

in the Dynamo Stadium. Originally the intention was to hold a meeting in the Gorky Park and an audience of about fifteen thousand was expected. When the Soviet Government realised how great was the Prime Minister's popularity, they shifted the venue of the meeting to the stadium. There, again, he expounded the basic philosophy of India. He said that contemporaneously with the Great October Revolution, launched by Lenin, India entered a new phase in her struggle for freedom. But she chose a different path. Those words were reminiscent of Lenin's own words, uttered on a memorable occasion. They reminded me of a picture in front of cell No. 47 in the fortress of Peter and Paul, where Lenin's brother had been detained for his part in the assassination of Emperor Alexander II and was subsequently executed. In the picture we see Lenin's mother in tears and Lenin standing by her side and consoling her with the words: "We must choose another path." The path, chosen by Lenin and trodden by Stalin, had to wind its way through the thickets of counter-revolution, foreign invasion, two World-wars and a continuing cold war and has been stained by the blood of countless victims. The path chosen by India promises to be clearer and brighter and, in the long run, even shorter.

K. P. S. MENON.

Moscow;
July 12, 1955.

A VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION : Some Impressions and Reflections

I

This is not an official report on our visit to the Soviet Union. Nor is it a chronicle of the journey, written in less formal language, or even a description of scenes and events that have impressed themselves upon us as of special significance or interest. It is but a record of personal impressions, with some reflections evoked by those impressions.

2. The character of this paper imposes upon it certain limitations. Personal impressions are intensely subjective; they mirror the mind and personality of the percipient, and portray, only less faithfully, the true nature and quality of the things perceived. And the more unfamiliar he is with his surroundings in the scene of observation the greater the risk of the observer's lapsing from high standards of objectivity.

3. Nor is this all. Travelling with the Prime Minister is a unique and thrilling experience. You live and move and have your being in the most agreeable of conditions. Barriers are down, friendship abounds. You meet everyone of note, including the highest in the land, and you see most things of interest there are to see. Scenes of rare occurrence unfold before you, and you witness situations for which there is no parallel.

4. But there is another side to the picture. Your daily programme, or rather the Prime Minister's, is a heavy one; it bulges with engagements. Your day starts early, even if you are not travelling, and ends late, rarely before past midnight. You have to be fleet

of foot, if you are to keep pace with the Prime Minister, and be quick of eye, if you are to see what passes before your vision in your rapid progress through a mill or factory. Where you saw a man one moment you see a crowd the next, and before you have formulated a question to put to your guide you find yourself separated from him by a seething mass of humanity. You hop, dodge and pick your way through lanes of noisy machines, clanging happily away, but have to look at them over the heads of eager men and women who have formed themselves into a permanent but somewhat disarrayed guard of honour around the Prime Minister. You wish, each time you enter a new town, that you could watch the people at work or play, as they normally are, without being noticed yourself, the better to study them and their habits and behaviour. But your wish remains unfulfilled. Wherever the Prime Minister goes, the people are in an emotional ferment. But who would deny that emotional understanding brings one nearer to the truth than does cold, objective appraisal?

II

The Itinerary

5. We reached Moscow on Tuesday, June 7. On the morning of June 11 we set out on our whirlwind tour of the Soviet Union—a tour which took us to Stalingrad, Yalta (Crimea), Tbilisi (Republic of Georgia), Ashkabad (Turkmenistan Republic), Tashkent and Samarkand (Uzbekistan Republic), Alma Ata (Kazakhstan Republic), Rubtsovsk (Western Siberia), Magnitogorsk and Sverdlovsk (Urals), Kazan (Tartar Republic) and Leningrad. We returned to Moscow on June 21,

and left for Poland on June 23.

6. In Moscow we were accommodated in a very pleasant villa set idyllically in the midst of a pine forest, some twenty kilometres out of the city. Wherever we went, we were housed in the best villas, or where there were no villas, as in Rubtsovsk, in the best guest-houses or hotels. Our temporary habitations, villa, guest-house or hotel, had all been newly painted, redecorated and, I believe, even refurnished. The planning of our tour and the arrangements for our travel had been conceived and executed with great care and lavish attention to detail. Yet, there was to be found confirmation of the popular Indian belief that nothing that man makes or contrives can attain to absolute perfection. In Rubtsovsk, K. P. S. Menon, Azim Hussain and I found that there was no looking glass, not even a shaving mirror, in our rooms or in the public toilet-rooms! And as we had to be up and about at a very early hour, before we could sound the alarm for the hotel staff, our plight could perhaps be better imagined than described.

III

The Country

7. The Soviet Union is in size the largest single political unit in the world. It stretches right across the northern part of one continent, and spreads far into the eastern half of another; and it occupies no less than one-seventh of the land surface of the globe. We travelled 14,000 kilometres within the country, but our circular tour, extensive as it was, took us only nominally inside the great land mass of Siberia. The places we visited lay mainly in the European zone of the Russian Federation, the Crimea (which is now part

of the Ukraine), the Republic of Georgia and three of the Central Asian Republics. We saw enough, however, of these regions to form a fair picture of the physical features of the western and central areas of the Soviet Union. In the north, the Ural mountains, hugging the supposed boundary between Europe and Asia, formed a wall between the two continents, stretching more than half way down from the Arctic to the Caspian Sea. Westward lay a continuous stretch of lowland, relieved only by the Timan hills, green and well-wooded. In the south, diagonally across the narrow strip between the Black Sea and the Caspian, ran the Caucasus mountains. The western tip of these mountains seemed to jump the Sea of Azov, to reappear in the lovely, green-clad hills and ridges of Crimea. In the east, beyond Tashkent, the Pamirs, the Tian Shan and the Altai ranges, striking in a north-easterly direction, broke up Central Asia into its Russian and Chinese halves. Encompassed within these natural barriers lay a vast expanse of flat, open land, treeless for miles and exposed to cruel winds. Wherever you stood, you were at the centre of a vast circle, with the skyline tracing its circumference. As far as the eye could carry, you saw the earth stretching away from you, mile upon mile, even and unbroken, until it lost itself in the dim horizon. You felt a strange sensation, at once of oneness with the earth and of indescribable loneliness.

8. It was in the steppes, in their hard climatic conditions and in the afflictions brought about by man, that the Russian peasant toughened his fibre. A twelfth century historian said of the man of the Kiev steppe: "Men began to ask themselves whether life

was possible under such conditions". Their present day descendants suffer from no such despair. They are establishing themselves in the vast virgin lands of South West Siberia, and, despite howling wind and swirling dust, are turning land overgrown with grass and weed into prosperous fields of wheat and maize.

IV

The People

9. Perhaps no other country in the world numbers amongst its population such varied ethnic groups as does the Soviet Union. The Great Russians, together with the Ukrainians and White Russians—the Slav group—form the preponderant majority, but the Usbeks, Turkmen, Kirghiz, Georgians, Tartars, Armenians and others together constitute a sizeable and important minority. Racially, linguistically and culturally, these people are different from the Russians, and I could not help feeling that there was still absent in the Soviet Union that basic organic unity among the diverse elements of the population which is to be found in India from Kashmir to Cape Comorin. In the Czarist days, the position of the Imperial Government in relation to the Central Asian provinces, for instance, must have been one of domination and exploitation. There was then between Russia proper and the newly acquired territories no equality of status, or fusion of ideas or interests. Under a common ideology, unrelated and even indifferent to religion, but founded in theory on principles of social justice, these disparate elements, with widely differing traditions and ways of life, are now finding it possible to co-operate to an increasing extent, on a basis of partnership, in a common

programme of revolutionary change and progress. Men find it difficult to change one old faith for another; it is easier for them to change an old one for a new. Where there is a welter of old faiths, decayed and worn-out, Communism wins; and from Communism seems to spring in the Soviet Union that unifying force which is bringing about greater homogeneity among the peoples of the Union and promoting among them a unity of outlook and effort.

10. Let us have a closer look at the different races that inhabit the Soviet Union. The Russians, first. I must confess that in their physical appearance they disappointed me somewhat, possibly because I had wrong, preconceived notions. Occasionally you ran into a tall, atheletic-looking man with a well-proportioned figure. But the majority were squat and stocky, and carried more fat than was good for them, no doubt because of their fascination for bread and the drinks which keep the chill out. The women appeared to be their good companions, plain and matronly. But when they smiled, men and women, their eyes creased in enjoyment, they looked so friendly and likeable.

11. As one went further and further south, the people seemed to be more and more good-looking. In Crimea, where, apart from the residents, there always are visitors from all parts of the Union, there was in comparison with the north no lack of good looks. Not only that, but the women were more fashionably attired and wore gayer colours.

12. For historical reasons, perhaps, the Russian is reticent when you meet him first, even suspicious. Once he is satisfied you are friendly towards him, he drops his protective guise of taciturnity. He then gets

interested in you, and you discover in him a simple, friendly, warm-hearted and hospitable person, intensely patriotic and proud of his country. He has nothing against foreigners as such, and indeed I have felt that there is a desire among many of them to visit foreign countries themselves.

13. There is, I believe, a strong sentimental streak in them. Why did they stage a welcome for the Prime Minister, the like of which had not been seen before? Not only because he went to Russia as the representative of India, but because he was Jawaharlal Nehru. He stood for peace, and strove for peace, of course, but that was not the sole reason for his personal popularity. Alone among the statesmen of the world, outside Communist ranks, he showed friendliness to, and understanding of, the Russian people and regarded them as part of the human race, as are all of us, and their Government, whatever our ideological differences, as the Government of a great and distinguished country. The Russians, like Indians, are responsive to appreciation; they like to be liked, more especially when they fear that there are so many enemies around them. They applauded the messenger of peace, but took to their bosom the man who had shown them sympathy and understanding.

14. There is also a distinctly eastern streak in the Russian. East of Leningrad, Russia ceases to be wholly European, and even Leningrad was consciously built upon the conventional European pattern. For centuries the Russian has believed that Western Europeans rather look down upon him, and not unnaturally this feeling irks him even today. When a sharply-worded note goes from the Kremlin to a Western

Power, it is the Russian of peasant stock, with memories of the past, who is speaking just as much as the irreverent and as yet unhumanised Communist.

15. Because perhaps of the eastern quality in him, the Russian has lately developed a liking for Indian film music. When I was told a year or two ago that Indian pictures were proving popular in the Soviet Union, I was inclined to think that this was a propaganda stunt. I don't think so now. We saw a number of Indian pictures being shown (I was told to packed houses), not only in Central Asia, but as far north as Magnitogorsk. At one town, where we spent the night, the moment I entered my room in the villa placed at our disposal, I heard a catchy tune with a lilt being played on the gramophone. Experience at another town had taught me that the piece came from the film "Awara". I thought of Dr. Keskar. How he would have winced at the reception!

16. Let us now go eastward. First comes the Georgian Republic. The people of this area are on the whole good-looking, with clean-cut features, but I thought that the popular belief that the handsomest men and the most beautiful women come from Georgia was far from well-founded. Georgia has produced some famous men, Stalin, greatest of them all, and it retains to this day its sturdy independence. Alone among the non-Russian speaking Republics, Georgia insists on using its own script which rather looks like Telugu at a distance. In other Republics the local language is written in the Russian script.

17. Further east lie the Central Asian Republics. Except in the towns, where there is a fair proportion of Russians, the people here are almost entirely

Muslims. The older amongst them who have not forsaken their traditional habits of dress and deportment are hardly distinguishable from the Muslims of the Punjab. Their villages look like ours, with all the familiar appendages, not excluding the cow-dung cakes which plaster the outer walls. Purdah has practically disappeared, but even the revolutionary Soviet Government has not yet been able to change the face of these age-old villages.

18. Good progress is however being made with industrialisation and with the improvement of towns. The head of the Academy of Science at Tashkent regaled us with a long account of the assistance given to the Uzbek Republic by the Soviet Government, and more particularly to the Tashkent University. His speech, I regret to say, jarred on my ears. He spoke as though the Uzbeks were a dependent people, not the full equals of the Russians from whom it was their due to receive assistance. I thought of the ancient Tartars who ruled Russia for two hundred years and the lot of the people who now inhabit their original homelands. How history avenges itself! Times had changed, and a new relationship was developing. Nevertheless, I could not help feeling that, though there had been great improvement since the Czarist days, relations between Moscow and the outlying non-Russian Republics were still not based on terms of complete equality.

19. One thing that impressed me was the total absence not only of any discrimination based on colour but of colour prejudice in any form. In the Central Asian Republics people of varying gradations of colour and non-coloured people live and work side by side in

perfect amity and understanding. Inter-marriages, I was told, were not common, but were not frowned upon. Colour carried with it no stigma. On the contrary, the Russians, I was told, considered the colour of ebony particularly fascinating. I cannot vouch for the truth of this, but it is a fact that Ramachandran, the P.T.I. correspondent, no doubt because he was the darkest member of the party he was in, was dragged out of his car in Leningrad by a group of women who then proceeded to imprint kisses on both his cheeks.

20. If the Russian is free from colour prejudice, he is equally free from racial arrogance. This came to me as an agreeable surprise, for I had had occasion to note in Stalinist days, at international conferences and even in Delhi, the overbearing manner of official representatives of the Soviet Union. The Russian could, of course, be pardoned if he felt a glow of national self-satisfaction when contemplating the achievements of his country. Forty years ago his country was in a state of political and economic backwardness. Since then, a Revolution has changed the political, social and economic fabric of the country and introduced a new way of life; the country has survived a Civil War and counter-revolution, and emerged victorious from a catastrophic world war, and today it is the second most powerful country in the world. Such spectacular materialistic success could turn the head of anyone, and it is refreshing to observe that the **average** Russian still keeps a cool head.

21. Before concluding this section, I must refer briefly to the Russians' love of reading. This is not a new quality developed by the present regime; it is one which has always been there but is being actively

encouraged by the Government. The Russian prefers serious books to light reading matter, and is a voracious reader of classical books, both Russian and translations from other languages. The Security Officer travelling with us, who began to study English only a few months ago, displayed such interest in Trevelyan's "A Layman's Love of Letters", which I was reading, and grappled with it with such persistence that I made a present of the book to him. You should have seen the tears in his eyes when I did so. Our stewardess was equally fond of reading, and seemed to have a remarkable range of knowledge. One morning, when flying over the Don, K. P. S. Menon and I talked about the book "And Quiet Flows the Don". We had for the moment forgotten the name of the author, and turned to the stewardess for help. Not only did she give the name, but she gave us a discourse on the life and work of Mikhail Sholokhov.

V

The Government

22. It is not my purpose here to describe the Soviet system of Government, but to give my impressions, in a collective way, of the men who compose the Government of the country. I say "in a collective way" advisedly, for I do not consider myself competent, after so short a stay, to attempt pen pictures of individual members of the Government.

23. The term "Government" in the Soviet Union must include not only the President and the Council of Ministers, headed by the Chairman, Marshal Bulganin, but the First Secretary of the Communist Party, M. Krushchev, who is reputed to be the most powerful man

in the country and one whose word is treated with respect by all his colleagues.

24. The first thing that impressed one was the extreme informality of their behaviour. True, on entering the Kremlin, there were the usual protocol requirements to be observed, but once you were clear of these you found yourself completely at home. There was about the movements of the President himself little pomp or ceremony. He came and went unobtrusively, and I saw him once sitting squeezed in a corner of the backseat of his car, as he had given a lift to a number of Ministers going the same way. The Ministers, among themselves, were free and easy in their manner, displaying, outwardly at any rate, a degree of camaraderie which might well be the envy of Cabinet Ministers in a parliamentary democracy. To Krushchev, the strong man, no-one, I thought, paid any special deference, though obviously he was held in respect.

25. In this atmosphere collective, rather than unitary, leadership throve best. At our meetings with members of the Soviet Government, there were present, on the Soviet side, Mr. Bulganin, Mr. Krushchev, Mr. Kaganovich and Mr. Mikoyan, Mr. Molotov having left for San Francisco the day after our arrival. Mr. Bulganin, Chairman of the Council of Ministers though he was, committed his Government, without consultation with his colleagues, only on matters of minor importance. On other issues, it was obvious that there had been full consultation between these top-ranking men before anything was said on behalf of the Soviet Government.

26. They were all very able men, and some perhaps

strikingly so, but of dazzling brilliance I am afraid I did not see much evidence. Nor did I get the feeling that there was in the company a man of destiny, who had yet to come into his own. There was, I thought, no search going on in the Soviet Union for a man of destiny; the Government and the party were content to leave power to be shared between, and exercised jointly by, a few outstanding men at the top. A dictator, though cast by nature for that role, could only become one if conditions were favourable. Such conditions are today absent in the Soviet Union, and would be unlikely to arise unless the country felt itself threatened by enemies outside its gates. There is in fact a retreat from Stalinism. One suspects that there is silent disapproval among the Soviet leaders today of the more extreme of Stalin's post-war policies. Lenin is more on people's lips than Stalin. A prominent person said to me, "It is the duty of you Indians to take the greatest possible care of Mr. Nehru. Remember he belongs to the whole world, not to India alone. We wish we had taken greater care of Lenin—like Nehru, a man in an epoch". He perhaps wished to say more, but did not. Could it be that he thought that had Lenin lived longer certain mistakes would not have been committed?

VI

Some observations on life in the Soviet Union

(1) *Standard of Living*

27. Mr. Saburov told me one evening, with a recognizable note of pride in his voice, that the industrial production of the Soviet Union was already in excess of the combined total of those of

the U.K., Germany, France and Italy. I did not pause to check up on the statistical accuracy of this statement, for the element of exaggeration which it might have contained only served to emphasise the stupendous progress made by the Soviet Union in industrial development. Already, steel production had reached 41 million tons, and corresponding progress had presumably been made in industries of comparable importance. Yet the colossus was far from having got into his full stride. There were resources still to be utilized, areas still to be developed. What would the picture be in fifteen years time, one could not help wondering.

28. There was evidence of a high scale of activity everywhere. Building, in particular, for that is what catches the eye most readily. New public offices, railway stations, schools, technical institutes, factories, workers' quarters, and the like. Stalingrad, that long narrow city reposing on the right bank of the Volga, had been completely rebuilt; another town, destroyed by an earthquake, had been restored on its original site.

29. This high economic activity was matched by liberal remuneration for the human effort which made that activity possible. Wages were high, the minimum being not less than 500 roubles a month, and salaries, particularly of technicians and artists, touched a ceiling of as much as 20,000 roubles. In addition, there were bonuses, subsidised holidays, low rents, free education and medical treatment and other benefits and advantages.

30. I had no opportunity of visiting a Russian home and seeing for myself how an average Russian

family lived, what amenities it enjoyed and what standard of comfort and well being it was able to command within the total income of its wage-earning members. I can therefore make no definitive statement about the Russian standard of living. But, judging by externals, I feel I can venture the opinion that the standard was much lower than one would be led to expect from the high national economic activity and the high level of personal incomes. This resulted from a combination of high prices, except for the commoner foodstuffs and other essential articles, and a comparative shortage of most consumer goods. A Russian maid would ask you to get for her an expensive Swiss watch. She had the money, but not a choice of good watches in her own country. In a lesser degree, the same was the position in regard to clothes and footwear. The prices, compared to ours, were prohibitive.

31. Men's clothes, in the quality of the material used, were probably below Western European standards, and, in tailoring, definitely so. Men's coats hung rather loosely over their bodies, and the sleeves reached half way down the palms of their hands, disclosing only their fingers. And they all wore the same standard type of shoes, with markedly rounded toe-caps.

32. Perhaps I should mention that every one in the Soviet Union dressed more or less alike, Minister or subordinate official, without distinction. Members of the Government were, I thought, particularly anxious not to appear better dressed than others. Their women-folk were equally austere. They were dressed in inexpensive clothes, wore no jewellery and

no make-up; yet, I thought, they looked dignified.

33. By all accounts there had been a great improvement in the standard of living in the past few years. Both clothing and furnishing fabrics had been much improved, in design, quality and range. Consumer goods such as radios were in increased production; and above all private cars were in abundant evidence in Moscow, though demand still greatly outstripped supply. Life in Moscow today, one was led to conclude, was not the dismal thing it was reported to have been some five or six years ago.

(2) Culture

34. In the old days the arts flourished under the patronage of kings and nobles. In the nineteenth century a prosperous middle class lent its patronage indirectly to writer and painter, musician and actor. But even before the modern Communist State was thought of, the Government in many countries found it necessary to take the theatre, or certain branches of it such as the ballet and the opera, under its protective wing. In Communist countries, the responsibility of the State for sustaining and developing the arts is total and complete, and this responsibility is exercised through a Minister of Culture. I must confess that being old-fashioned I find it somewhat difficult to get used to the idea of a Ministry of Culture. But, as cultural media can be used for other purposes of direct interest to the State, a Ministry of Culture may after all, in the eyes of some, serve a useful function.

35. In the Soviet Union much interest and care are bestowed on the theatre and the art gallery. Not only are the highest standard of excellence

consistently maintained, but a visit to the ballet or to an art gallery is within the means of everyone and is, I believe, actively encouraged. The Hermitage in Leningrad, an art gallery housed in the former Imperial Palace, is among the finest I have seen; while the ballets we saw in Moscow and Leningrad will long remain fragrant memories. Yet I am oppressed sometimes by the thought of possible propagandist misuse of cultural forms. A distinguished Russian lady asked me one evening how I liked "Swan Lake". I expressed myself in language, almost bordering on the superlative. "Yes", she said, "it is wonderful," and then went on to add, "it has a deep political significance." It was just as though a delightful programme of music on the radio had been suddenly interrupted and the voice of the announcer had said, "And now, ladies and gentlemen, don't forget! Andrews Liver Salt—FOR INNER CLEANLINESS!"

(3) Pioneers

36. The Pioneers are an organisation roughly equivalent to Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, a Sports and Recreation Club and a Debating Forum,—all rolled into one. If there is a favoured class in the Soviet community, that class consists of the children and young people on whom is lavished a wealth of care. The children look so well-nourished and well-clothed and so full of well-being that they seemed as though they were somehow different from their parents. The headquarters of the Pioneers are invariably located in the most palatial building in the neighbourhood and provide a great many amenities. The idea of such "homes from home" is no doubt to train Soviet

youth in the corporate way of life which would best subserve the interests of the State. The training develops discipline and qualities of leadership and promotes also certain civic virtues. But it is to be feared that it also encourages precocity, and one wonders whether one long-term result might not be the mass production of a new type of extrovert.

VII

Soviet Industry and Agriculture

37. No-one surveying the Soviet scene can fail to be deeply impressed with the vast industrial machine the Soviet Union has built up, or with the high technological skill which has been developed within the country. It is not that the Soviet people have surpassed others in originality or initiative. Other countries may excel them in particular industries, or in the techniques employed, or in the quality of the machines and equipment locally manufactured. What impresses one is the totality of the effort and the results it has yielded. Forty years ago, Russia, though rated as the sixth or seventh largest industrial country in the world, was in reality a backward country. European Russia was a long way behind the standards of industrial efficiency attained in Western Europe; industry was localised around Leningrad and in the Moscow area; and the limitless areas in Asia were undeveloped. In a generation the whole scene has been transformed. On the ashes of a pitifully archaic, weak and disunited country has arisen a powerful, well-knit, industrial State. It is this spectacle which arouses our admiration. Underdeveloped ourselves, we see in this an example of what can be achieved through determination, courage and hard work. To

the Russians, however, the goal seems still distant. Mr. Suberov said to me, "Given peace, we shall, in fifteen years' time, outstrip America in industrial output." I do not suggest myself that we should make it our life's business to outstrip anyone in any branch of human activity, but merely record the fact that it is in this spirit of confident competitiveness that the Russians are planning for the future.

38. We visited a fair number of factories during our stay in the Soviet Union, but I cannot say that I am in a position to assess the industrial potential of the country. As a lay-man, I could only form very vague impressions, and I record them below for what they are worth:—

(1) In the military, as in the political sphere, security considerations are paramount. Security demands that only armaments and weapons of the highest quality and effectiveness shall be used, and in this sector of industry there is reason to conclude that quality is given the highest priority, the aim being to ensure that Soviet products are equal to, if not better than, the rest of the world's best.

(2) In other industries, there is a certain lack of finish, though in heavy industries and where comparison with foreign products is to be expected, quality is well maintained.

(3) Consumer goods not only lack finish, but are, generally speaking, of inferior quality.

(4) In the older factories, obsolescent machinery is still being used, but under the Soviet system this may not be an uneconomical method of production.

(5) In the older factories again, more man-power seems to be used than would be in western countries.

(6) Protective garments and gadgets supplied to men engaged in hazardous operations seem to be on a smaller scale than in western countries.

(7) The Soviet Union now seems capable of manufacturing every type of machinery it requires, including, I believe, precision instruments.

39. Coming now to agriculture, I must speak with even greater diffidence. I could see myself no signs of an agricultural crisis, though without visiting the Soviet Union and basing oneself solely on reports appearing from time to time in "Pravda", one could say that performance has been falling down on targets in the agricultural sphere. The permanent Agricultural Exhibition in Moscow is intended to rouse the patriotic enthusiasm of peasants and to instil in them a desire to break an established record and thus win the coveted medal given to "heroes of Soviet labour". I do not myself think that, if there is a set-back in the fulfilment of the agricultural programme, it is any more than temporary. Extensive areas are now being brought under the plough for the first time; and, whatever the immediate consequences of collectivisation, large farms would prove an advantage as being readily suited for mechanical methods of farming, in a country where labour is deficient. I am less clear about the situation in regard to animal husbandry and poultry farming, but have a feeling that the position is not altogether satisfactory.

VIII

Soviet Policy

40. Thirty-eight years have passed since the Great Revolution. This is not a long enough period for an

entirely new system of human organization involving a complete break with the past to establish and prove itself. But in reality the period during which the system has been able to strike root and grow has been even shorter. In the first three years of its existence the new State was thrown into a bitter struggle for survival. After the collapse of the Counter Revolutionary Movement and the end of foreign intervention, there followed a period of international ostracism with all its familiar consequences. It was not until 1924 or 1925 that the Soviet Union began to receive diplomatic recognition from the major countries of the world. Some seventeen years later came the supreme test of the strength and vitality of the new regime, and for four years the Soviet Union was locked in a life and death struggle of unprecedented ferocity and destructiveness.

41. For the Soviet Union therefore there has not been since its birth more than thirty years or so of peace. During this period, the energies of the nation were occupied for a substantial number of years in the work of reconstruction and rehabilitation. Less than a quarter of a century of peace has thus been available to the Soviet Government for its great tasks of development.

42. The Russians know, none better, the horrors and sufferings of war. On their soil were fought the bloodiest battles of the last war, and on their people was taken the largest toll of life. Is it any wonder then that the Russians should repeatedly declare their desire for peace? If their sincerity is still in doubt, it is well to remind ourselves that, possessing both the Atom and the Hydrogen bombs and knowing also their deadly

effects and threat to human survival, the Russians would be lacking in sanity if they were secretly preparing for war. Their moral deficiencies might be open to argument, but certainly not their sanity.

43. Many in the Soviet Union have told me that what they desire most is a long period of peace to enable them to bring into being the Socialist State of their conception. There are strong practical reasons for accepting this statement. Impressive as have been the Soviet Union's achievements, much remains yet to be accomplished. In the economic sphere, industrial activity has been geared to an abnormal extent to the development of heavy industry. This cannot continue for long without causing serious disturbances. The morale of the people cannot be sustained by propaganda alone; their innate desire for a prosperous life must be progressively satisfied. Austerity is a good thing in a period of intensive national effort, for it supplies that element of self-sacrifice which produces in the citizen the consciousness of having done his little bit in the national cause. But austerity cannot be permanently woven into the fabric of a country's national life, for the fabric would not then hold together for long. Small wonder then that the Soviet leaders should wish to divert a greater part of their country's resources to the production of those goods which would give the people a higher standard of living. Here is yet another reason for their wanting to bring about conditions which would ensure a period of peace and security. The situation, however, is not onesided. If the Soviet Government are seeking an improvement in international relations, they are not doing so for reasons of internal weakness. Anxious as they are for more and better consumer

goods, the Soviet people would be the first to offer to tighten their belts in preparation for a further period of austerity, should their leaders fail in their attempt to bring about a lessening of international tensions.

44. I am continually asked whether reliance can be placed on the Soviet Government's assurances, more especially on their acceptance of the Five Principles in relation to India. In particular, concern is expressed whether help in some form or other would not reach the Communist Party of India from the Soviet Union. One cannot of course be dogmatic in a matter like this, but to put it no higher, there are sound *practical* reasons for believing that the Soviet Government would abide by their word. I am not myself disposed to question their *bona fides* in this respect, but even doubting critics must admit that here is a sector of foreign relations where for the Russians there can be no present conflict between self-interest and obligations voluntarily undertaken.

45. The desire for security has for long dominated the Russian mind, and has been a prime determinant of Soviet policy. Inevitably, one of the main aims of the Soviet Union has been the creation of conditions of security on its borders, and this has led it to take varying forms of action in relation to its neighbours. In the past fifteen years, three distinct phases have marked the execution of this policy. The Baltic States of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia could conceivably be used as springboards of attack by an invader having command of the sea; at the same time they barred the Soviet Union's access to an important stretch of the Baltic Coast. These States were annexed and incorporated in the Union in 1940, and with this ended the first phase.

that of absorption. Towards the end of the war came the second stage, during which the friendship and cooperation of the countries on the western border were ensured by the method of ideological assimilation. This process was completed in 1948, with a Communist Government taking full control in Czechoslovakia. In the post-Stalinist period, the cultivation of friendly relations with its neighbours by conventional methods has been the main instrument of policy employed by the Soviet Union; and in the recent past this policy has been greatly assisted by the Soviet Government's new approach to major world problems. On its southern border, Turkey, Iraq and Pakistan have been following policies which could not be regarded as friendly by the Soviet Union; yet the Soviet Union itself has been careful not to appear retaliatory or provocative in its dealings with these countries. Friendly overtures are at the same time being made to Iran and Afghanistan, and the invitation recently made to the Shah of Iran to visit Moscow is further proof of the Soviet Union's determination to improve its relations with that country. India presents no problem. Suspicions about our intentions and our ability to act in an independent manner have vanished. The Soviet Union now realises that our foreign policy is the best guarantee for its security on its south-eastern border. Happily again for the Soviet Union, the country with which it has the longest frontier, China, is one bound to it by a common ideological faith. The eastern border, however, lies exposed, for the sea which washes that coast is hedged in by a chain of islands terminating in the island kingdom of Japan which form an outer spur of the Asian mainland. Japan, according as she was neutral

or foe, could guard or threaten the east coast of Siberia. One may be certain that the negotiations recently started in London by the Soviet Union for the conclusion of a formal Peace Treaty with Japan will be followed by diplomatic activity designed to bring about a friendlier attitude in Japan towards the Soviet Union.

46. If our foreign policy is the best guarantee of security the Soviet Union has in this part of Asia, equally it is the best guarantee we have against unwelcome interest on the part of the Soviet Union in our internal affairs. India, as a non-Communist country unattached to either of the two blocs, is in a singularly good position to promote mutual understanding between the two blocs. She would cease to be in a position to play this role, to the disadvantage of both blocs, if she became committed to one or other of the two. Moreover, if she were to go Communist, she would, being still underdeveloped, prove a drag and a liability to the older and stronger Communist countries. In its own interests, therefore, the Soviet Union could be expected to do nothing which would alter or damage India's chosen status or cause her to change her established policy.

IX

Economic and Technical Assistance from the Soviet Union

47. In the Joint Statement by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. and the Prime Minister of India, the two signatories have undertaken to promote and strengthen the relations between their two countries in the economic field as well as in that of scientific and technical research. In the talks we

had in Moscow, the Soviet leaders modestly stated that their capacity to help was not unlimited. They had the development plans of their own country to carry into execution, and had in addition to render to China the extensive assistance they had pledged to that country. Nevertheless, they would be ready and willing to assist India with machinery and equipment and with technical "know-how" within the limits of their resources. No financial aid was offered or requested, though presumably credit terms could be negotiated in the normal commercial way. The possibility also existed of obtaining technical assistance through the Soviet Government's contribution to the U.N. Technical Fund.

48. There is no need to read into this offer any sinister motives. Remembering its own need for foreign technicians and for foreign plant and machinery in the twenties and later, the Soviet Union may now properly wish to pass on to friendly nations the benefit of its own accumulated skill and experience. Moreover, there is increasing recognition even in Communist countries of the fact that trade fertilises industry, besides being an effective instrument for the promotion of international understanding. It is not with India alone that the Soviet Union is seeking to develop commercial contacts; but India is of more than ordinary significance, for, if the policy proved successful in relation to India, the way could be cleared for similar contacts with other but more hesitant countries. This is a policy which fits readily into the general pattern of measures now being taken for the promotion of international peace and goodwill. Subversion does not seem to be the aim of this policy, though the hope may be present that

satisfaction with the goods and services supplied will in an indirect way win the admiration of the recipient countries for the Soviet economic system.

49. The principles of peaceful co-existence (now amplified to read "active and peaceful co-existence"), of which we, with China, were the first proponents, requires that ideological differences should be no bar to the cultivation of commercial and other forms of friendly relations between nations. But in judging to what extent such friendly relations should be developed in a given period, the prime consideration should be one's own national self-interest. For us the inclusion of the Soviet Union in the limited circle of countries, from which capital equipment can be obtained, would be a distinct advantage. Having to earn a reputation in this new field, the Soviet Government could be expected to fulfil their contractual obligations in a manner which would bring them special credit. Competition, being thus sharpened, would in turn impel other suppliers to improve on their past performance. Moreover, there are certain types of equipment which could be procured more readily from a Government than from a private concern. Oil prospecting and drilling machinery are illustrative of this type of equipment. On the other hand, it must be remembered that dependence on a foreign government as distinct from foreign private interests for important supplies subjects business transactions, more than normally, to the influence of the changing course of political relations. It must also be borne in mind that too sudden or too wide a swing in favour of a new supplier, especially one who does not belong to the same club as the traditional suppliers, carries with it a certain risk; it may tend to

shrivel up existing sources of supply. These opposing considerations must be balanced, one against the other, prudently but not unimaginatively, if we are to arrive at a wise judgment. Certain it is that there is no room in such consideration for the exuberance of sentiment displayed by some in their approach to this question. To turn to any one country for help or advice over a wide range of supply or other problems would be unwise; nor is it the way to gain anyone's respect. Sir James Barrie in a rectorial address delivered at St. Andrews University many years ago gave this advice to his listeners: "Do not ascribe to others motives meaner than your own". This is an injunction that we shall all do well to take to heart. Yet, there have been occasions when, reversing Barrie's maxim, I have felt like saying to some of our more emotional countrymen, "Do not ascribe to others motives nobler than your own".

X

50. Throughout our tour of the Soviet Union and during our stay in Moscow we were fortunate in having Mr. Kuznetsov, First Deputy Foreign Minister, as our constant companion. Kuznetsov speaks English perfectly. He lived for some years in America, where he took a degree in engineering and metallurgy. On his return to his country, he threw himself enthusiastically into the Trade Union movement, where he rose to one of the highest positions. Next he was associated with the Planning body, and later he went to China for a short period as his country's Ambassador. During the past two years he has been in the Soviet Foreign Office. His wife is a Professor of History in the Moscow University.

51. We all took an instinctive liking for Mr. Kuznetsov. He is a full member of the Communist Party, and stands high in the party counsels. But he is no narrow bigot, and it is a pleasure to argue and discuss with him. One day, shortly before I left Moscow, he said to me, "There are two classes of people who are unhelpful to us. The first are those who can find nothing good in us and in our administration. The second belong to the opposite group, those who can find nothing bad in us and extol us uncritically. The men we would like to meet and cultivate are those who, while being sympathetic and friendly, can take an objective view and tell us where we have erred and point the way to progress." It is in the role of those included by Mr. Kuznetsov in his third category that we can be of help to the Russians and thus serve the common interests of all nations.

N. R. PILLAI.

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