Communist "no longer defends socialism from unscrupulous abuse; he now defends mankind from the fallacy of socialism." Further on he writes, "our ex-Communist, for the best of reasons, does the most vicious things. He advances bravely in the front-rank of every witch hunt. His blind hatred of his former ideal is leaven to contemporary conservatism." His refusal to take these deserters from the cause of human liberation as serious political analysts, marks out Deutscher as belonging to a special category of critics of the Soviet Union.

Another good feature of the book under review is the attempt at objective analysis of the changes that have been developing in the Soviet Union. While at times he sinks to the level of the crude "struggle-for-power-in-the-Kremlin" argument (the Beria downfall), the main ground of his approach is to point to certain objective processes—industrialisation, collectivisation, education and the breaking of isolation through the momentous fact of the Chinese revolution.

Deutscher states that Soviet society "is an expanding society and that it expands on the basis of a planned economy making it immune from that extreme economic and moral instability which in bourgeois society tends to produce fascist mass neuroses." Referring to the recent changes and castigating the superficial observers who see in them a temporary, tactical manoeuvre, Deutscher writes: "The road back to Stalinist orthodoxy and discipline is barred, because that orthodoxy and discipline belong to an epoch which has come to a close."

There are many tributes to the feats of the Soviet people, to the contribution made to science by the development of planning techniques, to the enormous popular enthusiasm combined with a comprehensive discipline which has made the Soviet Union the power that it is. There is also trenchant criticism of many of the more deplorable and regrettable aspects

of Soviet development over a whole period. "The Tragic Life of a Polrugarian Minister," may be unpleasant to read but, shorn of some exaggeration, it is typical of some of the injustices that were committed and are now being remedied.

Yet, in spite of all the acumen, all the power of penetration, Deutscher fails to satisfy. Perhaps, Lenin's remark about Plekhanov applies too well to him—he is too much of a "materialist," and knows too little of dialectics. It would appear from Deutscher's approach that all that happened in the Soviet Union—the good as well as the bad—was inevitable if industrialisation was to be accomplished. At times this comes perilously close to apologetics, to excusing all in the name of success; at others it comes almost to slander that socialism means all of what took place.

What is forgotten, too often, is the hostile capitalist encirclement, the attacks and the provocations in which industrialisation proceeded in the Soviet Union. This played an enormous role in the relentless discipline, the vigilance as well as the distortions which were born of this situation.

In his attempt at objectivity Deutscher has become deterministic, ignored the levels at which history moves. The general laws of social development express themselves through a host of accidents and what may appear to have been necessary at one level turns out to be the result of unique circumstances or accident (in the scientific sense of the term) at the level of historical generalisation. To paraphrase Engels, not everything that happens is real. Further, it is clear that the ignoring of the rigorous Marxist scientific *method* and the forgetting of the scientific, Marxist theory of the unity of ends and means, were responsible for many of the lapses in the Soviet Union. We can explain all, but certainly not justify all.

Another basic defect is the author's underestimation of what the Soviet Union has done and what it signifies for human advance. The success of the Soviet Union is not only or even mainly a feat of social engineering. It is, above all, the demonstration of the ability of the workers and their toiling allies to build, to rule and to change the world. The success of planning did not depend on Marx's theorems of reproduction so much as on the storming of the Winter Palace in October. Those theorems were there for all to use, but why is it that only the toilers in power could use them? Deutscher has

missed the class-causation of history, the fertilising power of class revolution.

Nor is this an accident. He says: "I have, of course, never denied my Marxist convictions, but I try to stand on my own feet without leaning on Marx's much abused authority." Yet in the very first essay he sets the task of the intellectual: "to watch with detachment and alertness this heaving chaos of a world, to be on a sharp look-out for what is going to emerge from it, and interpret it *sine ira et studio*. . . ." Deutscher calls for the withdrawal not to an ivory tower, but to a watch tower. This is the essence of his mechanistic approach, of seeing history as a Leviathan-like pre-determined advance, in which he feels he need not engage.

This refusal to participate, to take sides might have saved him from the crudities of the Congress for Cultural Freedom but it has equally prevented him from being objective. To be objective one has to examine all the facts, to see *actual* relationships. But examination poses the problem of decision, of doing what the examination reveals as necessary. The putting off of decision is itself a failure to be objective. And one failure leads to the other—in the name of detachment one begins to be afraid to examine. With social analysis, detachment is another name for sterility, since society is made up of men and groups in conflict, in unity and in struggle.

Deutscher writes: " 'Have you read this book? You must read it, sir. Then you will know why we must drop the atom bomb on the Bolshies!' With these words a blind, miserable newsvendor recommended to me *Nineteen Eighty-four* in New York, a few weeks before Orwell's death." A damning indictment of Orwell! In a different setting, in gatherings of more sophisticated personages the books of Deutscher have been recommended by those who also wanted, in the ultimate analysis, to "drop atom bombs on the Bolshies." Has Deutscher, after all, managed to escape into his watch tower?

Mohit Sen

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