

# The Winds of Culture

(Contributed)

THE Indian Congress for Cultural Freedom has been providing surprises and mysteries since its inception. In the first place, it was banned by the Government of India from Delhi and Government servants were forbidden to participate in it. Why should Pandit Nehru's Government get out its gun, like Goering, at the mere mention of 'culture'? In any case, for some reason our Government is highly displeased with the Congress. Hut Mr. Munshi, our esteemed Minister of Agriculture and Culture, is evidently highly pleased with it. He explained that he attended not as a politician, but as a man of literature and wide culture. Yet he succeeded in giving a highly political lecture. Despite his *gurus* words (displayed on the dais) "I do not want to be swept off my feet by the winds of culture," he succeeded also in sweeping all present off their feet by the winds of his culture.

The sponsors of the session, however, had seen to it that the different cultural winds, however strong, should not result in a storm, but rather (if we may succumb to an obvious metaphor) a moving scene of windbags tilting at windmills. One of the sponsors of the Congress, Mr. Vatsyayan, the reputed author of "Am-Sutra" ("Am" standing for America) referred to "the centuries of this country's long history" which revealed "an unbroken tradition of the freedom of thought," a patriotic claim promptly deflated by Jaya Prakash.

But "criticism" was a weapon in which Mr. Munshi had no faith: "We cannot face this (communistic) gospel by criticism; we must provide a new constructive faith in man." How to do this, he did not show; so that, according to him, cultural freedom did not consist in criticism but in faith. In this he was doubtless harking back, to the Indian doctrine of *gurvade* i.e. surrender of one's intellect to one's spiritual *guru* (which, not doubt, Mr. Munshi claimed to be in relation to this country).

sion is the simultaneous appearance of both J.P. and C.P. on the same platform, doubtless an instance of cultural freedom. It is said that C.P. glared so hard at J.P.'s red cap that the latter took the cap off. a gesture as gracious as taking one's hat off to one's opponent (who, however, has in the meanwhile begun to see red).

Senhor Madariaga's refusal to offer "economic love" to his Juliet set people thinking about the economies of the affair—who had financed the scheme? The Congress appeared to have attained full economic freedom as a necessary preliminary to cultural freedom. All will agree that such economic freedom is certainly the prelude to "The Coming Defeat of Communism," a book with which title is reported to have been presented by Mr. Masani to Mr. Burnham as soon as the latter landed in this country. The writer has often regretted the fact, that no newspaper reporter has ever reported even the most lavish presents he has made to his friends.

All in all. Pandit Nehru must now be said to have missed so much culture and wit. It was heartening to hear from Mr. Max Yergan that though lynchings might go on in America, the foundations of a free and equalitarian society had been laid. Panditji's fulminations against that country undoubtedly betray a lack of culture. He should retire into the solitude which is the main-spring of Mr. Spender's poetry. He should eschew his "neutralism" (*par* M. Rougemont) and not provide an illustration of Mr. Munshi's charge that "the intelligentsia has not intellectual stability" and that it "lacks abiding faith." Pandit Nehru's godlessness and rationalism are incompatible with abiding faith, but he need not despair. "The ultimate responsibility must, however," said Mr. Munshi, "be with us, with thinkers and devotees of art and literature." Can Panditji lay his hand on his heart and truly say that he belongs to this category?

## Bengal Chamber Supports Managing Agency

The Bengal Chamber of Commerce do not favour the abolition of managing agency contracts, their representatives told the Company Law Committee in Calcutta. The advantages of the system, it was their considered view, outweighed its disadvantages and, even in the altered circumstances of the present, this country was in need of the initiative and enterprise of managing agency houses. This did not mean that all managing agency firms were now performing or were capable of performing the onerous duties cast on them.

In their memorandum submitted to the Committee, The Bengal Chamber of Commerce have expressed the view that while they were in favour of closing the loopholes in the existing Companies Act and incorporating in it such reasonable provisions for inspection and investigation as might be considered necessary, they were opposed to the introduction of irksome and cumbersome amendments as would fetter the enterprise and initiative of honest and efficient businessmen. Questioned as to what they meant by reasonable provision for inspection and investigation, the witnesses stated that they were in favour of the provisions contained in Sections 164 and 171 of the English Companies Act, 1948, with necessary adjustments to suit this country.

Equity is only one of the many tests that a good budget has to satisfy. Shri Chintaman Deshmukh had already disarmed his critics by spreading his net so wide that no one could justly accuse him of angling for a particular section. That the new-burden falls far more heavily on indirect taxes may be regretted, but is unavoidable. For the limit to direct taxation is set not so much by the ability of those who are taxed to bear the burden, but by the inability of the administration to check evasion and the failure of the Government to create the appropriate sanctions that could induce people to come forward and to volunteer to bear their share of the burden cheerfully. To repeat, Pandit Nehru realises this when he deplores that we have not evolved a way by which those who can may be made to bear the burden. But he misses the meaning; otherwise he would find little to differ with Acharya Kripalani.