

MEN I MET

by

M. N. ROY



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Preface

M. N. Roy, the wellknown thinker and revolutionary, was a prolific writer. He wrote several books and pamphlets and also a large number of articles for newspapers and journals. Many of the latter, though written as occasion demanded, are of lasting interest and importance. Most of them still lie scattered in the issues of newspapers and magazines.

In the course of his uniquely rich and varied life Roy came in close touch with a large number of leading personalities in various parts of the world. In the last half a dozen years of his life, when he had some comparatively free time, he wrote sketches of some of those leading personalities giving his impressions of their life and work. Most of them are based on his personal contact with them.

Some of them are being brought together in this volume. They are being printed as they were written. Years have passed since they were written; and yet they retain a remarkable freshness. Written by a person with a wide experience of men and movements and an uncanny ability to pick out the essentials from non-essentials, the sketches will, it is hoped, prove of great interest to readers in India and abroad.

Most sketches were published at the time in newspapers like the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. They were simultaneously published in *Independent India* and the *Radical Humanist*, as it came to be known later. A few remained unpublished. They are appearing for the first time in this volume.

V. B. Karnik

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	v
<i>About the Men</i>	ix
JATIN MUKERJI	1
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU	5
VALLABHBHAI PATEL	15
CHITTARANJAN DAS	21
M. K. GANDHI	26
MOHAMMED ALT JINNAH	32
LEON TROTSKY	35
GEORGI DMITROV	47
MATHIAS RAKOSI	57
WILHELM PIECK	63
MARSHAL TITO	74
MAURICE THOREZ	80
EUGENE VARGA	84
MALENKOV	90
MOLOTOV	97
MADAME SUN YET-SEN	103
CHIANG KAI-SHEK	110
YEN HSI-SHAN	118
MAO TSE-TUNG	124
CHOU EN LAI	131
HO CHI MINH	137

About the Men

Jatin Mukerji, a leader of the revolutionary movement, died fighting against British troops in 1915. Roy came in close touch with him early in his career as a revolutionary fighter.

Jawaharlal Nehru, Roy first met him in Moscow in 1927 and maintained close contact with him throughout his life.

Vallabhbhd Patel, the Sardar. Roy met him during his underground days in 1931 and several times after his release from jail.

Chittaranjan Das, Roy maintained contact with him from abroad. The letter that Roy wrote to Das when he was elected President of the Gaya session of the Indian National Congress is a historical document.

M. K. Gandhi, the Mahatma. Roy was a strong critic of his programmes and policies. Roy admired, however, his courage and his innate humanist outlook.

Mohammed Alt Jinnah, founder of Pakistan. Roy had some meetings with him and also some correspondence.

Leon Trotsky, the organiser, along with Lenin, of the Russian Revolution. Roy met him in Moscow in the course of his work in the Communist International. Later, owing to his differences with Stalin, Trotsky had to leave Russia. He died at the hands of an assassin in Mexico in 1940.

Palmiro Togliatti, the leader of the Communist Party of Italy. Roy had close contact with him as one of the leaders of the international communist movement. He died in 1964.

Mathias Rakosi, one of the founders of the Communist Party of Hungary. Roy knew him as a prominent functionary of the Communist International. He was the leader of the communist regime in Hungary until 1956 when he was recalled to Moscow owing to his rigid Stalinist policies. He died in obscurity in Russia a year or so later.

Marshal Tito, the President of the Republic of Yugoslavia.

Wilhelm Pieck, was one of the leaders of the socialist movement in Germany. After the second world War, he held prominent positions in the communist regime in East Germany.

Georgi Dimitrov, a Bulgarian Communist. He became prominent after the historical Reichstag fire trial in Berlin. He was for some years the General Secretary of the Communist International. He held important positions in his country after a communist regime was established there at the end of the second World War. He died in 1949.

Maurice Thorez, was for a long time the leader of the French Communist Party. He died in 1964.

Eugene Varga, a prominent communist economist. Roy differed with him on issues like decolonisation and the role of the bourgeoisie in colonial and semi-colonial countries.

Malenkov, was a close associate of Stalin. He became one of the rulers of Russia after Stalin's death. Later, he lost his position to Khrushchev.

Molotov, was Foreign Minister of Russia for several years under Stalin. Immediately after Stalin's death, he became a member of the triumvirate which ruled Russia for some time. Later, Khrushchev became powerful and Molotov lost his position in the ruling hierarchy.

Madame Sun Yet-Sen, widow of the first leader and organiser of the Chinese revolution, Sun Yet-Sen. She holds now a decorative position in the Maoist regime in China.

Chiang Kai-Shek, the President of the Republic of China until he was defeated by the Communists in 1949.

Yen Hoi-Shan,

Mao Tse-tung, Chairman of the Communist Party and virtual ruler of the Republic of China. Roy met him when he was in China as a representative of the Communist International, but Mao Tse-tung was not then a prominent figure.

Chou En-lai, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Republic of China.

Ho Chi-Minh, the President of the People's Republic of North Viet Nam. He was a struggling communist worker from Asia when Roy was prominent in the Communist International.

Jatin Mukherji

We called him simply "DADA"; because, in the land and age of "Dadas", he was peerless, not another like him. nor was he the "Baradada"; he was the "Dada". As in modern art, so in our infantile politics, "Dadaism" was an irrational cult. There was affection adulterated with adulation, jealousy sugar-coated with saintliness, and loyalty buttressed upon the indiscriminate adoration of the hero-worshipper. But Jatinda was not a prophet of the cult of Dadaism.

We lived in the atmosphere of a vague sort of idealism. Few of us had any idea of what is called a way of life, and much less of any particular school of philosophy. Only a desire was uppermost in the consciousness of us all: to go down in history as heroes—to leave footprints on the sands of time. Southey's poems were included in the college textbooks. Barin Ghose's cynicism cruelly punctured our rainbow balloons. But as passionate believers, we had the fortitude to keep on worshipping even after the clay-feet of our god had been exposed by one of the high-priests. Barin used to say that the worst of cowards could walk up to the gallows if he knew that the whole country was applauding. That remark made a deep impression on me; perhaps it was a pointer to the way of life I chose eventually. Was our idealism—the fervent desire 'to lay down our lives for the cause—then only an expression of selfishness, the wish to be remembered and honoured by posterity? This question haunted me. However, youthful enthusiasm is not so easily dampened; nor did Barin mean to do that, I suppose. Most probably, he wanted us to be better men than greater heroes. In any case, we patched up our balloon, and walked the earth with our heads in the clouds.

All the Dadas practised magnetism; only Jatin Mukherji possessed it. Therefore he was a puzzle and a despair for his rivals engaged in the game of "Cheladhara." He never cast out his nets; yet he was loved by all, even the followers of other Dadas.

Once I overheard a few sentences of a conversation. I still belonged to the entourage of another Dada, and heard him rebuking a Chela, presumably of wavering loyalty. The latter had been visiting some other Dada. Ultimately, in exasperation, the suspected apostate rejoined mildly: "Dada why do you want me not to see him, when he does not want me to go away from you? He has never asked me to join his party; he has no party." I was curious to know who was that strange sort of a Dada, and buttonholed the rebuked Gurubhai after he was dismissed by the extremely annoyed Dada. The next day I was taken to the unusual Dada who did not play the game of "Cheladhara," and was caught for good. At that time I did not know what was the attraction. A rather ordinary sort of man, physically. His frame did not speak for his legendary physical strength, though he had been a trained wrestler. Nor did he put on an air of condescending superiority. In what he said, there was no hint (a usual trick of the trade of Dadaism) of an extensively ramified secret organisation accumulating vast quantities of arms and money for the Day of Liberation. Later on, I realised what attracted me: it was his personality. Since then, I have had the privilege of meeting many, outstanding personalities of our time. These are great men; Jatinda was a good man, and I have still to find a better.

When I met him, to come under the spell of his personality, we were still far off from the days of mass parties and mass mesmerism; the Dadas counted their followers hi tens, seldom in hundreds. To storm Fort William with an army of the Ananda Math, equipped with lathis, was a long-term programme. Even the war cry of "Kara, Kara, Mahadev". could not be raised by a dozen impatient patriots without risking arrest under Section 124-A I.P.C. An "action" (conspiratorial term for political dacoity) presented the occasior for practising warlikeness; and even then, prematurely raised, the war cry woke up the

neighbourhood, and the planned "action" had to be abandoned, unless indiscriminate shooting was allowed. Dada was dead against the practice, and under his advice (he never issued orders), I often had to do the disgraceful duty of abandoning "actions" to prevent patriots playing the role of firing squads much too prematurely.

The time has changed; the man who earned fame as a great conspirator against the Imperialist State and an extraordinarily bold terrorist, is now to be memorialised as a great man in the history of modern India. His birthday is celebrated, and biographies written. But since his time, the political stage of India has been crowded with people claiming niches in history, if not places of honour in the pantheon of the great. Judged by his actual feats, minus the legends woven around them, Jatinda's name may be crowded out of the list of national heroes. That would not be a tragedy, nor falsification of history as it is written until now. Jatinda himself would not be disappointed, I dare say. He must be appreciated as the archetypal man the like of whom, though not many, live and die apparently without leaving any footprints on the sands of time. But in reality, they embody rays of hope, breaking through the darkness of the mass of mediocrity, aggravated from time to time by the blinding flashes of the greatness of built-up personalities.

A biography chronicling the events of his life, embellished by legends of heroic deeds, would be a false homage to the memory of Jatinda. He would be the first to admit that compared with the Resistance movement in European countries occupied by the Axis Powers, the tragic story of the last days of his life pales into insignificance. There is no doubt that the story of the Balasore Jungle can be dramatised; and done by a master artist, it may attain the grandeur of an epic poem. But such a drama must be built up around the man, his character, his personality not his marksmanship, his ability to escape almost successfully, and holding out for hours against a numerically superior enemy, when he had only a few cartridges left. By way of expressing admiration and respect, the imperialist policeman who led the party to surround Jatinda's hiding place, said: "He was the first

Indian to die fighting, arm in hand." I presume by Indian he meant terrorist; otherwise, the compliment to Jatinda would be an affront to Indian manhood. In any case, should Jatinda's life be dramatised, let not the curtain fall on a policeman writing the most ill-appropriate epitaph on the hero's tombstone.

Good men are seldom given a place in the galaxy of the great. It will continue to be so until goodness is recognised as the measure of genuine greatness. Jatinda was not the embodiment of the mediaeval values of warlikeness and heroism. He did not belong to any age; his values were human and as such transcended space and time. He was kind and truthful as well as bold and uncompromising. His boldness stopped short of cruelty, and his uncompromising boldness stopped short of cruelty, and his uncompromising-ness did not preclude toleration. Like all modern educated young men of his time, he tended to accept the reformed religion preached by Swami Vivekananda—a God who would stand the test of reason, and a religion which served progressive social and human purpose. He believed himself to be a Karmayogi, trying to be at any rate, and recommended the ideal to all of us. Detached from the unnecessary mystic preoccupation, Karmayogi means a humanist. He who believes that self-realisation can be attained through human action, must logically also believe in man's creativeness—that man is the maker of his destiny. That is also the essence of Humanism. Jatinda was a Humanist—perhaps the first in modern India. To recognise him as such will be the most befitting homage to his memory.

—*Independent India*, February 27, 1949

Jawaharlal Nehru

In the post-war period no one aroused higher hopes and greater expectations of India than Nehru. It was generally believed that a devastated and impoverished world was "richer by Asia," and Nehru was the leader of a "resurgent" continent. He was hailed as such by all and sundry when he visited the United States two years ago. Since then events have moved fast, and Nehru seems to have failed to rise to the expectations of the democratic world. The latest disappointment has been caused by his disapproval of the Anglo-American draft for the Peace Treaty with Japan and the refusal even to send an Indian delegation to the San Francisco conference. His anxiety to keep India out of the cold war between the communist and the anti-communist camps could be understood, though not approved, by liberal opinion throughout the world. But the arguments for India rejecting the Anglo-American draft of the Peace Treaty with Japan can be hardly called impartial. Yet, no dispassionate critic of his attitude suspects that Nehru is a communist or that he would deliberately lead India into a position antagonistic to democracy. That is why liberal world opinion is puzzled and disappointed, and disappointment may lead to frustration and resentment. If that happened, India would be harmed more than any other country.

For her economic development, India requires foreign financial aid which can come only from the United States. The latter has repeatedly expressed the readiness to extend the help as in the case of Europe. But Nehru's foreign policy has prevented India from receiving the help she requires. From this point of view, his visit to the U.S.A. was an all-round failure. It yielded no concrete result, and pleased nobody except himself. He disappointed American

statesmen by his refusal to take sides in the cold war, and annoyed businessmen by the morbid suspicion of political strings attached to foreign capital. At home, realistic politicians and big business were displeased with Nehru because he failed to bring home the bacon. This all-round failure and disappointment were due to the Actor's desire to draw applause from the world leftist gallery, and also to increase his popularity with the vocal middle class at home by pandering to their nationalist conceit. The result of the failure of Nehru's visit to the U.S.A. was a conflict between the 'people's tribune' and hard-headed party-politicians. The conflict has ultimately plunged the Congress Party into a crisis which is also the decisive crisis in the political life of Nehru.

At this juncture, a leading daily has reproduced an article written by Nehru about himself in 1938 under a pen-name. The article throws a flood of light on the enigma that is Nehru and provides cause for the anxiety that the enigma may turn out to be a tragedy for himself as well as for the country, which may still follow him in the absence of any rival. He wrote:

Jawaharlal has learnt well to act without the paint and powder of the actor. With his seeming carelessness and insouciance, he performs on the public stage with consummate artistry. What is this going to lead him and the country to? What is he aiming at with all his apparent want of aim? What lies behind that mask of his, what desires, what will to power, what insatiate longings? Is it his will to power that is driving him from crowd to crowd and makes him whisper to himself: I drew these tides of men into my hands and wrote my will across the sky in stars? Men like Jawaharlal with all their capacity for great and good work, are unsafe in democracy. He calls himself a Democrat and a Socialist, and no doubt he does so in all earnestness; but every psychologist knows the mind is ultimately a slave to the heart and that logic can always be made to fit in with the desires and irrepressible urges of men. A little twist and Jawaharlal might turn a dictator. He may still use the

language and slogans of Democracy and Socialism, but we all know how Fascism has fattened on this language. Jawaharlal cannot become a fascist. Yet, he has all the makings of a dictator in him—vast popularity, a strong will, energy, pride, organizational capacity, ability, hardness and, with all his love for the crowd, an intolerance for others and a certain contempt for the weak. His overmastering desire to get things done will hardly brook for long the slow processes of democracy. He may keep the husk but he will see to it that it bends to his will. In his revolutionary epoch, Caesarism is always at the door and is it not possible that Jawaharlal might fancy himself as a Caesar? Let us not spoil him by too much adulation and praise. His conceit, if any, is already formidable. It must be checked.

No apology is necessary for this rather lengthy quotation. Because, this honestly and masterfully drawn self-portrait is as true to life today as it was thirteen years ago. Only its lights and shadows now stand out more clearly on the background of the history of the intervening period. Here Jawaharlal himself explains why he has been 'one of the greatest disappointments of the post-war era,' as the *New York Times* described him recently. While his generalization is not true, in his own case, certainly the mind has always been the slave to the heart. And the present crisis in the Congress Party has been precipitated by his impatience with slow-moving democracy. Explaining the reason of his resignation from the executive of the party which he leads, in a press conference Nehru said: 'I am an exceedingly bad politician, and functioning in groups I cannot function properly, but I can function in the midst of 50,000 or 100,000 persons.' What he whispered to himself thirteen years ago in poetical language is spoken out aloud today. He has contempt for the weak, because he is a weak character; the weakness is hidden to himself by an exaggerated belief in his strong will and hardness, and rationalized, when it can no longer be hidden by the dogma that the mind is a slave to the heart.

The self-portrait was such an unmistakable pointer to

Nehru's future, and to the future of the country if it followed him, that for a long time few believed that it was drawn by himself. The authorship was ascribed to others who were known to be critical of him. As a matter of fact, until the reproduction of the article after thirteen years, as his own handiwork, Kripalani, who had recently broken away from the Congress with a large following, was generally believed to be its author. When the article first appeared, Nehru was the President of the Congress and Kripalani its General Secretary.

Nehru's self-study being so much more candid than the classical confessions of other famous men, and ominous as the shadow of a possible fearful future cast ahead, the idea that it might have been his own work did not occur to anybody. It was known to very few that the provocation was provided by one of the recurring crises in the political life which Nehru had just experienced. He had succumbed to his weakness, allowed his morbid attachment to Gandhi to overwhelm his own conviction and leave his followers in the lurch.

In 1937, the Congress participated in the election to the Provincial Legislative Assemblies set up under the Government of India Act of 1935, with the object of blocking the operation of the British-made Constitution which it condemned as the 'Charter of Slavery.' The phrase was coined by Nehru. The Congress having swept the polls, there developed a controversy. Practically all the top leaders, including Gandhi himself, were of the opinion that the Congress Party should accept office and form Provincial Ministries. That was obviously contrary to the object with which elections were contested. Followed by a considerable section of the membership, Nehru opposed the policy of compromise. The opposition was so strong that a Special Convention had to be called to settle the issue. It was almost certain that the opposition would win; and it was rumoured that in that case the elder statesmen with the consent of Gandhi would resign from the executive.

Nehru was the President of the Congress. Before the Convention assembled, the Working Committee met at

Gandhi's residence in the Delhi Harijan Colony to discuss the crucial resolution drafted by Nehru. It was an open secret that the Committee disagreed with the President on the issue of office acceptance. There was a protracted and heated discussion. Nehru threatened to resign if his draft was rejected. Finally, the Mahatma prevailed upon the Committee to accept the original draft amended by a short paragraph, which invalidated the rest of the resolution. The next day Nehru appeared in the Convention, not to resign his Presidentship, but to recommend the acceptance of the resolution! The Congress accepted office under the 'Charter of Slavery.' Although his followers were bitter against the 'betrayal,' Nehru's popularity did not wane in the least. The crowd can always be swayed by language spoken out of the heart.

Throughout his political career, time and again, Nehru has similarly acted against his own conviction, and on most of the occasions voluntarily—at the dictation of his heart, and lately prompted by the will to power.

After the failure of the second Civil Disobedience Movement in 1931, the younger elements in the Congress Party, who had been influenced by Nehru's leftism, revolted against the top leaders. They were already showing a tendency to accept the Reforms recommended by the Round Table Conference, which had been boycotted by the Congress. At that juncture, Nehru confused issues by associating nationalism with vaguely conceived socialist ideals. He was instrumental in arresting the process of differentiation between the force of progress and conservatism by captivating the immaturity of the former with the lure of a socialist Utopia. Conservative nationalism was rationalized as the means to social revolution. Nehru's socialist professions galvanized the antiquated cult just when it was losing its appeal to the progressive and democratic forces. Swayed by the silver-tongued oratory of the sea-green incorruptible people's tribune, they were fired with the fanaticism of reconverts and herded back to the fold of Gandhism, which had in the meantime shed the oddities which were incongruous in a struggle for mundane power.

Nehru missed the chance to lead the movement for

national liberation towards the higher goal of a social revolution of the kind which had brought Europe out of the twilight of the Middle Ages. Personal attachment to Gandhi precluded his moving in the direction of genuine political greatness and creative leadership. His behaviour at that juncture was pusillanimous. It was the first major crisis of his political life and he succumbed. He patronized the formation of a Socialist Party, but himself did not join it, and advised it to remain organizationally inside the Congress under its conservative leadership.

A blind revolt against a long social injustice and economic inequality provided the basic impulse of the mass movement which developed under the banner of nationalism. If allowed to be articulate, the social-revolutionary impulse of the movement was bound to threaten the *status quo*. Nehru's nationalism preferred to sail under a false colour in order to deceive and mislead the politically inarticulate urge for social justice. With the apparently revolutionary programme of an uncompromising anti-imperialist struggle, Nehru's socialism rationalized the racial animus of nationalism. The anti-imperialist battle-cry of pseudo-socialist left nationalism became the most virulent political expression of race animosity. Being primarily directed against the British, it opposed the political Nehru to his intellectual conviction and cultural ideals nourished by the tradition of European liberalism. The inner conflict could not but split the personality of a man who allowed emotion to overwhelm the intellect. Therefore, Nehru is so very full of contradictions which puzzle even his admirers.

Nehru's fascination for socialism was the expression of the longing of the lonesome intellectual of the twentieth century for an ideal, for a cause to which he could dedicate his life. It is a powerful urge which may enable one to rise high in the world of thought and deed; but it is also known to generate equally strong atavistic tendencies. The purely emotional longing for a vaguely conceived new world, in the context of the disintegrating bourgeois culture, has in innumerable cases found a concrete expression in the modern man's search for God. Nehru found his God in

Gandhi, and dedicated his life to rationalizing the latter's mediaeval ideals and obscurantist ideas.

During the last three decades, the political history of India was dominated by two personalities. They worked in the closest co-operation, but their relation was an enigma for all except the most superficial observers. Culturally, Gandhi belonged to the Middle Ages, representing the best of its moral tradition, though on a much lower level intellectually. Nehru, on the contrary, is a modern man who admittedly found it difficult to share Gandhi's obscurantist outlook. Nevertheless, throughout his public life he has been guided by the faith that Gandhi could never be wrong. His acceptance of the latter's leadership was without reservation. Nehru's entire political career was built on the basis of that enigmatic relationship between two personalities which apparently had so very little in common.

Nehru is a man of modern education and culture, endowed with a high degree of moral integrity, refinement and personal charm. As a matter of fact, insofar as his personality embraces all these virtues and many other attributes of a modern civilized man he stands head and shoulders above the top leaders of his party and also his colleagues in the government. As such, he has no peer in nationalist India. Yet, the point is that all these merits and assets might not have raised him to the high pedestal of the 'Tribune of the People,' and subsequently to political power, but for his mystic and mysterious relations with Gandhi.

The virtues of a modern man are not appreciated in an atmosphere of traditionalism and cultural conservatism; and Indian nationalism thrived in that rank atmosphere, its ideology being revivalist. Therefore it can be reasonably doubted if Nehru could become the hero of Indian nationalism except as the spiritual son of Gandhi. The corollary is obvious: to purchase popularity, Nehru had to suppress his own personality. That was not easy to do. Moral integrity precluded hypocrisy or insincerity. It was an effort to reconcile two discordant systems of values. The rationality of a man of modern education and culture

clashed with his blind faith born of the unanalysed emotions of personal loyalty. The superimposed personality of the *alter ego* proved to be stronger than Nehru's native self. The result was self-deception, disintegration and stultification of a personality which, but for that tragic experience, might have been more creative than a successful politician.

The tragedy of Nehru, his failure to unfold his personality to a high degree of creative greatness, was brought about by a conflict of two cultures; the tradition of mediaevalism represented by Gandhi proved much too strong for Nehru's superficial modernism—superficial because it could not successfully counteract the loyalty to an antithetical cultural tradition. The enigmatic relation between the two men was the logical consequence of the essential similarity of the apparently different ideas and ideals cherished by them respectively. The enigma was generalized in the puzzle of the Indian nationalist movement being led at the same time by two men belonging to epochs of cultural history, personifying two patterns of culture. It resulted from the fact that contemporary India does live in two ages: chronologically she lives in the twentieth century; but historically, that is to say, in the scale of social evolution and cultural progress, she still languishes in the soporific twilight of the Middle Ages. Nehru's surrender to Gandhi was determined by this paradox of the Indian situation.

After Gandhi's death, Nehru might have recovered his soul, could he resist the lure of power. The love of power, however, can result from a keen sense of responsibility. It has undoubtedly been so in the case of Nehru. Nevertheless, it has done more harm to him than to others. The delusion that he is the heart and soul of things makes him blind to the humiliating fact that he is being used by others for not very noble purposes. But having walked deliberately into this position, he could not retrace his steps unless he was prepared to abandon a vocation not compatible with his own personality. On several occasions in the past, it appeared that he might do so. As long as Gandhi lived, personal loyalty to him prevented Nehru from making a bold choice. Now it seems that he has

completely forgotten his own self, and has become a willing tool of the party bosses who are the power behind the Prime Minister's throne. The latter, in their turn, do not grudge him the monopoly of the limelight which tickles the vanity of most mortals.

The People's Tribune has not succeeded as a statesman. To retain his position as leader of the nation, he must always be on the platform and appear from time to time on the world stage. He has failed as a diplomat, being too honest to be one. But notwithstanding his waning popularity, Nehru is still irreplaceable as the premier vote-catcher of the party. The disillusioned urban middle class may no longer be fascinated by the glamour of the scion of aristocracy preaching Socialism. The decisive factor in the next election however, will be the newly enfranchised illiterate millions. Steeped in ignorance and superstition, they can be swayed only by an appeal to their blind faith. The Mahatma is no longer there, physically. But his infallible inner voice will speak through his spiritual son. Nehru will win the election, aided of course, by a powerful party machine and the generosity of financial patrons. Consequently, Nehru still remains the leader of the nation, because he is the heir-designate of the Father of the Nation.

The present crisis in the Congress Party is the latest crisis in Nehru's political life. He talks of secularism; but Hindu chauvinism is the prevailing passion of the politically minded middle class. To win the coming election, the Congress Party must make concessions to the sentiment of the most powerful section of the electorate. As a matter of fact, a majority of the membership of the Congress Party fully shares the prevailing passion. The party is moving in a definite direction away from the ideas and ideals of Nehru. He cannot stop the swing. Consistently, he cannot move with the party. He is confronted with the choice between loyalty to the party and his own principles. He has chosen the former. The capitulation may still appear as a victory, because the party managers are not taking any risk on the eve of the election. But Nehru would never leave the Congress. And he could not remain the titular leader of the Congress unless he capitulated to the reactionary forces which control the party

machinery. His uncompromising attitude on the Kashmir issue and the policy of being tough in the relation with Pakistan are concessions to Hindu chauvinism. Four years in office have cost the Congress Party much of its popularity with the people at large. But the popular hero will lead the unpopular Congress to victory in the coming election.

The tragedy of Nehru is all the greater because he could be the real leader, if he had a stronger character. In that case, the history of India might have been different, and she could really play on the world stage the role which Nehru imagines she is playing through himself.

The vicissitudes of party politics and the lure of power have strangled a good man who could shine more brilliantly as a poet or an actor. Those who know him well must wonder if he regrets having made a wrong choice. But it is too late to rectify. The lure of greatness has made the world poorer by one good man, potentially possessed of creative talent.

—*The Radical Humanist* May 4 and 11, 1952

Vallabhbhai Patel

On his 74th birthday, nationalist India has done homage to the man who has been correctly described as the master-builder of her destiny. In view of what he has done for the nation, if not for the people, it is natural for nationalist India to be reluctant to face the problem of doing without him. But it is idle to play the ostrich game. Sardar Patel is 74 years old and not in the best of health. I sincerely join in the prayers that he may live for many years more; but knowing that even God, if he existed, could make no miracle, I cannot silence the question—What will happen to India when the master-builder will go, sooner or later, the way of all mortals?

Recently, an American visitor asked me the question, and he bracketed the Sardar with Nehru. I could not answer except to say that Patel might well exclaim *apres moi, le deluge*. I am afraid, that might be the case, if medical science also fails to make miracles. But being a believer in the endless potentialities of science, I hope that it might succeed where God might not, as in the case of the Mahatma, all whose prayers could not save him from the assassin's pistol. And don't run away with the idea that the Mahatma did not care about what happened to the mortal coil of his soul. He wanted to live 120 years, and believing that nothing happens in this world except by the grace of God, he must have prayed for that long life. If God could not grant the prayer of his prophet, there is little chance of his listening to the supplications of less pure souls who wished Sardar Patel a long life on his 74th birthday.

It is easy enough to pay tribute to a successful man. But it is much more difficult to carry on the work he will leave unfinished when he has to listen to the call, not of

God, but of dying cells. Nationalist India was fortunate to have Sardar Patel to guide her destiny for a generation. But her misfortune is that there will be none to take his place when he is no more. He has been trying his best to rear up a group to succeed him. Notwithstanding his great achievements in all other respects, he has not been successful in training up an heir-apparent. That is a misfortune common to all great men.

When the future is bleak, one naturally turns to the past, and Sardar Patel can be proud of his past. His accomplishments have not been fully appreciated by any among those who sang the chorus of adulation on his 74th birthday. The more important of them can, therefore, be mentioned as the token of my respect for the man who would never be my ideal.

In 1938, Subhas Bose could have made history, for good or evil. His weakness plus the Sardar's iron will, frustrated his ambition and saved the Gandhist Congress. At the Tri-puri Session of the Congress and the A.I.C.C. meeting in Calcutta, when the people's tribunes were in a flutter, the Sardar sat on the dias—a figure of granite, confident of strangling the ambitious upstart with the purse-strings that he held. The picture was reminiscent of that of Stalin when the latter walked up and down in the background of the platform, smoking his pipe with a grim but cynical smile, when a Trotzky or a Zinoviev was frantically fighting for his political life with the weapon of oratory. The analogy is suitable in neither case. Neither did Subhas Bose ever reach anywhere near the grandeur of a Trotzky or even the impetuosity of a Zinoviev; nor is Sardar Patel to be compared with Stalin. The latter has shaped his destiny with his own hands, whereas, but for the decrepitude of British Imperialism, Sardar Patel might have died in prison. Stalin fought every inch of the way to his present position. To Sardar Patel power came as a gift and thereafter he had no rival. His greatness is that he could avail of the opportunity. Lesser men might have failed.

I claim no inside knowledge, but believe that I am not far off the mark when I say that but for the realism of the

Sardar, the Congress might not have agreed to partition, and consequently plunged India into an indefinite period of civil war. On that issue Sardar Patel proved himself to be greater than the Mahatma, who had declared that India could be partitioned only over his dead body.

Could Sardar Patel have had his way also on the Kashmir issue, India would not be today spending fifty per cent of her revenue on military budget. I do not know what was Sardar Patel's attitude to the Kashmir issue; but I am inclined to believe that it was as realistic as his attitude towards partition. Nevertheless once the dice were cast by the gambler's megalomania, the Sardar had no choice but to play the game; but one could be sure that he loathes the stupidity clothed in the glamour of popular heroes.

The integration of the States is the least of the Sardar's achievements, although it is rated so very high. After the departure of the British, the princes were like helpless orphans. They had no option but to bow to their fate, and the Sardar certainly 'made it easier for them by his generosity at the cost of the Indian people. All this talk about bloodless revolution is sheer nonsense. It is equally an exaggeration to compare the Sardar with Bismarck, although there may be much in common between the two men. If the *de facto* leader of Indian nationalism is to be compared with any personality in European history, Machiavelli would be a more appropriate choice. How then can Sardar Patel be a follower of the Mahatma? And I believe that he is, as sincerely as anybody else. The explanation is that Machiavelli was not a rogue, and the Mahatma was a shrewd politician.

In any case, the fact is that there is none in the Congress to replace the Sardar. Therefore, on his 74th birthday, the thoughtful patriot should have been more anxious than prayerful. I remember that at the time of the Haripura Congress in 1937, a prominent non-political Gandhist wrote an article to speculate what would happen if the Mahatma preferred Samadhi to this world. Those who indulge in a similar speculation on the 74th birthday of Sardar Patel, pay the highest tribute to him. I am one of them.

INDIA WITHOUT SARDAR PATEL

It is two weeks since the virtual leader of nationalist India passed away, leaving vacant a position that he had held for thirty years. His death is in fact a greater loss than that of the Mahatma. The latter is honoured as the Father of the Nation. What India is today, however, is rather a creation of Patel than of his master. This statement about Patel's role in the drama of the contemporary history of India is, of course, subject to the doubt if the credit of having made the history of his time could ever be conceded to any single man, however great. In the case of Patel, the claim to the credit can be more plausibly disputed.

The fact, nevertheless, is that, if the Mahatma was the Father of the Nation, it was his great disciple who conceived the idea of organising a totalitarian party as the instrument for the establishment of an authoritarian State, both behind democratic facades. Having successfully served the purpose of attaining power, very largely as a gift of decayed Imperialism, the former is threatened with disintegration in consequence of the struggle for the distribution of the fruits of an easy victory. And the possible disintegration of the party will impair the solidarity of the Government and reduce its chance of retaining the monopoly of power after the coming election.

The measure of the loss of Sardar Patel is to be judged in the light of these facts. It is difficult to imagine how in his absence the disintegration of the Congress will be arrested. No other leader commands the requisite control of the party machinery. None can have his authority, derived from the confidence of the powerful business community and the consequent control of party finance, and the power to distribute patronage which commanded the submission, if not loyalty, of all ambitious party members. Therefore, Sardar Patel was the dictator of the party in power, and as such dominated the Government, though formally occupying the second place.

The immediate consequence of his death may be a recrudescence of the crisis which was tided over at Nasik

by his skilful manipulations, backed up by the power to crush any group or individual who dared cross his will. By championing the most blatant form of Hindu nationalism and cultural reaction, the Mahasabha and the R.S.S. might become a serious rival to the Congress in the coming election. To regain the confidence of communalist Hindus, therefore, was the condition for winning the election. Sardar Patel knew that a vast majority of Congressmen had discarded Gandhism except in profession; that an exponent of reactionary Hindu nationalism like Tandon would be elected as the next President of the Congress, defeating an orthodox Gandhist or democratic rival, even if the latter was sponsored by the Working Committee. For these reasons, he backed up Tandon's candidature against a Gurubhai who was the Prime Minister's nominee. The manoeuvre of getting Tandon elected as President regained for the Congress the support of aggressive Hindu communalism, prejudiced the chances of the rival in the next election, and thus ensured Congress retaining power thereafter.

But Tandon's election was a defeat of the Prime Minister; and the Nasik Congress met in a tense atmosphere of crisis. Again the all-powerful boss of the party machinery pulled strings from behind, and the delegates who had voted against the Prime Minister in the presidential election declared their confidence in him. It is an open secret that there was little of agreement and harmony between the Prime Minister and his Deputy. But however much the latter might dislike the Chief's ideas and disapprove of his policy, he knew that in the coming election the Congress could not do without Nehru's popularity. He also knew that the latter's international reputation gave him the opportunity to consolidate a totalitarian State behind a democratic facade. Therefore, he tolerated Nehru's foreign policy, taking at the same time all precautions against its doing any irreparable harm.

The delicately balanced relations inside the party and the Government will be upset in the absence of the hand which held it. There is none who can replace Patel as the super-boss. The result might be a blessing in disguise—

Nehru becoming the virtual as well as the titular leader. But in that case, Hindu communalism and chauvinist nationalism will most probably revolt against the Congress, and its chances in the next election will be seriously prejudiced. Inside the Congress, the conflict between the President and the Prime Minister will break out in the open; the crisis will come to a head on the issue of selecting candidates for the election.

In short, soon after Patel's death, all his thirty years' work may be undone. The religious influence of the Mahatma survived his physical death, to be remembered, if not to guide. There is nothing like that in the case of Patel. Therefore, his influence on Indian politics will not survive his physical death. That might again be a blessing in disguise; but immediately, nationalist India, without Patel, presents such a depressing perspective that well might he have exclaimed on his death bed: "*Après moi le deluge*"—After me, deluge.

—*The Radical Humanist* December 13, 1950

Chittaranjan Das

Before leaving india, I had occasions to come in touch with C. R. Das. That was long ago, before the Great War and before the abortive attempt was made to conquer freedom on that golden opportunity, which was ultimately missed. He was not yet a political figure. Through his brilliant defence of Aurobindo Ghose in the Alipur Bomb Case, he had come closer to politics—to the politics of those days, namely, revolutionary politics. Yes, that was revolutionary politics; only it was ineffective and wrong methods were employed. C. R. Das entered politics as a sympathizer of that school of politics. A poet by temperament, emotion was the outstanding feature of this personality destined to dominate Indian politics eventually. Emotional persons, moved by high ideals, could have no patience for the Congress of those days. It simply had no appeal. It was not only ineffective but distressingly prosaic, except for those who loved to be entertained by the music of their own oratory. The manhood of Bengal—and the womanhood also—was fascinated by the whispers about the bold exploits and still bolder plans of the revolutionaries. It is difficult to say how far that emotional appeal drew C. R. Das to appear on the political field actively. But one thing is certain. His early political association made a deep impression on his mind, which never could get accustomed to the anti-revolutionary essence of Gandhism. In the closing days of his life, he was associated with an entirely different group of politicians, and tried to appear himself as a practical politician. But emotionally he always remained a revolutionary, and the mark that he has left on Indian political history is that of an impetuous personality.

I was far away when he appeared as a comet on the

political firmament of India. During 1920 and 1921, Indian newspapers did not reach Russia. I knew very little of his earlier resistance to the rising cult of Gandhism. But we began to get news of his activities when he came out of jail in 1922 to denounce Gandhist leadership for having "bungled and mismanaged" the revolutionary situation that was already on the decline. I was never taken in by the spectacular performances of Gandhist politics, even in the heyday of 1921. Already in 1920, I could foresee the ultimate debacle of Gandhist politics and the eventual relapse into constitutionalism. Therefore, in a letter addressed to C. R. Das, a few months before the Gaya Congress, I wrote that the Congress must choose between reformism and revolution. Nevertheless, it did manage to steer a middle-course for a number of dreary years, with occasional excursions in the uncharted sea of mass action. However, the point is that even from a very long distance, without any standing contact, I closely followed the activity of C. R. Das, whom I regarded as the incorporation of the spirit of revolt against the imposition of an essentially anti-revolutionary leadership upon an objectively revolutionary movement. Perhaps C. R. Das was not conscious of the role he was playing. But he raised the standard of revolt which could have been carried farther had he not, in search of allies for transforming his minority into a majority, associated himself with politicians who had very little in common with him.

Having undertaken the uphill task of carrying on, from such a distance and in the face of almost insuperable difficulties, a new type of revolutionary propaganda in India, I was naturally attracted by the activities of C. R. Das when he made those memorable declarations: "I want Swaraj for the ninety-eight per cent,"—"I do not want to substitute the white bureaucracy by a brown bureaucracy." I thought that there was a man who shared the view that I was trying to introduce in the political life of India. The masses having been driven to primitive forms of revolt, Indian politics had undergone a radical transformation. Everybody talked about the masses. Under the new leadership of the Messianic Mali atma, the Congress experimented with mass action. It played, very

circumspectly, with the inflammable material, only to be afraid of its own courage. But the general idea was that a new weapon had become available for the politicians. The weapon was the masses who were to be moved cautiously with the purpose of bringing sufficient pressure on imperialism, so that it would make some concessions to the elite of the nation. The point of the propaganda I was carrying on in that situation was stated in the word of Plekha-nov: "Revolution for the masses, not the masses for the revolution." C. R. Das's demand for Swaraj for the ninety-eight per cent appeared to echo the spirit I was trying to instil in the Indian political movement.

In those days, even for the Congress, Swaraj did not mean anything more than self-government within the Empire. Dominion Status was a distant goal. The Mahatma promised Swaraj within a year, but he defined it as a mental state, which could be attained by one at any moment. In that atmosphere of a reformist political outlook confused by a mystical demagogy, it was no mean boldness to declare that, "I do not want to substitute the white bureaucracy by a brown bureaucracy." That was, indeed, a programmatic declaration, perhaps made without understanding all its implications. For the politically educated, that declaration represented the demand for complete independence—separation from the British Empire. C. R. Das did not live to see the Congress make that demand its own. But to him must go the credit of having visualized the goal of complete independence. And he was able to do so, thanks to his early association with the revolutionaries, who had never wanted anything less than complete national freedom.

A messenger sent with my letter to see C. R. Das, a few months before the Gaya Congress, found him sympathetic to the suggestions made in the letter. But caution evidently prevented him from sending a written reply. The verbal reply, transmitted through the messenger, must still remain a secret of mine. But that enabled me to have a deeper insight of the man and I was left with an impression none too encouraging. I had advised him not to get deeply involved in the No-Change versus Pro-Change controversy. I had approved of the plan of discarding the

negative programme of boycott and of contesting the elections with the object of capturing the legislatures. The debacle of the non-cooperation movement, and the retreat ordered from Bardoli had left the country completely demoralized. Some form of positive political activity was necessary, if complete disintegration was to be avoided. From that point of view, the plan to capture the legislative councils had its merit. But that alone could not take us very far, and if it did take us far, that would be entirely in a wrong direction—in the direction of reformism. I warned C. R. Das of that danger, and suggested a comprehensive plan of action in which the parliamentary programme was allotted only a minor place.

That plan of action received a tremendous publicity on the very eve of the Gaya Congress, thanks to a mischievous move on the part of the Reuters agency. The object of the imperialist purveyor of news was to unearth the underground connection between Moscow and the Calcutta residence of the President of the National Congress. The Anglo-Indian papers triumphantly declared that at last the source of Mr Das's subversive propaganda had been discovered. The source, of course, was Red Russia. It seems that the sudden assault succeeded in unnerving Das. His presidential address at Gaya, though couched in a defiant spirit, was an anti-climax. The plan to capture the legislative council's with the purpose of ending or mending dyarchy occupied the central place of the programme he presented to the country. As a matter of fact, it was the whole of the alternative programme. The consequence was that he failed to mobilize the forces of revolt which might have followed him, had he not launched upon a course which appeared to be a move backwards. He found himself in a minority, and founded the Swaraj Party.

Founded under such circumstances, the future of the party was predetermined. Before long, it swallowed up the whole Congress. The Mahatma himself gave the party and its unorthodox programme his blessings. But the success of the Pro-Changers was not so much due to any intrinsic merit of their programme, than to the utter bankruptcy of the Bardoli constructive programme by

which the No-Changers swore. The rise of the Swaraj Party represented a reaction after a severe defeat. Its history is a dismal reading. It brought the Congress to the very verge of the relapse into constitutionalism—a fate that overtook it more than a decade late. The party founded by C. R. Das, who had opened for the first time the perspective of complete independence, formulated India's "National Demand" as Dominion Status within the British Empire, and the Round Table Conference eventually took place according to a demand formulated by the Swaraj Party. That was an unglorious end. C. R. Das could have made a better mark on Indian history, if his high-strung emotions were tempered by courageous judgement. His stormy political career ended in a sad anti-climax. The Faridpur speech is an unworthy epitaph for the impetuous rebel of Indian politics.

A critical appreciation of the role of C. R. Das, a clear understanding of the causes of the failings, will be highly useful today, when our struggle for freedom is passing through a similar crisis. The crisis is similar. But the possibilities of overcoming it are much greater today than at the time of C. R. Das. Therefore, if we can learn from his bitter experience, we shall be able to do better. His example should encourage us to raise the standard of revolt. That is the choice more clearly placed before us than at any time in the past. There is no middle course. Compromise will rather weaken than strengthen the rebels. Opportunism will be fatal. If the rebels are terrified by the hostility of the powerful Gandhi group, which dominates the Congress today, they will be compelled to make opportunist alliances, join hands with unreliable allies, and will meet a worse fate than that of C. R. Das because, the issues are sharper today, and choice is imperative.

—*Independent India*, July 30, 1939

M. K. Gandhi

About a year ago in a conversation with the head of an important Gandhi Ashram, I remarked that I appreciated Gandhiji's greatness better than any of his ardent admirers. My interviewer was very much surprised to hear me say so. Had I not been a critic of Gandhiji's philosophical views and often of his political actions? Do I not refuse to be a blind follower even now when, in the capacity of a loyal Congressman, I am a habitual wearer of *Khaddar* and accept the creed of the Congress? Do I not even to-day dare to differ from Gandhiji when my conscience and intelligent judgment prompt me to do so? How then could I have made the above remark? There was no reason for me to be hypocritical. I am too notorious to seek rehabilitation; too marked to sail under false colours.

This above remark was made with all sincerity, and I still stand by it. Yet, my interviewer was so very surprised by it as to ask me if the news could be passed on to others. My consent was freely and unreservedly given.

What was the reason of the surprise, which most probably is shared by many others? The reason is the inability to understand that criticism does not exclude appreciation. Blind faith and servile obedience are not only debasing for those who possess those questionable virtues, but debase the object of worship itself. In order to appreciate properly the historical significance of the personality of Gandhiji and the role that he has played in our struggle for freedom, one must be free from emotion and try to see things in the revealing light of criticism. But there is a wrong notion about criticism itself. It is confounded with antagonism. Hence the inability to understand the value of critical appreciation.

I am not a blind follower of anybody. I do not take anything for granted. Before I accept any doctrine, I submit it to a critical analysis, which is to test the consistency of its internal logic. If I find it self-contradictory, I have no hesitation in rejecting it however exalted may be the authority. But in the process of the analytical examination, the behaviour of certain persons, or a certain doctrine may reveal certain positive features which must be retained and admired even when the claims of the person and the doctrine as a whole, are to be rejected. That has been my approach to the personality, activity and the teachings of Gandhiji. And I claim to have found greater values in them than are known to the blind followers or uncritical admirers.

In my opinion, Gandhiji will go down in history neither as a prophet nor as a saviour of the masses, but as their political awakener. Gandhiji's exalted place in the political history of contemporary India is created by the masses. I do not share the view that our struggle for freedom ever since 1920 is the creation of Mahatma Gandhi. On the contrary, "Mahatma Gandhi" is a creation of the Indian masses. It is a remarkable historical phenomenon. Every realistic student of history must appreciate the role of Mahatma Gandhi as such, unless they would allow emotionalism to mislead them into wilful misinterpretation of history. Why did the Indian masses hail Mahatma Gandhi as their liberator while many other men had been in the field before him trying for the honour? The reason is that he could speak in a language understood by the masses. But unfortunately, the understanding of the masses of our country is still on a very low level. One had to stoop to that level in order to raise it higher. To have the courage to do so, is a token of greatness. Generally, one feels to have paid the greatest homage to Gandhiji, when he is given the credit of mobilizing the masses in the struggle for freedom. One does not know that the greater homage would be to regard and respect Gandhiji as the embodiment of the primitive, blind, spontaneous spirit of revolt of the Indian masses. His politics has been characterized by the immaturity, defects and deficiency of the source of the urge behind it. One can be only as great as himself. To ascribe to him any greater greatness, is to

worship the God of your own creation—the kind of God who is sure to disappoint you any moment by showing his clay feet. I am not such a stupid worshipper. Therefore, I claim to appreciate the real greatness of Gandhiji.

The conflict of views regarding the appreciation of the role of Gandhiji, can be traced back to the contradictory philosophies of history. Many in our country still believe that history is the biography of great men. But since the days of Carlyle, history has become a science. Today, it knows neither prophets, nor miracles, nor socio-political alchemy. Great men are no longer regarded either as *avatars*, demigods or super-men. Great men are great in so far as they represent the spirit of their respective age. Gandhiji will remain great as long as he represents the spirit of revolt of the Indian people. Therefore, his greatness cannot be unlimited. The spirit of revolt of the Indian people will grow until their conditions of life are so radically changed as would permit the development of any single human being into a "superman." Gandhiji's philosophy would not permit such tumultuous development of the spirit of revolt. However serviceable it may have been in the past, his personality and his activities may become injurious for the liberation of the Indian people in the future. That perspective should have been clear from the very beginning of his career to anybody who did not permit his intellect to be befogged by emotion. I claim to have been one of them. But having no illusion regarding the scene to be enacted at the end of the drama, I could admire wholeheartedly the action of the great actor when he strode across the stage in the previous scenes. He may still develop useful possibilities. Or he may not. No definite judgment need be pronounced as yet. Meanwhile, let us admire, respect and properly appreciate him for the great services that he has rendered to the struggle for freedom of the Indian people.

—*Independent India* October 16, 1938

THE MESSAGE OF THE MARTYR

Leaders of aggrieved India have professed unswerving loyalty to the sacred memory of the martyred Mahatma and

pledged themselves solemnly to be guided by his message. If the pledge is implemented, then death at the assassin's hand may still accomplish what a dedicated life could not. There is no doubt about the sincerity of sentiments felt in an atmosphere of poignant anguish and expressed spontaneously from the bottom of hearts moved by a dreadful experience. At the same time, it cannot be denied that, had nationalist India grasped the Mahatma's message and been guided by it without reservation, today she would not be mourning his death at the hands of an assassin. Therefore, having recovered from the initial impact of the stunning blow, the country should even now try to understand the meaning of the Mahatma's message, if his martyrdom is not to be in vain.

Even during his lifetime, the Mahatma was hailed as the Father of the Nation. Nationalist India's homage to his sacred memory will be to canonise him as such. He was the patron saint of nationalism, which triumphed during his lifetime. Yet he fell a victim to the very cult he preached. That is the implication of the terrible tragedy which stupefied the entire civilized world. But few seem to have learned the lesson. The patron saint of nationalism has been sacrificed at the altar of the geographical goddess of *Akhand Hindustan*, and all Indian nationalists, who today reaffirm undying loyalty to the Mahatma, also worship at the shrine of that goddess. Since that fanatical cult logically goes to the incredible extent of demanding the blood of its own patron saint, the Mahatma's message must have been greater than a mere call for suffering and sacrifice for the country. Essentially, it is a moral, humanist, cosmopolitan appeal, although the Mahatma himself allowed it to be heavily coloured by the narrow cult of nationalism. The lesson of the martyrdom of the Mahatma is that the noblest core of his message could not be reconciled with the intolerant cult of nationalism, which he also preached. Unfortunately this contradiction in his ideas and ideals was not realised by the Mahatma himself until the last days of his life. During that period, he was a disillusioned soul, full of sorrow, struggling bravely against the growing feeling of frustration with an apparently stout optimism based on the sand of an archaic faith.

The doctrine of non-violence represented an effort to introduce morality in political practice. But in the Mahatma, the politician often got the better of the moralist. Personally he may never have deviated from his principles, or faith, as he preferred to call it. Yet, he allowed, or condoned, compromise in the political practice and personal conduct of his followers. Even that he did not do willingly. His codes' of morality appeared so very dogmatic to others that they often could not observe them without surrendering judgment. Except in some quaint details, the moral codes preached by the Mahatma are unobjectionable. As a moralist, he followed the footprints of the religious preachers of the past; and therefore his codes were bound to appear dogmatic in the rationalist atmosphere of our time. Instead of rejecting them on the specious plea of practical political pragmatism, one should provide them with a secular and rationalist sanction. Utilitarianism is not the only alternative to intuitional or transcendental morality.

The implication of the doctrine of non-violence is the moral dictum that the end does not justify the means. That is the core of the Mahatma's message—which is not compatible with power-politics. The Mahatma wanted to purify politics; that can be done only by raising political practice above the vulgar level of a scramble for power. But for this, nationalist India today would not be intoxicated with the idea of having a strong army—an idea which logically spells the danger of war. In the atmosphere of this intoxication, it is blasphemous to pledge unswerving loyalty to the message of non-violence and peace preached by the Mahatma.

Nationalism, heavily tainted by Hindu orthodoxy, bred Muslim communalism. Therefore, the ideal of Hindu-Muslim unity, placed before the country by the Mahatma, could not be attained. The failure in this respect must have been the greatest blow for the Mahatma. During his last days, he staked his life for restoring communal harmony. He failed. Where he failed, smaller men with less lofty motive will not succeed. Nationalism is heading towards its nemesis. The cosmopolitan (non-communal) and humanist

message of the Mahatma was never so urgently needed by India as today. Caught in the vicious circle of the contradiction of his ideas and ideals, the Mahatma could not see the limitation of nationalism before it was too late. Will his martyrdom open the eyes of his followers? Will they know how to honour his sacred memory? That can be done by acting according to his message, more boldly than he dared himself. The Mahatma's place of honour in history will not be that of a patron-saint of nationalism which, in power, is bound to go against the moral and humanist essence of his message. He will be remembered for having vaguely visualized a humanist idea, while still groping in the twilight of mediaevalism. Primarily a religious man he set before his followers high ideals which could not possibly be attained unless the human spirit broke out of the charmed circle of the religious mode of thought. Therefore, like all other religious prophets of morality, peace and human brotherhood, the Mahatma was destined to fail in his mission. Communal harmony is not possible in the mediaeval atmosphere of religious orthodoxy and fanaticism. The ideal of individual liberty is precluded by nationalism, which is a totalitarian cult. In the absence of individual freedom, humanism is an unattainable idea. The inspiring vision of a peaceful human brotherhood is bound to be eclipsed by the ambition of making the nation great, prosperous and powerful. It would be idle to pledge loyalty to the message of the Mahatma unless it meant realization of its contradictions and an intelligent resolve to place the moral and humanist core of his teachings above the carnal cult of nationalism and power-politics. Otherwise, the Mahatma will have worn the crown of martyrdom in vain.

—*Independent India* February 8, 1948

Mohammed Ali Jinnah

Will Pakistan survive its founder? While one cannot be very certain in this respect, either way, it is an irresistible feeling that anxiety on that account must have been haunting Mohammed Ali Jinnah ever since he won the victory which he most probably did not expect, or might not even have wanted. One may go to the extent of wondering if that anxiety did not hasten his death.

Mohammed Ali Jinnah was the most maligned and misunderstood man. That experience made him bitter and it was very largely out of spitefulness that he pursued an object, the attainment of which placed him in the most difficult position. Jinnah was not an idealist in the sense of being a visionary; he was a practical man possessed of great shrewdness as well as of more than average intelligence. Such a man could not be blind to the difficulty which was to follow his highly problematical success. During the latter part of his career, politics was a gamble for him; having played a game of poker with high stakes, he could not pull out. He had to go to the bitter end, so to say. Bitter, because he must have been frightened by the spectre of success when it came within the reach of possibility. But then it was too late to retreat. It was a case of a man getting inextricably entangled in power-politics without having begun with the lust for political power. Few would agree; yet, that is a fact which will win the recognition of impartial and dispassionate historians.

Jinnah was certainly not an angel; but he was temperamentally not a professional politician. He began as a liberal for whom politics was a holiday pastime. Being a man of outstanding merit, he could not remain a back-bencher. Unfortunately, his coming to the front rank of politics synchronized with the desecularization of

nationalism, which doubtful development introduced communalism in politics. The responsibility for that fateful turn in the political life of the country must be judged by history. But ever since then, politics became a game of wits for Jinnah. Successful in that game, thanks to his own cleverness, he won the opprobrium of being a henchman of imperialism. The fact, however, is that, if distrust and hatred of the British were the hall-mark of patriotism, Jinnah was always as staunch a patriot as any other Indian. The more that fact was wilfully ignored by his opponents and he was maligned and misrepresented deliberately, the more was Jinnah naturally embittered, and spite-fulness became the motive of his politics. But even then his ambition was not to gain political power, but to avenge the wrong which he believed had been done to him. Once India was divided, he would sit back in his chair with the sardonic pleasure of having outwitted his opponents. There was something Mephistophelian in Jinnah's politics. In the League General Council meeting held in the Imperial Hotel of New Delhi to endorse the plan of partition, Jinnah concluded his speech by declaring, "I have won Pakistan for you; now do what you can with it." Was he going to retire to his Persian rugs, having played out the game of politics as a successful sportsman? That certainly would have been the most fitting denouement of a Mephistophelian political career.

But few mortal men can escape being prisoners of their creation. Pakistan was Jinnah's creation, and he had to hold the baby. There was no competent nurse; at least that must have been his feeling. It would have been superhuman to act otherwise, and Jinnah was not an angel. But he was not the devil of the drama, as he was made out to be. He is no more with us. Let justice be done to his memory.

Jinnah did not survive his triumph. He had been a sick man for the last year of his life; and grave anxiety must have been the cause of the sickness. The establishment of the "largest Muslim State" meant leaving many millions of Muslims in the lurch. Having been fighters for Pakistan, the millions of Muslims left in the Indian Union are in the

most difficult position. Most of them feel betrayed. Jinnah was fully conscious of that tragedy, which must have haunted his last days. Indeed, the homeland for the Indian Muslims was a Utopia; any territorial division was bound to leave many millions of them out, in a very delicate position of being regarded as aliens, suspected of disloyalty to the land they must live in. An intelligent man like Jinnah must have foreseen this tragic consequence of what he demanded. Therefore, I for one do not believe that he really wanted partition of the country. Like a gambler, overconfident of his wits, he staked high, believing that the other party would compromise on his terms. That would have been for the best of all concerned. But the latter having taken up the attitude of all or nothing, Jinnah was driven to the bitter end—of gaining a victory he himself dreaded and which he did not survive.

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Leon Trotsky

"A tremendous imperiousness and a kind of inability or unwillingness to be at all caressing and attentive to people, and absence of that charm which always surrounded Lenin, condemn Trotsky to a certain loneliness. Even some of his personal friends afterwards became his sworn enemies. For work in political groups, Trotsky seemed little fitted: but in the ocean of historic events, where such personal features lose their importance, only his favourable side came to the front. ... As to Trotsky's inner structure, as a leader, he was, on the small scale of party organization, inapt and unskilful. He was impeded there by the extreme definiteness of the outlines of his personality. Trotsky is imperative. Only in his relation with Lenin after their union, he showed always a touching and tender yieldingness. . . . Lenin never looks at himself, never glances in the mirror of history, never even thinks of what posterity will say of him—simply does his work. ... In distinction from him, Trotsky often looks at himself, Trotsky treasures his historic role, and would undoubtedly be ready to make any personal sacrifice, not by any means excluding the sacrifice of his life, in order to remain in the memory of mankind with the halo of a genuinely revolutionary leader." Lunacharsky, *Revolutionary Silhouettes*.

The above picture drawn in 1923, while Trotsky was at the height of power and glory, will remain a correct estimation of his character and personality, as long as he will be remembered in history. The picture was drawn not only in the hey-day of Trotsky's fame, but it was done by an admirer. Therefore, the defects pointed out therein could be attributed neither to malice nor to wilful misrepresentation. Trotsky was a great man, and was very eager that he should be recognised as such. In that

eagerness, he only accentuated the faults from which all great men, conscious of their greatness, usually suffer. Those defects, so very pronounced even when he was performing great deeds, later on made a tragedy of his eventful career.

I met him first in the summer of 1920—just before the Red Army suffered the historic defeat on the outskirts of Warsaw. My first impression was similar to that one receives while watching a skilful actor playing a thrilling role on a grandly set stage. The Second World Congress of the newly-founded Communist International had just closed its session in Moscow, which was then almost a beleaguered city. Yet, half-starved and dilapidated, Moscow was already then throbbing as the heart of the world revolution, and everyone present there felt the throb. Only a few months ago, the other great metropolis of the revolutionary Republic, Petrograd, had been freed from the menace of occupation by the White Guards of General Denikin, backed up by the powerful German Army, still intact, along the Baltic.

Civil war was still being waged fiercely not only in Siberia, but all along the lower course of the Volga. The counter-revolutionary army of Admiral Koltchak, backed up by the Japanese and American interventionists, had penetrated into the heart of European Russia. The Czechoslovak Legion, financed from America and armed by the Allies, was still crossing the Russian continent, dealing death and destruction on the way. Finally, yet another counter-revolutionary army, commanded by General Wrangel, had landed at the Black Sea ports and was advancing northwards. The ring of counter-revolution was thus closing around Moscow practically from all directions. It must be broken through. It was decided to strike through Poland. The Red Army was to carry the banner of revolution to defeated Germany, where the workers had already risen in revolt, but could not succeed in the face of fierce repression.

From the front, Trotsky telegraphed to the Second World Congress of the Communist International asking the leading delegates to send messages of encouragement to

the Army of the Revolution on the march. He also invited a delegation to visit the front. I was a member of that delegation. At the headquarters of the Western Front, we were received by the Commander-in-Chief. The Army, inspired with the ideal of liberating the world from all forms of oppression and exploitation, as it was then, defied all description. Any military expert would have refused to recognize it as an army. There were no drill sergeants to teach the soldiers to keep their brass buttons shining and boots polished. The buttons were mostly missing and boots scarce enough. All the soldiers did not even have guns. Yet, there was no doubt on the part of anybody that the Army of the Revolution was going to be victorious. That confidence was the most powerful weapon in the possession of that strange army. And it was Trotsky who was making superhuman efforts to keep the Army equipped with that weapon. He looked like a man walking in his dream. He was making history. And he was anxious that the history should be written with no mistake about his place in it.

A parade was held for the reception of the international delegates. That was the first time I heard Trotsky deliver a speech. He spoke in Russian. I hardly understood any Russian then. Nevertheless, I remained spellbound for more than an hour while he spoke. In my school days, I had listened to the oratory of the old type Congress leaders in India. During my subsequent travels, I had occasion to hear others reputed as orators. But Trotsky's feat reminded me of the legend of Demosthenes which I had read in school books—an immovable statue, pouring forth a cataract of words which electrified the whole atmosphere simply by their sound. Later on, I came to appreciate that Trotsky's oratory was equally rich in content. His greatest performance as an orator was at the Third World Congress of the Communist International. For making a report on the world economic situation, he spoke in German nearly for three hours; immediately afterwards, he delivered the same speech almost verbatim in two other languages — French and then Russian. Trotsky will go down in history as the greatest orator, certainly of our time, and perhaps as second to none of all ages.

Fortunately, the loudspeaker was invented only after the world had enjoyed Trotsky's oratory. The Red Square of Moscow can accommodate half a million people on the occasion of packed meetings addressed by great leaders of the Revolution. Until 1928, there was no loudspeaker. It was no fun to address meetings there. Speakers had to be carefully selected. But it was Trotsky alone who could make himself heard by everybody in a packed meeting on the Red Square.

His marvellous power of speaking made of him an invaluable asset for the Revolution during the critical days of the civil war. That was also his contribution in the months preceding the insurrection, when agitation was the decisive form of revolutionary activity. Even as the Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army, Trotsky made his mark not as a military genius or a skilful strategist, but as the inspirer. The Red Army was not the creation of any single individual. It was the creation of the Revolution. Trotsky's military counsellor was the French Captain Sadoul. He was a Staff Officer, who had been member of the Allied Mission sent to Russia in 1917 to reorganize the Army under the Provisional Government after the fall of the Tzar.

During his stay in Petrograd, he was disgusted with the intrigues against the efforts for setting up a really democratic regime on the ruins of Tzarism. That disgust brought him in touch with the revolutionaries, and when the Allied Mission left after the Bolsheviks had seized power, Captain Sadoul stayed behind. For that act, he was courtmarshalled in France for "desertion" and sentenced to death in contumacy. In the earlier years of the civil war, he acted as Trotsky's *de facto* Chief-of-Staff. He told me that in those days Trotsky had absolutely no knowledge of military technicalities and would not know what to do with military affairs, if he had actually to manage them. Let it be said that Sadoul was a great admirer of Trotsky and did not part company with him until, upon the death of Lenin, Trotsky came into conflict with the party.

Trotsky seldom commanded the Army in actual military operations. His function was to dash from one front to the other and appear, as if with an uncanny instinct,

on the weakest spot to inspire the wavering detachments with a vision, and instil in them a new courage and new determination. That was certainly not a mean contribution. But proper credit is not given to the other heroes of the civil war if, on the merit of his unquestionable services, Trotsky is allowed to eclipse all others, and acclaimed as the creator and leader of the Red Army—the organizer of the victory of the Revolution. The names of Bluecher, Frunze, Budjenny and Stalin are written prominently in the history of the civil war. The part played by those men may not have been so much advertized, perhaps because they were not so very dramatic. Nonetheless, they were heroic parts and, taken together, they were of more decisive importance for the victory of the Revolution than the dramatic feats of Trotsky.

A matchless orator and a skilful agitator, Trotsky was equally brilliant as a writer. Previously, his writings were mostly journalistic and won for him the distinction of the "Prince of pamphleteers." During the closing years of his life, he matured as a writer, and perhaps will be remembered longer for his literary talent than for other temporary accomplishments. Politically, all through Ms chequered career, Trotsky was unstable and erratic. As a Marxist theoretician, he had always been wrong, and it was due to the wrong notions developed out of the vanity of his younger years that he came to grief later on, when he would not abandon his wrong ideas even after they had been proved to be so by experience.

Occurring in the dramatic period of a great revolution, Trotsky's positive achievements have become well-known. But it is not so well-known that more than once he advocated actions which, if allowed, would have left no history of the Russian Revolution to be written by Trotsky. He rendered great services to the Revolution. But he was capable of rendering even greater disservice. On two occasions, he was prevented from doing so by the influence of Lenin, only to those genial leadership the angular personality of Trotsky could be subordinated. On the last occasion it was a conflict with the entire party. His will crossed, this time not by a more powerful but less obtrusive

personality, Trotsky revolted and consequently started on the declining plane of his career.

Generally, Trotsky's role in the Revolution is regarded only as second to that of Lenin. There are some who would not concede the first place even to Lenin. Having known both the men rather intimately for a long enough time, I came to the conclusion that there was no comparison. They lived on entirely different planes. Therefore no clash was possible. The one was a thoroughgoing subjectivist, looking upon the world as a stage set for himself to enact a great drama. The other was primarily a philosopher having a detached, objective view of the world and considering himself a part of it. Egoism and unshaken courage of conviction were respectively their outstanding characteristics. There can be no comparison, unless these two characteristics are confounded as the different expressions of the immeasurable mystic factor called personality.

The soul of Lenin's personality, if I may use one of those delightfully vague terms, expressed itself in his creation of the Bolshevik Party. Trotsky was neither a co-creator nor a part of the creation. That fact alone is the evidence of the fundamental difference in the temperament and the outlook of the two men. One was anxious to play the towering individual with a mission. The other was the simple man of the mass—the Massenmensch, as the Germans call it. Lenin believed in his power to build, to create something great. But he knew that he must create out of material which was not within himself. In other words, the unfolding of his creative genius was dependent upon numerous other factors, which were independent of himself. That was Lenin's greatness. In that sense, Trotsky can hardly be called a great man. It is not a mere accident that Trotsky did perform great deeds, and actually rose up to the stature of a great man only during the short period that he came under the influence of Lenin and allowed his subjectivism to be guided -by the sober wisdom of the objective philosopher. As soon as the vicissitudes of life deprived him of that mooring he drifted into the unchartered ocean of his egoism, only to be ship-wrecked

to the sincere grief of all who could really appreciate his great merits.

Now, let those general observations be borne out by a few facts. At least thrice, Trotsky might have acted as the grave-digger of the Russian Revolution if he was allowed to have his way. He was vehemently opposed to the newly established and almost tottering Soviet Government signing the Brest-Litovsk Treaty dictated by triumphant German militarism. His appeal to the working class of the world in reply to the arrogance of the German General who threw the draft treaty on the table and marked the dotted line with his sword, was certainly thrilling. But a thrilling appeal could not save the Revolution in that critical moment. The world was thrilled but failed to respond in the desired manner. Nevertheless, Trotsky would not take the hint. He was completely submerged in his vision of the world revolution, sure to be conjured up by his dramatic appeal.

In the last analysis, it was subjectivism, which often makes small men appear great, and great men sometimes go astray. It was dishonourable, a shame for revolutionaries, those fighting for the great ideal of the liberation of the world, to be dictated by German militarism. The prestige of some individuals wanting to play memorable roles in a great drama must be defended no matter what happened to the Revolution. Of course, Trotsky did not think like that. He was simply carried away by emotion. But the keen farsight and cold calculations of Lenin were there to prevent the Revolution being shipwrecked on the hidden rocks of subconscious egoism.

It was only on that occasion, when on the point of committing a great disservice to the Revolution, that Trotsky appeared almost to overwhelm Lenin. He carried the majority of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party with him in the opposition to signing the "dishonourable treaty." But Lenin stood like a rock. He would not allow the catastrophe to happen. He settled the controversy by declaring on the radio that the Soviet Government was going to sign the treaty.

In that connection, there is a very highly interesting

anecdote told by Radek. When Lenin was going to make the decisive declaration, the latter remonstrated with him saying how could he disregard the opinion of the majority. In honest surprise, Lenin turned around and asked: "Majority? But the Russian people want peace." Radek protested: "How do you know that?" Lenin replied that the majority of the Russian people had already "voted for peace." "How?" "With their feet. Don't you see that the soldiers are running away from the front? And whom do the soldiers represent? The peasantry, which constitutes the majority of the Russian people." That was Lenin. And that one single incident shows what was the difference between Lenin and Trotsky. That "dictatorial" act of Lenin was condemned by romantic revolutionaries throughout the world as surrender to German militarism (Lenin was even suspected of acting as a German agent), as betraying the Baltic peoples who were left to the tender mercies of the German invaders. But before long, it was realised that the signature of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty saved the Russian Revolution. Most of the territories conceded under duress were recovered before long. And eventually, the Baltic peoples have also regained their freedom within the Soviet Union without making any great sacrifice.

The next occasion was Trotsky's opposition to the New Economic Policy advocated by Lenin. Then also, as in his subsequent opposition to the policy of the party under the leadership of Stalin, Trotsky would rather put the Revolution into cold-storage, so to say, rather than permit it to deviate from his predetermined theoretical scheme. Already by then, he was back to his doctrine of the Permanent Revolution, a doctrine which has been the evil genius of his whole life. But again on that occasion, Trotsky did not realize the implication of his position. If he did, he would certainly not have taken it up. His reasoning was very simple: the peasantry is wedded to the desire to own private property; any concession to it will mean the rebirth of capitalism; that could not be allowed without prejudicing the proletarian character of the Revolution. The logic is plausible. Only it did not quite fit in with the logic of the situation in which the Revolution had to develop. If

concessions were not made to the peasantry, racked and ruined by four years of war and three years of civil war, they would have provided a fertile field for the counter-revolution to thrive. The theoretical purity of the Revolution could be preserved only at the cost of the Revolution itself. Lenin was still there, and once again Trotsky was not allowed to render a disservice to the Revolution, which would have more than counter-balanced all his services.

The so-called Stalinist policy, vehemently opposed to by Trotsky, was only the continuation of the New Economic Policy inaugurated by Lenin. That was not a deviation from Marxism, but the practical application of Marxism to the concrete realities of the given situation. The bone of contention again, was the appreciation of the place of the peasantry in the scheme of the development of the Revolution in an industrially backward country. According to Trotsky's doctrine of the Permanent Revolution, the peasantry is the devil of the drama. Whatever may be the merit of the theory, it obviously could not be applied to a country populated mostly by the devils. To exterminate the majority of the population is certainly not the proper way of making a revolution successful.

The objectivity of this criticism is testified by the fact that all along, ever since his opposition to the New Economic Policy, I was inclined to take up Trotsky's point of view. That only proves that Trotsky's personal magnetism and emotional appeal found response rather in the romanticism of the immature than in the hard-headed practical revolutionary. Trotsky had no personal charm for me. I had the privilege of knowing Lenin rather from close quarters. That gave me a glimpse of real greatness. Appearances could not deceive me. Moreover, the first impression was not very favourable. I think, off the stage, actors are rather incongruous. Life itself is a serious drama. It need not be artificially dramatized. Nevertheless, with all my strong dislike for Trotsky's personal characteristics. I also made the mistake of considering his attitude more revolutionary. But being an ordinary person, not encumbered with the obsession of a great mission to

perform, I could learn and gradually attain the maturity of intelligence necessary for discriminating unostentatious solidity from imposing flares. So imperceptible was my political differentiation from that of Trotsky, that he was shocked at my "defection." That was in the historic session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International towards the end of 1927, when Trotsky was removed from its membership.

It was an all-night gruelling session, and winter nights in Moscow are very long. Though now firmly convinced that Trotsky's point of view was wrong, I was disgusted with the mechanical method of the representatives of one party after another going to the platform to denounce Trotsky in a vituperative language. He was sitting there, still fighting like a lion interrupting every speech with sharp repartees which nonplussed most of the speakers. Evidently, he was the minority of one. Perhaps he still entertained the hope of my supporting him. Indeed I might have, because I was sorry for him. I wanted to make a gesture of protest against pygmies tilting toy lances at the lion at bay. I was still not free from subjectivism. Trotsky was wrong. But the giant should not be humiliated by marionettes. Finally, I decided to speak in order to let the doomed man have the last chance to vindicate his position if it could at all be vindicated. I was the last to speak before the vote was taken. The dawn was breaking. All were tired and sleepy. Trotsky looked fierce, but desperate.

The issue was the possibility of building socialism in one country. Trotsky maintained that it could not be done, and quoted at length from Marx and Lenin in support of his point of view. His thesis was that so long as the world remained capitalist, the Soviet economy was bound to degenerate into capitalism; and he accused Stalin's policy as heading towards that degeneration.

My speech was only a question put to Trotsky: having agreed that it is not possible to build Socialism in the Soviet Union in the midst of a capitalist world there are two alternatives—either we should continue doing whatever is possible by way of advancing towards the

ultimate goal of Socialism, pending the success of revolution in other countries; or we should lay down power in the Soviet Union and go back to emigration to wait for the time when there will be a revolution simultaneously throughout the world. I asked whether Trotsky would choose the latter alternative. He shouted "No." Then I would vote for his expulsion, because he had been advocating a policy either without understanding its implications, or without meaning to put it into practice if he had the opportunity to do so. Trotsky looked crestfallen. All through the night, he had heckled every speaker with challenging questions. He kept quiet while I spoke and hung his head in answer to my question. The historic vote was cast against him—unanimously. The Revolution went over the head of one of its most brilliant products.

It is instructive that practically all the older leaders, who had shone as agitators during the Revolution and the civil war, joined Trotsky in his last fight against the party. Trotsky was one of a whole type of revolutionaries whose days were gone. They were qualified for accomplishing tasks during the destructive phase of the Revolution. As soon as those tasks were accomplished and the Revolution was confronted with new and often unexpected problems in its constructive phase the older leaders became back numbers. Only subjectivism did not allow them to be reconciled to the new situation. Having played their part creditably they should have sat back comfortably basking in their well-deserved glory, to watch the drama unfold and new actors occupy the centre of the stage.

Of course, there was no objection or obstruction to any one of them, or to all of them, to have grown up to the new problems and continued as the leaders of the Revolution even in its second phase. But practically all of them failed to do that, and Trotsky was the most outstanding failure. Unable to fit himself into the scheme of post-revolutionary construction, he persuaded himself to believe that the destructive phase of the Revolution must be re-enacted so that the centre of the stage could be reserved for Trotsky for all the time. That belief, bred out of egoism, was objectively counter-revolutionary.

Trotsky's crusader's zeal for a second revolution in Russia and the plan to organize the Fourth International at the instrument for that revolution of his dream, implied a morbid desire to destroy what he had helped to create. I do not believe that he was at all happy while he passed his last years in those objectively counter-revolutionary activities, egged on not so much by any theoretical convictions as by a bitter hatred for the man who had done him the great service of having prevented him from doing the greatest disservice to the Revolution. Had Trotsky had his way, and Stalin been removed from the leadership of the party, most probably there would be no Soviet Republic today. Therefore, Trotsky goes down in history as one of the most outstanding personalities of our time, with his place there secured by the help of the man who has come to be known as his archenemy.

—Written shortly after Leon Trotsky's death in 1940.

Georgi Dmitrov

While speculating about the cause of Tito's excommunication,* it was suggested from some well-informed circles that his aspiration to succeed Stalin as the leader of world Communism displeased the Russian heir-apparents and heir-presumptives. It remains doubtful if the plausible hypothesis will ever be verified. Meanwhile, this much can be said that there is no reason why the leadership of the Communist International should be a perpetual Russian monopoly, and therefore it would be quite legitimate for a non-Russian communist to aspire for the honour, provided that he possessed the requisite power as well as qualification. In the post-war years, Tito was the only non-Russian communist qualified to be a pretender. Judged by qualification, Togliatti might have a greater claim; but he was not yet in power, and his chances were already on the decline. The other possibility, Thorez, is to be ruled out on both the accounts.

But there is another aspect of the situation: the leadership of world Communism can be separated from the head of the Russian State only in theory, so very abstract as to rule out the possibility of practice. Therefore, one who aspires for the one implicitly threatens the position of the latter. Of course, the idea of any non-Russian communist replacing Stalin during his lifetime is fantastic; but a struggle for supremacy between the two, somewhat analogous to the struggle between the Pope and the Emperor in the Middle-Ages, might take place after Stalin's death. Therefore, it could be imagined how Russians standing next to Stalin might not only be displeased, but worried by Tito's possible

*The break between Stalin and Tito took place in 1948. Tito was then expelled from the international communist movement.

aspiration to the leadership of world Communism. And in that case, a desire on their part to pull down the pretender could not be ruled out. In this connection, it may be recollected that the attack on Tito was led by Zhdanov, who was at that time the most probable heir-presumptive of Stalin.

Apart from the hypothetical jealousy of the Russian pretenders to the leadership of world communist, there was another rival who had obvious reason to engineer Tito's downfall. He was Georgi Dimitrov, who had previously held the highest position in the communist hierarchy, though not on his own merit. Himself a creation of the Russians, Dimitrov would hardly dare to cross their will. But he naturally desired to be the tallest communist outside Russia. Bulgaria was too small a country to give him the requisite power (the communists think exclusively in terms of power). As the head of a Federation of the Balkan States, he would grow in stature. But the idea of a Balkan Federation is old, traditionally associated with the nationalist resistance to imperialist Pan-Slavism. Having exploited nationalism for their own purposes, the Russians would not perpetuate the tradition in the form of a political organization. So, they put the foot down on Dimitrov's ambition, and he swallowed the rebuff as a disciplined communist.

But the idea revived by him could not be disciplined into silence. Except for the top leaders indoctrinated in Russia, communism in the Balkans is nationalism painted red; and the leaders themselves are often compelled to give in to the pressure of the prevailing atmosphere. So, Dimitrov knuckled down under the whip cracked in Moscow, but the idea of a Balkan Federation gained ground, and Tito took it over. For that impertinence and also for other sins of omission and commission, he was taken to task, and was excommunicated for not recanting.

Dimitrov came victorious out of the struggle for supremacy in the non-Russian communist world. But the victory seems to have been very ephemeral. While his excommunicated rival still holds his position against Russian-engineered internal intrigues, economic boycott

and military threats, Dmitrov goes on an indefinite period of leave for some sudden illness. Dmitrov's quiet departure from the Balkan scene, preceded by the arrest of his foremost lieutenant and the unostentatious transfer of the premiership to his opponent, have caused a mild surprise. Though carried out with the least possible notice, it is nothing short of a palace revolution. If the dramatized hero of the notorious Reichstag fire trial was really ill, some shadow of sadness would be cast upon the communist world, and there would be some stir of anxiety. It can be safely assumed that the report of his illness is false; he has incurred the displeasure of the Russians; and they cannot afford to risk the possibility of revolt of another veteran of world communism, while Tito still holds out. Therefore, instead of the weapon of public censure, unsuccessfully used against Tito, a quiet removal in time has been preferred in the case of Dmitrov. Tito's example might encourage others.

Dmitrov is in disgrace. That is a fact which most probably will attract little attention. What caused his downfall may also never be known, although there is enough evidence to the effect that it is a sequel to Tito's hitherto successful defiance. To influence the violent passion of Macedonian parochialism has been a part of the Russian effort to break Tito's resistance. But it is like playing with fire: there are Macedonians not only in Yugoslavia, but also in Bulgaria and the communist-controlled part of Greece. Therefore, the Russians are compelled to advocate the creation of a Macedonian State at the cost of all the three, as a counter-move to Tito's having sponsored the same plan with the object of weakening Bulgaria and communist Greece. General Markos as well as Dmitrov must have opposed the plan, although the creation of a Macedonian State was a part of Dmitrov's idea of Balkan Federation. But then, he was to be the head of the whole Federation, which would allow as much autonomy to the constituent units as the U.S.S.R. Consequently, both had to go; Markos, who did not enjoy much prestige, was removed first. Dmitrov followed.

So ends the career of a man who leaped into prominence in the early thirties, to be the General Secretary

of the Communist International and hold that high position in the communist hierarchy until the Comintern was dissolved. The Comintern has since been replaced by the Cominform; nevertheless, Dmitrov is "cominterned" as many a greater communist was previously. Non-Russian communist opposition leaders are treated more mercifully than the sons of the soil. They are invited to Moscow on one or another pretext and are not allowed to go back. The more important of them are given some nominal position in some secondary institution, and practically thrown into the scrapheap of wasted human material. This crafty method of liquidating opposition leaders came to be known as "cominternment." The house—Hotel Lux—allotted for the purpose, used to be called the "Museum of Revolution." One of the innumerable pointed witticisms credited to Karl Radek was that everybody of any importance in the history of the communist movement was to be found there, including Marx; of course, his disembodied spirit. Once upon a time, Dmitrov lived in the Hotel Lux while serving his apprenticeship for a subsequent career. It would be interesting to know if the fallen great has returned where he lived as an obscure refugee from the Balkans.

I remember his first appearance there. It was some time in 1924. The failure of the second German revolution was followed by several counter-revolutionary coups in Eastern Europe. The overthrow of the Bulgarian peasant leader Stambulisky from office was one of them. The few communists of the time supported the Peasant Party. Stambulisky having declined to risk a civil war when the entire army went with Tsankov, the communists tried to capture power through insurrection. It was localized, and provoked a widespread massacre in the countryside. One of the leaders of the adventure, Dmitrov managed to flee, and reach Moscow to report. In those days, Dr Popov was a Bulgarian delegate on the Executive Committee of the Communist International. He disapproved of the *putsch* and persuaded the Executive Committee of the Comintern (ECCI) to endorse his view. Dmitrov found a place in the Museum of Revolution.

On his first appearance behind the wings of the stage

which he was to dominate with all the footlights turned upon him he was his real self—of an uncouth country cousin—a burly peasant with a shock of grisly hair. He could speak no language except his mother-tongue, although it being very much akin to the Russian, he soon picked it up. His mind was no more polished than his exterior; but that regrettable shortcoming was his title to be the representative of his people. More often than not, leadership is won by the capacity to go down to the intellectual and cultural level where blind faith and the will to believe are the predominating psychological traits. When that spiritual relation between the leader and the following is natural, both sharing the bliss of ignorance, the leader may mislead; but there need not be any dishonesty in the relation. Dmitrov therefore began as a natural leader of his people, and as the personification of the latter's backwardness, fell foul with the European sophistication of Dr Popov who had learned Marxism in a German University. If sincerity is a virtue, it may also breed the vice of fanaticism. Dmitrov's sincere belief that the Bulgarian peasants were pining for a bloodbath which they got thanks to his leadership, disputed Dr Popov's honesty; and before long, suspected of being an *agent provocateur*, he disappeared mysteriously. A short period of apprenticeship thus qualified Dmitrov to find a corner in the communist underworld. The ability to converse in Russian is a great asset in the headquarters of the Communist International. With that advantage, foreign comrades can get chummy with the Russian subalterns, who control the machinery of the world organization, and may eventually find the "Open Sesame" to the charmed circle of leadership. And non-Russian Slavs are naturally favoured. After all, there is a blood relation. In certain respects, communist mentality is very primitive. That may explain the commission of unnecessary cruelties. However, Dmitrov got on—the farther on the road to the leadership of an artificially built up personality, the farther away from honest relation with his people. The rough-hewn stone, which might be granite or marble, or even diamond, of the Bulgarian refugee frequented hair-dressing saloons which tended to be garish and vulgarly odoriferous in the

communist metropolis; replaced the peasant jacket with suit, albeit badly cut; and even moved in motor cars instead of trudging on the cobbled roads. Not many noticed the metamorphosis, and equally unnoticed the incipient leader of world communism left his school of apprenticeship, to take up some responsibility in the entirely unfamiliar field of Central Europe.

The purge of the old leadership of the Russian party, which followed Stalin's complete triumph over his rivals, was to be carried out in the International. The underground machinery through which the parties outside Russia were financed and organizationally controlled, served the purpose. Before the revolution, the old Bolsheviks in emigration carried on subterranean propaganda in Russia through the intermediary of the left-wing Social Democratic leaders of the Balkan and East-European countries. After the revolution, the latter organized communist parties in those countries. Years of collaboration under difficult circumstances had created a bond of loyalty which did not snap as soon as the Bolshevik leaders lost their position at home. They still commanded a good deal of sympathy and support amongst leading communists in countries bordering on Russia.

Dmitrov had no past, nor did he suffer from the handicap of any intellectual conviction. He was a typical man of the masses with a massive ambition, although in the new stage of his political career, the masses had become an abstraction—a fanatical belief which enabled one to suppress all human sentiments and the sense of moral responsibility. During the years of apprenticeship, Dmitrov had been thoroughly Bolshevized, that is to say, he had become a callous robot, a mere cog in one of the many wheels of an inhuman and ruthless machinery—an admirable instrument to purge the communist parties in the Balkans. Therefore, his first rise on the ladder of the communist hierarchy was to be placed in charge of the clandestine Balkan Bureau of the Communist International, situated in Vienna. A protege of Piatnitsky, the all-powerful boss of the Comintern machinery, all-powerful because he held the purse-strings, Dmitrov was well supplied with the means to carry out his mission.

Plentifully supplied with money, anybody who would loudly proclaim himself as a disciplined soldier of the world Proletarian Army could capture the party machinery in his country and hound out the old leaders as Trotskyist or Zinoviev-disrupters and traitors. Dmitrov thus laid the foundation of his dream castle of a communist Balkan Federation, and in the bargain he got a lift in the communist hierarchy.

He was transferred to Berlin as a member of the more important West-European Bureau of the Comintern. He had become a man of considerable importance, but still a laughing-stock amongst communists who attached greater importance to brain than to brawn, figuratively speaking. In Vienna, the caveman from the wilds of Bulgaria had learned to cover his muscular frame in expensive fashionable clothes. Another Radek joke represented sophisticated communist opinion of Dmitrov's intelligence. One day, Radek saw an expensively attired man walking in the street near the Russian Embassy in Berlin; he looked familiar, but Radek could not immediately recognize him. Did he not resemble Dmitrov? What a change had come over the man! Yet, he was a comrade, and should not feel that Radek cut him in the streets. Radek turned on his heels to walk back and speak to the man, who in the meantime had also turned back to pass leisurely by Radek, close enough to whisper: "Comrade, I did not greet you in the street because I am underground here!"

The Nazis were storming ahead to power, and audaciously unscrupulous communist theoreticians of communist strategy were preparing for the first experiment of allying with the Fascists. It is not known to what an extent Dmitrov was responsible for the "Theory of Catastrophe"—to expedite the "inevitable" fascist victory which, destroying the democratic illusion of the working class, would prepare the atmosphere for the equally inevitable revolution. He was not a theoretician; nor a policy-maker; but a disciplined, that is ⁰ say, unquestioning, executor of any policy prescribed ^{om above}—Ruth Fischer in her book *Stalin and the German Communist Party* suggests that Dmitrov, as the representative of the Communist International, shared the

responsibility for the misadventure, and his trial in connection with the Reichstag fire was a mutually agreed put-up show. A man of Dmitrov's mentality would be capable of anything if he believed that it was his duty as a disciplined communist. But I should not attach any credence to the suggestion that the communists conspired with the Nazis to set the Reichstag building on fire. The suggestion is incredible simply because there was no conceivable reason for communist un-scrupulousness to go that far.

However, Dmitrov was arrested by the Nazis, and his behaviour during the trial was indeed remarkable, although there was a big touch of hysteria, which might just as well have been born of despair for his life as a demonstration of heroism. Heroes often are moved by hallucinations; for instance, Joan of Arc. The trial was public; Dmitrov knew that the attention of an outraged world was focussed on him. He believed himself to be the impersonification of the great cause of the Proletarian Revolution, which the Nazis wanted to destroy. That was the charismatic moment of his life. Fanaticism was his armour against the onslaught of a guilty conscience, which was the undoing of the more sensitive authors of the *Theory of Catastrophe*; morally, they were not altogether atrophied. Torgler, arrested with Dmitrov and a leader of the German Communist Party, experienced a nervous breakdown, when the magnitude of the folly of the theory of catastrophe dawned on him. Fearing that in a penitential mood he might make a clean breast, a communist whispering campaign branded him a traitor. None knows what happened to him. Did the Nazis kill him or mercifully allowed him to commit suicide? Other German communist leaders, like Hermann Remmele and the infant prodigy of a Heinz Neumann, the original author of the *Theory of Catastrophe*, approved by Stalin because it was Neumann's brain-wave, fled to the Socialist Fatherland, never to return. Whether scapegoats were made of them, or, not sure of people who even *post factum* feel the sting of conscience, the Russians acted on the dictum that dead men tell no tales, may never be clear. Even great Thaelmann, glorified as the German Stalin, sunk in the oblivion of—insanity, suicide or murder? Future historians

may discover. For the moment, we can only memorialize the tragic event.

Thanks to the tough grain of a caveman, steeled by the experience of the communist underworld, Dmitrov survived the moral crisis of communism. He was helped by the fortuitous circumstances which dramatized him as a hero defying fate. He would never suffer a nervous breakdown—too earthy for such an overwhelming emotional experience. Had not heroism been thrust on him, he would most probably act as a hard-headed realist—rather save his life than throw it away. But placed in a position where one could afford to gamble, he gambled, and won—a world-wide reputation and the highest place in the communist hierarchy accessible to a non-Russian. The hero's return to Moscow was celebrated by his election to the General Secretaryship of the Comintern, a place of honour and distinction previously adorned by historical names like Angelica Balabanova, Karl Radek, Bukharin. Intellectually, Dmitrov was not equal to the task of his exalted position. It is said that his speech in the seventh World Congress of the Communist International was written for him. By whom? That is yet to be disclosed. However, there were Stalin touches. Stalin writing anybody's speech, of course, is inconceivable. But he could have easily . dictated it. In any case, the Comintern was already nearing the period of decline; Dmitrov was its last General Secretary. The Comintern was dissolved because before long the revolution could be carried to Europe by the victorious Red Army. Thundering of thousands of guns at a time was more effective than revolutionary propaganda; armament factories were more useful than printing presses; armed Russian peasants replaced the proletarian masses as the army of the revolution. It swept Dmitrov to power. An unknown man without any outstanding talent had run away from his country, to return after twenty years as the mentor of its destiny, enjoying the protection of the army which had smashed Hitler's mechanized might.

Dmitrov was hardly a great man; he found himself well placed in a period of great events, and swam with the current. A greatness which does not contribute to the

grandeur of its background, is bound to be ephemeral. That is the cause of Dmitrov's downfall when he appeared to be at the pinnacle of power. What came as a gift has been taken away, exposing the fiction of an artificially built-up personality.

From M. N. Roy Archives, Dehra Dun.

Mathias Rakosi

The largest number of non-russians high up in the hierarchy of the Communist International in the earlier years of its history came from Hungary. After the fall of the short-lived communist regime under Bela Kun, all its members were imprisoned. Eventually they were expatriated to Russia in exchange for Hungarian prisoners of war. For the distinction of having made the first attempt to set up a communist dictatorship outside Russia, they were naturally welcomed there with a good deal of pomp and ceremony. Bela Kun reached Moscow on the eve of the Second World Congress, and replaced Radek as the first non-Russian General Secretary of the Communist International. But he never occupied the position practically. It was an honorific appointment. Moreover, lacking the requisite executive ability and political acumen, he was eclipsed by several more accomplished men who came in the next batch.

Mathias Rakosi was one of them, the others being Eugene Varga and Joseph Pogani. It was not until 1925 that Varga made his mark as an economist. Pogani was the first to shine. In the Third World Congress, he crossed swords with Trotsky who, on that occasion, made a brilliant analysis of the world economic situation, predicting an early downfall of the British Empire. Everybody was surprised by the audacity of the unknown Hungarian. Pogani's political record was not impressive. Before he became the Propaganda Commissar of the short-lived Bela Kun regime, he had been an obscure journalist. His criticism of Trotsky, though superficial, had some flashness which attracted attention. People began to speculate about his future. He appeared to sense the situation cunningly and hitched his wagon to the rising star.

Trotsky was still at the height of his glory but Lenin being ill, the struggle for succession had already begun in the leading circle of the party. Stalin was still the dark horse. Zinoviev wore the triple crown. He was the Chairman of the Communist International, President of the Leningrad Soviet, and one of the five members of the all-powerful Politbureau of the communist party. Pogani evidently played for Zinoviev's favour and won. But he too did not rise very high; having made some splash as a theoretician, he eventually fell a victim to his opportunism and unscrupulous ambition. Rakosi's craftiness succeeded where the superficial brilliance of Pogani failed. He did not try to gain distinction immediately on arrival at Moscow on the meagre merit of a none too creditable performance at Budapest. Though he lacked even the superficial brilliance of Pogani, not to mention Varga's learning, he was not modest. On the other hand, not being stupid like Bela Kun, he pursued his ambition quietly and skilfully. The apparent patience, which only shielded his intrigue to oust Bela Kun from the leadership of the Hungarian emigres and consequently from the place of honour conceded to the latter in the hierarchy of the Communist International was rewarded before long.

Towards the end of 1922, less than two years after his arrival in Moscow, Rakosi emerged from his obscurity as a Secretary of the Communist International. Though he never rose to the position of the General Secretary, for several years he was the key man of the hierarchy in charge of the underground organization of the International. He attained that position, never before nor since held by any non-Russian, by virtue of having preferred organizational intrigue to political or theoretical rivalry. Bela Kun and Pogani thought they must choose between Zinoviev and Trotsky for their patron. Rakosi sought the support of the party machinery, which was quietly preparing the ground for Stalin to assume supreme power eventually. He became a Secretary of the International as an agent of the Stalin clique. But more than craftiness was required to impress Stalin personally and Rakosi was too small a man to be tolerated by a great dictator.

Having risen by intrigue, Rakosi fell a victim to others' intrigue. Towards the end of the twenties, there was a whispering campaign against him amongst the Hungarian emigres in Moscow. Suspected of espionage, he was quietly removed from his position, and escaped the fate of a suspected traitor by volunteering to return secretly to Hungary and do underground work to redeem his reputation. He was arrested before long to spend fourteen years in jail, until the Russian army liberated Hungary. Thereafter, he quickly rose again to power so as to rank with Tito and Dmitrov. The one was excommunicated and the other disappeared mysteriously. Rakosi survives them to claim the distinction of the tallest poppy of the communist world outside Russia. He has retained that position by eliminating rivals, some of whom were bigger and better men. By doing so, he has proved himself to be a ruthless revolutionary, ever true to the Russian archetype. The trial of Laszlo Rajk and others at Budapest in 1949 was on the model of the Moscow trials of 1938. Rajk was not a Bukharin but he was by far a better man than his successful rival—not only intellectually, but morally also. There is a measure of moral grandeur in condemning oneself to death even for a false sense of values. If Rajk was not a Bukharin, Rakosi is not even a bad caricature of Stalin.

When he first came to Moscow in 1921, Rakosi was in his mid-thirties—a short stumpy man with the typically Hungarian broad head, thinly thatched on the top. He was Commissar of Education in the Soviet Government of Hungary, and most probably had been a school teacher to be qualified for the post. Like all his countrymen of some education, he spoke German and picked up Russian very quickly. Their country having been in the past the scene of conflict and convergence of diverse racial groups, Hungarians are talented linguists.

His quickly acquired knowledge of the Russian language and ingratiating manners seem to have enabled the unostentatious emigre to worm into the confidence of the lower ranks of the party bureaucracy, naturally jealous of foreign communists hob-nobbing with the top leaders.

The initial tactfulness therefore won for Rakosi a powerful though not spectacular patronage. The central machinery and the underground organization of the Communist International have always been controlled by some minor bureaucrats of the Russian party. They engineered the rise and fall of foreign communists either in the central hierarchy of the International or in their respective parties. With their backing, Rakosi emerged from his early obscurity as the first non-Russian to hold a position not only of honour but of power, in the bureaucratic machinery of the International. The experience proved to be a heady wine.

As Secretary of the Communist International, Rakosi was pompous and overbearing. His inclination to foppishness made a ridiculous attempt to cancel the disadvantage of an unimposing appearance and intellectual mediocrity. He demonstrated his importance by surrounding himself with a small regiment of stenographers and secretaries—all good-looking girls who, it was whispered, either in joke or maliciously, constituted also the harem of the Hungarian Pasha. Rakosi's rule in the headquarters, however, was of short duration. On the recommendation of his anonymous patrons, he went abroad to engineer the downfall of the veterans of European Communism, who were to be replaced by men more subservient to the Russian party bureaucracy. Meanwhile, Stalin assumed complete control, formal as well as factual. The central machinery of the International was reorganized with Bukharin as Chairman and a Political Secretariat of five, three of whom were non-Russians. Rakosi went out of the new picture, in which the bureaucracy was subordinated to an effective political leadership. He continued to be the secret agent of the Communist International in Central Europe until Dmitrov, with equally powerful patronage, appeared as his rival for that position. Rakosi met his match in underground intrigue and eventually returned to Moscow under the shadow of sinister suspicions, which bred so rankly in the atmosphere of clandestine transactions in large sums of money.

Having rehabilitated his reputation by fourteen years imprisonment in Hungary, Rakosi again rose to power, this

time as the supreme dictator of a regime buttressed on the victorious military might of Russia. All his old rivals have sunk in the oblivion of the cruel and blood-thirsty history of revolution. Varga alone survived the orgy of revolution eating her own children. He is an old man with no ambition for dictatorial power. But in the meantime, younger rivals with fresher revolutionary record, appeared on the scene. Rajk threatened to eclipse Rakosi, who is regarded by the younger generation of communists as a backnumber—a corpulent ageing man, fond of physical comforts foisted on them by the Russian army.

On the other hand, in his new position, Rakosi is reported to have been a diplomatic success. His suave manners and urbanity impressed foreign journalists and sympathetic visitors. In internal affairs also, he seems to have played his role skilfully. Hungary is the only country where a communist dictatorship still retains the facade of a coalition government. The supreme dictator is only the Vice-Prime Minister. With the support of non-communist parties still permitted a legal existence, Rakosi could outmanoeuvre his rivals. He isolated Rajk and undermined his power by shifting him from the Hony Office to the Foreign Ministry. He poisoned the mind of the Russians by interpreting the opposition to himself as intrigue against them.

But the veteran intriguer may yet experience a boomerang. After the Rajk trial, the tension inside the party increased. Anti-Russian sentiments are reported to be growing. The successful defiance of the Yugoslav Communist Party under the leadership of Tito naturally encourages the sentiment in the neighbouring countries. The Russians were alarmed by the development and ordered Rakosi to purge the party of Titoism. Thousands of active members were accordingly expelled, with the result that the communist party was completely subordinated to the orders of the Russian-controlled secret police. As further disintegration of the communist party would undermine his position in the State, Rakosi is reported to have remonstrated with the Russians and consequently has himself been suspected of Titoist deviations. There was a rumour that he was called to Moscow for consultation.

After the utterly unexpected downfall of Dmitrov and the mysterious disappearance of Thorez, it would not be at all surprising if Rakosi also went on his last journey to Moscow. In any case, for some time he has been rather out of the picture. According to latest reports, Bela Szantos, a veteran himself, who had been away in Russia for many years out of Hungarian politics, has returned to Budapest presumably to keep a watch on Rakosi and replace him, if necessary.

—*The Radical Humanist*, July 29, 1951

Wilhelm Pieck

Very few of the people who were prominent in the earlier stages of the world communist movement are anywhere in the picture today. The successive purges of the Russian Communist Party, which eliminated practically the entire Bolshevik Old Guard, attracted the attention of the world; but little was known about the periodical changes in the leadership of the parties in other countries. Ever since the foundation of the Communist International in 1919, the Communist Party of Germany occupied a place only next to the Russian. Originally, its leadership included some of the veterans of the revolutionary working class movement of Europe, men and women who, until the Russian revolution, had been recognised as intellectual peers of the Bolshevik leaders, including Lenin himself. During the first three years of its existence, the Communist Party of Germany rapidly grew in number and influence, and by 1923 it was a predominating force in the political life of the country. But in 1923, no less than in 1918, Germany was very differently situated from Russia. In addition to the superiority (compared with Russia) of the forces of native reaction, the victorious Entente Powers were anxious to reinforce the latter against the danger of a revolution in Germany. Consequently, the attempt of the communist party to capture power in 1923 was no more successful than in 1918. Nevertheless, the responsibility for the defeat was ascribed to the leadership of the party, which was replaced by a new set of people. Wilhelm Pieck was one of the few who survived that first purge of the German Communist Party at the instance of the Russians. Ever since then, he managed to survive a succession of similar vicissitudes, at last to be the leader of the party when it came to power with the help of the Russian Army. This

exceptional record is due primarily to no other merit than subservience to the Russians. As a matter of fact, that is the only ladder to climb to the top of the international communist movement.

Pieck was one of the founders of the German Communist Party, having been previously associated with Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. He was a member of the "Gruppe Internationale," which on New Year's day of 1916 formally revolted against the patriotic policy of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, and called for war resistance with the slogan: "The enemy is in our own country." The activities of the group were guided by Rosa Luxemburg, whose letters from prison were signed "Spartakus" after the famous leader of the slave revolt in ancient Rome. The pioneers of the German Communist Party thus came to be known as the Spartakus Bund—which held its first conference in 1918. Pieck was the chairman of the conference. During the revolution, together with Liebknecht and Ernst Meyer, he was a member of the Workers' Council of Berlin. After the assassination of Luxemburg and Liebknecht, Pieck became the leader of the Spartakus Bund.

Early in 1920, a section of the old German army made an almost successful attempt to overthrow the newly established Weimar Republic. One fine morning, it marched into the capital and without any resistance occupied all the strategic positions. The Social-Democratic President, Ebert, with his Cabinet left Berlin in panic, to avoid arrest. That was one of the most dramatic moments of the history of postwar Europe. A few days earlier, I had just reached Berlin from Mexico, on the way to Moscow. From the window of my hotel, in the heart of Berlin (the Potsdamer Platz), I watched a typical Prussian army fanning out to different directions. People of all classes stood by listlessly, as if paralysed by a sudden blow. The huge city was plunged in confusion. Overnight, there appeared a bold leadership to take the situation in hand, and deal a counter-blow. In the midst of that dramatic situation, I met Wilhelm Pieck for the first time. At first, I took him for a military officer in civilian clothes—a middle-sized man with a stiff bearing, accentuated by

brown bristles standing over the forehead. It was a secret meeting of the communist party. I went there with Ernst Meyer, a quiet, soft-spoken, scholarly intellectual, who had replaced Pieck as the leader of the party. The meeting had to decide a rather ticklish question, and the decision had to be quick, before dawn. Something utterly unexpected had happened. The call to resist the counter-revolution had been issued by Karl Legien, President of the powerful German Federation of Labour, whom the communist together with the entire left wing of the Social-Democratic Party had for years denounced as a rank reactionary. He had decided to call a political general strike to be declared from dawn. What should the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat do? Should it play second or third fiddle to Legien, or simply fade out of the picture in that crucial moment? Meyer advocated the former course. Pieck hesitated, and then proposed consultation with the leaders of the Independent Socialist Party (the left wing of the Social-Democratic Party had broken away to form a new party under that name). A joint committee issued the call for the strike before dawn. Pieck and Meyer signed it on behalf of the communist party.

For four days, the big city was dead, shops closed, factories idle, streets deserted in the day, everything enveloped in complete darkness at night. On the fifth morning, from the same hotel window, I watched the mass of steel-helmeted soldiers moving in the opposite direction in sullen silence. The might of organized labour had triumphed over brute force. Since there was not a soul in the streets for several days, the insurgent army did not have the chance of firing a single shot. It was a great luck to have had that experience. Naturally, it made an indelible impression on my mind. The acquaintance of Meyer and Pieck was a part of the picture. One has since then been devoured by the blood-thirsty mother revolution, perhaps because he was a devoted as well as an intelligent child; and the other rewarded, not so much for devotion to the goddess as for obsequiousness to her high-priests, which betrayed want of intellectual independence.

Having inflicted the crushing defeat on the monarchist-militarist reaction, the reformist Legien made yet another bold move which, if supported by the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat and other leftist politicians, might have consolidated the Republic and consequently altered the subsequent history of Germany and also of Europe. He demanded reconstruction of the Cabinet to the exclusion of the notorious Noske and some others who, in the critical days, had behaved most unreliably. Following the Independent Socialists, the communists broke the united front and refused to support Legien's demand. Pieck was their spokesman in that fateful negotiation.

After the conclusion of the Versailles Treaty, a curious movement had developed in Germany. Young army officers sought the alliance of the revolutionary proletariat to put up a resistance against the enslavement of Germany under the flag of National-Bolshevism. Two communist intellectuals, Dr Heinrich Lauffenberg and Fitz Wolheim responded to the call, and obtained the sanction of Radek who was then a State-prisoner in Berlin. Under Pieck's weak and ineffectual leadership, the Spartakus Bund was finding it very difficult to recover from the defeat of the revolution. Not only were Luxemburg and Liebknecht dead, but all its outstanding leaders—Meyer, Brandler, Thalheimer—were in jail. In that atmosphere of confusion and disorganization, the advocates of National-Bolshevism gained considerable influence in the Spartakus Bund. That was the ominous shadow of a calamity cast ahead. It was under that shadow that the communist party was practically out of the picture in the critical days of the militarist insurrection and its dramatic defeat. Some of the officers talking of National Bolshevism were connected with the insurrection. Most probably, under the spell of that strange cult, which has ultimately corrupted Communism, the then leaders of the communist party secretly sympathized with the insurrection, which was to overthrow the bourgeois republic. Had not Meyer come out of prison at the nick of time, Pieck might have led the party to a shameful position. The refusal to support Legien's demand for a reconstruction of the Cabinet went a long way in that direction. The fatal drift was stopped by Lenin's intervention.

Radek was an enthusiastic prophet of National-Bolshevism. He revived the cult, with the official patronage of the Communist International, in 1924. The skeleton was taken out of the cupboard of Stalin's *realpolitik* during the Second World War, finally to come back to Germany in the person of Wilhelm Pieck. In 1920 however, enthusiastically supported by Radek, it scandalized Lenin, who severely condemned the practice of painting nationalism red. Fortunately, that time, the old guard of the Spartakus Bund had come out of prison. Pieck was replaced by Meyer and Thalheimer at the head of the German Communist Party, and the National' Bolsheviks were expelled from its ranks.

Thereafter, the Communist Party of Germany, under the leadership of the Spartakus Old Guard—Thalheimer, Meyer, Brandler, Walcher and Froelich—entered the brightest chapter of its history. During their absence in prison, Pieck had enjoyed the honour of leading the vanguard of the abortive German revolution. Out of loyalty to old comradeship, he was given a place in the Central Committee of the Party, and was elected chairman of the Leipzig Convention in 1923 which, on instruction from Moscow, decided in favour of the communists joining the Social-Democrats to form coalition ministries in Saxony and Thuringia. With the leader of the party, Brandler, he thereafter sat on the committee of three which was set up to organize the planned uprising. I was present at the Leipzig Convention and participated in the subsequent events. It was difficult to imagine why a colourless man like Pieck, who could only shout like a Prussian drill-sergeant, should always be in crucial, positions.

The plan failed, and the entire responsibility thereof was placed on the leadership of the German Communist Party. In that first great crisis in the history of the party, it became evident that, notwithstanding his none too brilliant previous record, Pieck had won the confidence of the Russians who controlled the machinery of the Communist International. Ever since, his political fortune was secured by the nimble adaptability with which he landed on the

right side of the fence in each successive change in the party leadership.

While all his old comrades were victimized for the failure of a mistaken policy prescribed by the Russians, Pieck, although branded as a 'centrist,' was included in the new leadership of the party, and he remained entrusted with the administration of funds coming from Moscow. In that position of vantage, it was simple enough for him to have an influence on the party organs through its paid functionaries, and thus guarantee his inclusion in the changing leadership of the party. Prominent and popular leaders—Maslow, Ruth Fischer, Thaelmann—rose and fell; but Pieck was always there; ostensibly, as the personification of the Spartakus tradition, really, because he was the man of confidence of the Russian overlords.

When in 1927 Thaelmann replaced Maslow and Ruth Fischer as the leader of the party, Pieck was formally placed in charge of the party organization. In that position, he was fully responsible for the foolish policy which helped the rise of Fascism and ultimately led to the discredit and destruction of the party. Yet, he appeared in the seventh World Congress of the Communist International as the severest critic of the German Party. Thaelmann was in a Nazi concentration camp. But others—Heinz Neumann, Remmele and a whole host of them—had escaped. None knows as yet what happened to Thaelmann;* a number of his equally famous associates disappeared in the bowels of the Socialist Fatherland. Pieck was once more the survivor; so was Ulbricht, who is the real boss of the German Communist Party to-day. The latter was among those communists who, on the triumph of Hitler, flew to Paris. Thereafter, most of them participated in the Spanish civil war. There, Ulbricht distinguished himself in the hunting of Trotskyist heresy, and won the patronage of the Russian party. On the conclusion of the Soviet-German Pact, all the German communists in Paris were ordered to return home, and eventually to Nazi concentration camps and the dreadful fate that awaited

*It was later revealed that he died in one of the concentration camps.

them there. Ulbricht alone was sent to Moscow, where he presided at the conference of German prisoners of war held in October 1941.

German Communism, under the leadership of Pieck and Ulbricht, resurrected the cult of National-Bolshevism, which had cast its ominous shadow ahead as far back as in 1919. All German communists, who had survived the purge of the Thaelmann leadership, were sent to the front to blare through a battery of loudspeakers the old National Bolshevik propaganda: "German soldiers and officers, Hitler has betrayed Germany by breaking the alliance with Russia; revolt against the traitor and restore the great German-Russian alliance, which will throw the Western imperialists out of Europe."

After the battle of Stalingrad, the "Free German Committee" was established in July 1943. Marshall von Paulus and General von Deydlitz, who had commanded the victorious march of Hitler's hordes as far as Stalingrad and just missed dealing the death-blow to Russia, were the leading figures of the Committee. Pieck was the political Commissar and as such controlled the funds allotted for the reorganization and re-equipment of an army of German war prisoners under the command of von Paulus. So, at last, he has returned to Berlin, not only as a political agitator or a party boss, but with a formidable power behind his throne—as the powerful prophet of National-Bolshevism, the ghost of which haunted the German Communist Party ever since its birth. Having at last won the approbation of Russia, and with the backing of her formidable might, it today threatens the future of German democracy, and the future of Europe. An associate of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, one-time leader of the Spartakus Bund, the man of Russian confidence for years in the Communist Party of Germany, Wilhelm Pieck to-day personifies that threat.

—From M. N. Roy Archives, Dehra Dun

Palmiro Togliatti

It is a remarkable coincidence that the leaders of the two largest communist parties outside the "Iron curtain" should suffer simultaneously from cerebral derangements and go to Moscow for medical treatment. Maurice Thorez of France and Palmiro Togliatti of Italy have been the most outstanding figures of the communist movement in non-communist Europe. But except the faith, there was little in common between the two men. In sharp contrast to his boisterous French colleague who excelled only in flamboyant platform oratory, the Italian leader was a man of quiet habits and calculating disposition. As such he won the reputation of being the brainiest communist leader outside Russia and is said to have aspired to be the communist Cavour. Indeed, there was much similarity between the two, although Togliatti might have preferred Machiavelli as his more appropriate ideal.

Ever since he escaped the fatal consequences of the attempt on his life in July 1948, Togliatti has been a sick man; nor is he young—most probably above sixty. During these two years and a half, there have been persistent rumours that he was not only sick but also a politically finished man. Revolt inside the party against his weak leadership was frequently reported in the non-communist press. Luigi Longo, leader of the underground military organization, and Pietro Secchia, boss of the party machinery, were mentioned as aspiring to replace the sick and ageing leader. They advocated a firm revolutionary policy as against Togliatti's "softness." But Togliatti has been in the confidence of Moscow longer than any other non-Russian communist leader, having occupied a position high up in the international hierarchy ever since 1925. That distinction seems to have enabled him to cope with the opposition inside the Italian party for quite a long time.

The rumours about Togliatti's political future received a setback when, in the middle of October 1950, the communist press published reports of a session of the Central Committee of the party, conveying the impression that he still held his position unchallenged. He seemed to have recovered from his illness and regained the control of the party. The central theme of his speech was that the banner of Garibaldi's tradition, raised by the party in 1948, should now be substituted by Picasso's dove; and by all appearances, the party agreed to follow him. He pleaded for a "united front" of all the advanced elements of the nation without provoking any manifest opposition from the critics of his "softness and opportunism." The non-communist press cynically remarked that, showing signs of fatigue and disappointment, the communist leader would cast off the colourful mantle of the insurrectionist Garibaldi to put on that of the diplomatic and calculating Cavour.

Togliatti's position as the leader of the party however, was not as secure as it appeared to be. The iron-lunged Longo kept quiet. But Secchia denounced "the opportunists who have no faith in the masses, but claimed to save them by parliamentary combinations." Similarly, oblique criticism was directed against Togliatti's leadership by other advocates of "bold revolutionary action."

Two years ago, Italian communists were confident of capturing power constitutionally. The unexpected defeat in the 1949 election naturally caused a good deal of confusion in the ranks of the party. The experience seems to have shaken Togliatti's self-confidence. His spiritual fatigue must have been aggravated by physical illness. Therefore, appearing most probably for the last time before the gathering of party leaders, he failed to assert his undoubted intellectual superiority. Smaller men conspiring to pull him down, but still lacking the courage of open revolt, could not but disgust and embitter a spirit already demoralized by defeat and frustration.

The Central Committee of the party met in the middle

of October 1950 to prepare the atmosphere for a plenary party congress in January 1951. At the end of October, it was reported that Togliatti was seriously ill again, this time in consequence of a brain operation. About the same time, the French communist leader was also laid up with a cerebral derangement. This remarkable coincidence cannot but cause speculation about the psycho-pathological impact of a fanatical faith. In the case of Thorez, the mental derangement might have been due to a physical injury. He was not a man prone to be disturbed by moral scruples, although he might be temperamentally predisposed to apoplectic fits. Togliatti was a man of intellectual refinement and high culture, capable of moral judgment. In his case, inhibitions imposed by an irrational faith, misplaced loyalty and assiduously fostered sense of party discipline could conceivably snap under the impact of distasteful experience and precipitate a grave moral and emotional crisis. Mental derangement may result from such a psycho-pathological state.

Whatever might be the cause and nature of his illness, Togliatti followed Thorez, and Dmitrov before him, for medical treatment to Moscow. He was also accompanied on the journey by the two men who are marked out as his successors. Therefore, one can reasonably doubt whether he will return. The eclipse of Togliatti will deprive the communist movement outside Russia of the last surviving leader of the longest standing and requisite intellectual attainments. It will be an irreparable loss for international Communism. On the other hand, it can be said that Togliatti's eclipse was long overdue. He managed to hold a high position in the movement for many years even after it had no place for men like him. He must have compromised his conscience and prostituted his intelligence. That was too high a price for leadership. Therefore he had gone on this journey, thinking that it may be his last, a morally broken and spiritually exhausted man.

Enrico Ercoli (Togliatti's original name) came to Moscow in 1924 and rose quickly in the hierarchy of the Communist International. It was the time when the veterans of Communism were being replaced by men more

subservient to the Russians. Ercoli represented the best type of the leaders of the second generation. He took up a non-committal attitude in the internal strife, and retained the confidence of both sides. Only by great shrewdness and cold calculation, could he escape the fate of falling between two stools.

I was closely associated with him during the earlier years of his stay in Moscow. We were colleagues on the Secretariat of the International and were jointly responsible for the reorganization of the central machinery when Stalin took over control. A small wizened man, Ercoli looked older than his years. With his quiet manners and retiring habits, he was the antithesis of his boisterous countrymen. He remained in Moscow after I left in 1929, and came to be the key-man in the head-quarters of the International even when the dramatic Dmitrov was raised to the post of General Secretary. But the world knew little of him until he returned to Italy after the liberation, as Palmiro Togliatti. Since then he played his role extremely well, earning the reputation of being the ablest and cleverest communist leader outside Russia.

His eclipse would indeed be a bad omen for the future of Communism in Europe. But it was not yet his last journey. He has come back to Italy. It will be known before long whether the Russians thought that they could not as yet do without him or he has once again compromised his conscience and prostituted his intelligence.

—*Radical Humanist*, June 24, 1951

Marshal Tito

Son of a Croat peasant, Joseph Brosz began his life as a mechanic in a factory at Zagreb. Since he was conscripted in the Austro-Hungarian army as a sergeant on the outbreak of the First World War, until his rise to the unique position of the dictator of the only communist State which refused to be integrated in the expanding communist world, Brosz lived through thirty years of adventures unprecedented even in the life of a professional revolutionary. With that background, Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia is a self-made man, and as such dared spurn the subservience of the non-Russian communist leaders manufactured in Moscow. It is said that the Russian manipulators engineered to bring about Tito's downfall because he aspired to succeed Stalin as the leader of the international communist movement. He might have; and if he did, his claim would not be altogether fantastic. He was the leader of the only communist party which captured power without Russian military help. Someone must succeed Stalin eventually as the leader of international Communism; there is no reason why the honour should go to another Russian, if a more qualified man offered himself as the alternative choice; and Tito was as good as any non-Russian, if not better certainly than many. His most outstanding rivals were Dmitrov and Rakosi, who actively participated in the intrigue to cause Tito's downfall. Both were leaders made in Moscow, and as such shared the negative features of Russian leadership of the international communist movement. Tito had the advantage of initiation and early indoctrination in the socialist Fatherland; but in his case, it did not turn out to be a handicap, because of subsequent experiences under different circumstances, and also earlier contact with Western ideas, which had

penetrated more deeply in the Austro-Hungarian Empire than in pre-revolutionary Russia.

As a young factory worker, Joseph Brosz was attracted by Socialism which, in his native land, owes allegiance to liberal and democratic ideals. Subsequently, as a prisoner of war, he lived a couple of years among the nomads of Central Asia until the revolution set him free. In the flush of enthusiasm, the emotional youth joined the party of the revolution, and underwent a period of theoretical training. Thereafter, he secretly returned to his native land. The communist party in the newly constituted kingdom of Yugoslavia was an illegal organization, its members subjected to fierce persecution. Tito learned the trade of a professional revolutionary in the hardest school. Rent and demoralized by internal feuds, the Yugoslav Communist Party disintegrated under the pressure of terrorism. Tito emigrated, this time to the West—Vienna, Berlin, Paris. Eventually, he participated in the Spanish Civil War as a member of the International Brigade, which was the breeding ground of the "Western Orientation" of Communism as against Russian domination favoured by leaders made in Moscow. In 1937, Tito again returned to his native land as the Secretary of the Communist Party. Then began his spectacular rise to eminence, fame and power, of the guerilla leader waging a brave campaign of resistance against the fascist invaders, and the creator and supreme commander of an effective and victorious communist armed force outside Russia.

Apart from his personal merits, Tito owed his unique position to a contingent factor, which enabled him to build up an army—the help from the capitalist Powers waging war against the fascist invaders of Yugoslavia. In the last analysis, it was Churchill's eccentric impetuosity, if not calculated foresight, which gave the Balkan guerilla leader his chance. It stands to Tito's credit that he had the moral courage to welcome that inadvertent assistance, compromising for it from the communist point of view, when the Russo-German pact was still in operation, committing the communists to a more compromising alliance. The result was that Yugoslavia was the only country which attained liberation from the fascist invaders

under communist leadership, but without the direct intervention of the Russian army.

Apart from the fallacies of its theoretical pre-suppositions, the misfortune of the communist movement has been that the revolution succeeded originally in a backward country which, according to the Marxist prognosis, was not qualified to produce the architects and builders of the new social order. Lenin as the most orthodox Marxist saw the misfortune, and hoped that it would be rectified by the inevitable spread of the revolution to more advanced countries. He actually said that, as soon as the proletariat captured power in Germany, the Russians must yield the place of honour in the communist movement to those who were more deserving, because they were historically destined to play the role. But history refused to fit into the neat Marxist pattern; more misfortunes overtook the communist movement; the revolution did not spread to countries believed to be more ripe for it.

Though according to the articles of the Marxist faith, Russia was not historically qualified to assume the role, she nevertheless retained the leadership of the International by virtue of being the only communist State. Subservience to the Russian leadership, sublimated as revolutionary discipline and loyalty to the socialist Fatherland, came to be the highest virtue of communists in other countries. Failure to flaunt it with a fanatical fervour was condemned and punished as heresy. Intellectual independence and moral integrity being thus placed under a heavy discount, the leadership of non-Russian communist parties was purged of all who attached any value to these "petit-bourgeois prejudices."

The consequent regimentation and debasement of the communist movement outside Russia, in addition to the power of the modern State, not foreseen by Marxist optimism, greatly reduced the chances of revolution succeeding there. Under the new circumstances, partially created by the will of the Russians to maintain domination of the entire communist world, the success of revolution even in more advanced countries came to be conditional

upon Russian military might. The Red army was believed to be destined to carry the banner of revolution to other countries, as it actually did on the morrow of the Second World War. Communist regimes thus set up and sustained there could not possibly be independent of Russia. The condition which could help the international communist movement out of the crisis of leadership, namely, the end of Russian domination, was not created.

The singular position of Yugoslavia before long drove a thin wedge into the monolithic power-structure of the communist world. Unexpected opportunities in the earlier years of the war had won for Tito a unique position. Now he was put to the crucial test of his life: could he stand it? Was the Croat Peasant, steeled by the experience of a long life of adventure, intrinsically endowed with the personal qualifications to offer an alternative leadership to the international communist movement? Was Tito great enough to rise up to the situation? History will answer the question. Having raised him to his unique position, she might pull him down unless Communism still has a future better than its present.

For the moment, Tito is playing a role somewhat analogous to those of Luther and Calvin in the history of the Christian Church. He is neither a heretic nor a reformer; he professes to be more orthodox than the Moscovite Pope of Communism and challenges the latter's claim to supreme temporal power over the faithful. But he is reported to have refused to put on the mantle of Trotsky and disowned any intention to organize a rival Communist International. Sustained adherence to that promising resolution may wear thin Tito's professed communist orthodoxy, and his revolt may lead to a rejection of the totalitarian implications of Communism and reassertion of its tradition of the humanist passion for liberty and social justice.

But meanwhile, Tito is building up a communist State on the Calvinist pattern. Just like the Christian variety was, so is protestant Communism, whatever the future may hold for it, it is no less intolerant and bigotted than the orthodox faith. Heresy hunting, party dictatorship, economic

regimentation and absence of political liberty, are as rampant in Yugoslavia as in any other communist State. The picturesque journalistic description of protestant Communism as "Titalitarianism," and of Yugoslavia as "Titoslavis," is not mere manufacture of meaningless phrases. If Stalin has replaced the Czar as the ruler of Russia, the "Beloved Little Father," his Anti-Christ incorporates more power, albeit in a much smaller country. The former is not the constitutional Head of the State, but only the Prime Minister; nor is he the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces in peace time. Tito is the Head of the State and his own Prime Minister; he is also the Commander-in-Chief of all the armed forces; and he holds the key position of the General Secretary of the Communist Party. Thus, formally his dictatorial power is more absolute than that of Stalin. He has also allowed and encouraged the weaving of legends about himself.

Of late, the other side of the picture has been attracting attention. Having consolidated his position, shaken in consequence of the breach with Moscow, by typically communist methods, Tito is allowing some relaxation of those methods. The tendency is towards a gradual mitigation of the rigours of political dictatorship by reviving the democratic content of the Soviet system. If the process is allowed to go far enough, it will be an experiment in the practice of direct democracy in a large modern State. In the economic sphere also, democracy is gaining ground at the cost of regimentation. The economy of Protestant Communism tends to depart from the orthodox methods of top-heavy industrialization and forced collectivization of agriculture in the direction of the New Economic Policy advocated by Lenin.

The most interesting development, however, is in the realm of ideas. To justify heterodoxy with scriptural sanction, attempts are made to reconstruct the theoretical foundation of Communism. It remains to be seen if they will go to the extent of subjecting the Marxist creed itself to a critical examination, if Tito's Protestantism will develop into an out-and-out heresy. In any case, the experiment may yield significant results, if it will not be squashed by the ruthless Russian war machine. Even in that

case, Tito will go down in the history of Communism as one of its most colourful figures—a dictator, in practice as well as by temperament, who was compelled by circumstances to move towards a higher form of democracy, and as such, might greatly influence contemporary history generally.

—*The Radical Humanist*, April 15, 1951

Maurice Thorez

Instability of its personal composition is a characteristic feature of the international communist leadership. It is well-known how the Russian Bolshevick Old Guard was eliminated. The periodical changes in the leadership of the communist parties in other countries, particularly of Europe, has not attracted much attention abroad. There also the veterans were replaced by upstarts more subservient to the Russian super-leaders. They again rose and fell in quick succession. Maurice Thorez of France lasted longer than any other communist leader of the third generation. He has been the Secretary-General of the Party since the early thirties. His eclipse is reminiscent of the mysterious disappearance of the doughty Dmitrov of Bulgaria.

The checkered career of Dmitrov ended behind the Iron Curtain. Therefore it did not arouse much curiosity. When eventually the news leaked out that he had died in a sanatorium somewhere in the Socialist Fatherland, any speculation about the cause of his death was pointless. Having been in the limelight of international communist propaganda ever since he leaped into fame as the central figure of the Berlin Reichstag Fire trial, the Number One communist outside Russia sank into oblivion. The equally mysterious political eclipse of Thorez has been much dramatized. His fall is also sudden like that of Dmitrov.

Well-paid skilled workers in France are typically bourgeois in personal habits—fond of eating well, drinking lustily and living in comfort. Thorez belonged to that class of "workers' aristocracy." But when still a young man, he ceased to live on wages, and rose rapidly in the Party hierarchy. As the titular leader of the Party of the proletariat, he enjoyed a more comfortable living

conducive to physical growth true to the type of the French workers' aristocracy. A bulky young man before long grew bulkier with a considerable paunch, which he carried with easy, if not grace.

Thorez, therefore, was physically fit to bear the hardship of leading the second largest Communist Party outside Russia for two decades. He was known to be all the time in the best of health. Therefore, the news of his suddenly falling seriously ill, and particularly the mysterious nature of the malady, caused surprise and let loose a spate of rumours. The first report was that the French communist leader was wounded in an accident while driving his own car back from a mass meeting. He did not go to a hospital, but to a private clinic of a communist doctor. None but members of the party hierarchy could see him, "and the nature of his injury remained a secret. Naturally, Dame Rumour wagged her tongue, and certain newspapers speculated if the communist leader had not succumbed to a politically motivated assault. The plot thickened when it was announced by his trusted medical attendants that Thorez was suffering from brain haemorrhage and general nervous breakdown, which would keep him out of public activity for an indefinite period.

A whole month after Thorez was overtaken by the mysterious illness, the communist party issued a bulletin to inform the public that he was suffering from a partial paralysis and softening of the brain, and must go to Moscow for a prolonged medical treatment. A medical bulletin added that though the patient was improving, there was little chance of his returning to public life.

A few days later, a Russian neurologist came to Paris in a special plane which carried the patient to Moscow, accompanied by his wife and Auguste Lecoer, who had steadily risen in the Party hierarchy, as a rival to Thorez, it was whispered. Like Dmitrov, Thorez went on his last journey, never to return. One could only speculate about the end of the dramatic journey.

I met Thorez for the first time in 1926, when he came to Moscow as an understudy of Jacques Doriot, the then

leader of the French Communist Party. The young man was introduced to me by Doriot, who patronizingly called him a "bon garson." Two years later, the upstart was backed up by Moscow as Doriot's rival, whom he replaced before long as the leader of the Party. But Thorez lacked the qualities of Doriot, who was one of the most promising figures in the international communist movement.

In 1924, Moscow started the campaign against the non-Russian veterans of communism with the slogan that all the sections of the Communist International must be "bolshevized" and for that purpose intellectuals should be replaced by workers in their leadership. Doriot, a young metal worker with some revolutionary record was pushed up in France. But he was also a self-educated intelligent man, and as such turned out to be even less subservient to the Russians than his "intellectual" predecessors. As a young worker with an imposing physical appearance and an aptitude for platform oratory. Thorez got his chance. As Doriot's lieutenant, he had also acquired a measure of popularity. But these superficial attributes do not make one a true leader of men. Therefore, Thorez was bound to be a mere figurehead, and a docile instrument of the Russians.

On the outbreak of the Second World War, he escaped conscription and flew to Germany. When the Nazis attacked France, he preached the Leninist doctrine of revolutionary defeatism, and daily exhorted the French working class to rise in revolt against the bourgeois government. Before long, Nazi Germany invaded Russia, and the communists changed their revolutionary tactics. Thorez returned to France to lead his Party to participate in the Resistance to Nazi occupation.

On the liberation of France, the communist party joined the coalition government under De Gaulle; Thorez as the titular leader of the Party became one of the Vice-Premiers. That was the height of his glory. Thereafter his decline began, though the process was kept hidden for some time by his loudness on the platform. An effective leadership of the largest Party in the key country of West Europe required more brain than brawn. It quietly passed

on to new men, notably Jacques Duclos and Auguste Lecoeur—both belonging to the once so maligned class of intellectuals. One of them will most probably succeed Thorez—the arch-bungler and bouncer.

From M. N. Roy Archives, Dehra Dun

Eugene Varga

In 1946, the central Soviet "Statistics Factory" in Moscow produced an imposing treatise on the economic conditions of the contemporary world and their perspective. It was called *Changes in the Economy of Capitalism Resulting from the Second World War*. The author was Prof. Eugene Varga, who had for two decades skilfully manipulated all available statistical data (reports of the League of Nations, Economic Committee, Chambers of Commerce, Banks, so on and so forth) year after year, to show that the doom of capitalism as predicted by Marx was coming. For that service to the cause of revolution, he had come to be regarded as the Central Factory of Statistics, capable of producing results according to plan, to suit the purposes of Communist propaganda.

The book published in 1946 was a remarkable departure from the Varga tradition of Marxist orthodoxy. The pattern of capitalist economy as set by Marx is immutable. How could there be any change in it even as the result of two world wars? Yet, the chief casuist was revising the economic Article of Faith. Dispelling the fond hope of an early business depression in America to help the spread of revolution, Varga maintained that thanks to the cooperation of private enterprise and State-aid, during the war, capitalist economy had acquired a new lease of life. He further pointed out that the crisis of 1929 had not shaken the foundation of American economy: that, to the contrary, the rationalization of production under the pressure of the emergency of two world wars had steadily raised the standard of living of the working class. The implied corollary to this contention was that capitalism did not necessarily lead to economic chaos and impoverishment of the masses, and therefore proletarian revolution and communism might not be inevitable.

Curiously enough, these heresies were not detected when Varga's book was published three years ago. The Revolution had not yet definitely turned its back upon the new perspective of conquering Europe peacefully, opened up by the war. The conscience-keepers of the Party were still undecided. But they were jealous of the popularity of the Marshals who had planted the Red Flag in the heart of Europe. Any deviation from orthodoxy might entrench the upstarts in positions of power. The struggle for the upper hand between the Marshals and the Party bosses confronted Stalin with a fateful choice. He preferred the Party machinery and thus tipped the scale on the side of Marxian orthodoxy, which coloured the perspective of the Revolution.

Thereupon, began the heresy-hunting, and it was discovered that not only had Varga dared revise the Marxist horoscope of history, but his new economic theory blasted the foundation of the foreign policy of Red Napoleonism. Revolutionary offensive with the object of capturing power through armed insurrection presupposed the inevitability of a breakdown of the bourgeois State under the impact of a severe economic crisis. How could Soviet foreign policy prepare the ground for the offensive if the fatality of the precondition was doubted? Varga had not only erred; his error amounted to a betrayal of the cause of communism. He was anathematized.

The twenty years of meritorious service in manipulating statistics to vindicate a theory had raised him to the proud position of the premier economist of the Soviet Union and the Communist world. He was a member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and Head of its Institute of economics and politics. In 1947, he was removed from the position, and asked to recant his heretical views. Conviction had never been a strong point in the character of the Hungarian professor. He had deserted his friends (Bukharin and Bela Kun, amongst others) to land on the right side before it was too late. His function had been to juggle with statistical materials for backing up the official party thesis. For once, the worm turned. Varga refused to recant. He was 69. Perhaps he saw no further advance in

his career. Better fate than never—to stand by one's conviction. The world applauded the pluckiness of the old Professor when he stood up before the Party inquisition and declared: "I cannot take the advice of accepting all the criticism of my view as correct. If I did, I would be hypocritical and deceive the Party. I cannot say that I agree with the criticism when I do not." The controversy continued; and Varga stuck to his guns. He was removed from all positions of influence and honour, but not expelled from the Party. That was strange, because the policy of opposing the Marshall Plan to keep Europe in a state of economic chaos was determined by the orthodox Marxist belief in the imminence of a business depression in America. Varga escaped the fate that had overtaken so many greater non-conformists because an influential group inside the party, most probably including Stalin himself, saw that facts were bearing him out. Attempts for a revolutionary offensive during 1947 and 1948 having miscarried, Soviet foreign policy in the West was reorientated. Varga was vindicated. But the Party can never admit a mistake. The deadlock of the Varga case was broken by threatening the heretic with the extreme penalty. Hauled up once again before the Party inquisitor in the spring of 1949, Varga was warned by fellow Academician Ostrovityanov: "You must know from the history of our Party what grave consequences result from stubborn insistence on one's own errors." The choice for Varga was quite clear: to be thrown into the scrapheap even after history had vindicated him, so that the prestige of the Party did not suffer; or to live the rest of life unmolested, though perhaps in obscurity. The old fox made no mistake, perhaps hoping for a better fate. After three years of resistance, just when Soviet foreign policy and Communist strategy were modified in the light of his heretical reading of the world economic situation, Varga recanted! In an article in the journal *Questions of Economics*, he declared: "I formed a whole chain of errors of a reformist trend—which naturally also means of a cosmopolitan trend—because they beautify capitalism. My errors have compelled our economists to return to questions long ago

correctly solved by Marxism-Leninism. My mistake was that I did not recognise rightaway that my critics were correct. But better late than never."

On reading the amazing news, I recollected old friend Borodin's cynical remark about the behaviour of the early oppositionists in the Party: "They all flop, sooner or later."

Thus ends the longish career of a man whom I met first in 1920, when he came to Moscow with a number of other members of the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Government of Bela Kun. Most of them have sunk into the oblivion of history; Bela Kun himself was killed during the great purge on the eve of the war. Only one has reached the top of the hierarchy of world communism. He is Mathias Rakosi, boss of the Hungarian People's Democracy. After Tito's excommunication and Dmitrov's disgrace, he is perhaps the topmost Communist outside Russia.

In Russia, Varga did not come to any prominence until 1924, when the Communist International was involved in a theoretical controversy about the attitude towards the "rationalization" of German industry with American finance. Zinoviev was the Chairman of the Comintern and Trotsky's opinion still carried weight. The German Party under its new ultra-left leadership would oppose rationalization on the ground that it would mean mass unemployment. Varga criticized the attitude as analogous to that of the "machine-breakers" early in the Industrial Revolution. How could the Party of the proletariat oppose development of the means of production through technological improvement? Bukharin was the then theoretical authority. He endorsed Varga's arguments. The obscure Hungarian emigre, until then suspected of Social-Democratic sympathy, won recognition as an able Communist economist.

The Russian motive in supporting rationalization of Germany was not entirely economic. It was to help restoration of Germany's military might. Perhaps it was not yet quite a conscious motive. But Stalin was already the power behind the scene, thinking about the future of the Revolution in strategic terms. In any case, to support German nationalism as against Western imperialism was

the Russian policy of the time. Later in the year, talking informally in an intimate circle (I was present with Bukharin and Ercoli—now Togliatti), for the first time he outlined his vision of Red Napoleonism. The top-heavy growth of German industries (a tremendous expansion of the capacity of production while there was no market) led to the demand for rearmament with which the Nazis swept the country. Varga thus made his fortune by backing the wrong horse, even if he did so with Stalin's tip, as was whispered later on. Ever since then, throughout his career, until he played his card wrongly for once, he was the official casuist who juggled with statistics to back up the "Party line."

Once he tried his skill at my cost. My "decolonization" thesis having been approved by Bukharin in 1927, who had replaced Zinoviev at the head of the Comintern, the official economist also added his seal of consent. Varga rose to praise "the geometrically beautiful structure of the report written from a truly Marxist point of view." A year later, Bukharin was in disgrace; the "geometrically beautiful" Marxist report was condemned as my "illusion about the emancipating role of imperialism": and Varga manufactured statistics to prove the new official view that the Indian bourgeoisie was bled white by British imperialism.

Varga's betrayal of Bukharin was the most scandalous. Taking him for a true scientist, Bukharin had cultivated a sincere affection and admiration for the little Professor. By 1928, the ominous implication of the American financed rationalization of German industry was clear enough. Stalin's first Five Year Plan was cast on the same model. Bukharin opposed it, apprehending that it was the first step towards militarization, as it was meant to be. Stalin had by then seized complete control of the Party. Bukharin's was a lost cause. Varga left the sinking ship, to climb on the bandwagon. He condemned Bukharin's view as petit-bourgeois peasant economy, and discovered that a couple of years ago the former had set up the theory that capitalism could overcome the cycle of crises through super-imperialism. It is an irony of fate that Varga lived to preach the same heresy, and recant disgracefully.

Personally, Varga is an insignificant figure—a little man with a plaintive piping voice. There is not much of academic dignity in his appearance and bearing. He looks and behaves rather like a small tradesman from Eastern Europe. But for his accidental association with the Hungarian Soviet Republic (Bela Kun wanted a professor in his government), Varga might just as well have been branch manager of a bank, and he would have been quite happy in that modest station of respectability. Temperamentally timid, he is a typical petit-bourgeois as regards culture. Socially, he can be genial and, as an East-European Jew, possesses a sense of humour. The "statistics factory" works behind closed doors; and there are different views about the secret. One day, the little man went about with a swollen cheek. On being asked if he had a toothache, he replied with a disarming frankness; "No, my new Secretary is a seriously athletic girl; she does not believe in amusement in the midst of work."

—*Amrit Bazar Patrika*, September 18, 1949

Malenkov

Early in his struggle with Stalin for the succession after Lenin, Trotsky once complained that his more powerful rival had replaced the dictatorship of the proletariat by that of the Secretariat. He meant the Secretariat of the Communist Party. The term Politbureau figures prominently in all writings about Soviet Russia. It is the abbreviation of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, which is formally the highest organ of power in the communist regime. All Communist Parties, even outside Russia, have their Politbureaus. It was an organizational conception of Lenin. Stalin improved upon the master's passion for the centralization of leadership and power as the instrument of dictatorship. The Secretariat of the party is the organizational contribution of Stalinism. Characteristically, it was not a theoretical conception, but developed in practice to be the supreme organ of dictatorial power.

The story of this characteristically Stalinist organ of power is an interesting part of the post-revolutionary history of the Russian Communist Party. As long as he lived, barring the last year of serious illness, Lenin was the heart and soul of the Party. Election of office-bearers, such as the president or secretary, was a mere formality. They counted for nothing; Lenin's word was the law and final truth. During the last year of Lenin's life, when he was so very ill as to be practically no longer the leader of the Party, Stalin built up the Secretariat, which was destined to play such a decisive role in the drama of the struggle for Lenin's succession and also in the subsequent history of the Communist Party, and consequently of Soviet Russia.

Before Stalin forged his powerful instrument, there was no Secretariat, but only a Secretary of the party with

no political power. Stalin's predecessor was Stassova, one of those highly intellectual aristocratic or bourgeois women who had espoused the cause of the revolution for one reason or another. The fact that in the earlier days of the Stalinist regime Stassova acted as the head of the international information bureau of the Secretariat proves that, before Stalin, the secretary of the Party was not a person of much political importance. An incident illustrates the point.

It was in 1925; Stalin, having established himself as the leader of the Party, was gathering in his hands the reins of the Communist International also. Zinoviev was still the chairman of the International. Stassova had been abroad before the revolution, and was well-conversant with international affairs; he spoke several European languages, and acted as the interpreter whenever Stalin had serious conversations with important foreign Communists. I had known Stalin already for several years. Yet, Stassova used to be present in most of our long conversations. I could not speak Russian sufficiently well as yet.

I wanted to return to India, Stalin opposed the plan vehemently; but at last he agreed. Elaborate preparations were made for the secret journey. The day of my departure was nearing. One day I wanted to discuss some details of the plan. Stassova was present as usual. Stalin abruptly got up and dismissed us. Having never had the experience of being treated in that notoriously Stalinist manner, I was very angry, and left the room. While stepping in the lift, I was stopped by Malenkov, who was then Stalin's private secretary. The boss wanted us to return. I was angry and wanted to go away. The side-door of Stalin's room across the corridor, guarded by two armed soldiers, opened and the boss was standing on the threshold with the familiar grin. He nodded his head and waved his pipe. I walked back in the room. "You are angry," the grin broadened. "Of course, I am; why did you deceive me all this time by pretending that you agreed with the plan of my going back to India." He retorted: "Who told you that? Sit down, let us talk." I looked surprised. Then came the shock: "Are you not an Asiatic? And you wanted to discuss secret matters

before a woman?!" The woman was Stalin's predecessor as the secretary of the Communist Party of Russia.

This incident of no great political or historical importance reveals the force of Trotsky's complaint. While his predecessor was just a woman, Stalin, as the General Secretary of the Party, was all-powerful. Indeed, the post of the General Secretary was Stalin's creation. It was not provided for in the Party constitution. However, when Lenin could no longer dominate the Party politically and direct it organizationally, an administrative machinery had to grow to cope with the post-revolutionary experience of the Party. That need offered the occasion for the appointment of several secretaries; as one of them, Stalin made himself the General Secretary and selected the members of the Secretariat, which quietly captured the organizational control of the Party, while the political leadership still remained with the Political Bureau.

During Lenin's illness and after his death, Stalin did not control the Politbureau, which was composed of more popular men. As a matter of fact, had he not taken organizational precautions, he would have been in the minority of one when Zinoviev and Kamenev joined Trotsky to resist his bid for the supreme leadership of the Party. The constitutional power of the Politbureau was circumscribed by the Organizational Bureau, which came to be the Committee of Public Safety of the Russian Revolution. While the Extraordinary Commission to fight counter-revolution and later on the State-Political Administration conducted the Red Terror in the country at large, the Organizational Bureau performed the same function inside the Party. It served as the instrument for the establishment of the dictatorship of the Secretariat with Stalin as the General Secretary.

Stalin's motive in building up this organizational system is not under consideration here. For the moment, I don't propose to pronounce a moral judgment, but only to describe the rise of the supreme organ of power, which will determine the question of Stalin's successor. None but one of those few who have belonged to the all-powerful Secretariat has any chance. That limits the choice to three

men, one of whom is dead. The other Molotov, labours under the handicaps described in the previous article; the decisive fact against him is that he has never been an influential member of the Secretariat. For these considerations, Georgi Malenkov appears to be destined to succeed Stalin.

Since 1936, barring the two years between 1946-48, when Zhdanov eclipsed him, Malenkov was the most influential member of the Secretariat next to Stalin. During the war, he was the *de facto* General Secretary. Having been replaced by Zhdanov in that strategic position for a short time, now he occupies it formally—formally, because Stalin is still alive. As long as Lenin lived, even as an utterly ineffectual sick man, none could dare appear as the leader of the Party. Similarly, Stalin will be the undisputed boss until death takes him away. There is another similarity; Stalin captured control of the Party when Lenin was still alive; Malenkov has done the same, most probably with Stalin's connivance, if not explicit approval, also during the latter's lifetime. As General Secretary of the Party, just as in the case of Stalin after Lenin's death, Malenkov has the greatest chance to succeed Stalin.

Malenkov is the most typical Stalinist, a child of the revolution, not handicapped by the idealist preoccupations of the pre-revolutionary age. He is realist and ruthless, and as such as qualified to step into the shoes of Stalin as any other in the run. But he as well as his rivals, dead or alive, are inferior to Stalin, as the latter was to Lenin, although he was the most qualified to succeed him. There are men who make history. Stalin as well as Lenin, though not to the same extent, belong to that category of the instruments of humanity creating itself. Then, there are men who are made by history, destined to play important roles. Malenkov belongs to this category. There are others, all spiritual children of the Stalinist phase of the revolution. They may clash in a struggle for leadership after the master passes away; but Malenkov seems to possess the personal qualities and contingent advantages which will most probably enable him to come out on top.

Malenkov is the youngest (in age) member of the

present Politbureau, barring the two intellectuals (Voznesensky and Kosygin) who were there as economic specialists and have recently fallen out of favour because of the rehabilitation of the senior, the Hungarian professor Varga, who is known to be a supporter of Malenkov. The recent change in the constellation of economic stars and the implied reorientations of Soviet foreign policy indicate that Malenkov has definitely replaced Molotov as Stalin's heir-apparent. His rise to the supreme position of power can be interpreted as return to Red Dantonism, which came to be the growing spirit immediately after the war, and against which Zhdanov began his crusade under the banner of Marxist orthodoxy. During the war, which was called the "patriotic war," the popularity of the Red Marshals pushed the political leaders to the background; neonationalism, Pan-Slavism painted pink, eclipsed the evangelist zeal of Communist internationalism. Malenkov, who was the *de facto* General Secretary of the Party, while Stalin was preoccupied with the direction of the armed forces, encouraged the tendency, which culminated in post-war Red Dantonism.

Stalin himself appeared as the defender of the new tendency when he issued the new slogan: "From the Pacific to the Oder and the Adriatic." The new policy symbolized by the slogan was outlined by him as follows: "A planned economy in Russia and the countries of Eastern and Central Europe will enable us to heal our wounds much quicker and less painfully than we could do otherwise. If the capitalist world leaves us in peace and allows us to go on planning and building for twenty or thirty years in the vast area from the Pacific to the Oder and the Adriatic, we shall eventually reach such a high standard of living that, without wars or bloody revolutions, the rest of the world will follow our Communist example."

In his speech at the inaugural conference of the Cominform, Malenkov announced the new policy to the world. Had the latter taken the hint, instead of getting the jitters at the spectre of a revived Comintern, things might have been different today.

However, the opposition to Red Dantonism

developed inside Russia also. The Party bosses, jealous of the "Heroes of the Red Army," raised the scare of a military dictatorship replacing the class dictatorship. At that crucial period, Stalin was for a long time away from the helm of affairs due to illness and exhaustion from the strain of the war. Zhdanov as the apostle of Marxist orthodoxy and Party patriotism got the upper hand, and replaced Malenkov as Stalin's deputy. But Malenkov had entrenched himself so very deeply in the Party organization that his position could not be undermined by a formal change. He retained the support of a considerable minority in the Politbureau. After two years experiment in adventures, such as the Berlin blockade, Stalin threw his weight in the scale and Malenkov's come-back was symbolically announced by a manifesto issued on March 1, 1949 over his signature with that of Stalin. Soon thereafter, Molotov left the Foreign Office, to be succeeded by Vishinsky, who at the time of the Moscow Trials of 1937 had acted under Malenkov's orders.

Malenkov is the archetypal Stalinist. In 1925, at the age of 23, having already made a good record during the civil war, he found a place in the office of the Central Committee of the Party. Before long he attracted the attention of Stalin, who was then looking out for young men to be trained up as the new leading cadres of the Party, eventually to replace the old guard. Appointed to the confidential position of Stalin's personal secretary at the age of 23, Malenkov has all along since then been in close touch with the chief. Having been head of the Organizational Department of the Moscow Party for four years, in 1934 he was raised to the same position in the Central Committee of the Party. That strategic position enabled him, under the patronage of the chief, to gain the control of the Party machinery. In 1939, he was elected a member of the Central Committee and included in the all-powerful Secretariat. In ten years, he has risen to the top.

In 1941, he won his laurels in public as the *enfant terrible*, a probable Stalin II. The shadow of German invasion, a few months later, was cast ahead. The Party was making the most supreme effort to solve the problems

of industry and transport. In a special conference of the Party, Malenkov made the key-note speech. He fiercely attacked, almost every departmental head. But his most startling declaration was to ridicule the privilege of proletarian ancestry and praise of "non-party Bolsheviki, who had no Party standing, but who work better and more conscientiously than Party members." The youthful upstart was included in the "War Cabinet" of five, formed on the outbreak of hostilities, and until 1946 held that position. But in charge of the production of air-craft and subsequently of the rehabilitation of war-devastated regions, he enlisted the loyal cooperation of "non-party Bolsheviki" and became the leader of the group formed round the Red Marshals.

Stalin succeeded Lenin as the supreme leader of the Party; but as a man he bore a different stamp. Malenkov is made after Stalin's image, and as such is more qualified than any other to carry out his policy, unless once again the struggle for succession will be settled by terror.

—*Amrit Bazar Patrika*, December 18, 1949

Molotov

Malenkov's making the keynote speech on the occasion of the anniversary of the Revolution this year, instead of the senior members of the Politbureau, particularly Molotov, has revived the speculation about Stalin's successor. Stalin's absence has naturally raised the question. It is a significant fact. Two years ago, sickness compelled Stalin to stay away from the celebration of the red-letter day in the history of Soviet Russia. He recovered health and returned to the helm of affairs, which he had never surrendered to anybody even when he had to be away from Moscow for weeks. Nevertheless, he is no longer young—has passed seventy. He may live still many years, and knowing him as I do, I can say that he will die with his boots on when sooner or later the irresistible call will come. However, the flesh being weaker than the spirit, even of the Man of Steel, who has not belied his self-chosen pseudonym, age will compel him to relax the direct physical control of the house he has built. There will be more and more occasions of physical absence from lime-lit scenes to raise the question of his successor, and give fillip to the speculation about the identity of the coming man of destiny. Therefore, this may be as appropriate as any other moment to hazard a reply to the question: who will succeed Stalin?

It would be foolish to be dogmatic. One can only make an attempt to guess who is the most probable. Even for that modest purpose, one should try to have some idea of the elusive quality called personality, of each pretender, and an objective, dispassionate understanding of the ideological, political and organizational system which is their common background. Such an attempt cannot be made within the limits of short articles. For the moment I propose to present

pen-pictures of the men who, in my opinion, can be in the run at all; and my judgment will be determined by a critical appraisal of their qualification to wear the mantle of Stalin.

I believe that none can replace Stalin, he being, again in my opinion, the greatest man of our time. And I wish to emphasize that a great man is not necessarily a good man. Three men amongst the top leaders of Russia have figured in the speculations about Stalin's successor—Molotov, Zhdanov and Malenkov. There is a dark horse whom I may present on a subsequent occasion. Meanwhile, the readers may guess. Zhdanov has been put out of the run by an untimely death. I shall not talk about him except to say that his death has impoverished the future leadership of Russia, whether he died naturally or was hustled off this world by his malignant rivals. I also wish to say that I do not believe that he was killed. The Russian Communist leaders, after all, are neither depraved criminals nor mediaeval barbarians. If Molotov or Malenkov wanted to get rid of Zhdanov, they could rely upon the political guillotine.

However, with Zhdanov gone, Molotov and Malenkov seem to be the most probable heir-apparents of Stalin. For the moment, the latter appears to be on the ascendancy; but Molotov is by no means out of the picture, and seniority is not his only asset as against the younger, more brilliant and successful pretender. Therefore, let us have a look at the credentials of Molotov before we turn to the man who seems to have pushed his way to the centre of the stage and have the limelights turned on himself.

Molotov is the oldest member of the present Politbureau, next to Stalin, and the youngest to rise to that highest position in the Soviet hierarchy at the age of thirty-five in 1925; a year before the honour went to Voroshilov, who is Stalin's oldest comrade and about as old as himself. Molotov is ten years younger than both. Yet, Voroshilov has never been included in the list of possible successors of Stalin.

Born in a tolerably wealthy upper middle-class family, Molotov is one of the typical old Bolsheviks. At the age of fifteen, he participated in the Revolution of 1905 and

joined the Social-Democratic Party. While still a high-school boy, he was arrested and sentenced to two years' imprisonment. But there the similarity with the old Bolsheviks ceases. He can be more appropriately called one of the Stalinist old guard—old Bolsheviks who stayed all along in Russia, and consequently were not "westernized" like the Leninist old guard liquidated by Stalin before he could Russianize communism.

There is another similarity in Molotov's political career with that of Stalin. For a long time, he remained in obscurity, and there was nothing spectacular in his eventual rise to power. He is a typical member of the Stalinist old guard because, but for Stalin's patronage, he might have never come to the limelight. As early as in 1921, Stalin recommended him for inclusion in the Central Committee of the Party, which was composed only of 41 members in those days. Lenin was surprised at Stalin's choice of an obscure person whom he characterized as "the best filing clerk." However, already then, although Stalin himself was still overshadowed by the glamour of the westernized Leninist old guard and Trotsky, Lenin seems to have had a great confidence in his judgment. Having given his frank opinion about Molotov, he nevertheless endorsed Stalin's recommendation; the "best filing clerk" was not only included in the Central Committee, to share the highest Party position with Trotsky and Lenin's old colleagues like Zinoviev, Sverdlov, Uritsky, Kamenev, Bukharin and others; the next year he rose still higher, to be a substitute member of the Politbureau which was then composed of only seven men, and included in the Secretariat of the Party.

Thus Molotov, long before he was at all known outside the Party, became a direct lieutenant of Stalin, who was elected the General Secretary. Stalin won that strategic position because Lenin trusted him and the bulk of the ordinary membership of the party knew him more than the leaders who had for years lived abroad. Molotov's sudden advance in the Party hierarchy was due to Stalin's belief that he would be a serviceable instrument thanks to the same advantage which enabled himself eventually to

capture the undisputed leadership of the Party: the advantage of having been for years in personal touch with the bulk of the Party members. Molotov as well as Stalin remained Russian, although they professed Communist internationalism. Therefore, even a mediocrity like Molotov stood the test of post-revolutionary experience, while the brilliance of a Trotsky, the impetuosity of a Zinoviev and the honest idealism of a Bukharin failed.

But after the initial success, the advantage became a handicap, and Molotov, not possessing even a semblance of Stalin's greatness, became a glorified mediocrity. However, as a trusted lieutenant of Stalin, who had won the confidence by rendering meritorious services as a manipulator of the Party machinery, Molotov reached the zenith of his career before the limited vision of a Russian revolutionary, who had no experience of the world outside, was put to the test of conducting the foreign relations of a Great Power. Molotov might have succeeded as Stalin's under-study in the role of the Prime Minister. As the Commissar of Foreign Affairs he failed, because in that capacity he had to venture forth as *terra incognita*.

The substitution of Litvinov by Molotov in the Moscow Foreign Office was a symbolic event as well as a turning point in the history of the Russian Revolution. The broad vision of Communist internationalism was circumscribed by the considerations of the Russian national, albeit socialist, State. The distrust of the West became an obsession which drove Communist Russia ultimately into the alliance with Nazi Germany—the avowed enemy of all the values of modern civilization. The idea of the Soviet-German Pact was conceived by Molotov, as Stalin himself revealed subsequently, not to blame nor to disown his first lieutenant. That was the single positive achievement of Molotov as the Soviet Foreign Minister, and it could be justified only as a realistic move for the defence of the Russian national State. But to do him justice, it must be said that Molotov's foreign policy was endorsed by Stalin; otherwise it would not have been executed.

Subsequently, after the war, emboldened by victory

and the great advantages thereof, Russian foreign policy abandoned isolationism in favour of aggressive expansion of the revolution. Fully sharing the belief that a spread of chaos was the precondition for the rise of the Communist order, Molotov conducted the Russian foreign policy with the sole object of obstructing plans of post-war reconstruction, pending the coming slump in America, which would aggravate the chaos in Europe, enabling the Communists to capture power.

Again, it must be borne in mind that it was not Molotov's policy, but the policy of the Russian Communist Party, formulated by Stalin.

Molotov's final exit from the Soviet Foreign Office indicated a reorientation of the Russian foreign policy, caused by the reluctant realization that the capitalist West, under American leadership, might have a new lease of life. Russia must fall back on the older strategy of consolidating the new order in the vast Eurasian land mass under her control, and be on guard to defend her extensive frontiers. The new policy was heralded by Stalin himself, when before Molotov left the Foreign Office he (Stalin) gave the slogan: "Pacific to the Adriatic." Since then, China has been conquered to push the frontiers to the Pacific; and Tito may have to be eliminated to reach the Adriatic coast. Unless this latter move would precipitate a world war, there might be a period of armed truce. Movements of pawns will most probably continue on the eastern part of the world chessboard. Malenkov has all along advocated this long-term policy, which implies greater concentration of power, stronger discipline, more rigid regimentation, to make the Soviet State firmly entrenched behind a formidable military and economic might.

Malenkov, therefore, for the moment appears to be the more probable successor of Stalin. But Molotov is by no means out of the picture, where he still stands to the right of Stalin, with the new star on the left. That is symbolic. Stalin's team is much more homogeneous than the one Lenin drove. But it may fall apart after the captain's death. In order to prevent another orgy of the revolution devouring her own children, Stalin may instal his successor

in his place, himself still remaining the power behind the throne. In that case, Molotov's chances will be greater than any one else's. But his demonstrated failure to rise to great heights of statesmanship may outweigh Stalin's confidence in his equally demonstrated perseverance to hammer away at a job allotted to him.

If for these considerations, Stalin's mantle will not fall on Molotov, no injustice will be done. He is not nearly big enough for the position. Except in the earliest years of his revolutionary career, he has always been a Party hack, manipulating the machinery as a trusted man of Stalin. He rose to power and eminence not due to any particular personal merit, but as one of the key-men of the Party machinery built up by Stalin's lust for power, or genius. A bad speaker, handicapped by stammering which he could never quite get over, a slow thinker, dull-witted, humourless, ponderously dignified and gracelessly stubborn in international conferences, Molotov has never been amongst the best of the Russian leaders. Indeed, having known many of them well, and him also, I would place him no higher than in the third rank. He lacks the fire of a revolutionary; and his fanaticism was misdirected in the best of his days. Therefore, he has had more than his share of the limelight of history. He should not mind being pensioned off with honour. He will not be missed, if he disappears from the scene peacefully.

From M. N. Roy Archives, Dehra Dun

Madame Sun Yat-Sen

It is said in joke that for the last quarter of a century China has been ruled by the "Soong Dynasty." The modern Soongs are a family of bankers who own practically the entire maritime province of Chekeng, in which the Far-Eastern metropolis of Shanghai is situated. They did not rule China directly, but through marriage. The honourable status of the first lady of the land has been contested by two Soong sisters: Mme Sun Yat-Sen and Mme. Chiang Kai-shek. A third one preferred to be the power behind the throne; she married H. Kung, who was the Finance Minister of the Nationalist Government until its downfall. It is believed in knowledgeable circles that Mme. Kung wore the trousers in the family. The only male member of the dynasty to shine politically was T. V. Soong, who rose to the position of the Prime Minister in the post-war years.

One of the famous Soong sisters, the flashy Mme. Chiang Kai-shek, combined diplomacy with personal adventures during the fateful years of contemporary Chinese history. Her sex-appeal won not a few friends and admirers for nationalist China, although finally that doubtful asset was most probably the cause of the debunking of the legend of Chiang Kai-shek. The Stilwell scandal eclipsed her for a time. She reappeared as the mascot of Chinese diplomacy on the eve of the downfall of the Soong dynasty. Her last mission to Washington having failed, she sank into oblivion, perhaps to enjoy the happiness of private life in a foreign country. On the decline of its political fortune, the Kungs and the brother Soong left the sinking ship of nationalist China for a comfortable retirement in far off Paris. Mme. Sun Yat-sen alone may survive the downfall of the dynasty.

Revered widow of the venerable founder of the ill-fated republic, she was the first lady of the land until

Chiang Kai-shek occupied the centre of the stage, and as his consort the other Soong sister monopolized the limelight. Though brought up and then educated together in the most fashionable women's college in the U.S.A., temperamentally the sisters are as poles apart: one, the glamour girl of modern China; the other, shy and unassuming. Loyalty to what she believed to be the last wishes of her departed husband gave the young widow the courage to stand by what appeared to be the lost cause, and consequently go into voluntary exile, yielding the place of honour to the more ambitious and therefore less scrupulous sister. For the last twenty years, she has been a steadfast fellow-traveller of the communists.

Soon after the communists captured Shanghai, Mme. Sun Yat-sen appeared there in a public meeting, held to celebrate the victory and liberation of China. There was a time when, thanks to her sympathy and association, the Communist Party of China commanded the support of the democratic and progressive opinion abroad. Though the international communist movement has now forfeited the goodwill of others, the widow of the legendary father of the nation, herself mystified with the halo of a goddess, can still be greatly helpful for the Communist Party to win the confidence of the masses. Therefore, she has been mentioned as the possible first President of the People's Republic of China. Meanwhile, she reached Peking at the end of August to attend the North-Eastern People's Congress, which established the nucleus of the future Government of China. On her arrival, she was received at the airport by Mao Tse-tung himself. Since then, a Sino-Soviet Association has been founded in Peking with her as the President. Addressing the Preparatory Committee of the Association, she said: "Close cooperation between China and the Soviet Union was the cherished dream of my husband. We can now look forward to tackling our tasks of reconstruction and rehabilitation as comrades-in-arms with our mighty ally and friend, the Soviet Union."

Mme Sun Yat-sen has not only survived the downfall of the Soong dynasty, but may have a future, although it

may be as tragic as the last days of other illustrious fellow-travellers like Benes and Masaryk.

I met Sun Yat-sen early in 1916. He was then an exile in Japan. His private secretary was a handsome young woman who had recently returned from the U.S.A., having finished studies there. She was the daughter of a wealthy Shanghai banker; but she refused to return to her rich parents, who must have already found for her an equally rich husband, and offered her devoted services to the venerable Father of the Nation, who had still to win the honour. Quiet and refined, she was also distinguished in bearing and elegant of manners, like a *grande dame* by birth.

Ten years later, I met her in Canton as the widow of Sun Yat-sen, who had died two years ago. The nationalist army had already reached the Yangtse, and the seat of the Government and headquarters of the Kuomintang moved to Hankow. The Governor of Kwangtung, who was also the Commandant of the city garrison, gave a State banquet, in honour of the Special Representative of the Communist International and the International Labour Delegation which had accompanied him to deliver the message of solidarity from the workers of Europe and America to the Chinese people rising in a mighty revolt against imperialism. The widow of the Father of the Nation (she was not called the widowed Mother of the Nation, most probably because of her age), as the First Lady of the Land, presided on the occasion. On behalf of the guests, the senior most member of the Labour Delegation, the veteran British Trade-Union leader Tom Mann, proposed the toast to the host. With his cockney swagger he went up to the lady sitting at the head of the table like the marble statue of a goddess. The intention of planting a kiss on her cheek left the frightened or fascinated old man, and the whole party stood up in amazement when he dropped on his knees and burst out singing a prayerful song.

The widow of the Father of the Nation was a sacred institution, not a human being of flesh and blood, even though the flesh may be young, throbbing with life, and the blood reaching fever heat under the pressure of suppressed

emotions. One was struck by the grace and serenity with which a woman in the full bloom of youth was playing the role of a lifeless institution, which could have the highest respect and veneration, but not the right to live. I wondered if the honour was worth the dreadful price.

At Hankow, I came to know her better. Borodin was our common friend. Behind the cold but dignified facade of the "national institution," there throbbed a warm heart and a modern mind interested in the affairs of this world, where she must live an empty, sterile life, perhaps yet for many years after her great husband had left it. I believe it was Borodin who taught her that the sacred duty to the departed husband did not include the rest of her life becoming a living death. On the contrary, it was her duty to shoulder the mission of her dead husband. That was Mme. Sun's way to politics. She began with a strong sympathy for communism and great admiration for the Soviet Union. For twenty years, she has remained true to her ideals.

The elder statesmen and party leaders frowned upon her taking interest in politics, particularly when she dared to point out their deviation from the path indicated by the Father of the Nation. On the other hand, the communists distrusted her for her bourgeois parentage. Meanwhile, her sister had married Chiang Kai-shek, just when his hands were dripping with the blood of the Shanghai workers. Thus, early in her political career, Mme. Sun found herself in an emotional crisis. She had to choose between two groups of her husband's followers, each claiming to be the most faithful executor of the dead leader's will. There was no political judgment to guide. Borodin had left for Moscow soon after me, advising Mme. Sun to reach the same destination. On the way, Chiang Kai-shek received her with all the due respect and veneration, and proclaimed to the world that the widow of Sun Yat-sen was among his supporters.

Events were moving fast in the late summer of 1927. The Communists captured Nanchang, the seat of Chiang's headquarters, and proclaimed the establishment of a Revolutionary Government with Mme. Sun Yat-sen as its head. She was then in Shanghai. Her hands thus forced by

the Communists, she issued an appeal to the Chinese people to follow the Father of the Nation, whose last wish was cooperation with the Communists and friendship with the Soviet Union. Soon thereafter, she left for Moscow, where we met again on the occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of the Revolution.

In China, counter-revolution triumphed; after a heavy defeat, communism withdrew into the wilderness, haunted by the armies of Chiang Kai-shek, now in possession of dictatorial power. Mme. Sun had to yield to her sister the status of the First Lady of the Land, and live a retired life in Moscow. She was not happy there, lonesome in an atmosphere of strange ideas, in the midst of men who must have appeared to her as living in an altogether different world. With Borodin, I spent many evenings in her suite in the Metropole Hotel. Conversation was not easy; she never took much interest in the theories of communism. Nor was her general intellectual interest wide. Borodin and I talked, for her sake, mostly about events in China, past and present, and she appeared to listen, making occasional remarks, not always relevant or particularly intelligent. Her mind was wandering in distant Shanghai, thinking of the college days in America and of the youthful dreams of a gay, carefree life of a rich man's daughter and of a great man's wife. To have married a man of advanced age was an act of romantic idealism; but why should a young woman with a whole life still to live, remain married to a dead man? Mme. Sun Yat-sen in Moscow was a picture of the Tragic Muse.

In course of time, the tide of events in China turned. The Communists survived the ordeal of blood and tears. The echo of the tramping of the Chinese "Red Army" on the historic "Long March" attracted enterprising journalists from Europe and America. The imperialist stronghold of the Foreign Concessions of Shanghai afforded safe refuge to the Communists, though they were the fiercest anti-imperialists. The time had come for Mme. Sun to appear on the scene and play the important role of the patron-saint of persecuted communism. Her salon became the rendezvous of imaginative foreign journalists and a clearing-house of news from "Red China."

In August 1934, she was prominently associated with another political act which created a stir. Her name stood at the head of a list of three-thousand non-communists who signed a document called "The Basic Programme of the Chinese People in a War Against Japan." It was an endorsement of the communist appeal for a united national front under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek to resist Japanese invasion. There began the years of tortuous negotiations between the Communists, now established in the North-Western corner of the country, and the nationalists. Mme. Sun again disappeared from the limelight, to reappear whenever the Communists would find it necessary to draw upon the asset of her mystic reputation with the Chinese masses and prestige in the world abroad.

The war intervened, and for years nothing was heard about Mme. Sun. She was completely eclipsed by her glamorous and more energetic sister. But obscurity did not dampen her political idealism. She remained true to her first love; what it was is well-known: it was the belief that, had her husband lived, he would have cooperated with communism and allied China with the Soviet Union. But who knows what it was. When she became Sun Yat-sen's third or fourth wife, she was hardly twenty, and he, was passed fifty. It might have been heroworship, but love was hardly possible. Widowed while in the highest tide of youth, she was compelled by convention to sublimate her emotions. In such circumstances, one does fall in love with a cause. Most probably, that is what happened to Mme. Sun Yat-sen, and that explains her tenacious adherence to a cause, the implications of which she never fully grasped intellectually, and which used her as a mere pawn in the game of power-politics, and will have no scruples to cast her away as soon as she will no longer be necessary for its purposes.

So, the light may burn its brightest just before extinction. The only surviving member of the Soong dynasty may at last be the First Lady of the Land on her own. If the Communists decide in favour of a coalition government for their People's Democracy in China, they could find no better figurehead. But even at the zenith of

her none too eventful political career, Mme. Sun will remain a lonesome, tragic figure—a personification of the frustration of deeper emotions and stronger desires. Happiness was within her reach. I know at least two men who loved her and she reciprocated the sentiment. In either case, she would have been happy and could also serve the cause, if she really cared for it. "As it is, history may record the tragedy of the fate of a Benes overtaking a fair fellow-traveller.

October 9, 1949

Chiang Kai-Shek

For a quarter of a century, in the average foreigner's mind, China was identified with one name, that of Chiang Kai-shek. He leaped into the limelight of international fame as the Commander of the Nationalist Army which had worked a miracle. It was the first modern army raised in the Whampao Military Academy of Canton by Russian Communist officers. The world believed that the young officers of the first modern army of China were all Communists, and Chiang Kai-shek was their leader. Was he also a Communist? While still the head of the Whampao Academy, in early 1926, he seems to have for a time toyed with the idea of joining the Communist Party. But it is doubtful if he went any further. Originally having had his military training in Japan, he visited Russia secretly for the same purpose, when Dr Sun Yat-sen established his National Government at Canton in 1924. On his return, he found "Red Canton" not quite to his taste. The Russian Adviser to the National Government was the master of the situation, and, perhaps for temperamental reasons, he did not take kindly to Chiang Kai-shek. The mutual antipathy of the two men greatly determined subsequent events, which shaped Chiang's future. With Sorodin's support, Wang Chin-wei and Liao Chung-hai stepped forward as the chosen successors of the "Father of the Nation." Even as the head of the Whampao Academy, Chiang Kai-shek was subordinated to Wang, who as the head of the National Government assumed the office of the Supreme Commandant of the Military Academy.

Smarting under what he felt to be humiliation, Chiang nevertheless seems to have thought it wise to mark time. Towards the end of 1925, Liao Chung-hai was assassinated. Borodin suspected that Chiang was an accomplice to the conspiracy hatched by the right-wing

Kuomintang led by the rich Hongkong merchant Hu Han-min. But on the strength of his secret visit to Russia, and feigning sympathy for communism, Chiang had quietly endeared himself to the cadets of Whampao, and thus acquired control of the cadre of the nationalist army organized and trained by Russian officers commanded by General Galen. On the other hand, Borodin could not find any concrete evidence for his suspicion. Consequently, out of that crisis, which might have ended his career very early, Chiang, secretly supported by Galen, emerged as the winning party at the cost of his political superior, Wang Chin-wei.

Thereupon, two entirely different purposes led to the so-called North Expedition, which almost overnight placed Chiang at the centre of the Chinese stage, a position he held through many vicissitudes of fortune for a quarter of a century. Notwithstanding his initial victory, he did not feel very secure at Canton, which remained red even after the assassination of Liao Chung-hau and the departure of Wang Chin-wei to voluntary exile. Politically, Borodin still ruled supreme through the machinery of the Kuomintang, cast on the model of the Russian Bolshevik Party and infiltrated by Communists. Chiang naturally desired to take the nucleus of his army away from the political atmosphere of Red Canton, and established his base in a place where he could act more independently in pursuance of his ambition. Borodin, on his part, wanted to get the ambitious upstart out of the way. Why not encourage him to launch upon a military adventure which would most probably spell his ruin? Working each with his own purpose, Borodin and Chiang Kai-shek agreed that the forces of national revolution should no longer remain cramped in the southernmost province of Kwang-tung; that a military expedition should be sent northwards to bring more territory under the jurisdiction of the Nationalist Government. Chiang was the obvious Commander of the proposed expedition. In summer 1926, the Nationalist Army started on the North Expedition. Hardly 10,000 strong, it ventured into a country without any road, infested with mercenary armed bands commanded by feudal

militarists, the curse of modern China. Borodin hoped that the ambitious upstart, who dared to cross his will, would be soon swamped in the marshes of Hunan.

But something entirely different and unexpected happened. The Nationalist Army swept everything before it, and within a few months traversed half the vast country and reached the Yangtse. That was the miracle which staggered the world towards the end of 1926, and attracted its attention to the events in China. Chiang Kai-shek was the hero of the drama; he commanded the expedition which drove the armies of redoubtable militarists like Wu Pei-fu to the North of the great watery barrier. That was also a defeat for the foreign Powers who patronized the old militarists. A terrific blow was dealt at the prestoke, if not yet the power, of foreign imperialism. Regarded by the imperialist powers as an agent of Bolshevik Russia, Chiang was hailed by the world left-wing opinion as the leader of revolutionary China, the symbol of a resurgent Asia.

Not only did Chiang's army seize such a vast territory in a few months; hardly 10,000 strong at the beginning of the expedition, it had itself increased in number many times, to be counted in several hundreds of thousand. The First Army commanded personally by Chiang still remained the core of the swelled legion; its officers were mostly Whampao cadets, not a few of whom were Communists; its political Commissar was Chou En-lei, who today stands next to Mao Tse-tung at the head of the Communist legions sweeping the country from the opposite direction. But the rest of the swelled Nationalist Army, the vast bulk of it, was composed of mercenaries who had deserted the other camp. Chiang gambled and won; the bold adventure rewarded him with a formidable instrument to instal himself in supreme power, claim the leadership of the Kuomintang and settle accounts with his former opponents, particularly Borodin whom he heartily hated, and this hatred was his obsession.

Borodin, on his part, was not slow to realize that he had lost the gamble, and acted promptly to regain his position. To head off Chiang's plan, he convened an extraordinary meeting of the Central Committee of the

Kuomintang at Hankow to celebrate the success of the North Expedition and discuss the problems raised by it; meanwhile, the headquarters of the Nationalist Government was shifted to Hankow. Chiang did not go to the meeting of the Central Committee, himself called a rival party meeting and announced the establishment of the Nationalist Government at Nan-chang with himself at the head. The Hankow group accused him of indiscipline and expelled him from the Party. The fractional fight soon ended in a complete victory of Chiang who, since 1928, became the recognized leader of Nationalist China, and began a chequered career, now nearing the end after twenty years.

How did he do the miracle which almost overnight raised him to the pinnacle of power? By sheer audacity. The agreed plan was that the North Expedition should head towards the centre of the country with the object of seizing the "rice bowl" Province of Hunan. Having reached the northern border of Kwangtung, Chiang suddenly recast the original plan: the left wing composed of second line troops was placed under the command of the Communist Ye Tin; he was to pursue the old plan and get bogged in the marshes; with his First Army, Chiang himself struck out to the northeast through the comparatively easy terrain of the province of Kiangsi. It was soon obvious that he was making for Shanghai, disregarding the original plan to avoid territories where a clash with the foreign powers might be inevitable. He chose to risk exactly what was to be avoided. It may be reasonably surmized that the news of his relation with Borodin had travelled ahead of his army; the powerful commercial interests, native as well as foreign, centred in Shanghai, knowing that he was getting away from the Communists, saw to it that all obstacles were removed from his path; deserted by their financial patrons, the armies which were to resist Chiang's advance, went over to him. That is how the numerical strength of the Nationalist Army so spectacularly increased. The left wing under Ye Tin did not have such a happy experience; it had to fight every mile of the marshy and mountainous country, and reached the Middle Yangtse almost with its original number.

That first stage of his career showed up Chiang as an ambitious, bold and unscrupulous man. Having reached the danger zone, he acted swiftly, with resolution and ruthlessness. The cry of betrayal raised against him by the Communists and the nationalist faction was absurd. He had never pledged loyalty to the Communists, whom he treated mercilessly, just as they would have done to him if the positions were reversed; and he did not betray the nationalist cause. On the contrary, he acted like a blue-blooded nationalist; that is why, after a brief period of schism, the nationalist ranks closed under his leadership.

No man in our time has been so much idolized and damned as Chiang Kai-shek. Twice he was the hero: the first occasion was in 1926-27, when he was believed to be leading the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese people against foreign imperialism and native reaction. In the earlier part of that period, he was allied with the Communists, and the international propaganda machinery of communism built up his personality, and the gullible legions of fellow-travellers joined the chorus. The second heroic period of his checkered career was during the Second World War, when he was recognized as one of the foremost leaders of the anti-fascist democratic world front. It was curiously forgotten that in between, for nearly a decade, he had carried on a bitter and bloody struggle against the Communists, who branded him as a fascist, and that time, the same international propaganda machinery of communism, mobilized world left opinion against the "henchman of foreign imperialism and enemy of the revolutionary Chinese people." However his career may end, the frustrated greatness of Chiang Kai-shek should do one good turn to the world: to expose the shal-lowness of hero-worshipping opinion.

Irrespective of the Communist charges against him, when he was not playing their game, it goes without saying that Chiang has never been a democrat, never pretended to be one. His dictatorial ambition has always been quite pronounced. To have noticed those facts does not necessarily mean passing adverse judgment. His ideas are of the Chinese tradition; his personality and character

shaped by the social and cultural background. Chiang is not a man with a modern mind. In that sense, he can be called typically Chinese, and therefore fully qualified to be the representative leader of Chinese nationalism. He could be recognized as such; but to hail him as a leader of the world democratic front was absurd. If he ever had any sympathy with any foreign nation, it was the Japanese, due to cultural affinity which shaped political and social opinion in both the countries. During the period of his anti-Communist crusade, he came closer to the Japanese government, although he did not spurn American aid also. But his sympathy was with Japan and, through its eastern pole, with the Fascist international axis. During that period, the internal development of nationalist China was also towards Fascist dictatorship. Keeping all these obvious facts in mind, no objective historian can judge the Western powers allying with nationalist China any more kindly than the Soviet-German Pact. Both were equally unscrupulous and short-sighted. The sin might have cost Russia her very existence. She just escaped the terrible retribution. The present plight of China and the resulting threat to the whole of Asia is the consequence of the unscrupulous and shortsighted policy of the Western Powers. It is idle to blame Chiang Kai-shek or the corruption of his regime.

And it is worse than absurd for the Communists to call him a "war criminal," after having boosted him as a hero during the war. For ten years, he was the bloody butcher of the Chinese people. All on a sudden, he was celebrated as their leader in the anti-Japanese struggle. The Communists who had called him the greatest enemy of the Chinese people declared their readiness to organize the anti-Japanese patriotic front under his leadership. And the left world opinion swallowed Communist propaganda, notwithstanding its cross contradictions, and hailed Chiang Kai-shek as the representative of resurgent Asia. That superficiality of advanced democratic opinion, ventilated particularly through the American press, infiltrated by fellow-travellers, made it easy for the Western Powers to ally with Fascists in the struggle against fascism. It was an orgy of illicit love-making. The climax was Chiang's visit to India, to convince her nationalist leaders that Japan was

not to be trusted. How far he succeeded in his mission is still a secret. Madame's charms might have influenced the susceptible Nehru. But old Gandhi was a hard nut to crack. Having taken the vow of celibacy after he was father of half a dozen children, the Saint was not to be so easily seduced. It would not be a surprise should historical research reveal that the mission served a purpose entirely different from that desired by the Western allies. The leaders of Western democracy, in office or out of office, have not yet been able to take a realistic view of Asiatic nationalism. The experience in China has not taught them a lesson. While one bubble is bursting, they are deluding themselves with another illusion, although this time the Communists are not helping them.

Chiang Kai-shek's checkered career is nearing its end. His American patrons have deserted him. His effort to stage a come-back will not succeed. But before he sinks into the oblivion of history, the devil must have his due—an objective appreciation of the role he tried to play unsuccessfully, of his frustrated greatness.

Chiang embodied the tradition of Chinese culture more than any other leader of modern China and I happen to know practically all of them. Chiang is more Chinese than Sun Yat-sen was. Both were Christians; but with Chiang, Christianity was puritanism, while with Dr Sun, it was an influence of liberal democracy. Christian puritanism is more compatible with the Confucian tradition of sanctimoniousness. Sun Yat-sen conceivably wanted to be the George Washington of China, although the analogy is rather farfetched. Cromwell was Chiang's ideal. All his life, he was not only a disciplinarian, but also a rigid moralist. He lived a life of austere simplicity. His mediaeval personality and outlook could not be influenced by the ultra-modern Madame. But mediaevalism meant honest nationalism, which after all is tribal conservatism. Chiang was honest, and did not want to play the Hamlet of China, like his more successful contemporary in India. He wanted to be a full-blooded Chinese, with no hypocritical frills. And Chiang is not the only honest man to go down in the struggle of life. Only let it be noted that honesty is not

necessarily goodness, and one can be dreadfully sincere in wrong belief; similarly, false ideals can be pursued with honesty. The goodness or badness of the object of belief has nothing to do with honesty. In either case, it can be honest.

Once nationalism is recognised as an ideal worthy of pursuit, none is entitled to sit in judgment over what Chiang did. One should be judged by his accepted standard. Therefore, the objective historian must not be carried away by propaganda, for, or against him. He was neither a god nor a devil. If he failed to be a god-like hero, the fault is not his, but of the interested propagandists who wanted him to do what they wished. He was not a democrat; how could he serve the cause of democracy? He did not betray anybody; illusions about him were cruelly destroyed, because they were illusions. The disillusioned, whoever they may be, must blame themselves for the bitter experience.

Chiang Kai-shek is not the type of man which makes history, although in the beginning of his career it appeared that he would make the future history of China; the future could be of freedom or greater slavery. History is not committed to unbroken progress. But Chiang failed to be the man of destiny; instead of making history, he was tossed in the torrential stream of events. Twice greatness was thrust upon him; but himself not being great by nature, he was overwhelmed by fate, to sink into the oblivion of history, a maligned character and a frustrated soul. Not only is he frustrated, but greatness also, which has still to find a medium of expression in the Chinese scene.

From M. N. Roy Archives, Dehra Dun

Yen Hsi-Shan

Fleeing before the Communists and torn by internal dissensions, in summer 1949 the nationalist Government of China could not find a man to be its Prime Minister. In despair, the defeated and distressed nationalists turned to a man whose choice was symbolic. The new and perhaps the last Prime Minister of the rapidly disappearing nationalist China is a man who belongs to the past. As Governor of the North-Western province of Shansi, Yen Hsi-shan leaped into some prominence already in the early twenties. He came to be known as the "Model Tuchun," and together with the "Christian General" Feng Hu-hsiang, was an incalculable, and therefore the decisive, factor in Chinese politics for a quarter of a century. He was one of the "left militarists" for whose support the Kuomintang sold its soul, if it ever had one. Therefore, it is an irony of history that he should be chosen to preside over the funeral of nationalism.

China has never had an effective central authority. The Manchu conquerors for the first time brought the whole country nominally under one government. Feudalism successfully prevented the centralization of political power, and kept the country economically divided against itself. The Provincial Governors and regional Viceroys owed allegiance to the imperial dynasty, but for all practical purposes were independent monarchs and military despots. The situation did not change after the passing of the Manchus. The Republic was even more fictitious than the Empire. Under it, feudal militarists controlling single provinces or several provinces became more powerful.

On the fall of the Manchus in 1911, the country was plunged in a civil war which has devastated it for nearly half a century, and will most probably continue yet for

many years. During this long period of civil strife, China became the happy hunting ground of the "militarists" who, together with foreign imperialism, came to be the target of nationalist attack ever since the early twenties. They were as indige-neous as imperialism was foreign. They bred in the cesspool of social stagnation and economic chaos. Over-population and economic backwardness, themselves causally connected, created an increasing mass of unemployed who, tempted by the prospect of plunder, could be easily enrolled in mercenary armies. Every Provincial Governor or any other political adventurer took advantage of the national misfortune and placed himself at the head of an army. China became the land of Generals engaged in a perpetual civil war. Most of those early militarists who thrived on the ruins of the Manchu imperial rule, destroyed themselves mutually in course of the struggle for supremacy. That process facilitated the rise of nationalism as a cohesive force tending towards the centralization of authority. But nationalism itself was not immune from the national disease of militarism. It was torn by the struggle for power between politicians and new militarists. The opportunism of the former enabled some of the old-school militarists to get on the bandwagon of nationalism to exploit it for their purposes and corrupt it. Distinguished as "left militarists" those cunning representatives of a dying, if not yet dead, past played an important role in the twenties. While the famous Christian General Feng Hu-hsiang was the most prominent of them, the Model Tuchun of Shansi proved to be the cleverest. Having all along played his cards skilfully, at least twice he came within an ace of being the head of the Nationalist Government, and at long last has now reached the position when it is no longer covered and himself too old to aspire for anything bigger. It is indeed a severe retribution of history that reactionary nationalism as also its corrupt and corrupting ally should be sinking together into disgrace and oblivion.

Yunan Shin-kai's effort to restore monarchy having failed in 1915, even the pretence of a central government disappeared. For years the Mandarin Wu Peo-fu and Manchurian bandit Chang Tso-lin struggled for

supremacy. Independent rulers of provinces, each commanding his own mercenary army, grouped themselves around one or the other and frequently changed sides. During that period of turmoil and anarchy, Feng and Yen, as Governors respectively of the adjoining provinces of Shensi and Shansi, belonged to the opposing camps of the two war-lords. But the provinces under them were both well administered. They departed from the usual method of militarist rule, and made efforts to win the confidence of the people. Indiscriminate exactions by petty officials as well as banditry by mercenary soldiers were put down with stern measures. Legal systems of taxation were introduced and the soldiers were paid regularly. Feng was a Christian; therefore his distinction from other militarists was ascribed to his confession. He came to be known as the "Christian General." Yen was a Buddhist; and as such devoutly went to the temple to say his prayer, in the Chinese style. Culturally, he was a Confucian, capable of painting old proverbs on scrolls which decorated even the field-headquarters of the bloodiest Chinese General. To ponder to popular prejudice he religiously brought offerings to the shrine of his ancestors.

While the Christian General took active part in the struggle between the two war-lords, the "Model Tuchun" held his hand with a poker face. Marking time, he entrenched himself firmly in his domain. Appointed the Inspector-General of all the armies which owed allegiance to Wu-Pei-fy, the Christian General took up his headquarters in Peking. In 1924, he seized power and declared himself independent, claiming authority over the adjoining provinces. He was supported by the student movement inspired by Communist propaganda radiating from the National University. Though triumphant for a time, Feng was denounced as a "Bolshevik agent" by all his brother militarists who combined to drive him out of power. He left the metropolis to withdraw in his own province. Yen kept quiet all the time; but his neutrality was evidently benevolent. Otherwise, he could have easily marched into Shensi from the north and cut off Feng's retreat from Peking.

In the following years, events moved faster in the

south, where a new militarism rose under the banner of the Kuo-mintang. The new force reached the Yangtse by the end of 1926, and planned to march northwards with the object of establishing a central government in Peking. Having weakened themselves mutually, in the years of incessant civil war, both the war-lords failed to put up any effective resistance. Wu Pei-fu's adherents transferred their allegiance to the rising star of Kuomintang militarism; and Chang Tso-lin fell back on his Manchurian stronghold. The crafty Christian General, though the master of the situation in western and central China, proclaimed his adhesion to the new power, and was promptly rewarded by Chiang Kai-shek with the post of the War Minister of his government at Nanking. His "little Brother" (Yen) followed the noble example, though still trying for an alliance between his old chief, the Manchurian war-lord, and the new chief of Nanking. Chiang Kai-shek rewarded his meritorious services by appointing him the Vice-Commander-in-Chief of the Nationalist Army. The object was to detach the "little brother" from the big fellow who stood astride the railway on which the nationalists were to march to Peking.

In that tense situation, the Christian General acted dramatically. Invited to attend a conference with the Commander of the Nationalist Army moving towards Peking, he left his train of saloon-cars a few miles away and rode in an open truck in company of ordinary soldiers. Then he walked into the conference hall in the tattered uniform of a Chinese soldier, with a knapsack on his back and munching a piece of dry bread. Before the nationalist Generals had recovered from the surprise, he told them that they should go back, surrendering to him the honour of capturing Peking.

Chiang Kai-shek was very happy to receive the news that his War Minister had told off the rival Nationalist Army on the road to the coveted goal. But the Christian General had a surprise in store for him also. When Chiang marched up the Yangtse to dispose of the rival national government at Wuhan, he expected his War Minister to strike from the north. But the latter chose to act differently. He marched eastwards and placed his army also astride the

parallel north-south trunk railway on which Chiang wanted to reach Peking. Thereupon, Feng was denounced as a traitor to the nationalist cause, deprived of his high office and expelled from the Kuomintang, which he had never actually joined. But he was defeated not on the field, but with silver bullets, with which battles are proverbially won in the Chinese Civil war. With money plentifully supplied by Shanghai merchants and bankers, a number of the Field-Commanders of Feng's army were bribed. To prevent further disintegration of his forces, he retreated to his base in Shensi, still the ruler of the North-Western province.

In the summer of 1927, Yen Hsi-shan was the master of the metropolitan provinces. Peking was at his mercy. With Feng's army, still largely intact, threatening their left flank, the nationalists did not dare march further northwards. Moreover, the jealousy between the two rival factions kept them preoccupied. Consequently, they fell back upon diplomacy to detach Yan from the big brother, and recognised *de facto* his supremacy in the provinces adjoining Peking. But for once the "little brother's" affection proved to be remarkably steadfast. He graciously accepted all the honours conferred on him by the important Nanking Government and, of course, the money also, but would not move against the big brother. He would rather retire to the monastery. Feng reciprocated a demonstration of loyalty by declaring his intention to go abroad for study, leaving his army and territories at the disposal "of the dear "little brother."

While the world was regaled by the comic opera, behind the scene the stage was set for a new act in the tragic drama of the Chinese civil war. Defeated by the new nationalist militarism of Chiang Kai-shek, the "left wing" of the Kuomintang under Wang Chin-wi invited Yen Hsi-shan to establish a Central Government in Peking with himself as the head. Patience, skill and diplomacy had yielded the desired result. The "Model Tuchun" was at last within reach of his cherished ambition—overlordship of the country.

Having sat on the fence for years, in 1930 Yen Hsi-shan openly threw off his nominal allegiance to the

Nationalist Government of Nanking, occupied Peking and moved his troops to seize the important port of Tientsin and southwards through the central province of Honan. Wang Chin-wei came to Peking and announced the formation of the Central Government with Yen Hsi-shan as the President. The Christian General emerged from his retirement to be the Commander-in-Chief; and the premiership went to the discredited leader of left nationalism as the consolation prize.

But that was a short-lived glory. The relation of forces in the civil war changed, and all other events were for several years eclipsed by Chiang Kai-shek's anti-communist crusade. The nationalist movement closed up its serried ranks behind the new war-lord, and Wang Chin-wei's attempt to set up a civil central authority failed. But Feng and Yen remained the virtual rulers of the provinces adjacent to Peking until the Japanese invasion in 1940. What they exactly did during the war is still a secret. Anyhow, the Japanese invaders did not penetrate much further to the West of Peking. It seems the foxy Christian General, ably assisted by his "little brother," made friends on either side, and with Russian help the provinces ruled by them functioned as a buffer against the Japanese invaders.

Eventually, the clash of arms, in the international war and in the civil war waged simultaneously for several years, became too fierce to allow any neutrality. After the collapse of the Japs, the Communists, with the active help and connivance of their Russian patrons, became the dominating force throughout the North of China. The Christian General at last went abroad, not for study, but to die. The "little brother" sunk into oblivion, to be remembered only when none could be found to be the Prime Minister of the Nationalist Government, itself disappearing into the limbo of history.

From M. N. Roy Archives, Dehra Dun

Mao Tse-Tung

Ever since the Communists captured power in China, there has been much speculation about the possibility of the developing Titoist tendencies. The legendary figure of Mao Tse-tung is regarded as the man of destiny. Although he looms on the horizon of Asia as the spectre of communism personified, it is still hoped that he may also turn out to be the prophet of National communism. That, however, is a forlorn hope. Nationalism in China is so thoroughly discredited that it cannot be revived as a counterblast to triumphant communism.

The romantic leader of Chinese communism, who revived it after the tragedy of the Canton Commune of 1928 by interpreting it in the native tradition of the Taiping Revolt, attracted enterprising journalists from Europe and America. Their fertile imagination and facile pens wove a fascinating legend. Mao was the hero, approximating, if not excelling, Lenin. A man of unostentatious arrogance, he allowed himself to be lionized internationally by fascinated females and exuberant fellow-travellers; but the proverbial Chinese cunning, call it wisdom if you please, counselled reserve. So, Mao remained an enigma, which fostered the illusion that he may rather be the Tito of China than the Lenin of the East.

Having known Lenin as well as Mao, both from close quarters, and in critical moments of history, I can say that there is not much in common between the two. Mao has had a more adventurous life since the cautious conservatism of his peasant parentage offered him no protection in the days of the triumphant counter-revolution of 1928-29. But intellectually, he reaches nowhere near Lenin's calibre; nor is his personality so striking. One was lovable; the other may be laudable.

The fact that Mao always insisted upon reconciling his professed Communist faith with the Chinese realities, as he understood them, may make him more comparable to Tito. Whatever may be the logical development of his unorthodox nationalist temperament, there was never any tangible ground for the expectation that, like Tito, he would eventually revolt against dictation from Moscow. But if he ever found himself in a situation wherein non-conformism offered greater advantages than orthodoxy, he would be more likely to prefer the path of practical wisdom than to be very particular about theoretical consistency. Mao is not a dreamer, but a practical politician; and as such he is typically Chinese. Therefore he knows fully well that without Russian help he would be nowhere. He has admitted that publicly. So, the hope of his acting independently must be ruled out. I venture this opinion in the light of the earlier days of Mao's career and his subsequent reaction to contingencies.

I met him first in the hectic days of the summer of 1927. He was not yet counted amongst the top leaders of the Communist Party. He had never been to Moscow, and did not care to take the trouble of coming to see the special representative of the Communist International, when I spent several weeks on the trek from Canton to Changsha, the capital of the "Rice Bowl" province (Hunan), where Mao stood at the head of a powerful peasant movement. As such, he was a man of decisive importance in the critical period of the revolution.

The Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of China held at Hankow in May 1927 was to make a fateful decision —about the future of its relation with the Kuomintang. The latter was already split in two warring factions. The question of the relation with the one headed by Chiang Kai-shek had been settled by him. He had begun his fierce offensive against the Communists. The issue, therefore, was the relation with the so-called Left Kuomintang and its government at Hankow, which included two Communists; one of them was the veteran Tan Ping-san, who was also a member of the Political Bureau of the Kuomintang.

The Kuomintang had promised agrarian reform; on the basis of that promise, the Communists had mobilized the peasant masses under its banner. The whole South China up to the Yangtse having been brought under nationalist control by the end of 1926, Communists active in the countryside demanded some measure of agrarian reform, which they had promised to the peasantry.

Peasant revolt is a tradition of Chinese history; there always have existed all manner of mediaeval secret peasant organizations, particularly since the Taiping Revolt. The advancing nationalist army having driven the old-time military rulers out of the southern provinces, those parts were swept by a peasant movement led by Communists, but under the banner of the Kuomintang. The Left Kuomintang Government resisted any agrarian reform on the plea that the national revolution was not yet complete; social revolution must wait. In the provinces occupied by Chiang Kai-shek's army, violent suppression of the peasant movement had begun. The Hankow Government was also moving in that direction. Should the Communists still support it, or lead the agrarian revolution at the risk of breaking up the united front with the Kuomintang?

Mao Tse-tung was the Chairman of the All-China Federation of Peasant Unions, which was affiliated to the Kuomintang. He must have a big say in the discussion of the crucial issue. As representative of the Communist International, according to its latest thesis, I sponsored the resolution that the Party of the proletariat must lead the agrarian revolution. Mao was a member of the Executive Committee, but did not attend its meetings on the eve of the Party Congress. The then leader of the Party, Chen Tu-hsiu, backed up by the Russian adviser Borodin, opposed the resolution. The opposition thesis was that the revolution must be broadened before it was deepened; the nationalist army must reach Peking; in the meantime, peace must be maintained at all cost, in the territories occupied by it. To support the demand of the peasantry meant precipitating civil war, because the landowning class would oppose, and the officers of the nationalist army came from that class. The united national front would break up. The

majority of the Chinese Communist leaders held this view, which was contrary to the instructions of the International.

On my threatening to place the resolution before the Party Congress, even if the leaders rejected it, the Executive Committee reluctantly gave in. Mao did not attend the Party Congress, which was to settle the vital but controversial issue. He wrote a letter asking the delegates to throw out the resolution sponsored by the representative of the Communist International. Chen Tu-hsiu personally opposed it. Borodin pulled wires from behind the scene; he held the purse-string. Yet, by a big majority the Congress endorsed the resolution. Most of the delegates came from the countryside; they knew the mood of the peasantry.

Immediately after the Communist Party Congress, civil war broke out; in the key province of Hunan, peasants started taking possession of the land, and the nationalist army rushed to the aid of the landlords. On the demand of the provincial authorities, the Hankow Government directed the Communist Minister of Agriculture, Tan Pingsan, to go to Hunan and check the peasant movement. That was a bitter pill, and many of the members of the Communist Executive hesitated to go so far.

At that juncture, Mao came to Hankow and I met him for the first time. It was after midnight; we were in the midst of a heated discussion in the Polit bureau of the Communist Party. Borodin himself was present, sitting next to me. A tall man with swarthy broad face, longish straight hair thrown back on a high forehead, walked in calmly but haughtily. Everybody looked up. Chen Tu-hsiu was speaking to expound once again his famous thesis on broadening and deepening the revolution. He stopped. "Mao Tse-tung," Borodin whispered in my ear. Ah, that is the mystery man, who had the guts to evade seeing the special representative of the Communist International. My first impulse was to go up to greet him. But he was forbidding, did not take any notice of me or, for that matter, even of the all-powerful Borodin. We two foreigners looked at each other; Borodin remarked in an undertone: "A hard nut to crack; typically Chinese." Mao exchanged a few whispered words with Chen

Tu-hsiu, and started making a speech. He had not taken a seat on entering.

Revolutions are known to produce great orators. Their absence in China struck me. Even the most popular platform man spoke in a shrill, jerky voice. Perhaps it is due to the language; or the culture? Oratory, of the hypnotic variety, is extravagance of language; it does not harmonize with the slowness of dignity. Classical Chinese calligraphy is to paint syllables. The traditional manner of writing seems to influence the speech. In any case, the Chinese revolution, until 1927, had not produced its Danton or Trotsky.

So, as an Indifferent speaker, Mao was not an exception.. But he had a rather pleasant voice, and did not appear to be given to gesticulation, a very popular platform performance in revolutionary China. Neither Borodin nor myself understood Chinese. But it was evident that the speech was addressed to me. Chen Tu-hsiu and his supporters were visibly elated. From a running translation given to us, I could gather that the President of the Peasants' Federation was endorsing Chen's thesis that, for maintaining the united front with the nationalists, the Communists should restrain the peasant revolt. "How could foreigners have any idea of the Chinese reality? I am coming straight from Hunan; irresponsible members of the Communist Party are misleading the peasantry. We must not develop social revolution in the villages and weaken the rear of the nationalist army. The Party Congress has made a grave mistake. Its resolution must remain in abeyance."

That was the burden of a speech delivered in a couple of hours. It was nearing dawn. I suggested that Mao should meet me later in the morning to discuss the matter further. No, he could not live comfortably in Hankow, when the peasant masses were suffering; he must return to Hunan immediately, and demanded a prompt decision. The Communist Minister of Agriculture must follow him to check the "excesses of the peasant movement."

He left as abruptly as he had come. A man who evidently knew what he wanted and was not to be

deflected, either by reason or by authority—born to be a dictator. His appearance reminded me of the legendary figure of the Tai-ping Wang—the Emperor of the insurgent peasantry. I believe that Mao imagined himself re-enacting that legendary role, and has built up his personality on that model. For twenty years, he led a movement which bore much similarity with the German Peasant Revolt of the sixteenth century, and also with the Taiping Rebellion which took place in China three hundred years later. His prototype in European history was Von Hutten, a feudal nobleman who believed himself to be the natural leader of the peasantry, and later on, acting under the pressure of circumstances, was carried away by the fascination for adventure.

It is a curious accident of history that the first "Soviet Republic" which Mao founded in 1930 with the collaboration of Chu-Teh, who commanded a deserters' regiment, was situated in the mountainous region where the Taiping movement had also originated. He alone knows whether it was an accident or a conscious choice. Trying to escape the wrath of triumphant counter-revolution, he found refuge in the mountains. The memory of the fact that the Taiping Wang had started his romantic career just from that place might have been powerfully suggestive and shaped Mao's future life. The epic march from the far South to the remote North-Western corner of the vast country must have been "like flowing water and floating clouds." That is how legend describes the movement of insurgent peasantry. The Taiping Rebellion was so described.

Until he finally established himself on the Mongolian border as Taiping Nang II, for four years Mao had acted in defiance of the resolutions and directions of the Communist Party headquarters at Shanghai. From 1929 to 1934, the Communist Party of China pursued a pure proletarian policy. But in the mountainous fastness of the original "Soviet Republic," Mao refused to act according to the thesis that the agrarian revolution must be brought under proletarian hegemony. Only when the epic march brought him within the reach and under the patronage of the Russians Mao began to talk like a Communist, and a

National Communist at that. Since then, he may have taken some lessons in Marxism. He has certainly learned to play the dictator, and in that role also the Taiping Wang, I believe, is his ideal. With such a background, tradition, character and personality, Mao might be predisposed once again to place "the Chinese reality" above Communist utopia, if he was given a chance. It is too late now. Though the much advertised figurehead, he is not the supreme dictator. There are other actual and would-be dictators. If he is not to be compared with Lenin, comparison with Stalin will be even less valid. He does not control the Party machinery; and Chou En-lai, a much more intelligent man, is the head of the government. He was also the Party boss until Liu Shao-chi replaced him as the General Secretary. The latter is Moscow's man of confidence. His fanatical devotion to communism and unflagging faith in its inevitable triumph are shared by the four redoubtable field-commanders who control the armed forces, although the ageing veteran Chu-Teh still remains the titular Commander-in-Chief. The legend woven around the old guard triumvirate—Mao-Chou-Chu—is being fully exploited by the younger men who would never compromise their Communist faith and loyalty to the "Socialist Fatherland" for any particularly Chinese consideration. They believe in a Communist One World, which cannot be divided into national States with conflicting or antagonistic interests. Should the old guard ever try to make Chinese wisdom prevail on Communist passion, they will be purged. Nothing short of a crushing military defeat would disintegrate the Communist power-structure; and that seems to be a forlorn hope for the moment. So, the perspective is that communism in China and the rest of Asia, will take over all the ugly features of nationalism but for its own purposes.

—*New Republic*, September 3, 1951

Chou En-Lei

Mao Tse-Tung is not yet an old man. but he lived a hard life, which is said to have told on his health. Therefore, the question of his successor is not premature, it has actually been raised and settled. Liu Shao-chi is the man. As the General Secretary of the Party, he is indeed even now the virtual boss of Red China, like Stalin was for years before he became the formal head of the government. By virtue of seniority and record of Party membership, Chou En-lei should succeed Mao, if he survived his chief. It is not excluded that he will, Liu Shao-chi still retaining the power behind the throne. But judged by the standard of communist orthodoxy, his political past is no more spotless than that of Mao. He has risen to his present position not by virtue of having been an uncompromising revolutionary, but thanks to diplomatic skill, which brought the communist party out of political obscurity in the Second World War.

My first encounter with the future Prime Minister of Red China was in a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China on the eve of its Fifth Congress, which met at Hankow in May 1922 to endorse the new policy of pressing for agrarian revolution at the risk of a rupture of the alliance with the Kuomintang. Though a leading member of the communist party, he also, like Mao Tze-tung, opposed the new policy recommended by the Communist International. He was the Political Commissar of the First Nationalist Army commanded personally by Chiang Kai-shek. By loyal services to the cause of National Revolution, he had won the confidence of the Commander-in-Chief.

Under Russian direction, the Chinese National Revolution was to be built on the pattern of the Red Army. A Political Commissar was allotted to each unit to carry on

propaganda among the soldiers with the object of making them conscious fighters for the revolution. Out of stupid jealousy, the Nationalists in charge of the Wampao Academy chose mostly the communist cadets for the political officers' training; for shrewdness, the communists gladly accepted the discrimination. Purposeful communists as political officers of the army would be able to turn the guns of the soldiers against their military officers.

Early in 1926, the nationalist army under Chiang Kai-shek's command started from Canton on the North Expedition and within a few months reached the Yangtse, having brought a number of provinces under the jurisdiction of the Nationalist Government. Communist activity also contributed largely to that great military victory. With the promise of a reduction of rent, the communists incited the peasantry to rise in revolt in the rear of the opposing armies, which could thereupon be easily defeated. Soldiers, themselves being peasants, deserted in masses, lured by the promise of the Kuomintang. But after the victory, when the communist field workers on behalf of the peasantry demanded implementation of the promise, the nationalist leaders prevaricated with the plea that, the military officers belonging mostly to the landowning class, agrarian reform would be opposed by them and the army might be decomposed. For fear of breaking the united front with the Kuomintang, the communist leaders agreed with the Nationalists. It was in that crisis that Chou En-lei first came to prominence.

Born of a wealthy merchant family in the maritime province of Chekang, also Chiang Kai-shek's home, fifty-six years ago, as a young man, Chou En-lei went for studies first to Japan, then to France. Chu Teh is the only other top Communist leader of China who did not go to Moscow for indoctrination, but went to a western country for general education. In the leadership of the Party, Chou En-lei therefore has always been a class by himself, neither full-blooded Chinese nor imitation Russian, but a representative of modernism.

The Theses of the Communist International setting forth the new policy were drafted by me; and I was sent

to China to help the Communist Party practise the new policy. The resolution was sent ahead of me for the information of the party leaders. While I was still on the way, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China met to discuss the document. Chou En-lei was the leader of the opposition. He concluded his speech with the appeal: "Go in the national revolutionary army, strengthen it, raise its fighting ability, but do not carry on any independent work there." Holding this opinion, he had acted accordingly as the political officer of the inner core of the Nationalist army. He went to the extent of forbidding his subordinates to act in pursuance of the purpose with which the Communists had joined the army, and even demanded expulsion from the party of those whom he suspected of carrying on class-struggle propaganda secretly.

Subsequently, in a meeting of the Communist Polit-Bureau at Hankow in my presence, he vehemently defended his record, and went back to his duty refusing to participate in the Congress of the Communist Party convened to endorse the new policy. On that occasion, I came to know him well—a dominating personality with the necessary physical appearance, tall and extremely handsome; a persuasive speaker who spoiled a skilfully built up case by stubbornness. He appeared to be honestly convinced that Chiang Kai-shek was a sincere revolutionary; that to preserve the cohesion of the army was the most important task to guarantee the triumph of the national revolution; and that to do anything which might weaken the growing power of Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang was to betray the revolution.

Chou En-lei went back to his post under Chiang Kai-shek when the latter had virtually begun his crusade against the Communists, and his Russian Adviser, General Galen, who had planned and practically directed the victorious North Expedition, had left him. The night before Chou En-lei left on a journey which nearly brought him to death's door, in Galen's house at Hankow I made a last effort to dissuade him; Galen also joined me. But nothing could keep the future Prime Minister of Red China from his ill-conceived duty and near-death.

Early in 1922, Chiang's First Army, commanded by Pei Chung-hsi, occupied Shanghai with the help of the Communists, who led the workers of the city in a general strike and armed insurrection behind the lines of the defending forces. Hailing the national-revolutionary army as their liberator, the workers expected some relief of their long-standing grievances against the exploitation of the imperialist and Chinese capitalists. But they were peremptorily ordered to return to work. In protest, the communists continued the general strike and set up a democratically elected City Council to take over the civil administration.

In April, Chiang began his open attack on his allies. The City Council was dissolved, its leading members arrested and soldiers let loose in the working class areas shooting at random. Chou En-lei together with the local trade-union leader rushed to the army headquarters, followed by a large crowd. They were received with volleys. All his loyal services to the national-revolutionary army were of no avail. He could not even see his friend Pei Chung-hsi. By sheer luck, he escaped with his life, and went underground.

Thereafter, Chou En-lei disappeared from the scene, to return from Moscow in September 1930. Chou returned from there with new instructions, which repudiated the so-called Li-san line, that had been equally his. In a meeting of the Party Executive, he denounced his former colleague for having had "mechanical conceptions about the nature and tasks of the Chinese Revolution." On orders from Moscow, conveyed through Chou En-lei, Li-san was deposed, and completely disappeared, until in 1948 he returned from the prolonged exile somewhere in the Socialist Fatherland, as the reinstated boss of the key provinces of Manchuria. The new leadership of the party was composed of young students indoctrinated in Moscow. Chou En-lei played the penitent sinner; he declared: "I call upon the whole party to condemn my mistakes," which was described by Chiu Chiu-pei, another member of the deposed leadership, as "cowardly and rotten."

In 1934, as the political leader of a band of armed peasants, Chou joined the famous "Long March" to the

Mongolian border, where the new Soviet Centre was established. It seems that, owing to his earlier record, in the beginning he was not given any prominence at Yen-an. But his time was soon to come. In 1935 the VII World Congress of the Communist International abandoned the tragic experiment in China, and the communist party was to seek a re-alliance with the Kuomintang in a "National United Front" against Japanese aggression.

Well might Chou En-lei, then still in obscurity, feel that he was vindicated. But Chiang Kai-shek's anti-communist fanaticism was not to be easily placated. He pressed on with the object of dislodging the communists from their stronghold-in the North-West. With that purpose, he entered into alliance with the Manchurian War Lord Chang Hsue-liang. At the same time, he put his own First Army into action to attack, so as to cut off the line of communication between the communist headquarters and Soviet Mongolia. It suffered a heavy defeat; thereupon, Chang Hsue-liang revolted against the authority of Nanking and entered into an alliance with the communists. Chiang Kai-shek was furious, and flew to Sian, capital of Shensi, to deal with the rebellion of the North-Eastern Army personally. He was taken prisoner at the airport by orders of Chang Hsue-liang, who saw his august captive to demand cessation of the civil war, alliance with the Soviet Union and resistance to Japanese aggression. That seems to have been the first achievement of Chou En-lei's diplomatic talent. The first success in a critical moment raised his status in the court of the twentieth century Taiping Emperor.

At that tense moment, something very dramatic happened. Chou En-lei walked in where Chiang Kai-shek was cowering, paralysed with fear. At the sight of the unexpected apparition, he almost fainted. At last he had been delivered to his mortal enemies. So, he could hardly believe his own eyes and ears when Chou greeted him in the most friendly manner and saluted him as "My Commander-in-Chief"! The result of that dramatic meeting of old friends, who had been enemies for some years, was the establishment of the "National United Front" and Chou En-lei's rise to power.

He followed the apparently thankful Chiang Kai-shek first to Nanking, then to Chungking, and during the dramatic years of the Second World War was in the limelight of international publicity as the most capable communist in China.

He made a deep impression, and won the respect of General Marshall and other high American officials who came on diplomatic missions to China during and immediately after the war. It was his suave manners that persuaded the U.S. Ambassador General Hurley to visit in 1945 the communist centre of Yen-an and return with the belief that the Reds were respectable people not engaged in massacring landlords and nationalizing women. Chou En-lei's great diplomatic achievement was the American Ambassador's recommendation that Chiang Kai-shek should be compelled to make up with the communists on terms of equality for establishing a coalition government. His talent for negotiation having raised the communist party to that status, Chou En-lei naturally became the most important person in the party.

From M. N. Roy Archives, Dehra Dun

Ho Chi-Minh

The spectre of Communism casting its frightful shadow ahead on South-East Asia is personified by a man whose appearance does not seem to qualify him for the bloodcurdling role. A thin sallow face, adorned with the wisp of a long greying beard, is that of an ascetic Chinese Mandarin rather than of a revolutionary hardened by experience, which might have been exciting but not always pleasant. Appearances are deceptive; therefore, casual visitors to the parts of Indo-China held by Ho Chi-Minh's guerilla bands have returned impressed by his fortitude and composure of the proverbial wise man of the East. The Chinese Mandarin, whatever may be his thoughts and emotions, be he of the ascetic or jovial type, does make that impression. Ho Chi-Minh acted the part well when, as the leader of the Vietnamese nationalist movement, he went to Paris in 1946 to negotiate transfer of power by the French Government. The negotiation failed, and his country was plunged into a prolonged bloody ordeal, because he was neither a wise man nor an astute diplomat, but an uncompromising revolutionary acting as a field commander on orders from the General Staff of the international army of the Communist world revolution.

Perhaps, left to himself, he might have acted differently, according to the expectations aroused by the cunning of a professional revolutionary in his early sixties. But the child being father of the man, the ideas and ideals of Ho Chi-Minh were predetermined by the experience of nearly thirty years ago, when as Nguyen Thanh (his inherited name) he walked the cobbled by-lanes of the Quartier Latin of Paris, and subsequently, with the assumed name of Ai Quoc, went to Moscow to be indoctrinated in the faith of communism.

When I knew him as a novice in Moscow, he was anything but an impressive personality or even a diligent student. He came there as a student in the newly founded Communist University for the Toilers of the East. I happened to be the "Political Commisar" of that institution, meant to be the nursery of the would-be leaders of communism in Asia. Ai Quoc has become one of them, but the record of his apprenticeship hardly qualified him for the success.

The Communist University for the Toilers of the East was established in 1922, Lenin's genius having realised that communism might win easy victories in Asia instead of, according to the predictions of the prophet, in the capitalist countries of the West. The decision, though fundamentally theoretical, had a contributory cause. Several hundred more or less educated Muslim young men, who had left India in 1920 as *Mujahirs*, to fight for the defence of the Khilafat, survived the perfidy of the Afghan Government and reached the borders of Turkestan on the way to Anatolia where, they believed, Mustafa Kemal was defending Islam against infidel imperialism. Poor self-deluded soul! They did not know that before long Kemal Pasha was to abolish the Khilafat. However, in 1920, I had also reached Turkestan from Moscow with the mission, and the wherewithal, of helping the national liberation movement of India. Having received the report that a number of Indian revolutionaries had been taken prisoners by their fellow-religionists, the Turkomans, I arranged for their rescue by an expedition of the infidel Red Army. The fervent Khilafatists were brought to Bokhara and then to Tashkent. The Afghan Government stood on the way of my mission reaching the north-western frontiers of India. With the not inconsiderable resources (arms, ammunition and money) placed at my disposal to foment an anti-imperialist revolution in India, I founded a school to give military training to the *Mujahirs*, who were dubbed "The Army of God" by a member of the staff, an impious American of Russian parentage. The military school at Tashkent disturbed the sleep of Lord Curzon, who was the British Foreign Secretary at that time. The Soviet Government was trying to negotiate a trade treaty with Britain. So, the

Tashkent school was closed down, and I returned to Moscow with my "Army of God," which became the nucleus of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East.

India was important; but she was not the whole East. Students of the Communist University must come from other countries also. Some did come from Persia and Turkey. But the Far East too must be represented. Siberia was still to be cleared of the Japanese interventionists; the People's Republic of Mongolia was not yet born. But revolutionary colonial nationalists could be found enjoying the freedom of the imperialist metropolis of France and of Holland. The communist parties of those countries were directed to enlist recruits and send them on to Moscow to be trained in the Communist University. On the morrow of the first world war, Nguyen Thanh was in Paris, either as a demobilized member of the Labour Corps or as a student. In what capacity he was there to attract the attention of Jacques Doriot, who was then the colonial expert of the French Communist Party, is a question of the history of the revolutions of our time.

In any case, the ascetic looking Viet Minh leader of today was then revelling in the mundane life of the cafes on the left bank of the Seine. In that atmosphere of abandon, one talks recklessly. Doriot or some of his recruiting agents must have heard the young man from the colony denounce imperialism. He was packed up and patted and passed on to Moscow as a leader of the revolt of the colonial peoples against imperialism.

So came Nguyen Thanh to Moscow with the assumed name of Ai Quoc. In 1922, the capital of the first Workers' and Peasants' Republic was not a very attractive place for one habituated to the innumerable freedoms of the decadent civilization of imperialist France. Only stern revolutionary idealism could put up with the hardships and privations of Moscow. The would-be vanguard of communism in Asia grumbled; Ai Quoc was no exception. But he soon found a consolation; the cafes of the Quartier Latin were not there; other pleasures, as of Montmartre however, could be had much cheaper in revolutionary Moscow. A man from the East appealed not only to the

revolutionary erotics of the communist girls, but also to the morbid romanticism of the down-and-out ladies of the old order. It was some job to keep the Asiatic novices of communist monasticism away from the enticement of the bleak and frozen boulevards of Moscow, beautified either by the fur coats of the fallen demi-monde or the leather jackets of the comsomolkas.

However, revolt of the colonial peoples against imperialism was historically determined and communists as the consciously revolutionary vanguard of the international proletariat were destined to promote and lead the struggle for the national liberation of the subject races. Thus, history had cast a role for the alumni of the Moscow Communist University. They were destined to have their respective places on the stage of history, whether they learned their parts in the class rooms of the Communist University or philandered on the boulevards of Moscow. With his Parisian poses, plus the call of the wild from Asia, Ai Quoc shone more on the boulevards than in the class rooms. But that did not matter; history had cast a role for him to play.

With the help of the Russians, Sun Yat-sen in 1924 established his Nationalist Government at Canton. Borodin went there not only as the Chief Adviser of the Kuomintang, but also to foment anti-imperialist revolt in the neighbouring countries. A committee was set up for the purpose, and Ai Quoc was called to the colours. He was sent to join the committee and lived at Canton, conspiring under Borodin's guidance until the end of 1926, when I went there. In China, he had changed his name again, and called himself Ho Chi-Minh. The Chinese revolution entered the first stormy phase, and I lost track of him. After the defeat of the Chinese revolution of 1926-27, Ho Chi-Minh was back again in Moscow as Ai Quoc. As there was little for him to do there, he was sent to France to carry on anti-imperialist agitation amongst the people from the colonies. There he lived for years, until outbreak of the Second World War. It was during those uneventful years that he might have reverted to studies and picked up the doctorate which adds dignity to his name.

When Nazi Germany attacked Russia, Ho Chi-Minh found himself transported again to South-China to cooperate in the "People's War" against fascism. He established his headquarters in Yunan, and with American help organized the resistance to the Japanese occupation of Indo-China. That was the origin of Viet Minh—a nationalist party under communist hegemony. As soon as the power of Japan collapsed, Ho Chi-minh moved his headquarters across the Chinese border into Tongking, and contacted the withdrawing invaders. The latter responded by leaving behind arms dumps for the benefit of the Viet Minh fighting against white imperialism. Japanese stragglers constituted the nucleus of Ho Chi-Minh's army.

On the surrender of Japan, in autumn 1940, the Chinese army, commanded by General Lu Han, who was also Governor of the Yunan Province, moved down the railway line to Tongking and occupied the northern part of Indo-China. The advent of the Chinese to take the place of the defeated Japanese invaders naturally was not welcome to the Ana-mese, whose antipathy for the colossus of the North is traditional. They never forgot that for centuries China had ruled their land as a colony until the advent of the French towards the end of the nineteenth century. Consequently, the Chinese occupation of Tongking and Anam after the defeat of Japan could not be stabilized; it did not last long. Ho Chi-Minh shifted his headquarters to Tongking and declared the formation of the Provisional Government of the Independent Viet Nam. General Lu Han distrusted his former communist protege, and actually placed him under restraint until he appointed Hai Than, leader of the pro-Chinese nationalist party (Dong Minh Hoi) as the Vice-President of his Government.

At that crucial moment of his political career, Ho Chi-Minh made perhaps the cleverest move of his life: he dissolved the Communist Party of Indo-China which, though formed as far back as 1924, when he was at Canton, had remained a small group in exile, with a few underground contacts inside the country. Not only was the Communist Party dissolved, but its leader publicly disowned the faith he had professed for a quarter of a century.

Ho Chi-Minh was promptly rewarded for the clever political move and personal opportunism. The suspicion of the Chinese occupation authority was disarmed and all Indo-Chinese organized nationalist groups as well as scattered elements who had mostly cooperated with the Japanese invaders rallied around the Provisional Government under Ho Chi-Minh. He quickly reinforced his political position with a fairly numerous army built up around the nucleus of Japanese officers who stayed behind with the hope of retrieving the defeat, and with weapons left by the departing invaders. The southern parts of the country, however, were plunged into chaos; there was no power to accept Japanese capitulation. The French claimed formal restoration of their authority, but could do little in practice except to send small armed contingents to garrison Saigon, Hanoi and Hue. Ho Chi-Minh's Provisional Government was the only organized authority in the country. The only way out of the chaos evidently was to recognize it as the heir-apparent to the sovereignty to be abdicated eventually by France. Accordingly, the Supreme Allied Commander ordered withdrawal of the Chinese army, and early in 1946 the French Government invited a delegation of the Viet Nameese Provisional Government to a conference in Paris. Ho Chi-Minh personally headed the delegation. The obscure colonial, who had previously lived in Paris as a communist agitator of little consequence returned there as a claimant to sovereign power, his claim having been already recognized *de facto*.

It is believed in some well informed quarters that experience gained from successes since 1945 had very largely overcome the preconceived notions and pathological obsessions of the communist agitator. As evidence of the deepening change in Ho Chi-Minh's outlook, it can be pointed out that he had invited ex-emperor Bao Dai, suspected of collaboration with the Japanese invaders, to the post of the Supreme Adviser of the President of the Provisional Government. Bao Dai also participated in the Fontainebleau Conference as the Chief Counsellor of the Viet Minh delegation.

The Communist Party of Indo-China was dissolved, but individual communists rose to important positions in the civil administration and in the army as old associates and trusted lieutenants of Ho Chi-Minh. They were naturally alarmed by th* deviations of their chief. One of them was Pham Van Dong, who as the Foreign Minister of the Provisional Government, also went to the Paris Conference. Immediately on arrival there, he got in touch with the headquarters of the communist party, evidently to report that, corrupted by the illusion that national liberation of a colonial people could possibly be attained by peaceful democratic means, Ho Chi-Minh had come to Paris with the purpose of negotiating with the French Government an agreed settlement of all disputed issues. It seems that, appeal to his nagging communist conscience having failed, pressure was brought to bear upon him.

The Commander of the Viet Minh army, Vu Nguyen Giah, was a fanatical communist. A very ambitious man, with a not too creditable record (he had assisted the Japanese invaders when "revolutionary defeatism" was communist policy), he would readily stage a *coup d'etat* and disown the renegade chief, should the latter compromise with French imperialism. The grim perspective of having to stay in Paris once again as an obscure exile in his advancing age, even when a successful culmination of his career was within reach, must have shaken the moral stamina of a man who had never possessed a strong personality. Alternately, he was promised the fullest support of the powerful Communist Party of France, which was actually sharing State power in those days, if he took up an uncompromising attitude and demanded complete transfer of power to be evidenced by the immediate withdrawal of the token French forces in Indo-China. Ho Chi-Minh fell in line, to avoid the threatening end of a nearly successful career; but by doing so, he also played into the hands of die-hard imperialism, and the latter's stupidity, in its turn, created a situation fraught with grave dangers for the stability and peaceful democratic development in South-East Asia.

Instead of distrusting him as the leopard who never changes his spots, the French could help him resist

communist pressure by surrendering power which was no longer theirs, and which could not be re-established by the token army, even reinforced by an inadequate expeditionary force. In that case, Ho Chi-Minh would have returned home not as an embittered enemy, but an ally, with much greater prestige which might have emboldened him to get rid of the communist wire-pullers. The result would have been the rise of a really democratic State which could today successfully resist the red tidal wave from the North.

Unfortunately, wisdom did not prevail with the French government of the time. After months of protracted negotiations, the conference broke up in December 1946. The Viet Minh delegation returned home to launch a country-wide uprising against the pretensions of die-hard French imperialism. The latter, on its part, had also been preparing for the emergency, while the conference was still in session. French troops were rushed to reinforce the token garrison there and penetrated inland to occupy strategic positions. By the end of 1947, France had a fairly well-equipped army of 30,000 in Indo-China. The object of the operation was to drive the Viet Minh guerillas to the mountainous interior and clear the rich rice-growing plains. However, before long, it was realised by more sensible statesmen that a prolonged colonial war might keep the Viet Minh guerillas at bay, but only at the cost of devastating the country. French armed intervention could not set up a civil authority commanding any degree of popular support outside a limited area of Cochin-China around Saigon. Even that part, and the great city of Saigon itself, was not free from Viet Minh terrorism. The bitter experience ultimately persuaded the French Government to undertake the so-called Bao Dai experiment at the end of 1947.

On the other hand, the numerical strength of the Viet Minh army increased to approximate one hundred thousand well-armed men supplied with weapons and munitions through Siam. Based in mountainous Tongking adjacent to China and Siam, Ho Chi-Minh's guerilla bands operated practically throughout the country, evidently enjoying popular sympathy wherever they went. In Saigon itself and

all the other big coastal towns and trading centres occupied by French troops, secret Viet Minh agents collected large sums of "protection" money from the avowedly anti-communist rich merchants. That was the relation of forces when the red tidal wa*e sweeping down China in 1948-49 greatly improved Ho Chi-Minh's chances. At the same time, the French expeditionary force in Indo-China became about 150,000 strong and an additional 100,000 men were recruited in the newly created Viet Nam army.

Meanwhile, the victorious communist armies in China reached the northern boundaries of Indo-China, thus bringing within Ho Chi-Minh's easy reach unlimited reinforcements from outside. Peking and Moscow in recognition of the Viet Minh Provisional Government raised him to the proud position of the Commander of the vanguard of the army of the world revolution ordered to march southwards. Undoubtedly, he is and will be fully supplied with the wherewithal for carrying out the honourable mission entrusted to him. It remains to be seen if the threatened American active intervention will stem the red tidal wave sweeping Indo-China to reach South-East Asia. Ho Chi-Minh must be exhilarated by the perspective of riding the crest of the wave to greater fame and power. Curiously enough, the Communist Party of Indo-China still remains out of the picture. It is reported that eighty per cent of Ho Chi-Minh's followers are not communists, but militant nationalists. It is said that they are to be found even in the moderate democratic Vietnamese ranks rallying under Bao Dai.

Conscious of the strength of his position, Ho Chi-Minh has retorted to the threat of American intervention by ordering general mobilization; all the Vietnamese between eighteen and forty-five years of age have been called to take up arms against the Bao Dai regime and its international supporters. He will fully exploit the anti-foreign nationalist sentiment to win more victories for communism. It would be a vain hope to count upon his one-time conversion to nationalism. Even if his faith was ever really shaken, today it must be restored, communism being the winning cause. Unless his nationalist following

was detached from him in the near future, the People's Democratic Republic of Viet Nam would be another communist State. And any attempt to check communism by foreign intervention either of the French or of the Americans, will only further help it to exploit racial animosity for its own purpose.

The reported rumour about secret negotiations between Ho Chi-Minh's and Bao Dai's representatives, if not altogether unfounded, may suggest that the unwisdom of armed intervention is being realised. The latter would not make any move of that kind without the knowledge and tacit approval of the French. As a matter of fact, when his attention was drawn to the rumours in his weekly press conference at Saigon, the French High Commissioner made the significant remark that his Government would "favour any move of that nature." He added: "If Bao Dai decided to negotiate with Viet Minh, the French Government would follow his efforts with interest." On the same occasion, he admitted that France was unable to carry on the burden of war in Indo-China much longer.

At the same time, Ho Chi-Minh was summoned to Peking, evidently to receive instructions about the policy he should follow in this critical moment. Most probably, the instruction was not to reject any chance of capturing power through the instrumentality of a coalition with Bao Dai, following the policy so very successfully practised by the communists in the Balkans and East-European countries.

It has been said that strategically Indo-China is the gateway to South-East Asia. Ho Chi-Minh certainly holds the key to it. He is the man of destiny, and it is the destiny not only of South-East Asia, but may be of other Asiatic peoples also.

—*Amrit Bazar Patrika*, March 1950