

NON-ALIGNMENT

NISSIM EZEKIEL

THE Non-aligned Movement now has no political base. India, as the new Chairman, may be more non-aligned than most but has a treaty with the Soviet Union. The stand on Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Poland and Eastern Europe generally is affected by that treaty.

More important, the Movement has no moral base. Its major as well as minor representatives are almost all dictatorships, differing only in degree of brutality. Even if the two that have been at war for nearly three years, Iran and Iraq, stop fighting each other, they will still retain their terrorising regimes. No one in the Movement speaks up convincingly for human rights or embodies them in practice.

The economic committee of the Delhi meeting provides some sort of a facade unity against the North with various charges and demands on it. The U.N. Secretary General wanted "international co-operation" on economic issues "to prevent further deterioration in the situation of the Third World countries". No one placed the responsibility for that deterioration on the Third World countries themselves. (India as the host country spent Rs. 10 lakhs on decorating the route from Palam to Vigyan Bhavan)

The new economic order, like the new information order, is not interested in righting wrongs but in replacing one set of wrongs with

another. Claiming to be oppressed and exploited by the affluent nations and by the multi-nationals, they seek the privileges of the oppressor and exploiting classes through a series of specific measures. Take only Protectionism as an example. Do not the non-aligned nations resort to it whenever it is in their interest?

They speak of unfavourable terms and conditions in dealing with the North, but what is the record of the oil-producing nations in relation to prices, when they were in a commanding position? Is there any evidence that, in a similar position, in some other area, the non-aligned nations would behave differently? Would they do so even in relation to other non-aligned nations?

The North-South economic dialogue is sought to be conducted on the South's assumption of poorer-than-thou therefore holier-than-thou. The North is accused of squandering vast human and material resources on the unproductive and wasteful arms race. Yet, every one of the Southern nations does the same squandering in relation to its available resources and the real or alleged threat from other nations. Opposed to the multi-nationals in theory, the Southern nations open their doors to those very organisations and demand concessional flows for development.

There is no end to the contra-

dictions in the stances of the South when dealing with the North. If the North is insensitive to the interests of the South, the South is virtually blind to the interests of the North.

We know what India has made of its economic possibilities since 1947, and why; we know about corruption and inefficiency, waste of manpower and resources, socialist dogmas creating a parallel economy, and the ills caused by the bureaucratic spirit, to mention only a few factors that contribute to our economic, social and political degradation.

We know also that instead of facing these realities we, the Government and the people of India, have increasingly taken a self-righteous stand towards the affluent nations, whose foreign aid we swallow in enormous quantities every year without much to show for it. We have arrived now not at the solutions that matter but at Asiad-type diversions.

The Non-aligned Meeting in Delhi was one such, and there will be many more during the eighties. In the meanwhile, we shall prepare the ground for hosts of disasters in our economic, social, and political life. We must steel ourselves, and try to prevent them, by criticism which will help to create an altogether new climate of opinion.

Only in that climate, very different from the one in which the pretensions of the Non-aligned nations are dominant, is there hope for this country.

A VARIETY OF COMMENT

K. S. VENKATESWARAN

1. THE AFTERMATH OF BEIRUT

THE hysterical outbursts following the publication of Israel's Kahan Commission Report on the Beirut massacre has once again brought to the fore the rank hypocrisy that characterises the attitude of certain nations in international intercourse.

Not that one cavils at the chorus of indignation the Commission's findings evoked in the global community at large. Perhaps Israel did deserve to be censured for its grave lapses of omission in Beirut which led to the mindless murder of scores of innocent civilians at the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps last year. But when such censure is accompanied by politically-motivated howls of protest from sources which are not exactly known either for any commitment to democratic values or for any zeal in the promotion of human rights, serious questions arise.

Take the PLO, for instance. No sooner had the findings of the Kahan Commission been made public than we heard the leader of this desperate terrorist outfit, Mr. Yasser Arafat, roundly castigate Israel for what he called the "ugly crime" in Beirut. Talking to Jordanian newsmen, Mr. Arafat went on to criticise the Commission itself for not making a "decisive condemnation" of the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Menachem Begin, and demanded that an international court should follow up the matter.

The question one is obviously tempted to ask in the face of such patently dishonest rhetoric is: how scrupulous has the PLO itself been in following up, either on its own or in deference to international pressure, those acts of gross criminality for which it is justly notorious? As Robert Fisk, the London *Times* correspondent in Beirut pertinently points out in a recent despatch, "When PLO guerillas massacred Christians in Damour during the Lebanese civil war, Mr. Arafat made no attempt to hold even an internal inquiry into the slaughter."

Much the same holds for the Arab régimes. Fisk cites a telling example from Syria. President Assad of that country, he says, remained characteristically silent when his "special forces" brigades flattened large areas of Hama and killed thousands of civilians during an armed and bloody uprising by Muslim extremists.

And yet, when it comes to denouncing in and out of season a country as vibrantly democratic as Israel, not one of these despots lags behind in endeavouring to be the most vocal.

2. THE LIMITS OF SYCOPHANCY

MANY of us who have often been amused by the

increasingly ridiculous forms that sycophancy has assumed among members of the ruling party in this country, will be tickled pink by the following example from Romania which appears in a recently-published book entitled *The Bureaucracy of Truth* by Paul Lendvai.

Addressing the eleventh Congress of the Romanian Communist Party, Dimitro Popescu, one of the leading lights of Nicolae Ceausescu's government and an old hand at operating the state-controlled propaganda apparatus, is reported to have said:

"Since here and there Western newspapers express astonishment at the fact that the name of Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu is so often on the lips of the Romanian people, and that his merits are praised with such warmth at our great public gatherings, I will take the liberty of giving such possible wonderers the answer in advance. . . . People love and extol their leaders because they quench their own thirst for perfection, for the perfection to which man ceaselessly aspires, no matter how inaccessible it may be. In the past, they had Julius Caesar, Alexander of Macedonia, Pericles, Cromwell, Napoleon, Peter the Great, Lincoln. We had Mihai, Stefan, Cantemir Brincoveanu, Balcescu and Cuza . . . Now we have Nicolae Ceausescu: for ten years he has been our shepherd.—as our chronicles called the nation's leader. The eulogies we address to him are not invented. They are indeed true. So why should we not extol him? In fact, my conviction is that the full greatness of his role in Romanian history will be understood only by our descendants, who will undoubtedly be even more generous in their praise."

Not to be outdone, the local party functionaries are even more enthusiastic in their efforts at keeping up the drumbeat. For example, when Ceausescu had returned from one of his frequent foreign trips, this time to Africa, the party committee of Covasna could not restrain itself from noting ". . . with unlimited pleasure and special satisfaction that you, highly esteemed beloved Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu, an outstanding political personality of our days, an indefatigable fighter for the noble ideals of freedom, independence and social progress, peace, friendship and co-operation with other nations, were received on African soil with great enthusiasm."

The Romanian newspapers are apparently full of such messages, most of which also contain, for good measure, a promise that the party committee, factory or enterprise concerned, stimulated by the President's

lofty example, would do its best to achieve even better results in its field.

3. TORTURE TALES FROM IRAN

FRESH details of ill-treatment, torture and execution of political prisoners in five Iranian jails have been brought to light by a recent report of Amnesty International which bears further testimony to the utterly ruthless character of the fundamentalist regime in Tehran.

The report avers that the majority of prisoners are held without charge, often blindfolded, for days or weeks on end, and without being informed of the reasons for their detention. "They could have been rounded up for 'looking' at the scene of a bomb blast, for reading a political pamphlet, for condemning the regime over a tapped telephone, for arguing with a neighbour who reported them or for actually having been involved in some movement against the regime."

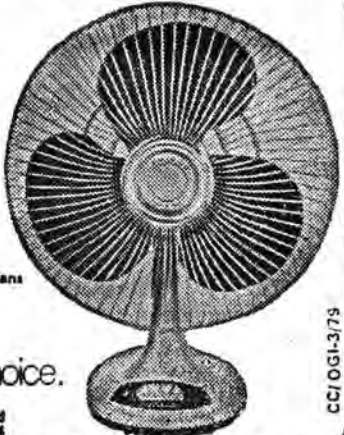
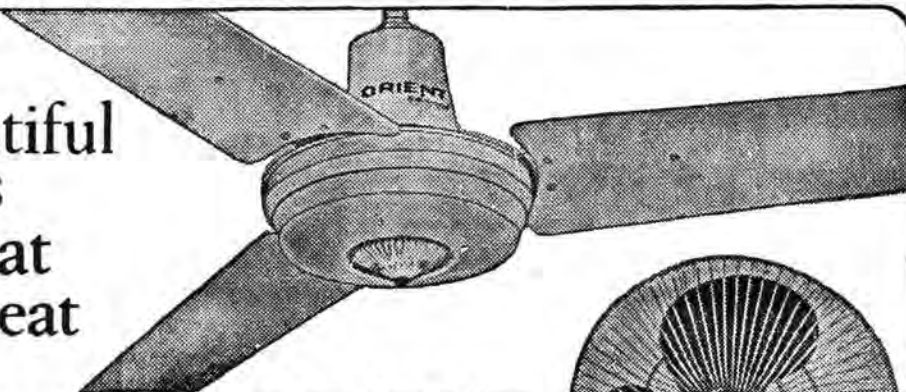
Compiled from evidence made available by former prisoners and prisoners' relatives, the report describes in heart-rending detail the happenings in each of the five jails which, between them, hold tens of thousands of prisoners. In Evin, for instance, "night and day you can hear the sound of gunfire. If it's continuous firing, then you know it could be mock-executions. But if you hear a lone shotgun fire at the end you know it is a real execution. From them you can estimate how many have been killed. Generally between 30 and 60 shots can be counted in a day. After the September (1982) bomb blast (in Tehran), you could

count 100 or more such shots in 24 hours."

The situation is no better in, say, the Komiteh prison which is also called the "hen house", probably because many of the detainees are required to squat for days on end on the balconies. "When you are taken there, you are left blindfolded on one of the balconies. There is hardly any room to sit, let alone lie down. . . . At night the guards drag people in and out of the cells through the midst of the balcony people. . . . Sometimes those they dragged out did not come back." This is followed by systematic torture of the most outrageous kind: burning with irons, whipping with iron cable, electric shocks, and so on.

Perhaps the most pathetic tale of torture comes from a man who had been arrested after some pamphlets were found at his home. At first the authorities took him to Evin but later transferred him to Salehabad where he was made to suffer the worst indignities. After being made to run around the prison yard in a state of undress, "they trained a whip on my buttocks and testicles and kept lashing at me. Then other men came and began beating me in the same manner with a hosepipe. I was hit like this for perhaps an hour. . . ."

Ultimately, about three weeks later, when he was taken to a "court" for questioning, the presiding **imam** informed him that he had been brought there mistakenly "as a member of the **Fedayeen** (a leftist organisation)" The man was duly discharged, but not before being warned that if he spoke of what had happened, he would be executed.



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LOOTING THE GOLD

A Report By The Asiad Virodh Samiti

For 15 days, beginning November 19, 1982—which is Mrs. Gandhi's 65th birthday—the routine of the capital was disrupted as New Delhi hosted the Ninth Asian Games. Mrs. Gandhi's government decreed that New Delhi's citizens pay obeisance to the Games' hoopla. The Parliament's regular schedule was altered, schools and colleges shut down and office hours rescheduled to fit the Games' time-table.

Conservative independent estimates place the total costs of the Asian Games at over Rs. 1000 crores, the monthly income of about 20 crore rural Indians living below the poverty line. An army of migrant workers were wantonly exploited for almost two years in a crash programme to construct the various Games facilities. And Delhi's environment was brutalized in the process.

Lacking the enthusiastic support of the nation's population, the Games were held under a Military camp atmosphere. The entire city of Delhi was placed under Section 144 of the Indian Penal Code restricting the fundamental freedom of Delhi's 6.5 million residents. A 10,000 strong security force, twice the number of participating athletes and officials, was stationed in Delhi for the duration of the Games.

Cost Of The Asiad Extravaganza

The Government's approach to revealing the expenditure incurred on the Games falls between blatant lying and withholding evidence.

Government spokespersons, from the Prime Minister downwards, have repeatedly pegged the price-tag of the Games at the ridiculously low original estimate of Rs. 67 crores. As recently as October, 1982, the Minister for Sports and Chairman of the Asian Games Special Organizing Committee, Buta Singh, told the Parliament that expenses amounting to only Rs. 40.12 crores had been booked so far. Like bad liars, all these people have overlooked a statement made in Parliament in September 1981 by N. D. Tiwari, then Union Minister for Labour that the total estimated expenditure for the Games was Rs. 361 crores. Earlier this year, the **National Herald**, the ruling party's newsdaily, cited a figure of "Rs. 700 to Rs. 800 crores" in an editorial.

Even a partial listing of the costs of infrastructural facilities raises the Games-related expenditure to ten times the Government figures.

Games-related Expenses: A Partial List*

	Rupees (Crores)
1. Stadia construction, equipment and operations	150
2. Hotel construction loans	280
3. Asian Games Village	40
4. Flyovers and road-widening	50
5. Ring railway	35
6. Agency expenses (DESU, Airport etc.)	10
7. Revenue loss from sale of hotel lands at concessional rates	100.5
8. Communications and T.V.	15
9. Electric generators	10
10. Transport	20
11. Ceremonial parade	10
12. Police security, food and water	5
	725.5

* All the figures are based on reliable press reports and statements made by Ministers and M.P.'s in Parliament.

Not included in this are such costs as:

- Rs. 130 crores spent on the spacecraft for the INTELSAT telecommunications satellite. This programme was speeded up to be used for telecasting the Games events. After a few weeks in space, the satellite went dead. The Government expects to recover only Rs. 65 crores from insurance.
- Revenue losses arising out of allowing the import of colour T.V. sets at a concessional duty, decreasing the local employment potential. These losses could range from Rs. 8 crores to as much as Rs. 160 crores. Government officials estimate that only 10,000 sets will be imported, newspaper surveys show that as many as 2,00,000 may be imported.
- The continuing costs of stadia maintenance. The swimming pool alone will require Rs. 50,000 per month.

Government officials argue that a lot of the expenditure on infrastructural facilities was necessary because it was part of Delhi's development plans. This is nonsense. Says Vijay Kumar Malhotra, a

former M.P. from New Delhi and former Chief of the New Delhi Metropolitan Council: "Four out of the seven flyovers that have been built now are not included in any Master Plan of Delhi's development upto 2000 A.D. No new five-star hotel is envisaged for New Delhi in the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-85)."

Protagonists of the Asian Games do not want to answer the question: Where is all the money coming from? Is it all non-plan expenditure? Obviously, this huge amount is being spent at the expense of the country's development plans.

COST OF ASIAN GAMES vs DEVELOPMENT

Rs 1000 crores	George Fernandes' estimate of the total expenditure	= Monthly income of 200 million rural Indians below poverty line.
Rs 361 "	Expenses on games-related projects as stated by the Minister for Planning in Parliament.	= Capital cost of 4 200 MW Thermal Power plants capable of providing twice the demand for domestic power in Delhi.
Rs 70 "	Special Organising Committee's (SOC) estimate of costs of sports facilities and organising expenses.	= Cost of 14 500-bed hospitals.

Rs 50 "	Approximate cost of the 7 flyovers for the Asian Games.	= Cost of 500 buses which can meet the transport needs of 3 major cities.
Rs 25 "	Approximate estimate (SOC) of the cost of Indoor Stadium and Swimming Pool.	= Cost of providing one primary school in 12,500 villages.
Rs 16 "	Approximate cost (SOC) of the Main Stadium.	= Cost of providing notebooks to 50 million school-going children.

Loot and Corruption

Numerous examples can be cited to illustrate privileges given to a favoured few:

The ruling party has used with impunity the opportunity provided by the Games to dispense political patronage. Prize real-estate in the vicinity of Connaught Place has been "gifted" at throwaway prices to two moneyed supporters of the Congress (I) party, for hotel construction: Charanjit Singh, a sitting Congress (I) M.P. and Campa-Cola baron and Sagar Suri, a close friend of the late Sanjay Gandhi. The standard practice of inviting sealed tenders was waived in these two cases in favour of open restricted bids. Bhishma Narain Singh, then Union Minister for Works and Housing, admitted in Parliament last year that these allotments were political decisions.

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The contract for the design of the Indoor Stadium was given to architect Sharat Dass who stood second in the design competition. Dass is the architect of Indira Gandhi's farmhouse in Mehrauli. His estimated fee was Rs. 60 lakhs. The Asiad has proved to be a bonanza for scores of officials who have been circling the globe ostensibly to learn from the experiences of the world's major cities that have hosted sports events in the past. Air-India has provided well over 225 free air tickets to officials visiting Los Angeles, Bangkok, Montreal, Moscow and Monte Carlo—while athletes were not even given second-class train tickets in advance to attend coaching camps.

According to **India Today**, the contracts for covering the Shivaji Stadium and building the Swimming Pool were given to contractors who had considerable clout with the New Delhi Municipal Committee but lacked the technical competence to complete the projects. Both these contracts were eventually cancelled.

Workers Exploited

The most scandalous aspect of the Asian Games preparations was the inhuman exploitation of migrant construction labourers. The number of people working at the various sites totalled around 1,25,000, most nomadic and tribal people from Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and eastern U.P.

A survey report released by the Peoples' Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR), in August, 1981, revealed a systematic abuse, by builders and contractors, of the Minimum Wages Act, the Interstate Migrant Workmen's Act, Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act, the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976, the Employment of Children (Amendment) Act 1979 and the rules for provision of sanitary and medical facilities. The government's callous attitude towards the construction workers is revealed in N. D. Tiwari's statement, responding to the above charges in the Lok Sabha in September 1981, "I have never claimed total implementation of labour laws. . . . We have accepted violations of the Acts."

Despite the incredible effort put in by the workers, they are now forgotten. No free tickets were set aside for them, no tours conducted.

An Environmental Disaster

The preparations for the Asian Games have left Delhi scarred. The authorities have tended to underplay the environmental damage. **Kalpavriksh**, Delhi's environment action group, has charged that 1342 full-grown trees have been hacked to widen roads. The Siri forest in South Delhi which abounded in birds and small animals has been reduced to a few apologetic pockets of greenery surrounded by the concrete

maze of the Asian Games Village Complex. Greenery is important in residential areas for it muffles noise pollution, traps dust and cools the air. The new constructions will worsen Delhi's dust problems—which is already the worst among the world's major cities.

In recompense, the Delhi Administration has announced plans to plant tens of thousands of tree saplings. It is one thing to plant a new sapling but it is quite another thing to rear them, nourish them and ensure that they grow to full-size. A full-grown peepal tree absorbs 2252 Kgs. of carbon dioxide and gives out 1713 Kgs. of Oxygen, as much as 2750 new-planted saplings.

The ridge, a stretch of forest covering 46,000 acres has been invaded to provide roads for fast-moving vehicular traffic. This encroachment violates the recommendation of Delhi's Master Plan that it be preserved as close to an undisturbed forest as possible.

Few people realize that Delhi is a city where four million people lack proper sewage facilities, where 1.7 million people live in decrepit colonies across the Yamuna river and 200,000 lack a roof over their heads.

While the resources for the Asian Games have been made available readily,

- A Rs. 46.6 crores urban sewerage scheme has been postponed indefinitely due to "lack of resources".
- The Yamuna bridge, the Shahadra Bridge and the Rohtak road flyover, among the most urgently needed, remain on the drawing board.
- Delhi is a city of bicyclists. Their needs are totally ignored while roads for cars are being widened everywhere.
- Posh hotels have been constructed in a hurry while school and college students sweat it out in make-shift classes under tents.

In the face of this picture, the colossal expenditure of funds and material resources—8 crore bricks, 100,000 tonnes of steel and 90,000 tonnes of cement, enough to erect an entire town—on a 15-day sports extravaganza is adding salt to injury.

A False Notion Of Prestige

The Government has claimed that by holding the Asian Games, it is trying to develop a sports consciousness in India and enhance our international prestige.

At a time when there are floods in Orissa; starvation deaths in Bihar, Rajasthan, eastern U.P., M.P. and Bengal; 2,50,000 textile workers in Bombay out of work; 5 million bonded labourers in the country and almost ten times as many children labouring in sub-human conditions, the Asian Games in New Delhi were a crime against the people of India. (Adapted)

A FUTURE FOR FREEDOM

Address by H.E. Sun Yun-suan, Premier of the Republic of China, at the 1983 World Freedom Day Meeting of the Republic of China, Taipei, January, 23, 1983.

Translated from Chinese

The 1983 World Freedom Day is being observed at a time when the forces of freedom are exerting themselves and when the world anti-Communist movement for democracy has joined forces with the strong aspirations of the people for the more active development of freedom. The anti-Communist freedom fighters of the Republic of China and other parts of the free world are attending this rally here in Taipei to strive to create a brighter future for human freedom by adopting a worldwide anti-Communist strategy and decisively terminating Marxism-Leninism. First of all, I want to extend my warm welcome and express my sincere respects to our honourable guests coming from afar.

Examining the confrontation between the forces of freedom and democracy and those of Communism, we can clearly see that Soviet Russia, the Chinese Communist regime, the Eastern European satellite states, and the North Korean, Vietnamese and Cuban regimes are without exception plagued by economic decline, political chaos and the people's resistance. Communism is tending toward bankruptcy; it has been repudiated by workers, peasants, intellectuals and youth. Despite strenuous efforts of readjustment and salvation, the substance of Communism will never change. It cannot overcome the crisis inherent in its system.

At the same time, the forces of freedom and democracy are growing vigorously. The people have come to understand the evil and backward nature of communism. Prosperity, progress and the openness of free and democratic society have generated a force to repudiate Marxism-Leninism and to undermine Communist rule. With the camp of freedom and democracy exerting itself and strengthening its solidarity, the unrestrained expansionism of Marxism-Leninism is past. Freedom and democracy have increasingly become the mainstream of our times. These developments attest that freedom and democracy will surely emerge victorious and that Communist totalitarianism will surely be defeated.

Two events related to world freedom and democracy have occurred in the last two years. First, the Republic of China sounded its clarion call for "unifying China under the Three Principles of the People," and second, President Reagan has advocated "world movement for democracy and peace"—in other words, for the "democratization of the Communist nations."

The Republic of China's call has generated echoes widely and has built up overwhelming waves of support. This is not only the common aspiration of the Chinese people at home and abroad, but also the ardent wish of our compatriots on the Chinese mainland.

Great alliances to reunify China under the Three Principles of the People were organized at home and abroad last year to serve as the prime movers of this undertaking. In earnestly promoting the world movement for democracy and peace, the Reagan administration has successively held the conference on the democratization of Communist nations and the conference on free elections. President Reagan predicted that the progress of freedom and democracy will doom Marxism-Leninism to the ash-heap of history. He also said the United States will redouble its efforts to support development of freedom and democratic forces in the Communist nations.

We believe that as the movement for world democracy and peace and the movement for the democratization of the Communist nations are opposed to Communist tyranny and totalitarianism, they are fundamentally consistent with the Republic of China's movement to reunify China under the Three Principles of the People. Additionally, a common interest is involved. We admire President Reagan's prescience and wish to express our active and strong response to the movements characterized by his lofty ideals.

However, we want to emphasize that the democratic movement must be spurred, that freedom must never be divided, that democracy can be promoted only by repudiating Marxism-Leninism and that freedom must be safeguarded both within and without the Iron Curtain. If we can forge the worldwide democratic movement and the anti-Communist struggle into a single entity, we are confident of hastening the victory of freedom through our common struggle.

On a basis of this understanding, we hope the world will listen to this solemn summons:

We call on the anti-Communist and non-Communist nations of all the world to recognize clearly the unchanged goal of "world revolution" pursued by Communist imperialism, and understand that there is no room for coexistence between the free world and the Communist world. We can say there is only this alternative: we live and you die, or you live and we die. The free nations must draw a clear line between freedom and democracy on the one hand and Communist totalitarianism on the other. We can never afford to confuse foe with friend, undermine the camp of freedom, or sacrifice our partners in the fight for

freedom. We must abandon the illusion of "peaceful coexistence" with the Communist nations, lest we fall into their trap.

We call on the free nations of all the world to recognise clearly that Communist expansion is universal and that their attempt to communize the world reaches everywhere. It means that we must strengthen the camp of democracy, solidify the forces of freedom and establish a global anti-Communist strategy.

This strategy must be joined with man's pursuit of democracy and freedom and with the struggle against totalitarianism and slavery being waged behind the Iron Curtain. We must furthermore promote the interests of the free nations through the increase of our economic, trade, technological and cultural interflow. Going beyond that, we must develop bilateral and multilateral joint defenses, strengthen or rebuild regional security systems and strike counterblows at the divisive, aggressive, infiltrating and subversive moves of the Communists.

We also call on the United States, the central force of the free world, to link President Reagan's "world movement for democracy and peace" and his "democratization of the Communist nations" with mankind's

movement for freedom and with the reunifying of China under the Three Principles of the People. We hope the United States will step up its efforts and determination to uphold world security, strive to carry out humankind's lofty ideal of freedom, honour its treaty obligations and defence commitments to free nations, and unite with all forces striving for freedom and democracy so that the forces of freedom and democracy can thrust their way through the eastern and western Iron Curtains and destroy the totalitarian rule of Communism.

Ladies and gentlemen, the bell of World Freedom Day tolls for us and has heightened mankind's confidence and courage. The torch of freedom has kindled more and more flames behind the Iron Curtain. We are convinced that to ensure lasting freedom, we must earnestly oppose Communism, and that to augment the power of democracy, we must unite sincerely. Let us lock hands, put our shoulders together and take vigorous action in our determined struggle to obliterate the evil influence of Communism. We thus shall make the 1980s a brilliant era in which all humankind will enjoy freedom, democracy, peace and prosperity in unity. (Adapted.)

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FROM THE SUBLIME TO THE RIDICULOUS

MINOO MASANI

ARTHUR KOESTLER

For me the most important event of the last fortnight is the passing away on 2nd March of Arthur Koestler. I was deeply touched by the death of my old friend and his wife Cynthia whom I had also met. I was not distressed, because it was Mr. and Mrs. Koestler's own choice. They died with dignity and, as the police spokesman who found them in their arm-chairs in the sitting room with the curtains drawn, observed: "It was a scene of calmness."

It would appear that Arthur Koestler, who was 77, and his wife, were both in bad health. He was suffering from two dread scourges, leukemia and Parkinson's Disease. The way they ended their lives was characteristic of the Koestlers. Both of them were members of **Exit**, now re-named the Voluntary Euthanasia Society, and Koestler was Vice-Chairman. Indeed, his thesis in his preface to the Society's **Guide to Self-Deliverance** was that death could be a welcome and natural relief for someone whose only alternative was pain and suffering. The principal obstacle was fear of the process of dying, which Koestler compared to the infant's struggles to be born. "An unknown country to which the only access leads through a torture chamber is frightening," he wrote. "The prospect of falling peacefully, blissfully asleep is not only soothing but can make it positively desirable to quit this pain-racked mortal frame and become unborn again."

In 1981, when we established our own Society for the Right to Die with Dignity, Koestler had written to me:

"Dear Minoo,

I am glad to hear that you are starting **Exit** in India. It will be a long and hard way until charity and commonsense will do their work.

With best wishes to you and all mutual friends.

Yours ever,
Arthur"

The best comment I have read on Arthur since his death has been that of David Holloway in the **Daily Telegraph** of 4th March: "Most of the time he was a minority report attached to the general body of thinking of his age". I would not mind appropriating that epitaph for myself!

Koestler died childless. When questioned, he once said that his books would be his children. Holloway aptly observes: "He has left a mighty progeny."

Darkness at Noon was only the best-known of some thirty magnificent works. Considering he was born in Hungary and it was only after he reached maturity that he picked up English, this was a **tour de force**.

I first met Arthur Koestler in Philadelphia in the United States in 1951. He asked me if he could find something in India to replace Zionism and Communism, the two religions he had already outgrown. I suggested he come to India and find out for himself. He did not do so till 1958-59. He visited various gurus and ashrams throughout India, but Yoga did not answer his needs. His exploration of Zen Buddhism was equally disappointing. The fruits of his profound disappointment are to be found in his book **The Lotus and the Robot** published in 1961.

A by-product of Koestler's visit to India was his discovery of the existence of our pavement dwellers and his characteristic reaction to the phenomenon. After a night or two at the Taj Mahal Hotel, he told Jayaprakash, who was then in Bombay, and me that he could not sleep at night because of the horror of seeing people in large numbers sleeping on footpaths and under staircases when driven for cover by rain. He was a little taken aback by our own relative lack of sensitivity to the phenomenon. While we appreciated his own noble reaction, we tried to explain that people born in this country and seeing people sleeping on pavements since their childhood could hardly be expected to react with the same vehemence as someone who was visiting India from a more prosperous part of the world, where such things had happily ceased to be.

As soon as he got back to London, with the support of his friend David Astor, who then owned the **Observer**, Koestler started a fund to help the homeless people in India. His love of humanity also found expression in his successful campaign for the abolition of capital punishment in Britain. Most of the royalties from his books went to funds for the relief of exiles from Communist countries and to writers and artists in British prisons.

THE NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT

Now let us turn from something sad to something rather comic. I refer to what was pompously described as the "Summit" in Delhi from March 7 to 12.

I spent quite some time watching television and reading press reports. As I did so, a sense of the ridiculous grew on me. It was something of a burlesque. What was being said in Vigyan Bhawan appeared to have little relation to reality. There

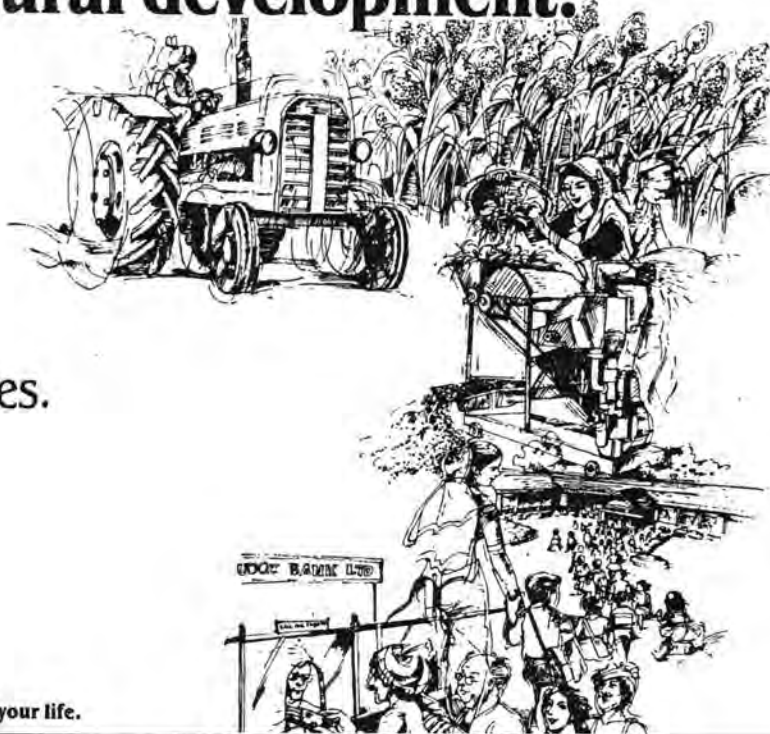
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was a great deal of euphoria emerging from the repetition of slogans and of imprecations against the whipping boys—the United States, Israel, South Africa and “Colonialism”.

Normal life in the capital was disrupted. Roads, five-star hotels and the airport were closed to Indian citizens. **Time** and **Newsweek** magazines were held up by the customs for the duration. Now that the tumult and the shouting has died and the captains and the kings have departed, the whole function appeared to me to be, in Shakespeare’s words,

“Full of sound and fury

Signifying nothing.”

Let me catalogue some of the myths:

Myth 1:

“We are independent and non-aligned”. Nonsense! With some exceptions it was the Soviet Union’s “B” Team in action, with Fidel Castro, Mr. Arafat and the Vietnamese as cheer leaders. Very few of those present had the strength to be non-aligned. As a wag has put it, the only truly non-aligned powers are the USA and the USSR! At the start of the Conference, the Singapore delegation had circulated a document which said the Conference would decide whether it has “merely blessed the self-degradation of Havana or rescued it from the brothel area into which it had wandered.” The answer is clear.

Myth 2:

“We are united as never before”. Really? What with Iran and Iraq refusing to stop shooting at each other and headlines in the press such as “Somalia and Ethiopia Trade Charges”, and “PLO Statement Sours Ties with Egypt”, this claim is difficult to stomach.

Myth 3:

“Peace and Freedom are indivisible”. Quite right. But then what about poor little non-aligned Afghanistan, occupied by more than 100,000 soldiers from the USSR? There was not one word of sympathy at the “Summit” for the brave and heroic Afghan guerillas, but a warm welcome for the Soviet stooges masquerading as the Government of Afghanistan. As for freedom, while Mr. Mugabe was shamelessly supporting a one-party dictatorship at the pres conference in Delhi, the soldiers of his Fifth Brigade, trained by North Korean mercenaries, were killing, maiming and rampaging in Metabeleland and the father of the nation, Joshua Nkomo, who said Mr. Mugabe has sent his troops to kill him and his family, had to flee for his life to Botswana and then to London. The **Guardian** had a headline “Mugabe Stops the Talk and Starts To Kill.”

U.S. Governments have been blamed for dealing with dictators but have there ever been more dictators per square foot than were collected under the roof of Vigyan Bhavan?

Myth 4:

“The world is on the brink of a nuclear war and economic collapse, and only the non-aligned can stop it.” Poppycrack. Nobody outside the “Summit” behaves as if the world is about to come to an end. An economic recovery from the international recession is about to start and there will be no nuclear holocaust in the next few years.

Myth 5:

“The eyes of the whole world are focussed on us.” Attaboy! I turned avidly to the foreign newspapers of the 8th and 9th as soon as they arrived. I could not find the “Summit” referred to on the front page of even one newspaper.

Now, some well-earned bouquets to balance these well-deserved brickbats.

First, to Mr. Natwar Singh and his colleagues for an extremely well planned **tamasha** worthy of a better cause, and to Mr. K. S. Bajpai for his succinct summaries on TV every evening.

Second, to Mrs. Gandhi for conducting herself as elegantly as she did, for her ability as Chairman, for her tireless efforts and amazing energy and stamina. For her, it was a successful public relations exercise.

The only bonus of the Conference for me was the opportunity it gave me to meet President Jayawardene of Sri Lanka after many years. We did not discuss the “Summit.” I found him greatly concerned at the impact on his country’s economy of the world recession and the high price of oil. Despite all this, he said his policies had created new employment for 1,200,00 people.

From “As I See It.”

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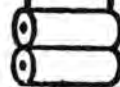
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A LETTER

Sir,—The Budget proposals for 1983-84 have dealt a severe body blow to rural development efforts by voluntary organisations.

Since 1951 the accepted doctrine of economic development has been based on the concept of centralisation of collection of funds for development through taxation to be disbursed through governmental machinery. Thus, the effective economic power vested with the political and administrative wings of the Government. The participation of people was limited to receiving the benefits but not designing them to match their felt needs.

The change was ushered in June 1977 by Mr. H. M. Patel when he introduced SS.35CC A in the Income Tax Act. Simply stated it meant if any company wished to participate in rural development efforts and it was ready to spare 42 paise out of its profits the Government would forego its cut of 58 paise of the tax. They could do it through specially set up trusts or through existing voluntary organisations. Mr. Charan Singh strengthened it by adding another clause to help individuals contribute to it.

After 25 years of centralised work a small decentralisation step was taken. It permitted participation effort by:

The companies, the individuals, the workers, the managers, the technical staff and the villagers. It enabled socially conscious individuals to work for national development.

All these programmes and institutions needed Government approval. Yet private citizens or voluntary organisations had an opening, an opportunity to join in developmental effort.

They could try out grassroot ideas, models, development efforts, in a decentralised way. The Finance Minister has chopped it with one stroke of his pen. Now one can only contribute to the Prime Minister's Fund.

The Finance Minister is justified in starting a new Fund. But why he should close this avenue for private initiative is difficult to understand.

If there is any proposal which the Finance Minister must drop, it is this deduction of 35CC A.

ARVIND DESHPANDE,
Director,
Trusteeship Foundation.

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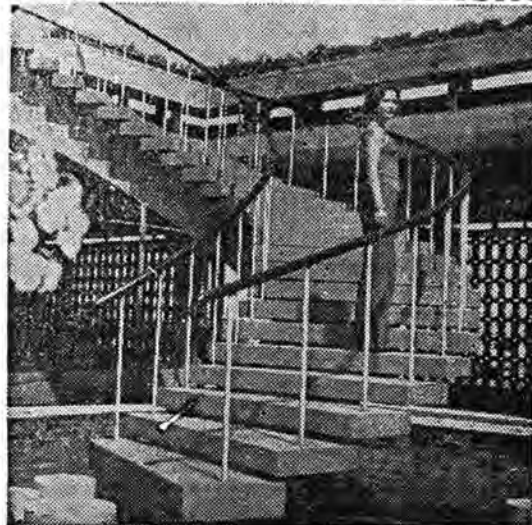
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WITH MANY VOICES

Scrooge, rejoice: 1982 has been your year.

—*The Economist*, December 25.

I frequently muse upon the fact that the cause of women's rights seems so often to be promoted by the most repellent representatives of the fair sex.

—John Hunt, *Penge Advertiser*, quoted in the *Guardian*, January 17.

Britain has more public inquiries per square foot than any country in the world.

—*The Observer*, January 23.

Men don't remember women.

—Emily MacFarquhar quoted in *The Sunday Times*, January 23.

Without string-pulling and under-the-counter sales of everything from shoes to cement, the Soviet economy would cease to function at all.

—*The Economist*, December 25.

You don't get rid of sin by getting rid of freedom to express it.

—Conor Cruise O'Brien in *The Observer*, January 23.

If you "believe in" freedom, then you must believe in choice.

—Bennett M. Berger in *Encounter*, September 1981.

A free Press is like life. Distressing though it may be, it is preferable to the alternative. I was reminded of the alternative by what I think is the neatest headline of the week—the following, from the *Daily Telegraph* (19 Jan.):

**'PRAVDA' HITS
AT 'BORING'
SOVIET PRESS**

—Conor Cruise O'Brien in *The Observer*, January 23.

In Cambridge last Saturday a group of women were marching through the streets shouting slogans against pornography. They were not a pretty sight.

—Alexander Chancellor quoted in *The Guardian*, January 24.

This contempt for money is a plot by the rich to keep it from the poor.

—Al Pacino in *The Godfather* quoted in *Encounter*, September '81.