

ASSEMBLIES DISSOLVED

S. V. RAJU

If you can't take 'em, break 'em. This is the simple logic that motivated both the Janata Government in April 1977 and the Congress (I) government in February 1980 when dissolving state governments not of the same persuasion as that of the centre. By a coincidence the number of state governments dissolved is nine. Six of these are common to both viz. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Punjab and Rajasthan. The three that fell under Mrs. Gandhi's axe are Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Gujarat, while the Janata party knocked out Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and West Bengal instead. Thus while Janata dissolved eight Assemblies in the north and one in the east, Mrs. Gandhi's action has a wider spread. In fact her tally should have been eleven but for the fact that the state governments of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh caved in. In the process, Haryana set up a new pattern of wholesale defections with the entire government crossing the floor. It will be recalled that Haryana had, in the post-1967 era blazed the trail by pioneering defections. In Himachal Pradesh, on the other hand, it was the usual sordid business of a government being destroyed by attrition. This was tried out in the other nine states as well but the effort did not succeed. Hence the dissolution.

The anger being displayed by the leadership of the Janata party and the Lok Dal is both unwarranted and unjustified as it is a typical case of the biter being bitten. Soon after March 1977, the victorious Janata Party, after failing to engineer defections in adequate numbers dissolved nine state assemblies on the specious plea that the governments in these states had lost their representative character (untenable as this claim may be in both cases in terms of the percentage of

votes) and had moreover exceeded their term of office. At that time, readers will recall, Mrs. Gandhi and her partymen cried foul and sought the Supreme Court's views. Unfortunately for her then and now equally unfortunately for the Janata Party and the Lok Dal, the Supreme Court ruled that the Centre was within its rights in dissolving state assemblies. Perhaps in the euphoria of March 1977 it did not occur to the then presiding Trimurthi that they were presenting a line of argument that would be used so soon against them.

Naturally, Mrs. Gandhi has seized the Janata thesis to throw out state governments manned by them or the Lok Dal. She has not surprisingly, chosen to forget her own objections to Janata's action in 1977. If it wasn't right then, it can't be right now. To put it somewhat tritely, two wrongs can never make a right. But who bothers about such trivialities as principles and right action?

The reasons for the dissolution are to be discovered not in their public justification but in the realms of real politik. Janata's driving need in March/April 1977 was to ensure safe numbers in the context of the Presidential elections then looming large on the political horizon. Mrs. Gandhi's decision in February 1980 has to do with the biennial elections scheduled for the middle of this year. Also, perhaps, for any plans she has for playing around with the Constitution some more.

Whatever they may be, the sad fact remains that Mrs. Gandhi has thrown away the opportunity to emerge as a statesman and has chosen to be a politician. And that indeed is a tragedy. With her action, she has signalled a continuation of the politics of confrontation even while making public noises about the need for national reconciliation to deal with the parlous economic situation on the one hand and India's growing isolation from its neighbours in the light of the present government's pusillanimous attitude towards the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Equally unfortunate is the fact that the gradual assertion of the federal nature of the Indian State, (a bonus arising from an ineffective government in New Delhi has received a setback and we are back again on the road to centralism with all its attendant weaknesses and dangers. ★

A BLUE-PRINT FOR NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

National Reconciliation is possible only if all of us (all major national political parties and people) desire it and work for it sincerely and unitedly.

Hindustani Andolan submits that it is possible to bring about national reconciliation only if we can all arrive at some firm agreement on certain basic issues and principles, listed below:-

1. With all its faults and other weaknesses, democracy is still the best form of Government. One may change, alter or amend the form of democracy by appropriate amendments to the constitution, with a view to strengthen democracy and make it's functioning more effective and purposeful.

In this context the first task for all of us should be to dispel the doubts created by force of circumstances and events, in the minds of the people. They are— (a) that individual freedom comes in the way of economic progress, (b) that freedom means nothing to a poor man, (c) that the current mandate given by the people to Mrs. Gandhi should be interpreted as a voluntary and unanimous rejection by the people of India of their own basic and fundamental rights, guaranteed to them under the Constitution of India, and (d) that discipline and democracy cannot co-exist.

2. Democracy and Human Values are inseparable. A democratic government which does not actively encourage the growth of human values among people can never succeed in ushering in justice, social, economic and political. Similarly, it must be accepted that human values which build the character of the people can only survive and thrive in an atmosphere of freedom and not in a state of serfdom.

3. We must now be ready to accept the fact that merely having the freedom either to express one's views or voice one's dissent or to go on strike or offer Satyagraha or the right to hire and fire people and finally the right to vote, will not automatically ensure the creation of a free and civilised society, unless people learn to exercise their rights in a responsible manner and learn to live up to the motto, "Live and Let Live".

4. Democracy means a system of checks and balances and, therefore, to make it work, (a) a healthy and constructive political opposition must be encouraged and respected, (b) the right of dissent must be protected, (c) all democratic institutions, associations and organisations must be allowed to function legally and freely and (d) the freedom of the press must be ensured to provide free access to information and views.

LAW AND ORDER :

Politicians make laws in parliament and legislatures; the Judiciary interprets the laws and the police is meant to implement them. It is the duty of the police to protect those who abide by law and punish those who break it, without any fear of any interference. Let everyone of us accept the fact that when people who make the laws themselves, break them or interfere in the administration of justice, it is impossible to ensure the rule of law anywhere in the world.

The first thing that is to be done by all political parties is to instruct all their members, M.Ps., M.L.As and others to stop interfering in the administration of justice. Any complaint of interference must be immediately looked in and culprits punished. In fact, it would be advisable to consider whether it is possible to amend the existing law in such a manner that any outside interference in the administration of justice becomes a punishable offence.

Let all political parties and other organisation decide that they should prohibit their members to hold any sort of demonstration within the premises of any Court in India. It is time we learnt to respect our judiciary and our custodians of laws.

Let us provide a decent living wage to our magistrates, judges, policemen and police officers. Let us improve the working conditions of all those who are involved in the administration of justice. Let us by all means go in for judicial reforms with a view to impart justice as speedily as possible.

Unless there is basic agreement on the above lines, Hindustani Andolan feels there will never be an effective rule of law in our land. There will only be the rule of despots.

RISING PRICES :

India is a great country. It is endowed with immense material resources. It has abundance of man power, ready and willing to produce goods and services.

Prices rise and fall in direct relation to demand and supply. The biggest problem is how to make every able-bodied Indian more productive. Let us examine all bottlenecks that come in the way of producing more goods. Let us liberate all forces of production from all unnecessary controls, regulations and excessive taxation. Let there be no penalty for over production for it harms no one. Let us agree to follow the policy of rewarding hard work, enterprise, research and honesty.

Let us accept the harsh fact that the final sale price of any product in India reflects the cost of labour, raw materials, interest on capital, overheads, profit *plus cost of corruption*.

The burden of cost of corruption is always passed on to the consumer who has to pay from his pocket what the producers, distributors, retailers and wholesalers pay to all manner of people which includes ministers, petty politicians and bureaucrats, small and big.

This problem is also linked with the problem of taxation and black money. If we are sincere about tackling this problem in right earnest, the above facts

must be accepted and plans for immediate actions should be chalked out to remedy the disease.

Hindustani Andolan suggests that there should be a constant dialogue between government, people connected with the manufacture and distribution of goods and consumers, in an atmosphere of frankness devoid of any fear and mutual suspicion.

FAMILY PLANNING :

Family Planning should not be made into a party programme. It should be a national effort planned jointly by parties, social and cultural organisations of the country with the active help and co-operation of all respected leaders of public opinion in India.

CORRUPTION :

Corruption has become a national disease, which has precipitated the crisis of our national character. A nation without character has no future. No amount of political power or fear of lathis, bayonet or jail term can succeed in building the character of the people unless those who wield the power, set an example by their own behaviour. If we accept this fact readily, then alone there is point in talking about attacking corruption. A beginning can be made however by attacking one major breeding ground of corruption viz. election expenses.

It is estimated that a minimum of rupees four hundred to five hundred crores has been spent in the last election by various candidates and parties in the field. All this money has been provided mainly by businessmen and industrialists from their black money pool. They will recover all their investment in politicians with profit.

Ultimately, it will be the consumer who will have to bear the burden in terms of rising prices. Very soon state elections will come which means more black money in circulation. If elections do not take place, there will be the cost of defections. All this will be an added burden on the consumer.

Unless, we go in for electoral reforms, which will eliminate this menace, we will not be able to destroy the deadly virus of corruption which is growing in our country. If we continue to ignore this problem we will do so at the risk of handing over the future of our country in the hands of a most unholy mafia-like coalition of corrupt politicians, businessmen and industrialists. Neither the present generation nor the future generation will forgive the leaders of political parties and the intellectual community of India for not taking appropriate steps to save India from total disaster.

Millions and millions of Indians are waiting for a decent break for the last so many years. Mrs. Gandhi has been chosen by them to cure the disease. Under these circumstances national reconciliation is definitely something worth trying for by all of us (that includes Mrs. Gandhi and her party, opposition parties and the community of thinking Indians) we must strive to bring this about sincerely.

This is not the time to go in for political gimmickry. This is the time for resolute action. If we fail now, there will not be another chance for there is a limit to everything, including the patience of the docile Indian voters. ★

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INDIRA'S INDIA

A POLITICAL NOTEBOOK
BY
S. NIHAL SINGH

"Insight into the political scene throughout the rise and fall (and rise?) of Indira Gandhi can be gained from Nihal Singh's book; he is among the soundest and wisest of Indian political journalists and this is a collection of his articles in the Calcutta Statesman. Among those who should read it, as well as the categories mentioned earlier, are people who imagine that Indian prose is stilted and pompous or that it mishandles the English language."

NEW STATESMAN (London)

"It is difficult to predict the shape of things to come. But reflection on the tumultuous times India has been through may yield valuable clues and lessons. It is precisely for this reason that Mr S. Nihal Singh's latest book Indira's India should be read carefully... What stands out throughout is Mr Singh's scrupulous fairness; he spares neither Mrs Gandhi nor the Janata leaders nor any one else. Nor does he lash out unduly. And the book is eminently readable. Rarely does one come across an awkward sentence or a jarring note."

THE HINDUSTHAN TIMES

"Since the fall of Indira Gandhi in the March 1977 general election, the former Prime Minister's doings during her years of power have been a tempting subject for many authors. All kinds of writers, expert in their craft or novices, have tried to cash in on the Emergency literature boom. S. Nihal Singh's book too is likely to be taken as another volume on the Emergency or its aftermath. It is not exactly so. The book is a collection of the author's signed weekly column in The Statesman, of which he is the chief editor. As a keen observer of the political events of the country for about a decade, he writes with ample background knowledge, clarity and imagination..."

THE SUNDAY STANDARD

"Mr Nihal Singh's book is quite distinct from most of the contemporary publications on the Indira regime. It is a dispassionate analysis of the major political events and the behaviour of our prominent personalities during the most fateful years (1969-early 1978) of Independent India... Able editing has enabled the book to avoid a disjointed look. It rather impresses the readers as a coherent and fairly complete account of the rise and fall of Indira Gandhi. Moreover, many shrewd observations and intelligent hints for the future shape of events will make one feel that there are journalists who may, at times, excel the practising politicians in the assessment of political situations."

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POSTAGE RS 5 50

OUR TRADE UNIONS

Will They Face The Challenge of the Eighties?

V. B. KARNIK

A new decade has begun, the decade of the Eighties. The challenges that trade unions will have to face are not likely to be qualitatively different from those faced earlier, but they will be more pressing and complicated. They will acquire that character because the economic situation is likely to be increasingly difficult and the problem of unemployment to weigh upon trade unions very heavily.

Trade Unions grow when the economy grows, not only statistically but at a rate higher than that of population. Growth must be able to provide for at least a slight improvement in the conditions of the people, and for employment opportunities to absorb not only the new entrants into the labour force but also a fair percentage of those who are already unemployed. Care will have to be taken moreover that the new wealth that is created is not monopolised by those who are better off but is widely distributed amongst those at the bottom. There is little prospect of the economy growing at that rate in the eighties and much less prospect of widening of employment opportunities and equitable distribution of newly created national wealth.

There are indications that the burdens on workers and other toiling millions will increase since vast sums will be needed for developmental expenses. They are likely to be raised through fresh taxation and deficit financing. Both will hit workers hard. Prices will increase, scarcities will appear, and living conditions will be harder than what they are at present. Growing population and unemployment will make things still harder.

These conditions will place trade unions on the horns of a dilemma regarding the policy to be adopted. Will it be a policy of constant struggle and confrontation against the Government and employers, without worrying about the results? It may appear heroic, but will prove self-defeating in the end. It will antagonise society, isolate the unions and provide an opportunity to the Government to damn them as anti-national and anti-social. Constant strikes hamper production, create bottlenecks and slow down industrial progress. Workers do not like unending strife. They leave unions following that course and flock to others working in a different way.

Or will it be a more prudent policy of securing as much as possible through negotiations and co-operation, building up strength, widening the base and winning the support of public opinion? Will it pay

more attention to changing socio-economic policies than to winning a concession here or a concession there. There will be little glamour in this cautious, painstaking course of action, but it will secure more benefits to the workers, and do no damage to public interest. Strikes are not excluded, but they will be resorted to only when absolutely necessary and only after exhausting all other means.

Trade unions can follow this course effectively only if they extend their organisation to unorganised workers in cities and also to agricultural labourers and artisans in rural areas. That will give them a strength which cannot be ignored. They must at the same time get involved in rural development and all associated activities. This will be a departure from the beaten track of trade union work, but it will be necessary if trade unions are not to be swept away by the rising tide of poverty and unemployment.

Workers and their trade unions are under attack at present because they ask more and more for those who are already much better off than agricultural labourers, the rural poor, and unorganised workers. Some critics go to the extent of calling farmers a privileged class. This criticism is far from true. Industrial workers in cities by and large, are only a little better off than their brethren in villages. And the little additional benefit that they enjoy as the producers of vast wealth they usually share with their poorer brothers, cousins and other relatives. An unemployed relative or two usually stays with an industrial worker, and from month to month he has to remit funds to the village for the support of his parents or his wife and children who cannot live with him for lack of accommodation. The criticism, however untrue, is likely to become louder and fiercer in the present decade. Trade unions can justify their demand for improvement of the conditions of industrial workers only by combining it with an equally strong demand for the improvement of the conditions of all poor people. And a mere demand is not enough. It must be accompanied by active efforts to organise the poor in cities and villages.

A significant change must take place in the role that unions play. In the Eighties, they cannot be merely combative organisations, constantly engaged in struggle for securing petty concessions. They will have to be more constructive in their approach. They will have to widen their horizons so as to include in it not merely their members but also the large masses of unorganised workers and the poor in villages. They must be also prepared to shoulder responsibilities so that the policies they advocate are properly implemented. This will bring about a qualitative change in the outlook and functioning of trade unions.

Trade unions should now shift their emphasis from monetary to longterm non-monetary demands such as housing, education, particularly technical and vocational, old-age pensions, promotions, etc. They should also demand a larger voice in the determination of the terms and conditions of employment and in the management of the undertakings. They will, of course, have to equip themselves for discharging these new responsibilities. The unions will also realise that patient negotiations and reasonable arguments, accompanied

by pressure of public opinion, are more useful for gaining their demands than strikes and demonstrations.

Long-term demands of workers and amelioration of the conditions of the masses can be best secured through legislation and through governmental actions and policies. The movement must, therefore, turn its attention to politics, to larger issues facing the country. It should try to influence the actions and policies of the Government. This can be done without joining any political party and without losing its independence and autonomy. The movement will stultify itself if it fails to perform this wider role. It must take an active interest in the plans for economic development, and in all actions of the Government in the social and economic fields. The age is long past when it could confine itself to collective bargaining over wages and allowances. It must enter the wider field of social and political life, and seek to influence it in the interest of a better deal for industrial workers and the producing masses as a whole.

Trade Unions must adopt a positive, and not a negative or oppositional attitude towards the Government. Opposition, even a fight, may become inevitable when the Government does anything which is against the interests of workers. But it can do, particularly in a democracy, many things, which is of advantage to workers and others. Those must be actively supported, and constant pressure must be exerted on the Government in order that it may follow that path more vigorously. This can be done only if there is an attitude of critical co-operation, critical in the sense of readiness to criticise whenever necessary.

The eightys will pose similar challenges to employers and the Government. Their response to those challenges must be helpful if worker's responses are to prove useful and rewarding. Employers must give up their hostility to trade unions and must accept them as equal partners in building up enterprises. They must hold constant consultations with unions and should not ordinarily introduce any changes without securing their consent. Disputes, wherever they occur, should be settled in negotiations across the table, and resort to an external authority should be an exception rather than the rule. Workers' demands for higher wages, dearness allowance or bonus should be regarded as legitimate, and all efforts should be made to settle them as early as possible. Apart from wages and fair conditions of work, workers should be treated with respect, and their dignity as human beings should be preserved.

Government has two roles, one as an employer and the other as the sovereign authority. As an employer, it cannot claim any privileges not available to other employers. On the other hand, it has the responsibility of behaving like a model employer and of setting standards for others to follow. It should, in particular, set up high standard in the matter of labour-management co-operation.

As a sovereign authority, the eightys will prove a very difficult period for the Government, whatever its colour. For the economic development that is taken in hand, huge investments and heavy mobilisation of resources are needed. Benefits will not be available

immediately. The task cannot be accomplished in a democracy without enlisting the co-operation of all sections of the people.

The co-operation of the trade union movement will be crucial in that respect. It can offer not only its own co-operation, but can also secure the co-operation of millions of others. This can be enlisted only through a meaningful dialogue with the movement. The dialogue must be continuous and must embrace all sections of the movement. It must be taken into confidence and consulted from time to time on all issues of social and economic policy.

There is a good example of such a dialogue in Great Britain. Some years back there was the Social contract. It gave some good results, but later fell into disuse. Another effort was made later and it resulted in an agreement between the British Government and the British Trade Union Congress. A similar agreement was arrived at recently between the AFL-CIO and the U.S. Government. It is called the National Accord. Here is something that authorities in India can copy with advantage. There will be many other challenges, but they will generally be of the same kind as faced earlier. They will be such as inter-union rivalries, democratic functioning of unions and others. They will have to be tackled properly, taking care at the same time to reduce tensions rather than to intensify them.

Inter-union rivalries have plagued the movement since long. They are responsible for many work stoppages, and also for some violence and other anti-social activities. The point to be noted, however, is that unions are not the only guilty party. The main offender is the Government. It has failed so far to provide an expeditious machinery for evaluating the claims of rival unions, and for granting the status of a recognised body to a representative union. Secret ballot is the best way to ascertain the support enjoyed by a union.

Recognition of a representative union (the representative character being determined by secret ballot open to all employees) as the sole collective bargaining agent and bonafide collective bargaining with it should be the basis of the industrial relations system all over the country. Recognised unions should enjoy the rights of check-off the union shop. That will put an end to inter-union rivalries and enable trade unions to grow as strong and responsible organisations. The movement would be well advised to secure the enactment of a law to provide for it as one of the main objectives of its work in the decade. It must also ensure that unions forming it function in a democratic manner.

It is difficult to foresee all the challenges that the new decade will pose. The situation is fluid and it may change in many directions. International developments may force a big change; internal developments may also, under some circumstances, knock the bottom out of the basic assumption of this argument. However, apart from these contingencies, trade unions would be well-advised to follow the path of conciliation and co-operation, to avoid the alternative path of constant conflict. ★

A SENSE OF FAILURE

In the controversies about current political questions, the long-term view is generally left out. It is assumed that no one can predict how events will shape in the next ten or twenty years. Yet futurology was a popular and respectable subject not long ago. It had the merits of drawing constant attention to the possibilities, as visualized in one area or other when the present situation is carefully analysed. Taking my clue from that somewhat hazy mode of anticipating the prospects for Indian society as a whole, I venture to offer this proposition: that by the end of the century life for the majority in India will be no better than it is now—it may be considerably worse.

The real problems of the country are of poverty, social injustice and regression, educational sterility, cultural stagnation, and loss of focus where there appears to be progress. While these problems are discussed by a small segment of the intelligentsia, the rest of it is almost entirely occupied with careerist opportunism. It has a superficial involvement in literary, intellectual and social activity. Spiritual cults proliferate. Intellectual fashions dictate terms, and ego-boasting public work is undertaken with a minimum sense of responsibility. The new crop of journals, which are in many ways lively and enterprising, reflect the qualities mentioned above to a depressing degree. It is rare to find in any of them a sustained seriousness when it comes to fundamental social purposes.

There is no denying the fact that a certain ferment of ideas has been going on for some time now. But no single person or institution is able to create enough loyalty and widely acceptable directions which would make a decisive difference to the actual conditions in

India today. Study-group discussion, public debates, arguments in print, a dialogue among the divided, manifestoes, guide-line statements, blue-prints for concerted action, in fact, all the manifestations of the need and the search for action are hearteningly and encouragingly visible. But so far nothing has *happened* to suggest or imply the possibility of a real transformation. When some minor modifications seem to provide evidence to the contrary, it soon turns out that their full consequences have not been adequately worked out, so that either there is chaos and confusion or a marked lowering of the already low standards.

Education in India supplies many examples familiar to this writer over the last twenty years. All the seminars and conferences he has attended, all the committees on which he has worked, the moves or counter-moves with which he has been associated, have not only failed to improve any specific educational situation; they have positively destroyed whatever was good in the old system and replaced it with unworkable solutions. In economic planning, in science policy, in housing developments, in urban reconstruction, in transport, in almost any sphere one cares to name, our thought and work not only miss measuring up to the demands; they create entanglements which put the reality of progress perpetually out of reach.

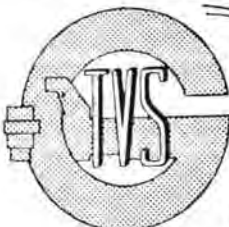
I don't mean to be pessimistic, but I would like to oppose, in myself and in others around me, exercises in futility, which result from dogmatic and pseudo-ideological thinking. As a people, we seem unable to make any practical arrangement function in the interest of those for whom it is set up. The rules, the plans, the facade, the committee, the expansion, the activity which adds up to nothing these take the place of the need and the service.

NISSIM EZEKIEL

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REVIVAL OF ISLAM

The muezzin's haunting call holds sway over 750 million believers, making Islam the faith with the second largest following in the world. (After Christianity's 950 million). Oil-rich Third World Islamic countries have made Islam a force to be reckoned with by the super powers in an energy-hungry world. The recent resurgence of Islam that has been inflamed by the demagogic rhetoric of Ayatollah Khomeini, however, has developed as an antithesis to industrialisation and the consequent disrupting social changes often wrongly branded as Westernisation. Power-hungry autocrats have used Islam as a convenient religious crutch to remain in office.

Saudi Arabia, birthplace of Islam, is governed by a monarchy, despite the fundamental Islamic principle that all men are equal. By maintaining close links with the "ulemas"—religious heads of the puritanical Wahabi sect of Sunnis, the royal family obtains religious sanctions for major decisions. Saudi Arabia's immense oil wealth has bolstered tottering Islamic nations such as near-bankrupt Egypt, besides aiding constructive relations among radical Islamic regimes.

Egypt's Anwar Sadat is the only deeply religious man of vision. After expelling the Soviets from his land he energetically worked towards peace in the Middle East, despite being condemned by orthodox Islamic nations, believing that "no religion in politics and no politics in religion" is the best policy. Most other Islamic states however hold "our wearon is our faith". Islam is therefore held as a political philosophy, a way of life, and an answer to Marxism and Capitalism.

The Iran revolution is directly responsible for upsetting the applecart of *detente*. The Shah's gravest mistake was not his dictatorial tyranny which resembles Khomeini's repressive rule in the name of Islam but the rapid modernisation of his backward country. The velocity of social change that inevitably followed, and the education of the hitherto orthodox middle class, was such as to galvanise them into revolution, with the Ayatollah's guidance. Progressive changes, such as the emancipation of women, were branded as heretically Western, rather than as offshoots of industrialisation brought about by the exploitation of oil wealth. Khomeini fanned the discontent of the middle classes—enlightened ironically about their rights by the Shah's far-reaching measures—to his advantage. The atrocities perpetrated by him in the name of Islam are, however, contrary to common or international law. Even the Shariat (Islamic Code) followed by Iran's revolutionary courts, nowhere justifies that innocent people (the American hostages, for example,) be punished for the crimes of a despot.

Afghanistan, with its strategic location between the USSR, Iran and Pakistan, and predominantly Muslim, is a house divided by its many warring tribes, a factor exploited by the Soviets. The late President Amin, while professing Marxism, was enough of a devout Muslim to cause suspicion among the Russians. The

growing resurgence of Islam among Afghani *mujahidin* (holy warriors), along with the impact of the Iranian revolution, undoubtedly urged the Soviets to cold-bloodedly dispose of Amin, invade Afghanistan, and install their puppet Babrak Karmal as President for an eyewash of legitimacy.

The Russian invasion of a non-aligned nation, achieved significant objectives in pursuit of their long-term policy of expansionism. First, it checked the Afghani *mujahidin*. With 50 million Muslims in the USSR, and a sizeable number already militant, the Soviets had ample reason for stemming Islamic resurgence, especially with theocratic, pro-US Pakistan aiding Afghani *mujahidin* across the border.

Unfortunately, despite the Islamic revival over continents, there is no meaningful Islamic solidarity across international borders. Contrary to past traditions, if Muslims in Pakistan and India combine to contain the Communist menace, now entrenched in Afghanistan, Soviet expansionism can be halted. However, Pakistan's President Zia-ul-Haq's shaky Islamic government has sought U.S. military aid, which can only add to instead of defuse tension with India, and also aid the Soviets, because of the deployment of Pakistani troops on the Afghan-Iran border, as well as on the Indo-Pak border.

Measures such as the introduction of the Shariat in addition to established civil and criminal codes, which attempt to appease disgruntled Pakistanis, only turn the wheel of civilisation back to the Dark Ages, when women were mere chattel, and thieves and adulterers had their hands cut off. It is doubtful whether such an Islamic revival serves any purpose other than bestowing on heads of states a religious garb for undemocratic acts such as the annihilation of the opposition, which finally creates more problems than it solves.

Islamic fundamentalist revivals are akin to Christian and Hindu revivals, in searching for solutions to problems of modernisation, such as the break-up of the family, and the break-down of traditional social mores. The latter are no longer purely a Western phenomena. Religious revivals are part of the cyclical changes that society undergoes, from puritanism to modernism and back to puritanism.

While, however, modernisation—attributed to the West—changes society, Communism is an ideology that suppresses it. Islam like Christianity and Judaism, is Semitic and monotheistic, while Communism is atheistic. In the race for power between the US and the USSR, the Islamic nations should realise the threat to religion itself, inherent in the Soviet advancement towards that oil-rich crescent of Third World nations surrounding the Indian Ocean. An Islamic revival with a policy of *modus vivendi* among these nations is more desirable than a revival that curbs social changes, and plunges civilisation back to the barbarism of the days before the rule of law.

PREETHI BIDDAPA

THE ENGLISH TEXTBOOK

For three years now I have been teaching English in Bombay at what is known as a "Junior College"; in other words, to students of Std. XI and XII, aged fifteen to seventeen. After Std. XII many of these students go on to professional studies (medicine, engineering) or they begin a three-year Senior College course with more specialised subjects. This means that Std. XII is their last year of "general" education. The language—in this case, English—course is also taught at a general, non-specialised level, and as such it becomes the nearest thing in the syllabus to an "education-in-life" course. Perhaps without undue reduction, then, one could say that the Junior College English course represents in microcosm the kind of life-education we attempt to give our students; and the Junior College English course means no more and no less than the Junior College English textbook.

With this in mind, I intend to take a good look at that textbook. Or rather, at the three which are prescribed at the moment. There's a "Higher Level" book, a "Lower Level" and a "Uni-level"; but in terms of projecting the educator's aims they are all Unilevel, and I shall treat them as one entity.

The textbook in question consists of selected prose extracts and poems. The most striking difference between this and the old-fashioned English textbook is that the present one has very little time for what one has so cautiously begun to call Style. It is clear that no extract has been included for the grace or elegance of its language. This shift of emphasis is not in itself a bad thing. Elegant English becomes a silly concept in our context, as any teacher will testify who has tried to bring together a purple Victorian essay and a bewildered class. My objection to these extracts is not that they do not demonstrate Style, but that they do not demonstrate the serious use of language. The life-education which comes from studying English, or Marathi, or Japanese, is that of being exposed to precision rather than muzziness; organised rather than disorganised material; and above all, the moral and human evaluation which is indirectly present in a good story, play, or poem. In other words, it would come from reading something by Elizabeth Browning, not a (poorly-written) narrative about her. The inclusion of that narrative more or less sums up the reasons for my crossness with these textbooks. Such a selection rests on the assumption that the only function of language is to impart information, which is a sinful assumption for a language textbook to have. The choice, naturally, fails to be literary, and succeeds only in paying a dubious homage to Literature.

I have implied that these selections are unconcerned with real education through language, and concentrate instead on a wholesale supply of externals. What are these externals, anyway? As I look at the list of contents, I say to myself: This educator wants the student to know something about Literature; hence the piece about Browning. He wants him to be patriotic; hence the speech by Nehru. He wants him to be kind to animals; hence the essay about an otter. But he doesn't want him to get bored; hence the "humorous"

piece at the end. What splendid aims these are! And how is the educator to blame if, at the end of it all, the student turns out unpatriotic, non-animal-loving, and bored?

SHAMA FUTEHALLY

Statement about ownership and other particulars about Freedom First

Place of Publication : Bombay
Periodicity of its Publication : Monthly
Printer's & Publisher's Name : J. R. Patel
Whether citizen of India : Indian
Address : 285 Javji Dadaji Marg,
Adenwalla Baug,
Bombay-400 007,
Editor's Name : Nissim Ezekiel
Whether citizen of India : Indian
Address : The Retreat, Bellasis Road,
Bombay - 400 005.

Name and address of individuals Democratic Research Service who own the newspapers and 127, Mahatma Gandhi Road, partners or shareholders holding Bombay - 400 023. more than one per cent of the capital :

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ENCOUNTERS OF THE SOUTHERN KIND

Geeta Doctor

1 How the South was won

"Good Lord, don't tell me you actually voted?" boomed the sculptured voice of mein host clutching his glass of Ballantine. The exquisite imitation Louis XIV furniture seemed to freeze in their places as the hostess nervously fingered the genuine Brussels lace (made in Hongkong) tablecloth, and the cut-glass knocked against the Wedgewood. The other guests looked as embarrassed as if they had been faced with the disclosure of some dreadful primitive rite.

The victim squirmed but countered with the question, "Yes, of course, haven't you?"

"I never vote while I am in India," replied the host genially. In the silence that followed only the mosquitoes of Madras humming in syncopated amazement wondered aloud where else in the world an Indian would vote. Did our host cast his vote in Paris or Moscow or Madrid?

The next day a plump matron, prime representative of the middle classes, confided on how she had voted. She had risen early on the morning of the election, she said, had her bath and said her prayers and gone straight to the temple. "I offered two coconuts and a basket of flowers for Indira," she said proudly. "That's why she won."

"But did you vote?" I persisted.

"No, we never vote," she replied. "What's the use of voting? The important thing is that she won." The lady belonged to the "kerosene and onion" faction of political persuasion and so it was very little use arguing with her. As everyone will readily agree, onions are more potent ingredients in daily life than mere democracy!

Turning now to the representatives of the working class, the wives of coolies working at a building site, I inquired how they viewed the elections.

"Very good elections," they replied in Tamil, smiling with deep satisfaction. Women in Tamil Nadu are said to be the main worshippers of MGR, the celluloid god, who leapt straight from the screen into the Chief Ministership and stopped their husbands from "drinking". Or at least he tried.

"Did you vote?"

"No," they answered. "We did not vote. We were given sarees not to vote. All we had to do was stay in the house on election day." And thus did one celluloid hero fade from the public gaze.

The interesting footnote to these happenings is that following the dissolution of the various State Assemblies round the country, including that of Tamil Nadu, the former Chief Minister has announced that he will be resuming his film career in April. This has caused widespread relief amongst his female admirers who will all be waiting to see his new film in their "Congress-I" sarees.

2 Cops and Robbers

The Guinness Book of records may not have noticed it, but the Policemen of Madras wear the widest short pants in the world. The khaki shorts are starched and stiffened to stand out like the organdie tutus worn by ballerinas; and when the Policemen stand on their pedestals directing the traffic, there are signs on them in Tamil that I cannot read but which must surely say, "Pedestrians are requested not to look up."

One theory for the extraordinary width of this garment is that it makes it easier for the Police to run about catching the thieves who are currently on the increase in Madras. Every time there is a robbery, the Commissioner in charge of such matters no doubt sends down a memo to the tailoring department saying, "Please increase the width of khaki shorts by two extra inches." At least one always reads that the Policemen covering the beat in that area have been doubled, and so too their rate of arrests.

Recently an uncle of mine was deeply upset when his faithful servant-boy vanished into the night air, soon after the Sunday T.V. show. Not knowing whether the weekly melodrama had affected the boy so profoundly as to lead him to the nearest railway track, which was not so far from the house, my uncle sent messages to the relatives. They arrived on the scene disclaiming all knowledge of the boy's whereabouts and demanding his immediate return.

At this point the boy reappeared in the company of a lawyer, in a high state of excitement, relating a strange tale. He had been standing outside the gate, he said, after the TV show, when a dozen policemen wearing their well ventilated khaki shorts and wielding batons, bore down on him and dragged him into a van.

"Put me down. My Master and Mistress are in the house. Let me just ring the bell once," he begged, but the ballerinas in khaki only danced a few blows on his head and asked him to shut up and to let them do their work in peace. They were rounding up criminals, and anyone standing outside a house at night had to be a criminal.

Faced with this logic, the servant boy was reduced to such a state of speechlessness that he could not even remember the telephone number of the house, when asked for it at the police station. A sure sign of the criminal mentality, said the constable in charge, and locked him up for the night.

It was only towards the evening of the next day that the servant boy was returned to the house. The Police had released him at the behest of a kindly lawyer who took the boy back to my uncle with a kindly smile and requested him to pay sixty rupees for the kindness.

No comments were available from the Police on this unusual method for apprehending thieves, but the last we heard of it, tailors were busy increasing the width of khaki shorts by two inches.

THE WORLD OF BOOKS

FORWARD WITH NATURE An Integrated Approach to World Problems of Technology Energy and Agriculture by *Jatindra Nath Mukherjee*; Popular Prakashan, 171 pp Rs. 60

There is very little writing specifically on the Indian environment. Most books deal either with conditions in temperate climates or with environment in general—lumping all the “less developed” countries together. India has problems which are different from those of other “developing” tropical countries. It is not only physical or material circumstances which affect the quality and productivity of the land. History, religion and customs most profoundly affect its well-being. In these circumstances, any book, article, speech, symposium, Seminar or Conference which gives an airing to the Conservationists’ scale of values is to be welcomed. And any book which is concerned with the Indian environment, and which presumably takes into account and discusses our own special brand of troubles, is to be doubly welcomed.

Having, then, in principle, welcomed Mr. Jatindra Nath Mukherjee’s book *Forward with Nature*, we proceed to study it. The title page carries a quotation from “The Mother.” We discover that the author was “Chief Research Chemist in Tata Oil Mills, but left service at a young age in 1946 and settled in Pondicherry taking an active interest in the Ashram....”. We next discover that the author does not set himself any limits, and is prepared to discuss everything about the whole world, its Technology, Energy, and Agriculture. Also its economics, its psychological, social and political problems. Time is short, for all this must be settled within 112 pages, leaving 60 for Appendices. No wonder the author gets a bit breathless. “Finally,” he says on page 23 “the constantly proliferating administration of all kinds, political, social, education, health, welfare, research and development, etc., all increasingly consuming goods and services, are getting more bureaucratic, more institutionalized, more mechanised, more demanding of men, materials and energy and, hence, increasingly inflationary.” The problems of the mind are taken up on the next page — “His (man’s) guide should be mind and supra-mental consciousness. But his mind, stymied and perverted by his almost exclusive economic preoccupation, cannot discern his true needs. Artificially created wants serve him badly and banefully and make him physically ill, vitally suffering and frustrated, and mentally sub—and mis-developed”. If the best definition of the Environment is “Everything except Me,” then Mr. Mukherjee certainly cannot be faulted for overlooking a single item.

Having described all the problems which beset us, what of the solution? Mr. Mukherjee tells us this in a short chapter entitled “The Solution”. “Corrective

action should be taken regarding land. Equitable redistribution of land for farming and agriculture should be done on an urgent basis wherever, as in India, there is pressing need for it. All types of land including arid, semi-arid, rocky, sandy, eroding, brackish and even some parts of forest land should be used for redistribution for farming..”

Unfortunately, the author’s headlong style almost camouflages the one really important plea which he makes. This is for tree farming, or social forestry as is usually called. There is no question that it is the best hope of saving our country today, but in the heat and dust of discussing every available world problem, there is a chance that the reader might miss its importance altogether. Again, although it is obvious that the author sincerely and quite rightly believes that tree farming on a large scale in India could help to save the country, his confused style and his inability to sustain a logical or persuasive argument is a serious handicap.

The diffusion and hysteria of his writing will prevent readers from taking him seriously. Only the converted will know how right he is. The unconverted will shrug it off as just one more excursion into cloud-cuckoo land.

LAEEQ FUTEHALLY

ACCESS DENIED: The Politics of Press Censorship by *Sean Kelly*; (*The Washington Papers IV*) Ambika Publications, New Delhi, Indian Edition, 1979. Pp. 80 Rs. 7.50.

The author, a Voice of America correspondent, who has spent the last twelve years reporting from Africa, Asia and Washington D.C., was a research fellow at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, for a year. His book is a study of the growing trend towards international information control. It is the fourth in a series of the Centre’s “Washington Papers” dealing with problems in international communications.

Kelly has limited himself to information in its narrowest sense—the news. He has analysed the various forms of censorship: through visa restrictions, denial of transmitting facilities, harassment of correspondents, threat of expulsion or excessive (restricted) hospitality. How these are implemented is amply illustrated by many bizarre yet true incidents of news censorship.

The survey, though, is made from a totally American point of view, and hence appears rather prejudiced at times. Kelly strongly feels that unless the Western nations make concrete efforts to dispel misunderstanding between themselves and the communist nations as well as the Third World, the Soviet Union, with its Eastern European allies, China, Cambodia, Laos and

Vietnam, and now also UNESCO, who are encouraging information blockage, will continue to do so even more strongly. Kelly has handled this subject in the chapter entitled "UNESCO, Moscow and the Third World Complaint." Though UNESCO earlier backed America and its allies, with many Asian, African and Latin American countries becoming independent, and consequently UN members, it has gradually changed its stand. The author is very critical of UNESCO's world-wide efforts to create national communications policies and national news agencies. He makes his point through detailed examples of UNESCO press activities in Latin America, and at its General Conference held in Nairobi in 1976.

Kelly also highlights the Helsinki 1975 Agreement and its follow-up in Belgrade in 1977. The Belgrade meeting was divided and discussed in three major portions called "Baskets". Basket III which covered Human Rights, is examined minutely in this book. In condemning the information-jamming policies of the communist countries, one must admit that Kelly has also given instances when even the U.S.A., Canada and Britain have violated the terms of the Helsinki agreement. Much of the hostility directed towards the Western news media by most of the Third World countries, is due to the fact that these countries sincerely believe Western intelligence agencies are indirectly involved in plotting their downfall, and the Western news media is closely connected with these. The record of the CIA over the past few years and its use of journalists for clandestine purposes, has only added to the confusion.

On the other hand, Americans believe that no press which is financially dependant either on government subsidies or on foreign aid (as is the case with most communist and Third World countries) could really be "free". Kelly is critical of such a view-point.

That press censorship is rapidly becoming institutionalized is Kelly's lament in "What to do About Information Sovereignty," the most interesting chapter in the book. Press Freedom has already become an endangered principle, and this chapter lists the various ways in which appropriate action could be taken to protect it. Kelly is full of praise for the World Press Freedom Committee, established in 1976, which is working to bring Third World journalists into closer contact with their counterparts in the U.S.A., Western Europe and the developed countries of Latin America. This Committee is supported by private media, and functions in total independence of governmental agencies.

The author advocates this recognition of the threat posed by nations who do not value freedom of expression, as a threat to all freedoms, and is critical of the fact that the United States has not, as yet, realised the urgency of the situation. He feels that the American news industry has a paramount role to play in resolving the problems of information sovereignty.

The book, however, strongly biased, provides a host of thought-provoking arguments, and should be of special interest to Indians who have been through the unpleasant period of the Emergency, and know what press censorship is like (*Samachar*). They must learn how to react to it in the future.

SANDHYA BORDEWEKAR

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HER GOLD AND HER BODY by Jamila Verghese; Vikas; New Delhi; 1980; 188 pp; Rs. 60.

"Brides are not for burning," read the caption on a banner carried by a group of angry young women in Delhi, protesting against the institution of dowry. In the last few years, the dowry system has agitated the minds of educated Indian women, just as abortion has exercised the minds of women in the West.

The book vividly portrays the horrors of the system, focussing on the bride. She is faced with pressures on both sides—her in-laws expect her to bring an endless stream of gifts, on pain of ill-treatment; her parents exhort her to adjust to her marital household. In such circumstances, many young women are driven to suicide, and some are even murdered by their husbands and in-laws. The abuses of the system seem to have increased during the last few decades, with the dominance of materialistic attitudes and values in Indian Society resulting in an unseemly avarice for the various gadgets offered by modern technology. With other channels of advance being relatively limited in the present Indian context, it is possible that the dowry system has emerged as an important means of climbing the social ladder.

Jamila Verghese demonstrates the concern of an Indian woman over the plight of the young woman of marriageable age, and of her parents. As she says in her Preface, "The book will have served its purpose if it can save one unwanted wife from torture and death. . ." She has amassed a great deal of information on the practise of the system, and presents a few interesting case studies. The book's merit lies in the numerous episodes she has described of the manner in which the dowry system functions in India, in spite of the legal strictures against it. Had the author confined herself to such an exercise, perhaps concentrating on the "middle class families of Delhi", from whom she derives most of her case studies, and among whom the system is practised in its harshest form, the study would have been a major contribution to our understanding of the problem.

However, the author has gone on to encompass the whole world and all of time, within the covers of her book. She recognizes no historical or geographical boundaries, as she herself says. (Preface, P. VIII) The reader is taken on a heady journey through time and space; ancient civilizations are juxtaposed next to tribal societies, and modern societies set alongside Greek and Roman ones. The reader is confused by the vast and wide-ranging scope of the study.

Another methodological pitfall into which the author has fallen, is to isolate the institution of dowry from the social context in which it is practised. She has tried to view the problem in the context of women's exploitation in its various manifestations, such as female infanticide, child marriage, *sati*, etc. It must be borne in mind that women's problems *per se* cannot be seen in isolation, but must be viewed in the light of the whole social structure, of which it is a part. Only then can we obtain a balanced view of the question.

In other words, the author has carried out an exercise similar to that of the early ethnologists, also called "conjectural sociologists", who tried to explain the origins of the institution of family and marriage by deriving numerous examples from many and varied tribal societies. The purpose in adopting a global perspective appears to be to show us the universality of the institution of dowry. However, we know that this institution is not universal. In fact, in many societies, the reverse, namely bride-price, is practised. The author herself points to the prevalence of bride-price in some tribal societies in India, as well as in Africa.

On the whole, the book serves as an eye opener, making people aware of the magnitude and seriousness of the problem in Indian society today. Written in a very readable style, it is tinged with a sense of humour and sarcasm aimed at the exploiting male.

LALITA CHANDRASEKHAR

ELECTIONS INDIAN STYLE: by Mario Miranda & Rajan Narayan; Jaico Publishing House; Rs. 4.95

Now that the elections are behind us, it is tempting to ignore this book and comment only of the event and its aftermath. In retrospect, the sketches and caricatures help view the elections in unconventional ways. It is fitting that the cartoon be the medium for featuring the greatest number of jokers—our politicians. One ridicules the whole country, the politicians and the people, till one realises that the laughter is really at our own shortcomings and follies.

Mario's sketch on the cover page is striking. A line is drawn and the race is about to start. But the racing vehicles are ancient and rickety, unlikely to finish the race. Mario is also at his best in his caricatures: Devraj Urs, for example, with his pipe, smoking a pipe dream, Y. B. Chavan on the wall almost with a sense of permanence and Mrs. Gandhi on the treasure trunk of *Emergency*, innocently asking, "Emergency? What Emergency?"

Mario understands the political situation in India and the reaction of the people to it. A series of panels reflects it clearly. What could be more telling than a citizen tossing a coin before casting a vote, more symbolic than a mugger waiting for a citizen rushing to cast his vote. Mario's satire is realistic. His characters are easily identified: pot-bellied politician, high-breasted socialites and starving citizens. The image of a beloved leader totally eclipsed by a squadron of soldiers is brutally frank, and the drawing of India 1980 BC where our ageing politicians take the shape of now extinct creatures is poignant.

Mario's weakness lies in his repetitive effects. The drawings do not show much development, and the characters sometimes vulgarly depicted, reduce the power of the irony. Many situations end up being banal and trivial. The script by Rajan Narayan, serving as an introduction and a commentary says just enough. In a language that's hard-hitting and sarcastic, Narayan analyses the country, the people the politicians. As he says, "The new sun refuses to rise."

SANTAN RODRIGUES

INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS: A more Glorious future by Jagjit Singh Anand; Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd; p.p.83; Rs 25/-

The question, a glorious future for whom?—India or the USSR, or both?—spring to mind on reading the sub-title of this book. Suspicions are aroused on finding that the author takes pains to point out how magnanimously helpful the USSR has been in its dealings with India. His claims that Soviet assistance has been of disinterested friendship—indifferent to making India approve of USSR foreign policy makes his book sound like the best—or worst—form of Soviet propaganda. There is no mention of how India has tangibly contributed to Indo-Soviet relations, although much is made of "high-level meetings" between the leaders of the two countries, India's policy of non-alignment, and the Principles of Panchsheel, enunciated by Nehru at the Bandung Conference. Considering that this has been the so called bedrock of Indian foreign policy, towards all countries, it cannot be considered as a major contribution to Indo-Soviet relations.

This salient point has missed the author's attention; and hence, the whole purpose of the book is denied. Primarily, a successful relationship entails a give and take policy. When there is only a one-way traffic or aid flowing only from one country to the other, there is an acute danger of intimidation from the aid-giving country into making the other blindly accept the former's foreign policy. This is so despite concerted

efforts by the author to show how noble and idealistic relations between the two countries are.

He compares U.S. aid with that of aid from the USSR. The U.S. he says, was agitated when India refused to side with American foreign policy. The USSR, however, understood and respected India's policy of non-alignment, and continued supplying aid to build up Indian industries—notably steel—which the U.S. and Western countries were reluctant to do. The U.S. he says, only supplied 50% of the countries food requirements, whereas the USSR gave unhesitatingly of her vital technology and know-how. He fails to mention that while USSR aid is paid for, albeit in rupees, U.S. aid has been written off during Daniel Moynihan's term as U.S. Ambassador, in what is considered by the Guinness Book of Records as "the world's largest check." This is but one sample of the book's almost total attempt to sell the USSR to Indians. Hence it lacks objectivity, and an in-depth analysis of how Indo-Soviet relations have benefitted or harmed the two countries. The last aspect is quite bypassed by the author, as the sub-title "A glorious Future" indicates.

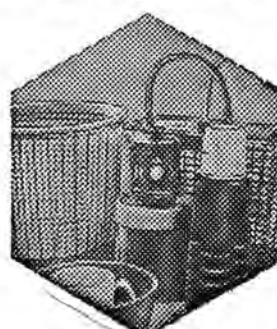
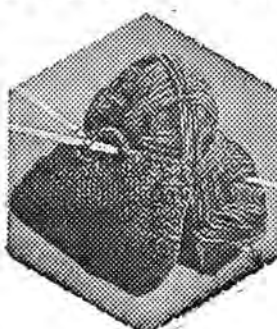
In trying to point out how Indian and Soviet foreign policy objectives are similar, he quotes Leonid Brezhnev, mentioning "the struggle against colonialism, aggressive imperialist wars,—and strengthening peace, and stabilising international relations". Considering that the USSR was never subject to colonial rule, as



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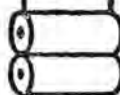
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India was, and considering that India, apart from the annexation of Sikkim and Portuguese Goa, has never waged wars pursuing a policy of expansionism as the USSR has in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Hungary, his analogies do not ring true. As for stabilising the international situation, recent events in Afghanistan belie the truth of such pronouncements, as "a democratic transformation is taking place in Afghanistan". Viewed against the naked invasion of that country by the USSR, words like "peaceful coexistence," and chapters headed "Peace in Asia Must Be Preserved", make reading this book an exercise in patience.

While the Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 is given coverage, the writer has neglected mentioning how similar treaties of friendship were drawn between the USSR and Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, prior to their invasion by Soviet troops. "Good fences make good neighbours". Mr. Anand has inadvertently emphasised the frightening fact that in the case of Indo-Soviet relations, no such fences exist.

P.I.B.



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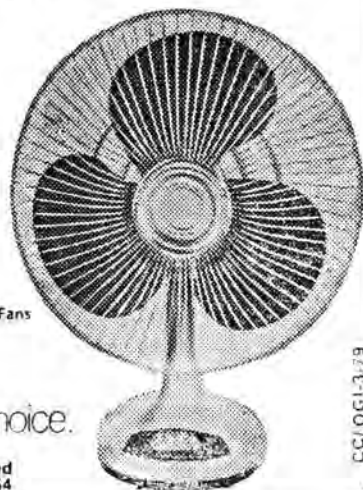
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THE LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL VIEW

At its 104th Executive committee meeting held in Messina, Sicily on 26/27 January 1980, the LI debate centered on an exchange of opinions between leading Liberals on the present world situation.

The following press statement was released :

"The Liberal International expresses its grave concern about the rapid deterioration of East-West relations caused by the occupation of Afghanistan and the deportation of Sakharov;

- the Liberal International sees the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan as a threat to the security of the region and as a violation of the fundamental principles of peaceful international relations and the indivisibility of detente. The LI supports the condemnation of the Soviet Union by the General Assembly of the United Nations and asks for the immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops from Afghanistan.
- the Liberal International strongly condemns the banishment of Andrei Sakharov : it sees this move as a serious violation of the letter and the spirit of the Helsinki Agreements. The Liberal International asks for the immediate release of Mr. Sakharov and the reinstatement of his civil rights.

Bearing in mind that both the invasion of Afghanistan and the banishment of Mr. Sakharov undermines detente, the LI still believes that in view of the nuclear potential of the two super-powers there can be no alternative to the continuation of all sincere efforts to increase the peaceful cooperation between countries

of different social and political systems. While the Western powers have to make it clear to the Soviet Union that they cannot under any circumstances accept military intervention, they also have to continue the difficult process of detente.

Following an exchange of opinions on the question of the Olympic Games being held in Moscow, it became obvious that parties have different stands on the issue. In view of the fact that the parties have not yet decided on an official line the LI is not in a position to take a common stand concerning the boycott of the Olympic Games.

The LI considers in this context the continuation of the Helsinki, Belgrade and Vienna conferences as a test case for the willingness of all parties concerned to continue serious efforts to reduce the arms race and the global tension. The LI sees the EEC and Western European democracies as a stabilising factor in the crisis. It asks the Western governments to take positive steps to limit Soviet interference in all parts of the world particularly in the developing countries by increasing economic and political cooperation between the North and the South. In this light it welcomes the signing of a new treaty between the EEC and the ASEAN countries due to take place on March 7th 1980.

It is clear that as Liberals we consider it as the vital interest of the West to continue, in spite of the present East-West tension, to support democratic forces in countries with dictatorships whatever their ideological basis may be." ★

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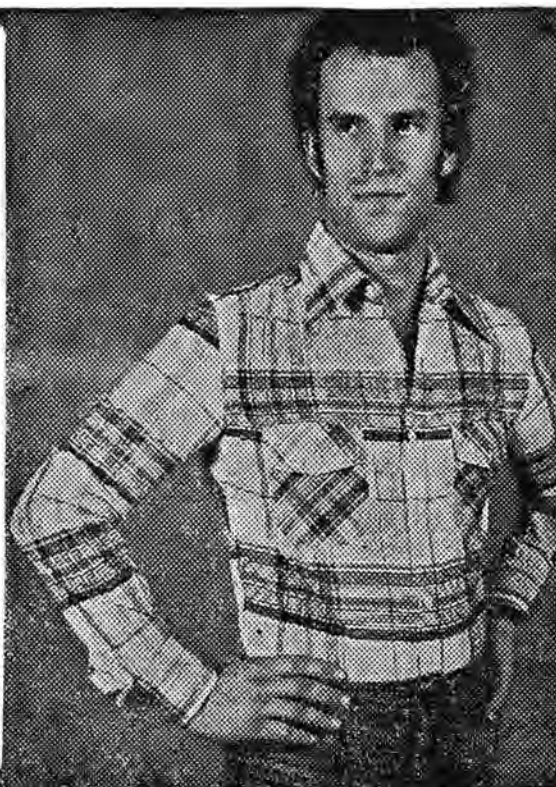
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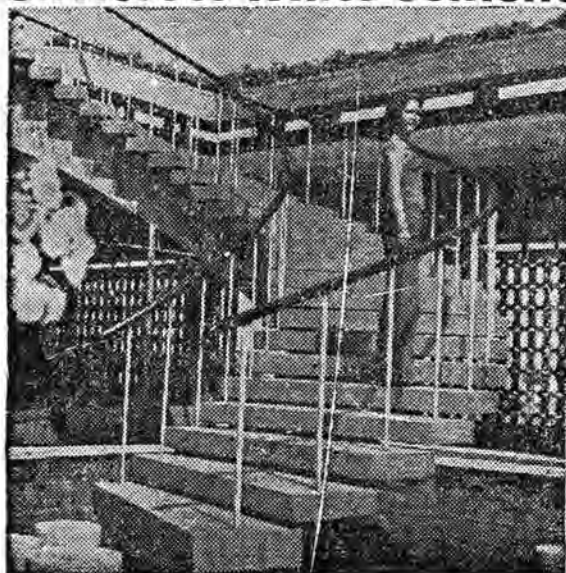
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