

A QUARTERLY OF LIBERAL IDEAS

Freedom First

April 1988
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Violence, Civilization and Democratic Values

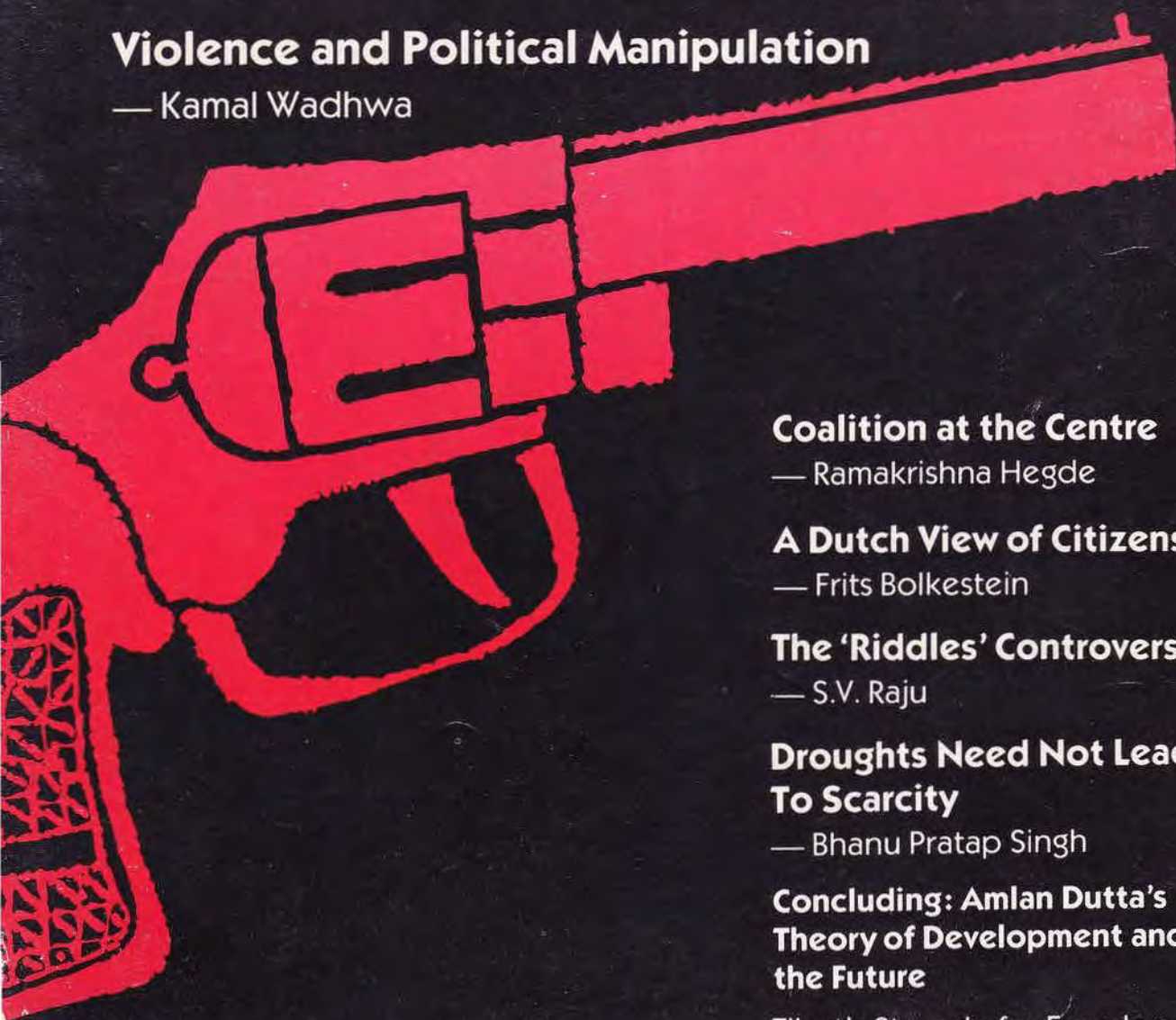
— A.N. Dalal

The Roots of Violence in India's Polity

— Louella Lobo Prabhu

Violence and Political Manipulation

— Kamal Wadhwa



Coalition at the Centre

— Ramakrishna Hegde

A Dutch View of Citizenship

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The 'Riddles' Controversy

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Droughts Need Not Lead To Scarcity

— Bhanu Pratap Singh

Concluding: Amlan Dutta's Theory of Development and the Future

Tibet's Struggle for Freedom

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Dear Reader

While the world watches Communist China's attempts to modernise by taking halting steps towards economic liberalisation (if such a thing is possible in a totalitarian system), not enough attention is being paid to the tightening of China's grip over Tibet. Tibetans are already a minority in their own country, they are being killed in large numbers and their nation is being systematically parcelled out in bits to neighbouring Chinese provinces. In our own small way we wish to prod our people's conscience to the travails of a neighbouring people (pages 5 & 6).

We won't be saying anything new when we observe that violence in India is escalating. On the back cover is a map of freedom which shows India among those totally free. This freedom is today very much "under siege" having to contend not only with violence engineered by a variety of vigilantes groups – political, cultural and religious but also State violence in more subtle forms. Dr. A.N. Dalal, Mrs. Louella Lobo Prabhu and Kamal

Wadhwa analyse the growing menace. While on the subject of violence we also take a look at the 'Riddles' controversy which generated much heat and avoidable violence and thought that in addition to some background information you might welcome an extract from the late Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's book.

From Holland comes a contribution from that eminent Liberal Dr. Frits Bolkestein on the Dutch view of citizenship. Readers will, we are sure, agree that that is also the views of liberals everywhere.

We are happy to carry the text of a well thought out talk by Karnataka Chief Minister Mr. Ramakrishna Hegde in which he avers that a coalition government at the Centre is possible and can work given certain basic pre-conditions.

We acknowledge our debt to *The Statesman* for Mr. Masani's comments.

We invite readers to write to us on what they think of the journal now in its third year as a Quarterly.

Contents

April 1988
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<i>Of Cabbages & Kings</i>	3
Milovan Djilas – 'A Virtual Unperson'	
Closing India	
Of Pigs, Mongooses and Bed Bugs	
South Korea's 'Free Enterprise'	
<i>Tibet Struggles for Freedom</i>	5
<i>On Violence</i>	
Violence, Civilization and Democratic Values	A.N. Dalal 7
The Roots of Violence in India's Polity	Louella Lobo Prabhu 9
Violence and Political Manipulation	Kamal Wadhwa 15
The 'Riddles' Controversy	S.V. Raju 17
A Dutch View of Citizenship	Frits Bolkestein 19
Coalition at the Centre	Ramakrishna Hegde 23
The Masani Viewpoint	Minoo Masani 27
The Theory of Development and the Future	Amlan Dutta 30
<i>The Rural Perspective</i>	
Droughts Need Not Lead to Scarcity	Bhanu Pratap Singh 35
<i>Profiles of Indian Liberals</i>	
Karsondas Mulji	Kunjibala Modi 37
<i>From the Foreign Press</i>	41
Privatising Marx	
Soviet Charisma – The Wish and the Reality	
Democracy through Olympics	
Wole Soyinka – Interpreter of African Consciousness	Padma Srinivasan 45
<i>Book Reviews</i>	47
Communal Violence in India	
Today's American: How Free?	
Common Cause: Lobbying in the Public Interest	
Women of India – An Annotated Bibliography	
Leadership for the Indian Manager	
Saranam – A Novel of Refuge	

**Freedom
First**
A Quarterly of Liberal Ideas

WITH MANY VOICES

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

Nothing causes more hilarity among educated Indians than the spectacle of politicians like Bhagat and Tytler paying lip service to Gandhian ideals of poverty and honesty in public life

Edward Behr, *Encounter*, January 1988

Throughout history humans have lived with perils over which there seemed little control — stronger creatures, hostile elements, mysterious diseases. One by one such threats have been tamed and replaced by one of our own making (air pollution).

Noel Grove, *Span*, March 1988

How wonderful it is to no longer have to pretend to be a socialist in order to be considered patriotic.

Tavleen Singh, *Express Magazine*, March 13

As in life so also in death Varadhabhai proved yet again that crime pays...like nothing else.

The Sunday Observer, January 10

Once upon a time, cricketers accepted umpires' wrong decisions without question. But that was when sports was a game, wasn't it.

The Economist, December 12

If violence on the streets leads to violence in society generally, an increase in the depiction of lovemaking on TV might result in more tenderness and more fun in the nation's bedrooms.

Philip Noel, *Listener*, Sept. 24, 1987

It is a curse of the leisure class that can afford to go to the end of the earth to dump its orange peel.

Quoted in the *Times of India*, January 15

Blessed are the young for they shall inherit the national debt

India Today, February 29

Do not talk about yellow journals. If they attack MLA's and Ministers I declare they are all yellow journals. They have no character or morality.

Paul Hector Pandian, *Aside*, February 16

Economists are a highly overrated tribe. Europe and America have between them more Nobel Prize economists than Japan, and look at the mess their economies are in.

Jay Dubashi, *The Sunday Observer*, January 3

If Richard Nixon had to reckon with a Justice Thakkar and/or a Justice Natarajan he would have gone scot free.

A.G. Noorani, *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, January 3

Solzhenitsyn is a Khomeini. He is the enemy. I don't want such freedom.

Georgi Andjaparidze, Director of the Soviet literary publishing firm Khudozhestvennaya Literatura.

The Asian Wall Street Journal, February 19

Needless to say that I shall have nothing to do with these funsters. I hope they will have plenty of Pepsi-Cola on their way to Dandi.

N.G. Gore (Commenting on the Dandi march to commemorate Gandhi's Dandi March launching the Salt Satyagraha, *The Indian Post*, March 13

Soviet citizens squandered eight billion working days a year looking for goods in short supply.

Sarah Traxler, *Spectator*, Oct. 31, 1987

We have enough religion to hate one another but not enough to love one another

Nani Palkhivala, *Hindustan Times*, August 5

A perusal of admission records in Kerala's schools may lead one to an interesting, though erroneous, conclusion that most births in the state occur in the month of May

The Week, February 7

OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

Milovan Djilas – 'Virtual Unperson'

This is how seventy-seven year old Milovan Djilas describes himself today. He has been described as a phantom of the past. For the first time since the 1950s, after thirty-four long years, he has been interviewed by a journal and this too by a student magazine! Perhaps he is the only important surviving member who had direct dealings with Stalin but he is almost virtually under arrest for he was denied the right to travel abroad (until this year); has no friends from his active political days; his books in his native language are not even in print, and in the streets of Belgrade only a very few give him a nod of recognition.

It was earnings from his Western royalties that helped him buy his modest flat. His *New Class* might well be regarded as one of the most important political tracts published from Europe in this century and it did lead to a considerable search of heart among committed socialists and leftists and gave rise to furious debates.

Obscurity might be the lot of most people but deliberate ostracism can be galling particularly for a man of the sensibilities that Djilas is.

In his interview to the student magazine reproduced in the *Hindu* of September 25, 1987 Djilas comments *inter alia* on communism today:

"There is the same crisis of the system from Belgrade to Beijing. Changes of substance are not yet in sight anywhere, not in Russia, let alone China. Without radical reform, he says, the Soviet leader, Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev will ultimately fail.

"Mr. Gorbachev still has to show he contemplates more than reform within the system – i.e. simply to improve it – instead of reform of the whole system which is essential. He talks only in general terms about improving democracy, but nothing specific about broadening it, by admitting new ideas

and approaches. Yet, without that – as we see increasingly in Yugoslavia – there can be no true reform."

Mr. Djilas nonetheless sees Mr. Gorbachev as "something very positive" in Soviet development, bringing a "new phase" of tremendous importance to the West and the world at large. "But remember that, though Mr. Gorbachev is both younger, more dynamic, and flexible than his predecessors, he faces the same problems – traditional Russian mentality, the habit and inertia generated by an enormous bureaucracy and the highly closed nature of the system."

RS

Closing India

Some opposition parties efforts to close India, *Bharat Bandh* in other words, were by most newspaper accounts, only partially successful. In states where opposition parties are in power the Bandh was 'total'. In other words in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and West Bengal the ruling parties blessed the closing of India in their states!

What do these Bandhs try to prove? Simply the extent of political clout the respective political parties have. They are essentially an exercise in political gamesmanship. The main demands of the 15th March Bandh sponsors were the ouster of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, and the holding of general elections before the due date which is the end of next year, with some economic demands such as arresting the rising cost of living, corruption in high places etc. thrown in for good measure.

Bandhs are an expression of impotent anger. They are actually counter-productive. If many stayed at home it was more out of a fear of getting hurt, or stranded on their way to work or being subjected to harassment by the organisers' cadres.

Ask any man in the street what he thought of Bandhs and I bet nine out of ten will denounce them. Bandhs no longer evoke spontaneous response. There is no sense of solidarity and sympathy. Only one of disgust.

Just as the failure of a Bandh does not imply support for the party against whom a Bandh is directed, it is no indicator either of support for the sponsors. In both cases neither suffers. Only the people are put to avoidable harassment.

'Hartal', a Gandhian legacy which evoked voluntary participation in large measure during the days of the freedom movement and even during the infamous 'emergency', and now rechristened 'Bandh' (an ugly word), has become a useless weapon.

What did the March 15 'Bharat Bandh' achieve? According to newspaper reports the death of seven people and injuries to 250 in various parts of the country not to mention loss of wages and losses in production. Will it influence government policies in any way? Not the slightest. And yet we shall have our politicians doing this time and again for, they are bankrupt in the realm of ideas. The sad fact is that after 40 years of freedom the wisdom of our politicians is in inverse proportion to that of our people

SVR

"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



"Gazetting" the Press

In the battery of words used in effectively throttling newspapers a new word that the Asians have contributed to the language of Milton and Mill is "gazetting". The Singapore government under the tutelage of its energetic Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew has had recourse to "gazetting" journals and newspapers that are critical of its government and administration. *The Far Eastern Economic Review* is the latest of the journals to be "gazetted" by this act. The local circulation has been reduced from 9000 to 500; *Time* magazine has had its circulation lopped off from 18,000 to 2,000 and *The Asian Wall Street Journal* from 5,000 to 400. A similar fate befell *Asiaweek*.

Those Singaporeans who want to read the "gazetted" journals will have to go to Johore to buy them. This is certainly not good for Singaporeans who have been avid readers of these journals.

Like South Korea, Singapore has lured many free enterprise enthusiasts, but in both places freedom has always been precarious. Till the present century, democracy and fundamental freedoms have accompanied an open free market economy. But in the present century it is undergoing different manifestations — at a time when the ordered economies of the communist world are talking of Glasnost!

Of Pigs, Mongooses and Bed-bugs

Sri Lanka's experiment in snuffing out drug peddling is amusing in a world that is otherwise grim. In the last few years Colombo has become an important entrepot for drugs to be smuggled in and out of the country and the country has a serious drug problem. The authorities got nine German Shepherds to sniff luggage at the airport. They were efficient but the costs were fabulous. They had to be kept in airconditioned kennels and in special vehicles; a special cook had to be engaged to prepare "dog chow". Also while each dog cost \$150 the salary of the trainers was just a third of that!

Most obnoxious was the assault on Muslim sensibilities which regard the

dog only next to the pig in uncleanness. And no self-respecting Muslim would like either his person or his luggage to be sniffed by these, far from clean, animals.

The government has now pensioned off the dogs and resorted to another *Swadeshi* rodent, the mongoose, to sniff at the loathsome drugs. Obviously there are several advantages. They are tropical and do not need airconditioned homes. They are clever and can easily be trained. In fact a couple of them Tiki and Nohi have emerged as experts in tracking hidden drugs. But their presence amidst crowded air passengers waiting in the clearance queue may not be reassuring. For one thing they can bite — in fact all the ten mongooses in the training programme bit the trainers several times. And the tourists bitten in the feet are not likely to regard this as a rodent's way of saying "namaste"! Also they can climb over people and scare the life out of them.

Meanwhile the Israelis are training bed-bugs to detect heroin and the Germans, pigs that will be drug-sensitive and ferret out drugs.

We are in for exciting experience — that is those who belong to the jet set. They will have more interesting things to talk about besides places and exotic foods!

South Korea's 'Free Enterprise'

Many of us disillusioned with the varieties of socialism practised by our governments at different levels have looked up to those systems where free enterprise seems to work so excellently. South Korea has remained an important beacon to many a country that pulled itself up by its bootstraps out of the ruin that the war wrought on that country. Its clean roads, the spick and span towns and the new cars do proclaim a miracle. But some truths have rubbed off some of the gilt. It appears that police haul up all battered cars and "round up beggars so that passers by are not offended by the sight." Borrowings from the international market amount to a whopping \$40,000 million dollars making it the fourth largest debtor in the world!

Its free enterprise is again a cover, for the fifteen large "giant conglomerates called Chaebols" resembling the Japanese giants and which are supposed to be capitalistic but are all under the total and rigid control of the Ministry of Finance and the Economic Planning Board; the Board decides what should be produced, whether it should be for internal consumption, or for export. On directions from the Board, the Chaebols produce what they are told to, and the government decides as to who is doing well and calls the others to stop.

This is a "free enterprise system" not known anywhere else! While this is something that will intrigue votaries of free enterprise, there are other manifestations that are definitely obnoxious. The rural economy is so manipulated that people migrate to towns to labour in the factories for a low wage. While the wages are low the prices are almost European and the conditions of work are straight from the pages of Dickens. Half a million industrial accidents is the record for a year. Women workers are not only paid but are often employed for 15 hours on a working day and "slaving for 36 hours is not unknown". Employers often hire goons to physically assault working women who organize strikes. It is said that the only alternative for them is to turn to prostitution and even this is overcrowded with a million women of easy virtue in Seoul. I do not know of the census in Bangkok or Hong Kong.

The press till recently was manipulated and directed as to what news to highlight and what to suppress. The government does not frown on employers having their own computer blacklist of troublesome employees — those who form unions. In the poorer quarters of each city a government official (who is unpaid) has a list of people and their addresses and those who move out — surely for surveillance and not for honourable purposes!

RS

I cannot give you the formula for success, but I can give you the formula for failure — which is: try to please everybody.

— Herbert Bayard Swope

Tibet Struggles For Freedom

Text of Statement adopted at a Seminar convened by the Hindustani Andolan and the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom on February 27 in Bombay

When, during the aftermath of the Second World War, the Colonial Powers were withdrawing from their colonies; even as India became free and was declaring itself a Sovereign Democratic Republic; its northern neighbour Tibet, which had done no country any harm was invaded and occupied by Communist China.

It took the Chinese a decade to crush the poorly armed but valiant people culminating in the suppression of a national uprising in which over 87,000 Tibetans were killed. Despite this the resistance continues.

To our eternal shame our Government equivocated and finally acquiesced to Chinese hegemony over a deeply religious and peace loving people. Some national honour was salvaged when the then Government of India provided shelter to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and thousands of his countrymen who had no other option but to flee the land of their birth.

It is however regrettable that the

Government of India has not permitted the Dalai Lama a Government-in-Exile. This seminar calls upon the Government to permit such a Government-in-Exile.

It may be recalled that just a month before he died Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel had warned Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru of Communist China's intentions and the geopolitical consequences of the disappearance of a buffer State. His were prophetic words for, in less than three years after their subjugation of Lhasa, the Communist Chinese invaded India.

This Seminar, even while welcoming His Holiness the Dalai Lama's "Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet" as an act of great statesmanship which the Chinese have so far chosen to ignore hopes that the struggle for the independence of the Tibetan people will, in the end, succeed and peace and tranquility will once again return to Tibet. History shows us that however mighty an imperialist power, it is nothing when faced with the struggle of a suppressed people's

love for their motherland.

Meanwhile the Seminar submits that immediate and primary consideration be given to the physical security and democratic rights of the Tibetan people and assures China that China's initiative to guarantee these rights to the Tibetan people will prove to be a giant step forward in creating goodwill among the Indian people towards the People's Republic of China.

The Seminar pays its humble tribute to the Dalai Lama and to the valiant and peace-loving people of Tibet and expresses its solidarity to them in their continuing struggle against imperialist aggression.

By the end of 1988 the Dalai Lama and his people would have completed 30 years in exile. The Seminar calls upon freedom-loving people and organisations all over the world to observe 1989 as the YEAR OF TIBET and hold meetings, rallies and in other ways to focus attention on this most tragic human problem of the century.

A Report on the Seminar

The Statement published above represents the unanimous view of the participants at the seminar which included Mr. Minoo Masani, Mr. M.V. Kamath, Dr. Aloo Dastur and Mr. R.M. Lala among others. The seminar had the benefit of the views of Mr. Thupten Samphel of the Central Tibetan Secretariat at Dharmshala in Himachal Pradesh.

Mr. Masani who chaired the seminar recalled India's pusillanimous attitude which enabled the Communist Chinese to annex Tibet and resulted in the Chinese invasion of India in 1962. He said that far from supporting Tibet's appeal to the United Nations for help, the then Prime Minister, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru prevented the United Nations from going to Tibet's assistance.

Mr. M.V. Kamath pointed out that today the real problem in Tibet was not so

much the forced occupation of the country by the Chinese Army as much as the problem of getting rid of Chinese settlers who now outnumber the Tibetans in their own country.

Mr. Madhu Mehta drew attention to the fact that the Chinese were deploying short and long range missiles in Tibet and using that country as a dumping ground for nuclear waste, thus threatening the environment of the entire Himalayas and India.

Mr. Thumpton Samphel who was a member of the Fact Finding Mission deputed to Tibet by the Dalai Lama in 1985, explained how the United States had in the fifties dropped weapons to help the struggling Tibetans but how ultimately they betrayed the Tibetans by succumbing to their new found love for

China.

Out of a total Tibetan population of 6 million, 1.2 million Tibetans had been killed in the last 25 years. In any future talks between India and China, the Tibetan question should therefore be included, said Mr. Samphel.

The case for the Tibetans who have been reduced to the status of second class citizens in their own country and to that of a minority is perhaps unprecedented in the annals of world history. No government seems to give the Dalai Lama the importance they give to the PLO and its leader. This is true of our country where we see nothing wrong in officially recognising the PLO while to our shame (like other countries), cold shouldering a genuine religious leader totally dedicated to *ahimsa*.

Chinese Imperialism in Tibet – Some Facts

TIBET – A SOVEREIGN NATION

- Tibet's recorded history began in 127 B.C., but the State was unified and reached its imperial apogee between the 7th and 10th centuries A.D. The country's borders remained largely unchanged from the 10th century until the Communist Chinese invasion.
- Tibet developed relations with all its neighbours, including the Mongols, Nepalese, Manchus, Chinese, British, Russians and Indians.
- For short periods of its history Tibet came under the influence of Mongol Khans, Nepalese Kings, the Manchu Emperors, and the British rulers of India. Tibet never lost its independent statehood, and was never incorporated into any other state, including China.
- Any uncertainty that might have existed about the nature of the country's relationship with the Manchu Empire, was resolved once that empire collapsed in 1911 and the Dalai Lama publicly reasserted Tibet's full independence.
- All important legal studies conclude that Tibet in 1950 was an independent state in law and fact.
- Chinese armies illegally invaded and occupied Tibet by force in 1949/50.

VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- 1.2 million Tibetans (one-sixth of the population) died as a direct result of the Chinese occupation.
- In 1960 the International Commission of Jurists found that genocide was being committed in Tibet and that 16 Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were being violated.
- The U.N. General Assembly passed three Resolutions condemning China for "violations of fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people" and called on China to respect the Tibetan people's rights, including their right to self-determination.
- In an effort to annihilate Tibet's religion and culture, the Chinese systematically destroyed 6254 monasteries and temples: 80% during the "democratic reforms" before 1966, and the remaining 20% during the Cultural Revolution, according to Chinese officials.
- One out of ten Tibetans has been held in prisons or forced labour camps for periods of 10 to 20 years. Most were beaten and tortured. Today 3000 – 4000 Tibetans, including 300 monks, remain in captivity for anti-state activities.
- The Chinese policy of "religious-liberalization," is merely superficial: Tibetans are allowed to rebuild some monasteries, but serious study or teaching of religion is forbidden. Only 10-15 new monks are allowed to enter a monastery each year.
- Forced abortions and sterilization of Tibetan women are common. In Chamdo, Tibet's third largest city, fetuses have been found in storm drains and garbage bins of hospitals.

THE CHINESE MILITARY PRESENCE

With the Chinese occupation of Tibet, Chinese and Indian troops face each other on the Himalayan border for the first time in history. Instead of being separated by a large buffer state, the world's two most populous countries now share a common border – over which serious disputes now exist.

- An estimated 300,000 – 500,000 troops of which 200,000 (15 divisions) are permanently stationed in the Tibet "Autonomous Region", (approximately one soldier for every 10 Tibetans). Intelligence reports estimate that because of this year's increased tension troop strength in the "Autonomous Region" may have been increased to 30 divisions.
- 17 secret radar stations :
- 14 military airfields :
- 5 missile bases (Kongpo Nyitri, Powo Tamo, Rudok, Golmu and Nagchuka)
- At least 8 ICBMs, 70 medium range missiles and 20 intermediate range missiles

Well over half of Tibet's original territory has been appended to the contiguous Chinese provinces with only Central Tibet (U-Tsang) and parts of Eastern Tibet (Kham) remaining as the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region.

The administrative incorporation into China of these vast areas serves to reduce the importance of Tibet, while also splitting the Tibetan population, and accelerating their signification.

POPULATION TRANSFER

The transfer of Chinese to Tibet is reaching alarming proportions. The real fear is that if the present Chinese policy is successful – and indications are that it is – Tibetans will be reduced to a small and insignificant minority in their own country in the same way as the Manchus (35 Chinese to 1 Manchu), the Turkik people (3 to 1) and the Mongolians (5 to 1) have been. The object of this policy is to forcibly "resolve" China's territorial claims over Tibet by means of a massive and irreversible population shift.

7.5 million Chinese now outnumber the 6.0 million Tibetans in Tibet. They are distributed as follows (approximate figures in millions):

- In all major cities the Chinese today outnumber the Tibetans. In Lhasa there are 100,000 Chinese compared to 50,000 Tibetans.
- The transfer has produced a 300% inflation rate and a two-class society sharply divided along racial lines and unprecedented unemployment among Tibetans. In the Lhasa valley, for example, 30,000 Tibetans have lost their jobs to the newly arrived Chinese.

Violence, Civilization and Democratic Values

A.N. Dalal

"Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed
and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is
drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the
worst
Are full of passionate intensity."

W.B. Yeats, *The Second Coming*

On May 11, 1987, an English judge sentenced and convicted soccer hooligans to prison terms of upto ten years for having organised a six-year 'reign of terror' provoking clashes among rival soccer fans who turned English and European stadiums into battlegrounds. The five who were sentenced were described by the judge as "some of the nastiest, most ruthless and most vicious men for whom violence appeared to be a way of life." A few days earlier, in April, communal riots were sparked off in Ahmedabad by a dispute over a decision in a street cricket match. Heated arguments were followed by stone-throwing, knifing, arson and attacks on homes and shops. Five lives were lost and several people were injured.

Obviously, mass-violence, till now restricted to political and social life, has now invaded the world of sports. Phrases such as 'fair play' or 'being a sporting loser,' are now obsolescent.

Violence Innate or Learnt

This rapidly increasing incidence of mass-violence on global, national and local levels raises deeply disturbing questions. Is man violent by nature? Is the desire to hurt, maim and kill others programmed in his genes or is it learnt from the examples and attitudes he sees in society? Most experts today agree that man has only a marginal genetic disposition towards violence. By and large, violence is learned in the same way as other aspects of culture are learned through social conditioning. Frustration and pain play an important

part in the arousal of violence. This is often seen when a crowd of office-goers attacks buses and trains when these are unduly delayed. This may then be followed by an incident which triggers off aggression. Finally, human aggression demands a weapon — a knife, a gun, a missile or even a sharp tongue. Not only does this make violence more certain but it creates a psychological barrier between the aggressor and the object of aggression.

Men learn to be violent due to indirect influences of the mass media especially T.V. and cinema. People spend a great deal of time watching T.V. and absorb its messages which often preach, display and glorify violence. Not all T.V. violence is make-believe. A great deal of real violence is shown in the form of news. Studies in the West have shown the high degree to which T V can desensitize heavy viewers to violence. In recent times, many governments have tried to regulate violence on TV e.g. British Television keeps violent sequences out of its news bulletins before 9 p.m. and the children's News keeps them out altogether. Films too, especially, those frequented by adolescents, reflect a 'glamourisation of barbarism'

If violence is at variance with the norms of civilized behaviour, it is equally incompatible with democratic values which, broadly speaking implies faith in the rule of law, individual freedom and the safeguarding of human rights. It also believes in solving problems through rational discussion and compromise.

with emphasis on sexual gratification and violence e.g. films like Conan the Barbarian, Rocky (I, II, III, IV) and Rambo. For many young minds, violence has a peculiar fascination rather than any abhorrence.



Urban Violence

It is well-known that people behave differently in groups. They are willing to perform acts of violence and aggression that would be abhorrent to them as individuals. Not only are feelings of violence intensified in a group, but action is more likely to follow. Moreover, membership in a group provides people with a sort of anonymity and also legitimises violent action, especially when it is in the service of a cause. The group pressurises the individual to conform to its norms of behaviour, obey its authority, participate in acts of aggression against the objects of its prejudice and hatred. In a group, the individual loses his identity, loses a sense of personal responsibility and self-restraint; in other words he becomes de-individualised.

Is violence the result of adverse socio-economic conditions like degrading poverty or unemployment? Is it an exclusively urban phenomenon, the result of huge, sprawling slums? Are the lumpen masses to blame? None of these questions can be answered in the affirmative. Violence rears its ugly head in the midst of affluence as well as

poverty. The Delhi riots of November 1984 were not organized by the lumpen proletariat but by politicians, some of whom were high up in the Congress hierarchy. In India, communal, linguistic and caste prejudices have to do far more with mass-violence than poverty, unemployment or bureaucratic blundering.

Education and Civilization

In Britain, substantial correlation is seen between the decline of the educational system and a rise in the incidence of barbarism and violence. Much more than increased financial inputs is needed. There is something wrong in creating an educational system solely devoted to useful skills like computer technology or accountancy, when children emerge from schools "devoid of the values and virtues of civilization and civilized behaviour."

This should give our educational policy-makers food for thought. While economic development is the need of the hour, what sort of human beings do we produce? What models of civilized behaviour do we offer the young? While violence and aggression are, at least to some extent, instinctive in both man and beast, civilization is not. It is a product of cultivation, restraint and self-discipline. What a civilized society means in terms of human behaviour has been admirably summed up by Kenneth Clark in his B.B.C. series, 'Civilization.'

"I believe that order is better than chaos, creation better than destruction. I prefer gentleness to violence, forgiveness to vendetta. On the whole I think that knowledge is preferable to ignorance and I am sure that human sympathy is more valuable than ideology. I believe in courtesy, the ritual by which we avoid hurting other people's feelings by satisfying our own egos. And I think we should remember that we are part of a great whole which for convenience we call Nature."

The Revolting Dimensions of Violence

Violence dehumanises both victor and victim. The more it is used the more it dulls the edge of our sensitivity. It becomes commonplace or 'banal' as Hannah Arendt describes it. A classic example of dehumanising the victims is that it is easier to exterminate them was used, by Hitler against the Jews. They were treated like animals, forced

to go unclothed with identifying numbers tattooed on them, sprayed with insecticide and transported in cattle-trains.

Of all forms of violence, the most offensive and abhorrent is violence against the weak, the oppressed, the dispossessed, people who can never retaliate. Such violence is rarely political in nature but is often seen in the social and familial systems. Nevertheless we cannot be indifferent to it. "A pacifism which can see the cruelties only of occasional military warfare and is blind to the continuous cruelties of our social system is worthless." (Mahatma Gandhi).

We have our own indigenous varieties of social violence in India – atrocities on Harijans and landless labourers and cruelty to women and children. In earlier times it took the form of sati and female infanticide. Today we have developed more sophisticated, scientific devices like amniocentesis to eliminate the female embryo before birth. *India Today* of June 15, 1986, carried a report about the Kallar community in Tamil Nadu in which 80% of female babies every year are killed off. What about the violence involved in the exploitation of dowry and bride-burning? Then there is child-labour – children who manufacture matches in Shivkasi or work in glass-blowing factories and other hazardous occupations – millions of starving waifs destined to be mentally retarded or blind because they lack the minimal amount of vitamin A in their diet. Is this not a 'passive' kind of violence which reflects our total insensitivity to the sufferings of our fellow humans?

If violence is at variance with the norms of civilized behaviour, it is equally incompatible with democratic values which, broadly speaking implies faith in the rule of law, individual freedom and the safeguarding of human rights. It also believes in solving problems through rational discussion and compromise. Yet, all democratic societies, at one time or another, have experienced violent upheavals. They all maintain well-equipped police and military forces. Many affluent democracies have huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons enough to destroy the world several times over. Sadly even democratic countries India included, do not always have the clearest record so far as re-

Hooliganism in The House

In case one thought the prize for disgraceful behaviour by members of the legislature should be awarded to Tamil Nadu, the events in the Rajya Sabha on February 23 shows that hooliganism and indiscipline by legislators are not the monopoly of any State but the prized possession of this unfortunate country as a whole.

Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, the Vice President of India, who is also the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, quite reasonably allowed Mr. Uppendra of the Telugu Desam Party to make a reference to developments concerning the Governor in Andhra Pradesh. This provoked certain Congress (I) Ministers and M.Ps. who should have known better, to challenge the presiding authority and indulge in scenes of hooliganism. Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma quite wisely and with self respect, refused to yield to this clamour and stuck to his decision. His action has been endorsed by the former Vice President, Mr. Hidayatullah, who recalls that he also took the same stand as Dr. Sharma many years ago.

The saddest part of this entire incident is that this charade was enacted in the presence of the Prime Minister who sat with a smug smile on his face and without any attempt at controlling his goons. He has distinguished himself by such behaviour earlier. So it is fair to presume that Mr. Rajiv Gandhi is party to the indiscipline and hooliganism in Parliament whenever it suits him personally. What a sad state of affairs for this country! I note that Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's behaviour has been condemned by every editorial in every newspaper I have read and I am glad to note that my good friend Mr. Girilal Jain has joined in this chorus of condemnation which is deserved by the Prime Minister.

It is time to remind Mr. Rajiv Gandhi of an old Biblical saying that "The mills of God grind slow, but they grind exceeding small."

Minoo Masani

spect for human rights is concerned. Reports of Amnesty International show that even in democratic countries many are incarcerated for years without any charge or trial. Torture is widespread; many just disappear after being taken into official custody. Others have been selected and killed by government agents, perhaps in police 'encounters!.'

The Beacon of Non-violence

One of the important lessons of history has been that violence solves no problems but in fact creates many. True, the police and the military have a role to play in suppressing violence and maintaining law and order. But this cannot be the long-term solution to any problem. "An eye for an eye", as Gandhi said, will leave the whole world blind. In fact Gandhi launched the most famous non-violent satyagraha campaigns of the twentieth century. He believed that non-violence was mightier than any weapon of destruction. Like violence, non-violence too is learned and it is possible for strongly motivated human beings to respond peacefully to provocation which would normally trigger violence.

For a long time it was fashionable to attribute violence in post-independence India to Gandhian satyagraha movements. It was said that Gandhi's campaigns were not totally non-violent, that the techniques of satyagraha could be misused for communal and linguistic or other undesirable purposes, that even non-violent mass campaigns could erode the law abiding habit of the citizens and destabilise an elected, democratic government and that even non-violent resistance exercises a kind of psychological compulsion on the opponent. Today, after decades of persistent and escalating violence, many in India are reconsidering Gandhian principles and techniques.

One of the most outstanding movements of non-violent resistance has been that of the Frontier Pathans who were led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan popularly known as the Frontier Gandhi. The Khudai Khidmatgar or Servants of God was founded in 1929 as a social, economic and political movement among the Pathans who, unlike the Indians of the plains, lacked a tradition of *ahimsa* or *tapaśya*. They were used to weapons, most men carried firearms and blood feuds were the order of the day. Yet, under the impact

of Ghaffar Khan, who interpreted Islam as a religion of peace, the movement was totally non-violent and did incalculable good to Frontier society, especially to women.

Another great apostle of non-violence who followed Gandhian techniques and led a peaceful movement of negroes for civil rights in the USA was Martin Luther King. He worked not just for the rights of Negroes but for the integration of the white and black races of America. His famous speech, 'I have a Dream', has a valuable message yet to be woven into our lives. "In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred, — We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence."

"Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force — For many of our white brothers have realised that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. We cannot walk alone."

While violence divides and destroys, non-violence heals and integrates. This

country and this planet are satiated with violence. South Africa, the Lebanon, Iraq, Viet Nam, South America and nearer home, Sri Lanka, the Punjab, Gujarat, Assam, the North East are not just trouble spots on our map. They are our open, festering sores of agony, bloodshed and violence. And we can never hope to end our mutual suffering through more violence or bloodshed or by 'teaching each other a lesson.' This is the time to heal the wounds, to bind the sores, to soothe the sorrows. And we can only do it peacefully, non-violently, realising that none of us can walk alone — neither the Americans nor the Russians, neither Arabs nor Jews, nor Punjabis, Sikhs, Assamese, Tamils or Gurkhas. We must walk together to build a free and self-confident India and a free and integrated world.

We cannot totally eliminate violence as we cannot eliminate evil, both within and outside us. But just as evil can be overcome only by good, violence can be defeated only by non-violence.

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The Roots of Violence in India's Polity

Louella Lobo Prabhu

In the screen version of Morris West's novel, "The Shoes of the Fisherman", a court of Papal theologians, sitting in judgement on the writings of an unorthodox thinker, point to a pre-historic skeleton, with an axe embedded in its skull. As the theologian believes that everything on earth is a manifestation of God, the judges ask whether this act of violence, so concretely preserved in the skeleton they display, is also part of God's design? The accused does not answer — and perhaps no answer is possible, raising as it does, the perennial question of pre-destination and free will; of a supposedly omnipotent creator, who appears to be sleeping when creatures created in His image and likeness destroy each other in sub-

human ways (Hitler and the Jews).

Violence Marks the Birth of Most Polities

The Old Testament itself documents violence in one of its earliest chapters. Cain's murder of Abel, because God, who looked down on their respective sacrifices (for no reason the rationalist can find) blessed the offerings of one brother, and rejected that of the other. Technically, it would have made better sense for God to accept the fruits of the earth, rather than the slaughter of the lamb, involving violence to another species which also he created. The story, or more likely, the allegory may make better sense, if it typifies the perennial conflict between tillers of the earth (settlers)

Violence has always been with us, since the time of the stone-age man clubbed to death and displayed as a museum exhibit illustrating the origins of man. Violence by the State, directly or in abrogating the Rule of Law distinguishes the degree of progress and civilization different nations have reached. India has strayed far from the days and ways of Ashoka and Gandhi

and nomadic peoples who often preyed on them.

Even without reference to Biblical parallels, the thinker Hobbes envisaged the state of Nature as being "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." There is little doubt that violence and the impact of sheer physical might, made people prey on each other within a particular territory on the one hand, and with people outside their hard won territorial space, on the other. No one can identify the precise point in history, when "social contract" regulated the conduct of people in a particular place; of their surrendering their personal freedom, to an individual in the community who laid down the rules for common survival. The Code of Hammurabi, The Ten Commandments, and the Edicts of Ikhnaton are among our earliest codified examples of "social contract". Curiously, these advances from the "State of Nature" are confined to the triangle of the Middle East. The legend of Arthur, as portrayed in the book, *The Once and Future King*, makes him espouse the concept of MIGHT FOR RIGHT. He is credited with first introducing the idea of trial by jury in a procedure based on evidence, abjuring the practice of a physical contest to establish the validity of a disputed claim.

The Roots of Violence in India.

There is in fact no such thing as "The Indian State", till the British created a national identity even by uniting the country against them. India, indeed functioned virtually as two different countries, north and south of the Vindhyas. South of the Vindhyas great southern kingdoms flourished – in comparative peace – rating even upto now, barely a chapter or two in our history books. Indian history – wrongly, no doubt, but in fact – is regarded as the history of Northern India. It exhibits successive waves of violence, beginning with the culture of Mohenjodaro and

Harappa, whose disappearance from the scene has never been satisfactorily explained. Thereafter, Aryans, Greeks, Muslims, and European foreigners descended on India through the North West frontier and from the sea. Each incursion started with violence, though eventually giving way to an assimilation with and into the settled population, itself an amalgam of many racial strains over the years. India, no less than America, is the melting pot of nations: Apart from the Ashokan idyll, which would seem almost like the myths surrounding the Arturian legend (but for concrete documentation in edicts and pillars of stone) India has never been a land of peace and unbroken development. Perhaps that is why the Gandhian legacy has been destroyed less than a half century after his death.

Partition – The First Cause of Violence

As Greece conquered Rome, and Rome itself became the spearhead of an universal Christian culture, Muslim invasions of India started with violence but eventually settled at a viable *modus vivendi*, the difference between the conqueror and conquered being more or less bridged by the "Jeziya", (poll tax) levied on non-Muslims. That Hindus remained in a majority despite centuries of Muslims and Mughal rule, when the British arrived on the scene, suggests that if there was any forced conversion at the point of the sword, it must have been limited and transitory.

It is therefore sad, that when the goal of Independence was in sight, after a prolonged struggle, whose burdens had been carried by Hindus and Muslims, the concept of one-India was promptly abandoned. There was not even a last ditch struggle (except for Gandhi) by persons tired of waiting to assume the leadership of their respective countries. Pakistan, split into two separate entities thousands of miles away. The unnatural configuration finally broke up, forcing India to intervene in the sovereign

affairs of another State, though theoretically committed to peaceful co-existence with its neighbours.

Majority Vs. Minority

As seems to be evident, even in the violent public reactions to the screening of "Tamas", the scars of partition have never faded. Muslims, in particular, suffer from a siege and ghetto complex, despite the constitutional protection offered to them under Articles 25, 29, 30. They have been joined in their feeling of insecurity by the Sikh minority, which was hitherto virtually a sect of Hinduism, but is now emerging with a strong feeling centred round its distinctive social-religious-political-cultural identity. It may certainly be said of the Indian government at different times that our minorities have fared much better than minorities in other countries. However, it looks as though this picture is going to change radically with even the ruling Congress now veering towards religious fundamentalism. The riots in which minorities (be it Muslims or Sikhs) suffer maximum damage; the failure of government to punish culprits clearly identified – indeed its promotion of such persons to higher rank, and multiple offices; its cozening of dubious characters for political gain (Bhindranwale; Subhash Ghising) are straws in the wind, which the minorities perceive with fear. Government *alias* the Ruling Congress is still perceived as the better of worse alternatives, by the minorities. This is rather cold comfort. It may be recalled that though the Election Law makes it an offence for anyone to promote hatred between the communities, the first advertisements of the Congress(I) election campaign, carried references to taxi drivers of a particular community who may be a threat to the safety of the average citizen. Earlier the whole Opposition was branded as anti-national for suggesting that certain parts of the Amritpur Sahib Resolution

may be taken up for consideration. Later, the Punjab Accord among the achievements cited by those who were trying to get the Prime Minister a Nobel Prize – became the cornerstone of his post-electoral Punjab strategy.

**Government Promotes
Fundamentalism**

One other plank of government's

policy towards minorities, is to elevate some among them to high places, as figure-heads. Once elevated, these persons represent the government, rather than the community whose special interests they are supposed to protect. Finally, another crime of the government, (again, *alias* the Congress-I) is to deal with those sections of the minor-

ities representing the most backward elements in their respective communities. The *volte face* on the Muslim Women's Bill is the most recent case in point. Religion is not involved in the simple human and fundamental right that a discarded wife, without independent profession or means of support, must be adequately provided for by the

Safeguarding Our Democracy

B.R. Ambedkar

On 26th January 1950, India will be an independent country. What would happen to her independence? Will she maintain her independence or will she lose it again? This is the first thought that comes to my mind. It is not that India, was never an independent country. The point is that she once lost the independence she had. Will she lose it a second time? It is this thought which makes me most anxious for the future. What perturbs me greatly is the fact that not only India has once before lost her independence, but she lost it by the infidelity and treachery of some of her own people. In the invasion of Sind by Mahommed-Bin-Kasim, the military commanders of King Dahar accepted bribes from the agent of Mahommed-Bin-Kasim and refused to fight on the side of their King. It was Jaichand who invited Mahommed Ghor to invade India and fight against Prithvi Raj and promised him the help of himself and the Solanki Kings. When Shivaji was fighting for the liberation of Hindus, the other Maratha noblemen and the Rajput kings were fighting the battle on the side of Moghul Emperors. When the British were trying to destroy the Sikh Rulers, Gulab Singh, their principal commander, sat silent and did not help to save the Sikh kingdom. In 1857, when a large part of India had declared a war of independence against the British, the Sikhs stood and watched the event as silent spectators.

Will history repeat itself? It is this thought which fills me with anxiety. This anxiety is deepened by the realization of the fact that in addition to our old enemies in the form of

castes and creeds we are going to have many political parties with diverse and opposing political creeds. Will Indians place the country above their creed or will they place creed above country? I do not know. But this much is certain that if the parties place creed above country, our independence will be put in jeopardy a second time and probably be lost for ever. This eventuality we must all resolutely guard against. We must be determined to defend our independence with the last drop of our blood.

On the 26th of January 1950, India would be a democratic country in the sense that India from that day would have a government of the people, by the people and for the people. The same thought comes to my mind. What would happen to her democratic Constitution? Will she be able to maintain it or will she lose it again? This is the second thought that comes to my mind and makes me as anxious as the first.

It is not that India did not know what is democracy. There was a time when India was studded with republics, and even where there were monarchies, they were either elected or limited. They were never absolute. It is not that India did not know parliaments or parliamentary procedure. A study of the Buddhist Bhikshu Sanghas discloses that not only were there Parliaments – for the Sanghas were nothing but Parliaments – but the Sanghas knew and observed all the rules of parliamentary procedure known to modern times. They had rules regarding seating arrangements, rules regarding motions, resolutions, quorum, whip, counting of

votes, voting by ballot, censure motion, regularization, *res judicata* etc. Although these rules of parliamentary procedure were applied by Buddha to the meetings of the Sanghas, he must have borrowed them from the rules of the political assemblies functioning in the country in his time.

This democratic system India lost. Will she lose it a second time? I do not know. But it is quite possible in a country like India – where democracy from its long disuse must be regarded as something quite new – there is danger of democracy giving place to dictatorship. It is quite possible for this new born democracy to retain its form but give place to dictatorship in fact. If there is a landslide, the danger of the second possibility becoming actuality is much greater.

If we wish to maintain democracy not merely in form, but also in fact, what must we do? The first thing in my judgment we must do is to hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives. It means we must abandon the bloody methods of revolution. It means that we must abandon the method of civil disobedience, non-cooperation and satyagraha. When there was no way left for constitutional methods for achieving economic and social objectives, there was a great deal of justification for unconstitutional methods. But where constitutional methods are open, there can be no justification for these unconstitutional methods. These methods are nothing but the Grammar of Anarchy and the sooner they are abandoned, the better for us.

An extract from Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's speech in the Constituent Assembly during the third reading of the Constitution of India

THE PATHOLOGY OF CROWDS by Elias Canetti, translated by Carol Stewart; Penguin Publishers: 1973

It is one of the surprising scandals of our decade that a penetrating book like that of Elias Canetti is so little known in our country even among the well-read. Published years ago, it retains its relevance even today when our leaders manipulate crowds and they in turn revel in mindless violence. Politicians are only glad to fish in these and turn them to their sordid advantage. Even Canetti's winning of the Nobel Prize for Literature and the reprinting of this as a Penguin book recently has not drawn the attention that it should have.

Starting with the 'destructiveness' of the crowd, Canetti says that this is often mentioned, discussed and disapproved of, as its most conspicuous quality but it is never really explained. The noise of destruction of course adds to the crowd's satisfaction but there is more to it than that. "The destructiveness of representational images is the destruction of a hierarchy which is no longer recognised. It is the violation of generally established and universally visible and valid distances." With the lifting of these burdens of distances the individual feels free. His freedom lies in the crossing of these boundaries, in transcending the limits of his own person. To a crowd in its nakedness, everything — doors, windows, all kinds of boundaries — seem to be replicas of the Bastille and thus meant to be destroyed.

Canetti proceeds to identify four important traits of crowds. In the first place, the crowd always wants to grow and there are no natural boundaries to its growth. Secondly, within the crowd there is equality. Thirdly, the crowd loves density or closeness. Everything must be the crowd itself. Lastly, the crowd needs direction. It moves towards a goal common to all its members. In fact its fear of disintegration is so great that it will accept any goal.

Emotionally considered crowds can be classified differently: the baiting crowd and the flight crowd are

common to animals and men. The prohibition, reversal and feast crowds are uniquely human. Myth and folklore no less than recorded history, testify to the crowd's association with violence, cruelty and autocratic power.

The Phenomenon of the Survivor

In a crowd which has experienced a massacre, the survivor immediately feels a sense of power and sometimes the need for survival can become a dangerous and insatiable passion. The careers of heroes and soldiers suggest that an addiction to survival is quite common. eg. the proud commander in the field sends his men against the enemy and to their death. If he is victorious, all the dead, on both sides, belong to him, so to speak. In victory after victory he survives them all. The significance of his victories is measured by the number of the dead. Plutarch, one of the humaner spirits of mankind, commenting on Julius Caesar's military career sums up by saying that he took by storm 800 cities, fought pitched battles with 3 million men, of whom he destroyed one million and took another million prisoners. In recorded history, comments Canetti, such reports have been customary and to this day have scarcely altered. In the circumstances it appears tactless to reckon the victor's own losses. These proud balance-sheets are handed down from generation to generation. Every generation has its warriors and heroes whose passion is to survive and those who are most skilled in this kind of survival have the securest place in history. The survivor is the man of power.

Those who have power have a passion to augment it and this is no different from delusions of grandeur experienced by those in states of mental imbalance. Individuals of such dispositions establish their greatness by finishing off millions of men or of money. The megalomaniac's notions of growth are of two kinds. There is growth of the indi-

vidual who wants to become physically bigger and heavier. Another that of crowds which have a compulsive tendency to increase in number.

The Schreber Example

Having traced the link between crowds, power, violence, the greatness of rulers, Canetti relates this to paranoia through the case-history of Schreber, an educated and intelligent man, a lawyer by profession, who spent seven years in asylums as a paranoic. He wrote down and later published his memoirs which describe in great detail the turmoil of his emotional world. His delusion is in fact a precise model of political power which feeds on the crowd. It illustrates the strong and lasting attraction exercised over individuals in the crowd, the subjection of individuals through being reduced in size; the way they are taken into (eaten) by the survivor who in his own person represents political power. From Schreber's account Canetti deduces that to be the last man to remain alive is the deepest urge of every real seeker after power. Such a man sends others to their death and he is likely to bring about mass death especially when his dominion over the living is challenged.

All this is not just fantasy. In fact it is a political system disturbingly familiar to those who lived through Hitler's regime. No one has a sharper eye for the attributes of the crowd than the paranoiac or the despot, "Who are one and the same". At the core of it all is the lust for power. Paranoia is an "illness of power" in the most literal sense of the word and the great men of history have all been guilty of it.

However, one question remains. What became of the survivor? He is not yet extinct and even in our own time has been glorified as a hero and obeyed as a ruler. And his most fantastic triumphs have taken place among those who set a great store by humanity. "The survivor is mankind's worst evil. It rises and perhaps its doom." Today, the survivor himself is afraid because either everyone will survive or no one will. "A strange and terrifying equality!"

A.N. Datta

husband who uses her body in bed, and her services as a household drudge. Social issues like a woman's right to maintenance, should not be confused with freedom of religion or conscience, anymore than untouchability should have been preserved, as a basic tenet of Hinduism. Thanks to Gandhi, Hinduism was purged of a social evil, at least on paper. No equivalent of Gandhi has appeared, to wean Muslims away, from social excrescences masquerading as the centre point of religious freedom.

However, the minorities are also at fault, for not throwing up a more enlightened leadership. They cry about under-representation in the Services, not realising that to enter the Civil Services, they must at least sit for the relevant examinations.

Self Help

Unlike the Christian minority, for example, Muslim religious heads (like the Syedna) have not contributed much to the academic or technical advancement of their flock, the Aga Khan being a possible exception. In Catholicism, the Church is a central authority which is able to sponsor education and other socio-cultural measures. However, while almost any village church has a complex of small institutions attached to it (at least a school, and some socio-economic venture for the economic upliftment of the parish) this phenomenon is rarely seen around a "palli", or a temple. Christians on the whole, have managed to do well, in a manner out of all proportion to their numbers. Given political conditions as they are, other minorities, and even the Hindus, should shed the attitude of waiting for only such help as government can give.

Linguistic States

The second major cause of violence in the State came into being, when India's first Prime Minister gave in to the blackmail of agitators for linguistic States. It is an irony that the fragmentation of States has grown so fast, that the integration of States (the main achievement of Independence) may now be totally reversed. There was much greater identification with India as a whole, in composite States created by the British, for administrative reasons. Fewer States were also less burdensome on the pub-

lic exchequer. Incredibly a small steel frame of I.C.S. officers provided excellent administration over a total territory which has not grown larger. However, bureaucrats, legislators, supernumeraries of all kinds have multiplied with the creation of the linguistic States we now have, these are also likely to be increased, if any agitation creates enough nuisance value. Even if it is conceded that the functions of the administrator in independent India has changed, these developmental tasks do not justify the quantum jump in bureaucracy, and the political establishment.

Sons of The Soil?

Each linguistic State which ultimately saw the light of day, experienced fratricidal violence as its midwife. The violence does not stop with the creation of the State, but spills over into endless disputes about boundaries, use of language in "minority" language pockets of border areas; the sons-of-the-soil theory in matters related to work. The Shiv Sena is an extreme example, of a political pressure group committed to violence in furtherance of its linguistic and regional chauvinism. Yet, even so apparently a reasonable and liberal man like Karnataka's Ramakrishna Hegde, set up a Committee to recommend, and presumably to later enforce, preferential employment for Kannadigas in public and possibly private employment. Even where a sons-of-the-soil agitation on the work front has not been specifically promoted, it is tacitly imposed by the reign of the vernacular in most States. Politicians do not seem to know - or care - that a stranger in a place (visiting the Secretariat, for instance), cannot possibly read the signboards in a language he does not understand. Moreover, as all States have persons who now reside in a place where they may not have been born or brought up, to insist on communicating with them, only in the language of State is hardly fair. In fact this is a special hardship when a person has to decipher administrative or court communications in a language he or she does not understand. Even though there is no physical violence arising from this, it is intellectual violence, forcing an individual to forfeit privacy in communication when he must get an

official communication translated. Linguistic chauvinism, and the "sons-of-the-soil" cry in the field of work, are clearly unconstitutional, as Article 19 allows freedom to move, settle and work throughout the territory of India. In specific cases, Courts have upheld these rights. However, till people and those who represent them can think of India as a whole, and not merely the town or village he comes from, violence on this subject can and will erupt constantly.

The Last Trio

There are only three others areas of violence which this paper hopes to tackle: one, the instigation of class war in the villages; second the pitfalls of reverse discrimination; third, the emergence of organised labour as an insatiable pressure group. There is no doubt that independent India inherited a feudal agrarian structure, more or less unchanged since Mughal times, with such further exactions as the British chose to levy for the perpetuation of their rule. Land reforms were necessary, and it may be conceded, that they took place without the bloody battles which characterised the elimination of the Kulaks in Russia. However, dispossession of owners, without anything approaching equitable compensation, does no credit to a free and democratic society. Taiwan, which did carry out agricultural reform, did so, without a vindictive attitude, compensating owners with sufficient funds to start some other line of work, and enough to remain beyond want. It would no doubt be said that most owners acquired their property by theft or collusion (Proudhon's concept about property in general). Even if this were true about most owners, economic change in a democratic State, should follow the Rule of an equitable law. Even if it follows the rule of a validly-passed law which is inequitable, the law itself is battered by violence, whether or not this is translated into a physical manifestation. Land ownership laws have now succeeded in beggaring the old owners, without greatly assisting tenants. The latter still suffer the characteristics of feudalism, being bound to land which they cannot offer as collateral for loans, or which they can transfer or sell.

In passing, the same principle marked the dealings of government

with the princes, and the I.C.S. — neither class greatly beloved by the people, though there were a few good rulers, and it is generally conceded, that the "heaven-born" did at least offer India clean and firm administration at a critical time. The point is not whether these classes deserved public sympathy, but whether it is correct for a State unilaterally to amend not just ordinary laws, but laws written into the Constitution, to carry out the "stray thoughts" of a Prime Minister trying for socialist credentials with the people, in her war with the Syndicate. A government which abrogated solemn contracts with the princes and the I.C.S. could similarly repudiate its obligations to pay pensions, for example. As this would touch more "people, it would arouse greater concern than the decapitation of the zamindars, the princes, and the I.C.S. It may be mentioned in passing that the obligations to the princes cost less than the loss of a major public sector unit in one year! It may also be noted that there are today, many I.A.S. officers whose pension being half of the last salary drawn (approximately Rs. 8000) reaches the respectable figure of Rs. 4000, whereas the I.C.S. pension is around Rs. 1800. Violence to covenants constitutes violence by the State, even without the actual spilling of blood.

Reverse Discrimination

Independent India also inherited the social evil of untouchability, which it proceeded to outlaw in the Constitution, by taking serious note of any practices which outraged the dignity of Harijans as free and equal citizens. This was right, necessary, and proper. It might even have been right, necessary and proper, that the uplift of these depressed classes should receive positive assistance from the state, to overcome the deprivation of centuries. This period of special reservations in education, public employment and the like, initially restricted to a certain time-span, has carried on well beyond that date, leading to increasing resentment, bitterness and violence between the "upper" classes, and the beneficiaries of reverse discrimination. These antagonisms have often spilt over into bloody riots, such as those which brought down more than one State government. It has also resulted in a perceptible lowering of academic and administrative standards, without really helping the depressed

classes as a whole. Few among them even reach the level of being able to compete for a professional course, or public employment. Once they "pass" (the terminology used in the U.S. when a "Black" merges into "White" society) their anxiety is to escape their origins, and join the "upper classes" into whose ranks they seek acceptance and admission. Eventually, it becomes a travesty of all that is sane, when people vie with each other for the "backward" or "Scheduled Class" tag. The nomenclature itself perpetuates the condition it sought to change, while the reliance on a permanent crutch prevents these classes from even thinking of trying to reach their goals under their own steam. Full employment; perhaps special coaching classes for Scheduled Caste students, would serve the Backward and Scheduled Classes better than reverse discrimination *ad infinitum*.

Organised Labour

It is a curious irony that while working for almost a century to oust the British from India (1857-1947), free India not only took over Britain's Parliamentary practices, but its trade union system too. As India's industrial revolution was still in its infancy, (if not unborn!) this was not the wisest of "copycatting" tactics. Moreover industry when it came up was confined to urban centres, creating a great divide between the remuneration of the rural and urban work force. The national cake being somewhat limited, this distortion can only be at the cost of rural labour, and the hapless consumer forced to take goods and services offered, with few or no options. Despite floating in high-wage islands, urban, organised labour is always like Oliver Twist, crying for more. In the seventies, gheraos almost paralysed the life of India's premier industrial State. The labour situation is better now, but violence arises from the fact that government only responds to violence in the event of an industrial dispute. It is the clout of the agitator, rather than the merit of the cause, which invites remedial action. There is a well-conceived series of steps set forth in the law, for the mediation of an industrial dispute. However, government steps into the picture long before the prescribed steps are followed and exhausted. It should be the last, and not the first court of appeal. On their side, trade unionists need to see the cause of an industrial

action steadily and as a whole. They need to be as solicitous about greater productivity, about higher wages, if they are to avoid subjecting the economy to a fresh round of inflation, which in turn sparks off a fresh demand for another pay-rise also *ad infinitum*.

Conclusions

Violence has always been with us, since the time of the stone-age man clubbed to death and displayed as a museum exhibit illustrating the origins of man. Violence by the State, directly (in so called "encounters") or in abrogating the Rule of Law distinguishes the degree of progress and civilisation different nations have reached. India stands higher than Marxist regimes and some dictatorships. But it has strayed far from the days and ways of Ashoka and Gandhi. That it should have veered off course, not under a foreign regime, but under successive governments freely elected by people of our own sovereign republic, leaves little room for self-complacency. If elections as they now operate make it impossible for good men to contest, they have to make their will known through the avenues available to them. These are the Press which is still — relatively — free because it is not government owned; the Courts, which at least at the higher levels have tried to check governmental attack on the rule of law. Above all, they must make a stand, even in a private capacity, against any manifestation of violence by the State.

Not too long ago, one man — Gandhiji — could arouse the apathy of a subjugated nation, and win freedom for it, with truth and non-violence. It would be grand if his *avatar* appeared from nowhere, to do this a second time! But Gandhiji himself would not have wanted people to idle while looking for a new political messiah. He would have wished that each of us gets on with our appointed tasks, fighting dragons, if need be all in the day's work.

History has often been moulded not necessarily by those who were born great, but by simple people with the courage of conviction in their belief that it rests with every individual to be an agent of change. Rightly has the poet said "Adventure on, for from the littlest clue, has come whatever worth man ever knew, and the next to raise all mankind may be you!"

MS. LOUELLA LOUO PHABHON
Associate Editor of *Insight*

Violence and Political Manipulation

Kamal Wadhwa

Any inquiry into the causes of violence in our national life cannot ignore the material and economic reasons for such anti-social phenomena. Despite forty years of self-rule, the fruits of economic development have not been equitably distributed. For example, 10 per cent of the population appropriate the economic surplus that is generated by the economy every year. 75 per cent of Indian Muslims are in poor straits. The annual consumption of wheat flour is 400 lbs. per Indian as compared to nearly 1500 lbs. in the United States. Combine these with high prices, shortage of essential commodities, housing scarcity, and a host of other shortages, and we have a combustible mixture of tensions which explode at periodic intervals into frenzied violence. Most of this violence is directed against the State because it has failed to provide succour to vast segments of the population despite populist rhetoric and socialist propaganda.

The increasing alienation of the citizenry is the consequence of draconian measures adopted by the State. Raids, seizures, and midnight swoops have engendered hostility and fear; suspicion exists in many quarters that the State is a willing stooge in the hands of the elite. Many people even view the State as a robber baron because of its ham-handed and indiscriminate use of force to raise revenues.

Urban Violence

The rise of slums and the increasing congestion of people in urban areas is another cause for the mindless violence witnessed in our national life. Cities like Bombay and Calcutta frequently attract the rural poor because of better economic opportunities. Upon becoming urbanites, the rural poor lose their identity and suffer from anomie, *a la* Durkheim. In the absence of welfare measures for the urban aggrieved, no cushion exists against unemployment and economic misery in leaner times. In time, the army of the urban unemployed becomes a fertile breeding ground for violence. The potential for

violence is further increased by the politicization of the masses. Because political freedom is not followed by economic emancipation, the urbanized rural poor fall prey to manipulation by wily politicians.

The nature of violence in India as compared to Western countries is not criminal but largely political. The incidence of murder in India is probably less than that in the West in spite of the dire straits in which most Indians live. Similarly, the so-called communal violence seen in some areas of India is, in fact, motivated by economic disparities between Hindus and Muslims. The communal carnage in Bhiwandi was sparked by paucity of jobs for the Muslim community. On the other hand, where the Muslim majority is affluent, riots are engineered by poor Hindus whose target is Muslim property. As M.V. Kamath pointed out in his address to the Harold Laski Institute of Political Science in 1984:

"...communalism is a function of economic destabilization, as the result of the entry into occupations of groups not traditionally associated with them, thus arousing apprehensions among those groups who have been so associated."

Kamath cites Malegaon as an example of such destabilization. There the Muslims were the majority community while the Hindu minority controlled the supply of yarn to the 70,000 power-looms that are the town's chief economic pursuit. The Hindus had traditionally controlled the collection and sale of the finished product. However, with the advent of Muslims in the business of supplying yarn and purchase of the finished product, Hindus felt apprehensive. And with the talk of Arab money pouring into Muslim coffers, Hindus felt insecure and this insecurity led to riots.

The Role of 'Realpolitik'

Another disturbing trend in our national life is the practice of *realpolitik* by our national leaders. The staging of the Reliance Cup in cricket was a clever

way of avoiding the touchy subject of the Bofors scandal by Rajiv Gandhi. In *realpolitik*, the individual citizen is depersonalized and the mass of people become mere pawns in the national game of politics. The use of *realpolitik* is especially visible during election time when politicians cow down their constituencies with a combination of the stick and the carrot in order to build vote-banks. As former member of Parliament, Krishan Kant, observed:

"A private goonda army, small or big, is attached to the political leader in every constituency. They serve each other. When there is no individual candidate, and the winning candidates are not attached to any constituency, this relationship will not be required to that extent. Their dependence on each other will be reduced and so is their role in the election process. Leaving aside the 1971 and 1977 elections which were waves, goondas' role has been increasing with every election. They are now dominating the lower levels, middle and upper levels in many areas, of almost all political parties. They started replacing the old dedicated leadership as they are dying out. So, the danger of goonda elements taking over the political system is very real. The logic of the functioning of all political parties leads to the same direction."

Most of the violence visible in our national life is an imitation of foreign models. The fixation on violence characteristic of Western culture has spread into our national life via the film and newspaper media.

Decent and law-abiding societies are caught in ethical quagmires because their values do not permit physical defence or the use of counterforce. This non-violent consensus, with a premium on collective salvation, lies in ruins today after failure to compete with the Western mode of forceful means.

MR. KAMAL WADHWA is Assistant Editor of *Lex et juris - The Law Magazine*



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The 'Riddles' Controversy

S.V. Raju

To the extent that the Shiv Sena sought to muzzle freedom of expression they are clearly in the wrong. But they are right when they say that the government has no business to publish books of this kind. The Liberal position goes further. The Government has no business publishing books of any kind.

We Indians have a genius for splitting hairs when not breaking heads over non-issues. The Ram-Janmabhoomi agitation in the north and the "Riddles of Hinduism" flare-up in Bombay are two such where people have been killed or injured. We even have a lunatic fringe agitating in defence of the evil practice of *sati* – and we are talking of entering the 21st century!

On some cars on the streets of Bombay, one can find stickers which proclaim "Say it with pride that I am Hindu". I am a Hindu and glad to be one but, I suspect, not for the same reasons that the sticker-writer had in mind. I carry my Hinduism not on my sleeve (or for that matter on my forehead) but in my heart and in my attitudes. I am proud to belong, not so much to a religion but to a philosophy of life which tells me to be catholic in my outlook, to be tolerant and accept with humility that the 'truth' as revealed by other religions is equally true.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the architect of our Constitution who converted to Buddhism as even 20th century Hinduism, despite the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi, had failed to purge itself of the scourge of the caste system, wrote a critique which he called the "Riddles of Hinduism". This forms the fourth volume of the Selected Works of B.R. Ambedkar, published by the Government of Maharashtra. *Riddles* has an appendix in which Dr. Ambedkar comments on the conduct of the heroes of the Indian epics the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, Rama and Krishna, in not very flattering terms. His sources are unimpeachable. In the case of the *Ramayana* from the great Indian Sage Valmiki himself.

This is not the first time that someone has taken a swipe at Rama or Krishna. Compared to what some others have said, Dr. Ambedkar is mild. Rama's conduct in slaying Vali and Sambuka has been criticised time and

again and his treatment of Sita, compelling her to undergo an ordeal by fire after her release from captivity was characterised by Rajaji as 'disgraceful conduct.' The Rt. Hon. V.S. Srinivasa Sastri wrote a whole chapter on this in his *Lectures on the Ramayana* and was put to great difficulties explaining away Rama's conduct. The followers of E.V. Ramaswami Naicker, Founder of the anti-Aryan Dravida Kazhagam, imitating their leader, have been most abusive of Rama and Krishna. Yet all these have not in any way eroded the appeal these Gods have for the Hindus who continue to worship them with the same fervour. The popularity of the TV serial 'Ramayana' is an eloquent testimony.

The Shiv Sena, a militant political party which makes no bones about its pro-Hindu stance demanded that the book be withdrawn as it wounded the religious feelings of Hindus. This provoked the followers of Dr. Ambedkar, the Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes now known as 'Dalits' or the downtrodden, to retaliate with a resounding 'don't you dare' to the Maharashtra Government. Caught in a controversy of their own creation, the Government was at a loss. By the time the solution had presented itself, Bombay's citizens went through two days of tension with private and public properties damaged or destroyed, the Martyrs' Memorial defaced and the Shiv Sena threatening dire reprisals. During the period of the controversy one even saw policemen protecting Dr. Ambedkar's statues in various parts of the city to prevent their disfigurement by 'anti-social elements.'

The solution was simple: the Maharashtra Government agreed to paste a slip on the 'offending' volume that the views expressed were not those of the Maharashtra Government!

There can be no doubt that the occasion was grist for the mills of both the

Shiv Sena and the Dalit politicians. The Shiv Sena's objective was evidently to garner Hindu middle class support while the hopelessly splintered Dalit groups saw this as an opportunity to combine on an issue on which there could be no differences – the protection of the late Dr. Ambedkar's legacy.

All this could easily have been avoided if the Government had only minded its own business and not become a publisher of books. But then governments in post-Independent India do almost everything (selling milk, baking bread, publishing books etc.) except the one job they are expected to do – govern.

What did Dr. Ambedkar write that led to such a storm? Constraints of space prevent reproduction of a meaningful extract. Readers will have to secure a copy of Volume Four of the *Riddles of Hinduism* if they are interested. However to give a flavour, page 18 carries an extract from page 327 Appendix I and an extract from the *Valmiki Ramayana*, Canto 115 pages 1849-50 of *Kalyana Kalpataru* which Dr. Ambedkar cites.

While the issue is peripheral, there is however an important democratic principle involved: the right of an individual to write and publish freely. To the extent that the Shiv Sena sought to muzzle freedom of expression they are clearly in the wrong. But they are right when they say that the Government has no business to publish books of this kind. The Liberal position goes even further: The Government has no business publishing books of any kind except of course their laws, rules, and regulations and anything they wish to say about themselves. For, as the Swatantra Party's Statement of Policy so rightly observed: "The business of the Government is government not Business." Had this policy been followed there would not have been a 'Riddles' Controversy.

An Extract from the Riddles of Hinduism

The first thing (Rama) should have done after disposing of Ravana was to have gone to Sita. He does not do so. He finds more interest in the coronation (of Vibishana) than in Sita. Even when the coronation is over he does not go himself but sends Hanuman. And what is the message he sends? He does not ask Hanuman to bring her. He asks him to inform her that he is hale and hearty. It is Sita who expresses to Hanuman her desire to see Rama. Rama does not go to Sita his own wife who was kidnapped and confined by Ravana for more than 10 months. Sita is brought to him and what does Rama say to Sita when he sees her? It would be difficult to believe any man with ordinary human kindness could address to his wife in such dire distress as Rama did to Sita when he met her in Lanka if there was not the direct authority of Valmiki. This is how Rama addressed her :

"I have got you as a prize in a war after conquering my enemy your captor. I have recovered my honour and punished my enemy. People have witnessed my military prowess and I am glad my labours have been rewarded. I came here to kill Ravana and wash off the dishonour. I did not take this trouble for your sake."

Could there be anything more cruel than this conduct of Rama towards Sita? He does not stop there. He proceeded to tell her:

"I suspect your conduct. You must have been spoiled by Ravana. Your very sight is revolting to me. Oh you daughter of Janaka, I allow you to go anywhere you like. I have nothing to do with you. I conquered you back and I am content for that was my object. I cannot think that Ravana would have failed to enjoy a woman as beautiful as you are."

Kalyana-Kalpataru – Valmiki Ramayana

यत् कर्तव्यं मनुष्येण धर्मणा प्रतिमार्जता । तत् कृतं रावणं हत्वा मयेदं मानकाङ्क्षिणा ॥ १३ ॥
निर्जिता जीवलीकस्य तपसा भावितात्मना । अगस्त्येन दुराचर्या मुनिना दक्षिणेव दिक् ॥ १४ ॥
विदितं ब्राह्मणं भद्रं ते योऽयं रणपरिश्रमः । सुतीर्थः सुहृदां वीर्यान् त्वदर्थं मया कृतः ॥ १५ ॥
रहता तु मया वृत्तमपवादं च सर्वतः । प्रख्यातस्यात्मवन्द्यस्य न्यङ्गं च परिमार्जता ॥ १६ ॥
प्राप्तचारित्र्यसंदेहा मम प्रतिमुले स्थिता । दीपो नेत्रातुरस्येष प्रतिकूलसि मे दृढा ॥ १७ ॥
तद् गच्छ त्वानुजनेऽयं यथेष्टं जनकामजे । एता दश दिशो भद्रे कार्यमस्ति न मे त्वया ॥ १८ ॥

"That which ought to be done by a man revenging an insult has been accomplished by me by killing Ravana, seeking (as I did) to redeem my honour. (13) Though difficult to approach for the world of mortals (for fear of Ravana), you have been won (back) by me (whose mind stands purified by asceticism) in the same way as the southern quarter, which was difficult to assail (for fear of the ogres Ilvala and Vātāpi) for mortals was conquered by Sage Agastya, who had realized his self through austerities. (14) Let it be known to you that (all) this exertion in the shape of war, which has been successfully carried through, thanks to the prowess of my friends (the monkeys and Vibhishana) was not

undertaken for your sake: may prosperity attend you! (15) This was, however, done by me in order to vindicate my good conduct and wipe off the obloquy coming to me from all sides as well as the stigma on my illustrious House. (16) Standing (unabashed) before me, even though suspicion has arisen with regard to your character, you are extremely disagreeable to me even as a light to one who is suffering from sore eyes. (17) Therefore, go wherever you like, O Janaka's daughter; I grant you leave to do so this (very) day. (All) these (ten) directions are open to you, O good lady! No more purpose of mine remains to be served by you. (18)

कः पुमस्तु कुले जातः त्रियं परप्रदोषिताम् । तेजस्वी पुनरादयात् मुदुस्लोमेन चेतसा ॥ १९ ॥
राक्षसाङ्गपरिक्षिप्तं दृष्टं दुष्टेन चक्षुरा । कथं त्वां पुनरादयां कुलं व्यदिशामहत् ॥ २० ॥
यदर्थं निर्जिता मे त्वं योऽयमादितो मया । नास्ति मे स्वल्पमिच्छन्ने यथेष्टं गम्यतामिति ॥ २१ ॥
तद्य व्याहृतं भद्रे मयेतत् वृत्तमुदिता । लक्ष्मणे वाच भस्ते कुरु बुद्धिं यथासुखम् ॥ २२ ॥
यवुप्ते वाच सुधीवे राक्षसे विभीषणे । निवेश्य मनः सीते यथा वा सुखमात्मनः ॥ २३ ॥
नहि त्वां रावणे दृष्ट्वा दिव्यरूपो मनोरमाम् । मर्षितं चिरं सीते स्वश्रे पर्यवस्थिताम् ॥ २४ ॥

"What man of spirit and born in a noble family for his part would take back with an eager mind a woman who has dwelt in another's house. (simply) because she has been kindly disposed towards him (in the past)? (19) While boasting of my triumph, how can I accept again you, who were squeezed into the arms of Ravana (while being borne away by him) and regarded (by him) with an evil (hostile) eye? (20) That object (viz. the retrieval of my lost honour) for which you have been won (back) by me, has been achieved by me. There is no more purpose to

for you (in my heart). You may (therefore) go wherever you like. (21) Hence this utterance has been made by me today, resolved as I am to act accordingly. Set your mind on Lakshmana or even on Bharata according to your pleasure. (22) (Nor) fix your mind on Satrugna or even on Sugriva or on the ogre, Vibhishana, or Shibi, or do as it pleases your mind. (23) Seeing you, who are endowed with a charming exterior and are (so) soul-reaching, detained in his abode, Ravana could not have endured your separation for long. (24) Sita!"

A Dutch View of Citizenship

Frits Bolkestein

We believe that citizenship arises out of its own practice and that if one is robbed of the possibility of playing a full role in the economic life of the country this will in the end erode the quality of citizenship all around. We also believe that ownership and property rights foster responsibility and that this may be seen in the overfishing of oceans and the indiscriminate cutting down of forests. Where all are responsible, no one is responsible.

What gives rise to citizenship? I can think of four sources. The *first source* is identification with a country, its history and its traditions. The French philosopher Ernest Renan wrote in this respect of "the remembrance of great things achieved together and the will to achieve other such great things in future". It is the feeling that it is "my country", the sense of belonging to it, of having a stake in it. Sometimes this takes the form of being inspired by the national myth – of greatness, of freedom or whatever – or the sense of a mission: we are here to do something. Together with this goes the feeling of participating in the political process, no matter at how modest a level, and of consensus, a rejection of polarisation, in the assurance that power will alternate between major parties. This is the political dimension of citizenship. Can one identify with a "soft state"? I think it is easier to identify with a "hard state". Who wants to be part of something weak?

The *second source* is a system of education that teaches duties as well as rights, where teachers do not merely pass on knowledge but also inculcate standards of responsible behaviour and a sense of pride in the community. Schools are examples of so-called "intermediate structures". They are called intermediate because they are situated between the individual and the state. There are other examples of such intermediate structures which may perform the same function as schools. The churches used to do that in the West, and the Ismaili community e.g. in East Africa. Intermediate structures are therefore of importance. It should be noted, however, that not all intermediate structures are beneficial. Some repress the individual. The Moonies leave their members very little freedom and in



Dr. Frits Bolkestein

This article is the text of a lecture which Dr. Frits Bolkestein MP., deputy leader of the Liberal party in the Dutch Parliament, delivered at a seminar of the Citizenship Development Society held on December 30/31, 1987, in New Delhi.

many Chinese families before the revolution of 1911 the feet of the girls were broken.

The *third source* is politicians who set a personal example of disinterestedness and of probity. The first such politician to come to mind is, of course, Mahatma Gandhi. But there are others. In Great Britain, both Churchill and Attlee inspired people, as did General de Gaulle in France. Heroic deeds inspired people but the heroic is nowadays at a discount, as are national myths. What inspires people these days? Little enough, certainly in the West. And if, on top of that, omistors

set a bad example – why should ordinary people not follow?

And the *fourth source* is a system of law which dispenses justice efficiently and effectively. Not everyone behaves responsibly. Some break the law. Norms and standards erode if no sanction is directed at transgressors. That is why anarchism is a dream. Without an efficient and effective administration of justice we would soon sink into a war of all against all.

Having given an idea of what in my view are the sources of citizenship, I shall, in what follows, first give a few illustrations of what I mean. I shall then describe some recent developments in the Netherlands and conclude with a brief note on liberalism.

The American Ethos

The *United States* is a country of immigrants. Hence the importance of education. It is not surprising that the subject "civics" figures prominently in the curricula of many American high schools. Now the American ethos is based upon:

- (1) the American myth, i.e. the belief that if a person is given freedom, he will achieve a personal optimum;
- (2) a common legal system – in spite of variations between states – under one Supreme Court;
- (3) a common language; and
- (4) an open political system that encourages participation.

It is indicative that in Great Britain candidates *stand* for office while in the United States they *run* for it. Now it may be objected that the phenomenon of the Black Muslims and the slogan

"Your order is not our order" shows that not all groups take part in the national ethos. That is true. But it should also be noted that about a dozen of President Nixon's Cabinet officers and personal assistants were convicted by a jury that was more than half black. And President Nixon himself was forced out of office. With respect to the common language: the increase of Spanish as a second official language is not without risks, as it tends to fracture an important aspect of national life.

The French Experience

Now let me turn to *France*. The French think that their culture is the greatest in the world. They speak of their language, their country and their anthem as nobody else would. We may laugh when the French talk of their "*mission civilisatrice*" but this idea has given France undoubted self-assurance, cohesion and ambition. Even the French communists support their country's nuclear deterrent. I do not mention this out of preference for nuclear weapons but to show the cohesion of France. France operates in Central Africa in a way which no other West European country would dare to imitate. France is the best example in Western Europe of a strong state, with which it is easier to identify than with a weak one. But that was not always the case. In the thirties France was rocked by a series of political and financial scandals. It was then said that France was "the republic of chums and scoundrels". And the French Third Republic was so weak that it could resist the onslaught of the German war machine for not much longer than one month. The bad example set by politicians must have had something to do with that.

Behind The Iron Curtain

After these two countries of the West, take the *USSR*. A serious problem there appears to be the disaffection of young people, who seem to have lost all interest in public life, and above all in politics. The causes, in my view, are firstly the lack of possibilities meaningfully to participate in the political process and, secondly, the absence of most intermediate structures except official ones. This would indicate a low level of citizenship. But the undoubted patriotism of the Russian people and the fact that the Russian state is very strong

counteract this tendency. *Poland*, however, is an extreme case of a lack of political participation, aggravated by the fact that the official leadership of the country has lost all credibility. In Poland there is an undeclared civil war between the state and society, and the level of citizenship is probably very low.

I have thus far mentioned a few countries in both East and West. I now want to turn to two aspects: patriotism and the electoral system, in particular proportional representation or PR.

Patriotism

I think it was Samuel Johnson who said that *patriotism* is the last refuge of a scoundrel. Nonetheless, patriotism can play a useful role in fostering citizenship, as long as it does not exceed certain limits and in so doing degenerate into chauvinism. Let us take a look at the former president of Indonesia, Soekarno. The Dutch usually view him as the man who led the struggle of Indonesia against Holland, or as the man who collaborated with the Japanese during World War II. Apart from this, what has Soekarno achieved for Indonesia? Well, he kept the country together. He kept language and religion out of politics – no small achievement in a country where Javanese is by far the most important language and the overwhelming majority of the people are Muslim. He also fostered an Indonesian nationalism, complete with *musjawarah* and *pantjasila*, which together amount to a sort of national myth. That was a good thing. Unfortunately, Soekarno neglected economics – "that dismal science", as he called it – and allowed nationalism to spread into the sphere of business. Thus he undid much of what he achieved. Indonesia has become a soft state.

The Mexicans have a saying: "God is so far and the United States are so near". It is understandable that they have sought to stress their sense of nationhood. In the whole of Mexico City there is not one statue of Hernan Cortés, although he wrested the country from Aztec domination. On the other hand, there is an almost aggressive idolisation of the Indian heritage and of pre-Columbian art. Even a short visit to

the National Museum will suffice to show that. Again, however, this patriotism was allowed to spill over into the economic field and the Mexican economy – above all the Mexicans themselves – has suffered as a consequence. Mexico is also a soft state. It must be admitted that neither Mexico nor any of the other Latin American countries show a highly developed sense of citizenship and it is not easy to see why that should be so. Perhaps it is the result of Catholicism, which has always been much more interventionist than liberalism.

A Plea For PR

Now as far as the *electoral system* is concerned, I want to make a plea for PR as opposed to the first-past-the-post system which the British have. The advantages of PR are twofold. Firstly, it produces middle-of-the-road coalitions which are based on a consensus. Secondly, it facilitates the rise of small parties, which enliven parliamentary debates while the main parties do not get infected with crypto-extremists from the right or left. In Great Britain, for example, there are various Labour Members of Parliament who in reality are communists. The claim for the British system is that it encourages firm government. Perhaps it does, at least for the moment. But it also produces zigzag policies as well as the feeling of being excluded on the part of those who have voted for the party not in power.

The Dutch Experience

What is the *Dutch experience*? Since the early sixties Holland has been marked by four independent but mutually reinforcing developments. Firstly, the country has become much more affluent and thus the people have to a certain extent lost contact with the sharp edges of existence. Secondly, a system of mass education has been set up, which all too often has given that little knowledge which is a dangerous thing. Thirdly, the mass media and in particular television give a semblance of knowledge of what goes on elsewhere. Fourthly, many people have experienced a loss of religion. Affluence has given us all the mod. cons. of present-day civilisation in particular all the paraphernalia of communications. Mass media and mass education have given rise to a sort of *hyper-intelligence*. The loss of religion left behind an emo-

tional need to be committed to a different kind of salvation, if not in life-after-death then in this world. A secular religion came into existence which manifested itself in a social gospel. This was especially propagated by alienated intellectuals. A climate of opinion arose which was harmful to the various sources of citizenship which I have mentioned above.

A climate of *vapid internationalism* arose which discounted patriotism of any sort whatever. It is interesting to observe the behaviour of the Dutch when they are called upon to sing their national anthem. In contrast to, for example, the Americans or the French, they feel embarrassed; they hang their heads and shuffle with their feet. They are uncomfortable.

Education

In *education*, the aims of consciousness-raising and of self-expression were stressed at the expense of applicable skills. This not only affected the labour market and thus the economy, but also made it seem – at least for a while – as if any expression of one's personality whatever was worthwhile. Now it is obvious – at least to me – that many aspects of many personalities are worthy of being expressed, but surely not all. Nor are all ways in which such aspects may be expressed equally valuable. Yet such obvious thoughts run counter to the dominant thinking of the sixties and seventies in Holland. I know that everybody after a certain age is inclined to complain of the education of the next generation, yet I have the strong feeling that in Holland this is now justified. For the present purpose I want to stress that the inculcation of a sense of citizenship is both less and more pronounced than it used to be when I went to school. It is less pronounced in that a sense of discipline is not given the same importance as in my youth. Someone who would attempt to do so in the days of "doing your own thing" and consciousness-expanding drugs was soon relegated to the category of old fogeys. But it is more pronounced in that the protection of the environment now comes higher on the list of responsibilities than before. That is no doubt a result of the deterioration of the environment since World War II. And in Holland this had had good results. We are number one in the world as far as the proportion of used glass and used

paper that is recycled. By and large, however, I am inclined to believe that Dutch education does less to foster a sense of civics now than it used to.

The Administration of Justice

As far as the *administration of justice* is concerned, the prevailing climate of opinion in the sixties and seventies has had a largely deleterious effect. Some went so far as to explain away transgressions of the law as the result of the structural violence of society. "The law and order issue serves to deflect public attention from more pressing issues, like death, destruction, war, torture and starvation". The theory was that as long as society was unreconstructed it was useless, if not downright harmful, to attempt to do something about crime. More concern was often voiced for the criminal than for the victim. All this sapped the morale of the police force and encouraged judges to pass lenient sentences. Holland came to play a steadily larger part in the international drugs-network. Amsterdam in particular was hit by a wave of streetlevel-crime. Although the prevailing climate of opinion has now changed – partly as a result of the economic difficulties we are experiencing – the effects I have described are unfortunately still with us. The shortage of cells means, for example, that some suspects have to be released for lack of space, while convicts have to queue up to serve their sentence. It can hardly be said, therefore, that the administration of justice in Holland is either efficient or effective.

A word is in order here on *civil disobedience* or the extra-parliamentary opposition, as the Germans used to call it. The disaffection of the lumpen-intelligentsia led in some cases to squatters occupying empty buildings in contravention of the law, which went unchallenged because the "progressive" majorities on city councils refused to let the police move in. One part of Amsterdam has removed itself outside the pale of the law to the extent that not long ago the mayor of the city was prevented from entering it. In India, which has almost invented civil disobedience, as it were, I shall not deny that action groups can have certain beneficial consequences. In Holland, for example, they very definitely were instrumental in increasing public awareness of the damage that was being done to the en-

vironment. Also, action groups keep dissidents committed to the political process as such¹. But to condone transgressions of the law is to start upon a slippery slope. It is contagious; it spreads to other areas, e.g. fiscal matters. It is a one-way street that leads downhill. All in all I do not think it has increased our sense of citizenship.

Unemployment

I must now turn to a new element, viz. *unemployment*. A man who is out of work obviously does not participate in the economic life of his community and has therefore much less of a stake in it than somebody who has a job. Now unemployment in Holland is high – unacceptably high. Let me mention a few of its causes. The rate of births has gone up of late, partly because many women in their late thirties decide to have a child before it is too late. Also, many more women than hitherto want to participate in the labour market – either because they must (broken marriages) or because they want to (emancipation). Then technical advances have made many jobs in traditional manufacturing obsolete without so far having created sufficient new jobs to compensate for the loss. The growth of world trade has been disappointing, which is of importance to an open economy such as the Dutch. These factors are beyond the influence and control of the Dutch government. But it can do something about the relative costs of labour and capital, which are out of kilter. That is why there is so much self-service in petrol stations and hotels. The service sector in Holland is anaemic because the people needed to serve have become too expensive to employ. The service sector is thus unable to mop up the labour that is sloughed off by an industry which must keep up with international standards of competitiveness. People are expensive to employ in Holland in large part because personal income taxes and social security premia are the highest in the world. If we could reduce the public sector, we would thereby reduce the burden of taxes and premia. Thus labour would cost less to employ, even though their take-home pay would remain the same. But reducing the size of the public sector runs counter to the dominant philosophy I have described. Therefore some at least of the unem-

ployment that erodes the feeling of citizenship is of our own making.

On balance, therefore, I am afraid developments in Dutch society over the last 25 years have not favoured the sense of citizenship. The climate of opinion that prevailed in the sixties and seventies has eroded patriotism and the standards of education and justice; the net effect of action groups has been negative; and government policy is at least partly responsible for our unemployment.

It is here that I come to my final observation, which has to do with liberalism. In the sphere of personal freedom we strive for maximum freedom consistent with the freedom of others. For example, we have pushed our coalition partners, the Christian Democrats, to adopt a more liberal position on voluntary euthanasia. In the field of economic affairs, we have pushed for a reduction in the public sector, a reduction in the public sector, a reduction in the punishing levels of personal taxation, privatisation of those government ser-

vices which can be performed better by the private sector and de-regulation of many of the rules which the government has introduced. In brief: *more society, less state*. We believe that citizenship arises out of its own practice and that if one is robbed of the possibility of playing a full role in the economic life of the country this will in the end erode the quality of citizenship all around. We also believe that ownership and property rights foster responsibility and that this may be seen in the overfishing of the oceans and the indiscriminate cutting down of forests. Where all are responsible, no one is responsible. In other words, the more responsibility a man gets, the more he will be able to carry. Our political opponents – the Christian Democrats and the Socialists – accuse us of fostering individualism and hence egoism. Now it is true that for us the free individual is the repository of ultimate value. But it is most certainly untrue that we want to foster egoism. For it is always freedom with responsibility that we strive for.

Let me end by quoting that eminent

Indian liberal, Mr Minoo Masani, where he borrows from the Swatantra Party's programme: "Individual initiative, enterprise and energy maximising individual freedom and minimising interference by the State, foster the sense of moral obligation".

- 1 "La République des copains et des coquins"
- 2 L McDonald: "The Sociology of Law and Order" (Book Center, Montreal, 1976), p.13
- 3 Harry Eckstein: "Pressure Group Politics"; "The disjunctive function of pressure groups is equally important to prevent alienation of groups from systems that appear to distort their goals" (quoted in Ashoka Mehta: "A Decade of Indian Politics", p.13)
- 4 In his booklet: "Rajaji's view of life"

No government based on the naked principle that the majority ought to govern, however true the maxim in its proper sense, and under proper restrictions, can preserve its liberty even for a single generation. The history of all has been the same - violence, injustice, and anarchy, succeeded by the government of one, or a few, under which the people seek refuge from the more oppressive despotism of the many.

John C. Calhoun

Dr. K.M. Munshi Birth Centenary

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is celebrating with great enthusiasm, the birth centenary of its Founder Dr. K.M. Munshi. It is also the Golden Jubilee of the Bhavan which fully deserves all the plaudits it has received for continuing its Founder's mission – a cultural renaissance and a resurgence of values we seem to have lost somewhere along the way.

The Bhavan's emphasis is on Hindu culture and values and it is a pleasure to see the way it is being done without either narrow chauvinism or even a hint of pandering to baser communal instincts. And the man who set this tone for the Bhavan's activities was none other than Dr. K.M. Munshi. To the Bhavan's Executive Secretary, Mr. S. Ramakrishnan, should go much of the credit for continuing Munshi's work and carrying it beyond India's shores.

Dr. Munshi, or Bapaji as he was to some of us who had the privilege of

working with him, was among the last of the giants who left their imprint on India's politics and public life. To even attempt a comparison between men like Sardar Patel, Jayaprakash Narayan and K.M. Munshi with what we have today would be unfair to their memory.

My association with Munshiji was not in the field of culture but in the more mundane world of politics. He was Vice President of the Swatantra Party from 1959, the year the Party was founded, till his demise in 1971. Greatly respected by both his colleagues in the National Executive of the Party and the rank and file, Munshiji never once hesitated to state his views, be it on the Punjabi Suba (he chaired a Committee appointed by the Swatantra Party to go into the question) or Kashmir's integration with India – two issues on which intra party discussions, for instance, were often heated. But the manner in which he marshalled his arguments

and, more often than not, was able to get the Party to see the validity of his point of view, was a pleasure to watch.

He was a firm disciplinarian and even while giving full allowance for internal party democracy, he never hesitated to advocate or support action against indisciplined members irrespective of their position or the loss to the Party's numerical strength that such action would entail. On many an occasion, as Executive Secretary of the Party I sought his counsel and cannot recall returning disappointed even once. He was firm but fair and his understanding of the Party's *raison d'être* was complete.

To the many tributes paid to him, I add my own little tribute to a great leader and a wonderful person I had the privilege of knowing and working with.

India today needs many more like Dr. Munshi. Where are they?

S.V. Raju

Coalition at the Centre

Ramakrishna Hegde

"Indian experience has shown that where a coalition was unprincipled, formed purely for the sake of power, it had not endured; on the other hand, where it has been made up of parties with a programme broadly compatible with their ideologies it has led to a stable government, as in the case of Orissa, and to some extent Kerala"

Comparative Study of Coalitions:
The Research and Policy Planning Division of the Union Home Ministry, 1967

India is already passing through a phase of coalition politics. Even though political polarisation is gradually taking place at the State level there is yet no sign of the emergence of a national alternative. Unless that miracle happens a coalition government at the Centre comprising like-minded parties appears inevitable in the present political situation. It is also desirable. If the opposition parties are unable to offer the people a credible alternative they should at least prepare the mind of the people to accept a credible coalition at the Centre. In the context of the distortion of India's federal structure in recent years, a coalition Government would help restore the Constitution to what it was intended to be by the Founding Fathers. It would help to strengthen the roots of co-operative federalism.

I realise that the word, 'coalition' has acquired a bad name in the country because of various historical reasons. The speedy collapse of the SVD (*Samyukta Vidhayak Dal*) ministries in north India in 1967 and 1968 and the collapse of what was a promising experiment in national politics, the Janata Party Government in July 1979, a little over two years after it was formed, have created a strong prejudice against the very concept of coalition.

The Janata Party

However, the SVD Governments were based on sheer quest for power and on negativism. Such programmes as were evolved on the spur of the moment to topple Congress ministries remained on paper and the paper work could not cover the cracks that were so evident in the edifice built in haste. The Janata Party, in contrast, had a very well-

defined programme and policy. It was not built on mere negativism, but had a positive thrust. It was a unique combination. It was neither a coalition proper nor did it emerge as a truly unified party transcending the loyalties of the five groups that had merged to form the party: the Congress (O), Socialist, Bharatiya Jan Sangh, Swatantra and the Bharatiya Kranti Dal. It fell between the stools, as it were. In those two years, no organisational elections could be held because of "ghatakwad", growing dissensions and disagreement on the issue of dual membership of the former Jan Sangh members in the RSS and the Janata Party simultaneously.

The Janata Party was beset with the vice of groupism almost from the very beginning. When elections to State legislatures were to be held in June 1977 in 14 States and Union territories, the scramble for nominations threatened to tear the party apart. Each group demanded its "quota". What followed in the States where the Janata Party had won proved to be suicidal to the party's survival in the long term. Two factions, the erstwhile BKD and the erstwhile Jan Sangh arrived at a secret deal. There would be BKD Chief Ministries in U.P., Orissa, Haryana and Bihar and Jan Sangh Chief Ministers in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh.

The Janata Party remained a non-dominant party rather than a product of their fusion. Its members, in turn, had a strange obsession with ancestry, their own as well as that of their partners. The Parliamentary Board of the Party behaved like the Security Council of the

U.N. in the sense that every constituent unit could exercise its veto power.

JP's Scepticism

Even before the emergency forced the opposition parties to come closer, Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan had predicted in a speech, at the Indian Council of World Affairs at New Delhi on February 3, 1970, that the seventies would see coalition governments both at the Centre and in the States. But he doubted if they would be stable. The reason for his scepticism is relevant. It was the steep deterioration in political ethics. J.P. was against "coalitions of convenience without any rationality".

The Political Atmosphere Today

The political atmosphere in the country today is strongly reminiscent of that in the mid-seventies immediately preceding the imposition of emergency. On the one hand, there is an authoritarian and corrupt Government at the Centre which is impervious to reason, adamant against reforms, determined to ride roughshod over the rights of the people and of the States, is inimical to the Press and hostile to the judiciary. In short, a regime with just one overriding passion — continuance in power by all manner of means. On the other hand, the people's consciousness has been aroused to high pitch and shows every sign of rising still higher. But the opposition parties have not quite come up to the level of the people's expectations. As in the mid-seventies, there is hope all around that they will rally round and meet the situation.

Ramakrishna Hegde



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He was not against coalitions in themselves. Indeed, he was all for sharing of power on the basis of agreed programmes between the partners. He knew that multiplicity of parties made politics of coalition inevitable. He was emphatically of the view that stable coalitions were perfectly possible provided that they were rooted in shared commitments. As he said, "I wish the Congress really split on ideological grounds so that stable coalition governments could be made possible". But every time the Congress split it was due to clash of personalities.

Many in India had hoped that a two-party system would emerge in the country. They had in mind the British model though it was itself under strain. By now it is clear that the hope was built more on illusion than on realism. In a country of our continental dimensions and social diversities a stable multi-party system is perhaps unavoidable for quite some time.

In the wake of the Congress debacle in the fourth general elections in 1967, that pragmatist, Shri S.K. Patil, pleaded that the Congress should give up its high and mighty attitude and take the lead in forging coalitions. The advice he gave to the Congress in March 1969 should be taken to heart by the opposition parties today: "Now it is obvious that the process of coalitions must start and coalitions must be formed not only after but also during and before the elections. If well-planned coalitions are formed before the elections, they will develop a capacity of lasting longer and becoming more effective in actual functioning. It will take a long time, not less than 25 years, to develop a two-party system in India ... In many other democratic countries, the two-party system has even now not made any demonstrative impact. In most of the European countries which are democratic, coalitions are accepted as a matter of fact"

Shri Patil was only too right. In the Federal Republic of Germany, both the major parties, the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats, have ruled either in coalition with the Free Democrats and once in coalition together in the famous "Great Coalition". The Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark know of no other way of forming a government except in a coalition. In federations particularly, "coalition" govern-

ments help to mirror the rich diversity of national life better than single party rule. Canada is a good instance. In Australia, the alternative to the Labour Party has been a Liberal-Country Party coalition.

Union Home Ministry's Study

In 1967 a very able study was prepared by the Research and Policy Planning Division of the Union Home Ministry entitled: "Comparative Study of Coalitions". It was prepared in the context of the Congress debacle in the fourth general elections in 1967. The study noted that there were then as many as 24 political parties recognised by the Election Commission; 8 as national or multi-state parties and 16 as regional parties. While the divergence between the votes polled and the seats won which the electoral system brought about had worked for the Congress in the past, in 1967 it went against it. If this trend continued, the Study observed: "it was clear that the greater the extent to which the other parties combined, pooled their votes and presented as few candidates against the Congress as possible, the greater will be the loss of seats by the Congress in all constituencies where it held a marginal lead over the parties due to the scattering of the votes".

Before 1967, there were only a few coalitions. There were two coalitions in the period 1952-57 in PEPSU and Andhra Pradesh and one each in Orissa (1957-62) and in Kerala (1960-64). After the 1967 general election the figure rose to 8. Coalitions were formed in Kerala, West Bengal, Orissa, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

"If well-planned coalitions are formed before the elections, they will develop a capacity of lasting longer and becoming more effective in actual functioning. It will take a long time, not less than 25 years to develop a two party system in India ... In most of the European countries which are democratic, coalitions are accepted as a matter of fact"

"A Plague on Both Your Houses"

I am all for the concept of coalitions and I have always admired the stable coalitions in Germany and elsewhere, but that is entirely different from trying for a third time to give a trial to an unprincipled coming together of parties with no common basis whose only cementing force is the hatred of Indira Gandhi or Rajiv Gandhi. Twice is enough for me and, I imagine, for most people in India.

I am aware that those who advocate a coalition in Delhi after the next elections prefer it as a "lesser evil" to the present Union Cabinet. If there is anything I learned from Mahatma Gandhi, it was not to prefer a lesser evil because, as he pointed out, all evils are evil and should be rejected. Also, one doesn't know till later which is actually the lesser of the two evils with which one is faced. "A plague on both your houses" is my own position in the present context.

Minoo Masani

The Study was optimistic that "As parties increasingly aim at compatibility in entering into alliance, the ugly in-coalition stresses and conflicts, mainly due to ideological and programmatic incompatibility of the partners witnessed after 1967, may prove to be a passing phase". It emphasised that while coalitions were inevitable, they had to be based on programmes. "If the broad lines of political evolution as emerging from the results of the fourth General Elections are any guide, coalitions cannot always be avoided, and may become inevitable in certain circumstances, if the alternative to it is instability or inefficient government. However, Indian experience has shown that where a coalition was unprincipled, formed purely for the sake of power, it had not endured; on the other hand, where it has been made up of parties with a programme broadly compatible with their ideologies, it has led to a stable government, as in the case of Orissa, and to some extent Kerala (if we overlook the Muslim League and the controversial attitudes of individual Ministers)".

There is another aspect which the

Study did not emphasise. The members of the coalition must accept the coalition not as a temporary convenience to be exploited cynically, but as an enduring understanding at least for the duration of the term of Parliament. There must be a will to work the coalition earnestly. A coalition is doomed if any of its constituents seeks to impose its own identity or will on the coalition. The Home Ministry's Study pointed out a feature which makes the difference between stable and unstable coalitions – the behaviour of the larger parties. They are known as "the anchors of the coalition". It noted: "... In each country one or two parties can usually be identified as providing this anchorage. So confirmed has this principle of anchorage provided by the four parties of Italy – Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, Liberals and Republicans – become that the word *quadri partito* has got into the political vocabulary". And Italy has known nothing but coalition rule in the last quarter century.

The recent experience of coalition rule is encouraging. At least at the State level since 1977 as we have seen in Bengal and Kerala, coalition rule has been durable and to a large extent successful. The people of these two states seem to have accepted this arrangement. In Kerala it is a case of one coalition vs another.

Feasibility of Coalitions

If coalitions are viewed in their proper perspective not only will the fears of instability be proved to be unreal, but even the apprehensions regarding the introduction of proportional representation will be allayed. The present electoral system based on the winner taking all in the "first past the post" system produces an artificial stability – sometimes not even that – in which the popular vote is not accurately reflected in the seats secured by the various political parties. Once coalitions are accepted as a norm, people will not look askance at an electoral system which, accurately reflecting the popular vote, strengthens the multi-party system. The experience of West Germany belies the criticism that coalitions are unstable. If Italy provides the contrast, the reason lies not in the nature of coalitions, but very obviously in the nature of the political parties. What people often forget is that in very many of the countries which are governed by a single party, that party

itself is essentially a coalition of various interests and forces. Even in our own country, for over two decades since independence the Indian National Congress was essentially a coalition. The two powerful personalities in the first Cabinet, Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the Deputy Prime Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, belonged to the same party but their differences on outlook, approach and style were fundamental. A political party which can accommodate personalities as different as Shri S.K. Patil and Shri V.K. Krishna Menon, till as late as 1967, is a coalition of diverse elements even if it functions under a single flag. As a British scholar, Prof. Richard Rose, pointed out in his book, "The Problem of Party Government", "in a sense, Britain is always governed by coalition; for the Conservative and Labour Parties, like any party with millions of voters inevitably combine politicians with contrasting points of view. One of the chief problems of party leadership is to reconcile outlooks of differing factions and tendencies within a party so that supporters can concentrate upon what unites rather than what divides them". In his opinion, the distinction between the British and the European continental practice is that between Government by "a coalition maintained *within one party* as against coalition *between parties*".

In his view, "coalition Government does not necessarily cause ministerial instability". Ministerial re-shuffles produce as much change in the personnel of British Government as in coalition governments elsewhere. Except that in coalition politics a Cabinet re-shuffle can replace a Prime Minister while the other Ministers remain in place, whereas in Britain the Prime Minister remains in place and other Ministers are changed.

Instability can be prevented by a simple reform which is desirable on its own merits. It is the "constructive vote of confidence" as in West Germany whereby the existing Ministry cannot be toppled by a mere motion of no-confidence, since the coalition also nominates the leader of the Government to be formed thereafter.

Advantages of Coalition Governments

The positive advantages of a coalition are innumerable. It will do away with the excesses of "Prime Ministerial

Government" and restore the importance of the Cabinet. A coalition government can lead to a more effective harmonisation of diverse interests and prevent acute conflicts whether between the various elements within the States or between the Union and the States. The communal situation in Punjab when the Akalis and the Jan Sangh formed a coalition in the sixties and when the Akali Party was a member of the Janata Party Government was far better than it was otherwise. This is not to deny some inherent weaknesses of coalitions. These stem more from the weaknesses of the political parties themselves than from the fact of power-sharing in a coalition. If the members of a coalition resort to unprincipled horse trading or partisan interference in administration or resort to demagoguery the coalition would certainly become an arena of conflict. It is clear that in such a situation, there simply was no political basis for a coalition in the first place. A veteran administrator, Shri L.P. Singh has opined that "a coalition Government, if it is to be formed would not be a calamity; it might in fact serve the country's wider interests better at this juncture". Shri L.P. Singh has put his finger on the heart of the matter.

The necessity to form a coalition does not altogether exclude an element of free choice. But here I would like to make a distinction between coalition politics and coalition rule. In regard to the former all political parties and groups in the opposition irrespective of ideological differences should work together to expose the lapses of the ruling party. However, broad agreement on basic issues is necessary among the parties to make a coalition government credible and effective. To be successful, coalitions must be formed in a spirit of willing cooperation and with a determination to make a success of them. The duty to make them succeed is as clear as the duty to forge coalitions on the basis of agreed programmes. The alternative to the single party national alternative is a coalition of like-minded parties.

Dr. Hemachandra Hegde is the Chief Minister of Karnataka.

The Crimes of Stalin

It does my heart good to read the news trickling out of Moscow these days to the world press and the Indian press. It is good to live long enough to see the truth as you told it in the 30's vindicated in the 80's. The recitation of Stalin's crimes, obviously with the approval of Mr. Gorbachev, takes many forms and covers many events.

Boris Pasternak

When Boris Pasternak was alive and till he died, he was cruelly persecuted by the Kremlin. When his book *Dr. Zhivago* was awarded the Nobel Prize, he was prevented from going to Sweden to receive it and the book was banned. But we are told now the prize winning novel was legally published in Moscow on 14th December 1987. Commenting on this development, the well-known poet Evgeny Yevtushenko has recently written: "Now we are atoning for our guilt before Pasternak, and it must not be partial atonement but full atonement". He has demanded that the Soviet Union must acknowledge the Nobel Prize awarded to Pasternak which Pasternak himself refused to accept during his life time as he was left with a false choice: "Either the Nobel Prize or his Motherland".

Nikolai Bukharin

Another person who has been belatedly, rehabilitated is Nikolai Bukharin, Stalin's main opponent through the thirties. Now *Prauda* (which means 'truth'), which once condemned him as a fascist spy and gloated over his execution, reports on the recent investigations by the Soviet Supreme Court (which had convicted Bukharin) showing that the poor man had been tortured mercilessly while in confinement. *Prauda* says: "The accusations were built on confessions. There was no other proof... Through threats, violence, and deception, the accused were coerced to give false evidence

against themselves and other people".



Boris Pasternak

Kirov

Stalin murdered a large number of people in 1934, accusing them of the death of Kirov, the party leader in Leningrad whose popularity surpassed Stalin's and who had become a threat to him. I remember hazarding a guess in 1935 that it was Stalin who had murdered Kirov and then murdered a large number of innocent people on the charge of assassinating Kirov! Now, in February 1988, comes a Soviet documentary which broadly hints that it was Stalin who murdered Kirov and not those who had been falsely charged with the crime.

A Play in Moscow

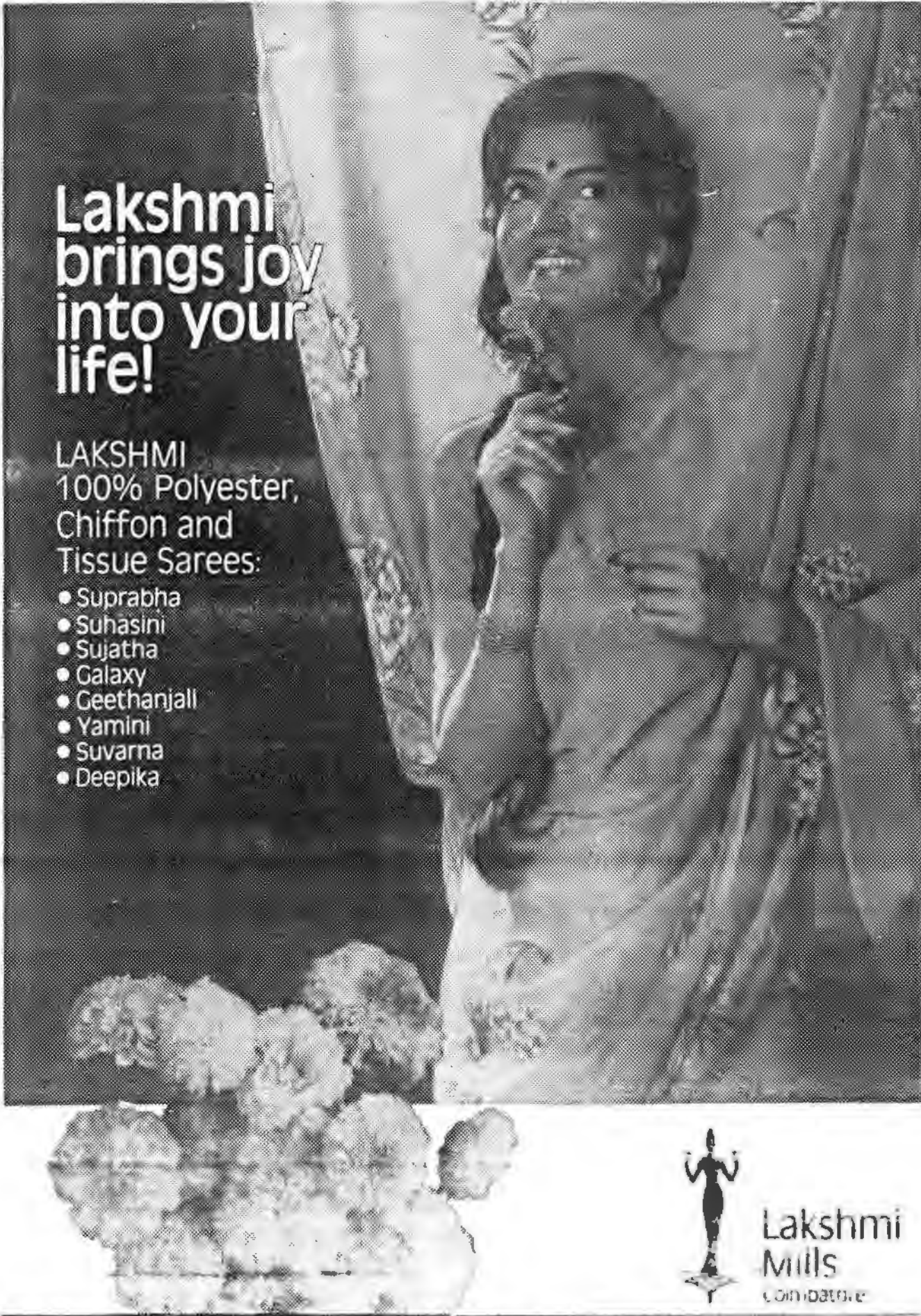
The most amusing of all is however a play shown in Moscow named 'Onward, Ever Onward' by the veteran dramatist Mikhail Shatrov. In one of the scenes Leon Trotsky accuses Stalin of having him murdered in Mexico. Says Trotsky's ghost to Stalin's ghost: "You killed me without even an appearance of a trial". An even more interesting scene is where Stalin meets Lenin and Lenin turns his back on him, which is not surprising considering how brutally he treated Lenin and his wife Krups-

kaya during the latter's last year of life when he lay paralyzed in bed, unable to destroy the monster he had created. During that interview Stalin asks Lenin: "You surely don't deny my Communist convictions?" Lenin replies: "I most certainly do".

Stalin's death was as morbid as that of a Mafia chief. When in 1952 his health failed, his physician Dr. Vinogradov recommended that he should take rest and desist from public activity. Recalling how he himself had isolated Lenin under the pretext of concern for his health, Stalin's guilty conscience now made him feel that Dr. Vinogradov was doing to him what he had done to Lenin. So he got Dr. Vinogradov and other doctors arrested and tortured to confess that there was a doctors' plot to bump him off. Stalin died but the doctors survived and were in due course rehabilitated.

Indian Friends of Stalin

One rejoices that in Gorbachev's Russia part of the truth is at last being told. But what about those contemptible people in India who glorified Stalin and maligned his victims? Jawaharlal Nehru who was among them has now passed away. But there are people in the two communist parties who are still alive and who can, if they are decent enough, confess their own errors and lies. Accusing me of forgery and lies does not really matter, but accusing Bukharin, Zinoviev, Marshal Tukachevsky and others of being fascist agents is a crime of which they have yet to absolve themselves. Mr. E.M.S. Namboodiripad was among those who stared in that lie at that time. As recently as five or six years ago, the CPM celebrated the anniversary of that monster Stalin. In the light of the latest revelations from Moscow, is it not time that these guilty men confess?



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Tamas

I watched on Doordarshan the serial *Tamas*, the controversial film which has been the subject of litigation. I found the film rather pedestrian and not a patch on *Garam Hava*, an earlier film which dealt with the same theme of the evils that accompanied the unnecessary partition of India in 1947. But then, if pedestrian films are to be banned, few of the inane serials on Doordarshan will survive!

The message of the film is loud and clear — that communal violence is a disgusting phenomenon which must be eschewed. Decent citizens will therefore rejoice that two judges of the Bombay High Court arrived at a decision that there is nothing in the film against the public interest which should stop the film from being exhibited. They observed that it is absurd to suggest that the films would lead to communal riots and violence. The judges also found that far, from being biased against any particular community, the film was equally aimed at extremism on both sides. I will vouch for this after seeing all the instalments of the film. As the judges rightly observed: "it is an anatomy of the tragic period of partition."

While Justice Lentin and Justice Sujata Manohar deserve to be congratulated on their enlightened judgement, I myself am particularly happy because I do not believe in censorship of any kind. George Bernard Shaw said all that is to be said on the subject when he denounced censorship of all kinds and pointed out that once we start banning works of literature or art, we shall not know where to stop.

"You Cannot Nationalise a Human Being"

We all know about TELCO built by Mr. Sumant Moolgaokar over a life time. When Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister, she once asked him to join the Planning Commission and look after the so-called public sector. When he declined the offer she protested and asked why he

could not do for the Government what he had done for Tatas. Mr. Moolgaokar's reply was that Government could never give the encouragement and freedom of action that Tatas had given him. He then delivered himself of a memorable remark of which Milton Friedman could well be proud: "Madam you can nationalise a machine but you cannot nationalise a human being."

I was reminded of this when I had occasion recently to see another side of Telco's activities at Pimpri near Poona. Instead of yielding to the usual trade union demand that the Company should employ employees' children and dependents, which would result in an unproductive labour force, Telco have encouraged the formation of co-operative societies for men and women dependents of Telco employees which provide them with productive employment and an income.

I saw a women's co-operative society which employs 186 employees' dependents to whom the company supply wooden scrap — small pieces of wood left after making seats for truck drivers. From the scrap the co-operative society makes wood packing cases too, which the Company buys from the co-operative at a commercial price on a competitive basis. A worker in this society makes around Rs. 800 a month and the turnover of the co-operative is Rs. 45 lakhs.

Similarly, women dependents of employees whether wife, widowed mother or daughter make in the co-operative, files, masalas and electronic parts for trucks which again are bought by Telco at a commercial price. So these activities are hi-tech and it is a pleasure to watch them. Mrs. Prabha Kale runs this co-operative and her story made me feel that she could make a good subject for a future instalment of *SM* on Doordarshan one of these days.

There is yet another co-operative society where women dependents make *chapatis* for Telco workers. Every woman makes 500 *chapatis*

per day and, oh! boy, do they smell good! These women make around Rs. 600 a month.

The moral of all this excellent work is that genuine concern is shown not by creating jobs as the government does for clerks who are unemployed most of the time or by keeping alive 'sick mills' which should be allowed to die a natural death as in communist Yugoslavia but by the TELCO way.

All honour to Mr. Sumant Moolgaokar, Mr. Mehrunkar, the Deputy General Manager in charge of Human Resources and their colleagues.

Rama Swarup

I recently paid a visit to Delhi after a long time to attend a seminar. I naturally took the opportunity to go and see my old acquaintance, Rama Swarup, who is under trial for over two years already, on a charge of violating the Official Secrets Act. The Delhi High Court released him on bail but the Supreme Court in their wisdom overruled the High Court and placed him in house custody in his own home and only allowed visitors to call on him provided a police official was present at the conversation.

I had an interesting chat with my old acquaintance, with the policeman listening in. I was sorry to learn from Rama Swarup that his case was proceeding slowly and that probably another year would pass before he was acquitted. I was also sad to learn from him that his friends and relations in Delhi do not visit him although permitted by the Supreme Court. Why? They are frightened. But frightened of what? I asked one or two of them but they could not give me a convincing reply. I can only say that they are victims of terror inspired partly by the Prime Minister's Secretariat, but mostly by their own fear complex. What a terrible state of affairs for the citizens of the capital of a great country!

The Theory of Development and the Future

Amlan Datta

Conventional theories of development cannot show the way to that deeper transformation of society which we need today. The theory of development has to be connected to a wider philosophy of society.

In our country and in many other countries of the Third World, the State is assuming a big role in the area of economic development. The role is not just restricted to the drawing up of projects; in many major areas of business and industry, government undertakings have been established. State control of private enterprise is also present on an extensive scale.

Industry and Agriculture

It can often be seen in these countries that the extent to which the state pays heed to the planning and implementation of industrial projects is much less evident in agriculture and rural development. Heavy industries are given particular importance by the state. There are a number of reasons for this. To start with, there is a special relationship between heavy industries and defence. Apart from that, it is difficult for the central government to look after a number of small enterprises whereas it is relatively easy to supervise a limited number of larger ones. In the developing countries, due to poverty, the demand for commodities is insufficient. The demand of the internal market is limited and entry into foreign markets is not easy. In such a situation the easy way out is to decide to produce, as far as possible within the country, those goods which had to be imported till now. These goods are sometimes produced by large and heavy industries. It has been argued that machine industries should be given priority in order to make the base for development strong, that is, to make the country self-sufficient.

By the same token there is no reason why agriculture should not be given similar priority. We need not a means sum for the import of foodgrains. Though we have not reached a stage where we no longer have to depend

upon the import of foodgrains during normal seasons the want for food has not been removed. There is still a shortage of agricultural products like oil, pulses and sugar. The scarcity of fish and milk is also marked. This means, there is as much need for diversification of production in agriculture as in industry.

Systems Not Mutually Contradictory

All this is generally acceptable. The moot point is the governmental control system. How much can reasonably be left in the hands of the market is in itself a major question. The issue has gained importance due to the fact that even in countries where the policy of depending upon the market was not recognized, there can be seen a tendency towards it. In the economies of countries such as China and East Europe, the tendency is becoming clear. Actually, a

In this, the third and concluding instalment of the Ashok Kumar Sarkar Lectures, Prof. Amala Dutta draws attention to the need for paying much greater attention to the diversification of production in agriculture. Arguing for a restoration of the concept of village *Swaraj* Prof. Dutt advocates the formation of Village Committees to monitor developmental activities in the rural areas.

He points out the close relationship between the army organisation and the industrial revolution on the one hand and the bureaucracy and corruption on the other.

Prof. Dutt concludes with a plea for the development of a new Indian theory of development has to be connected to a wider philosophy of society. We are indebted to the thinkers of the 18th and 19th centuries. But our responsibilities lie toward the future. This future has summoned mankind towards the path of new thinking.

new truth is being gradually revealed through experience. This new truth is that things which appeared as contradictory in the face of argument, like planning and the market system, co-operatives and the family farm, are in fact not so contradictory and that a combination of them is possible and required.

It is not difficult to demonstrate in theory that the choice of the market departs very often from the social good. The government represents the people, at least it is supposed to do so in a democratic system. The businessman seeks his own interest, the government acts in the interest of the common people. Looked at it this way, government control is good under any situation. Due to several reasons the debate cannot be resolved this way. Adam Smith demonstrated that when we act out of our own interests, it cannot be presumed that we necessarily act contrary to the interests of society. The peasant cultivates for his own interest, and sells vegetables and eggs in the market. He does this definitely out of personal interest, but by this, the interests of society are also served. Thus Smith's inference was that if the structure of the market does not lean too far towards monopoly, if the government does its duty in certain matters, then harmony between the men of commerce and society can generally be expected. Again, just because the government acts in the name of the people, it cannot be taken for granted that its decisions are for the benefit of the people. The government has to act through the bureaucracy and under the political pressures of the ruling party. Just as the market in actuality does not reach a perfect form, it is also impractical to imagine an ideal situation in the case of the bureaucracy and party politics.

There will be trouble if one is driven by pure theory in these matters.

We can see in front of our eyes the problem which has come to stay in reality. As means of governmental control there have appeared licences, permits, etc. At each step we have to get clearances and permits from the bureaucracy. Thus, work is hindered at every step, and it has become customary that time is wasted, and then bribes offered for every job to be done. Disrupting work has become lucrative. This is going on at every level. We are familiar with the spectre of corruption in our country. This is not absent in other countries as well.

Keynes Only Partly Right

In such a situation there are arguments in favour of reducing the complexities of government control. The market is unfeeling, but so is the bureaucracy. It is no use blaming the bureaucrat in particular. This does happen if central control is too complicated. It is not surprising that in many countries, even in socialistic systems, there has been a return to dependence upon the market. Nevertheless, this return cannot be unconditional. All human needs cannot be satisfied together. Among the many competing necessities in society, to decide which has to be given what degree of priority, there have to be some conclusions drawn and planning done by the state. The public and private industrial organizations must function within that framework. We have left behind the age in which there was an almost unquestioned reliance upon the market in the mainstream of economic thought. The basis of the old assurance has been weakened by the influence of Keynes's thought. He had warned everybody in a memorable way that there is a danger in leaving the whole of the country's capital investments to the market. But we are no longer in such a position. Keynes's anxiety was there regarding the total amount of capital invested, not regarding its distribution. The problem in reality does not concern this only. There are many other problems which did not find a place in Keynes's thought.

Regional Dis-equilibrium

In regional development, dis-equilibrium is one such problem con-

fronting the whole world including the sub-continent. Developed areas become even more developed; the gulf with the undeveloped regions continues to widen. A city becomes a metropolis. It grows, drawing sustenance from its environs. The market structure cannot prevent this tendency. It is necessary to check this through an alert internal policy. Accordingly, plans and decisions have to be made and put to use. Otherwise we will become trapped in a vicious circle which the market cannot break.

The Calcutta urban agglomeration is a clear example of such a vicious circle. There is no end to problems in this overexpanded metropolis. Projects of thousands of millions of rupees are being thought of in order to save the city, to make its transport, housing and water supply tolerable, for the improvement of its environment. When the vil-

There is need for planned decentralisation. A local market and a small town in the midst of a few villages: a medium-sized city at the heart of a few towns – thus according to a plan the hierarchy of villages and towns and their development is possible

lages of the whole of Bengal do not have minimum facilities for education, health and food, whether this amount of money should be lavished upon Calcutta and whether Calcutta's problems will at all be solved, is a matter for consideration. With the situation in Calcutta becoming a bit more tolerable, many more people from the neighbouring poor areas will be attracted towards the city as a result of which all the extra arrangements for transport will yet again become wanting in proportion to the need. Have we thought about this possibility? This is the dilemma: to make Calcutta a suitable place for the

functions ascribed to it, a huge amount of money has to be spent, keeping the rest of Bengal starved. If that is possible, if Calcutta is made fit for use, then a swarm of people would probably spill over into this place and the roads will again become too congested for use.

There is only one way to get out of this dilemma. Calcutta is West Bengal's main business centre, the only port of Eastern India, the capital of the State and the centre for administration, and the largest educational centre in Eastern India. The result of this convergence has neither been good, nor is it necessary. It is the good fortune of Pakistan that Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad did not have to be lumped together. New York is the business centre, Washington the capital, while the centre for education lies in another state. The secretariat and the educational centres could be elsewhere in West Bengal. This way Calcutta, and with it West Bengal, can regain some of its balance. This is not possible without clear policy-making. Some inconveniences might appear in the accustomed pattern of life of the new middle classes. But this is the right path for the future of West Bengal.

Calcutta is just an example. On the whole, there is need for planned decentralization. A local market and a small town in the midst of a few villages: a medium sized city at the heart of a few small towns – thus, according to a plan the hierarchy of villages and towns and their development is possible. Roads, health and educational centres should be arranged this way. This is the path to natural transformation. But due to various reasons there is a deviation from this path. Once deviated, it is very difficult to return to it. That is why a planned



John Maynard Keynes

effort is required.

Village Committees

Associated with decentralization is the question of ownership. Ownership or proprietorship in practice denotes a particular kind of cluster of rights. In capitalism such rights are centred in the hands of the capitalist groups, and in statism, in the hands of the state. Rabin-dranath Tagore had shown the difference between socialism and statism or *etatism*. We are not so careful in our use of words. There remains an ambiguity here. Even if we say that all authority is vested in society, it is not clear how those rights are being implemented in reality. Some of the systems known as socialism are actually different forms of statism, resulting in overcentralization. The picture of a decentralized social system is different. There, the claims associated with proprietorship are not centralized anywhere, but arranged in different layers in different orders of society connected to duties and responsibilities. Gandhi had said planning should start from the village. In a country like ours many tasks become simplified if the villages can be organized, otherwise most efforts become fruitless. Let us take up for example, education for the masses. Till now our success in the spread of public education is not encouraging. It would be better to employ a committee made up of one or more villages in the work. Otherwise it would be difficult to do away with mismanagement and fraud. Who will see to it whether the money allotted for adult education is being spent for that purpose; whether the teacher is doing his or her work regularly; what difficulties the students face? These things cannot be done properly by officers and supervisors. Funds are misused and failures obscured by false reports.

I have already discussed the importance of population control. Here too, we haven't been able to show sufficient success. Women's education has not yet been extended in this country, especially to the rural areas. It has been observed in surveys that there is a close link between women's education and birth control. We will remain backward in these two areas i.e. women's education and birth control, so long as they are not properly introduced into the rural regions. Here too, village commi-

A strong argument in favour of the redistribution of land is that, by this, the base of democracy will be strengthened in rural society. But the party system often acts contrary to the ideas of village **swaraj**. Political parties become the instruments of centralization of power. Jayaprakash Narayan and Vinoba Bhave have voiced their warnings over this.

tees have to be considered. In the rural areas where everyone knows everyone else, work progresses easily if the village committees are taken into confidence. Along with health and education, it is desirable to reach essential foodstuffs cheaply or at reasonable prices to the poorest of the villages. One fault of the market is that it is not possible to meet the most urgent needs of those who do not have the purchasing power. Without the means to feed the poorest of the village, it will not be possible to arrange for their education. India has fallen behind in this regard in comparison with China and Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka has the advantage of being a small country. It is relatively easy for the administration there to set up a national service system in the villages. China's organizational powers have come to the help of such tasks. In India, organized village committees are required.

But the work is not easy. There are of course, not many left to shed tears over the abolition of the zamindari system. A strong argument in favour of the redistribution of land is that, by this, the base of democracy will be strengthened in rural society. But the party system often acts contrary to the ideas of village **swaraj**. Political parties become the instruments of centralization of power. Jayaprakash Narayan and Vinoba Bhave have voiced their warnings over this. There has been much wrangling over how the distribution of land for agriculture and organization in a country like ours should be. The issue is a complex one for many reasons. Whichever solution we choose, some

basic facts, some words of warning, have to be remembered.

Markets or Cooperatives?

The pressure of population on land is excessive in this country. After fixing a reasonable upper limit for agricultural land per family, if the surplus is divided amongst the landless, then the amount of land coming into the hands of the landless families is not enough for their subsistence. That is, even after getting hold of some land, they have to cultivate other people's fields or search for other kinds of work. In such a situation it becomes difficult for them to retain their land. The problem will not be solved by turning all land into collective farms. The population pressure will still remain inside the farms. There is no firm basis for the belief that crop production will rise remarkably due to this change. In the last thirty years the production of crops in both India and China have grown approximately at the same rate. The record of the Soviet Union is also unsatisfactory in this regard.

There are some good arguments in favour of cooperatives, but good agricultural work is not possible in large communes. China's experience is enlightening in this context. The commune system was introduced there in 1958. After experimenting for some time the system has been rejected. Communes are still there, but the commune is not suited to such work. Cultivation is best done by families or relatively small cooperatives. Bigger organizations and communes can be entrusted with the responsibilities of integration, coordination, and the task of investing large capital. China's agrarian system has broken out of the centralization of big farms. The role of markets is also increasing there. Actually both the market and the cooperatives are necessary. Different cooperatives are required for various kinds of activities and responsibilities. In the rural economy an important role for family enterprise is essential. After 1980 there was a remarkable growth of cultivation done by families in China. There is a debate regarding its good and bad points. Different countries have to arrive at their own decisions in these matters with experimentation in their respective situations.

Once upon a time there was a balance between agriculture and other occupations in our rural economy. A silent proof of this scattered all over the

country is the size and variety of the different occupational castes. That equilibrium broke down one day. The problem was aggravated by the rise in population.

Modern technology in this context cannot be neglected, but neither can it be accepted indiscriminately. Here the issues of decentralization and industrialization come in. A large section of the people employed in agriculture have to be brought out of it into rural industries or outside the village for some productive work, otherwise the economic problem of the village cannot be removed. What was just referred to as rural industry does not necessarily have to be situated within the village itself. It can be situated in the small town which lies at the centre of a few villages. Just as a change is called for in credit policy and in the method of banking for decentralized industrialization, so is there the necessity for the reflection of the new objectives in the organization of research and the choice of its problems. Each area of planning might incorporate a small town along with some villages and markets. By joining small circles with a greater one we can progress towards a national economy.

An indication of such an outline for social and economic activities was there in Gandhi's thinking and his writings. Both Gandhi and Rabindranath visualized the organization of their ideal society for the country, taking into account the village as the starting point. They drew an outline for education based on this. This is the way out of the hiatus between the new middle class and the rest of the country. But they did not mean to be restricted within the confines of the village. Rabindranath wrote: "One thing has to be emphasized. When I wish the villages of our country to come alive, I never wish rusticity to return. Rusticity is the kind of notion, sense, belief and action which is severed from that which lies outside the limits of the village ... the role of learning and intellect in the present day is world-wide ... the life that has to be brought into the village, its elements are not trivial and narrow, it is that by which the nature of man is not stunted or obscured by darkness in any respect. (Palliprakkriti)

It is a mistake to neglect science and modern technology. However, the application of knowledge and science are

desirable in harmony with the form and order of society we aim at. Rabindranath wanted a communion with the world. So did Gandhiji. They did not see any conflict between this and the idea of village organization. The root and soil of fellow-feeling and neighbourliness lies in the village, excluding which there can be no solution to the world's problems.

Here the question of a philosophy of life comes in; at the base of modern economics is utilitarianism. Many criticisms have been levelled against it. Perhaps the main weakness of utilitarianism is that it looks at happiness in an atomized way. Thereby the competition for happiness between individuals gains primacy, the complementarity of joy amongst human beings is not acknowledge so much. Ultimately the integrity of society is endangered by this. Thus we are not surprised when we see a leading thinker like John Stuart Mill having set out with a vision of utilitarianism, did not feel at ease within the limits of the doctrine. The hedonist philosophy of life we have discussed before, its philosophical and practical ground lies in utilitarianism. There is indeed a sphere where happiness assumes such a fragmented and self centered form. This cannot be denied altogether. But accepting this as the final truth, there is no way to reach the solution to the problems of the present age.

It is difficult to give a clear indication as to how the noble aspects of the individual's consciousness and society can be awakened. Man learns a good deal gradually through crises. Environmental pollution teaches us the need for new perspectives towards nature and the environment. Accumulated frustrations of competitive society point towards communitarian organization. The monstrosity of warfare repeatedly reminds us of the necessity for an international peace organization. Again, the failure of organizations leaves behind the lesson that organization is not the last word. Consciousness has its own role too, something which has no organizational alternative. What is required is a healthy sphere of new consciousness and organization. It neither begins nor ends with any contingency. It is not easy to break the chains of *a priori* notions. Still, experimentation in new directions has started.

A new vision of society is hovering like a dream in the minds of idealists. The ideal is not just a figment of im-

agination without substance. It is as if the idea is taking form and peeping into the stage of history, then departing. In the present day on the basis of this, an epoch making notion has taken shape regarding the organization of the army. Militarism and bureaucracy are the two pillars of today's society marked by inequality. We have to remember that there is close relationship between army organization and the industrial revolution. Today's military system has been built around heavy industries and modern transportation.

Just as a change is called for in credit policy and in the method of banking for decentralized industrialization, so is there the necessity for the reflection of the new objectives in the organisation of research and the choice of its problems.

The Army and the Bureaucracy

During the period of the French Revolution there was not such a big difference between the army and the common people. During the last part of the 19th century, in the age of Bismarck the gulf between the two became enormous. Engels noticed this during the latter part of his life. The trend has progressed much further after that. Keeping pace with it, the other pillar of overcentralized society, the bureaucracy, has grown. This is indeed the state today in capitalism and also in socialism. In every country recognized as a big power, modern army organization and heavy industries, overcentralized society and economic planning — all these are related to each other. Marx saw society as divided into two classes, the propertied and the propertiless. He saw an uncompromising conflict between the two. The propertied will fight to the last to

protect their property for all their interests lie therein. But in today's reality, other dimensions have been added, and no calculation can come out true without these. Capitalism is not the way out, this is true. But that is not enough. The new class does not need the prop of the conventional system of property. They are not obliged to fight to death for this system. In the meantime, an alternative basis for their privileges has been created. In today's society the new middle class has come back and has found stability around the two interrelated props of society, the bureaucracy and the army.

In order to destroy this we have to destroy the organization of the bureaucracy as well as the army. Mao, the Chinese leader, had taken a step towards a new organization. Marx's proletariat had been the child of the industrial revolution; a part of the advanced urban civilization. Under the leadership of Mao, China's revolutionary army became the comrade of the peasant, inseparable from the village. Thereafter, the idea spread across countries. Even during the war of liberation in Bang-

ladesh, this new idealism had reached at least a few.

The path China has taken today has deviated much from that which Mao took. The army and the bureaucracy are sitting pretty in Bangladesh. Revolutionaries in Bangladesh are again thinking in terms of an armed mass uprising, perhaps also in China and other countries. But to foment a mass uprising is not the main thing, the problem lies in the fact that the edifice of inequality grows repeatedly out of the ruins.

Need for New Thinking

Who will show the way towards a stable embodiment of the new idealism? It has little in common with nationalism. It cannot be reconciled with the hunger for power. Reliable leadership cannot be expected from any big power. Maybe some small country will show the way. And for its reception the field will be prepared slowly in the hearts of people all over the world. The path leads to organized non-violence. Or else, we have to accept organized inequality. The future swings between these two alternatives. Is non-violence possible? Can inequality be tolerated?

The question is — which way are we going? In today's consciousness inequality is gradually becoming intolerable. If this cannot be checked, the end lies in the suicide of man. There is no dearth of its indications in present day society.

Conventional theories of development cannot show the way to that deeper transformation of society which we need today. Military spending cannot be reduced merely on the strength of the argument that there is widespread poverty on one face of the earth while on the other, the lion's share of the nation's income is being spent on armed resources. With this, is necessary a new foresight and imagination for a new future, as also determination and unified effort.

In conclusion, the theory of development has to be connected to a wider philosophy of society. We are indebted to the thinkers of the 18th and 19th centuries. But our responsibilities lie toward the future. This future has summoned mankind towards the path of new thinking.

Translated by Mr. Sudipta Sen.

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THE RURAL PERSPECTIVE

Droughts Need Not Lead to Scarcity

Bhanu Pratap Singh

Those who are never tired of narrating the success story of Indian agriculture have failed even to take note of the fact that agriculturists who had brought about the Green Revolution are poorer today in terms of purchasing power than they were 15 years ago. The great beneficiaries of the so-called socialist dispensation in India have been the administrative, defence and other services who produce no tangible products.

Can droughts be managed? The reply to this question is both "No" and "Yes". The "No" is in respect of the current drought, which is bound to lead to widespread suffering, if it really turns out to be the worst drought of the century. The "Yes" is in respect of future droughts, if proper policy decisions are taken now. Emergency relief measures, like fire-fighting operations, stop the fire after some damage but do not ensure future safety, which requires advance precautions.

Mr. Rajiv Gandhi claimed in his Independence Day speech last year that food production had increased three times, and that in spite of the drought, the country will pull through without having to import foodgrains. Neither the foodgrain production increased three times, nor is the country likely to pull through without having to import.

Contrary to what the Prime Minister stated the increase is less than two and half times and almost all of it neutralized by population growth. It falls short of the 180 kgms regarded as the minimum for adequate nutrition. At the current rate of progress of foodgrain production the ideal of adequate nutrition will be reached only by 2010!

Though it's too early to predict the foodgrain production for 1987-88, we are likely to run short by about 2 million tons. It would, however, be most imprudent to allow government stocks to run down to zero, and depend on the frugality of the people to absorb the shortage of 2m tons. As soon as the government stocks are below 5m tons, there would be a tremendous rush for hoarding of foodgrains, and the poor will be reduced to starvation. The government

machinery, corrupt as it is, will not be able to prevent hoarding in the light of the precarious foodgrains situation. The government should not stand on prestige, if it wants to prevent starvation deaths in the country. If large-scale hoarding and acute shortages affecting the vulnerable sections of society are to be prevented, government stocks, at no point of time, should be allowed to fall below 5m tons, even if it means having to import foodgrains.

Declining Growth Rate

Why has such a serious situation been allowed to develop? Government spokesman will certainly blame the rain god for his truancy, but the production figures since 1970-71 tell a different story. These tell us: (i) that except for the freak performance in 1983-84, which produced all round complacency, production in none of the years of the VIth and VIIth plans were equal to the target set for the year, and (ii) that as compared to the annual growth rate of 2.48%, foodgrain production during the period 1970-71 and 78-79, declined to 1.66% while population has been increasing at the rate of over 2% per annum. These were clear enough signals of the impending danger, but every one in the Government of India was too busy cooking statistical lies, and coining expressions such as the "high resilience of Indian agriculture" to heed these signals. In earlier years too, they had been blaming the monsoon. But these were only excuses, for the drought was local during the last two years, while this year it is an almost all-India phenomenon. Paradoxically while in 1985-86 we were officially informed of the failure of the monsoon we had a

record production of rice, a crop that needs enormous water!

Comparative figures of agricultural production indicate that our productivity per hectare is only 66.17% of that rest of the world (1985-86) in spite of the tall claims made about the success story of Indian agriculture and the Green Revolution being described as making quantum jumps. The crops of the Green Revolution have withered, while in most third world countries productivity is even higher than ours.

Do droughts, floods, and other natural calamities visit only India, and not other countries? According to F.A.O. figures, between the years 1974 and 1985, the maximum decline in production of cereals in any single year, compared to the preceding one, was 12.58% in India, 15.97% in Canada, 36.31% in U.S.A., 43.71% in Australia, and 17.37% in the U.S.S.R. From these, it is evident that natural calamities do less damage to production in India, than in other big countries. But in those countries, there is no hue and cry, as in India, about crop failures. The crucial factor is the level of production compared to domestic consumption. If the production level is fairly high, domestic consumption is not affected in years of short production, only exports get reduced. India too should fix targets of production to cover the risk of crop failures.

Nature Not Responsible

One may ask why per hectare yield in India is less than two thirds of the average yield in the rest of the world. Poor productivity in India is not due to natural causes. The trials conducted under the

supervision of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research to determine the production potential of crop-sequences in different parts of India, with the application of recommended doses of inputs, have given an average yield of 9.26 tons per hectare. Thus, it is evident that our productivity potential is over 9 tons per hectare hectares, one of the highest in the world. If we raise our production even to half of this, and that too only on our irrigated lands, our production would be nearly 300 million tons, i.e. twice our present production in the entire area. Thus we have the potential of being amongst the world's largest exporters of foodgrains. Instead, we have remained a marginal case in food self-sufficiency.

Who is to be blamed for this sorry state of affairs? Not the inadequacy of arable land, which inspite of our huge population, on a per capita basis, almost equals the rest of the world. Not the agro-climatic conditions of the country, which are unparalleled anywhere in the world. Not the farmers of the country, who have eagerly adopted the new techniques of production to the extent it was possible within their limited means.

The blame clearly lies with the Government of India, which has been systematically draining out the resources of farmers by turning the terms of trade against them. According to "Research Highlights 1986-87", a Government of India publication, prices of farm inputs have increased 2.35 times faster as compared to those of farm-output. Such a price situation is not conducive to faster agricultural growth. The total net national income from agriculture during the five years of the VIth Plan was Rs. 2,38,498 crores. During the same period, farm prices on an average were only 78.9 percent of the non-farm prices. From this it follows that the loss suffered by farmers during the VIth Plan period, due to intra-parity prices, was of the order of Rs. 63,780 crores, which is roughly two and a half times the total investment on agricultural and rural development during the VIth Plan. But for such exploitation of the farm sector, our level of foodgrain production would have been much higher, and a decline of 25m. tons in production would not have mattered.

If one were to take the distribution of national income, for the period 1970 to

1986 we notice that the public administration and defence sectors registered five times the growth of agriculture, banking four times, transport nearly four times and manufactures nearly three times. The numbers engaged in agriculture have increased while there has been a stagnation in the rate of growth.

The Irony of the 'Green Revolution'

Those who are never tired of narrating the success story of Indian agriculture have failed even to take note of the fact, that agriculturists who had brought about the Green Revolution are poorer today in terms of purchasing power than they were 15 years ago. The greatest beneficiaries of the so-called socialist dispensation in India have been the administrative, defence and other services, who produce no tangible products; and the greatest losers have been the primary producers, who produce food and raw materials, the vital needs of the nation.



If we wish to avoid a repetition of the present crisis in future, the only way is to produce at least 20% more foodgrains than is required for our adequate nutrition, because no natural calamity has yet reduced our total production by more than 20%. Our most dependable food security lies in increasing production, and not merely in building up buffer stocks.

Droughts Maybe — Scarcity Never

To ensure a more secure future, we should immediately take the following steps:

1. Fulfil the Constitutional promise of universal education, because without it, no progress in agriculture, or other walks of life, is possible.
2. Ensure that the benefits of higher production in agriculture accrue to producers, and are not sucked away by price manipulations.
3. Increase forest cover to at least 33% of the land area, as against less than 10% at present. If we do not accomplish this we will soon exhaust our ground water resources. It is the forest cover, which replenishes our ground water reserves.
4. Stop the waste in our existing irrigation facilities. No less than one third of irrigation water is wasted in *kachha* irrigation channels, before reaching the fields. This can be saved by the use of plastic irrigation pipes, as in other countries. But in India, the pipes (and the raw material needed to manufacture pipes) are heavily taxed, making their use prohibitive. With the use of pipes to convey water, we can increase by one third our irrigation potential, without much investment, and also make irrigation one third cheaper.
5. Establish more agro-based industries, cold stores and warehouses, within easy reach of farmers to intensify and diversify agriculture.

If Indian agriculture is developed even upto fifty percent of its potential, droughts may recur, but scarcity, never.

Karsondas Mulji

Social Reformer, Educationist, Writer, Pamphleteer

Kunjala Modi

Single-handed, he educated his contemporaries in the values of independence, self-reliance and advanced sense of moral values and social service.

Even not many Gujaratis of today know of the work of Karsondas Mulji who should be regarded as the pioneering liberator of Gujarati women of the Bombay Presidency. He found the women of his community sunk in degradation and almost single-handedly liberated them; his fellow castemen were sunk in ignorance. He educated them in new values — and all by the time he was in his late thirties.

Karsondas belonged to that band of Indians (of whom Ram Mohun Roy was the best exemplifier) who purified and rejuvenated India's social life. He found widespread ignorance, superstition and timidity in his community. Timidity extended to foreign travel; women were regarded as chattel. Kept illiterate for centuries, they were mentally inured to educating themselves. Religious obscurantism and superstition was sufficient to keep religious dissent in check. Nowhere had obscurantism sunk so low as in the Vallabhacharya Vaishnava sect, where the monks led a life of licentiousness unmatched since the time of the Borgias — a sad commentary on the collapse of the high ideals enshrined in the sect originally founded by Vallabhacharya, the Andhra who founded this religious order in far off Gujarat. There was no exaggeration in the following description of the sect by the then Governor of Bombay despite his anti-Hindu bias

"Maharajas have reduced philosophical Epicureanism to practice in forms more hideous and degrading than almost any which the Hindu Pantheon could furnish.

It was in this sect that Karsondas was born in Bombay in 1832 and this, in a sense, was an advantage, for the evil practices and the degradations burnt themselves in his mind and he had an

intimate knowledge of these which could scarcely be known to an outsider. His hatred for their debaucherous lives prevented him from ever visiting their temples

Education and Early Influence

Like other reformers of Western India, he had his education in the Elphinstone Institute whence he came into intimate contact with other like-minded intellectuals: Dadabhai Naoroji, Bhau Daji, Raghunath Narayan Khot, Sorabji Shahpuri Bengali and others. The rebel poet of Gujarat Narmad too was here. Missionaries led by Dr. Wilson were to be an important influence, and discussions among the students and teachers on the glaring social problems of India, were common.

The Institute also inspired the formation of many associations, one among which was the Gujarati Dnyan Prasarak Mandal and which found in Karsondas an active participant. In 1853 it took up the issue of remarriage of Hindu widows and announced a prize of Rs. 150/- for the best essay on the subject submitted to it. Karsondas began working on the subject. His guardian who was his aunt and a widow came to know of this and drove him out of the house for his heterodox activities. Karsondas not only lost the prize, but his home as well and became a destitute. He did well in studies and got scholarships which he could not himself avail of, for he had to give up his studies.

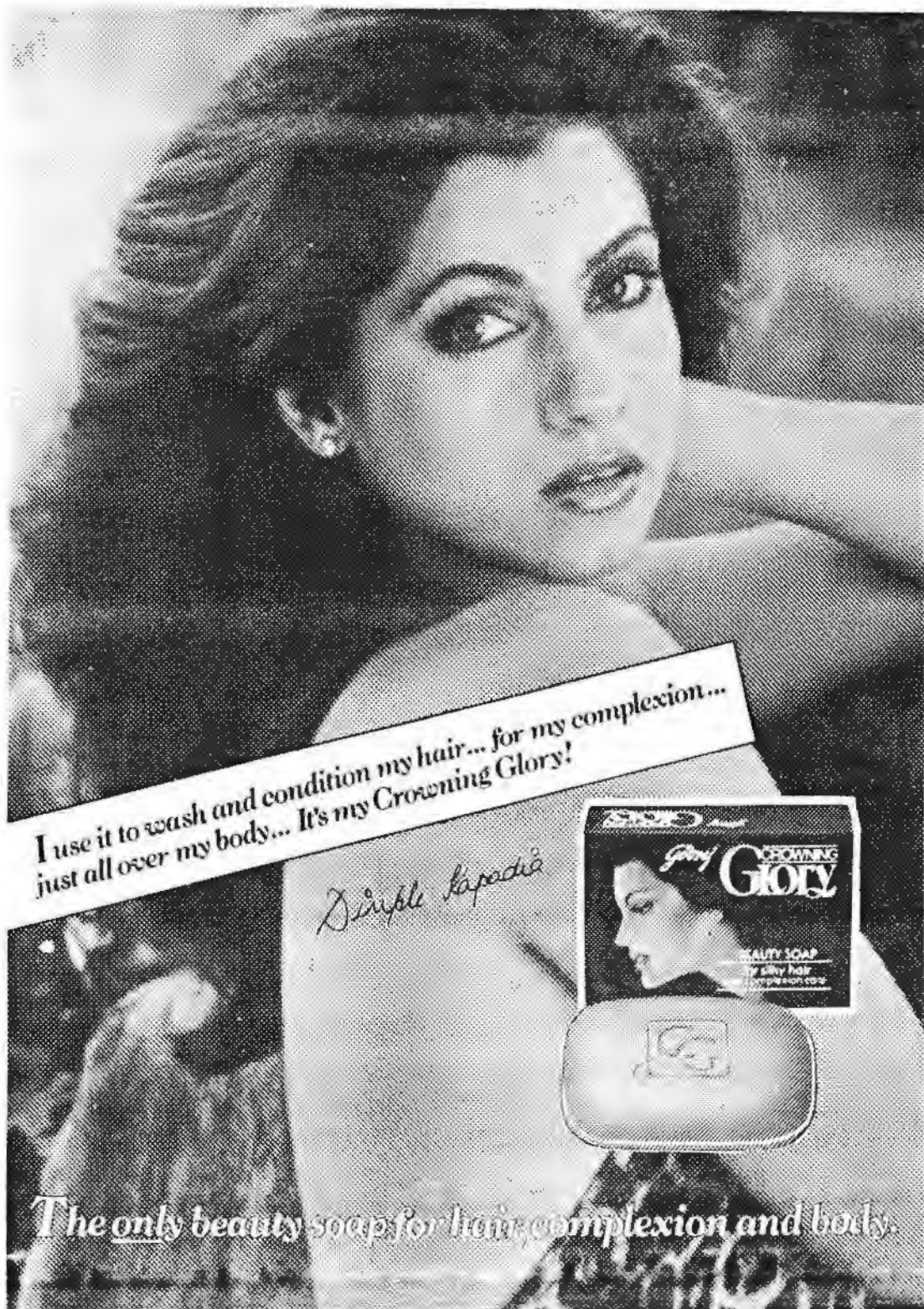
If he missed his prize, he got something even better. He came to the attention of the intellectuals of Bombay for the paper he read on the advantages of foreign travel to the Buddhi Vardhak Sabha (in 1853), an institution established for the enlightenment of Kutchi



KARSONDAS MULJI

and Gujarati Hindus in 1851.

The Sabha published it with a note by the secretary. His mark as a social reformer and as a thinker led to his appointment as Headmaster of the Gokuldas Tejpal School at Mandvi, a heaven-sent opportunity, for he needed a job very badly. His first assignment, he fulfilled to the satisfaction of many, inspiring his juniors, while at the same time, pleasing his superiors. The School became a training ground for him for his public activities. The Buddhi Vardhak Sabha ran two girls schools which he supervised in addition to running another boys' school — all in an honorary capacity. He and his reformer friends taught in these schools *gratis*. The government finding in him an ardent educationist, appointed him Headmaster of the Government English School at Deesa in 1857; here he soon emerged to be a public figure, founding



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a monthly called *Niti Bodhak* and an organisation as well.

Journalist and Controversialist

Like other leaders of the nineteenth century, writing remained his forte which he wielded successfully creating public opinion against injustice and servile attitudes and for reforming society. His journalistic career began with the weekly *Rast Gofar* but it could not be contained within it; it flowed to other journals like *Buddhi Vardhak*, *Dnyan Prasarak*, *Sri Bodh* and others. Writing for other papers had their own limitations which made him start *Satya Prakash*; while Karsondas was editor, Mangaldas Nathooabhai was the patron of this journal.

That very year saw a fierce sectarian battle among the Gujaratis breaking out in the city between the Bhuleswar Brahmins and the Maharajas of the Valabhacharya sect. It gave an opportunity for the editor to thoroughly expose the licentiousness and immoralities of the Maharajas. The fiercely written articles were helpful in improving the conduct of these, and he made no new expose, but only put on paper what was known to a select few. Even as Karsondas was writing, the Bhatia community had resolved to send its women to the temples only at specified hours and the emerging Swaminarayan Sect was doing the very thing that Karsondas was attempting.

But none earlier had the grit, determination and courage to openly challenge the Maharajas. His exposure of the Maharajas in speeches and writings was unprecedented. Like Lord Byron he woke up to find himself famous. His journal fully justified its name. His two friends in reform, Laxmidas Khimji and Mathuradas Lawajee were a great source of strength. In the dishonouring of the person of the women of the community he saw an assault on his own mother. The attempts made by the Maharajas to silence him through bribes and intimidation did not succeed.

The Vaishnavite Bull

The Maharajas now egged the editor of a rival Gujarati paper *Chabuk* to abuse Khimji. A court case for defamation ensued. To nullify the proceedings in Court, the Maharajas authored a Vaishnavite 'Bull' excommunicating any caste member appearing in Court and

testifying in the case. The 'Bull' was characterised by Karsondas as a bond of slavery and he announced in his paper two prizes for the best essay on the bond and on the authority of the Maharajas. Besides, he distributed thousands of copies of the 'Bull' and its terms and this daring act more than anything exposed and ridiculed the Maharajas. A number of newspapers supported the act of this daring reformer.

A war of words between one of the Maharajas in his journal and the spirited reply of Karsondas (which has become a classic entitled *The Primitive Religion of the Hindus and the Present Heterodox Opinions*) in his journal led to the famous Maharaja Libel Case of 1862. For the courage of his convictions, Karsondas had to suffer thrashings showered on him by the faithful of the community outside the court. Similarly his friend Laxmidass Khimji, Laxmidass as well as the evidence of Gokuldas Tejpal in Court in support of the stand of Karsondas contributed to the victory of the reformer.

Lely, one of the Commissioners described the trial to be the greatest trial after that of Warren Hastings. It created a sensation and made him a hero in the eyes of the people. The Maharajas were routed and lost their once dreaded authority over their fold.

The Battle for Foreign Travel

The visit to England of his friend Mahipatram inspired Karsondas to accept an offer to go to that country immediately after his victory in the court case. He left in 1863 and was given a warm send-off by more than one organisation and newspaper. In England he met Dadabhai Naoroji. On his return he and his family had to face the excommunication of his and the Kapol community. His reformer friends and supporters except three staunch members, deserted him. One of his supporters Karsondas Madhavdass, belonging to the Nagar Baniya caste found that his entire caste was *enbloc* excommunicated by the Bombay Bania Mahajan because of a single member's "lapse"! Madhavdass could not withstand this ostracism, for economic losses compelled him to recant ritually. But Karsondas Mulji was not one to relent. In spite of his father's displeasure and his wife's continuous reproaches, he stood firm. To his dying day he remained an outcast and he visited Eng-

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land a second time in 1867, excommunication notwithstanding. He partially succeeded in popularising foreign travel by persuading the Rajkot Baniyas and Jain Maharajas to help pass a resolution not to excommunicate those who went abroad.

Widow Marriage

The year of his death, 1871, saw him fulfil another mission dear to his heart, that of widow marriage. At the risk of his life he arranged the wedding of a fellow caste widow with Madhavdass Raghunathdass. In the community this was the first widow marriage. Elaborate arrangements, including police protection had to be made. It was attended by social reformers and created a commotion in the city and was covered in detail in the local press. Karsondas had arranged for a loan of Rs. 4000/- to tide over the inevitable economic excommunication. Curiously, the Buddhi Vardhak Sabha which had supported the reformer was to be lukewarm and some of the members turned apostates. Madhavdass was to take the lead in the promotion of widow marriage.

Writer and Pamphleteer

Karsondas was the first to compile a

Gujarati-English Dictionary. He was the first to write a book on his travel in England (1866). The government gave a subsidy of Rs. 6000/- and got it translated into Marathi at the instance of the then Governor of Bombay. His book on the *Sect of the Maharajas* (1865) remains a monumental work in English. In addition to his numerous articles, his books in Gujarati are *Niti Vashan*, and *Sansar Sukh*.

The later years of his life saw him as administrator of the native states of Rajkot. The years he spent there were all too brief but his integrity, sincerity, thorough knowledge of problems of the native states of Rajkot and his exposure to developments abroad thanks to his stay in Britain, made him an ideal administrator and one who ushered in social reforms.

His untimely death cut short what should have been a life crowned with glory. One should remember that his public life and activities lasted for just seventeen years for he died at the age of 38, and began his public engagements at 21.

An admirer of association with the British, he was no blind imitator of Brit-

ish ways. Single-handed he educated his contemporaries in the values of independence, self-reliance, an advanced sense of moral values and social service. He urged Indians to educate themselves and wanted the promotion of Hindustani in the Devnagari script. He insisted on the education of women and children and saw the salvation of India only through education. This alone according to him would develop new sensibilities. He urged women to tear off their veils, to go out with their menfolk, give up adorning themselves with useless ornaments.

Above all his character was steeped in nobility that one rarely comes across among ardent reformers who could be intolerant in their own ways. His integrity is well-known. But his abjuring of the use of harsh and indecent language and his total sense of non-vindictiveness to his enemies, is striking. He requested the Court to offer mild punishment to those accused in the Bhatia case — the very people who pummelled him outside the court. All these indicate a high sense of nobility of character.

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FROM THE FOREIGN PRESS

Privatising Marx

Mr Deng and Mr Gorbachev are making it harder to give a simple answer to a simple question; what is the difference between capitalism and communism? True, in politics the gulf between democracy and one-party Leninism is as wide as ever. But that is an imperfect guide to the economic dividing-line. Look at Taiwan and South Korea, consummate capitalists but (until recently) dismal democrats. Reforms in Russia and China seem to be blurring the contrast between capitalist faith in the market and communist worship of the plan. Both Mr Gorbachev and Mr Deng are telling planners to pipe down so that factory managers can hear what markets are telling them. Yet the great ideological gulf is still there.

Messers Deng and Gorbachev are abandoning some old communist fortresses – strict egalitarianism, abhorrence of market forces – but they are digging in behind the most basic of Marxist orthodoxies. Their idea is to make their economies as dynamic as capitalist ones while keeping, for most of their industries, the communist purity of public ownership. It is because both leaders insist on keeping Marx in the market that their revolutions will turn out to be flawed.

Admittedly, western experience suggests that ownership is not what matters most in making markets work. Privatised British Gas, for example, and you simply replace a public monopoly with a private one. A flourishing market requires competition, proper prices and proper incentives. But it would be wrong to conclude that who owns what is irrelevant.

The markets that work best in the communist world are the black ones in which private enterprise thrives precisely because of the inadequacy of the state's provision of goods and services. Where private initiative has been allowed to operate legally it has usually shone by comparison with the state sector. Private farming plots in the Soviet Union produce a quarter of the country's food on only 3% of the farm-

land. It is Hungary's private shopkeepers and restaurateurs who have put the glossy veneer on a shabby economy.

Most people living in communist countries have long since stopped believing that private ownership is evil and that state ownership is the answer to the supposedly fatal capitalist disease of worker "alienation"

Attempts to introduce versions of "market communism" – in China, Hungary or Yugoslavia – have shown how hard it is to make mainly state-owned economies as nimble as mainly private ones. Restructuring is delayed because of the lack of a simple system for takeovers and mergers. Despite bankruptcy rules in all these countries, it has proved remarkably difficult for state-owned factories actually to go bust, so over-security still encourages under-efficiency. Worse, all attempts to stop bureaucrats from meddling seem to fail, with the result that factory managers continue to pay more attention to their bosses in the ministries or local authorities than to their customers. No wonder China feels it necessary to introduce a law designed to free factory managers from petty interference by government and party.

Most people living in communist countries have long since stopped believing that private ownership is evil and that state ownership is the answer to the supposedly fatal capitalist disease of worker "alienation". Alienation has become a communist disease, because workers reckon state property belongs to nobody (which is why they have few qualms about pinching it to sell on the black market). Recent research at two big Polish factories by Professors Pawel Bozyk and Marian Guzek produced results that would make Marx blush: three quarters of the workers interviewed

were in favour of replacing state property with a new form of ownership, and over half accepted the idea of selling shares in their enterprise to all Poles. Parts of Eastern Europe, it seems, would be ready for a dose of Margaret Thatcher's "popular capitalism".

Private Property: Please Trespass

The question of ownership has so far been too sensitive even for Mr Gorbachev's *glasnost*. The Soviet leader has limited himself to a modest expansion of small private and co-operative enterprise, and he hopes that workers will start to feel they own the factories they work in if they are given a say in how they are run.

China and Hungary have gone further. They realise that a genuine market and monopoly ownership will not mix. So they have been introducing a diversity of ownership, stretching the ideological limits without (they claim) breaking them. The Chinese have started leasing small factories to private entrepreneurs or co-operatives. The Hungarians have increased from 15 to 30 the number of people some private enterprises can employ; more important, in October they opened the way for factories to issue shares to employees for up to half the value of the company's assets, and officials are now talking about the possibility of letting Hungarians buy shares in factories other than their own. But so long as public ownership remains dominant, the likely result is a second-rate imitation of proper markets.

Still, even this *Ersatz Kapitalismus* may contain the seeds of communism's eventual destruction. Sooner or later, freer markets do require freer politics (look at South Korea now). That could dilute communist orthodoxy to the point where the old qualms about private ownership vanish. The best thing about flirting with capitalism is that it may be a step on the way to the real thing.

COURTESY: The Economist, Jan. 30

Soviet Charisma: The Wish and the Reality

Ian Tickle

When Lenin came to power in 1917, he set up the Soviet of People's Commissars. As he had foretold for years from his home in Switzerland, the workers had taken over. The people had come to power. This was the rhetoric which was to clang down the decades of the twentieth century – and its message was so simple and so attractive that millions and millions of people could not bear to question its reality.

In fact, Lenin set up a totalitarian dictatorship of monstrous proportions. In addition, from the beginning his new workers' state was expansionist. While purporting to accept a grand new doctrine of self-determination for the former realms of the Russian Czar, and having recognised their independence, Lenin quietly re-annexed all these territories as soon as his government had the strength to do so. Newly independent states like the Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Khiva, Bokhara, Armenia, Georgia and Outer Mongolia were absorbed with little ceremony into the new Soviet state – by force of arms and not the power of doctrine.

Two decades later, a new wave of annexations was to take place under Lenin's successor, Stalin, this time in cooperation with Nazi Germany. In 1940, the democratic Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were annexed, and conquered Poland was divided between the Soviets and the Nazis. Five years later, the Soviet Union – now one of the victorious allies – extended its hegemony to the whole of Eastern Europe and set up the Iron Curtain as we still have it today.

And this is where the real irony starts. While the Soviet colonial empire was being stitched together at the end of the war, the British and French governments – faced with a dramatic change in the climate of public opinion at home – began to envisage the end of their respective empires. First independence came to India and Pakistan and the former mandated territories of the Middle East. The State of Israel was born. The Dutch empire in the East Indies came to an end. Later, in the fifties and sixties, the colonial territories of Africa were brought peacefully – in the main – to

independence.

The heroes of the independence movements in these lands were men like Nehru of India, Sukarno of Indonesia, Nkrumah of Ghana, Sekou Toure of Guinea. In their time, they were worshipped by millions. They claimed to be democratic socialists, yet they were inspired by Lenin's doctrines of self-determination – and many of them, seriously believed that their independence would never have come about if Lenin had not taken power in Russia in 1917. Almost all were dictators.

Today, the situation has not greatly changed. In spite of overwhelming evidence – which is available to every man or woman who can read a newspaper – millions in both Western Europe and the Third World secretly and not-so-secretly believe that their salvation lies in the doctrine which underpin the existence of the Soviet Union. This situation continues in spite of the seven-year-old war in Afghanistan, where it seems that the Soviet Union has resumed the process of annexing its southern neighbours, which it previously attempted in Northern Iran both in 1920 and again in 1945 – and which it may again attempt in the aftermath of the present Iranian regime.

In the Third World, countries far from the Soviet Union have come under Moscow's domination. Because of their geographical position, some have escaped the Soviet yoke. Others have pretended to do so in order to gain economic aid from the West. Examples are to be found in Africa, in Asia and in Latin America. In Europe itself, a very serious attempt was made a few years ago to bring Moscow's rule to Portugal, the westernmost European country. Although this narrowly failed, almost the whole of the Portuguese colonial empire fell to Moscow-supported dictators.

All these countries throughout the Third World descended into a hell of economic misery and political tyranny which they never knew under colonial rule. Millions have died in man-made famines in countries like Mozambique and Ethiopia. Thousands died in fac-

tional fighting – amongst the communists! – in South Yemen a year or two ago. Yet people in the West have not yet understood that when the leader of one of these countries comes to them with his bread bowl he is usually doing it on the orders of Moscow – which is quite prepared to supply arms for domination and experts to create efficient secret police, but cannot afford economic aid to the starving million who were supposed to be the beneficiaries of the doctrine of self-determination. Samora Machel of Mozambique tried this with growing success in his last years, and his successor is continuing the process. The Soviet-supported dictator of Angola is now engaged in the same policy.

Only the very astute politicians can resist. But even they have to give lip service to the Soviet origin of the independence movements. Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe is a prime example: he calls himself 'comrade' and visits with Communist dictators. But he sees that Zimbabwe is surrounded by countries – the ruins of countries – which trusted the promises of Moscow. He is ready to speak the language, but he is not about to follow the same road. It is true that today there is a new sophistication, and not as many of the prominent thinkers of this world are prepared to support Soviet domination as was the case in preceding decades.

During the years between the wars – when Stalin's crimes were being committed and when millions died throughout the Soviet Union through famine and the firing squad, when the Gulag was full to overflowing – some of the greatest minds of Europe applied their lofty thoughts to the Soviet Union (and went there frequently). They were among the purveyors of the great charisma – that a phoenix had risen from the ashes and there was new hope for the world. This was lampooned by such authors as Aldous Huxley in 'Brave New World' and George Orwell in '1984'. But though the lampoons were popular, millions refused to draw the obvious conclusions and continued to think that hope would spring ever and anew from Moscow.

Western Europe provides two parti-

cularly flagrant examples of this. And I will end by coming back to the heart of the matter. In spite of all that has been *done*, millions refuse to believe that the Soviets do not mean what they say. Stalin said: "Words have nothing to do with deeds, otherwise what would be the use of diplomacy?" Why don't at least West Europeans — who are so near — take this in?

My examples are disarmament and Nicaragua. On the matter of disarmament, millions were prepared to walk the streets of European cities a year or so ago to protest against the plan to match Soviet missiles in Eastern Europe with American missiles in Western Europe. The issue was pretty simple; can we trust the Soviets? do we need the American nuclear umbrella? The answer given by hundreds of thousands of marching feet was a resounding Yes and No respectively. The leaders of Western Europe, it must be said, did not agree — but only after much soul-searching were they prepared to say so, since they knew that their freedom might depend on it. Today, there is anxiety amongst West European leaders lest the new arms agreement should lead to a lessening of the nuclear umbrella — as it well might.

And why not indeed? The question is justified. A new form of isolationism is growing up in America which says: why should we defend these people who — *after all that has happened* — still trust the Soviets and never, but never, trust America. Which brings us to Nicaragua.

In 1979, the hated Somoza dictatorship was overthrown in the name of liberty. Within weeks — weeks not months — it was apparent that the new Sandinista leadership intended to set up a totalitarian state which would be under the domination of Moscow. It had all been planned long ago: there was to be a second Cuba, this time on the soil of Central America, in a country with land frontiers through which tyranny could be exported. The American Government took a strong line on the issue: they did not want another Marxist dictatorship "in their backyard".

But Western Europe also took a strong line. The United States should keep its hands off Nicaragua, we were told by all and sundry. Otherwise, Western Europe would show the Americans some hometruths. And they did this — by sending help to the Nicaraguan Mar-

xist regime. Not only the Americans were outraged — but so, understandably, were democratic Nicaraguans. You claim to support freedom, they said, then why not for us?

A leading American commentator has suggested that the real European preoccupation is that by pursuing an active Central American policy the Americans will be diverted from more important commitments, like the defence of Western Europe. And he asks the question: "Surely our European allies cannot believe that such behaviour will strengthen the Western alliance?"

But the answer lies elsewhere. The belief in utopia. The belief that Communism must exist somewhere, either in the future or in the clouds. *Faute de mieux*, in Moscow. Whatever they have done wrong in the past, the Communists at least had the right idea — and one day they will prove it. The beauty and the charisma of it all. Plain reality must not intrude. And plain reality is what the man so often labelled as the predecessor of Gorbachov, Nikita Khrushchov, said in 1955 on a visit to India: "We never have and never will forsake the political line which Lenin has mapped out for us. . . Therefore we say to people who are waiting for the Soviet Union to change its political programme: You will have to wait for pigs to fly".

Democracy through Olympics

These are heady days for South Korea. The country has finally been brought to democracy on a wave of people's power — for it seems that any irregularities there may have been in the election process were minor by many standards and would have had no effect on the result.

One of the reasons why the authoritarian regime gave in was the necessity of an atmosphere of serenity to prevail at the Olympic Games, to be held in Seoul later this year. These two phenomena are of great importance for the South Koreans, and they march hand in hand. In this case, the Olympics have been a force for democracy.

South Korea is one of Asia's fastest developing countries. It has achieved

the status of an industrial power, and with a democratic government its prospects can only improve in the years to come. This is one reason why more countries are to take part in the Seoul Olympics than ever before. Both the Soviet Union and China, which have previously backed North Korea in the hope of gaining advantage over each other, are both ready to take part in the Olympics. They have decided — probably for the same reasons — that North Korea is no longer worth supporting. This is in itself a signal victory for South Korea.

North Korea originally asked the International Olympic Committee if it could share the games. The Committee's original reaction was that the Olympics are awarded to a city rather than to a state — and that therefore the demand had no validity. But in the name of international amity and promoting peace it decided to offer some of the events to North Korea, with one important proviso — that the frontier would be opened and there would be free right of travel between all events in both countries during the period of the games.

After an attempt at tough bargaining, North Korea has now refused the offer and has decided to boycott the games — followed by its faithful acolyte, Cuba. The gesture is hollow; and the real reason for refusal to accept the International Olympic Committee's conditions is the impossibility of opening up the country in the way demanded. North Korea is a closed society run on Stalinist lines, about the most dictatorial state on earth, and the consequences of opening up the frontier even for a week or so would be incalculable. It was because of this condition that the Olympic Committee's offer was refused, not because the number of events offered was inadequate.

In refusing to take part in the Olympics, North Korea and Cuba have shown that they are in their own way defectors from the modern communist camp. They are the only Communist countries in which Mr. Gorbachov's doctrines of *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* have had no echo whatever.

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Wole Soyinka: An Interpreter of African Consciousness

Padma Srinivasan

When Akinwande Oluwale Soyinka was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986, it was at the same time, an award for Africa. And Soyinka said so. The non-African world had realized that here was another way of interpreting reality, different but equally valid, and this was the African way. African consciousness expressed itself in a myriad ways through her tonal languages, musical idioms, myths and symbols. The African aesthetic is virtually different from anything the rest of the world has ever known. European aesthetics have dominated human thought for nearly four hundred years and set the standards for judging the rest of humanity. But Africa has now stepped forth to urge modern Man to seek a newer world of consciousness within himself – the mythic consciousness.¹ Africa's artistic genius is indeed unique.

The Nobel Prize bestowed on Soyinka becomes meaningful only if we are able to see the Africanness of his creativity. In all his writings, Soyinka stands forth as an Interpreter of the Myth and the Aesthetic of the African World.²

When he was born, on July 13, 1934, at Isara, near Abeokuta, a Yoruba area in western Nigeria, his parents gave him three names that were instinct with prophetic significance. The first two refer to the Yoruba God, Ogun,³ whom Soyinka reveres greatly. The first one, Akinwande, means: "The valiant warrior returns to me."⁴ The second name, Oluwale means: "The Lord enters the house". The third name, Soyinka, means: "Seers surround me". So we have in Soyinka today the 'Valiant artist who sallied forth into distant realms of creativity and returned home, a teacher and a sage, to the bosom of Africa, bearing with him a Nobel Prize for her'.

The more we understand Soyinka, the more we recognise the traits that Ogun has gifted him. Like Ogun, he has an irrepressible, run away creativity. When he wrote his first novel, *The Interpreters*⁵ he was a novice at this art form, and the novel bears all the marks of immaturity and irresponsible experimentation. It is a pain to read it and

most people give up, after much drudgery, at page 50 or so. This is because Soyinka brings in too many characters and complexities and flash backs without any uniting thread of narrative. All that is apparent is Soyinka's attempt to grab all life – with all its variety, its drabness, ugliness, meaningless trivialities or obscenities, disappointments, hopes and ambitions – in one extravagant sweep. As an artist, he has no use for the trodden path and does not care to dish out, in his own words, an "unrelied competence".



Wole Soyinka

In the novel we see a group of protagonists either in night-clubs, cocktail parties or art studios and through their conversation we become aware of the general squalor and corruption in Nigerian business and politics. They are supposed to be the interpreters of society, art, culture and life. All that the reader gets in unconnected pictures, snatches of dialogue, exaggerated descriptions of squalor and flashbacks. Kola is a painter. Both he and Bandele teach art at the University of Ibadan. Sagoe is a newspaper reporter and Sekoni is an engineer with an artistic bent which makes him a great sculptor. Egbo, a teacher, is another member of the group. They are variously obsessed by water, shit and death. Sagoe is so obsessed by shit and the act of evacuation that he has written a thesis on the theme of Voidancy. Egbo is fascinated

by water and by drowning. At intervals he ponders over his parents' death by drowning and over the flow of time. His personality is marked by an elemental streak of violence and fascination with blood-sacrifice that links him to the destructive side of Ogun. Kola the artist works long and hard at a monumental painting of the Yoruba Pantheon, in which each of his friends get represented as deities. Egbo's likeness is transferred to the god Ogun; not in his creative aspect as the primal artisan but as "the blood spattered fiend", so full of the lust of blood and war that, as Yoruba mythology has it, he slaughtered his own men in battle. Egbo is very angry at this. Another symbolism in the novel relates to death and renewal. But in between is a transitional state that also intrigues Soyinka. Sekoni dies in the middle of the novel and Soyinka introduces an albino called Lazarus. Soyinka had known albinos from very early childhood and had been fascinated by them. He says, in an interview: "There's this feeling of them not being quite of this world; they can't see very much in daylight, they see better in darkness; they're very fragile; you feel that if you hold them they'll dissolve in your hands. And I think that it is this that creeps into *The Interpreters*, as you have rightly observed. It's a kind of spill-over of this feeling for the numinous area of transition". When Kola sees Lazarus, he half believes him to be a resurrection of Sekoni.

The novel lacks a plot or a conflict in the accepted sense, which one would expect in any well structured story. It is as meaningless in the middle as at the beginning. There is no movement of events or ideas or characters and there is no real 'end' because there is no story. There are only scenes, flashbacks and playlets, involving a bewildering array of 'characters'. The single quotation marks are necessary because the reader is aware only of images, as on a cinema screen, and not real flesh and blood people. The reader's interest is not gripped at any stage and he does not feel any emotional involvement. When one reads great literature one

usually has a sense of having been transformed. But here are no philosophical depths.

Soyinka's language in *The Interpreters* is often so heavy with symbolism and allegorical construction that it becomes exaggerated and meaningless.⁶ There are also several stretches of tiresome vulgarity.⁷ A whole chapter (seven) is not only inconsequential but extremely nauseating. It is about Sagoe the journalist, who had been sleeping all day in the house of his mistress, Dehinwa, while she was away at work. When she returns at 4 p.m. the sound of pans in the kitchen wakes him up. We read (p. 104): "The bitch. The goddamn bitch. She had woken him up with that racket on the pans". The vulgarity continues when he is in the shower. There is no evidence anywhere of respect for womanhood among the 'Interpreters' in this novel. They treat their women friends like common prostitutes. The violent and dirty language that gushes out of their mouths and the debasement of human sexuality leaves the reader deadened with nausea. Soyinka's language sometimes becomes very intense, as when Sagoe is splashed with mud by a passing bus: "Rat! You filthy rat!"⁸ As Sagoe walks along Carter

Bridge, we are told that the lagoon" was a trough of shea-butter churning, and cockroach huts of ako stalks circled the water edge in uncertain nibbles."⁹

In spite of all these great defects there are flashes everywhere of a true poet's imagination. Soyinka is basically a poet and a dramatist. This was his first novel, written in 1965. His second novel, *The Season of Anomy* was written in 1973. His literary genius is truly revealed only through the dynamic medium of drama and through his intense poetry. Basically, he is incapable of telling a story, which needs 'unrelieved competence' for its success. Yet, in spite of this, he experimented boldly – and *The Interpreters* became a magnificent failure.

Yet, it is the poetry, flashing through his prose that leaves a lasting impression – like Simi's personality

Altogether, one cannot help agreeing with the statement that it is "a great steaming march of a book ... brimful of promise and life!"¹⁰

Footnotes:

1. In an interview Soyinka said that Europe has been "very much inward turned in its cultural attitude to the world. The result of the Nobel Prize will certainly result in the external world taking the literature of Africa seriously, especially the vast body of oral literature in Africa."

2. Soyinka delivered a series of lectures at Cambridge in the Department of Social Anthropology; these were published by the Cambridge University Press in 1976 under the title: *Myth, Literature and the African World*. Besides being a playwright, poet, essayist and novelist, he is a teacher in the widest sense of the term. In his own words: "Artists provide consciousness".
3. The Yoruba pantheon recognizes as King of all gods, the supreme Being, Olorum or Olodumare. Among the lesser deities, or *orisa*, are Sango, the god of lightning and Ogun the god of creativity and destruction. Ogun is the dynamic god of artistic creativity, the primal artisan of the forge, the god of iron and of warriors.
4. As a warrior god, Ogun symbolizes Man's urge to venture forth and to return, i.e. Man's love of Quest and Return.
5. Wole Soyinka, *The Interpreters*, London, Fontana Paperbacks, 1986; Indian distributors: Rupa & Co. Bombay. (My article focuses mainly in this novel).
6. *The Interpreters*, see for instance, p. 77.
7. *ibid.*, see pp. 70-72 and p. 88 (referring to farts).
8. *ibid.*, p. 107.
9. *ibid.*, p. 110.
10. An opinion from *New Statesman*, (back cover).

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BOOK REVIEWS

COMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN INDIA by P.R. Rajagopal; Uppal Publishing House, New Delhi, 1987; Pp 141; Rs. 140

Communalism and its most serious manifestation, communal riots, have become a chronic disease in the body politic of modern India. Theories – historical, political, sociological, economic – abound explaining the phenomenon. The book under review, however, it is claimed, deals with its 'practical' aspect, as a retired police official who spent thirty years of his career tackling this problem sees it. The work is part of a trilogy dealing with violence and sponsored by the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi.

The author devotes his attention entirely to Hindu-Muslim riots. He accepts that areas of tension between the followers of other religions exist but, according to him, they differ qualitatively from Hindu-Muslim riots.

The work points out a steady increase in communal incidents in India, from 84 incidents in which 34 were killed and 512 injured in 1954 to 525 incidents in which 328 were killed and 3,665 injured in 1985. The worst years were 1964 (1070: 199: 2053) and 1983 (500:1143:3652). The virus has spread throughout India, the worst affected states being Gujarat, Bihar, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and U.P. in that order. From 61 districts which were economically sensitive in 1961, the number has grown to 186 districts in 1986 of which 88 are super-sensitive. It has now infected the rural areas too.

After a brief survey of riots in Ahmedabad, Bhiwandi, Moradabad, Aligarh, and Ranchi the author concludes that commissions of inquiry are mostly appointed to defuse an inconvenient political situation. The evidence tendered before them is based on what the officials want them to believe are facts. Their recommendations are rarely taken note of.

He draws on a computer-based study of riots in Gujarat to show that in such riots mostly household weapons are

used; that most of the victims belong to the same localities (and not outsiders) and that often initiatives are taken by mobs, not by individuals. Based on these the practical suggestions made by the author are:

1. Deployment of units of police/ CRP near a sensitive area, specific unit being allotted specific area with frequent familiarisation exercises conducted.
2. Greater coordination between CRP, police and armed constabulary at lower levels.
3. Less political interference in police administration. Choice of functionaries of the units be based on 'fundamental tenets of administration' rather than on political expediency.
4. Where a particular unit (of police) misbehaves, it should be identified, isolated and dealt with in an exemplary fashion.
5. Decennial review of police strength, its deployment and related problems. Plans be made to deal with riots in rural areas.
6. Better utilisation of Home Guards, drawn from all communities and coordinating their activities with local peace committees.
7. Establishment of a unit for conducting ongoing appraisal of failures (or successes), irregularities and improprieties in crisis situations. Such an appraisal acting as a feedback to the police force as also to be passed on to police training institutions.
8. Use of video cameras in riots so that identities of rioters can be established in courts of law and convictions obtained.

At the policy level, the author recommends establishment of non-denominational schools giving secular education; embargo on reopening of issues involving old temples, mosques or shrines; modernisation of walled sectors of cities which are mostly the scenes of riots; reducing public celebration of festivals and more forceful action against visitors from Pakistan and Bangladesh who fail to return to their countries.

These practical suggestions appear idealistic in view of the facts which the author himself recognizes viz: the police force in many states is highly politicised; that a nexus between the police, politicians and anti-social elements (eg. smugglers) has developed. The author also admits to the influence of caste and religion on the police in some states. He cites the example of Bihar where police messes are not only denominational but even caste based!

According to the writer, "Communalism as an ideology is the ultimate source of all communal riots. The beneficiaries of this ideology are also its promoters who seek to achieve certain personal or group interests by articulating the secular needs of the community on communal lines". When these demands are considered by the Government the image of the communal leaders is built up, with each riot making the community more insecure and the communal leaders more indispensable.

In analysing this, the author points out that since Independence, Muslims too have benefited from socio-economic changes and a middle class has emerged among them. However, by following wrong policies, eg. the concept of reservation, the Government has created a belief that it would respond only if demands are projected on the basis of a group identity. Therefore, communities have tended to consolidate themselves in an effort to project their identity to demand their share of scarce resources. The democratic framework in the country provides the political leverage necessary for the purpose. And if conceding these demands appears to be a victory for the communal group, their rejection is interpreted as a case of discrimination against it. The political parties in their anxiety to capture power queer the communal pitch, the best illustration of which is the politics in Kerala.

One could pick holes in such a theoretical framework, but the value of the book lies in its dealing with the 'practical' aspects of the problem. One wishes he had devoted greater attention to these than what is found in this work.

R.S. Morkhandikar

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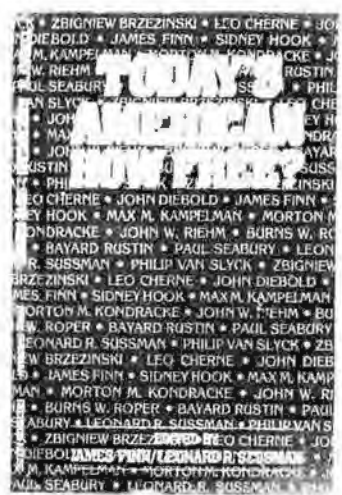


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TODAY'S AMERICAN : HOW FREE?
Edited by James Finn and Leonard R. Sussman; Freedom House, 48 East, 21st Street, New York, N.Y. 10010; 1986; Pp.177



The editors of this excellent book are, respectively, Executive and Publications Directors of Freedom House. The thirteen essays in it are all by its Trustees. It would therefore be reasonable to assume that the views expressed are representative of that institution, in spite of the disclaimer in the Acknowledgements that they are not "necessarily" so. Published 45 years after its foundation, the "retrospective insights" of its essays cover that era as well as its present condition in relation to the appropriate theme.

The Introduction by John W. Riehm defines that theme as the American striving "to preserve and expand freedom", the culture created by it, the "tensions" in the university and the news media, religious conflicts, the implications for these of Marxism, and finally "the promise of national restoration" which is the specific concern of the essay placed last. There are studies on the Mythic Aspects of American Culture, Equal Opportunity, Alliances with other Nations, Academic Freedom, Civil Liberties, Computerisation, and The Role of U.S. Intelligence. The crucial questions raised by the authors and the basic values they project support the statement by Max M. Kampelman that "today's America is the freest person ever, here or elsewhere".

Philip van Slyck rightly points out that homogenous and traditionalist societies do not easily understand "the extraordinary diversity of American demography." And Bayard Rustin con-

cludes his analytical survey of Equal Opportunity by proposing a three-point agenda for expanding its meaning. He demands a national commitment to reduce poverty, to safeguard civil rights to expand democracy on a world scale. He adds that room should be found for "special privileges" where they are obviously needed by the exploited and the discriminated against, in a multicultural society.

On the issue of Alliances and the Imperial Conflict, Zbigniew Brzezinski focuses on Washington-Moscow differences of attitude and practice. He deals with the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the plight of the East European nations, recommending a number of strategies. These are notable for their long-term and highly controversial nature. Their central aim is "to intensify international condemnation of Moscow..." Brzezinski asserts, for example, that "India should be encouraged to change its attitude of benign acceptance of Soviet aggression and brutality". Granting such a change may influence the Soviet Union, one wonders if "more direct mass media coverage of the war" (in Afghanistan) is likely to bring it about.

The five-power agreement proposed (America, Russia, China, Pakistan and India) to guarantee "the genuine neutrality of Afghanistan" seems a reasonable diplomatic step, but will it reassure Moscow that the departure of the Soviet troops would not be followed by the massacre of all pro-Soviet Afghans? Such limited inter-nation agreements, it has often been found, do not succeed in enforcing the idealistic aims they have in mind. Similarly, the moderate policy argued for in relation to Eastern Europe will only arouse the suspicions of the Soviet Union that the ultimate, secret aim, at least of the U.S. is "freedom".

Brzezinsky wants "to transform the essence of Eastern Europe's relationship with Moscow *without necessarily disrupting its formal framework*." (Reviewer's italics). On the other hand, even Gorbachov's moves in this context show that the Soviet dream is of "greater integration".

We enter a different world in listening to the voice of Sidney Hook on Academic Freedom. Though there are serious differences among interpreters of that situation, the extremist views have little support on the national level.

One example quoted by Hook is useful in illustrating the characteristics of the relevant extremism, but there is no evidence that American academics are corrupted by it on a large scale. Alan Wolfe may be alone in his stance that "a course in riot control would simply be declared out of place" in the kind of university he supports, while a course on "methods of rioting might be perfectly appropriate".

Fortunately, neither course is offered by any American university! It is true, though, as Hook states, that the politicisation of many American universities and the introduction of courses in which only one point of view is tolerated, "has created a climate of opinion on some campuses very hostile to the principles of academic freedom."

The essays which I have not covered in this review are all notable for their balanced, sensible mode of reasoning. They are liberal-democratic in the best sense. They vindicate the last sentences of the book, by Morton M. Kondracke on *The Promise of National Restoration*: "In foreign or domestic policy, no one should be content to ignore America's imperfections. That is especially so where they damage lives or diminish respect for democracy. At the same time, in 1986, Americans deserve to respect their country. It offers opportunity. It promotes democracy. It guards liberty."

Can we say anything similar about the Soviet Union, even in its present "glasnost" phase, about the Third World, about the variety of socialist regimes and dictatorships in different parts of the world?

Nissim Ezekiel

COMMON CAUSE — LOBBYING IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST by Andrew S. McFarland; Chatham House Publishers Inc.; 1984; Indian Edition: Asian Books, New Delhi; 1987; Pp 212; Rs. 65

Imagine for a moment that Mr. V.P. Menon, the first Chief Minister of Kerala, had been that corruption in high places (which he tried to combat as Union Finance Minister) was equally vast section of the middle class intelligentsia but who, individually, are unable to influence the ruling party in Parliament. He decides to launch his *Jana*

COMMON CAUSE



AE ANDREW S. MCFARLAND

Morcha not in association with politicians like him who are currently out of favour in Court, but looks beyond them to those thousands of intelligent men and women who are prepared (irrespective of their political party preferences) to identify themselves with Mr. V.P. Singh and his *Jana Morcha* on this single issue.

He then builds up the organisation by securing subscriptions from these thousands of men and women. The money so collected enables him to employ experts who study not only the various charges of corruption and come out with non-partisan factual reports but also, in the process, identify the root causes of corruption and suggest appropriate legislation. These reports are then made public and the members of the *Jana Morcha* in their thousands write or meet their elected representatives and persuade them to prosecute the corrupt and enact legislation to change the system.

If you find difficulty in imagining such a scenario I won't blame you because I must have been delirious when I thought of it in the first place! But this precisely is what Mr. John W. Gardner, a bureaucrat turned politician (and author of that outstanding book *Excellence*), decided to do in the United States in 1970.

What prompted Gardner to launch *Common Cause*? According to Mr. Andrew McFarland, the author of this interesting study, Gardner was "looking for a political niche where he could influence events without running for office." The author adds: "He found his constituency among upper-middle class professionals. Gardner was a sin-

cere, intelligent idealist and he knew something about the workings of Washington... he was a man who would fight the congressional establishment..."

Gardner founded the organisation, saw it through its infancy and five years later, in 1975, stepped down, handing over *Common Cause* to David Cohen — an organisation man. Details of what followed and the manner in which the *Common Cause* leadership worked out an organisational solution to deal with their lobbying, organisational and public leadership activities makes interesting reading.

In what way is *Common Cause* different from the other lobby groups in Washington? *Common Cause* lobbies Congress in the *public interest* as against *special interest* groups that lobby for issues affecting their particular needs. There are now, reveals the author, 2500 trade associations and professional groups with their headquarters in Washington. Those not based in Washington "are represented by one or more of the thousands of lawyers, public relations experts and outright 'lobbyists' who attempt to influence the policy process for a fee." An example is a Company called Neal & Company employed by the Pakistani Embassy to sell their case to the Congress. Reporting this in her despatch in the *Indian Express* (Dec. 9) Ms. Shanaz Anklesaria writes that the same lobbying group is employed by Jordan, Morocco & Egypt to promote their interests in Congress.

In India lobbying is a dirty word. Apparently greasing palms is cleaner and easier! But as Ms. Anklesaria reports: "Having firms that specialise in lobbying for specific causes are a respectable and accepted part of the US political system. Such groups are often the only source of information for a Congressman or Senator on specific issues."

Since its inception some issues which *Common Cause* took up with great impact are:

1. Support for an amendment to limit contributions to presidential and congressional elections;
2. A suit against the "Committee to Re-Elect the president" (CREEP — an appropriate acronym considering the person concerned was Richard Nixon) to force disclosure of massive contributions to the

Nixon campaign.

3. Putting pressure on congressmen and supporting anti-Vietnam war members of the Congress to end the war, and
4. Lobbying at the state-level for "good government reforms" on such matters as "disclosures of and ceilings on campaign contributions", "control of lobbyists" and "disclosure of personal finances by state officials".

The nearest *Common Cause* equivalent in India is, in my view, Madhu Mehta's *Hindustan Andolan* — admittedly a far cry from the American model. The *Andolan* takes on too many issues, lacks persistence in following up any single one and above all has no organisation to speak of. Mr. Madhu Mehta and his colleagues would profit by reading this well-written and highly informative volume on the techniques of organising such a movement.

Personally in the present climate of cynicism, I doubt very much if, in our country a man like Gardner comes forth who is "looking for a niche where he could influence events without running for office"; the common belief being that not much can be done unless you are "in office". Any takers?

S.V. Raju

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WOMEN OF INDIA: an annotated bibliography by Harshida Pandit; Garland Publishing Inc., 1985; Pp 278; \$ 52

Women's studies as a interdisciplinary subject are of recent origin. It remains mainly a "movement-born" programme. By now it is well-established only in the U.S. and is rapidly taking roots in other western countries also. The declaration by the U.N. of 1975 as the International Women's Year and of the following ten years as the Women's Decade generated interest among academics and researchers in both the developed and developing nations.

In India, the pioneering work is *Towards Equality*, the report prepared by the Committee on the Status of Women. After that there has been growing attention paid to women's studies in India. Hence bibliographies in the field are urgently required. *Women of South Asia, A Guide to Resources* by Carol Sakala is an important and comprehensive bibliography, published in 1980.

Dr. Harshida Pandit's book is in response to this need. It contains invaluable information on many topics related to Indian women, who are oppressed and discriminated against even in our democracy. The contents are neatly classified into sections covering economic, political, legal and cultural aspects. It is exciting to note that there are also sections on women in art & culture, and in psychological studies. The long lists of references under various sections show the author's grasp of the subject and her capacity for attention to detail.

Such studies are essential to make our invisible women visible, and to sensitize all of us to the problems of women.

Usha Thakkar

LEADERSHIP FOR THE INDIAN MANAGER by Dr. BS KS Chopra; Times Research Foundation; Bombay: 1987; Pp. 197; Rs. 90

Reading the book, one is reminded of a classroom incident. Students in a school were asked to write an essay on a cow. One student not knowing much about cows started off by saying that there was a huge banyan tree near his house. A cow was tied to the tree. He then went on to write in great detail about the tree!

The book reproduces theories on leadership with hardly a word on its practical applications. The cow is forsaken for the tree and what we have are reams of paper on welfare measures, diplomacy and even Machiavellian tactics. Take for example an incident reported on page 118. The management of an enterprise is faced with a situation wherein they are called upon to dismiss a worker for some gross act of indiscipline. The management is aware that the consequences of the dismissal would be a strike. What does the management do? It goes through a devious method of "leaking out" a rumour that the worker is being dismissed and taking the union leader into confidence and getting him to placate the other workers by suggesting a compromise solution. This has been held out as an example of exemplary leadership. One fails to get the point of it all.

Leadership is no doubt a function of the situation and the followers. But in its practical application there are many

personal qualities that come into play. Judgement and decisiveness come readily to mind. The book does not make even a reference to these important qualities.

Coming to the theories themselves, readers are likely to be confused by the task/consideration approach *vis a vis* the managerial grid. For instance where a team is highly motivated the former advises a low task/low consideration approach to leadership; whereas the grid advocates the 9/9 or high concern for task and people approach. The author should have spelt out in greater detail a clarification of the issues involved.

A number of "nice" recommendations have been made but regrettably these have nothing to do with actual leadership. A paternalistic business owner may find these more to his liking.

In conclusion this is a book for students of management in second class management institutes, looking for the equivalent of their college guides. Certainly not recommended for managers – in India or elsewhere.

S. Nair

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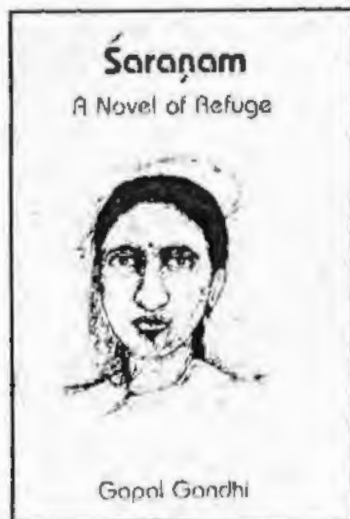
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SARANAM by Gopal Gandhi, Affiliated East-West Press Ltd, 1986; Pp ; Rs. 40



This little literary gem is subtitled "A Novel of Refuge". It is in fact, the nearest English equivalent to the Sanskrit word from which it is derived. Its complex connotations span a range of meanings: shelter; refuge; journey's end. The Sanskrit root, also closely corresponds with the Sinhala Buddhist concept of three refuges: Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. As the author himself explains in the opening page: "Almost every character in the story is a seeker after 'Sarnam', which is intellec-

tual or spiritual, for some of them, and literally a physical refuge, for those who definitely need a small plot of earth, beneath the sun, which they can call their own.

"Sarnam" is not a conventional novel, in the sense that it has an unmistakable hero and heroine; a "straight" storyline, with a beginning, middle, and end. Like the novels of Leon Uris, which also feature a multiplicity of characters and a plot, (if it may be so called) which moves in parallel, rather than straight lines, "Saranam" too, is a novelistic landscape dotted with many figures, rather than a portrait etched with detail.

Nonetheless, certain characters do begin to emerge quite clearly, as the author has the capacity of Toulouse Lautrec or Degas to sketch vivid pictures with a few bold strokes. He seems equally at home in presenting the "gentle" characters, as in describing the somewhat inarticulate Tamils on the tea estates which are the physical setting of his book. The Westernised estate manager; the crusading doctor, and European priest, particularly the last two are very endearing, while the manager typifies the dilemma of every western educated Asian: alienation from his roots.

In some ways, the author's work recalls the pastoral idylls of Thomas Har-

dy, whose novels seem rooted in the Wessex countryside, and the grandeur of Egdon Heath. It seems quite obvious that this is a work which has been lived and felt before it was written.

The book was published in 1986, and does not purport to talk about the political problems of Tamils *vis a vis* Sri Lanka, and their mother country. As he paints them, they seem to be very much a part of Sinhala soil, looking to India, much as Christians might look towards Rome: a distant place which is a lodestar of the subconscious not a destination which they really think they will go, much less stay!

A word about the author, is called for. He is a member of the Indian Foreign Service, who was First Secretary in the office of our Assistant High Commissioner in Kandy, during 1978-82. He had first-hand exposure to his subject when he helped to handle the Tamils being repatriated to India under the India Ceylon Treaty of 1964. He has documented his encounters with the Tamils in the genre of a novel with great sensitivity of perception. One hopes that his sojourn in other lands as a member of the Foreign Service, will yield other novels from his pen.

Louella Lobo Prabhu

Letters

Rule by Districts

I have read with interest Mr. M.V. Kamath's article 'Rule by Districts' in the January '88 issue. Coming from the pen of a renowned journalist it is very well edited with statistical data. But the crux of the problem is that neither the ruling party nor the splinter opposition have the time to think of such solutions. Their efforts are all oriented for grabbing power. There are no selfless active leaders in the country to lead the people to the cause: neither the people nor the politicians seem to remember the great sacrifices the country was subjected to before gaining independence. The cause for which Mahatma, the Father of the Nation, gave his life is forgotten. The upstarts are only interested in perpetuating the name

of the Nehru or Indira Dynasty by naming every blessed project after them.

Doordarshan became a very good handmaid to force Hindi down unwilling throats telecasting Hindi serials day in and day out. It is a *fait accompli* that Hindi has become the national language in spite of it being found worthless and, not rich enough in its vocabulary during the last four decades. My suggestion is that Sanskrit is the proper national language though, of course, it may take at least a decade for making the nation proficient in that language.

It is time that the nation organises a forum for a free discussion of the subjects of our Constitution, states reorganisation and national language whether or not the political

parties take any initiative in the matter.

K.S. Narayanamurthy

A National Caretaker Government

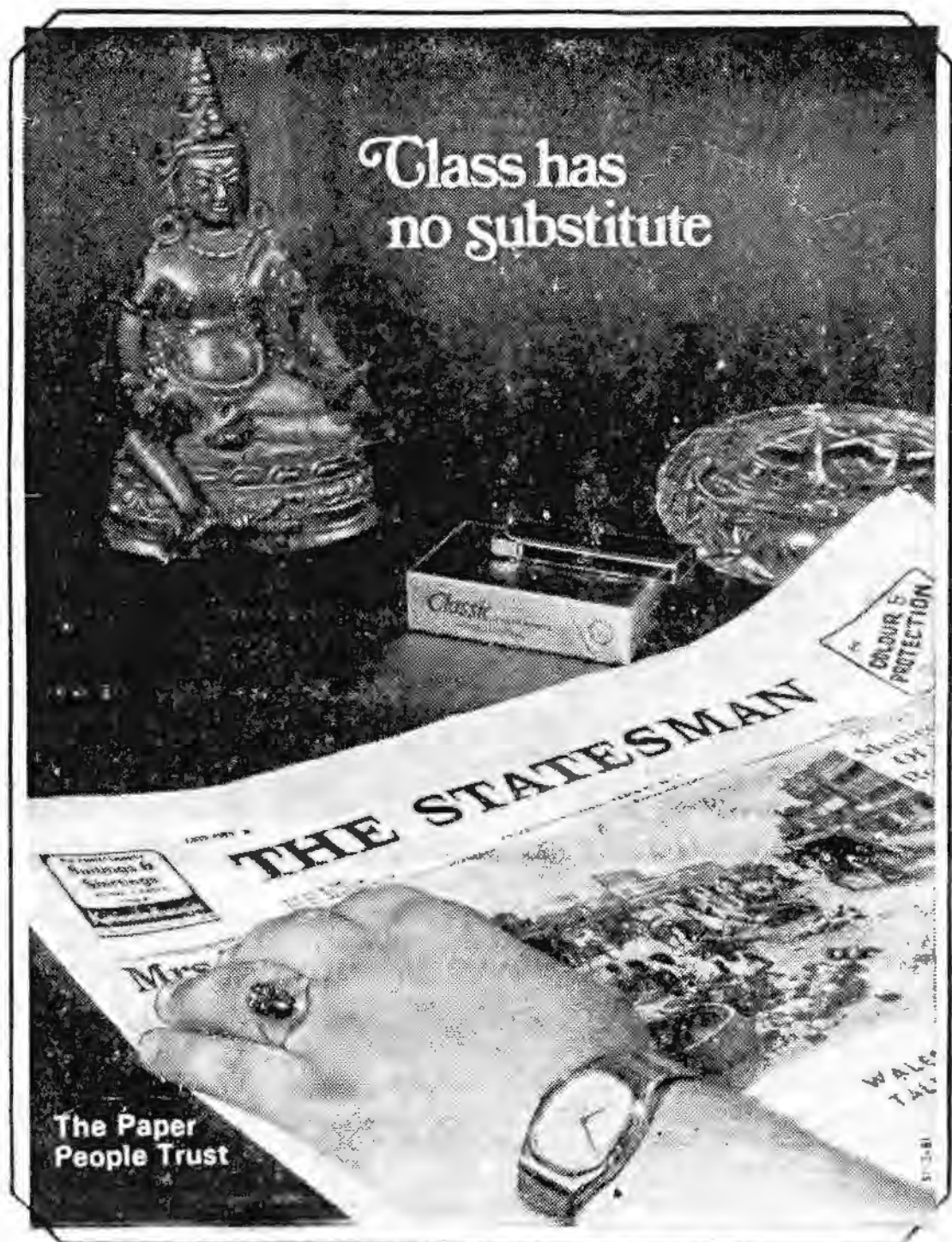
Your idea of a National Caretaker Government would be a wonderful one, if it could ever be realized. Appealing to our rubber-stamp President to dismiss the scion of a dynasty he has served so loyally all these decades is like exhorting the tiger to turn vegetarian.

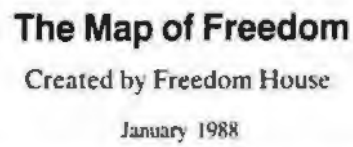
It would be reasonable to expect that the appeal would set to work to form a shadow cabinet drawn from Janata, Jan Morcha and B.J.P. and possibly Lok Dal so that it could take over, if it won the next general election.

Prof. C.V. Elias

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