

Weekly Notes

Bevan and Bevanism

One clear fact emerges from the deliberations of the recent Labour Party Conference at Brighton. It will fight the next general election as a strong, united Party. That is not the only reason for evolving a compromise policy. It is evident that the Labour Party's compromises on some of the major political issues are aimed at seducing the uncommitted section of the voters to vote for it in the next general elections. Whether the Party's new policies on nationalisation and the hydrogen bomb will achieve this aim, is doubtful. But its positive plans for pensions and rents are likely to make it more popular with the voters. This is not denied. But there seems to be some disillusionment that, in the interest of the Party, Mr Bevan has ceased to be a Bevanite. From voting results, it is evident that, on both the controversial issues, the rank and file hold pronounced views. Even so, to accuse Mr Bevan of insincerity is to confuse issues. Mr Bevan has lent his weight and authority against any unilateral ban on nuclear weapons or their testing. But he made it clear that, if voted to power, the Labour Government would take the initiative in banning both. Emotionalism in Politics is not necessarily a virtue. And it would be uncharitable to be harsh on Mr Bevan for his sense of political realism.

This year's Labour Party Conference has been a turning point in the history of the Party not because of Mr Bevan's stand on the issue of the hydrogen bomb, but because of the shift in the Party's policy on nationalisation. Mr Herbert Morrison may have been in strange company with Miss Jennie Lee in their joint opposition to the Party's new policy of purchasing shares of key firms as a substitute to its old plans for nationalisation. But those who are familiar with the sad experience of the nationalisation programme of the Attlee Government will appreciate the shift in policy. It would be wrong to assume that the British Labour Party has abandoned its bias against Capitalism. It remains committed to public ownership. But it has changed its tactics to suit

the changing conditions and circumstances. Its new policy is based on the basic assumption that nationalisation cannot, by itself, abolish class rule, with the divorce of ownership from management, nationalisation cannot end class rule. Even in the Soviet Union a new privileged class has emerged in the shape of managers and technicians. Mr Gaitskell claims that his Party's new policy to public ownership is aimed at checking the status and power of this new privileged class. Even those who endorse the basic implications of the new policy will wonder how the British Labour Party expects to achieve the objective as its changed tactics involve merely part ownership of key firms, but not effective control, through voting rights, over management of such partly acquired concerns. On this fundamental issue, both the British Labour Party and Congress in India find it convenient to be vague, though the latter can legitimately claim to have anticipated the former's changed strategy in their common fight against Capitalism.

India and Japan

It would be hasty to expect any basic change in Japan's foreign policy or any Indo-Japanese alliance as a result of Pandit Nehru's visit to Japan. But certain developing events indicate a possible shift in Japan's foreign policy which may have some intriguing effects on her relations with Asian neighbours. Tokyo's foreign policy is based on co-operation with the Western Powers, and particularly with the United States. But it has always been evident that Japan is eager to develop friendly relations with newly-independent Asian countries. Her policy of alignment with Western Powers is an obstacle to her active participation with Bandung countries. But Mr Kishi's recent appraisal that Asian-African powers exercise "great weight in the comity of nations" is an indication of Japan's eager desire to collaborate with her Asian neighbours. Tokyo has been wooing Asian countries since the Bandung Conference' but without much success. She remains suspect among her Asian neighbours.

Intrigued by the cold reception

at Bandung, Tokyo has been eagerly exploring possibility to allay suspicions against her, she has not abandoned her policy of alliance with America and Western Powers. But she relies on two issues, in which Asian countries are jointly interested, for a rapprochement with her Asian neighbours. They endorse enthusiastically Japan's appeal for banning nuclear tests. Japan's vocal stand on this issue is easily understandable. In her clamant demand for banning nuclear tests, she has the active support of all peace-loving Asian nations. Reports so far available of talks between the Prime Ministers of India and Japan indicate a Joint Indo-Japanese move on the issue of banning nuclear tests. Whether or not sponsored jointly by India and Japan, the latter's insistent demand for a ban on nuclear tests will be actively supported by the Asian-African group in the United Nations.

Japan hopes that unity among her and Asian-African countries on this vital issue will gradually lead to a closer political collaboration between her and her Asian neighbours. Japan is aware of Asian democratic countries' suspicions about her internal political set-up, as also of some aspects of her foreign policy. It is not without significance that, despite the possibility of a closer collaboration between India and Japan on the issue of banning nuclear tests, Pandit Nehru has been rather frank in his lack of response to the Japanese-sponsored plan for an Asian Development Fund. Not only India, but many other Asian countries are hostile to any such proposal which may involve Japanese leadership in Asian economic development. Any such plan sponsored by Japan is a painful reminder to Asian countries of her pre-war policy of economic aggression in the garb of the Asian co-prosperity Sphere. Japan's Asian neighbours admire her technical and economic achievements. They are not unwilling to develop economic relations with Japan or to receive help from her in men and money in furthering their plans for economic improvement. But they have no intention to be included

In the Japanese economic orbit or sphere of influence. There will have to be a fundamental change in Japan's foreign policy before any close and active political co-operation between her and her Asian neighbours can be possible. There are some indications of a shift in emphasis in Japan's future foreign policy. Even so, Japan, like Germany, is likely to remain suspect among her neighbours.

Baby Moon

RUSSIA'S historic achievement in launching the first man-made satellite into outer space has been acknowledged abundantly by scientists throughout the world as a clear indication of her supremacy in science and technology. Along with ICBM, it demonstrates the undisputed lead of Soviet scientists in missile development. While the Russian claim to have made scientific history is widely conceded, there is renewed apprehension of the evil potentialities of scientific progress. Splitting the atom was a tremendous scientific feat. But its monstrous progeny, the Atom Bomb, is a constant reminder of man's ingenuity to exploit science for evil purposes. Even as the common man hails the Russian scientific achievement, he is stupefied by the grim potentialities of earth satellites. Will Russia exploit her scientific supremacy to gain control over the earth? Will the Russian experiment lead to a projection of the "cold war" into outer space? These terrific possibilities are implicit in Washington's mixed reaction to Moscow's successful experiment with an earth satellite.

Professor Antolin Blagonravov has been at pains to dispel such fears. His explanation, that Russia did not inform the world about the launching of the earth satellite as the one now revolving round the earth was merely an experimental venture, has served to allay suspicious. Russia proposes to launch a second artificial earth satellite for the International Geophysical Year. America's plans for an earth satellite for IGY are well under way. Russia has expressed her willingness to co-operate with all countries by exchanging information on related scientific issues. At Barcelona, world's scientists are now discussing the problems of cosmic rays, the exact shape of the earth and similar other problems. In the IGY, scientists will welcome the knowledge gained by the first successful attempt

made by man toward the conquest of space.

Food and Irrigation Rates

"FOOD output declined slightly during 1955-56, though it seems to have increased by about five per cent during 1956-57. This increase in food output appears to be inadequate in relation to the rising demand for food as a result of growing money incomes. Hence, food has become a bottleneck, responsible largely for internal inflationary pressures and also to a certain extent, for the large drain on our foreign exchange resources.

In this context, it is rather disquieting to find that only about 40 per cent of the increase in our irrigation potential is being made use of for expanding agricultural output. From the reports of close observers, it appears that peasants do not find it profitable to use irrigation facilities because of onerous irrigation rates. If this be true, it is necessary for the government to study this aspect of the question closely, for it is hardly desirable for it to be so obsessed with revenue considerations. The concern of the government in inducing the farmers to use irrigation facilities must be rather with the indirect favourable effect of increased food output on its development schemes.

There is much to be said, therefore, in favour of the view that it would be better to charge very low rates to the farmers for the use of irrigation facilities at least for some years in order to induce farmers to change their habits and get used to the new irrigation facilities. This would probably have a very favourable effect on food output. An increase in the irrigation rates may be thought of only after the farmers have realised the benefits of irrigation in the form of increased output and incomes. Till then, irrigation expenditure may be considered as social overhead expenditure, the *raison d'être* of which is to break the food bottleneck,

University Medium

ADDRESSING the seventh convocation of the Gujarat University last week, Shri K. M. Munshi, former Governor of Uttar Pradesh, drew attention to the danger involved in introducing regional languages as media of instruction in universities. He said that such a move would create parochial tendencies, destroy the integrity of the country and take it back to mediaeval isolationism.

Shri Munshi is not given to mincing words; but such emphatic terms as he used are perhaps not necessary to most thinking people to realise the disadvantages of using regional languages for higher studies. The cultural unity of India, preserved for ages through Sanskrit lore, came to be highlighted and even revived through the use of single language for higher education. That the language happened to be English is an accident which, however, does not detract from the significance of the experiment or its lesson.

Without questioning the importance of lower levels of education, be it primary or secondary, where the regional language may be used and is, in fact, being used with considerable advantage, it can be pointed out that university education stands on a different footing. Education at that level takes on more than a regional character, and its benefits would be nothing if not shared on more than a regional basis. It is at that level that education develops a creative quality, and it is from there that leadership in various fields, scientific, cultural, administrative and even political, is normally derived.

The men who have gained the creative urge or quality of leadership through higher studies must have a single medium for the exchange of knowledge, experience, thought or the result of research so that they may be generally beneficial. And that medium can best be only *the* language in which they have mastered their subjects and not any language into which they might try to translate their experience or ideas. So, if different universities are to have different media of instruction, the interchange of thought and experience at the higher level would be halting and defective, if not altogether impossible. The result would be that the present linguistic suspicions and rivalries, apart from getting ossified, might also encourage the emergence of water-tight compartments of life and culture, isolated from one another and possibly at perpetual loggerheads too.

That higher education would benefit vastly from having a single medium for the whole country and for all the universities in it is fairly indisputable. The problem, if any, can be only with regard to the choice of the medium. Here too, happily, the choice is limited to English and Hindi; and considering