

breast and on this memorable day in the chequered history of our country and of our people, the thought that springs uppermost is that "May the New Republic be launched on a career of achievements; may it help us to realise all that is best in our traditions—sanity, tolerance and values of life

that spurn mean ends and set no limit to the perfectability of man.

The call is there always—to awake, arise and to seek and attain the goal that is ours by birthright. Let the illuminations of the Republic Day and the celebration awaken us to its realisation. The Republic Day

would have come and gone in vain, if lamps are lit only in stately buildings, and the humble homes of the poor remain dark. Ignite the masses, said Desabandhu; seek God in the humblest of homes, admonished Gandhiji. To this great task of dedication, let the country awake.

## The Constitution Of The Republic

THE Constitution of a country is, in essence, adjectival rather than substantive; it does not seek to prescribe what should be done, but how the authority of a government should be exercised. It is strictly procedural in character. The procedure thus laid down is always based on a specific political philosophy, which when it strongly emphasises the consent of the governed, will be the philosophy of democracy with its insistence on the necessity of free persuasion in time for every substantial decision for change in the order of things. But historically it is only rarely that this enunciation of a political philosophy has been accompanied by an equally forthright declaration of an economic philosophy; it can hardly be said, for example, that the Founding Fathers of the American democracy envisaged the growth of the United States as a citadel of free private enterprise in the sense in which we understand it today. Nor did the declaration of specific social or economic purposes such as the egalitarian doctrine of the French Revolution and of the similar faith shared by the founders of the Kuomintang necessarily secure their fruition. It is, therefore, not strictly necessary to look to the Indian Constitution for the affirmation or denial of any specific social and economic pattern; that pattern must emerge in the process of time and its character determined by the meaning and content which the people impart to their political

institutions through their power to choose the government of the day.

It is necessary to bear this in mind when we hear criticisms of the Indian Constitution from persons who had cherished the hope that any particular matter, social or economic, should either have been written into the Constitution or excluded from it. We need only examine it with a view to see what particular processes of evolution are helped or hindered. So far as the declaration of ideals is concerned, the Constitution has left out little; the objects, set out in the preamble, of the promotion of social and economic justice and of equality of status and opportunity cannot be improved upon. These Statements and the Directive Principles in which they have been elaborated, may probably serve no practical purpose and remain, perhaps, more honoured in the breach than in the observance, and if any of them are realised, it will not be because they were enshrined in the Constitution but because of the other operative portions which enable that realisation. It would, therefore, be wrong and lacking in perspective to infer from these solemn declarations that the shape of our future will be entirely in accordance with our ideas of progress.

There is no preordained pattern of equality and justice and the most feasible programme of equality must remain, as David Hume

said, a matter of trial and error, a function of the political process through which these trials have to be made and the errors committed in those trials. Whether the passion for equality and social justice stops merely with charity or with the abolition of privilege and the provision of opportunity for all or in the achievement of such abundance (inconceivable as it may seem) that would make the problem almost academic, it is the democratic process that should offer the most trustworthy manner in which society may discover the most feasible formula for justice and equality. The establishment and working of democracy is thus fundamental and prior to equality, but we no longer believe with Acton that the passion for equality "makes vain the hope of freedom" and it is well that the specific denial of this specious doctrine which held sway for a time should have been written into the preamble of the Constitution.

### THE ECONOMIC WEEKLY

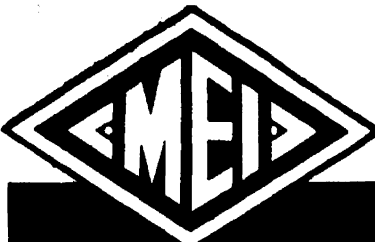
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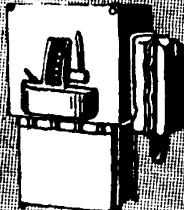
The realisation of this ideal of economic and, therefore, of social, justice and equality, within the framework of the Constitution is, however, a different thing, and must depend on the men and women who work it. It ultimately depends upon the growth of Parties wedded to the achievement of lesser or greater justice and the pace with which their programme can be worked out. There are certain basic factors which the best will in the world cannot alter, and the chief among them is the fact that the enthusiasm for the reduction of social inequalities and injustices with our present available resources in wealth would mean little consolation, to anyone. Our economic resources have to be multiplied many times if equality should not merely mean equality in poverty but in prosperity; the effort that is needed to achieve this degree of production cannot come from any single group and, as such, there must at every point be practical demonstration of the progress towards the ideal of distributive justice so that all groups have the incentive for the expansion of our economy to the levels which would ensure an increase, however gradual, in the standard of living for all. This cannot depend entirely on private, free enterprise. President Truman proudly declared in his State-of-the-Union message the other day, that national production in the United States had increased five-fold during the last fifty years; that hours of work had declined from 60 to 40 per week; that, with this background American economy can, on the basis of free enterprise, plan and reasonably look forward to such increasing abundance in the next half century that would make equality of opportunity much more real than any amount of idealistic talk within an underdeveloped country. Private enterprise in India has never been robust and has rarely, if ever, taken the lead for a vigorous expansion of our national production. But this, of course, does not mean that for future development it should either not be regarded as one of the main tools or subordinated so closely as to hamper its growth.

There is a wide enough field in which State enterprise may increasingly enter and participate without having to clash with exist-

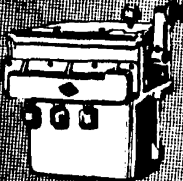
ing private enterprise or, proposed new undertakings. In this view, the question of nationalisation of (Continued on page 57)



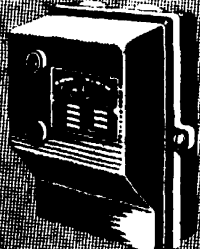
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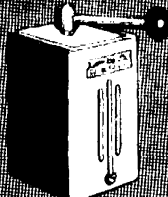
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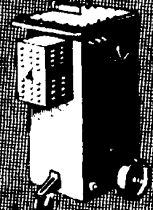
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industries, which is always put in the forefront of any programme of economic justice, is not a problem that should seriously exercise the minds of the leaders of government for a fairly long time ahead of us. Private enterprise in the past has not undertaken the establishment of any large plants dealing with basic or key industries but has contended itself, except for Tata Steel and Power plants, to the manufacture of consumer goods which were being imported on a large scale. And no great harm can arise if the modest field demanded by private enterprise is left to them subject to the residual State control which will always exist.

There is the need to formulate a comprehensive plan, part of which would be the demarcation of the field which will be left clear to private enterprise. There is no indication that private capitalism would ever desire to make a bid for the control of the basic and heavy industries like steel and chemicals. The Constitution has provided the framework in which such a plan can be devised and executed. As economic and social planning is regarded as a subject in which the States and the Centre will exercise concurrent jurisdiction, the Constitution has left scope both for the unity that central direction can achieve and the degree of decentralisation needed for the regions to work out the details as part of a larger whole. The Constitution provides that the regulation and development of industries needed for defence and such others which are deemed expedient by Parliament will come under Central control. Agriculture yet remains a provincial subject, but as a result of execution of river valley schemes and as part of economic planning, it cannot escape Central regulation. There are, besides, the residuary powers with the Centre which will strengthen its hands in many new fields.

The augmentation of the powers of the Centre is; therefore, the vital factor to be observed in connection with the future of our economic affairs and the economics of the Constitution has to be

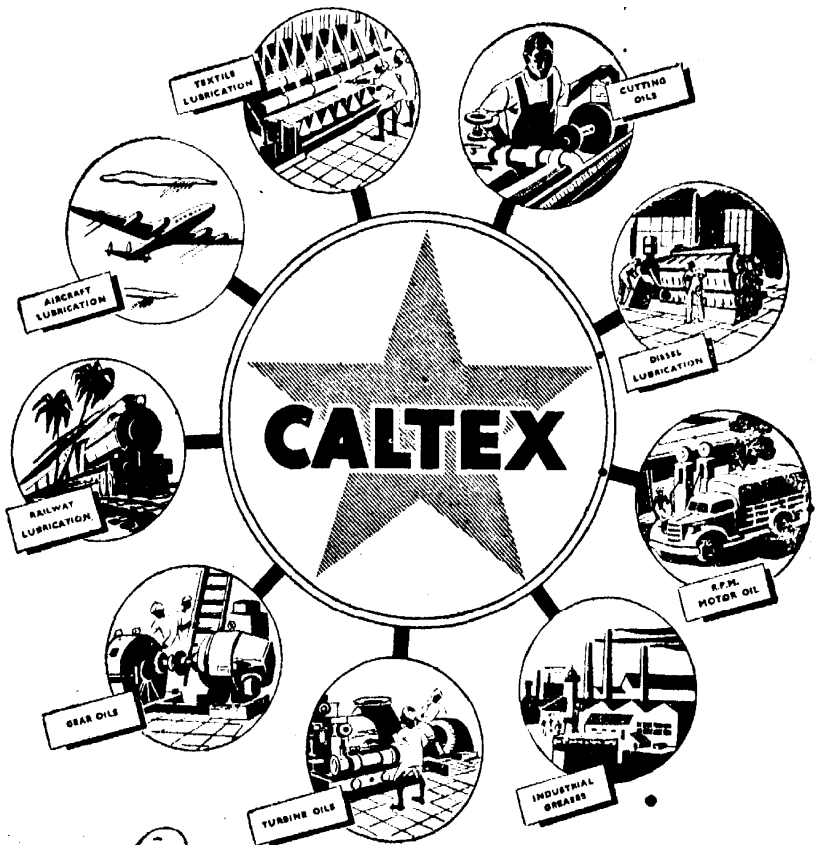
sought in this than in the allocation of financial and taxing powers or in the procedure that has been laid down for their exercise.

The provisions regarding inter-State trade and commerce would add greatly to this wide authority; in the United States, the Commerce clause, drafted in the age of post-chaises, has continued to serve the country's needs long

after the character of commerce had been transformed by railroads, telegraph, telephone, radio and the aeroplane. It has served the Americans right from the days when the feeling of statehood was strongly entrenched down to recent times when, after initial set-backs, it enabled implementation of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programme and the more vital requirements of the last war.

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In incorporating, though with many reservations and exceptions, in Part XIII of our Constitution, provisions to secure the freedom of inter-State commerce from restrictions, some flexibility will be imparted to the economic life of the country to enable its freer growth.

The Congress Working Committee's decision to establish a Central Planning Commission has almost coincided with the inaugu-

ration of the new Constitution. The need for a new statutory body of this kind would show that the plans that had been made from time to time were largely unrelated to available resources. A Constitution or a plan or even the presence of men with the necessary vision and drive cannot achieve a rapid growth of economic prosperity until there is the willingness on the part of the majority of the people to restrict present consumption, which

means a desire to save and invest. In a totalitarian economy, it is brought about by State compulsion, by rigidly enforced austerity but with our democratic liberties assured by Constitutional guarantees, the main task of the Planning Commission would be to mobilise our resources for the success of planned economic progress. It is a task which needs the free and voluntary co-operation of a people willing to advance on the economic front and ready for the endeavour.

## THIRD FORCE COMMITS SUICIDE

NINETEEN-FORTY-NINE will go down to history as the year in which the common man became vividly aware of the yawning gap between the promise of the twentieth century and its performance. It was the year in which statesmen of the Western Powers lulled themselves into the false belief that world problems could be solved merely by a statement of what these Issues were. President Truman has repeatedly affirmed his and his country's faith in the United Nations Charter. It is now a commonplace that world peace and prosperity are indivisible. Peace as well as prosperity still eludes the common man, and a sense of frustration haunts the world.

Twelve months ago, President Truman announced his plan for Fair Deal to the world. Point Four was a message of cheer and hope to the forgotten man. It was hailed as a faint glimpse of America's realisation of her destiny. It was a promise of America's preparedness for assuming moral leadership of the world. As months rolled by, it became apparent that the common man was over-optimistic. Point Four was an imaginative plan whose broad outlines were skilfully sketched by President Truman in his message to the world. As it has gradually emerged, Point Four has got enmeshed in technicalities and technicians

Stared of capital, which alone

could clothe it with flesh and blood, Point Four has been reduced to a shadow. Suspicion grows that while America is lavish with money of political origin, she is stingy with money of economic origin. Suspicion deepens that America is either unwilling or unable to accept the challenge to its world leadership and transform it into an opportunity. Nineteen-forty-nine may well be docketed in history as the year in which America failed to fulfil her great promise.

Disillusioned and disappointed though the common man is today, he is wiser by the events of 1949. He is no longer deceived by the pretence of an ideological war between the West and the East. Implications and nature of the East-West conflict are now better appreciated. That conflict is now assessed in its proper perspective: a cold, relentless fight for supremacy between the Great Powers. It is significant that this interpretation of world developments is endorsed both by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. Trygve Lie, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

There is no doubt that the Secretary-General of the United Nations is of the opinion that the difficulties besetting the world stem from the continuance of "the Great Power conflict." There is an implicit assumption in Pandit Nehru's recent statements that the East-West conflict is a reflection

of the struggle for supremacy between some Great Powers with which the small Powers have no direct concern. The latter, naturally, hope that the dispute will be solved without hostilities, but they are reluctant to take sides or to participate in conflict or wars which, to them, seem nothing more than dynastic or imperialistic wars of the eighteenth and the nineteenth century.

Political reactions in the West to developments in 1949 confirm this interpretation of contemporary events. It is widely accepted that the Communist victory in China and the manufacture of the atomic bomb by Russia have fundamentally altered the world balance of power, though it is frequently emphasised that the Tito-Stalin schism is the first, faint signs of creaks in the solid monolithic Communist bloc. Whether or not Titoism is the beginning of the end of Stalinism, the exaggerated significance attached to the Tito-Stalin controversy is both an admission by the Western Powers that the "cold war" is a reflex of power politics and a hope that the division in the Communist bloc may tilt the balance of power in favour of the Western Powers. Whether there is any basis for this hope or whether it is merely an exercise in wish fulfilment, remains to be seen.

In the meanwhile, hopes raised by Third Force have been dashed to pieces along with the expecta-