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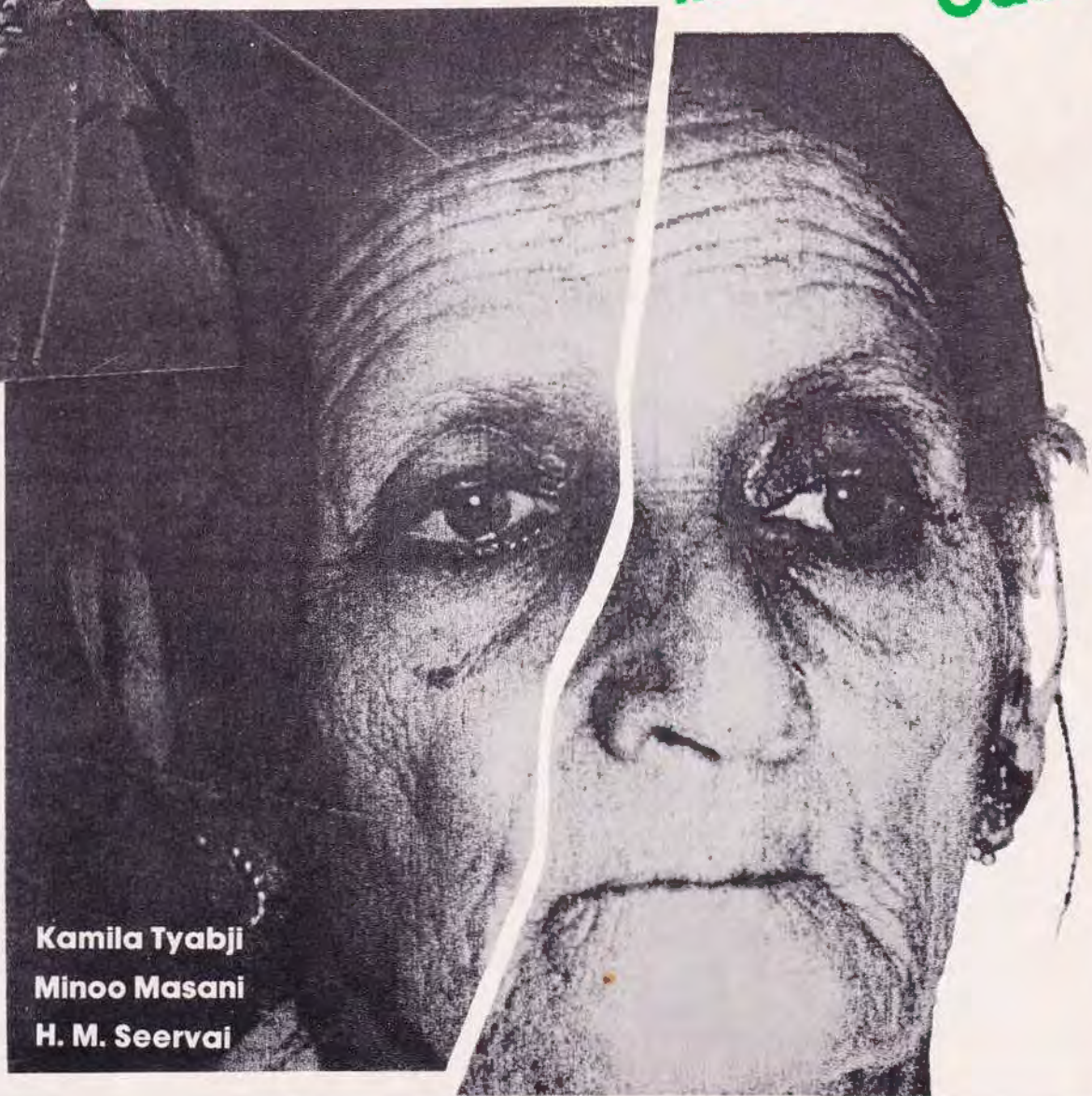
APRIL 1986

NO. 389

PRICE
RUPEES FIVE

Personal Laws
and

the Shah Bano
Case



Kamila Tyabji
Minoo Masani
H. M. Seervai

The Role of the Police K. F. Rustomji

J. B. H. Wadia – A Humanist Par Excellence D. B. Karnik

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Dear Friend:

Yet another Humanist and Liberal, Jamshed Wadia passed away in Bombay on January 4. He was for many years a member of the Executive Board of the Democratic Research Service and along with Mr. V. B. Karnik an Honorary Secretary of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom. Though he professed atheism, he was, if we may use the phrase, one of God's good men. May his soul rest in peace.

We dedicate this issue of *Freedom First* to his memory.

Problems in the press have delayed the publication of this issue. We apologise to our readers but are encouraged by the many anxious enquiries from concerned subscribers. That we are missed is heartening!

The delay was in a way a blessing in disguise for it enabled us to carry, as this quarter's essay, the views of Ms. Kamila Tyabji, Mr. Minoo Masani and Mr. H. M. Seervai on Personal Laws in the context of the Shah Bano Case.

The contributions by Mr. Minoo Masani under the title "The Masani Viewpoint" are from his column in *The Statesman*. We are indebted to them for their kind permission.

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With Many Voices

"The deep moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world"—Tennyson.

"Charging V. M. Tarkunde with sedition must be the brainwave of a moron. If Tarkunde is an enemy of the people, H. K. L. Bhagat is the Virgin Mary."

—Nayantara Sahgal, *Indian Express*,
October 27, 1985

Politicians make fools of us. They are all the same, some more than others. It's not values that matter to them. All that matters is power.

—K. R. Sundar Rajan, *Debonair*, March 1986.

Only in Britain had union leaders become arrogant enough to think that they can do without democracy.

—*The Economist*, February 25.

"We're tired of waiting for the next five year plan—we want a better life now."

—A young Soviet Communist Party member,
Fortune International, Nov. 25, 1985.

Competition is fine. But the rules should be the same for all.

—Vinod Doshi, Chairman Walchand Group, *Fortune International*,
January, 1986.

Why doesn't the President (Mr. Reagan) just say something like this: We are opposed in principle to both Communism and apartheid. However, we will take action only against nations that seek to export these evils.

—*National Review*, October 4, 1985.

Doordarshan is afraid of reality and truth. I don't blame them. They are very nice bureaucrats.

—Ramesh Sharma, *Illustrated Weekly of India*, April 6.

Money is a sort of influence, too. It helps when you know somebody is going to pay you. It's a better incentive than music or rain!

—Mario Miranda, *Imprint*, April 1986.

Let us never forget that the descent into a police state is deceptively easy.

—N. A. Palkhivala, *Business World*,
March 17.

Competition acts as a powerful spur in the economy.

—L. K. Jha, *Illustrated Weekly of India*,
April 6.

... The Rajiv Gandhi government is the most vacillating one we have ever had. And all that is needed to make it panic is to make a lot of noise.

Kuldip Nayar, *Mid-day*, April 17.

There are few countries that sign up as many major contracts as India does, but there can be none other which has an even remotely comparable record of dilly-dallying and flip-flopping on contracts.

India Today, April 30.

Of Cabbages & Kings

S. R. Venkataraman

With the passing away of S. R. Venkataraman, the President of the Servants of India Society, the world of Indian liberalism has lost one of its stalwarts, liberals one of the firmest of friends, and the *adivasis* a champion of their cause. Born and educated in Coimbatore and Madras, Venkataraman never took professionally to the law, where he had his initial training. A full time member of the Society, he travelled far and wide in the country and knew of many leading figures in Indian politics and South Indian politics in particular. A tireless worker for the education of the *Harijans* and the welfare of the *adivasis* he wrote a book in Tamil on them. He supervised for a number of years on behalf of the Society, the schools run for them in special areas in the South.

He became Secretary to the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri and his devotion to Sastri and Gokhale bordered on this side idolatry. He tried to keep their memories green by regularly bringing out annually *Gokhleana* and *Sastriana*, small pamphlets resurrecting forgotten writings of the masters many of them most difficult of access.

In Madras he was an institution and many scholars interested in modern politics made his residence and the office of the Society their Mecca. It also was the Madras centre of the Indian Council of World Affairs. Gentle in deportment, his fantastic memory for details, and his subdued humour and, above all, his gentlemanliness won for him a wide circle of friends. He will be missed for a long, long time.

—RS

When Are "Exceptions" Exceptions?

Mr. NE. L. Chidambaram is a Rajaji devotee. He is President of the "Rajaji Seva Sangam" in Ramana-
thapuram, Tamil Nadu. In July last year, Mr. Chidambaram wrote to the Prime Minister making several suggestions to commemorate Rajaji's services to the Nation. Among these was the minting of coins with Rajaji's effigy.

Rajaji himself would have frowned and asked

"the time has come," the
walrus said,
"to talk of many things:
of shoes-and ships-
and sealing wax-
of cabbages-
and kings-"

- Lewis Carroll



Mr. Chidambaram to refrain from making such requests. But that's a different matter.

It is not known whether the Prime Minister saw the letter. But Mr. Chidambaram did receive a reply from a Director in the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance. "... your request for issue of coins and notes with the effigy of late Shri Rajaji has been considered but it is regretted that under the present policy of the Government the same cannot be accepted," the Director wrote.

Mr. J. Venkateswaran who is General Secretary of the Swatantra Party, Maharashtra, thereupon followed up with a letter to the Director concerned, asking what precisely the "present policy" was regarding the issue of coins and currency notes with the effigies of great sons and daughters of India. By way of reminder, Mr. Venkateswaran pointed out (in case this fact had escaped the Director) that Rajaji was independent

Mr. K. S. Venkateswaran who edited *Freedom First* from January 1983, and along with Mr. S. V. Raju edited the Quarterly from April 1985, has resigned due to the pressure of professional work and frequent absences from Bombay. The Democratic Research Service, which publishes *Freedom First*, and the Editorial Board have recorded their appreciation of the services rendered by Mr. Venkateswaran during his editorship of the journal. I would like to add my personal appreciation of Mr. Venkateswaran's excellent work. We wish him a prosperous career.

We invited Dr. R. Srinivasan, Professor of Political Science, University of Bombay, to join the editorial team and are delighted he has joined as an Editor beginning with this issue.

—Minoo Masani

India's first Governor-General and the first Bharat Ratna.

This time an Under-Secretary in the Department of Economic Affairs replied: "the policy of the Government of India is generally not to issue commemorative coins and currency with effigies of eminent persons and only very few exceptions were made in the past." The Under-Secretary added: "While appreciating the sentiments in the suggestion regarding an eminent personality like Shri Rajaji, it is regretted that it has not been possible to accede to the request."

As liberals we have no use for the personality cult, and do not, even while informing readers of this interesting snippet, suggest we favour Rajaji's effigies on coins. We do not believe that a republican government should indulge in these or other forms of slavish adulation prevalent generally in African dictatorships.

The minting of the effigy of Mahatma Gandhi may perhaps be unobjectionable. After all he had given up party politics long before independence and could truly be described as a leader of all Indians. But both Pandit Nehru and his daughter were party leaders. This does make a difference.

If they can be exceptions so can a whole lot of those whose contribution to the freedom movement was no less outstanding: Sir Pherozshah Mehta, Lokmanya Tilak, Gopal Krishna Gokhale to name a few. What then was the yardstick to decide on the "very few exceptions"? Would the Under-Secretary care to clarify?

—SVR

A Lesson and a Prayer

Though public memory is short, readers of *Freedom First* may still recall the devastating earthquake in Mexico city on Sep 19. Officially, 5,000 to 8,000 people were killed; but it is believed that the death toll was between 20,000 to 30,000. A city of 18 million, one fourth i.e. nearly 4½ million have been rendered homeless.

It is interesting to note that the city was originally built by the Aztecs in the middle of a lake, on the mud remains of the lake. An area prone to earthquakes, the conventional wisdom of an 'uncivilized people' was never to build a house above three storeys and the Spaniards followed suit.

The city witnessed five million people exploding to the moon. The drive for residence made for a feverish rush to build high-rise buildings unknown before

1957. The casualties in the earthquake were not in the old working class areas. It was mainly in the areas of modern constructions built by public authorities. A civil engineer built the highest building of 46 floors in the city which remained undamaged through the earthquake. "...of about 900 buildings that collapsed, less than ten fell down because of the earthquake. The rest fell down because they were badly constructed, badly designed or a mixture of both." (*Listener*, Feb. 13).

The casualties are eloquent—four hundred and fifty school buildings collapsed and in the very areas where no other building crumbled. The three largest hospitals (needless too say built by the public sector) just crumbled.

The collapse of the hospital Juarez killing more than a thousand (the largest casualty) after analysis revealed serious faults in the "structural design, the welding and the consistency of concrete. One of the main structural beams contained no steel reinforcements."

The biggest housing estate in the whole of Latin America is Plateloco. A block of flats, the Neuro Leon flats is supposed to be designed to stand earthquakes. The hollow concrete foundations were so flimsy that the building leaned like another Pisan tower. In the earthquake ten of the fifteen floors toppled.

The record of the Delhi Development Corporation in building houses without foundation does not lie far behind that of the public works of Mexico City. Let us hope that the wrath of the Gods does not befall our capital.

—RS

Why Not Tihar Jail a Motel?

Newspapers have commented upon the Republic of San Marino which has the unique distinction of having only one jail; and now the only occupant by fleeing it has raised problems for the employees of the jail. For now they have no work to do. There have been proposals for turning it into a low-cost motel to attract tourists!

Since Delhi too is overcrowded and the tourists find it difficult to find accommodation why not consider transforming Tihar Jail into a motel? The jailors will have work to do and the motel will pay for itself. Also, the jailors need not guard the inmates and have no problems of embarrassing the political high and mighty.

—RS



J. B. H. Wadia

A Humanist Par Excellence

D. B. Karnik

J. B. H. WADIA was a many-faceted personality. He was a scholar, thinker, writer, poet, political worker, and a pioneer in the film industry. But the greatest asset of his life was that he was a cultured humanist par excellence. Mr. Wadia went through many vicissitudes of life. But he was consistent in one thing. He was essentially dedicated to service. As a film maker he introduced stunt films in the market in the pioneering days of the film industry and he was so successful and his films so popular that he became renowned as the emperor of the stunt film. It is difficult to believe that so educated and cultured a man like Wadia should get himself involved in stunt films. But Wadia's explanation was very simple. He told his admirers and critics "I stand for the entertainment of the common people and I know they admire adventure, intrigue and some thrill. My pictures provide them with this thrill and they enjoy my pictures". But there was never any vulgarity or cruelty in his films. As a matter of fact Wadia produced in course of time, historical, mythological, social and artistic films. These were an indication of his frame of mind and ever-widening political and philosophical outlook.

Wadia was an ardent Congressman. But he was never static in his beliefs. He was attracted to M. N. Roy because he felt the impulse of his rationalist political thought and his yearning for ushering in a renaissance society in India, on the pattern of the European Renaissance. Jamshed Wadia was also a person who cherished the ideas of Renaissance. His idol in painting was Leonardo da Vinci. He named his son Vinci and the bungalow which he built on the Worli Sea Face was called by him Casada Vinci. Through sheer coincidence M. N. Roy and Ellen Roy made it a home of their own in Bombay and subsequently Jamshed and Hilla his wife, became the hosts of all the Royists at Casada Vinci.

Jamshed Wadia was an enlightened thinker. He became so attached to Roy that he wrote a book *M. N. Roy the Man*. He called it an incomplete Royana.

He also established his own publishing house through which he published some of his writings and also his poems in Gujarati. It is surprising that Jamshed while leading a hectic life also wrote poetry in Urdu, a language which he admired and also-mastered. His affiliation with Roy was indeed helpful to both. Wadia and his wife Hilla almost adored Roy and Roy took Wadia into confidence while he formulated his philosophy and line of action. Roy trusted him so much that he made him a trustee of the Renaissance Institute at Dehradun. Wadia also became a founder-member of the Radical Democratic Party founded by Roy and when Roy launched the intellectual Radical Humanist Movement, Wadia became its active supporter and positive champion.

Jamshed Wadia was a fearless activist. He never shied away from sponsoring unpopular causes. Roy's thesis of supporting the Second World War as being an anti-fascist war brought all the popular fury on his head. As a staunch supporter of that policy, Wadia also bore the brunt of virulent criticism. But he stood for free as well as fearless thinking. The Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom and the Democratic Research Service founded by Minoo Masani, were both organisations which were unnecessarily and to an extent mischievously misunderstood by many political workers. But Wadia, like V. B. Karnik, became Masani's closest colleague in developing critical faculties in the society, through these organisations.

Wadia's achievements in the film world were fabulous. He came to films in 1928, in the closing years of the silent film era. He produced silent films but gradually turned to the Talkies as well as to documentaries. In 1933 he founded the Wadia Movietone and developed into a Producer-Director and Screen Writer. Under its banner he made 70 feature films, 20 documentaries and a pioneering series of short films of musical value. Wadia was a connoisseur of art and had the rare knack for discovering new talent. He produced short films or skits on Kumar Gandharva who was only eight years old. The *tabla* master Thirakawa was also captured by Wadia in a short film. All these artists and many other actors remained loyal to him through thick and thin.

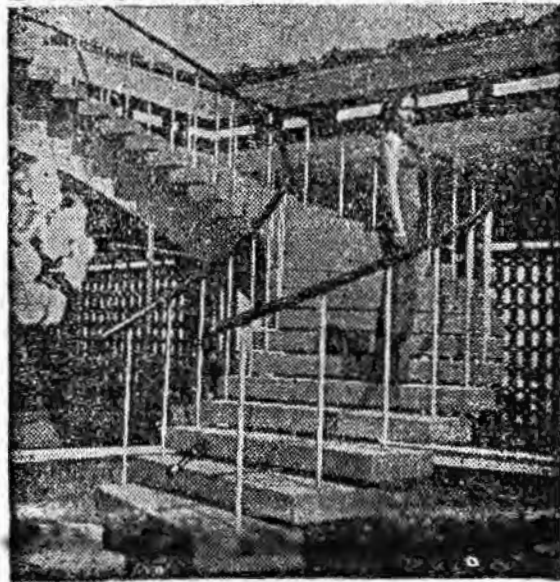
Wadia maintained the same relationship with all his friends, colleagues and comrades. The response he received from them was commensurate with the sincere affection that he bestowed on all of them. Wadia was a loving and a lovable person. He was fortunate to get as his life's partner a person like his wife Hilla who not only maintained his house but also co-operated with him in all the ventures he initiated in films and helped him in his social and political activities.

It was indeed a hard life for both of them because Wadia while achieving successes had also to go through adversities. Both of them kept a smile on their faces and extended generous hospitality to all those who came to Casada Vinci. Wadia's help to all and sundry was a sustaining force for the needy. But the beauty and the grace of this help was that it was bountiful but anonymous.

J. B. H. Wadia is no longer with us physically. Cancer claimed his life. But his memory will remain fresh in the hearts of all those who had the good fortune of associating with him. Jamshed Wadia had outstanding qualities. But the greatest among them was his abiding culture and human understanding. He was a great man but he has also a noble soul. His spirit will shine as a beacon.

—Mr. D. B. KARNIK is a former editor of *Maharashtra Times*.

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Wishful Thinking

Mr. Girilal Jain, Editor of the *Times of India*, is an intelligent man. I am therefore glad to learn from a signed article he has written in the *Times of India* of February 19, that:

"the Swatantra approach found special favour among upper crust Indians and certain political parties, the Jana Sangh, for instance, which was rooted in the trading community in north India. Socialists too bought the pro-Western and anti-Soviet aspect of the Swatantra platform under the influence of Jayaprakash Narayan who had, for good reasons, become highly critical of the Soviet Union.

"Janata owed its victory at the hustings to the excesses of the Emergency, especially in respect of family planning and slum clearance. But there can be no question that Janata, with all its differences and personality clashes, stood for a broad approach which was not very dissimilar from Swatantra's. It was anti-socialist and anti-Soviet, though there were powerful exceptions. The Janata Government sought to reduce controls and liberalise imports; it would have loved to weaken ties with the Soviet Union and strengthen those with the United States; only geo-strategic compulsions prevented it from implementing its policy of 'genuine non-alignment.'"

Rajaji and I always looked on our Party as *avant garde* and I am glad to know that we were right in our expectations.

I am a little taken aback, however, when Mr. Girilal Jain goes on to refer to Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's 'Swatantra sympathies'. I can confidently say that Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's economic policies have very little in common with those of the Swatantra Party. This is unfortunate, but those who live under the illusion that the Prime Minister will follow the Swatantra Party's policies are in for a bitter disappointment.

The latest example of this obvious fact is of course the Union Budget which was introduced on February 28, 1986.

—Minoo Masani

The Role of the Police

K. F. Rustomji

IT IS appropriate that the Rajaji Foundation should organize a seminar on Policing* because the present law and order situation in the country has become a cause of grave concern to every law-abiding citizen.

When we look back at the last three years, we find that this has been a period of agitations—in Assam, Punjab, Bhiwandi, Ahmedabad. Twelve thousand Indians lost their lives as a result of brutal attacks that occurred in the violence organized in the last three years. The organizers of the agitations disclaim all responsibility, attempt to make out that it was a police failure, plead that dissent is normal in a democracy, even gloat over their achievements. History will hold them guilty; and hold us too guilty, for having permitted such barbarism, such terrible brutalities to be visited even on women and children, and for condoning them and even allowing the perpetrators to be glorified.

In the riots in Delhi immediately after the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her own bodyguards, an unprecedented bloodshed followed in which nearly 2500 Sikhs were killed, thousands of homes damaged, and entire colonies left without hope.

Now Ahmedabad. Assuming that the Chief Minister had made a mistake in suddenly raising the reservation quota, what was its utilization till that date? Very low indeed. The whole agitation was designed to mislead. All that it had done is to show that the reservation itself is unfair to those for whose benefit it is designed. Close to 100 lives were lost in the rioting, crores worth of property was damaged, and crores of rupees were lost to the poor in wages due to curfew and disruption of work. Officially, there was an attempt to cover up the mistakes with a campaign against the police as in all previous agitations, and the police broke down under the strain of prolonged tension and behaved in an undisciplined manner.

It is true that the performance of the police has declined in the last few years. No preventive action is taken, no patrolling, detections, convictions and scientific investigation. The state of records is very poor. The decline in professional methods is very clear. Often, the wrong man is glorified by the police.

In Kashmir an MLA who was arrested on a remand warrant signed by a magistrate was not produced in court. In rural India there are outrages of one type or another and the people feel nervous.

All this leads one to think that the system of British justice was good. People had faith in it, faith in the police, courts and jails, and standards were maintained. Most of all that helped to build the "Iqbal" of the British.

I wonder if the recent raids in Bombay are a replacement of the punishment that courts are expected to give. Is this a sign of the distrust of our system of justice, or failure to discipline by the law?

Gandhiji did a great service. He woke up the masses and mass action was possible for independence, but he controlled violence. The only person who realised how dangerous the mob can be was Gandhiji. In 1922 he withdrew the non-co-operation movement because 22 policemen were killed at Chauri Chaura.

What was the background to the 1942 disturbance? Fearing that India would be lost in any case owing to the Japanese advance, and egged on by President Roosevelt who sincerely pleaded for Indian independence, Churchill sent Stafford Cripps in March 1942 to lay before the Indian leaders a complicated formula assuring a transfer of power after the war, and offered for the first time the right to secede from the federation to any state that wanted to keep out of it. Bad as the proposal was, it could have been accepted, and probably would have worked out all right. It is a fact however that not one of the British side trusted the other. The Viceroy hated Cripps, Cripps distrusted Churchill and Amery, Attlee distrusted Churchill. All of them seemed to shoot down each other's ideas, and at the centre of it all was Linlithgow, the Viceroy, who distrusted everyone, and felt that he alone could guide India out of the danger of war. He called the Cripps plan "hawking rotten fish". The one single thought that emerged in all minds after the failure of the Cripps Mission was that the British were trying to deceive us and would never depart without a blood-hot struggle.

Then came that tumultuous August 1942—stormy in every way—with hope of independence shattered by the failure of the mission. No prediction of the future

*Seminar organised by the Rajaji Foundation on the occasion of the 106th birthday of Rajaji. This article is based on Mr. Rustomji's keynote speech.

course of events was possible. The Congress decided to temporise and passed a resolution in Bombay on 9th August 1942 offering conditional support to the Allies. The words 'Quit India' were not used in the resolution at all. Suddenly the government decided to arrest Gandhiji and all the Working Committee members and that set the match to a conflagration which nobody could control. Mobs of different types took over. The hatred that had banked upon both sides precluded any calm thinking. It was India in anger—the very foundations of the country were shaken by the intensity of the freedom demand.

Calcutta (1946)—direct action was launched by the Muslim League and that night of long knives which made Wavell feel that Hindu and Muslim could never live together—was the precursor of Pakistan. Then Noakhali (East Bengal) and its revenge—rioting against Muslims in Bihar, horrible in the extreme, followed by organized rioting to throw the Hindus out of Lahore, Multan, Rawalpindi and to appropriate their properties; and then more rioting to make the reluctant Pathans accept Pakistan by setting fire to Dera Ismail Khan Hazara and Bannu by groups of hired agents.

Despite all the efforts of leaders on both sides, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were driven out from their homes after the partition even from Delhi and Lahore, and their houses, factories and fields captured by gangs of ruffians. An uncontrollable communal frenzy gripped the land. Then came massacre upon massacre. The mobs had taken over northern India and they dictated the transformation of both countries. It was only the deeply embedded secularism of Gandhiji, and his martyrdom that saved us from an irretrievable disaster. Nehru too played his part well but many others right down the line to the last constable showed that secularism is only skin-deep on our side, and in lesser measure on the other. The crying need of this sub-continent was, and continues to be firm impartial policing.

Even after independence we have allowed mobs to dictate. The devastation in Andhra after the fast unto death of Potti Srimulu led to the formation of Andhra Pradesh, although Nehru would have liked to retain Hyderabad as a separate entity. The formation of Punjabi Suba and the decision regarding Chandigarh, were outcomes of suicidal threats and mass disorder. The massacres in Assam and Delhi (1984), the change in the language policy owing to disturbances in the south, the dismissal of two Chief Ministers of

Gujarat to prevent casualties, the blood-burst over the formation of linguistic states—the list is endless, not to mention the communal riots in various parts of the country.

The Government of India has now created a separate Department to look after Internal Security matters with Arun Nehru as the Minister and assisted by an able police officer, Ribeiro. Let us hope for an improvement in the law and order situation.

And now terrorism is raising its ugly head—knocking aircraft out of the sky, killing women and children, holding the civilised world to ransom. For funds it takes to bank robberies, drugs, sale of weapons. Why are we weak against terrorism? It implies a trusted and dependable police, but our police reactions are panicky, conciliatory, even partisan. There is no accountability to law. Police performance depends on direction by the political machine, good officers, and control—for which you have officers, counts and the media. Unfortunately, faith in the criminal justice system is declining. In the words of the Chief Justice of India, Mr. P. N. Bhagwati, the judicial system is on the verge of collapse. Delays and arrears have made litigation a gamble where the dishonest and the rich have all the advantages. Structural changes are required to improve the situation. But even within the existing system substantial steps can be taken. The conditions of the subordinate judiciary must be urgently improved. There are not enough judges and courts at the lower level where the public makes the first contact with the judiciary. The Chief Justice has warned that this most important part of the judicial pyramid, the lower judiciary, will crumble and has called for effective steps to improve the situation.

The rule of law is being finished in an unthinking manner. The police need to be protected from political interference; and protected from the corrupt and the sycophantic in the forces. Performance of each man in the force must be improved and any strategy that is worked out must be designed to protect the poor and the defenceless in the country.

I have tried to show how law and order has been affected and how social accord and internal peace have been shattered by law and order breakdowns. All of us have a part to play in it—the Rajaji Foundation, the media, the political machine, the judiciary.

Mr. K. F. Rustomji is a retired Inspector-General of Police and member of the Police Commission.

New Structures for the World Economy —the Indian Perspective

P. R. Brahmananda

IT IS a privilege for me to deliver the valedictory address at this important seminar* in which we had the opportunity of listening to the views of Mr. Bolkenstein. May I remind the distinguished audience that Holland was the ancestral home of David Ricardo, the fountain-head of International Trade Theory. Holland has contributed many distinguished economists among whom Tinbergen has been a source of great help to developing countries.

On this occasion it is a further privilege to us for having had the opportunity of listening to the remarks of Mr. M. R. Masani, one of our most distinguished statesman. I recollect that it was several years ago just a little around the time of our Independence that Mr. Masani put forth the idea of a 'mixed economy'. When all is said and done this is the political economy frame in which India has finally landed herself. With the help of the late Rajaji, Masani has helped to keep high, the flag of political freedom during a very critical period of our history. It must be a matter of great satisfaction for him to know that over the years, after several switches and reswitches, India has continued to cherish the goal of a mixed economic system.

If democracy has remained in India and economic freedoms continue to be valued by us, the credit must go to stalwarts like Rajaji, Jayaprakash Narain and Masani. They have conserved vital elements in our system and today we can be sure that these elements will continue to be retained by us through thick and thin. Masani has continued to take active positions on the great issues of our day. He has pioneered the causes of decentralisation, restraint, population growth on limits on taxation, training for enlightened citizenship, consumer welfare etc. He has supported causes which make life worth living and now has taken the lead in the cause of freedom *not* to continue to live!

The course of the International economy in recent years reveals a trend and a pattern not anticipated earlier. Most economists had taken for granted the presence of a high inflation rate among the developed

countries; it was argued that this high inflation rate would have repercussions as well on the developing economies, which in turn would be witnessing still higher inflation rates. Inflation was built as a law of a growing economy; no inflation, no growth, so went the almost universal refrain. A big change has come now. The world is now witnessing, particularly in the 80's, substantively lower inflation rates. Developed countries have an inflation rate of between 3-6 per cent, but the developing countries taken together are manifesting rates of inflation of above 20, and in many cases above 30, per cent. India is having an inflation rate of about 9 per cent. We used to pride ourselves as the lowest inflation-rate country but to-day this is not true. Further, the thesis that the high inflation rate of the developing countries as also of India was due to the repercussions of a similar state in the developed countries has been exploded. Some one may now put forth a thesis that the high inflation rate of the developing countries is leading to inflation in the developed countries. If the dog previously wagged the tail, why not now say that the tail is wagging the dog.

We may now reasonably postulate that so far as developed countries are concerned the prospects of a rather moderate inflation rate being within the range of say 2 to 5 per cent are bright and even somewhat sure. Between the end of the eighteenth century and the early thirties of the present century, the world witnessed a remarkable era of gently falling prices. The period thereafter has seen a significant upsurge in prices. From the early eighties we may be heading towards an era of near price level stability—definitely, we think, so far as the developed countries are concerned.

What about developing countries? Will price stability ever come here? Let us make some assumptions. One: the world is going to come closer in trade relations; political nationalism means economic internationalism. The role of aid, multilateral, bilateral, tied, untied, hard, not so hard and soft, is going to get diminished. Its share will certainly shrink. Trade and commercial loans will take their place. Trade will increasingly become multilateral; this is the second assumption. The era of cursory blocks, bilateral

* Seminar on "New Structures for the World Economy The Indian Perspective" jointly organised in Bangalore in December 1985 by the AIRD and the Friedrich Naumann Stiftung of West Germany. These are extensive extracts from Prof. Brahmananda's speech.

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reements, common markets etc., is going to get reduced. The transfer of technology through the market will become more and more important and efficient firms will become more and more multinational. This constitutes the third assumption. And now I come to the fourth assumption. Tariff and non-price barriers will also gradually lose their importance. This takes us to the fifth assumption. Exchange rates will move in accordance with market trends and the important conclusion is that though exchange rates will be free they will tend to remain reasonably stable. We have now learnt the hard lesson that we cannot continuously beggar our neighbours and neighbours too cannot beggar us. The adjustments to changes in balance of payments will be not through exchange rate variations but through domestic policy adjustments particularly in money, interest rate and fiscal and related matters.

In the above type of world environment, developing countries will have also to fall in line if they have to even keep relative economic positions stable. The external factors causing inflationary pressures will largely fade out. Since countries have to appear to be economically viable and strong if these have to attract capital and to borrow in the commercial markets, exchange rate stability will have to be maintained. And this would need domestic, monetary and fiscal policies. Exports through cheaper costs will have to be the mainstay. This will also necessitate control over monetary and fiscal expansionism.

An important member of the Developing Countries group, China, seems to have expressed its faith in relative price stability. This is itself a great sobering influence on the policies of developing countries like India. What about monetary growth rates? Recent experiences show how developed countries have significantly brought down their annual money subsidy growth rates from about 10-14 per cent to 6-10 per cent. There is a strong movement for imposing and keeping agreed ceilings on money supply growth rates. The O.S. opinion has favoured 5-6 per cent growth rate per annum; the international economists favour a slightly lower growth rate. Assuming the influences of factors mentioned earlier, one may forecast that monetary growth rates would settle down to 5-6 per cent per annum. If developed countries settle down to monetary growth rates of 5-6 per cent, in course of time developing countries too will have to follow. In India, the Chakravartty Panel has proposed in effect a 9 per cent ceiling. Prices should not rise by more than 4 per cent states the above committee. If a 5% growth rate is the order, this will yield a 9% growth rate in money. Most Indian economists favour a 5 per cent ceiling on monetary growth.

What about output growth rates? Developed countries together are currently growing within a range of 2-4 per cent. We may postulate safely a 3% growth rate here. The developing countries are growing within a range of 4-8 per cent per annum. We may postulate an average 4-5 per cent growth rate. *This means that the absolute development gap will go down steadily though slowly.*

Will the per capita gap go down? Most developing countries have accepted the need of $nrr=1$ as a goal. Birth rates have fallen heavily in China and have also fallen in India and in many other developing countries. One would expect the processes to speed up. In such a case if the developing economies' population growth rate comes down to 1% per annum by about 2000 A.D. or earlier the rate of per capita improvement will move up and the differential in per capita growth between developed and developing countries will be slightly higher. At the rate of between 1-2 per cent per annum the per capita gap will start narrowing.

What then will be the shape of the future international system in the light of the above? Several predictions regarding the above issue have been in circulation and whole economic theories have been built on the basis of the theories. A danger of more long run theorising is that we seek to extrapolate the current drift according to our biases and beliefs. There is always an element of self-doctoring involved in these predictions. One leading theory associated with Professor Myrdal is that the income gaps will tend to get worsened, accentuated by forces of cumulative causation. Myrdal is also known for the thesis of the 'soft state'. We do not know how he would react to the levels of savings in most developing countries today, which come close to an average of 25% in gross terms, higher than what prevails over most of Europe and in U.K. and the U.S.A.

High levels of accumulation *per se* are not the sole requirements of growth. High productivity levels and low capital output ratios are very very important. In fact, even with the low savings ratios, low capital-output ratios can yield high enough growth rates. In most developing countries, K-O ratios are high, very high; they have *become* high. To save 25% implies a very 'hard' community and not a soft state. But the productivity gaps can only be closed by vigourous exchanges of ideas, inventions, processes, and products. This is what trade is expected to do provided it is untrammelled and sufficient time is allowed for efforts to work out. We may not agree with Dr. I. G. Patel that growth *per se*, that is what it amounts to, is an engine of trade. Growth *per se* may mean huge and yawning trade gaps. India's case is an illustration.

But growth which gradually allows trade to be fostered causes K-O ratios to be kept down. And it makes for policies which keep external perspectives on our performance alive and vigorous. Even diamonds cannot apprise themselves by themselves; that is why an outside expert is required. Trade courses, 'trade winds' if I may use a pun, must be allowed to blow on us. These are the outside spectacles through which we view ourselves. Myrdal's thesis is already falsified.

A second theory has been that of Raul Prebisch, the influential Latin American economist. He has presented a thesis of terms of trade almost perpetually going against developing countries. The thesis is based on two sets of opposite hypotheses holding for the developed and the developing countries. In one, money wages determine prices; in the other, demand. Prebisch's thesis does not hold for India and certainly has no prospect of its holding for China. There is no 'representative' developing country, no representative country. Again, a proper measure of terms of trade is a tricky issue. Nor can we hold that the two hypotheses hold for different sets of countries. The hypotheses also require optimal economic policies in each set of countries.

The major fact is that the developing world, even excluding the oil-rich countries, is growing at a higher rate than the developed world. And given time the trends are for a closing of the gap, though equalisation is not postulated by us. Note that the theories of Myrdal and Prebisch are equilibrium theories; time does not matter here. The drift is the thing.

In the light of all the above what would be the future of the international institutions? The IMF and the IBRD too are caught up in their own trappings. The institutions were ushered under the postulate that the U.S. and a few other rich countries will have persistent long run lendable surpluses for export. These hypotheses have been belied. With the present anti-inflation psychology that is dominating the developed world, we think rightly, the future of SDR's is clouded. The developed do not, by and large, need the Fund. Resources have higher prospects elsewhere. They do not want to lend to the world.

The facile assumptions on which we the third world economists function are far far away from reality. We are bound to be disappointed if we have not realised this already.

If the above prognostications are correct, there is an important, very powerful, implication for our classificatory procedures. In the early portion of the post-war period, the 'developed' countries were growing at

a higher rate than the 'developing' countries. Now the reverse is taking place. This any way is not due to the oil-shocks. The oil-shocks just tilted the holding of assets, temporarily more in favour of the oil-rich countries. The effects are now almost over. The developed countries have almost recovered. The growth process therein has renewed. There is high unemployment thereon. But the unemployed are well cared for. No crisis has occurred. The developing non-oil countries had a jolt but they too have almost recovered. The classificatory foundation for the division of the countries has become obsolete. Countries are getting into all sorts of criss-cross relations. Some even believe that the division into developed and developing turned attention from adjustment and destruction problems inside the latter. Altruism has not been the basis of economics. Why do we have to persist in asking others to follow a philosophy which we ourselves do not practice in?

It trade integrates the 'world more and more as we visualise the hypothesis of 'several worlds' collapses. Paradoxically, if countries are becoming more and more inward looking they surely become better suited to become more and more outward looking. An economics of efficiency dictated by the invisible Lord Justice Comparative Cost will in the long run displace the economics of "ideology" as an end by itself. Trade is born out of necessity, the necessity to have some thing more than what we have or what we may have, irrespective of what the other may also have. Live and let live, that is the most powerful bond.

The World has seen from the beginning a division between the rich and the poor. After the Russian Revolution the division came in terms of the capitalist and the socialist. This division got into trouble when the underdeveloped countries most of which were under one empire or the other got liberated. A new rubric emerged with the world getting divided into the First, the Second and the Third, the Capitalist, the Socialist and the 'Mixed', or the 'Non-aligned'. Since even the Socialist world has got divided into three groups, the East European, the Soviet, and the Chinese and this world is also said to be mostly rich, the division into North and South has come in its place. But we know that not all of the North is rich and not all South is poor. And even the poor nations have very rich components. So one supposes the ancient classification of the world's people's into rich and poor has a more solid basis than any other so far. But with the poor gesture out of poverty by 2000 A.D. a new classification may have to emerge.

May we speculate on the above? If poverty does not serve to classify countries nor can the notion of development itself. All countries are underdeveloped, all are developing. Can we use the classification in terms of freedom? The division is between total freedom and total planning. Total means political, economic and social, and also within and without. The two extremes are unreal. All are mixed some more in one way and some in another. The division between free and planned economies may not be empirically tenable. We need a third category. A third paradigm if we may say so. Herein we think is India's special contribution. We have tried to bridge Freedom and Planning by the powerful and meaningful concept of social justice. We are a mixed economy pursuing both freedom and social justice in a frame-work of macro-planning. We want to eschew the evils of the two

extremes by themselves. That is the significance in economics of the political concept of non-alignment. To avoid extremes we have to walk on a tight rope never losing the direction and never falling.

If we really look back, the concept of a free international economy fits well within the above frame-work. To transpose a nationally feasible goal of social justice to an international frame-work is a very very intractable task. No country will accept this without, unless it accepts it within. A mixed economy within means the possibility of an international order based on freedom and social justice. May we conclude with an aphorism. *From Freedom Solely to Justice also is easier than from Justice only to Freedom also.*

Prof. P. R. BRAHMANANDA is an eminent economist and Head of the Dept. of Economics, University of Bombay

The Anguish of Sanjiva Reddy

IN AN exclusive interview with the *Hindu*, February 23, 1986, the ex-President "expressed serious concern over the widening gap between precept and practice of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi both as Prime Minister and President of the Congress I". Since this did not get the attention it deserved from the media *Freedom First* extracts some portions of it for readers.

"My hopes were raised when the young man succeeded Indira Gandhi after her brutal assassination and promised to provide a clean administration and also later showed some pragmatism and political acumen in concluding accords on Punjab and Assam. Then I appealed to the nation and the Opposition parties to extend a helping hand to the new Prime Minister in overcoming the crisis confronting the nation. Some Opposition leaders criticised me for such a call. Then it was the need of the hour for the entire nation to stand by the Prime Minister to help him create peace and establish law and order in the strife-torn country. But the latest developments are causing agony to me.

The septuagenarian leader said: "I am 73 now almost at the dusk of my life. I have no personal or political ambition except seeing the country united and trouble-free and the welfare of the down-trodden looked after by persons at the helm of affairs. I wish to die before the country drifts into further political degeneration, social turmoil and economic crisis.

"I am sorry to say Mr. Rajiv Gandhi is not practising the political morals he is preaching.

Some persons who were voted out in the general elections are being brought into the portals of power through the backdoor. In such circumstances how will the people take his preachings seriously and continue to repose confidence in him? Consequently the Congress (I) under his stewardship is losing its image and already has lost credibility in the southern parts of the country and in some non-Hindi speaking States too.

"The Finance Minister is trying to make a mole out of a mountain by harassing small people". He asked why he had not ordered a single raid on the houses of politicians who had accumulated "tons of black money". "The Finance Minister in this country has control over only 50 per cent of its economy. The remaining 50 per cent is under the sway of black money-holders. As long as the menace of black money playing the role of a parallel economy is not ended, the nation's economy would not become sound and an economic crisis would further deepen. Several committees appointed to study the issue of black money had recommended demonitisation of high denomination currency to end the pernicious impact of black money on the country's economy."

"These sycophants around persons in power are a menace not only to them and their parties but also to the nation. If persons at the helm of affairs are not cautious about these elements, the very interests of the nation will be in jeopardy," said the Former President of India.



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The Masani Viewpoint

The Recklessness Continues

THE TRAGIC death of twenty-seven persons and the injuries to eight others who were run over by the Cannanore-Ernakulam Express is an example of the fact that indiscipline and anti-social conduct sometimes attract disaster on those concerned. The crowd had no business to be on the railway track and press reports say that the efforts of the police party on the spot to stop the people from crowding on the railway track were not successful.

The Finance Minister, Mr. V. P. Singh, is very much like the unfortunate and unwise people who were run over by the railway train. He and his predecessors have been repeatedly warned that printing currency notes is no way of balancing a budget.

Last year the Union Government indulged in legalised counterfeiting estimated at Rs. 3,316 crores, but it has now turned out that this was of the order of Rs. 4,400 crores. Undeterred by this experience, this year's budget leaves uncovered a deficit of Rs. 3,660 crores which will inevitably turn out to be over Rs. 5,000 crores. To the massive inflation that will result from this has to be added the rise in prices caused by the additional duties on the products of Government monopolies imposed a few weeks ago. All this shows how reckless are the Union Government and its Finance Minister.

Last year, in his Budget speech, the Finance Minister permitted himself to mock at those honest people who live within their means by saying that such people lack imagination. It is like an alcoholic making fun of temperate people. Evidently, the wisdom of the ages summarised in the adage "Cut your coat according to your cloth" carries no weight with Mr. V. P. Singh. Like the trespassers on the railway track, he is inviting inevitable disaster, not for himself but for his country and its unfortunate people.

Against this crushing burden on the common man, the so-called 'concessions' in the budget pale into insignificance.

If Mr. Girilal Jain will forgive my saying so, a Swatantra budget for this year would have avoided deficit finance and assured what Professor Shenoy called 'an honest rupee' by a massive cut in the wasteful public expenditure on the bloated bureaucracy and by privatising several Government enterprises which are eating into the nation's capital year after year. It means that the present budget and a Swatantra budget would have differed as much as chalk and cheese.

Why This Distinction ?

I HAVE received an interesting letter from a reader who has drawn attention to the fact that, for some reason, he finds it difficult to divine why newspaper headlines tend to be discriminatory in so far as Sikhs are concerned. As an illustration, he gives the following example of anti-social elements whose religion or community are never mentioned, as in Group A, and those where Sikhs are referred to in case of misdeeds as in Group 'B':

Group 'A'

SALES TAX CLERK NABBED
WOMAN HELD WITH MANDRAX
TABLETS
ACE HOUSEBREAKER HELD
CAR THIEVES HELD
MAN HELD FOR BURNING WIFE
TWO T. C's SUSPENDED

Group 'B'

AI CRASH—SIKHS' CASE ADJOURNED
CANADA SWOOPS ON SIKH HOMES
SIKH ATTACK ON 2 DIPLOMATS
6 SIKHS HELD FOR ASSAULT
4 SIKHS FURTHER REMANDED IN
CUSTODY.

I must confess that I had not noticed this distinction made by the newspaper headlines probably because I am altogether immune from any communal bias one way or the other. But it is altogether possible that others are prejudiced by the constant reading of such headlines.

My correspondent goes on to ask why, for instance, we do not see headlines like:

GANG OF MUSLIM CAR THIEVES
HELD;

HINDU HOUSE-BREAKER ARRESTED;
CHRISTIAN HELD FOR MURDER

A good question. Will some editor or journalist care to explain? I cannot.

The Masani Viewpoint

Et tu Mr. Hegde?

When I insisted on resigning as Chairman of the Minorities Commission in 1978, I was told I had been guilty of un-Indian behaviour because in this country one only threatens to resign but never does. Mr. Ramakrishna Hedge by his resignation from office as Chief Minister of Karnataka had, I felt, struck a blow for clean politics. It further burnished his already shining image.

I was in Delhi on the 15th of February to take the chair at a session of the Hindustani Audolan Convention on Clean Government. I happened to see Mr. Hedge briefly that morning and can testify to the fact that he was engaged in a life and death struggle with the Janata Party executive in order to adhere to his stand.

Political parties are selfish organisations. A party is a means to an end and not an end in itself. The Janata Party Executive, for its own selfish party interests, persuaded or forced this honest man to go back to the job he had relinquished. This obviously suited them in more than one way.

Mr. Hegde has claimed that as a loyal worker of the party, he had no option but to abide by their wishes. "We have to surrender our individual ideals to the ideals of our party", Mr. Hegde is quoted in the press as saying. He also said that "he had to bow to the order from the high command as a party worker without any alternative".

Not so. No political party in a free society has a right to force a man to take up the leadership against his own wishes. Such a right only

exists in totalitarian countries like the U.S.S.R. Mr. Hegde should have stuck to his guns and the party would have had to make the best of it. He could, if necessary, have offered to leave the party, which would have been to his advantage but not that of the party. "My party right or wrong" is almost as pernicious as the slogan "My country right or wrong".

Mr. Hegde, in my opinion, has a big future in the national politics of this country. He has now postponed his freedom to operate at that level. It was a cruel dilemma by which he was faced. I could see in the few minutes I saw him on the 15th morning that he was in a highly emotional mood while trying to resist the pressure of his colleagues. In yielding to them, Mr. Hegde has allowed his head to yield to his heart. Like Edmund Burke, about whom Oliver Goldsmith wrote, he "to party gave up what was meant for mankind."

Many years ago, in another context, Professor Tawney gave a fitting reply to the leader of the Labour Party Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, when the latter pressed Professor Tawney to accept a peerage in the interests of the Labour Party. Professor Tawney wrote back in reply that while his Party had certain claims on him, it had no right to dishonour him. As a friend and admirer of Mr. Hegde, I am not sure that he would not have done well for the country and himself if he had echoed to Mr. Chandrasekhar Professor Tawney's rejoinder to Mr. Ramsay Macdonald.

Supping with the Devil

THE PRESENCE of Mr. Arjun Singh, Congress (I) Vice President and a 4-man delegation from the Congress (I) at the Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in Moscow is nothing short of a disgrace. Countries that observe friendly relations with the Soviet Government scrupulously keep out of association with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. This is true of all countries except the out and out satellites in Eastern Europe. Now India has joined the ranks of the Soviet satellites in this particular manner by permitting a link between the Congress (I) and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

It is true that the programme of the Congress (I) is by no means a communist programme. One of two things therefore flows—either the Congress (I), led by its President, the Prime Minister of India, is trying to throw dust in the eyes of the Soviet dictatorship by professing an identity that does not exist. Or, if that is not so, then the Congress (I) is throwing dust in the eyes of the people of India by being essentially communist, without saying so. The Congress (I) is welcome to resolve this dilemma to which it has exposed itself. We can only recall the wise old saying: 'He who supps with the Devil needs a long spoon'.

The Masani Viewpoint

The Curious Case of Rama Swarup

THE CASE against Mr. Rama Swarup, is becoming curiousest and curiousest and acquiring an 'Alice in Wonderland' touch. Two unfortunate ministers of the Union Government had to resign because they visited the Republic of China in Taiwan and were in contact with Mr. Rama Swarup. So what? Though I have not been mentioned in the inspired leakages to sections of the press, I would like to volunteer the information that I have myself committed the heinous crime of twice visiting Taiwan! True, the Government of India, like the proverbial ostrich, refuse to 'recognise' the fact that Taiwan exists, as though they deplore the fact that the happy people of Taiwan have not been brought under the brutal dictatorship of Peking.

Taiwan presents a lovely contrast to the Mainland. Its standard of living is immensely higher than that of Communist China, while the foreign trade of this little island is about as large as that of the entire Mainland. The crop of rice per acre of land in Taiwan is the highest in the world. The wonder is that the Indian Government does not appreciate any of these achievements though they talk so much about democracy and development.

As it happens, I have referred to my visit to Taiwan in 1963 in a chapter in my memoir *Against the Tide* entitled humourously "The forgotten Land of Taiwan". In order to restore a sense of proportion and combat the hysteria emanating from New Delhi, let me quote a little from my memoir (pages 104-105):

"I told Nehru that President Chiang had spoken gently about him and without bitterness. Indeed, he had gone so far as to say that in spite of Nehru's ingratitude towards him and his country, he had never a bitter word about him in private or in public, and that he continued to regard himself, as he had always done, as a friend of the Indian people."

"As I got up to leave, Nehru thanked me for my report. Perhaps these were the last words he addressed to me. I am glad that our 25-year duel, over international communism, had ended on a friendly note. A few days later, I was to learn from a good friend, in the Ministry of External Affairs, about the aftermath of my visit to Jawaharlal. It seemed that, on the following day, at a meeting of senior officials of the Ministry, Jawaharlal gave a fairly detailed resume of my report on Taiwan. What was interesting about it is that he had repeat-

ed President Chiang's statement about his absence of bitterness towards Nehru, in a completely deadpan manner. The usual snort of disdain was missing. . . . A man who was present (and who told me all this) asked me: 'Don't you think, Minoo, you have to hand it to him for having reported you to us so fairly?' I readily conceded this—it had shown Jawaharlal in a fine light."

Since the charges levelled against Mr. Rama Swarup are still *sub judice*, I desist from expressing any view on the validity or otherwise of those charges. I also abide by the principle of the rule of law that a man is presumed to be innocent until he is proved guilty in a court of law—something the authorities in Delhi and some sections of the press evidently forgot.

All the same, one thing sticks out a mile and that is that the authorities in Delhi do not seem to understand the difference between espionage and lobbying, which involves collecting and passing on information which is not 'classified' under the Official Secrets Act. These are two entirely different activities. It is known that there are lobbies maintained by various countries in other countries. Thus, for instance, there is a lobby maintained by Libya, with whom the U.S.A. is on bad terms, in Washington. It is registered and allowed to function without let or hindrance. In India and Britain, however, lobbies can function legally without registration.

On top of all this, come disturbing reports from Delhi that Mr. Rama Swarup's trial is to be held *in camera* as is customary in such cases in the Soviet Union. If that happens, it will confirm one's worst suspicions. If the light of day is not allowed to fall on the evidence about the charges made against Mr. Rama Swarup in a fair trial open to the public, the result will unfortunately be that the judgement of the court will lose all credibility in the eyes of the public.

I have yet to be persuaded that the word 'committed', if analysis is pressed home, will ever be found to mean anything which does not boil down to 'a state in which something else matters more than truth'. There is nothing amusing about committal; the victims of that slaughter lie strewn around.

Mary Renault quoted by Bernard Levin in his book *The Way We Live Now*.

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Will Kerala Go the Communist Way?

Babu Joseph

ONE MIGHT wonder why I have chosen two different subjects seemingly unconnected. But a careful analysis of the political and social situation in Kerala will enable us to understand its inter-relation. The purpose of this paper is to go a little deep into the present political and social scenario prevailing in Kerala and draw conclusions for future action.

The State of Kerala is presently governed by a Non-Marxist United Democratic Front (U.D.F.) led by Shri K. Karunakaran of Indian National Congress(I). They came into power as an outcome of the General Election held to the Kerala Assembly in 1982. The main contestants to the seat of power were the United Democratic Front (U.D.F.) led by Shri K. Karunakaran and Left Democratic Front (L.D.F.) led by Shri E. K. Nayanar of the Marxist Communist Party (C.P.M.). Let us examine the election results in a nutshell.

Total number of votes polled ..	95,26,895
Votes secured by U.D.F. ..	46,16,908
Votes secured by L.D.F. ..	45,21,681
Difference in Votes ..	95,277

Hence the obvious conclusion is that the difference in popular votes which the United Democratic Front had managed to secure over Left Democratic Front is only very slender and narrow. Even this they have obtained after having got into its alliance all sorts of splinter groups and communal forces. Any further leftward shift or tilt which the Marxists can effect in the popular base of the U.D.F. will be definitely to the advantage of the Left Democratic Front led by the Marxists. It was against this background that I watch with alarm the increasing Marxist infiltration into various Christian Churches in Kerala in a most scientific and skilful manner. This danger assumes greater dimensions when we understand the fact that Christians in Kerala were a bastion against Communist onslaughts in the past. Is this bastion cracking leading to an eventual fall? If this happens what will be its impact? To what extent has the weakening of our Christian commitments contributed to the present pligh? What are the remedial measures? While the Marxists create inroads into our ranks on the one hand, are not our Hindu brethren gradually getting alienated from us on the other? Do we have any special bondage of friendship with the Muslim masses? These are all questions which a true Christian and a true democrat should ask himself. For the purpose of this paper, I

am confining myself to the extent of Marxist infiltration into Christian Churches, its political impact and some remedial measures.

Christians in Kerala when taken together are a considerable political, social and economic force since they constitute about 25% of the total 25 million population. When compared to other religious groups they are well-organized and wealthy. Hence Christian Churches were traditionally the mainstay of the democratic forces in Kerala and had contributed its mite in preventing the spread of Communism. In turn Communists had always considered Christian Community as their number one foe. Until recently they had managed to get only a very few Christian upstarts into their fold and even their leader E.M.S. Namboodripad has testified to that fact. But the situation is slowly changing. Of late communists have changed their strategy and have managed to infiltrate into the Christian Churches in a most disguised and effective manner and in many a case it is very difficult to identify them. They have decided to be subversive and their strategy is to 'wreck from within'. Some of the recent developments in Christian Churches show that their efforts have started yielding results. In support of my argument I can cite a few instances.

Three leading Bishops in Kerala have started canvassing in support of Marxists openly. One Bishop Paulose of Kaldaya Church issued an open press statement during the time of the last Assembly elections exhorting all Christians who have a genuine concern for 'Human Rights' to support and vote for the Left Democratic Front led by the Marxists in Kerala.

Another Bishop Geevarghese Mar Osthathios of the Orthodox Syrian Church speaks vehemently in support of Marxists whenever and wherever he gets a chance. I shall quote a few excerpts from a speech he made at a conference of Christian educationalists held at B.C.M. College, Kottayam on 10th September 1983. "It is the profit oriented capitalist structure which has brought about the present state of affairs in the field of education in Kerala. Hence before we contemplate any improvement in the educational system we have to think seriously of bringing down the structure some how. When the old structure crumbles down out of its debris a new structure free from exploitation of all sorts will come which will be a Marxian order of things".

Yet another of the trio Paulose Mar Gregorios who

also happens to be one of the Presidents of World Council of Churches (W.C.C.) made the following press statement from Hong Kong very recently.

"Whenever Russia intervenes anywhere in the world it is Socialistic and whenever America intervenes anywhere in the world it is Imperialistic". This bishop is one of the three presidium members of the Achutha Menon of the Communist Party of India. His influence in the 15 lakh strong Orthodox Syrian Church as Bishop and as Principal of a leading Theological College, at Kottayam is tremendous and is used for Marxian indoctrination in a subtle way among the intellectuals and seminarians. For the present his influence has not percolated down to the masses; but it is only a matter of time.

The Church of South India (C.S.I.) is the worst affected by Marxist influence at the grass root level since its membership is composed mainly of financially and socially backward sections of the society. Its youth wing has been completely taken over by Marxist sympathisers. Christian Peace Conference for Development (C.P.C.D.); and Christian Conference for Asia two associate organisations of W.C.C. are financing about 22 action groups in India by sending enormous amounts of money. It is reported that these action groups together get about Rs. 6 lakhs per month from these sources. Although the money is sent in the name of "Development" it is mainly used for subversive activities in the Christian Churches on Marxian lines; influence of Marxism among the 6 lakh strong Marthoma Church is felt only at the intellectual plane for the present, i.e., among young priests, teachers and youth leaders.

The Catholic Church which is supposed to have a steel-frame is also getting corroded by Marxian influence. Marxist sympathisers in the Catholic Church are inspired by the "Liberation Theology" imported from Latin America, Philippines and Thailand. A few congregations of Jesuits, C.M.I., Redemptorist order and a few influence 'Liberation Theology', whose analysis and solutions of crisis situations are very much akin to Marxist theoretical positions. Their presence was very much evident in the recently concluded month-long Fishermen's agitation led by the 'Kerala Swatantra Matsya Thozhilali Federation' against Government failure to check mechanised trawling along the coast line. They have stopped the agitation only to start again. The Kerala Catholic Bishops Conference's (K.C.B.C.) appeal to stop the agitation, by accepting the assurances given by the Government was flatly rejected by the agitation leaders. To prove my contention that the agitation leaders had in their mind something more than what the ordinary people

seem to think of it as an attempt to alleviate the long standing sufferings of the poor fishermen in coastal areas, I shall quote a few relevant parts from a press interview of Sr. Alice (a member of the Order of Assumption Sisters belonging to the Catholic Church and one of the agitation leaders) with *Indian Express* dated 6-6-'84.

"Q" The Church here has not identified itself with your agitation for Fishermen.

A: *The established church has been catering for the elite and the rich. It has come to depend on the elite for its existence as it does in a capitalist society.*

Q: The agitation led by the Priests and nuns has been called politically motivated. And when you talk of capitalism and socialism you do sound, political.

A: *I am political because I believe in Socialism which will be free from oppression. Let me tell you the Vatican has recently decreed that the clergy can take part in politics under special circumstances though I feel the permission has more to do with the Pope's interest in Poland.*

Q: There are many known Naxelites supporting the agitation. The C.P.M. (Communist Party Marxist) and C.P.I. (Communist Party of India) have now come out in your support. Can a true Catholic work with Communists, professed atheists?

A: *It is true some Naxelites are supporting the agitation. But even communists believe in something beyond..... Perhaps it is the capitalists who could be called atheists because they believe only in money. Many communists have a deep spirituality and Marxism besides being a science of social analysis, is also deeply spiritual humanism.*

As for working with communists, two years ago our congregation permitted us to collaborate with all forces committed to the humanist cause.

Q: What about violence? The Fishermen's agitation has been quite a bit of boat burning.

A: *I do not subscribe to violence for its own sake. But violence becomes inevitable when strong oppressive forces have to be resisted. In the gospel MARK Christ asked his men 'how many swords they had? They replied 'Two'. Christ said 'That will be enough'.*

Q: Don't you think you can as well serve your convictions by working on the lines of Mother Teresa.

A: *I see a limited role for charity as relief during calamities. The elite and the rich are overglorifying Mother Teresa's work. They need more orphanages and destitute homes because they can create orphans.*

Q: There have been allegations that you work among fishermen with the object of converting them into Christianity.

A: Conversion militates against Christianity. It is the result of the inability to accept another human being as oneself.

Having said this much about the areas of influence of disguised Marxists let me come to positive solutions. I have no doubt that if the Marxist infiltrators and sympathisers are allowed to operate and function as they do now, the result will be disastrous. *The poor socio-economic condition of the people coupled with a steady erosion of fundamental Christian values will offer the most favourable ground for Marxists and their fellow-travellers to spread their tentacles very fast. A very reliable leftist source revealed that there are about 3 bishops 300 priests and 75 sister belonging to all Christian denominations in Kerala as Marxist Supporters or sympathisers.* Although no one can suggest any panacea I have two humble suggestions to make. (1) We need an Inter-denominational Christian Forum wherein intellectuals belonging to all Christian Churches in Kerala join together as individuals and discuss seriously how the increasing influence of Marxian ideas in the Church can be effectively checked. It was in this spirit that the 1st ever Inter-denominational Consultation was held on Marxist infiltration in Christian Churches at Kottayam on 23-6-'84 at my initiative. About 15 intellectuals who include Priests, Sisters, Women and Youth belonging to various

Churches spent several hours together and discussed in detail the grave threat posed by 'Disguised Marxists' in the Churches and decided to form a non-profit making non-partisan inter-church forum under the name and style 'The Christian Liberation Movement'. The main objective of the Movement is to take all possible measures to counter effectively the spread of 'Marxist Ideology' in Christian Churches. The main thrust of our programme shall be a massive educational campaign among all church leaders irrespective of they be Bishops, Priests, Sisters, Youth, Students and lay leaders.

(2) Since we live in a society where Christians are in a minority it is essential that we should educate our non-Christian brethren also on liberal democratic lines. Hence a non-partisan non-sectarian organization under the name and style 'The Centre for Democratic Studies' was formed and it was inaugurated by Shri Minoo Masani, the veteran freedom fighter and liberal democrat at Ernakulam on 28th April 1984.

We hope and cherish that both the foundations will go a long way in countering Marxist influence in the state of Kerala and we request all lovers of freedom and democracy to support and strengthen us in all possible ways.

BABU JOSEPH teaches in a college and is a political activist.

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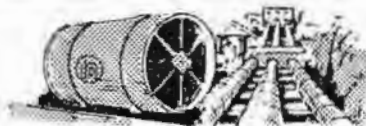
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Sharing the Financial Cake

Marina R. Pinto

THERE IS a virtual tug-of-war between the Centre and the States over finances. The states have always nursed a grievance against the Centre in fiscal matters on several counts. The Constitution of India has denied them fiscal autonomy. Over the years, their dependency on the Centre has grown because of the compulsions of developmental activity in the framework of a functioning democracy.

There are several irritants that cause stress and tension in Centre-state financial relations. To begin with, the devolution of taxes levied and collected by the Centre is inadequate. Hence, the states have to depend on the Centre for varied forms of financial assistance. This could be by way of plan grants, loans and other *ad hoc* grants. States also look for a share of the huge financial resources that the Centre controls apart from its budgetary resources. These include the resources of the nationalised banks, financial institutions like the IDBI, Unit Trust and Life and General Insurance Corporations, foreign aid and deficit financing supported by the Reserve Bank of India.

The Centre exercises unilateral control over industrial, commercial and monetary polity including matters like industrial location, nuclear and thermal energy, export-import restrictions and industrial licensing. Undoubtedly, the Centre has the prerogative here, but then, the states would appreciate if the Centre took counsel with them in the formulation and implementation of these policies rather than have decisions simply thrust on them.

A very significant field of Central involvement is in the subjects found in the state and concurrent lists. Its involvement is direct, through the expenditure incurred by its own departments and agencies and indirect, through the expenditure channelled through the state governments and covered by the Central Plan and non-plan schemes or through the financial and other institutions under its control.

A close examination of the concurrent list would indicate that many entries strictly belong to the State list. But by their inclusion in the concurrent list, the Centre has leverage vis-a-vis the states, especially in matters of legislation in certain circumstances. The Centre has also made mighty inroads into state subjects through the financial backdoor. This has established the supremacy of the Centre by virtually obliterating the distinction between Central and state subjects.

Take for instance, the subject of agriculture and

allied services. For all practical purposes, agriculture functions as a concurrent subject. The Centre accounts for two-thirds of the expenditure, both direct and indirect on this head. Its expenditure on food is near total. Research in agriculture, though specifically state-listed (Entry 24, List II) has virtually become a Central subject thanks to the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. The Centre's expenditure on agriculture relates to the distribution of manure and fertilisers, schemes for small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers and agricultural research, in that order. While the states are required to spend on area development which covers the development of dry lands, hill, desert and other special areas, the states share is only two-fifths of the aggregate budgetary expenditure of the Centre and the states. The point is that the Centre should not make inroads into state subjects in the first place. And having done so, it should not be on such a large scale. True, the listing of subjects itself could legitimise such involvement. The Centre has areas of operation carved out from state-listed subjects by the Constitution itself. For instance, fisheries is in the state list, but fishing and fisheries beyond territorial waters belong to the Union (Entry 57, list 1). Roads and bridges are in the state list. But high-ways declared under Parliamentary law to be national highways are in the Union List (Entry 23). Also, the states do not have resources of such magnitude to meet the required expenditure under such heads. But this is not to make out a case for Central intervention but to insist that the states' allocations must go up in sufficient measure.

Taking into account the total budgetary resources of the Centre and the states, more than two-thirds first accrue to the Centre. Central fiscal transfers to the states account for less than one-third of its total resources. These transfers are meant to off-set unequal impact of the Centre's own taxation as well as its expenditure policies on the states' budgets. Federal financial transfers should also be used to off-set adverse impact of interstate spillovers of expenditure benefits and tax costs of the state governments. Through the instrumentality of these transfers, the Centre should help generate economic activities in poorer states and also enable state governments in general to ensure a minimum level of public services.

Table I gives a comprehensive picture of the total fiscal transfers from the Centre to the states:

TABLE 1
Federal Fiscal Transfers from the Centre to the States during the Period 1951-79

(Rs. crores)

Plans period	Statutory transfers or the recommendations of the Finance Commission (tax shares + grants-in-aid)	Discretionary transfers on the recommendations of the Planning Commission (Plan Grants and (Central loans)	Discretionary transfers at the discretion of the Central Ministries (loans + grants)	Total federal fiscal transfers
1	2	3	4	5
First Plan (1951-56)	447 (31.2)	800 (61.5)	104 (7.3)	1,431 (100.00)
Second Plan (1956-61)	918 (32.0)	1,058 (36.9)	892 (31.1)	2,868 (100.00)
Third Plan (1961-66)	1,590 (28.4)	2,738 (48.9)	1,272 (22.7)	5,600 (100.00)
Three Annual Plans (1966-69)	1,782 (33.3)	1,917 (35.9)	1,648 (30.8)	5,347 (100.00)
Fourth Plan (1969-74)	5,421 (35.9)	4,731 (31.3)	4,949 (32.8)	15,101 (100.00)
Fifth Plan (1974-79)	11,048 (44.2)	10,353 (40.9)	3,761 (14.9)	25,282 (100.00)
Sixth Plan (1980-85)	20,845 (61.14)	13,245 (38.86)	—	34,090 (100.00)

Note: Figures shown in brackets are percentages.

Source: Report of the Eighth Finance Commission, Government of India, New Delhi, 1983.

Appendix IV. 1 (ii), (iii), (iv) pp. 174-177.

Table taken from G. Thimmaiah, *Burning Issues in Centre-State Financial Relations*, 1985.

Federal fiscal transfers are through three channels: The Finance Commission, the Planning Commission and through Central Ministries. All these federal financial transfers are directly made from the Central Government budget. Transfers that flow not so directly from the Central Government budget are those channelled through Central Government owned financial institutions like commercial banks and LIC.

Finance Commission: The allocations of the Finance Commission are statutory transfers. It recommends tax shares as well grants-in-aid. The former are increasing and this is a good sign. Table 2 highlights this point.

TABLE 2

Transfer to States

(On the basis of the Finance Commission's recommendations)

	Taxes and statutory grants
	In crores of rupees
I FYP 1951-56	447
II FYP 1956-61	918
III FYP 1961-66	1,590
Annual Plans 1966-69	1,782
V FYP 1969-74	5,421
VI FYP 1974-79	11,168
VII Finance Commission 1979-84	20,907
VIII Finance Commission 1984-89	38,500

Tax shares are elastic and are mostly in the form of unconditional grants unlike grants-in-aid which are fixed amounts for 5 years. A greater part of these statu-

tory transfers are to meet the non-plan recurring expenditure of state governments.

A word needs to be said about the Eighth Finance Commission which functioned when an intense debate on Centre-state relations was on and the Sarkaria Commission was appointed to examine the whole gamut of Centre-state relations. It has recommended that the Union Government should withdraw the surcharge on Income Tax and make suitable adjustments in the basic rate from 1985-86. It would also like the inclusion of penalties and interest on arrears in the divisible pool of Income Tax. It endorsed an increase in the rates of stamp duty payable on letters of credit and some insurance policies. Tables 2 and 3, show at a glance the sharing of Income-tax and Excise duties from the first to the Eighth Commission. Table 4 provides a comparative picture of the recommendations of the seventh and eighth Finance Commissions.

TABLE 3

Sharing of Income Tax

Finance Commission	States' share	Distribution of proceeds	
		Popula- tion	Collec- tion
In per cent			
First	55	80	20
Second	60	90	10
Third	66		20
Fourth	75	80	20
Fifth	75	90	10
Sixth	80	90	10
Seventh	85	90	10
Eighth	85	90	10

TABLE 4
Sharing of Excise duties

Finance Commission	States' share	Population	Other criteria
	In per cent		
First	40 p.c. of three commodities	40	60
Second	25 p.c. of eight commodities	90	10
Third	20 p.c. of 35 commodities	80	20
Fourth	20 p.c. of all commodities	80	20
Fifth	20 p.c. of all duties	80	20
Sixth	20 p.c. of all duties	75	25
Seventh	40 p.c. of all duties	90†	10
Eighth	40 p.c. of all duties	††New form	

† A formula giving equal weight to the population factor, the inverse of the per capita State domestic product and the percentage of population below poverty line 40 per cent of the net proceeds of excise will be distributed.

†† Formula 25 per cent on the basis of population 25 per cent on the basis of the inverse of per capita income multiplied by population and 50 per cent on the basis of distance of per capita income from the highest per capita income State multiplied by the population of the State. Five per cent will be distributed to States found to be deficit after devolution.

TABLE 5
A comparative picture

	VII F.C. 1979-84	VIII F.C. 1984-89
		Rs. Crores
1. Revenue deficit grant	1173.12	2200.82
2. Grant Upgradation of standards of administration	436.79	967.33
3. Margin money for relief expenditure (Annual)	100.65	240.75
4. Non-Plan capital gap	3512.18	3852.64
Extent of debt relief	2155.80	2285.39

Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 are taken from *The Hindu*, August 8-10, 1984.

Resources at the command of the state governments have grown steadily. This is because the total devolution of funds from the Centre to the states in the form of shared tax revenues, net loans and grants-in-aid have increased. In 1969-70, these constituted 26.4% of the total resources at the command of the states. In 1980-81, the figure stood at 32.5% and in 1983-84 it was 36%. In absolute terms, these rose by 5½

times between 1969-70 and 1980-81, when the total resources at the Centre's command rose by 4 times. Finance Commissions have been, on the whole, very sympathetic to the states. In fact, critics point out that devolutions of such a high order present a sorry spectacle of an impoverished Centre doling out huge amounts to the states.

It cannot be denied that the size of the financial cake must increase. The national kitty can be enlarged by better administration of existing taxes and inclusion of new taxes. At the same time while state governments should exert to cut down on all unnecessary expenditure, the same is expected of the Centre. There is no gainsaying that there is an enormous increase in Central expenditure. What is worse, the Centre gets away with it because there is no organization except Parliament and its statutory committees that can exercise some vigilance over its magnitude and appropriateness. Apart from Central expenditure in subjects legitimately within states' sphere, there has been tremendous increase in expenditure to provide the investment in public enterprises and meet their losses, as also an unwarranted increase of departments, ministries and activities on state or concurrent list subjects. A way out would be to have another body like the Finance Commission to look into the Centre's financial requirements, expenditure pattern and future projections.

Planning Commission: A major irritant in the field of planning is when states have to compulsorily submit their 5 year Plans to the Planning Commission. This results in states being subjected to central interference and control in spheres of socio-economic development which rightly belong to them. Planning being comprehensive, covers the whole range of activities that affect the common man and naturally Plan outlay forms a major part of the states' budgetary expenditure. States see this as a major irritant because it ties them to the apron-strings of the Centre and denies them the freedom to plan their priorities, programmes and outlays. It can also explain to some extent, the somewhat irresponsible behaviour of the states for the latter can make the Centre and its plans the scapegoat for their own deficiencies in developmental activity.

Funds routed to the states through the Planning Commission are according to the revised Gadgil formula which covers 90% of the total funds and gives no discretion to the Planning Commission. Since the discretion exercised in the remaining 10% has been viewed as interference by the states, it is suggested by experts like V. K. R. V. Rao, that the entire amount should be distributed according to the Gadgil formula. G. Thimmaiah suggests that the Gadgil formula be

modified to take into account the needs of less developed states by linking plan assistance to the level of development achieved in different sectors in each state.

The Planning Commission recommends for most states, only 30% of Central assistance for state plans in the form of grants and 70% of plan assistance is provided in the form of loans. Interest amount and repayment instalments of loans create the burden of annual reverse flow of resources from the states to the Centre. The picture is complicated when one realizes that the Centre has to raise the totality of loans and so the RBI, Finance Ministry, Planning Commission and foreign lenders come in.

It is a truism that only self-liquidating projects should be financed by loans. But in the name of development and public sector outlay, this rule is ignored. The result is that states get into the 'debt trap' of Central loans. Since they cannot repay earlier loans they are forced to borrow fresh loans to repay old ones. So each year, higher amounts of (gross) loans are borrowed from the Centre much of which goes to repay earlier loans. The remaining net loan amount is used for undertaking financially unproductive activity and so the vicious circle is repeated again making for even greater financial dependency of states on the Centre. With regard to foreign loans even when these are passed in the form of loans to the states it is always with a higher rate of interest than that charged by the foreign lender/donor.

Flow of Central Government Institutional Funds: It is generally found that developed states receive relatively higher absolute amounts as well as higher proportions of these funds. This is because financial institutions like LIC, commercial and development banks invest funds in commercially profitable projects. This means that developed states get more institutional funds because the prospects of greater financial returns are more. However, this cannot be said of public sector investments in different states which by and large have been more equitable.

State governments' overdrafts: Qualitative and quantitative expansion of governmental activity strains the state exchequer severely. The states seek to meet their commitments, among other things, by resorting to overdrafts. This the Centre has decried and banned. It has now put a ban on them.

The Central government's decision to terminate the states' overdraft facility is a drastic measure. Economically, it could be a blessing. But politically, it is fraught with great risk. It can strain Centre-state relations severely. Non-Congress states in particular resent this move because they see in this measure a

sinister device to choke them financially and adversely affect their poll prospects.

The states have worked out a fairly strong justification for growing overdrafts. Taxes assigned to them under the Constitution are less elastic than those of the Centre. The Centre has devious ways to cut into their due share of taxes in terms of the awards of the Finance Commission. In several cases, tax hikes have been disguised as price increases. This means that the states have a double disadvantage, for costs go up without increase in revenues. A number of states' tax functions taken over by the Centre on grounds of convenience in collection are carelessly performed because the money goes to the states. The Centre has also neglected to exploit the potential of those taxes whose proceeds go wholly to the states. As for development plans, the Centre asks the states to raise their own revenue for state sector schemes. Their 5 year plans have to be cleared by the Planning Commission which is a centralized agency. All surplus funds are not given as grants but mostly as loans. When it comes to repayment the states have no money. They cannot tax voters; they cannot borrow in the open market because such borrowings are controlled by the Central Government under Act 293 (3); nor can they raise loans from the financial market because financial institutions which subscribe to government loans are owned and controlled by the Central Government. So the only way out is overdrafts. When overdrafts cross a limit, the Centre is given to arm-twisting which is not bereft of political overtones.

Unauthorised overdrafts became a serious financial issue in the late 1960's. *Ad hoc* solutions to the problem are many and varied. In 1978, the Centre advanced medium-term loans to clear unauthorized overdrafts in 45 days. In 1982, the Central Government introduced the "Overdrafts Regulation Scheme" for the same purpose. It had 3 components. (1) The outstanding overdraft amount, namely, Rs. 1743.46 crores at the end of the financial year 1981-82, was converted into medium-term loan (long-term loan of 10 years duration for economically weaker states) carrying an interest rate of 6.5%. One year moratorium was provided on the repayment of principle and interest. (2) The Central government agreed to provide short-term assistance so that states could clear their unauthorised overdrafts of the period April 1, 1982 to June 30, 1982. But this was really only an advance payment of the usual central assistance. (3) The Central government again agreed to revise upwards the ways and means limits to state governments. But these solutions only tinker with the problem rather than strike at its roots. The first solution only in-

creases the burden of central loans. The second solution created the need for further overdrafts because revenue of the states did not increase in proportion to the increasing non-plan expenditure. So often, plan assistance was utilised for non-plan expenditure. The third solution is of no avail, because the enhanced ways and means advances proved inadequate. Even so, the Union Finance Ministry continues to reduce the quantum of unauthorized overdrafts in the same old ways. It has decided to extend loan assistance to state governments to reduce the total amount of unauthorized overdrafts which stood at Rs. 1,808 crores as on, January 28, 1985 by 10% to Rs. 1,628 crores. The remaining amount is to be reduced by 35% per year in 1986-87 and 1987-88 and finally by 20% in 1988-89 so as to eliminate unauthorized overdrafts completely by 31st March 1989. The RBI has been advised to increase the ways and means advances limit to Rs. 700 crores. But the point is, states will have to willy-nilly resort to overdrafts again and again.

The cut off of overdrafts, unless coupled with measures to reform the entire system of resource-sharing between it and the states, will aggravate Centre-state tensions. The states view the denial of overdraft facility as yet another way to undermine their autonomy with respect to the Central government. The issue is now increasingly politicised. Central leaders complain that the policies of the non-Congress(I) state governments are to be blamed for their financial instability. The non-Congress(I) states are of the opinion that the Centre discriminates heavily against them in the allocation of discretionary funds. Mr. Ramkrishna Hegde has shown how Karnataka's acute budgetary problems and its huge overdraft can be traced directly to a change in the Centre's attitude to the state after the 1983 elections. A simple change in priorities or in the phasing of large investment projects can mean the loss of hundreds of crores of investment to a state and of thousands of jobs as has been demonstrated by shelving the Vijayanagar steel plant and the down-grading of the Mangalore oil refinery.

The overdraft facility was the one remaining 'window' through which states could assert their autonomy and get the funds they need to meet unforeseen contingencies or complete programmes on the anvil. With limited devolutions through awards of the Finance Commission and the political factor operating in allocation of discretionary grants, the states feel trapped by the closing of this window. A little reassuring is the medium-term loan of Rs. 1,628 crores provided to the states to clear their overdrafts in the 1986-87 budget and an increase by Rs. 7,542 crores

or 51% in the Centre's transfers to states and Union territories inclusive of assistance for Central and Centrally sponsored schemes in the current year as compared with 1984-85.

Remedial action: States basically suffer from a shortfall of revenues to meet their growing expenditure responsibilities. This is related to the problem of vertical federal fiscal imbalances. In Marxian thinking, there is a kind of 'financial imperialism' which manifests itself for states have a continuous dependency relation *vis-a-vis* the Centre. This state of dependency is highlighted in the operation of Central loans to states.

States must have financial autonomy in areas of activity that are constitutionally assigned to them. This state of dependency must be done away with. Among the many suggestions offered to remedy the situation the following need to be emphasized. An Inter-state Council as laid down in Art (263) should be set up. It should take charge of all areas of Centre-state conflict. The quinquennial Finance Commission should be appointed in consultation with it. So also the RBI should be made a federal institution. Finally, a National Economic Council which provides the expertise in commercial and industrial matters especially in the realm of policy-making. The National Loans Corporation and National Credit Council should be represented on the Council. The Annual Reports of all these three bodies should be placed before Parliament and state legislatures.

The Sarkaria Commission could do well to consider the possibility of having the total tax revenues of the Centre and the states constitute one divisible pool which should be divided on an agreed basis (say 52:48) between the Centre and the states. The sum total of borrowings could be divided in a similar way. Also, the distinction between agricultural and non-agricultural incomes should be abolished for the purpose of taxation on incomes and proceeds should be shared between the Centre and the states.

The states, it is suggested, should exert to cut down on all unnecessary expenditure. They could, for instance, reduce their losses on water, power and road transport. They could withdraw from a host of loss-making activities that could be left safely to the private sector, like road transport and the tourism industry.

The idea of leasing out state owned assets to the private sector on management contract is even more attractive when it comes to hotels. All said and done one wants a bigger and a more equitably shared financial cake.

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Personal Laws And The Shah Bano Case

The judgement on the Shah Bano case, and the controversial Bill in the Lok Sabha in the light of the judgement has led to considerable public debate and, unfortunately, to much passion and fury.

The PUCL organised a public meeting in Bombay last month. We felt the views expressed by Ms. Kamila Tyabji a social worker, Mr. Minoo Masani, a member of the Constituent Assembly and Mr. H. M. Seervai the eminent Jurist articulate the liberal response admirably. The texts that we publish below are based on their speeches at the meeting.

Kamila Tyabji

There are certain matters that I, as a Muslim woman in particular, would like to place before you. What has shocked and stirred the Muslim community particularly Muslim women, as perhaps nothing else has for the past 39 years is that they have understood for the very first time how false are some of the interpretations of the Muslim Law that the orthodox and the Mullahs have been foisting on us.

Perhaps you know that the basic issue to be decided in the Supreme Court Judgement was the interpretation of a particular *ayat* of the Quran. This *ayat* (no. 241) says quite unequivocally that 'to a divorced woman, a reasonable provision is due'. Analysing the *ayat* in depth, the Supreme Court held that its words covered maintenance to a divorced wife.

Now what can this verse from the Quran—which is quite distinct from the provisions which are laid down for payments during the 3-month, *Iddat*, period possibly mean? For, payments during the 3-month *Iddat* period is not maintenance of a divorced wife at all—because a divorce, as understood at the time of the Prophet, was not completed until the *Iddat* period was over. It is only in later times that the hateful (*makruh*, as the Prophet called it) triple divorce in one sitting was accepted in Muslim Law; in earlier times divorce was uttered at three different times, with at least one month between each pronouncement, and this 'cooling-off' period was the *Iddat* period. So what can an *ayat* in the Quran which says that to a Divorced wife a reasonable provision is due, mean to anybody who cares about the Muslim Law, and about all the numerous references that the Quran and the Prophet have repeatedly made to the necessity of fair and just treatment of women; what can it mean except that maintenance is something which can be provided under the Muslim law? And there is no dearth of precedents amongst the old established jurists of Islam which support this interpretation.

But, instead of this, what are we being told? We are being told that maintenance by a husband of a divorced wife is something entirely against the tenets of Islam. We are being told that for a woman to

accept such maintenance is something degrading even if, as in the case of Shah Bano, the marriage has lasted for over 40 years. Here is a religion which had for the first time given women complete rights to property, rights which British women, for example, did not get until the 1860s; here was a Prophet who was considered not only by Muslims but by scholars the world over as one of the greatest champions of women that the world has ever seen; and yet we are asked to believe that this decision to give Rs. 179 a month maintenance to a wife, whom the Supreme Court considers to be without any visible means of livelihood, is something absolutely against the Muslim Law.

It was stated quite rightly I think, that the average Muslim knows very little about the Muslim Law. They read the Quran in Arabic without understanding much of it, and so they can easily be led by the nose whenever they are told that the *Shariat* is in danger, or that Islam is in danger. And yet these are the same people who have raised such a hue and cry over this judgement. Do they raise the cry of Islam in danger when blatant irregularities, flouting the basic principles of the Quran, are allowed in the name of Islam? When bigamy is indulged in with one wife being abandoned for the sake of another when the Quran has clearly laid down that a second marriage may be allowed *only* when there is equal treatment of the two wives? Do they protest when dowry is demanded by bridegrooms, which is totally alien to the concept of Muslim marriages? No voices are raised; no morchas are taken out; nothing at all happens.

And so, even to the benighted masses of the community (perhaps more to the women than to men) it is slowly becoming clear that there is something wrong with the interpretation of Islam in India. Is this Islam that we are being taught, or is it the centuries-old oppression of Muslim women? Is this what the Quran has said? Is this what the Prophet had said? Is this what He had preached to us, or is it something that we are being forced to hear representing ages of male domination?

Yet somehow, I do not regret the commotion over the Shah Bano case. I do not regret it because, in spite of everything that has happened, it represents the biggest awakening of Muslim women that there has ever been over the years since independence. I think it is a tremendous opportunity for the Muslim community as a whole to realise the difference between what the orthodox are preaching, and what is the reality of Islam. Perhaps those same men who are so jubilant today because the proposed Bill will free them from the shackles of supporting one wife, may not remain so jubilant when they realise that they may now have to support five sisters! They have not thought that far as yet!

I would however, like to take a more positive and a more constructive view. Let us not get caught up in such arguments as to whether a word is to be interpreted as 'provision' or as 'maintenance' (*mata'a*). Many of you may have read an article by a Pakistani lawyer which appeared recently in the *Times of India* quoting instances from early times when men had undertaken to pay the servant's salary for their divorced wives, or given vast sums of money to them at the time of divorce. But we are told that *Mata'a* can mean only gifts of saris and clothes and it cannot justify payment of maintenance to divorced women.

What is it that makes these people believe that they alone have such a fantastic insight into the meaning of the Quran, that they know 'provision' means only saris and clothes, and cannot cover an allowance to an ex-wife? What gives them the power to decide, from a wealth of conflicting views of early Islamic jurists, that this interpretation of theirs is the only true interpretation even though countries like Pakistan and Egypt have taken a contrary view?

Yet, as I said before, all is not lost. Because it is not only women who are waking up. I think the entire Muslim community is slowly beginning to wonder how it is that our religion, which is based on the Quran and on the sayings of the Prophet, and all that Islam had done for social reform, how such a religion can be reduced to something which cannot support the payment of Rs. 179 a month to a divorced wife? And so, for the first time, those people that some of us have been trying to reach through all these years are being brought face to face with all the obvious malpractices that have crept into Muslim Law. Let us try and give it back its purity; let us try, as almost all other (Muslim) countries have done, to give back to women the rights they are entitled to; let us try to make this an occasion when we can introduce, completely within the Muslim law, a Standard *Nikah-namah*—something which the All India Women's

Conference under its Chairman Begum Hamid Ali has been demanding since the 1930s, and which innumerable women's organisations have asked for since then.

The present Bill cannot possibly stand as it is. Not only are its clauses untenable and the reliefs it promises to Muslim women illusory—but it would certainly be struck down by the Supreme Court as going against its own judgement. Let us therefore now unite in advocating a much more far-reaching and composite Bill: a Bill which all Muslims, even the most conservative, would be unable to fault. For we all know that under Muslim law, marriage is a contract; a contract, in which you can specify what you want to. And so the basic rights that we need and which it is only fair that Muslim women should have, can and should be stated in this contract and which all *Kazis* in India should be asked to *presume* incorporated in the marriage contract, unless expressly excluded.

What are these rights? First of all, the amount of *Mehr* should be clearly stated. Secondly, the right of the wife in case of a second marriage by the husband should be defined. Thirdly, she should have an equal right to divorce the husband. And finally the question of maintenance (*mata'a*) must be clearly settled. For *Mata'a* under the Muslim Law is something entirely different from *Mehr*—which *Mehr* vests in the wife at the time of marriage; and the amount of *Mata'a* the husband should pay at the time of divorce can only be decided by appointing an arbitrator from her side and one from his side. This was the practice at the time of the Prophet—and is entirely in consonance with the Muslim Law.

These are the rights Muslim women need. These are the rights that the Muslim Women's Cell in the All India Women's Conference has been agitating for since the early thirties. These are the rights that countless women's organisations all over the country, in whatever little way they can, have been fighting for. These are the views of the vast majority of Muslim women, if only one could get them to speak out fearlessly.

What has been the greatest tragedy of Muslims since partition? It has been that no liberal Muslim wanted to join the Muslim League or any Muslim party; and as a result none of them has a platform from which they can speak to the Muslim masses. So, all these years Muslim audiences have been fed entirely on the views of obscurantists and reactionaries who continue to think of women as beings who are just there to cater to their needs, not as individuals with a will and rights of their own. But Muslim women, in this the end of the twentieth century, much less in the

twenty-first, will simply not allow themselves to be shackled in this way. As I have said, I work amongst a lot of Muslim women. I know something of what they feel, and though perhaps not all of them are prepared to speak out as yet, they *will* speak out at some stage, and when they do they will surprise the nation. When they *do* speak up, there will be an amazing reaction. I would urge this government not to let down half the Muslim community who are just beginning to wake up.

I would urge the government, when they are legislating on behalf of Muslim women, not to lose the opportunity of tackling the problem on a broad front; and I would urge them to do so, taking into account the views of not only those who are in Parliament and worried about their votes and their seats, but taking into account the views of a wide cross-section of all Muslims who know something of what they are talking about.

Finally a word about the clause removing Muslim women from section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code. I said this about the proposed Adoption Bill, and I say it even more strongly now: I can think of nothing worse for India. If we care about our country at all, I can think of nothing worse than that we should allow any particular community to be *excluded* from any of the general laws of the State.

And once again let me state that here the government has a unique opportunity. Muslims have come together to ask the government to define Muslim Law. In Rajiv Gandhi's hands there is a great opportunity to show statesmanship and wisdom. If he and the government will rise to their task, they will not belie the hopes that millions have reposed in them.

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Minoo Masani

I am a minorities man. By that I mean that I do not accept the right of the majority to trample on minorities particularly multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic communities, like South Africa or India. I don't believe that Hindus have a right to dominate Muslims because they are in a majority nor that the Blacks have a right to dominate Whites in South Africa just because they are in a majority. In countries like these, the Swiss Constitution which allows for minority rights through proportionate representation and the fullest autonomy becomes a valuable model.

As a Member and Chairman of the U.N. Sub-Commission for the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities I soon realised, while functioning in that body, that the two objectives clashed—

that you cannot protect minorities without some discrimination. These are two conflicting principles, both valid—equality before the law on the one side and the protection of minorities on the other. This calls for a careful balance to be maintained between non-discrimination and the protection of minorities.

I was nominated Chairman of the Minorities Commission by the Union Government but resigned after six months. The Government at that time, the Janata Government, behaved in a partisan manner and refused to accept the fact that Aligarh is a Muslim Institution, though our Commission, after proper research and study, came to the conclusion that the Aligarh Muslim University is a Muslim Institution. Since Mr. Morarji Desai's government, was not prepared to allow us to express our point of view, as a protest against their anti-Muslim attitude, I resigned.

Now to come to this topic, I will leave the technicalities to lawyers. I am more concerned with the political fallout and wider implications for our national life.

In the Fundamental Rights Committee of the Constituent Assembly it was I who started the ball rolling by saying that there should be a uniform civil code for all Indians. I was supported by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and Mrs. Hansa Mehta. But this proposal was turned down by the other members of the Sub-Committee, who were all Hindus. So the four of us, tabled a Minute of Dissent, which we put in the proceedings. This is what we said

"One of the factors that has kept India back from advancing to nationhood has been the existence of personal laws based on religion which keep the nation divided into water-tight compartments in many aspects of life. We are of the view that a uniform common civil code should be guaranteed to the Indian people within a period of five to ten years."

This was rejected.

Article 44 of the Directive Principles reads: "The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizen a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India." This happened in 1947. One would think that enough time has passed to enable us to take a step forward. But the Prime Minister said the other day that he believes in a common code but that the time has not yet come. When will the time come? If 30 years are not enough to take this step forward, when is he going to take that step?

It is my view that the minorities have a right to protection for their religion, to propagate their religion, to convert people to their religion, run their schools and colleges, like the Aligarh Muslim Univer-

sity. But they have no right to demand exemption from any part of civil or criminal law of the land. That is taking freedom of religion beyond its proper limits. That is what the Muslim fundamentalists now demand.

Let us see the chronology. There was first the judgement of the Supreme Court. Then came the introduction of Mr. Banatwala's Bill in the Lok Sabha. At that stage, the Law Ministry prepared a note on the subject. The note signed by Mr. B. S. Sekho Secretary of the Law Ministry, was dated 31st May, 1985. It was endorsed by Mr. Bhardwaj, the Minister of State for Law, on 1st June, 1985. It was endorsed by Mr. Ashok Sen who forgot what he signed on 2nd June, 1985. All three notes supported the Supreme Court Judgment's stand and said Banatwala's Bill should be rejected. On the basis of these three notes, the Home Ministry prepared a comprehensive note on the 24th July, 1985, advising the government to oppose Banatwala's Bill and stand by the Supreme Court judgement. This is all part of the record. We should thank the Secretary of the PUCL, Mr. Arun Shourie for an excellent piece of investigative journalism which appeared in the *Times of India* on 3rd and 4th March where he has given the entire background.

Mr. Arif Mohamed Khan, member of the Union Government, was commissioned by the Congress Party and the Prime Minister to get up in Parliament and oppose Banatwala's Bill. This he did. At the end of his speech it was reported that the whole House gathered around to congratulate him including members of the Congress Party.

Then, just when everything seemed to go smoothly, something happened. There was a complete *volte face* . It was the Muslim vote bank which Mr. Rajiv Gandhi was after. He was told that the result of a bye-election and of the Assam elections showed that if the Congress were not to lose the Muslim vote, it must give in to the appeal of the fundamentalists. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi is reported to have accepted this advice. Behind the back of his party, behind the back of his Cabinet, behind the back of Mr. Arif Mohamed Khan, the Prime Minister negotiated secretly with the Muslim fundamentalists. Neither the members of his Cabinet were consulted nor was Mr. Arif Mohamed Khan informed that he has been ditched and double-crossed by the Prime Minister. The result of this double crossing was that a Bill was sought to be introduced in the Lok Sabha on 21st April, 1986.

I have always said that Mrs. Gandhi excelled in post-midnight politics. Her son seems to have inheri-

ed her penchant. It was at 3 o'clock in the morning on that day that he sent letters to the Opposition leaders, who were all fast asleep, asking them whether they would waive the rules of the Lok Sabha to enable the government to have the Bill introduced without due notice. But thank God, the Opposition leaders, who were woken up to receive this wonderful letter, did not quite see how the security of India demanded the scrapping of Parliamentary procedures. They said: No, the rules have to be obeyed. So the Prime Minister's move to jump the gun on a sleeping nation and Parliament, was defeated. On 25th February, 1986, the Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha by none other than Mr. Ashok Sen, the so-called Law Minister who had forgotten what he had written and signed earlier.

At this stage, Mr. Arif Mohamed Khan, who found that he had been taken for a ride tendered his resignation from the government. Resigning in India is not a very normal practice. When I resigned as Chairman of the Minorities Commission I was accused of un-Indian behaviour. Mr. Khan has thus committed an un-Indian act by resigning.

Writing in the *Times of India* Mr. Daniel Latif observed:

"The Bill is based on faulty summary of the Supreme Court Judgement in the Statement of objects and reasons. The Bill as it stands is obnoxious to Islamic principles, derogatory to human rights, violative of the rights of women and children, and also of the rights of the minority community to establish and administer charitable and educational institutions of their choice. It may, if persisted in, involve the political leadership and the country as a whole, in increasing difficulties and may founder on the bedrock of our Constitution. The earlier it is withdrawn, the better for all concerned. The Bill as drafted is an insult to the traditions of Islamic civilisation."

Here's a Muslim lawyer expressing in very strong language what he thinks of this wretched Bill.

Now, some conclusions appear to emerge from all this. The first conclusion is that many of those objecting to the Bill are very hypocritical. They are really male chauvinists. Mr. Madhu Mehta of the Hindustani Andolan put a few questions to Muslims a few days ago but has had no answers. These are the questions that were asked:

Are they (the fundamentalists) prepared to demand that the Criminal Procedure Code should be so amended that every Muslim can be awarded the punishment for any crime committed by him, or her as laid down by Shariat? For

example, any of them found stealing should be prepared to let his hands be cut and anyone who commits adultery should be prepared to be stoned to death?

Are these leaders prepared to tell their fellow Muslims that they should stop selling, smuggling, distributing and consuming liquor or drugs as it is against Shariat and all those who flout this edict should be prepared to be flogged publicly? Are they prepared to tell their fellow Muslims not to deposit their money in any bank as a bank charges interest from borrowers which is against Shariat?"

The second conclusion that I come to is there is no proof that the majority of the Muslims are against the Supreme Court judgement. 50% of the Muslim community are women and we may assume that most of these women would demand and stand for the rights of their sex. Among the Muslim men also, all Muslims that I know of, for instance are for the Supreme Court judgement.

Now let me say that it is very unfortunate that some Hindu communalists have joined the controversy. I neither understand nor accept their bona fides. There is nothing to choose between Muslim obscurantists and Hindu obscurantists. Their intervention is going to be counter-productive and weaken the position of liberal Muslims. I would say to Hindu communal organisations, please keep out of this. Let decent citizens argue this out. Do not try to make it a Hindu-Muslim affair.

Finally, the Prime Minister showed great disrespect for the supreme judiciary. Mr. Ansari, one of his ministers, said in the Lok Sabha. "This was nothing short of judicial dishonesty and amounted to degrading the Supreme Court. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court was too small a man to interpret Islamic law. He is incompetent to enter this field." (*Indian Express*, Dec 21, 1985). When there was a roar of protest by Members of Parliament and others Mr. Rajiv Gandhi rushed to Mr. Ansari's rescue and said, "I do not think that the statements were intended to denigrate the judiciary". It is sad for the Prime Minister of India to defend a man who lampoons the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. This makes it very clear that Mr. Rajiv Gandhi has no use for the tradition of an independent judiciary in this country.

The only thing that can now be done to save the situation is for the Prime Minister to undo his mistake and to withdraw the Bill. If he doesn't do that, I would say it shows that he does not have the greatness required of the Prime Minister of this country.

Now supposing that he does not withdraw the Bill?

It is open to the Congress (I) members of Parliament to demand a free vote. In the British House of Commons, matters of this nature are never subject to whips of parties and freedom of conscience is given to the members of the parties. I am not very optimistic that this will be so in India because members of the Congress (I) have shown a great capacity for sycophancy. Mr. Arun Nehru, Mr. Arun Singh and Mr. Ashok Sen, privately told Mr. Arif Mohamed Khan they agreed with him. But they all went on to support the Prime Minister.

If the Prime Minister and the Congress Party let the country down, there is the Supreme Court. Let there be a petition to the Supreme Court to strike down this Bill. It is good to know that members of the legal profession have once again shown some courage. Under the auspices of the Indian Law Institute, there was a discussion recently in Delhi, in which Mr. Soli Sorabjee, Mr. Upendra Bakshi, Mr. Amrik Singh and Justice Krishna Iyer participated. It is reported that they have decided that if the Bill is ever passed by Parliament, they will move the Supreme Court and get it struck down. All honour to them.

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H. M. Seervai

You have listened to eloquent speeches. You have heard my learned friend Mr. Masani say that he dislikes technicalities and he leaves it to lawyers to tackle them. As a lawyer I dislike technicalities but I think that the fundamental right to the freedom of religion and the provisions of our Constitution cannot be described as technicalities.

Let us forget the Muslim community for the time being, and let us take the fundamental right to the freedom of religion of Hindus. According to Hindu Law, marriage is a sacrament. Certain religious ceremonies have to be performed. And it is an indissoluble union between man and woman. In old days a Hindu had the right to fill his zenana with as many women as he liked. What has our Parliament done?

First of all the Hindu Marriage Act provides for a Hindu marriage and has provided for divorce. In the Law of Succession the Hindu woman was entitled only to starving maintenance. I remember being told that Justice Lallubhai Shah would award about Rs. 25 for a Hindu widow when any European or Parsi Judge or Muslim Judge would award more than Rs. 400 to Rs. 500. They have been given the right to a share in the property on partition of joint family property. The Hindu women's rights were challenged

in the Supreme Court. And the Supreme Court held that first of all polygamy was not a part of religion. But, secondly, if it was, the Constitution gives you freedom of religion but it does not prevent social reform. And therefore the law was valid.

So let's turn to the fundamental rights we have got. Marriage is essentially a matter of social arrangement. Parsis have no really personal law of their own. But living among Hindus we adopted their customs. And, one of them was polygamy. And in 1865 the Parsi Panchayat represented to the Government that Parsis did not want polygamy. And, sure enough after polygamy was abolished, any Parsi who after 1865 takes a second wife is guilty of bigamy, and will be looked upon by the community as an infamous person. So it is essentially a social arrangement. Where then is the question of an attack on the right of religion?

The majority community has had the rights of males reduced, curtailed; — divorce allowed on the widest ground. The Special Marriages Act provides that you needn't even go through ceremonies relevant to Hindu Law. Surely then, here, as in any other matters, a social arrangement is subject to social reform.

Read any article on marriage in any encyclopaedia or any book and you will find that with change in social manners, social customs, the laws of marriage change. Take Christianity. Originally, only the Church could dissolve a marriage. And the dissolution took the form of an ecclesiastical verdict of separating husband and wife from bed and board. Thereafter, in England by an elaborate process of a special Act of Parliament a marriage could be dissolved. Time passed; circumstances changed and a distinguished humorist Mr. A. P. Herbert enlarged the grounds of divorce in the Act which he successfully sponsored. The ecclesiastical power disappeared. Today practically the Law has been changed to make one ground enough—that the marriage has broken down. Note that a Christian marriage was treated as a sacrament. It had to be in Church. And yet the passage of time has made it necessary to recognise that though the Biblical saying "Those whom God has joined let no man rend asunder" should be supplemented by another command: "Those whom God has rent asunder let no man keep joined".

Now it seems to me that all this *hoo ha* about the application of the Criminal Procedure Code to Muslims is completely unintelligible. The law has existed for over seventy years. The law has to decide that if a husband does not maintain his wife who is to do it? Is the State to do it? It raises a social problem in a most acute form. Is the wife to be driven to prostitution? Or should the State, as the Welfare State in

some countries do, provide her maintenance and give her an allowance? Surely our fundamental rights to the freedom of religion are subject to social and economic legislation. This is both social and economic. What has been protected are religious doctrines, religious rituals, religious ceremonies. There the community decides what they are. And the mere fact that a learned man like my friend Mr. Masani dislikes religion as a divisive factor is irrelevant.

That is why writing the chapter on Freedom of Religion in my book caused me the greatest possible trouble because if, for good or evil, and I think for good, we have been given the freedom of religion it means that the Constitution believes that if a man feels that he is a better man, that his life will be happier because he believes in religion, he is free to do so. If he doesn't he is equally free not to believe in religion. But it has been pointed out that that freedom does not preclude social and economic reform. And surely we are not *in the stage of economic reform* but because this had been done over 80 years back in what was originally Section 488.

Now look at the position. If marriage is a contract as it is among the Muslims then, is a contract a matter of religion? Reflect a little. It is not necessary to attribute motives, although motives can be attributed. A clear precise understanding of the nature of marriage and of the obligation to bring up children is required. Who will provide for them? Secondly, what about their education, what about their marriage? Each and every one of these matters is a matter of social arrangement and changing times.

I heard a beautiful story only a few days back. An eminent Hindu lady active in politics who had been widowed said to Margot Asquith, as many have said before, "What good have the British ever done to us?" And Margot replied, "Well, madam, if we hadn't abolished *Sati* you would have been burnt on the funeral pyre with your husband and you wouldn't have been here to ask me the question." Now *Sati* was a religious doctrine. The British who adopted non-intervention put an end to it. They put an end to the thugs and the pindaris who resorted to murder and robbery as part of religion. So the Constitution says that the freedom of religion is subject to public order and morality. Surely, public order is widely affected, if the women are to be thrown on the steels. The argument that Muslim law provides for maintenance is alright. But supposing the provision made is inadequate, the State is entitled to say that since we give you the protection of the law, the benefits of the State and the freedoms which a free society gives you, we will not permit women to be deprived of their

rights. They have done it on the most extensive scale. From starving maintenance to a share on partition.

Now my learned friend Mr. Masani says that there should be a uniform Civil Code, as in all civilized countries. Well, it is not correct even historically that every civilized country has a common Civil Code. In a country as small as Great Britain there is no uniform Civil Code. The Scottish people have laws of their own. They have followed Roman Law as opposed to Common Law and the treaty of union with Scotland expressly provided for the maintenance of Scottish Law which exists till today. But let me give you one example. As Ms. Tyabji was telling you, try to form a uniform Civil Code. Let me deal only with testamentary succession. Among the Muslims a man cannot will away more than one-third of his property, unless the heirs consent. So the heirs are protected to the extent of two-thirds of the estate. Now among the Hindus you can dispose off any self-acquired property by Will. But you can't dispose off joint family property. Now the joint family, though it encourages a fair amount of parasitism also acts as a protection to its members. Is that going to be part of the Civil Code of the Muslims? Or take what happens in England just now. Till recent Acts were passed, a man could leave all his property to his mistress. And the argument was that a man was free to do what he liked. After all if you give him the power to make a Will why not give the power to leave his estate to his mistress and not his wife? But things have changed. And power is now given to the Court to direct that out of any estate, £8,000 must be given to the wife. If the man has left about £20,000 and the Court feels that all 20,000 should be given to the wife, the Court is given the discretion to do so. Is that going to be your Civil Code?

So, instead of asking for the moon why not exercise your undoubted powers of social reform and bring about a change by law? It matters little whether Muslims, if they do not want a uniform Civil Code and prefer the restriction on Testamentary power they should be free to do so. I am quite sure that if there was a satisfactory plebiscite that law can't be changed. So I think that the most unfortunate part of the *Shah Bano judgment* is that although it is 100 per cent right—it is incredible that the opposite should be argued—the judges gratuitously went out of their way to talk of a uniform Civil Code. If there is one principle that is well settled in Constitutional Law it is that you never decide what is not necessary. But it is being done because judges like to say, "Oh well I am an advanced thinker, we must

have a uniform Civil Code". Let him try to frame a uniform Civil Code. I have given you only one instance, but I could give you many.

So I think we ought to oppose this Bill. That Bill will be open to the gravest challenge. And that challenge must succeed. This is because if a Hindu could be deprived of his power of marrying as many wives as he liked, if the joint family is deprived of its "right" to give women only starving maintenance, by women being granted maintenance and now a share in property on partition, surely, if all this can be done in the case of Hindus, by what process does any member of the Muslim community say in respect of matters essentially social that the same changes can't be brought about?

I personally feel that it is pre-eminently desirable that we keep passion and politics out of this discussion. It is difficult. And it is difficult to resist criticising the Prime Minister for saying one thing at one time and saying another at another time. But I think it is much more satisfactory to believe in the power of reason and truth to get itself accepted.

And if there is one example which I would like to give you of a man, one of the greatest in America, who in the midst of utmost provocation, corruption, corrupt colleagues, preserved his temper, it was Abraham Lincoln. In all his fight for the preservation of the Union and the abolition of slavery, never did he abuse his opponents. He said: "Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. The prayers of both cannot be answered, those of neither have been answered fully." So I think that the power of reason ought not to be under-rated. And I know for a fact that if there is one thing my friend Masani believes in, it is in the power of reason and argument to get itself accepted. And I think if we keep away from inflammatory topics we are more likely to have our way than by insulting people who have it in their power to pass the law or not.

Mr. Masani talks of the Supreme Court, as our last refuge. It is a little unfortunate that he has done so. He was right in saying that when it came to preventive detention and *habeas corpus* the finest hour was reached by the Bombay High Court and by all the High Courts in the country. Would he have relied on the Supreme Court? If he had, he would have found a strange disillusionment. If ever anybody let us down it was the Supreme Court. So, I think, let us first exhaust ordinary political processes; let us remember that conciliation failing, force remains, force failing nothing remains.

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J. N. Tata

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Henry Derozio

Firebrand of the Bengal Renaissance

Padmini Menon

IN THE history of the intellectual awakening in early 19th century Bengal the majestic figure of Raja Rammohan Roy rises like a peak. His achievements as educationist, social and religious reformer have justly been praised. He was, without doubt, one of the greatest figures of his time.

Not so well-known, however, is Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809-1831). An Eurasian poet, he established his reputation for his poetry at a young age and while still a lad of seventeen he was invited to join the faculty of the Hindu College at Calcutta to teach English literature. He taught there for only about five years and a promising career came to end because of his untimely death from cholera at the young age of twenty-two. Within the brief span of his career as a teacher, he had a profound effect on his students who formed a core of the "young Bengal" as the followers of Derozio came to be called.

Derozio's mind was cast in the mould of the social thought of the European Enlightenment. Scepticism, Secularism and Rationalism were at the heart of his thinking. As a teacher, he taught his pupils to doubt all things and to accept nothing on authority. Derozio's teaching did not fall on stony soil. The condition of society in Bengal provided fertile ground for his revolutionary teaching. He roused a storm of opposition from the Hindu orthodoxy and Derozio was compelled to leave the college. In this article, an attempt is made to estimate the work of this firebrand of the Bengal Renaissance.

"... the length and breadth of the country was submerged in darkness. The symbolic rituals of idolatrous practices had spread from one corner of the land to the other. ... The propertied Brahmins of Calcutta were cautious to maintain the proud position of their caste. ..." This description of Bengali Hindu Society, in the early 19th Century would hold true for the whole of India. Though the British had remained in India for many decades the process of acculturation

had not begun. A few Indians who had come into contact with Western thought sought to introduce change. If there were some like Rammohan Roy who introduced modernity in idea and thought through English education, there were others like Derozio who adopted everything Western, be it Western clothes or Western thought.

A literary journal in 1843, 12 years after Derozio's death, describes him. "In his dress he went to the extreme of foppery. He was like a woman fond of gold and his person was adorned with a goodly quantity of it. He never wore his hat and his hair was parted from the middle. He was conspicuous for his yellow-painted Stanhope and English horse and it was laughable to see him in the morning, spurred and booted to the knee, on a powerful Arab, coursing the plain. The effect of his dress was increased by his diminutive stature. ..." But then a man is not to be measured by the richness of his dress, and this portrait does little justice to the mind of the man. The "youngest and brightest star" that shone in the Hindu College firmament, Henry Derozio's role in the revolution of thought and idea that was sparked off in Bengal, in the 19th century, is definitive.

Henry was born on 18 April, 1809 to Francis Derozio, a rich trader of Portuguese extraction and his wife Sophia, an English woman. In Drummond's Dharmatola Academy, one of the "private-schools" in Calcutta, where the Anglo-Indian students and the Indian students sat side by side, he learnt English, reading, writing and reckoning. Derozio's mind was ingrained with David Hume's religious scepticism, Diderot's rationalism and Rousseau's democratic faith. He grew up to encourage the same rationalism and scepticism in his students.

The life and times of Derozio are closely linked with the history of the Hindu college as is the Renaissance in Bengal with that of the college. It was only in the 19th Century that the knowledge of English began to be cultivated not merely for commercial purposes but as a "medium of culture". Not only the young but even the elder members of the Hindu orthodoxy expressed their "anxious desire" to learn this new language. R. C. Majumdar in *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance* tells us that the whole process of establishing the college was set in motion by a Brahmin

of Calcutta, one Bidyanath Mukherjee. He either met or wrote to Sir Hyde East, the then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in Calcutta and informed him that many of the leading Hindus of the day were desirous of setting up an institution where their children would be given a liberal education. On 14th May, 1816, at the meeting called by Sir Hyde East at his residence more than 50 'respectable Hindus' gathered and a sum of half a lakh rupees was collected to start the college. The meeting, Sir Hyde East tells us, "was composed of persons of various castes, all combining for such a purpose, whom nothing else could have brought together: whose children are to be taught, though not fed together." He further tells us that "when they were about to depart, the head Pandit, in the name of himself and others, said that they rejoiced in having lived to see the day when literature (many parts of which had formerly been cultivated in their country with considerable success, but which were now nearly extinct) was about to be revived with greater lustre and prospect of success than ever."

Derozio joined the Hindu college in 1826. Prior to that he had worked in a clerical post with Messrs James Scott and Co. Destined not to count numbers but to lisp in them, he soon found himself in Bhagalpur, working on his uncle's indigo plantation. It was here that his sensitive mind awoke to the beauty of nature. And from his pen, as he watched the waters of the Ganga flow, flowed the earliest verses. Under the pseudonym; Juvenis he became a regular contributor to the *India Gazette*. (The poem *Fakir of Jhungeera*, based on a local legend attained much popularity). It must be mentioned here that some of the earliest nationalist poetry was written by him.

He opined that it was in the best interests of East Indians to write and co-operate with the other native inhabitants of India.

Derozio was only seventeen when he took up the offer of Assistant mastership at the Hindu college. The classroom dais was for him his pulpit. He spoke to his students about Voltaire, Locke, Bacon, Hume and Tom Paine. (An interesting story published in a contemporary Bengali weekly attests that an Indian book-seller got 100 copies of Tom Paine's *Age of Reason* which he advertised for sale at Re. 1 a copy. The demand was so great that he sold it at Rs. 8 a copy. Soon after a part of this book was translated into Bengali and published in a Bengali paper). The thirst for knowledge of Young Bengal could not be slaked. All experience, for them, has an arch where-thro' gleaned that untravelled world. Derozio drew his students "like a magnet" around him. He did

what very few teachers can do today. He taught his students to think for themselves. The crux of mental action was "to live and die for truth." Assisted by his students he started a debating society, the Academic Association, and a weekly magazine the *Parthenon*. The doors of his house on Lower Circular Street were thrown open to visitors and students. Here they discussed topics ranging from free-will, free ordination, sacredness of truth to meanness of vice, attributes of God and female education.

The immediate influence of Derozio's teachings was felt in the change in the attitude of his students towards Hindu religion and idolatry. Many of them showed their contempt for Hindu tradition by consuming meat and liquor. One of them was even roused to assert that 'if there was anything he hated from the bottom of his heart, it was Hinduism.' But these were to do only with the external trappings of a culture. The question we have to answer is whether Derozio did impart anything more than the superficialities of a Western style of life.

R. C. Majumdar has shown that Derozio's teachings did influence his students in other ways too. Politically they were highly motivated. He illustrates it by quoting two incidents. On 10th December, 1830, 200 persons attended the July Revolution celebration in the Town Hall. On another occasion, on Christmas Day of the same year the tricolour flag of the French Revolution was hoisted on the monument. It was not difficult to guess by whom it was done.

The Derozians' consumption of beer and meat, their repeating of lines from the *Iliad* instead of the *mantras* at prayer, a student's greeting of goddess Kali with a "good morning Madam", were soon to stoke opposition to the "vagabond fringis" as Derozio and his group were contemptuously called.

The management of the Hindu college succumbed to public pressures and forced Derozio to resign. But the committee by a majority refused to pronounce Derozio as "an improper person to be entrusted with the education of youth". In his resignation letter dated 25 April, 1831, Derozio stated that he was being dismissed unexamined and unheard, without even the mockery of a trial.

In spite of his youth Derozio had oftentimes heard the still sad music of humanity. Death had plagued his family, he had lost much of what he loved, yet he never lost his cheerful demeanour. After his dismissal from Hindu college he took up editorship of *The East Indian*. At the same time he contributed to *The Calcutta Literary Gazette*, *The Indian Magazine*, *The Calcutta Magazine*, *The Bengal Journal*, *The Enquirer* and *The Hesperus*.

The end came when he was only 22 years of age. In the winter of 1831 he died of cholera. On looking back we realise that whether it was a Sidney of the 19th Century or a Derozio of the early 19th Century they were not poets who lived in ivory towers but men who stood in the whirl and madness of action, men of many parts. Henry Derozio cannot be dismissed as a mere flash in the night sky of 19th Century Bengal. He left behind a whole band of followers who hid behind their extreme anglicism, their indulgence in meat and drinks and their irreligion, a fearless rationalism, a scepticism combined with a faith in democracy. Many of his students like Tarachand Chakraborti, Rasik-Krishna Mallik, Ramgopal Ghosh, Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyaya and Pearychand Mitra fought against police corruption, the unprotected status of the peasantry and the ambitious and domineering priesthood. They advocated the freedom of the press, the protection of the ryot, and civil and social reform. As Kishorichand Mitra put it in 1861: "The youthful band of reformers who had been educated at the Hindoo college, like the top of the Khanchangunga, were the first to catch and reflect the dawn...".

—Ms. PADMINI MENON is a Research Assistant in the *Times of India* library.

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Theory and Practice

Darius Cooper

MR. KAPOOR is Mr. Average. He is a middle-aged, lower-middle-class citizen of a large Indian city. He pays his taxes; he tries to stay within the word of the law; he prides himself with being "a little" honest; he is a fairly hardworking man; his immediate family, their well-being and their security, take up all his time and leave him little for any other pursuits. Mr. Kapoor is not particularly intelligent nor exceptionally brave. He is intimidated if confronted with violence and goondaism. A world of thugs is not the place he is cut out for—when he dreams, he thinks that it would be 'nice' to have a world that is cleaner than it is today, more honest, and thus easier for him to live in. But, years of experience have convinced him that the ideal is also the impossible. Mr. Kapoor smiles cynically when he hears of 'anti-corruption' drives; but, secretly, he wishes that there is *something* to them. The thoughts in his mind are something like: "I know that it's probably nothing but a public relations stunt; but... but let's hope that some good does come out of it... let's hope that there's some small help in cleaning up things a bit.

It is the thesis of this article that Mr. Kapoor is very often mistaken. It is true that anti-corruption drives *do* bring about closer correspondence between written and practiced law. But, the average man does not always stand to gain by this. And, paradoxically, Mr. Kapoor (our average citizen) may find himself better off voting for a government that had no intention of keeping to their promises. He must hope for a political party that is *not* serious about what it says.

The paradox is the result of a very simple principle: the harder you push for a bad thing, the more of the bad thing you're likely to get. Put more formally: actions are the result of motivations acting within the context of a certain theory (i.e. accepted knowledge); and a high motivation in the context of an incorrect theory *may* (and most often *will*) lead to effects that are in contradiction to the original goals (motivations). You want your actions to yield certain results—these are your 'motivations'. You believe in some theory about reality that tells you what type of action would lead to those ends. The stronger your motivation, the more thoroughly will you try to apply your theory. If two men hold a theory that is in accordance with reality, then the one who lives up to the theory better will be more successful in achieving his goal. On the other hand, if two men hold a theory that is incorrect—if they believe that a certain act will lead to a parti-

cular goal when, in fact, it does lead to just the opposite—then, the one who is more steadfast will find his ends less and less fulfilled.

In the realm of political science and economics, this translates as follows: Every economic or political policy that is mooted is claimed to lead to certain ends that are beneficial. For example, smuggling is punishable by law in order to maintain the spirit of the statutes prohibiting the free import and export of goods. These statutes are, in turn, based upon (a) the economic doctrine that control of import/export is essential for the economic well-being of a country like ours; (b) the political doctrine that it is within the legitimate power of the government to so control the lives of its citizens.

Assume for a moment that either (or both) of these is not true. Assume that, on the other hand, (a) free trade is the best for the country; (b) the government has not got the right to so regulate the lives of its citizens. Given this scenario, the harder it is to smuggle, the worse it will be for the nation. Any anti-smuggling drive will necessarily lead to a more serious state of affairs.

The argument for smuggling can be extended to other related areas, for example, the blackmarket. The blackmarket is a market that comes into being in a situation of price control. Remember: the key is control of price, not scarcity of the goods *per se*. Movie tickets are sold on the blackmarket because people are willing to pay a higher price for the entertainment they offer than the government is willing to allow the movie hall owners to receive. It is dubious what advantage accrues from allowing a parasite population of blackmarketeers to flourish and to keep the money that is rightfully that of the hall owner. In some countries, notably the communist ones, even food and clothes are sold on the blackmarket. Without that source of supply, people would not be able to get the bare necessities that they demand. Like the blackmarket, blackmoney too has its plus points. It can be supported on the political ground that the government must not unduly tax its people. It can be supported on the economic argument that heavy taxes are a disincentive to growth. Similarly, governmental corruption can be seen as a safety valve that allows people to get around the restrictive laws. In this way, we may go on and on arguing about the advantages that accrue from various illegal acts.

This article does not pretend to argue the rightness

or wrongness of any particular statute (though the writer's views are obvious). It does try to highlight that many laws are accepted unthinkingly by most people, and that this can be dangerous. Mr. Kapoor, the average man, does not begin to think of the rightness of the various laws to which he allows himself to be subjected. He acts with resignation toward contemporary statutes: almost as though he were still living the role of a subject *vis-a-vis* a monarch's edicts. Mr. Kapoor will seldom be able to tell you what *exactly* is wrong with smuggling, the black market, black money, etc. He will not be able to explain the *precise* usefulness of the various regulatory acts that control the actions of people. He suffers from a lack of intellectual foundation with regard to the ideas that he thoughtlessly accepts as true.

When one desires an end, one must ruthlessly and carefully investigate how it can be achieved. If one accepts a false theory by default (by allowing someone else to do your thinking) then one must needs run into error. In fields like politics, morality and economics, which affect every living moment of a man so closely, judgement must be one's own. Else one is bound to end up striving for ends desparately but finding that just the opposite results ensue.

Anti-corruption drives and 'cleaning-up' campaigns

must therefore be viewed in the context of the laws that they seek to enforce. If the statutes are bad, enforcing them will simply worsen matters. Yet, no honest man likes the idea of breaking the law. The correct response is to change the law and to make it more moral and unrestrictive. A government has an executive function in that it must enforce the law. But, we must not let this prevent us from getting to the root of the matter; viz., the legislative role. In a country like ours bogged down for so long by countless restrictive statutes, the legislative aspect takes on primary importance.

The first thing the government ought to do is to amend the statutes rapidly to bring the written law closer to the principles of freedom and individual rights. Anti-corruption measures that seek to enforce old laws are indicative of honesty. But misguided honesty can often be dangerous. Yet, because of the honesty involved, we cannot fully criticize such measures. Instead, we must make the government see that they are often counter-productive, and that the real goal should be the enactment of proper laws. The focus of any protest must be aimed at the laws themselves—those we must seek to change for the better.

—DARIUS COOPER is a student of I.I.M., Calcutta.

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Prize Winning Essay

We the Inheritors

The India of Tomorrow

Rena Noronha

"AT THE stroke of midnight, when the whole world is asleep, India awakens to a new life..." declared Jawaharlal Nehru from the ramparts of the Red Fort, on that eventful day of our tryst with destiny. That was the day when India shattered her shackles and emerged a free, independent nation; the day the dream of our elders culminated into a reality; the day we inherited our own land from the British. With drops of sweat and blood shed profusely, emerged a new nation as a torch bearer to the rest of the world engaged in a never ending struggle to overthrow imperialism. The ideals of liberty, justice, equality and fraternity professed by our national leaders, created an awareness even among the illiterate masses of India that had been inspired by the never ceasing efforts during the freedom struggle. Thousands of lives had been sacrificed to lay the foundation of a free India and so the task of building a national edifice was but the supreme need of the hour.

India is a land of diverse cultures and the birthplace of many civilisations. It has cradled many warriors, administrators, scientists, astronomers and monarchs, all of whom have played a vital role in evolving a new India. The village artisans and craftsmen had moulded the very existence of the rural Indian life. The vast country with its rich natural resources was bestowed upon us by Mother Nature.

At this juncture the youth of the nation awakened to face a new reality, a life of challenges and hard-work in order to lead the country to a better future. All the efforts of our great leaders were not to be in vain. We the inheritors had to put before us clear cut ideas and channelise our energies and resources towards the path of progress and prosperity. The unfinished task at that juncture had to be completed. A total revolution had to be brought about in the social, economic and political life of our country. India had to keep pace with the rest of the civilised world.

If we were to look at today through tomorrow's eyes, we would discover that the tide of time has today brought us into the most momentous phase in the history of human civilisation. The decisions made and the actions taken today would be unquestionably crucial in guiding the course of our destinies and the destiny of humankind.

We are just past the Orwellian year of the 'Big Brother'. Are the negative Utopias of Orwell and Huxley merely the predictions of doom and disaster awaiting us, or are they warning bells sounded by men of vision? Already a great part of the world is shrouded by the clouds of totalitarianism similar to the chilling scenario presented by Orwell. Problems of hunger and poverty pervade two-thirds of the globe. Nuclear weapons are being piled up in a most alarming fashion and the war games have now been expanded into space as well. Thoughts of exercising the nuclear option are increasingly being voiced, taking mankind to the brink of annihilation many times over. The world is nowhere near a just and equitable economic order and human rights in many countries are being most blatantly violated. In India itself the smoulding embers of the Punjab inferno have not had time to die down before another conflagration broke out in Gujarat. One Prime Minister was laid down by bullets and a thousand other lives were lost in the violent aftermath, scarring the minds and bodies of a multitude of people. These are some of the grim and depressing realities of the present.

Where do we go from here? Are we going to allow ourselves to remain precariously tottering on the precipice? To let fuddled minds decide our fates? This is the time of reckoning. This is the time for the awakening of youth. The youth of today is going to be the hope for the future. It is going to hold the reins of power tomorrow and our hopes and aspirations are resting upon their young shoulders. What are its responsibilities and the goals it must set for itself? These are questions upon which we must ponder deeply.

First and foremost, the exuberance of youth must be channelised towards the attainment of universal human freedom and dignity. This would require inculcating a crusading zeal and a spirit of sacrifice. Within our own country, the backwardness and exploitation of millions of people is a grim reality. We must awake in them a consciousness of their rights. Eradication of the caste system and its concomitant inequalities must be one of the aims of the youth. These sentiments should be inculcated into the young so that the fetters of social backwardness can be cast away within the span of the next few generations.

This can be achieved only by means of education.

The new education policy should be job-oriented. So far the educated man found himself at the cross-roads of life, wondering which path to follow. There was no basic training by which he could start a career for himself. The end of the term should enable him to make use of the knowledge and skill acquired in the educational institutions. Vocational training should enable the youth to contribute their might towards the technological advancement of the nation.

We are in an age when scientific and technological developments can lead to an alleviation of human suffering. The age of computers will bring about radical changes in every sphere of life. The human brain, which is the best computer, should in its quest for knowledge, strive to attain maximum benefits from man-made machines. Man's quest of science has opened new vistas to the modern youth. The space research programmes have given a new dimension to the technological spectrum.

Unfortunately, a great proportion of our resources are being utilised for the expansion of war machines. One must engender a climate of peace so that the fruits of science can be harnessed for the benefit of humanity. Nuclear energy utilised for peaceful purposes can be a boon to mankind. The youth should come into the forefront to achieve this task of dis-

armament. There is already considerable awareness of this in the west and youth movements like the Greepeace movement have gathered considerable support among the people.

Coming to the ubiquitous problem of corruption and religious discord within the country, the youth can form vigilance committees to expose the venalities of corrupt officials and bureaucrats. Where there are signs of communal disharmony, peace committees can be formed at local levels to promote religious amity. Before the malaise of drug addiction poisons our society, youth movements can come forward to fight this menace.

India has a rich cultural heritage. In the gallop towards the twenty-first century, one must not lose sight of our traditions. A perception of our history among the youth should prevent the future generations from losing their balance and becoming bewildered automations dependent upon mazes of machines and computers. It is perhaps apt that in this, the 'International Year of the Youth' that a youthful and dynamic leadership under our new Prime Minister has emerged to guide the destiny of our millions. A new season of hope has been heralded and an atmosphere of optimism prevails within the country.

Ms. Rena Noronha is a student of ICL College, New Bombay

UNTAPPED YOUTH ENERGY HARNESSSED AND TURNED INTO A POWERFUL VIABLE FORCE

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- * The Government gives special importance to Sports—it means a healthier and more disciplined Nation. To encourage the youth many facilities are provided.
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- * Sports school at Kudige in Kodagu.
- * Financial assistance and cash awards, scholarships to talented sportsmen and sportswomen.
- * Rural sports centres.
- * Technical College admission priorities to outstanding sportsmen and women.
- * Championship tournaments, sports meets, mass sports.
- * Coaching camps and training centres.

Karnataka Information.

What Neutrality Means to a Leninist

Peter Sager

THIS IS what the Soviet Communist Party leader, Mikhail Gorbachov, said when he arrived in Geneva on November 18, 1985 to meet President Reagan: "The remarkable contribution of Switzerland to the development of international relations was without doubt made easier by its self-chosen permanent neutrality. The Soviet Union has always recognised this status and will continue to do so".

This remark by Gorbachov, transmitted by radio and television around the world, has aroused a new interest in the Soviet concept of neutrality, just as happened thirty years ago at the conclusion of the Austrian State Treaty. At that time, a declaration by the Austrian Government that it would follow a policy of "neutrality on the Swiss pattern" was internationally confirmed and recognised.

The fact that Switzerland's neutrality has allowed it to make a remarkable contribution to the development of international relations is true beyond a doubt. But how does this neutrality fit in with the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of the class struggle and with global revolutionary development?

To describe the real Soviet attitude to neutrality, we have to go back to Lenin, particularly since he spent several periods of his life in Switzerland: he lived from April 1903 to November 1905 and from January to December 1908 in Geneva, from September 1914 to January 1916 in Berne, and from January 1916 to February 1917 in Zurich. From his bases in Switzerland, he visited social-democratic conferences in different countries.

The conviction of both Marx and Lenin that the victory of socialist revolution was unavoidable throughout the world does not need to be proved here. There is enough documentation on this subject to fill a series of libraries. But I would like to bring out a useful quotation which shows that, although Lenin was indeed convinced of the final victory of socialism, he did not exclude the idea that this victory could be reached by several roads. In a brochure written in Zurich in October 1916, called "A Caricature of Marxism", he wrote: "All nations will arrive at socialism—this is inevitable, but all will do so in not exactly the same way, each will contribute something of its own . . ." But in spite of these differences it is also clear to Lenin that the revolution will always have to be brought about by force.

For, also in October 1916, he wrote in an article on "The 'Disarmament' Slogan": "Disarmament is the ideal of socialism. There will be no wars in socialist society; consequently, disarmament will be achieved. But whoever expects that socialism will be achieved *without* a socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat is not a socialist. Dictatorship is state power based directly on *violence*. And in the twentieth century—as in the age of civilisation generally—violence means neither a fist nor a club, but *troops*. To put 'disarmament' in the programme is tantamount to making the general declaration: We are opposed to the use of arms. There is as little Marxism in this as there would be if we were to say: We are opposed to violence!"

Quite apart from the question of violence, however, we have here the picture of two parties to a conflict, in which one of the parties wins. This does not leave any room at all for neutrality.

In January 1917, Lenin, replied to four articles published in the Zurich newspaper, "Volksrecht", by Hermann Greulich in a work to be known as "Twelve Brief Theses". He wrote this in German, and it was published as a reply to Greulich in the "Volksrecht" on January 31st and February 1st 1917. In this response, Lenin wrote: "Greulich states in his second article: 'For Switzerland, neutrality and defence of the fatherland are identical. Whoever rejects defence of the fatherland endangers neutrality. One must appreciate that'. Two modest questions to Comrade Greulich. First, shouldn't one appreciate the fact that faith in proclamations of neutrality and intentions to maintain it in the present war is tantamount not only to blind faith in one's *own* 'bourgeois government' and *other* 'bourgeois governments', but is simply absurd? Second, shouldn't one realise that in reality the position is as follows? Whoever in this war accepts defence of the fatherland becomes an accomplice of his *'own'* national bourgeoisie, which, in Switzerland too, is a thoroughly imperialist bourgeoisie, since it is financially tied to the Great Powers and is involved in imperialist world politics. Whoever in this war rejects defence of the fatherland destroys the proletariat's faith in the bourgeoisie and *helps* the international proletariat wage its struggle *against* the bourgeoisie's domination".

Apart from its literal meaning, this quotation demonstrates the spirit in which Lenin regarded the

politics of the country which had given him shelter for so long. He expressed himself even more freely in a piece which was not published in the Swiss press, written in November 1916, and entitled "Tasks of Left Zimmerwaldists", referring to the social-democratic conference which had been held in Zimmerwald, near Bern, in September 1915. In a chapter on "The Immediate Tasks of Party Propaganda, Agitation and Organisation", he wrote: To influence broader masses, the party must organise more systematic publication of leaflets for free distribution. These should explain to the masses that the revolutionary proletariat is fighting for the socialist transformation of Switzerland, which is necessary for and in the interests of nine-tenths of the population . . . More attention and effort must be devoted to propaganda among the rural workers, agricultural labourers and day-labourers, and also among the poor section of the peasants. . . The party should demand of its parliamentary representatives . . . that they utilise their particularly advantageous political position, not for idle reformist parliamentary talk, which naturally only hores the workers and rouses their suspicion, but for propaganda for the socialist revolution among the *most backward* strata of the proletariat and semi-proletariat in urban, and particularly rural, areas. . . A truth most strikingly confirmed by the war should be brought home to the masses, namely, that so-called 'neutrality' is bourgeois deception or hypocrisy, that in fact it means *passive* submission to the bourgeoisie".

In his "Farewell Letter to the Swiss Workers" in April 1917, Lenin used these words: "Comrades, Swiss workers: Leaving Switzerland for Russia, to continue revolutionary-internationalist activity in our country, we, members of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party . . . wish to convey to you our fraternal greetings and expression of our profound comradely gratitude for your comradely treatment of the emigrés". The letter ends: "Transformation of the imperialist war into civil war is *becoming* a fact. Long live the proletarian revolution that is *beginning* in Europe."

For Lenin there could be only two social systems and two ideologies. As early as 1902, in this book "What is to be done?", he said: "Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology formulated by the working masses themselves in the process of their movement, the *only* choice is—either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for man has not created a 'third' ideology. . ."

The first countries to be offered permanent neutrality by the Soviet Union were the Baltic states of

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. This was in 1920, Latvia was not interested in the suggestion, while Estonia and Lithuania, though interested, failed to receive the necessary guarantees from the Western powers. The project failed.

Things were different in Georgia, which was far outside the sphere of influence of the Western powers. The Soviet leaders did not hesitate for a moment. In 1921, they attacked Georgia, abolished the legal government and annexed the country, even though they had previously promised to respect its independence. The Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939, and the annexation of the Baltic republics in the following year are other examples of gross violations of valid non-aggression treaties.

The events in Eastern Europe at the end of the Second World War illustrate the Soviet habit of adapting words and meanings according to political needs. When Moscow forced Communist regimes on Eastern Europe, the description was in terms of "helping" these "peoples" in their struggle against "reaction". The Soviet leaders spoke of "the class struggle" and "revolution". There is seldom a mention of normal international or interstate relations.

On the other hand, in 1952 the Soviet Union proposed the neutralisation of Germany. This was in response to the fact that in July 1951 the Western powers had declared the state of war with Germany to be at an end and had proposed in September of the same year that "a democratic Germany" should become a member of the proposed European Defence Community. The Soviet proposal for a neutral Germany came up against the Western insistence that a united German Government could only be formed after free elections, while the Soviet Union wanted the elections only after the event.

The conclusion of the Austrian State Treaty in 1955 was certainly bound up with the intention of the Soviets to find a framework in which neutrality also for Germany could later be established.

But the attitude of the Soviet Union towards Hungary was entirely different when on November 1st 1956 Prime Minister Imre Nagy declared his country to be neutral. This has been described as the last straw which brought about the invasion; but the troops were already on their way. Probably the declaration of neutrality was a last desperate attempt on the part of Hungary to obtain a status similar to that of Austria. When the final Soviet attack took place on November 4th both the Soviet spokesman and Janos Kadar, the head of the newly formed puppet government, used only Marxist-Leninist terminology: the Soviet troops were "saving Hungary from a counter-

revolution". The concept of "international relations" was entirely ignored.

Soviet military interventions are usually billed as aid to a threatened "people" for the defence of their revolution. Thus, Viktor Chebrikov, a member of the Soviet Politburo and head of the KGB, said in his speech for the last anniversary of the October Revolution: "The peoples (of Nicaragua and Afghanistan) are obliged to defend their revolutions against imperialist mercenaries in armed struggle. . . The freedom-loving people of this and other countries which are fighting for independence and progress can be certain of our true and constant solidarity".

It sometimes happens that circumstance and place force Soviet spokesmen to be more discreet. In his speech to the UN General Assembly on September 24th last year, the Soviet Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, declared: "It is necessary in particular that all should recognise the right of the Afghan people to live their lives according to their own wishes".

The conclusion is unavoidable: according to Soviet doctrine, neutrality is simply one alternative to membership of NATO. In this sense, neutrality must be seen with one eye on military advantage. Thus, the Austrian State Treaty had the effect that in an emer-

gency NATO troops could no longer be stationed on the line, Munich-Innsbruck-Verona.

But as soon as a Communist country shows a tendency towards neutrality (or is suspected of such a tendency, as in the case of Czechoslovakia in 1968), then there is no longer talk of "international and interstate relations", and only the ideological terminology of the class struggle is used.

It sometimes happens, however, that tactical considerations dictate a patient attitude. This was also foreseen by Lenin, in his May 1918 brochure "Left-Wing' Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality": "It is in our interest to do all that is possible, to take advantage of the slightest opportunity, to postpone the decisive battle until the moment . . . the revolutionary workers' contingents have united in a single great international army".

It is through this glass that we may see Gorbachov's respect for Swiss neutrality and his reference to "international relations". The time has not yet come for Switzerland and its permanent, armed neutrality to be judged according to the terminology of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine.

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Financing the Soviet Union

Roger W. Robinson Jr.

HASN'T IT struck most Western policy makers as odd that the Soviet Union, with a total annual hard-currency income of only about \$32 billion from all sources (including arms sales), can sustain a global empire? More specifically, how does the U.S.S.R. support such a vast array of third-country commitments—many of which must be financed by hard currency—with annual earnings equivalent to about one-third of Exxon's annual revenue for 1985? Untied and unobserved Western financial flows to the Warsaw Pact countries are, in my view, a principal avenue by which the West contributes to the Soviet Union's ability to maintain and expand its costly global commitments.

In his novel "The Honorable School-boy," John LeCarre offered some sound advice concerning financial flows to potential adversaries, which was embodied in three words: "Follow the money." That is exactly what I recommend we do.

In this connection, I've often been curious why I've never seen a security-oriented cash-flow analysis of the U.S.S.R.—a page divided down the middle with "sources" of hard currency on the left side (for example, oil and naturalgas exports and the sales of arms, gold, diamonds, etc.) and "uses" of hard currency on the right side (such as imports from the West, technology theft, the underwriting of client states, KGB operations and other expenditures). My own guess is that a detailed security cashflow analysis of this kind would show a formidable annual hard-currency shortfall that presumably has to be financed through Western borrowings.

Declining Soviet oil production and plummeting prices for both oil and natural gas—which constitute approximately two-thirds of the U.S.S.R.'s total annual hard-currency earnings structure—should result in an even more active Soviet presence on the world credit markets than the roughly \$4.5 billion in new credits observed in 1985. The fact is that the level of Soviet indebtedness remained largely unchanged between 1979 and 1984 even though the U.S.S.R.'s hard-currency needs apparently grew significantly. I believe this discrepancy can be, at least in part, explained by substantial Soviet reliance on a rather hidden borrowing source in Western financial markets.

This less visible borrowing activity takes place in the vast and amorphous interbank market where the Soviet Union has been a major player for many years. The interbank market is global in scope and has been formed by the established practice among the world's banks of depositing cash with one another to facilitate the efficient flow of funds and to earn income on excess cash.

Prior to concluding an interbank transaction, the bank offering the funds will check the credit limit for the particular bank taking the funds, as well as the "country exposure limit" for the country in which the bank is based. It is not in all cases standard practice to check the "country exposure limit" for the country (such as the Soviet Union) that may own the "taking" bank.

The six Soviet-owned banks located in the West, along with their branches, have been major beneficiaries of this global flow of interbank funds. The largest Soviet-owned banks in the West include Banque Commerciale pour l'Europe du Nord, or Eurobank, in Paris, Moscow Narodny Bank, London (which often serves as the coordinating point for other Soviet banking institutions in the West), and Ost-West. Handelsbank in Frankfurt. Other 100% Soviet-owned banking institutions are in Luxembourg, Zurich and Vienna. The Soviets go to some lengths to obscure their complete ownership of these institutions. For example, these banks are incorporated under the laws of the countries in which they are based, have foreign nationals in management positions, have what appear to be a diverse group of shareholders, and even maintain offices in Moscow that are similar to those of Western banks.

These Soviet banks engage in other banking activities outside the interbank market and even place some of their own deposits with major Western banks. This does not, however, offset the enormous advantage to the Soviets of having access to this kind of oversized reserve checking account at an interest rate that is substantially below the U.S. prime rate and that can be used at their sole discretion. Similar to a cash-reserve bank line to bridge shortages of cash in a regular checking account, interbank deposits provide the Soviets with needed liquidity on the margin to meet their pressing cash requirements. Access to these Western deposits also permits the Soviets to

avoid more expensive and visible forms of Western financing. After all, why should the U.S.S.R. step up its modest use of bankers' acceptances or go more often to the syndicated loan market when it can tap a largely invisible pool of Western deposits at interest rates well below U.S. prime?

It is very difficult to estimate the precise amount of such Western funds on deposit with the Soviet Bank for Foreign Trade, the Comecon banks, the State Bank of the U.S.S.R., and Soviet-owned banks in the West. Nevertheless, as the Soviets maintain correspondent banking relations with virtually every sizable banking institution in the world, a ball-park estimate of Western deposits with Soviet-owned banks in the West would be roughly \$5 billion. I would estimate that several billion dollars more in Western deposits have been attracted directly by the Soviet Bank for Foreign Trade and the Comecon banks. Individual East European banks also enjoy the same favorable access to this untied, low-cost financing source. Although these deposits must eventually be repaid,

similar to loans, they still represent a major reservoir of cheap money.

I am not arguing for the discontinuation of inter-bank activity with the U.S.S.R.—only that specific information be developed on the amounts and the proper use and maturity of such deposits.

We simply cannot avert our eyes from those financial practices that are potentially harmful to the West's long-term security interests; nor can we sidestep the need to develop a more comprehensive picture of how the Soviet Union funds itself and its global activities.

Finally, it is imperative that we successfully come to terms with the enormous contribution the West is making to the economic and financial vitality of the Soviet Union and its client states.

Mr. Robinson is president of RWR Inc., a Washington-based consulting firm. This article is adapted from a talk given to the Heritage Foundation and published in *The Asian Wall Street Journal*.

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Adivasi Kala Mahotsava

S. I. Clerk

OVER THE YEARS the Indian National Theatre Research Centre For The Performing Folk Arts are doing some sterling work in the research and the documentation of the folk and tribal performing arts of Maharashtra and Gujarat. They also periodically organize relevant performances, seminars, demonstrations. Thus, from February 1 to 4 this year they organized the Maharashtra Adivasi Kala Mahotsava in Baba Amte's complex at Anandvan, Warora (some 80 kms. from Nagpur). It involved some 600 tribals, sixty scholars and 25 journalists/critics. The Mahotsava consisted of seminars in the mornings, demonstrations in the afternoons and actual performances at nights.

The tribals involved were Gonds, Warlis, Ghorpads, Dhemsas, Ghusadis, Kolams, Bhillas, Thakurs, etc., from Thane, Pune, Dhule, Amaravati, Parbhani, Gadchiroli, Yavatmal, Nasik, Nanded, Aurangabad and Jalgaon districts. While the performances provided the most vivid visuals, the seminars and the demonstrations provided an interesting background to some significant understanding of the yet alive tribal art forms of our State. Jivya Soma's demonstration one afternoon of how Warlis paint their paintings covered to an extent the fine art fact as well.

The performances were no entertainment *per se* and, in all probability, would be a total flop on the sophisticated urban stage. However, they had an academic value in that they pre-eminently revealed their present status—how much of the traditions are still retained, how the modern way of life is affecting them.

On an immediate level, the performances were marked by vigorous rhythmic movements, 'elementary' musical instruments, exotic costumes, an utter abandon, the least stage consciousness or fright. The creeping modern influences could be observed in Gandhi caps, vests, shorts, saris, blouses, mention of Indira Gandhi's name in one performance, *et al.* Before the traditional folk arts get totally lost, they must be scientifically documented and one is glad that INT is doing some really constructive work in this context.

It is not possible here even to list out the several performances that took place during the four nights. However, some of the highlights were *Kahalyacha Naach* by a group of Warlis from Thane; *Morga Naach* by Warli women from Thane; *Dhemsas* by Gonds and *Keknis*; *Ghorpad* by Koknis; *Dongardev* by Koknis

and Thakars; *Tipri* from Dhule; *Bharu* from Pune; *Tamasha* by Thakars from Pune; *Gop* by Thakurs; *Gau Bahadhani Natya* by Kolam; *Gotul Patang* by Madias; *Gau Panchayati Natak*; *Rela Nritya*; *Gondi Nritya*; *Parai Nritya*. Of particular interest, a number of dances had strong influences of the *Rasa* and *Garba* of Gujarat.

Moving away from the performances, the morning seminars had some highly specialized scholars as participants such as Dr. Prabhakar Mande, Prof. Rajabhai Deshpande, Dr. Deogavkar, Dr. (Smt.) Deogavkar, Dr. Sudam Jadhav, Dr. Madhykar Wakode and Anant Rao Bophankar. The topics covered the various facets of the *Adivasis* such as their art and culture, dance, costumes, musical instruments, deities, dialects and economic development. Needless to add that lively discussions followed the relevant papers. The seminars were presided over by Prof. Deogarkar. The afternoon demonstrations had Warli paintings, Madia handicrafts, musical instruments and dances.

Altogether these four days at Anandvan were well spent. They offered some direct visual experiences of our rich tribal culture. Here was a great dance/theatre experience in the raw away from the sophisticated and/or off-beat stage. It was of special significance when one remembers that tribal fine and performing arts are never meant for entertainment *per se* but form a very vital part of their festivals, celebrations, prayers and daily life. Art in tribal culture is no mere decoration or ornament and the artist is not a special person in their society. Art must serve religious, social and communal purpose in the tribal society which also refuses to recognise individual talent as such. All activities must be group activities. The Maharashtra Adivasi Kala Mahotsava at Anandvan made one once again aware of some of these facets of tribal culture.

One hopes the INT will continue their periodical presentations of our folk and tribal performing fine arts. They are very valuable for anthropologists, scholars, the theatre people and the average man.

This festival at Anandvan was jointly presented by the Maharogi Seva Samiti (of Baba Amte) and the Indian National Theatre Research Centre For The Performing Folk Arts and was sponsored by Hindustan Lever Limited—a very welcome instance of enlightened art patronage by an Industrial House.

BOOK REVIEWS

CONCILIUM—SUICIDE AND THE RIGHT TO DIE edited by J. Pohier and D. Mieth, Edinburgh; T. & T. Clark Limited; pp. 109; £3.75.

THE CONCILIUM is a conglomeration of articles dealing with the changing experience of our relationship with death brought about by socio-cultural modifications and a tremendous advancement in medical sciences calling for a renewed discussion on the right of the individual to have full authority over his own life and death so that he may die with dignity.

The book deals with two kinds of death: Suicide and Euthanasia.

Suicidal acts are of multi-factorial origin, and raise many basic moral, sociological and psychological questions. Suicide is not just an individual but a social phenomenon. Emile Durkheim's analysis claims that suicide varies in inverse proportion to the degree of individual integration. A person commits suicide in a state of isolation. In some of the cases the person contemplating suicide reveals a social disorder and calls for reconstruction of social ties which may be the intense expression of a will to live.

The question we have to ask is if this approach cannot be replaced. The book allows us to understand suicide as a logical step which an individual finds to resolve a problem. It is no longer sufficient to say that people take their own lives out of distress, deception, loneliness and so on. It shows that people also kill themselves in order to change a state of things and to achieve a solution to a problem. Suicide loses something of its mystery because it appears as a logical solution. And it is no longer possible to associate it exclusively with depression or with any state of weakness. Campaigners for the freedom to take one's own life are not arguing that this group of pathological people who doubtless need medical help should be given this right. They are concerned with those who knowingly and willingly administer death to themselves and understand it as a free act. Suicide can neither be commended nor forbidden morally. The proliferation of modern medical resources has resulted in confusion about whether these resources should always be employed, and if so, what criteria should determine their use.

According to Madame Paula Caucanas-Pisier, the factor leading to the appearance of various Societies internationally dealing with the Right to Die is the problem faced by the doctor and the patient suffering from terminal phases of mortal diseases. In countries where legislation is particularly strict on doctors who

agree to their patients' demands, legislation is required to guarantee against possible legal proceedings. Whether active or passive, should euthanasia be practised in a particular case is a medical problem. It is not a question of whether the person who is permitted to die is valuable but whether continued physical life is valuable for him or her. The shift has occurred at the level of relieving suffering. The Declaration on Euthanasia of the congregation for the doctrine of the faith exceeds its own biological usefulness and can become so severe as to cause the desire to remove it at any cost.

It is further reflected in the following words of Pope Pius XII and Pope John Paul II as quoted by *Concern for Dying*, an Educational Council in New York, U.S.A. Said Pope Pius XII: "The removal of pain and consciousness by means of drugs when medical reasons suggest it is permitted by religion and morality to both doctor and patient even if the use of drugs will shorten life".

And Pope John Paul is quoted as saying:

"When inevitable death is imminent in spite of the means used it is permitted in conscience to take the decision to refuse forms of treatment that would only secure a precarious and burdensome prolongation of life so long as the normal care due to the sick person in similar cases is not interrupted".

Death is good for those individuals for whom physical life is irreversibly deprived of the potential for meaningful human relationships even at a minimal level. Thus, if discontinuance of all types of life support measures is in the best interest of the patient, such course of action does appear to be justified.

It would be a good move on the part of Christian ethics not to treat any act as absolutely and universally good or bad in itself in an abstract sense, but to inquire into its context, the possibilities available to the person who did it, not its circumstances but what is signified deep down.

—Ishwar Behl

THE TROUBLE MAKERS: DISSENT OVER FOREIGN POLICY 1792-1939 by A. J. P. Taylor; Penguin Books; pp. 200.

READING English history is an inexhaustible source of enjoyment. Many books about long or brief periods have been accepted as classics, works of literary power of great charm with a wide and lasting appeal. The English tradition of well-written history has been carried down to our own time.

The book under review deals with dissent over

British foreign policy. It takes up the period between 1792-1939. It is divided into six chapters and contains the Ford lectures on English history given by the author early in 1956. The Dissenters had always played an important part in domestic British politics. Professor Taylor emphasises their role in foreign policy as well.

Personal factors did much to determine British policy. The British nation has been a divided nation. Dissent is not to be confused with the party arguments between Liberals and Conservatives. The Dissenters were Radicals, not good party men who merely wanted an alternative government. The aim of the Dissenters in 1876 was to capture the Liberal Party through the instrumentality of Gladstone, rather than to overthrow the Conservative government. According to the author the Dissenter's foreign policy was a conspiracy, 'conducted behind the backs of the People' (p. 97). It started with jealousy of the Foreign Office.

The Dissenters did not discriminate between the professional diplomatists and 'the governing class'. They held that the party leaders had made a compact to keep foreign affairs free from democratic interference. The 'governing class's' foreign policy was in the Radical view, "essentially aggressive and selfish" (p. 99). All Radicals held that only the governing classes benefited from foreign policy. Foreign affairs provided the aristocracy with jobs.

It was Imperialism which produced the change. In the later years of the 19th century British history was punctuated by petty and major wars outside Europe—Egypt in 1882 and afterwards, Angra Peguena in 1884, Spain in 1893, the Kruger telegram in 1896, Fashoda in 1898, the Boer war in 1899. The balance of power seemed forgotten. Financiers provided the driving force in foreign policy. The Boer war was a capitalist war. Just after the Boer war a galaxy of dissenting writers of literary distinction viz., J. A. Hobson, Norman Angell, H. N. Brailsford, Lowes Dickinson put the discussion on foreign policy on an elevated plane.

According to the author the Dissenters challenged the immediate as well as the remoter causes of the Great War. Opposition to the war recovered its moral force after the Bolshevik Revolution. Before 1917 the Dissenters had been sane and rational, but they had been battling against the moral current. The Russian revolution, the Austrian peace offer and finally the publication by the Bolsheviks of the so-called secret treaties, branded the supporters of the war as cynical and imperialist. Even Wilson's Fourteen Points, in the view of the author, did not restore the moral superiority of the war-makers; for the British

and even more the French government were accused of planning to evade them—an accusation which swelled during the actual peace—making later.

The twenty years of peace from 1918 to 1939 began with an attempt to adapt the machinery of international relations to what was commonly, though not universally, regarded as a great change in its functions. Some thought that defects in the system of diplomacy were to blame for the occurrence of war; others believed that modern industry and transport had linked the different parts of the world so intimately and the war had drawn their mutual dependence so close that they needed a new center of negotiation if not of government. The League of Nations grew from compromises between these and other conflicting opinions. In operation it inevitably moved from compromise to compromise.

Taylor's book is fascinating history and an indispensable guide to the understanding of historical roots of British foreign policy.

—B. N. Mehrish

THE ECO-VOTE: PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES AND GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT by Digvijay Singh; Prentice Hall of India; 1985; pp. 144.

ENVIRONMENTAL conservation is an idea which boasts of a long and chequered history with its roots going back to the earliest human societies. However, the dominant tradition prevailing in the West and foisted upon the East by the colonial link has been concerned with the subjugation and control of nature. Thus, material progress in the West was wrested out of the environment indiscriminately without any thought given to the imbalance created in the surrounding eco-system. This state of affairs continued as long as mankind was employed in simple agrarian and animal-rearing pursuits assured by a plentiful supply of land and natural resources. The onslaught of industrialization destroyed the age-old harmony between man and nature by creating varied and insistent demands for water, raw materials, and waste disposal facilities which sorely tested the environment's carrying capacity. Today, the culmination of that trend, characterized by widespread air and water pollution, scarcity of natural resources and defoliation has confronted our planet with the possibility of resource depletion. And in spite of the worldwide consensus on the need to protect the environment, the ecology movement has faced an uphill struggle because many

nations do not wish to limit their economic growth within the accepted parameters.

Digvijay Singh considers himself amply qualified to discuss the ecological crises facing the world because he had personally witnessed the disappearance of vast natural assets in the State of Wankaner in Gujarat during his formative years. Besides his illustrious family background, Singh can vaunt his experience gained during his tenure as Union Deputy Minister for Environment. He is the holder of a Masters' Degree from the University of Cambridge which achievement has sharpened his perceptions on the nature of the environmental problems confronting humanity. However, Singh is less of a writer than a polemicist because his work is meant to arouse the sleeping public and its elected representatives through slogans, frequent repetition and fervent appeals. Nevertheless, he succeeds in outlining a highly subjective scheme to halt further degradations on the global environment.

Digvijay Singh points out that all human activity is grounded in selfishness and short-term gain. Human society is interested in fighting poverty, curbing crime, and reducing consumption because these pursuits serve its own ends. The environmental movement is the only concern that surpasses immediate gain and narrow self-interest. Man is only one part of the ecosystem and he has no right to dominate the environment because other living species have just as much right to survive and breed. By monopolizing natural resources, man has alienated himself from his natural habit and committed a great injustice upon other living species. With the gradual depletion of his resource base, man is pushing against the limits set by nature and the "spaceship" Earth.

In tracing the background of the ecology movement, Singh describes the first sustained effort to draw global attention to the problems of the environment which resulted in the United Nations Conference on Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972. With a representation of nearly one hundred and thirteen countries (including India), this conference highlighted the divergent concerns of the developing versus the developed countries. While most developing nations were more concerned about the problems of disease, hunger, and mere survival, they lent a willing ear to the environmental issues raised at the Conference. An Action Plan was drawn up and the 5th of June was declared as World Environment Day. Shortly thereafter, the establishment of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) was successfully put to vote in the U.N. General Assembly and Nairobi was selected as its headquarters. Other U.N. agencies that soon took part in the ecology movement included UNESCO,

FAO, WHO, and UNFPA. The Stockholm Conference also resulted in grass roots activism by non-governmental organizations which role was soon officially recognized.

Digvijay Singh's work is an appeal to all parliamentarians to become more aware and be involved in ecological matters. Only legislators can develop the political will to popularize conservation and actively engage the masses in the protection of scarce flora and fauna. The highlight of his book is an imaginary conversation between a legislator and his constituent where the former succeeds in persuading the latter to abandon the practice of felling trees and breeding a large family. Singh expects, somewhat naively, that all legislators will emulate his imaginary hero and take up the challenge to defend their countries' natural wealth. His message is succinctly phrased in a few lines.

"If a political party is not committed to environmental issues, the least it can do is to refrain from making concessions and compromising with environmental policies and programs...."

Environmental issues are national issues and not negotiable by any political party.... This is the message for the enlightened legislators of tomorrow."

—Kamal Wadhwa

OUR PEOPLE: OUR POLITICS (in Telugu) by Yelamanchili Sivaji; Chetana Publications, Guntur A.P.; pp. 800; Rs. 150.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI in his collection of articles on a number of social, political and economic issues appropriately titled "Our People: Our Politics," discusses a wide ranging variety of issues, from 'the city buses of Guntur' at one end of the spectrum to 'the rape of Czechoslovakia' and 'Centre-State relations' at the other.

Dr. Sivaji has the uncanny knack of organising his material in such a way that he does not miss the woods for the trees. Even while taking care of detail, the overall picture presented by him is not lost on the reader. Dr. Sivaji is at his best when he turns chatty in presenting his views which he does often enough.

Discussing nearly 170 topics running to about 800 printed pages is in itself truly staggering. But when you consider the amount of home work and research that must have gone into the shaping of the articles, you can appreciate the hard work that has gone into producing this volume.

Introducing the book Dr. Sivaji does not mince words when he says that in getting to know things, in analysing matters and understanding them in proper perspective the common run of people are indeed ahead of the professional politicians.

P. G. Wodehouse in one of his novels referring to a character says rather derogatorily, 'there is religion in him'. In most politicians and political analysts of today one would find either the religion of the kind that Wodehouse mentioned or an utterly despicable opportunism. Both are dangerous trends which, if not curbed, would soon reach a point of no return in polluting the political, social and economic ecology of the nation.

Going through the series of articles one finds that Dr. Sivaji has neither the 'religion' nor the opportunism referred to above. He gives the feeling that he has an open mind and can easily tolerate an opposite point of view. Under the broad heading 'Emergency' Dr. Sivaji has discussed his arrest and release. While narrating the events of those days he tries to analyse and look at them from the outside like a surgeon at an operating table. Even though himself victim there is neither rancour nor any residuary illwill. This is also evident when one reads, 'Bansilal in court'.

Towards the end of the collection in an article entitled 'Then and Now' Dr. Sivaji discusses the general atmosphere that prevailed during the days of the freedom movement and that which prevails today.

Dr. Sivaji bewails that in the political situation in India today, appreciating the goodness of the other has become a rare commodity. Even if one finds points for admiration in a rare case, there are others who immediately choose to denigrate by alleging 'undesirable' qualities.

One cannot agree with Dr. Sivaji more and one is reminded of Guruzada's lines in a poem that 'the demon of jealousy has eaten into the vitals of our nation' and we lost the quality of appreciating another by sheer disuse of the faculty.

This reviewer does not see eye to eye with Dr. Sivaji on a few of the topics discussed by him. Even then one cannot but admire the ring of sincerity and honesty that comes out loud and clear. He has also no use for outright and unbridled condemnation.

Another impression that one gets after going through the book is the tenor of robust optimism that marks its pages.

—M. Symala Rao

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THE NEHRUS: MOTILAL AND JAWAHARLAL by B. R. Nanda; Oxford University Press, New Delhi; Pp. 357; Rs. 70.

THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS was a hundred years old last December; its centennial celebrations which began on May 6 also happened to be the birth anniversary of Pandit Motilal Nehru who was a key figure in the national freedom movement in the nineteen twenties. A biography of such an important personality by Shri B. R. Nanda was first published by George Allen & Unwin Ltd., in 1961, at the time of his birth centenary. The book under review is a reprint.

It is a two-in-one biography because the author while going through the original sources including Motilal's own papers found it impossible to understand and interpret Motilal's life without dealing in detail with the ideas and activities of his son. Thus while describing the father, the son is also described and hence the title. Motilal occupied a place next to Gandhiji in India's political history in the early twenties; his son proved even greater than him by his achievements during the latter's life-time and ultimately becoming Gandhiji's heir. The story of the Nehru family is closely linked with the story of the Indian National Congress, it runs parallel to the latter and at times gets merged into it.

The author narrates vividly the birth of the Indian National Congress, the split in the party between Moderates and Extremists, the Home Rule Movement, the Punjab tragedy and Motilal's fateful plunge into the national movement. So also Motilal's role as the opposition leader in the Central Legislative Assembly and Jawaharlal's evolution as a champion of independent India. The political clashes and emotional bonds between father and son are described graphically. And in doing this the author gives a very coherent, incisive and gripping survey of India's political history for seventy years from 1861 to 1931.

Analyzing the careers of both father and son the author writes that both played and occupied different roles in the national freedom struggle. But their lives were inter-linked with each other in such a way that one influenced the other. In spite of their differences, there was an emotional bond between them.

Pointing out the contrast between them the author writes: "... their temperamental and intellectual differences were already apparent. Motilal was practical, confident, optimistic; Jawaharlal was academic, introspective, diffident, Motilal saw the world as it was without any illusions; Jawaharlal had a tendency towards abstraction, a disposition to seek a shape for

life from within himself. Motilal's reading was utilitarian, usually related to the job in hand: he had one of the largest private libraries of law books in India. To Jawaharlal reading was not only an exquisite pleasure, but a key to those immeasurable realms of knowledge the existence of which he daily perceived; his intellectual appetite was insatiable" (pp. 118-119). These difference in turn made the political partnership between the two more remarkable.

The greatest quality of Motilal, according to Gandhiji, was "Love of his son" and his love for the country was "derived from his love for Jawaharlal". He had no ambition other than for his son and his son's ambitions were for the country. It was this "love of his son" which ultimately urged Motilal, besides many other factors, to give up in 1920 his legal practice and all the luxuries for the national cause. This in turn became a symbol of political sacrifice in the eyes of the Indian public. He contributed a great deal to the national movement as he had many things to offer. He was a true secularist in his outlook as he was a product of intermingling of Aryan, Moghul and European cultures. He was a great parliamentarian, and he, with his Swaraj Party, laid the foundation of the representative form of government in India.

The book is mainly based on the study of original and unpublished sources, the Nehru family papers, confidential official records, the Gandhi and Sapru papers. The author was the Director of the Nehru Museum and Library for several years and this was in an ideal position to do so. The book makes interesting reading especially for students of modern Indian history and politics for its simple and lucid language, for clarity and detailed information. Fine printing, an attractive get-up and the moderate price are other plus points of the book.

—Kunjbala Modi

In an article on how India and China are taking to the capitalist road, the *Economist* finds many positive signs for India's future economic growth. Among them is the fact that "India now has a prime minister who failed to get a degree at Cambridge and was not Chairman of the local Fabian Society"

Sunday Observer, December 29

THE SOUTH-WEST MONSOON HAS WITHDRAWN. A FIRST VOLUME OF SONNETS by Thomas Gay; Writers Workshop, Calcutta; Pp. 45; Rs. 40 (Hardback) Rs. 25 (Flexiback).

THOUGH WRITTEN mostly within the last decade and a half, the sonnets in this book maintain a distance from the characteristic obscurity of much modern verse. If they disappoint it is because they lack the complex themes and attitudes which have enriched the literary life of the twentieth century.

Mr. Gay's collection is light-weight. The first thing one notices on reading it is the familiar Indian world from which the material is drawn. "The Retreat, Ahmedabad," "Politician", "Wedding" and several others express feelings and describe settings which are commonplace from the Indian readers point of view.

Born in England (1905), Gay has lived in India for over fifty years, and has made himself at home here. He has written stories, articles and book reviews for various Indian newspapers and magazines. The note on him informs us that "He has translated books and poems from Marathi..."

Taken collectively, the poems make persistent use of nostalgia. The feeling of loss is often intense, as in "Mourning the Loved One" but surprisingly optimistic in the book's title poem.

Notable in these sonnets is the poet's attitude to Indian women. They are seen as martyrs. I quote from "Wedding".

"This is her Day of Days. She sits—how fair!
In rich brocaded sari's heavy billows, Red *kum-kum*
in the parting of her hair, Cheeks red at the
whispered teasing of her fellows"

And this is how it all ends:

"At last—the Accident, the toppled stove, The
screaming torch, the murdered Suicide?"

The lovers and husbands in these poems are either violent men or failures.

Gay loves structural vigour and the formalities of verse-making. Unfortunately, his wisdom is beyond rescue. It is archaic and out of tune with the poetry as well as the prose of our time.

"Know you what means it to grow old"

And

"Look not to what they've done, these men I made"
are two examples of Gay's outdated language.

There is a degree of social consciousness in Gay's sonnets. "Conqueror", "Poverty" and "Two Women" are effective comments on Indian realities. The poet is indifferent to style and sophistication, and wants to get his message directly, without fuss, so to speak. "Conqueror" is about the ambitions of a single individual which turns millions into cannon-fodder.

"Great Conqueror! If you had not been born,
How many men had lived!"

"Two Women" focusses on the callous behaviour of the rich to the poor.

Gay's sonnets may be admired only for their sense of involvement with and closeness to our everyday experiences.

—Deepika Maurya

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WOMEN IN POVERTY: TYRANNY OF THE HOUSEHOLD. Edited by Devaki Jain and Nirmala Bannerji; Shakti Books; New Delhi; 1985; Pp. 178; Rs. 125.

THIS book is a collection of twelve essays on women in indigent households where there is a constant battle for survival due to insufficient resources and consequently where women and female children remain neglected. This of course is in contrast to middle class families. The essays are divided into four parts, the first dealing with inequalities and handicaps within the households, the second with women in employment, the third with the labour market and the household and the last with the problems of collecting reliable data on women's activities in these households.

The first two essays in part one are the findings of a survey done in the villages of West Bengal and Bangladesh respectively. They point out the sex-wise inequalities within a household in health-care and in access to individual consumption; they reveal that there is an in-built bias in the cultural values of the families and that even general welfare schemes like the land reforms programme introduced in Kuchli do not alter the intra-family sex bias in nutrition. The third paper demonstrates that women as a whole engage in back-breaking labour in scrounging for the fast disappearing energy resources, which on the one hand heavily tells upon their health. But at the same time they have very little access to nutritionally valuable food, these being gobbled up by the other sex. There is a crying need for emphasizing these to be made available to them in any grand framework for development. The last paper analyses households where women are the heads of families and indisputably agrees that these are dogged by handicaps in their quest for resources for their very bone survival.

The two studies in part two dealing with women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes and women in employment in the districts of Karnataka respectively, indicate how National and State programmes for economic development for the backward classes and regions do not benefit the women of the groups concerned for whom they are intended. Most of them are unaware of the existing programmes.

The two papers in part three deal with the extent of sex-wise discrimination in the labour market. There are variations across regions in the field of agriculture and these arise because of agricultural variations in taboos on women's work. Also the estimation of their domestic work and its value tends to influence their worth in the labour market as well.

We need more of scientifically organised information

regarding the activities of women; this we need urgently and part four concentrates on methodological problems relating to the collection of data on women. A paper in this section points out that the work done by women (absolutely vital but always unpaid) in the homes for the benefit of its members is not listed at all as work done. And this in the very Census and National Sample Survey (N.S.S.) inquiries! In this respect the N.S.S. has a more inclusive list of activities—but even here only those activities that have an exchange or market value qualify to be included as work, neglecting their valuable contribution to the national well-being. This evidently is the result of a built-in bias in our social values.

The book is indeed valuable in as much as it throws light on the inadequate recognition and low evaluation of women's role which becomes the chief cause for the gender-based inequality exercised in poor households.

The papers in part four suggest alternative methods of data collection for evaluation of women's work and help break the barriers of perceptions and attitudes that have aided the enhancement of women's discrimination. The book deserves a prominent place in the literature on Women's Studies.

—Rosbeh Bilimoria

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