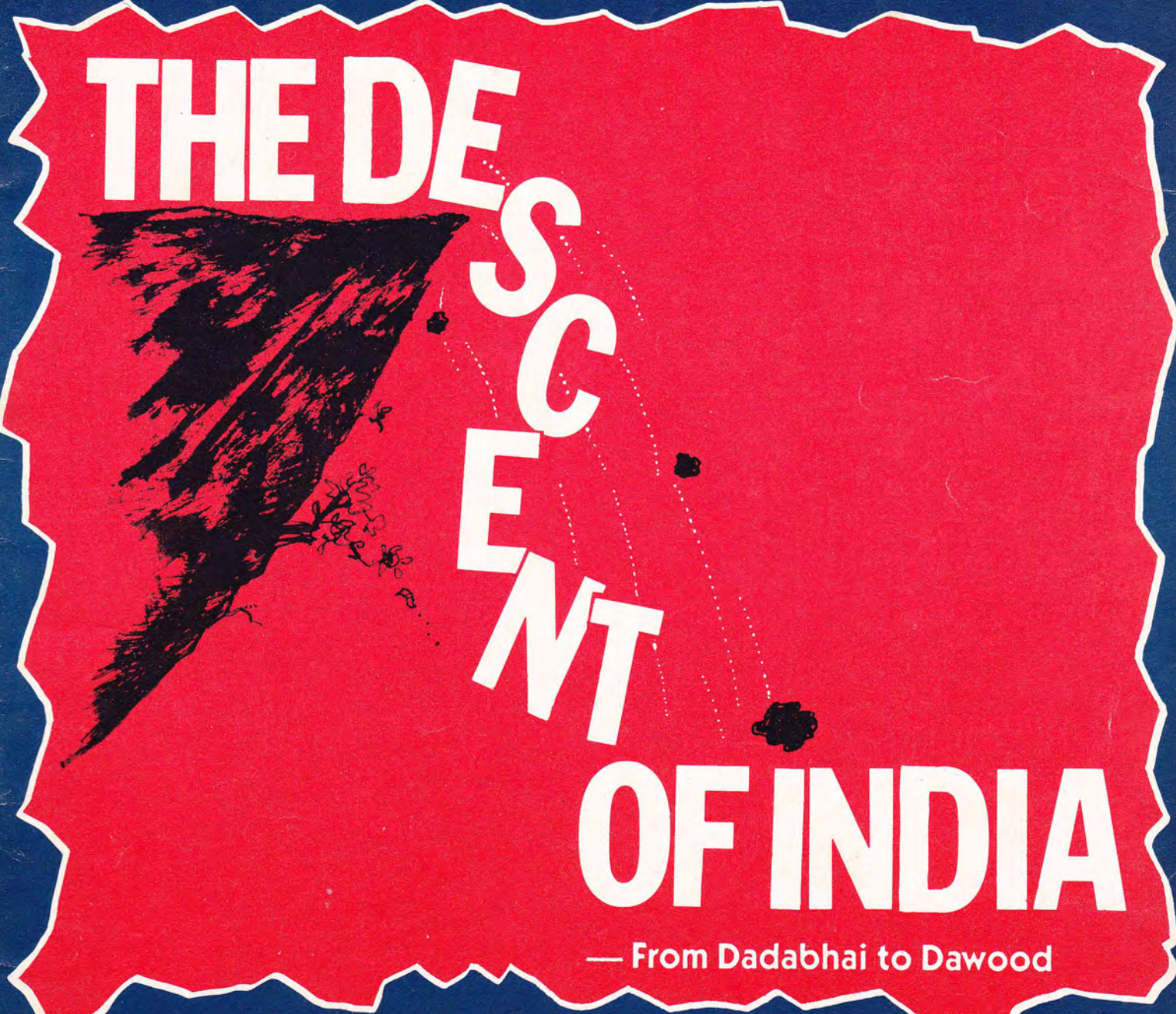


A QUARTERLY OF LIBERAL IDEAS

Freedom First

April-June 1993
No. 417
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41ST YEAR OF PUBLICATION



THE DE SCENT OF INDIA

— From Dadabhai to Dawood

Keeping the Peace the Bhiwandi Way

V.C. Phadke

Democracy or Theocracy

Mervyn Hiskett

ONLY ONE PERSON CAN SAVE BOMBAY.

No, it's not the Chief Minister. (Though there's no denying Mr. Pawar's doing his bit.)

Nor is it the Police Commissioner. (Though it's true Mr. Samra's doing an admirable job, too.)

Or, for that matter, a legislator, an editor, MLA, industrialist, or Chairman of a peace committee. (Noble as their intentions may be.)

Who is that person, then?

Which single person is in no apparent seat of power, and yet so powerful?

Can *any* single person be so powerful?

A daunting thought, yes.

But the answer is even more so.

That individual is you.

Yes, *you*.

THE MOST POWERFUL VOICE ON EARTH.

Every revolution is first an idea in one man's mind.

Individual conviction has the habit of snowballing into movements.

The emancipation of slaves in America, began with one man's yell.

John F. Kennedy asked not what the country can do for you, but what you can do for the country.

Closer home, we have witnessed this power bring about the freedom movement.

Subsequent to the riots and blasts, newspapers reported the most recent demonstrations of this power.

Of Jagdish Kumar, the cab driver who risked his life, whisking a Muslim lady to safety during sordid January. She bore one child in her arm, while another clutched at her leg.

Of the good samaritan who rushed a bleeding victim of the stockmarket blast to Bombay Hospital, in his car. He didn't even wait to accept gratitude, probably rushing off to rescue more injured.

Then there was the Florence Nightingale who nursed Worli's wounded. (While struggling to make ends meet in her own little hut.)

The list is endless. As endless as the queue of blood donors outside Bombay Hospital after the blasts.

As endless as the rows of people who lined up to give food, clothes and medicine, following the riots.

Absolutely endless. And, absolutely anonymous.

Just concerned individuals who knew no contribution, no deed was too small. Individuals like *you*.

Because, when the smaller things are taken care of, the larger things take care of themselves.

So remember this. The buck stops with you.

WHO, ME?

The riots and blasts were gory reminders of a city gone wrong. There are smaller reminders all over. Phones

that don't work. Inadequate water supply. Power supply tottering on the brink. Blocked sewers, blocked roads, choking chimneys, chemical-laden water.

Whether you like it or not, it's partly your fault.

You think it'll be taken care of. It's not your job. You have to get on with your life.

But stop and think a while.

If *you* switched off the lights in your home, when not required (and each one of us did the same), that would be a load off the MSEB.

The same goes for not allowing your tap to trickle. (Elsewhere, people queue up at the crack of dawn to fill their pots from a municipal trickle.)

If *you* checked your vehicle for pollution.

If *you* didn't litter.

If *you* ensured that everything in your home and your immediate neighbourhood, is as it should be.

Admittedly, they're not very big ifs.

But if you do everything you can, you can also make your voice heard.

You can haul up the authorities.

Since you're accountable, you'll be in a stronger position to demand accountability from your elected representatives. (And from the telephone department, the ration office, courts of law and so on.)

It won't be a frustrating experience any longer. You won't be scurrying from pillar to post.

Because you won't be alone.

Once you start, you'll be amazed at the number of like-minded people you'll find.

And when a lot of individuals unitedly echo their voice, it's no longer one voice.

It's public opinion.

The same public opinion that felled governments, liberated slaves and brought about a free India.

Abraham Lincoln said "With public opinion on its side, nothing can fail. Without it, nothing can succeed".

You could be anyone. A writer, a doctor, a chartered accountant, a lawyer, a student, you could even be a person in charge of an organisation that's trying to do something for the city.

Mobilise opinion. Channelise it to the appropriate authority. Write a letter to the editor. Launch a signature drive. Remember, no deed is too small.

In the wake of recent developments, the city has been left crippled, but defiant.

And it's leaning on you for help.

SALAAM BOMBAY

Let's say Bombay, I'm proud of it.

Freedom First

A Quarterly of Liberal Ideas

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BETWEEN OURSELVES

After the communal holocaust in January came the bombs in March which were calculated to reduce Bombay to another Beirut. That the Bombayman and the Bombaywoman refused to let the bombs destroy their morale is a tribute to their fortitude and courage.

You will recall that in the last issue we had mentioned how a seminar on the "Role of the State in a Market Economy" had to be postponed due to the civil commotion in the city following the Ayodhya demolitions. The seminar was re-scheduled for March 20. The bombs put paid to that date as well. The venue where the seminar was scheduled had a visitation from the bombers and the hotel concerned closed down. We are rather worried about announcing a fresh date for fear of some other incident!

Seriously, however, we do hope to discuss this very vital topic sometime in August or September. Meanwhile this issue of *Freedom First* yet again delayed, concerns itself with the criminalisation of public life — a topic of considerable relevance in the context of the bomb blasts.

Also discussed in this issue are a number of other topics ranging from communal peace and a debate between Agarkar and Ranade on matters that are as relevant today as they were when they were debated in 1895 (we have just noticed a printer's devil in that article — it should be 1895, not 1985 — on page 29) to a review of India-US relations and a study of Yeltsin and Gorbachev. We trust readers will find the contents sufficiently varied and interesting.

S.V. Raju, R. Srinivasan

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WITH MANY VOICES

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

Bear a child, and you pierce an arrow in the enemy's eye.

Posters in Iraq quoted in the *New York Review of Books*,
February 11, 1993

It won't be long before someone starts marketing TV dinners, or offering you the gourmet experience of eating food that tastes like soap to match the soaps on the screen.

K.K. Pillai, *The Metropolis*, March 6/7, 1993

India is a geographical term. It is no more a united nation than the equator.

Winston Churchill, quoted in *The Economist*,
December 12, 1992

If Narasimha Rao visits your house don't make the mistake of offering him a choice between tea or cold drink — it will take him a month to make up his mind.

Sadhvi Rithambhara, *Indian Express*, November 8, 1992

We have astronauts flying in space-ships but we don't have enough wheelchairs.

Mrs. Naina Yeltsin, *The Sunday Times of India*,
November 15, 1992

Benazir want to be a martyr. If not Joan of Arc, then certainly Joan of Pak.

A Pakistan Government spokesman, *Indian Express*,
November 15, 1992

Many streets have been named after Nelson Mandela, who has neither done nor intended the slightest good to our country or civilization; but no streets are named after Solzhenitsyn or Havel.

Salisbury Review, September 1992

I cannot look at any more maps. The names of cities reek of burnt flesh.

Elias Carretti, *The Human Province* 1985

It seems hardly credible but it is clearly true that the arbiter of public opinion and public morality in our most cosmopolitan city is Bal Thackeray.

Tavleen Singh, *Indian Express*, May 2, 1993

The psychology of Bombay is such that if BEST buses are on the roads, then people feel that things are all right.

Sharad Pawar, *The Times of India*, May 2, 1993

Bulls and Bombs. Bombay has seen both in the last 12 months. And the city has taken both in its stride.

TVR Shenoy, *The Week*, March, 28, 1993

Have we lost our sanity that the only interesting issues we have on the national agenda are film stars or Ayodhya.

M.M. Chandni, *Indian Express*, May 2, 1993

India has recently joined the exclusive club of nations that spend more money on interest on debt than on defence, though India has one of the largest defence forces in the world.

K.P. Joseph, *Indian Express*, April 22, 1993

When the order of the day is 'protect Hindus' and 'protect Muslims' who cares about protecting the nation?

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in 1923, quoted by
Prof. T.N. Nadan, *The Times of India*, April 23, 1993

Some secrecy is necessary in government, but Henry (Kissinger) crossed the line from secrecy to deceit.

Tony Lake, quoted in *The Independent*, May 1/2, 1993

The defeat of the impeachment motion would "safeguard fearless and independent judges from scurrilous attacks and calumny from motivated persons"

Justice V. Ramaswamy, *The Times of India*,
May 15, 1993

A lifetime is too long for sexual fidelity.

F. Giroud, *The Times of India*, May 16, 1993

OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

"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



A New Colonialism?

Murray Kempton (*New York Review of Books*, Nov. 19, 1992) has drawn the attention of the concerned regarding the flourishing trade in children — "sex-workers" in southeast Asia. Tourists of course, are the consumers of this commodity. While Thailand's laws decree that not more than 10,000 work in these "houses of dubious fame," the actual figures have been toted up to 200,000. This is not to say that all the tourists seek this strange and bizarre pleasure, but there is sufficient demand for the market to supply 200,000.

Fear of the spread of AIDs makes the careful and wary traveller opt for a younger sex partner. The chances are that there is less possibility of an infection. "There are villages in northeast Thailand where it is hard to find any children from the earliest years. There was a public outcry in 1990 when a Thai newspaper reported that a pregnant young woman in the north had sold her child into prostitution even before the little girl/boy was born." This of course was not uncommon in our country where children yet to be born were bonded for debts.

But stranger things are yet to come.

Merchants in need of children carry television sets into South China and despite the international border, manage to exchange a television set for a girl child. The girl child till now cursed for her gender is now blessed for the valuable consumer item that she brings to her ex-home. A TV is of course *the most essential* of commodities.

Meanwhile, the rush of girls of nubile age to the metropolises in search of

gold and the "good life" makes them walk unwittingly into brothels. Is this a new colonialism? or a new market?

RS

The State's Role

A free market economy does not mean that the State in such an economy has no role to play other than that of maintaining law and order. Law and order and ensuring the safety and security of citizens are indeed a major charge of governments.

A market economy described by the Germans as Social Market Economy envisages a role for the state in those areas which are of crucial importance to the welfare of its citizens. These go beyond the maintenance of law and order beyond national security. Primary education is one such area. There was a time when India honoured its teachers — the gurus. Now this title has been usurped by charlatans and has acquired religious connotations.

The real gurus are the teachers in the thousands in small towns and rural areas who are manfully doing what they can to impart primary education to our children. We in the cities care little for these men and women who are not only not given the recognition due to them but are often not even given their just dues. *The Pioneer* (February 11) reported that a teacher at the BS College in Danapur, Bihar (in the outskirts of Patna) died because he could not pay his medical bills — he had not been paid his salary for the last four months. In fact, according to press reports, about 100,000 teaching and non-teaching staff in the 12 universities

of Bihar have not been paid their salary for over four months.

The Pioneer report points out: "Even if these reports are exaggerated, such a state is way beyond acceptable limits of treatment for the teacher... And what is happening in Bihar is reflective of the state of teachers in the entire country."

Tibetan Freedom

Freedom First would be failing in its duty if it did not, on the 34th Anniversary of the Tibetan people's revolt of 1959 (March 10) reaffirm our wholehearted support to the movement for the liberation of Tibet. Let us also not forget that it was the Nehru government's pusillanimity that made it so easy for the Chinese communists to annex Tibet. We therefore have to atone for our lapse by recognising the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in Dharamsala and supporting its demand that the Communist Chinese quit Tibet.

Departing from a prepared text, the Dalai Lama delivered an extempore speech on March 1993 from his headquarters in Dharamsala. In the course of his speech (reported in *The Tibetan Bulletin*, March-April 1993) he said: "I always say that our struggle is not merely political in nature. Rather, it has a direct bearing on Buddhism. Therefore, putting all our efforts into it is asking to practising the Dharma. The Dharma is not a system; a kind heart and peaceful, harmonious character are its essence." The Dalai Lama's remarks were directed at those who though "with a commendable sense of responsibility to our national Cause" were inclined "to display non-peaceful and disharmonious characteristics at times." Something that could be directed equally at other peoples also seeking freedom and justice elsewhere in this troubled world.

SVR

Freedom First Salutes *Oslobodenje*

The Indian Liberal Group has nominated *Oslobodenje* the Sarajevo daily newspaper for the Liberal International 1993 Prize for Freedom. In a despatch to *Freedom First* Ms. Shirin Panthaki of the Indian Liberal Group writes that the Group is honoured to nominate *Oslobodenje* for the prize.

Oslobodenje was founded in wartime, in 1943. Since the siege of Sarajevo began in April 1992, *Oslobodenje* has steadfastly and with great courage continued to operate in the most hazardous and atrocious conditions. The *Oslobodenje* building was one of the first to be under direct attack when at the beginning of April Sarajevo was surrounded and blockaded.

During the months of war that followed, the journalists of *Oslobodenje* have worked with the utmost loyalty for their paper. "Anything could happen, the skies could collapse, but *Oslobodenje* had to appear in print every day." That is what the journalists decided at the start of the siege. Since April no truck bringing printing paper has been able to enter the besieged city. *Oslobodenje* reduced its number of pages, but the paper was published just the same.

A remarkable and admirable feature of *Oslobodenje* is, that there are Serbs, Croats and Muslims all working together for the paper, at a time when ethnic conflicts and violence are tearing human beings apart in the land.

In a city under siege, with heavy shelling and mortar fire, it was not safe for journalists to go to and from work every day. So they were organised into 7 day shifts. Teams of journalists and typographers worked from Monday to Monday. They slept and ate and worked in a nuclear bunker beneath the shell-shattered *Oslobodenje* building. But the paper had to be printed.

Three of *Oslobodenje*'s journalists have been killed since last April when civil war began to tear Bosnia apart. Yosef Smilovic, a reporter, was killed on April 9th, very soon after the start of the war. Sarko Hondo, a photographer was killed in July, photographing Sarajevo citizens queuing for water. Several more journalists have been wounded by sniper fire in the area around the building. But still *Oslobodenje* managed to appear in print every morning.

On 19 February 1993, one of journalism's top awards, 'Newspaper of the Year' award in London, was won by *Oslobodenje*. The prize was accepted by the editor-in-chief, Kemel Kurspalic, who managed to get out of Sarajevo and come to London to receive the

award. In a few deeply moving words, this is what he said: "Thank you for the feeling that we are not alone in the world, not alone in the atomic bomb shelter where we prepare our paper each day. Thank you for the feeling of belonging to the family of journalists here in London and anywhere in the world. And, I have to tell you that our example proves that freedom of the press cannot be silenced by any means, by guns, by snipers, mortar, tanks, or bombs. We will survive that, with your support."

We lack everything: newsprint, paper, basic security — but not devotion and dedication to our readers and our paper, whose name, '*Oslobodenje*' means Liberation."



THE DESCENT OF INDIA — From Dadabhai to Dawood

The Criminalisation of Politics in India

R. Srinivasan

If there is one thing on which everybody is agreed it is that our politics has been criminalised. The blasts in Bombay only confirmed what has been known for a long time. That one should pull out by the root this noxious blight is something on which all will agree. How to do this?

If there is one thing on which everybody is agreed, it is that our politics has been criminalised. The blasts in Bombay only confirmed what was known for a long time. Professor Rajni Kothari has been crying himself hoarse upon this for over two decades in column after column but his was to be the voice of a Cassandra.

That one should pull out by the root this noxious blight is something on which all will agree. How to do this? Generally people have vague and dim memories of the good old days when politicians were knights in shining armour and names one tossed about were B.G. Kher, Rajaji and others. It is true that those were halcyon days when politics had a moral purpose about it. We know that V.N. Gadgil had to borrow to send his son to study in the London School of Economics.

Politicians of that generation were part of a movement — a movement for the regeneration of the land, for national freedom and a sense of idealism pervaded all around. Many were prepared for sacrifices and were prepared to work with no thought of rewarding themselves.

This was a flash in the pan, a temporary phase in the politics of the country. The knights had to turn to the rough and tumble of getting elected to legislatures, rewarding old war horses, buying support of intractable leaders of castes, cajoling the leaders of the Muslims, scheduled castes and women, with positions in the legislatures, cabinet or sinecures.

These of course are the very stuff of politics and you cannot indulge in any

one of them if you take a high moral dudgeon. Unfortunately this was not driven home sufficiently to the average citizen who still was fed on platitudes.

One of the central problems of politics is how is one to balance the need for buying political support without falling fully into the outstretched arms of special interests. This of course means manoeuvring the ship of the state among dangerous rocks and floating and steering itself is a great achievement. That the Indian politician was able to do this was itself a high testimony to his abilities.

Democratic politics has found devices for keeping the politicians in leash. The institutions of a free press, the judiciary, parties in opposition, the various organised interests, and the free floating intellectuals have from time to time taken care to see that the compulsions of politics do not nibble away at all values to the bone. The legislature can only partly do this and the bureaucracy by its very nature has to opt itself out of reforming these shortcomings.

Since an open political system means elections and these guzzle up gargantuan amounts of money, the one corrupting factor is the meeting of election costs. This has been the thin edge through which many of the ills of our politics has been infected. Another important factor of course is to ensure that the results of the elections will be predictable — by intimidation, booth capturing, kidnapping and all those things that one reads in the *Pickwick Papers*. Dickens was describing a stage in the history of British elections. And

this has become a fixture in our system during the last twenty years and the mechanisms of intimidation have become more thorough and the threats to the non-compliant citizen very real and violent.

In come the thugs with this. And since every party wants to win elections, willy nilly they are beholden their brand of musclemen. Since our politicians become supine in front of those who deliver the votes, these "vote deliverers" make their profession more sophisticated and pitch their demands constantly high. It is a sad commentary of our times that none of our national political parties were able to resist these successfully.

These unsocial elements which at one stage would hover around only at elections for their kill, gradually became insatiable and began to enter into the very processes of politics for they learnt very soon of the inordinately high stakes that there were in politics. But



they had to work with the politicians in power and these people were soon to be led on the primrose path to the enormously good things that were available once a responsible public official jettisoned moral constraints. The politicians and the thugs now developed a finely tuned symbiotic relationship and the plunder of the land began in which all pitched in their claims. Buccaneering entrepreneurs, land sharks, liquor barons, fly by night financial dealers, vied with each other in greasing the palms of everyone in public office. And the police were not long left out. They too joined or were cajoled into the team.

It was not as though these were not exposed. The newspapers that began ferreting out these were of course a thorn and a calculated violence upon reporters, editors and others were attempted. Our record in this area is positively sordid. It was difficult to silence the press and they have done a splendid service in the cause of clean open politics. But remedies were hard to find.

For one thing the government more often than not was unwilling to strike. And the judicial process was tardy. The average citizen was left with no recourse to turn to except to learn to live with these.

The Emergency of 1975 witnessed several of these developments reaching an apogee. The clique that surrounded the *de facto* ruler, the so called Youth Congress was a synonym for young thugs. Their public behaviour was shocking even to the jaded sensibilities of newspaper readers. Many entered into legislatures, into the inner circles of political parties and into other strategic centres as well. Those who had been law abiding workers were not slow in learning the new political alphabet and picking up a thing or two.

In this context it is not surprising if the law-breakers and those who were the zamindars of the world of smuggling entered the arena. For, with political patronage many things could be accomplished. And they were accomplished — black money laundered, new respectable fronts of business inaugurated, construction corporations floated, the entertainment industry invaded and hotels of varying stellar constellations proposed. They were eager to turn parts of the country into tourist spots

GOVT. THAT HIDES FASTER



This poster by Ajit Ninan drawn for a different occasion is quite apt in the current context — the criminal in the politician's garb.

and almost won their game — but they were foiled by a public outcry against the rape of the land.

Can these things be allowed to grow unchecked? It is not beyond the wit of man to contain these.

First, since elections are the source of all the evil, the government should totally finance elections. Public education on civic values can go a long way in keeping these things at arms length. If illiterate women in a state can battle against a strong liquor lobby there is nothing that is impossible for an awakened *jan shakti*.

The alternative grass roots movements that have sprung up all over the

country should be supported with funds, and by other kinds of voluntary help.

There are many who serve the public cause without any ulterior motive, by just doing their duty. And since their greatest opponents are their own colleagues (as in the case of of Deputy Municipal Commissioner Khairnar) the public should organise letters of protest and an affirmation of support for them.

People's awards corresponding to Padma Bhushan should be instituted and worthy individuals should be publicly felicitated.

ADAM ADIL

We regret to announce the passing away, after a heart attack, of our dear friend and colleague Mr. Adam Adil in May. Adam was a member of the editorial board of *Freedom First* and a former editor of the journal when it was a monthly. He was actively involved in the work of the Indo-Arab Society of which he was a Vice President. Adam was active in the freedom struggle. After independence he as a member of the Maharashtra legislature.

Freedom First conveys its deep sense of sorrow to his family on their bereavement. We share their loss.

Criminal Politicians or Political Criminals?

S.V. Raju

The fact remains that criminals have taken over and their writ runs in large parts of the country. In other words, goondas who put politicians in power and manipulated them from behind no longer feel it necessary to be backstage. They have now come out into the open and have got themselves elected to public office. This is the reality of public life in India today.

The big bangs from the bomb blasts in Bombay on March 12 signalled, with their deafening roar and the blood of their victims, the fact that the chickens had at last come home to roost; that India had truly touched rock bottom — that the descent of India was indeed complete.

One could argue as to when exactly the rot started. Some would say that it began on August 15, 1947 when the British handed over power to the Indian National Congress led by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Another would suggest that the rot started with the Second Five Year Plan in 1957 with its Gosplan orientation fathered by Prof. P.C. Mahalanobis. 1957 would also be identified as the year of birth of the notorious Licence-Permit-Quota-Raj. A third view would be that it began with Mrs. Indira Gandhi; and a fourth that it all really started with Nehru's grandson and Mrs. Gandhi's son Sanjay Gandhi. Each of these (milestones of sorts in their own way) could be right.

My own personal preference is for the second 'milestone' — the launching of the infamous Second Five Year Plan. Licences, Permits and Quotas led to countless restrictions, which in turn led to the creation of a whole new profession, the breakers of such restrictions — familiar to us as smugglers, black-marketers, 'hit-men', 'Dons' etc. Corruption came to be accepted as a way of life — it may be recalled that Mrs. Gandhi once described it as a 'universal phenomenon' (obviously she had accepted globalisation of corruption much before the globalisation of legitimate trade and commerce was even thought of).

Once corruption came to be accepted as inevitable then who better than

the criminals to manage 'the system'. A rather simplistic explanation, I will be told, hence inadequate. But then most things in life do have rather simple explanations once the layers of alibis and excuses are peeled off.

So long as the Permit Licence quota Raj continued under the umbrella of the 'socialist pattern of society' the cozy relationship between corrupt businessmen, corrupt politicians and corrupt bureaucrats continued undisturbed. Unfortunately for them the economy bankrupted sooner than they expected. The Indian *nomenklatura* saw lucrative sources of income disappearing in front of their eyes. Something had to be done quickly to reverse or at least slow down the trend towards a free economy. One was to ensure that officials at the centre and the states dragged their feet so that, irrespective of what the ministers said or promised, performance lagged behind promised policy. The other was to tell the world that India was an unsafe place to put their money in. Without foreign investment the economy stood little chance of revival.

The first was easy. Also welcome because it suited the interests of a large number of bureaucrats in Delhi and in the states. They therefore did their damndest to nullify official policy. In this they have had the willing cooperation of petty officials right down the line who too have much to lose. With regard to the second, the BJP, the VHP and the various assorted 'Sanghs' and 'Dals' that go by the name of '*parivar*' or family, provided India's 'New Class' with just the opportunity they needed by bringing down the domes of a mosque in disuse in a remote town in Uttar Pradesh. While one did not expect anything better from such organisations

which represented Hinduism's lunatic fringe, many including this writer expected the BJP to be more mature. On the other hand I had no business to expect the BJP to behave better as I have had the opportunity of following rather closely the pronouncements and policies of the BJP in its previous *avatar* — the Jan Sangh. But that is another story.

There is yet another explanation that is offered by those who assert that the Ayodhya demolitions had nothing to do with the March 12 explosions. According to the proponents of this view the explosions are the expression of anger (or the backlash if you wish) of gangsters against the previous Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Mr. Sudhakar Naik who had declared war on the many gangs infesting the city. One of the weapons he used in his campaign was to order the demolition of illegal multistorey constructions built with impunity by 'builders' with the active connivance of corrupt officials and corrupt politicians. The latter owed



their election to the Municipal Corporation or the state legislature to local 'mafias' who provided these politicians with the money and the manpower to contest and win the elections.

Not surprisingly when his continuance in office was threatened Mr. Naik called off the campaign. That he finally did resign had more to do with his inability to enforce law and order in the wake of the bloody riots that claimed over 600 lives in the wake of the Babri Masjid demolition.

Whatever the reason the fact remains that criminals have taken over and their writ runs in large parts of the country. In other words, *goondas* who put politicians in power and manipulated them from behind no longer feel it necessary to be backstage. They have now come out into the open and get themselves elected to various public offices.

This is the reality of public life in India. Whatever they may say and howsoever they may disclaim responsibility the fact remains that today in just under 47 years after the British handed over

power to the Indian National Congress the people of India are at the mercy of criminals clad in *khadi*.

An exaggeration? The following are excerpted from various newspaper reports. You judge for yourself.

The following is from a report filed by Mr. Sanjeev Unhale in *The Times of India* of February 25, 1993:

"Aurangabad, February 24. Corporators from the municipal corporation here have flouted the law with impunity and managed to get away scot free because of the immense clout they wield in their areas of operation," it is said.

★

"Forty-six different criminal suits have been filed against some of the corporators, according to police sources.

★

"Some of the cases pending against the corporators are for cheating, robbery, dacoity, theft, extortion, house-breaking, rioting, arson, causing grievous hurt, attempt to murder, kidnapping, wrongful confinement

of government servants, sale of banned narcotics and drugs, running a gambling den, fraudulent deeds and disposal of property, criminal trespass, land scams and threats to contractors.

★

"To cite one example, the former Shiv Sena corporator, Mr. Pradeep Dutt is involved in as many as 11 criminal offences...

"Another corporator, Mr. Javed Hasan Khan has 46 criminal trials pending against him...

"Another known corporator who crossed from the Shiv Sena to the Congress, Mr. Narayan Fatelashkar, faced two dozen criminal trials for the offences of assault, attempt to murder, unlawful congregation, robbery and wrongful confinement of a public servant."

The following was filed by Mr. P.K. Surendran from Nagpur in *The Times of India* of February 5:

"Nagpur, February 4. If there was a place in the Guinness book for the criminal antics of a civic body, the

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Nagpur municipal corporation might well win the position hands down.

"Criminalised politics may be a trite issue in the Indian context today but the civic body in the "orange city" of India has much more than it offers. Here, the first citizen is elected by lottery. Also other civic panel members get elected by drawing lots. A Janata Dal leader of the corporation finds himself handcuffed as he comes out of the civic hall. And, at least, six other corporators have criminal records."

Mr. Hitendra Thakur, the Congress member of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly has the "dubious distinction" of being the first elected representative from Maharashtra to be booked under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA).

In his despatch in *The Times of India* of October 29, 1992, Mr. Rajdeep Sardesai notes that "Mr. Thakur's rise from small-time crook to don of Vasai-Virar has been supported by politicians from the Congress, BJP and the Shiv Sena alike."

"Mr. Thakur got involved in a big way in land grabbing and illegal constructions after 1988, the time around which Mr. Pawar announced the dereservation of green zone land in Vasai-Virar. In one case when the tehsildar ordered the demolition of some illegal buildings, a stay order was obtained within moments from the then minister of state for home, Mr. Madan Bafna.

"In recent weeks, Mr. Bafna's name has been linked with telephone calls that were allegedly made to Dubai's underworld kingpin, Dawood Ibrahim. Mr. Thakur's brother, Bhai, is a trusted lieutenant.

"The BJP has demanded that a full-fledged inquiry be held into the Thakur affair. But the party cannot profess to have an entirely spotless record in the matter either.

"During the last general elections, Mr. Thakur tacitly supported the BJP MP from North Bombay, Mr. Ram Naik. In fact, the BJP's performance in the Vasai-Virar segment of the constituency was much better than the Congress.

"When the police began its offensive against Thakur's men this year, the Sena actually criticised the police action. *Saamna*, the party's mouth-

Mera Bharat Mahan

India's crime clock has gone berserk. There is at least one cognizable crime every seven seconds, one penal offence every 20 seconds, a property crime every minute, theft every one-and-a-half minutes, a violent crime every two minutes, burglary every four minutes, riot every five minutes, dacoity and robbery every 14 minutes, murder every 15 minutes and a rape every 52 minutes.

More women and youth are taking to crime than ever before. While the population of the country increased by 127.6 per cent between 1951 and 1990, the total incidence of Indian Penal Code (IPC) crimes has gone up by 146.9 per cent.

Worse still, there is no effective deterrent. An agenda paper prepared for the conference of chief ministers on administration of criminal justice — scheduled to be held here on Friday November 13, 1992 — presents a grim scenario of the crime rate in the country.

The paper warns: "Long-term trends clearly show a marked increase in incidence of crime; a less than proportionate increase in registrations; a growing backlog of investigations, prosecutions and trials and a declining rate of conviction. The obvious conclusion that can be drawn from these trends is that increasingly more and more criminals are going unpunished; deterrent effect of the law is on the wane and its supremacy is being stymied by individuals. If this trend is allowed to go unchecked, it will further erode credibility of the criminal justice system, reduce people's faith and confidence in its efficacy and further encourage a tendency on their part to take law in their own hands."

The paper notes the "clear upsurge" in activities of Punjab terrorists in other states. Last year, 290 incidents occurred outside Punjab, in which 373 persons were killed, compared to 117 such incidents, leading to the death of 110 persons in 1990. In Jammu and Kashmir, though there was a decline in terrorist-related incidents from 3,905 in 1990 to 3,122 in 1991, the number of casualties rose from 1,177 to 1,393.

Left wing extremists continue to strike in a big way. Their main hunting ground remains Andhra Pradesh (1,230 incidents with 232 killed) and Bihar (415 incidents with 166 killed). The two states account for 88 per cent of the total left extremist violence in the country. A marked feature of the Naxalite violence has been that it has spread to states adjoining Andhra Pradesh. Thirty persons were killed in Maharashtra, 36 in Madhya Pradesh and one in Orissa in 96, 89 and 14 incidents, respectively.

Crime against women remains a serious concern. A new feature is the increasing involvement of women in crime. The "female criminality" has shown an increase of 362.53 per cent from 1971 to 1990. In contrast, the "male criminality" has risen by 146.7 per cent during the corresponding period. It is odd that the highest number of women arrests are in respect of a crime directed against their own sex, kidnapping and abduction of women and girls.

Indian Express

piece, even wrote an editorial accusing the police of spreading "terror" in the district."

According to a report in the *Indian Express* of November 16, 1992, "Ahmed Ali alias Sher Khan, a notorious character of Agra who is facing charges in more than 25 criminal cases, has been nominated Chairman of the Indian Jute Development Council (JDC)." The report adds that Khan's nomination was announced by the Union Ministry of Agriculture on September 14. The report reveals that "the Chairman's name entered the police records way back in 1971, when

he was allegedly caught with a wireless set and subsequently charged with espionage... The police at Agra and Etah booked Khan for various offences including murder."

The above are only miniscule samples to give you a flavour of the extent to which public life in this country has been all but taken over by criminal elements. There's more — very much more that is reported in the daily press and in the magazines. An excellent account entitled "The Mafia Challenge" in *The Week* of April is recommended reading for those concerned with the rapid decline in the quality of public life

and morality in India. Here are two paragraphs from this account written by Maria Abraham:

"The spectre of chaos haunts the Indian cities. From smuggling and satta, kidnapping and supari killings, the underworld don has graduated to the semester of Semtex and sabotage. From the power-hungry politician and the money-mad policeman, the patronage that the don boasts has widened to forces beyond the country's borders. Indian dons have gone global."

"Earlier, politicians created and controlled the dons. Now in a reversal of the picture, the dons are claiming more than their pound of flesh. They are seeking to subvert the country. The bombing of Bombay shows just that."

In the course of his article entitled "Hack at the roots" in the *The Economic Times* of April 24, 1993, Mr. Nikhil Chakravarty points out:

"The bomb blasts on March 12 have, of course, shaken many a politician out of his unscrupulous complacency in maintaining links with the underworld of smugglers who have promoted themselves as arms deal-

ers right up to the sophisticated RDX. The Sanjay Dutt case has shaken the film world, and now Dawood Ibrahim's links have been traced to Bangalore and beyond. And Dawood Ibrahim is not the only mafia don with whom prominent politicians have built up cosy arrangements.

"There is a lot of talk nowadays of criminalisation of politics. Why not say it openly that the criminal has become a partner of the politician in the same joint venture of capturing and managing the power structure of this country. Its gruesome manifestation has come as a frightening revelation to the country as a whole. And this cannot be eliminated from our public life without liquidating this unholy nexus. The fight has to be as much against the mafia as against the politician who protects the mafia."

How do we reverse our tracks. Can we reverse our steps. Can we go back to the days before freedom when we still retained some idealism. When India could produce men of the calibre of Dadabhai Naoroji who carried the cause of India's independence right into

the House of Commons. I agree with Dr. Srinivasan who does not think it is too late.

To his suggestion that voluntary movements and organisations need to be supported and encouraged, I would add that there is need to critically evaluate whether the extent of power in the hands of our politicians and bureaucrats is really necessary and consider how best to reduce such power to the minimum required for the efficient governance of the country. We need to evaluate the amount of privileges enjoyed by our elected representatives and consider how many of these privileges are really necessary or justified for the efficient performance of their duties. While no one can dispute the fact that electoral reforms are badly needed there is also the need to make power less attractive. Because among the reasons why criminal and other anti-social elements seek electoral office are the power of patronage and the perks that go with public office. Power should become service oriented and not the means for self aggrandisement which is what it became since freedom.

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Keeping the Peace The Bhiwandi Way

V.C. Phadke

Many people who were surprised to see the peaceful atmosphere in the powerloom city of Bhiwandi, known as the Manchester of Maharashtra, amidst the communal holocaust let loose in neighbouring Bombay ought to know that the twin-city of Bhiwandi-Nizampur has had a proud and long record of communal harmony and fraternity during the last hundred years.

When Hindu-Muslim riots flared up in communally sensitive towns and cities of Maharashtra like Bombay, Pune, Malegaon and Yeole before and after the partition of India, the citizens of Bhiwandi maintained remarkable peace because both communities had cultivated, over the years, an enviable sense of understanding and mutual trust for each other.

The Muslims of Bhiwandi who have a slight edge over the Hindus in terms of numbers consist mainly of Momins, a weavers' community which migrated from Uttar Pradesh, and the native Konkani landlords and traders. The Hindus are divided into the native Maharastrians who are currently hardly ten per cent of the total population and a very large number of businessmen who migrated from Gujarat and Rajasthan. The recent influx of about a hundred thousand Telugu speaking *Padmashalis*, weavers' from Andhra Pradesh, has added a new dimension to the social and cultural fabric of Bhiwandi.

Agonising Memories

This state of peace was however disturbed for the first time in 1970 and again in 1984 when communal riots broke out on an unprecedented scale leaving behind agonizing memories of gruesome murders and arson as well as a sad legacy of mutual hatred and distrust between the two communities. Therefore when the Babri Masjid was demolished on 6th December 1992, people in and outside Bhiwandi expected a recurrence of communal frenzy leading to the kind of riots witnessed in Bombay during December and January. But, thanks to the remarkable restraint exercised by both the

The present state of the peace in Bhiwandi is the natural consequence of sustained and ceaseless efforts made by the police with the spontaneous cooperation of the citizens. Bhiwandi has shown how a judicious combination of thoughtful, restrained citizens and wise, intelligent police officers can achieve what appear to be miraculous results.

communities and the exemplary precautionary measures taken by the local police to forestall any untoward incident, Bhiwandi remained peaceful — barring one or two minor incidents of stone-throwing and cracker-bursting. The present state of the peace in Bhiwandi is not the result of a magic wand being waved nor is it a case of a fortunate fluke. It is the natural consequence of sustained and ceaseless efforts made by the police with the spontaneous cooperation of the citizens. Bhiwandi has shown how a judicious combination of thoughtful, restrained citizens and wise, intelligent police officers can achieve what appear to be miraculous results. Such a police-people combine is, however, not possible unless the common people trust the khaki clad custodians of the law.

People-Police Cooperation

Surely the police force cannot develop friendly relations with the masses without freely mixing among them. After the 1984 riots the then Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Mr. K.P. Gaekwad initiated the process of cultivating good public relations. His example was followed by his successor Mr. Suresh Khopde who, after making an objective study of all riot cases registered by the police wrote a book in Marathi on the 1984 riots.

He ignored a very controversial politicians-dominated Peace Committee and established *mohalla* committees in each of the 70 municipal wards of Bhiwandi. Each committee was composed of 25 members belonging to the Hindu and Muslim communities known in their locality as law-abiding respectable citizens. Periodic meetings of these committees (which had no office-bearers to avoid wrangling over positions) were conducted by police officers. These committees helped develop direct communications between the two communities which greatly helped in removing mutual distrust and hatred generated by mischievous propaganda let loose by fundamentalists of both communities. These committees also sought to solve the day-to-day problems of the people relating to water, electricity, rationing, licencing etc. with the help of the police and other officials concerned. In this direct dialogue between the police and the people, middlemen like professional politicians and so-called social workers were conspicuous by their absence.

DCP Khopde also implemented a novel scheme called "one day is yours; the other days are ours" to prevent occurrence of undesirable events during public processions on such occasions as the Ganpati festival, Shivjayanti and Moharrum. Under this scheme, the police accompanying such processions were advised not to take any action *on the spot* against those miscreants who indulged in indecent behaviour and provocative slogan-shouting as any police action could lead to violent mob reaction and to communal riots. However, the names of such miscreants were noted and legal proceedings launched against them after the festival was over. They were then rounded up and kept in police custody as a precautionary measure before the next public procession. These steps naturally deterred potential miscreants and reduced their number after each successive procession.

Imaginative Measures

The new DCP Gulabrao Pol, who took charge two years ago from DCP Khopde continued with even greater enthusiasm the good work started by DCP Khopde. He extended the scope of the police-oriented social and cultural activities by encouraging new ventures. He was ably assisted in this endeavour by his trustworthy Assistant Commissioners of Police (ACP) Mr. Keshavrao Sahasrabudhe and Mr. B.L. Pawar. The first preventive measure imaginatively taken by them to defuse tension was to arrange an *Eka Daud* (Unity Run) on the eve of the last Republic Day when BJP President Murli Manohar Joshi had announced his intention to hoist the National Flag in Srinagar. Hundreds of Hindus and Muslims participated in the programme of running in the presence of Ajitsingh Samra the then Police Commissioner of Thane. It proved to be a great success with the atmosphere in Bhiwandi filled with gaiety and enthusiasm instead of anxiety and tension.

The senior and middle-aged citizens of Bhiwandi who had gone through the traumatic ordeals of two successive riots yearned for peace at any cost and, as such, were mentally prepared to exercise caution and restraint even under the most provocative circumstances. But then there were the hot-tempered youths in both communities who were too young to have suffered directly from the atrocities of the last riots who could easily be led astray by the vicious propaganda of fundamentalists and be used by mischief mongers and trouble-makers. The Police Officers of Bhiwandi, therefore, maintained close contacts with such youth to deter them from anti-social activities and to channelise their energies into constructive work. They sought the cooperation of college students in the smooth conduct of general elections, organised cycle rallies, essay and elocution competitions. Furthermore the police helped the social and cultural associations run by different communities and were occasionally even personally present at functions organised by these organisations.

In these and other ways the police force of Bhiwandi projected their image as a friend of the law abiding even while ensuring that they did not neglect their role as a foe of the law-breakers. Hence

the entire force was kept on its toes to ensure its physical and mental fitness. The police conducted frequent *Nakabandis* (sealing the roads at mid-night) and surprise visits to the slums to identify and arrest anti-social elements before they commit any crime. They correctly anticipated the Ayodhya incidents as likely to disturb the peace in Bhiwandi and took some precautionary measures well in advance. For instance, they organized a Mushaira (poem-reciting) programme on 25th November. It was compered by the famous music director Naushad Ali and attended by an audience of about 25,000 Hindus and Muslims. They arranged frequent meetings of the *mohalla committees* to educate the common people on the importance of maintaining the peace in Bhiwandi irrespective of what happened in Ayodhya. On 6th December they ordered the cable TV operators in Bhiwandi to disconnect their dish antennas so that the people of Bhiwandi could not see and be provoked by visuals of the demolition of Babri Masjid. The police exhorted the political and social leaders, the corporators and members of *mohalla committees* to patrol along with them the streets of Bhiwandi from the night of 6th December onwards for a few days to forestall any untoward incident engineered by communal minded mischief-mongers. During patrolling, people were exhorted not to believe in rumours and to report to the police even minor cases of mischief for prompt action. They were assured that the police would reach any trouble spot within three minutes of a phone call.

The Bhiwandi Model

All these timely and well planned measures taken by the police prevented a possible communal holocaust in Bhiwandi. The credit for this spectacular achievement must go to the peace-loving Hindus and Muslims of Bhiwandi. Although the provocation was severe the Muslims exhibited exemplary restraint in not reacting with violence. Similarly the Hindus did not allow their passions to flare up in spite of the mischievous and provocative tone of some vernacular newspapers which reported the atrocities inflicted on Hindus in Bombay during the December and January riots. Credit must also be given to the entire police force in Bhiwandi for their hard work and commendable vigilance in pre-

venting communal riots of horrible proportions. Their *modus operandi* to maintain communal harmony, now known as the 'Bhiwandi Model' is worth emulating in other communally sensitive areas not only in Maharashtra but all over India. It is true that this model cannot work unless the police are willing to go out of their way and engage themselves in social and cultural activities and unless people are prepared to cooperate with them. It cannot succeed unless both Hindus and Muslims forget their past history of unhappy and acrimonious relations and look to the prospects of building a strong, unified and secular India.

To achieve such a noble objective it is quite essential that both Hindus and Muslims free themselves from prejudices and inhibitions. Muslims who are in a minority in India must give up their fear of insecurity under the majority rule of the Hindus. The Hindus too should never think that all or even a majority of Muslims in India are anti-Indian or pro-Pakistani.

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J.R. Patel
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Democracy or Theocracy

Mervyn Hiskett

On 9 May 1991, the London Times carried an announcement of the intention of certain Muslims to set up 'A Muslim Parliament in Britain'. Even if this first essay at Muslim separatism gets no further than *The Times*, it is unlikely we shall have heard the last of it. It will surely recur as the Muslim voice in Britain becomes more insistent and more confident.

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When the Indian Muslim leader, M.A. Ansari, sponsored the Nationalist Muslim Party during the 1920s, he did so with the intention of supporting Gandhi's initiative for Hindu-Muslim unity; and in the belief that the state could be religiously neutral, to the extent of accommodating both Muslims and Hindus as citizens of a secular, pluralist state. Ansari, a convinced modernist, failed to gain the support of his fellow Indian Muslims for this stance. As Robb puts it,

... what occurred from the 1920s among Indian Muslims was a retreat from Indian nationalism, and a quickening slide from communalism towards separatism.

That is, the Muslims opted decisively for an exclusive religious, not a secular, pluralist identity. It proved impossible for Ansari, or any other, to overcome this inherent Islamic predisposition to the extent necessary for Indian Muslims to co-exist with Hindus in the secular nationalism envisaged by Nehru. He had declared that, 'There shall be no state religion... nor shall the state either directly or indirectly endow any religion...' The Muslim leader, Jinnah, opposed this with his 'Fourteen Points' as early as April 1929, in which he demanded preferential treatment for Islam and insisted, 'that state neutrality was not enough and that state support was demanded...' This Muslim position had already been foreshadowed as early as 1870, when certain North Indian *maulvis* issued a well-known *fatwa* to the effect that India was *dar al-islam*, 'Islamic Territory', by virtue of the positive protection given by the British Raj to Islamic observance. What lay behind this consistent Muslim demand for special status, was fear of the consequences of being exposed to universal suffrage, which is wholly alien to Islamic theocracy, based as it is on the absolute values of the *Koran*. This was forcibly put to Minto by a Muslim deputation in 1906, which repudiated democracy and argued that the state of Islam was alone sufficient measure of its proper representation. As time went on,

Muslim leaders, employing religion to secure credibility and support, demanded all the more fiercely to be excused the rigours of demography and a wide franchise. The twin prospect of adult suffrage and independence was a chronic political shock.

Elsewhere, commenting on what he considers to be the 'confusion' of British policy in India, Robb adds that '(The British) sought Muslim support but introduced ever-wider suffrage'. He thus puts a finger on what is indeed the basic inconsistency in any expectation that Muslims will participate contentedly in a secular, pluralist state grounded in adult suffrage. Such an expectation is contrary to the Islamic *dhimma*, which tolerates 'People of the Book', for practical purposes Jews and Christians, as tribute-paying citizens of the Islamic state, though without any form of franchise beyond their own community, but excludes all non-scripturians from any political rights whatsoever.

In the Indian case, the subsequent course of events is well known. The Muslims, having rejected the early nationalism espoused by Ansari, were unable to come to terms with the idea of membership of a secular, pluralist Indian state. By 1940, the Muslim League, unwilling to tolerate the consequences of the wider franchise this required, demanded, and was given, what amounted to a constitutional veto. This was followed, in 1947, by the separation of the Muslim areas from India, and the emergence of East and West Pakistan.

The same crux — the incompatibility between democratic pluralism and Islamic theocracy — has caught Muslims elsewhere in the world, where the colonial aftermath has left an unwelcome democracy where theocracy once reigned.

In northern Nigeria, in the closing years of the hapless Shagari government — a quite outstandingly corrupt federal administration selected on an adult franchise that included Christians and animists as well as Muslims and fell to a coup in 1983 — Muslim students at Bayero University, Kano, and at other northern campuses, paraded carrying banners that proclaimed in Hausa, Arabic and English, 'Democracy is unbelief. We do not want a constitution. We want government by the *Koran* alone'. It is probably only the present military administration, which includes a strong minority Christian interest, that prevents the Islamic North, either from separating or, more probably, from attempting to take over the present Federation and turning it into a unitary Islamic state...

The former Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, now the Democratic Republic of the Sudan, provides another example. Here,

the answer (to the problem of post-colonial self-rule) most Islamic groups have tended to be anti-democratic, calling for the formation of an elite corps which would guide the people back to Islam.

★

It has long been obvious that the same Islamic predisposition — an inability to come to terms with state secularism, religious pluralism and universal adult suffrage, of which the mirror image is a visceral longing for the hermetic and exclusive theocracy of traditional Islam — have been forming the attitudes of the Muslim immigrant population of western Europe, especially Britain.

It has long been obvious that the same Islamic predisposition — an inability to come to terms with state secularism, religious pluralism and universal adult suffrage, of which the mirror image is a visceral longing for the hermetic and exclusive theocracy of traditional Islam — have been forming the attitudes of the Muslim immigrant population of western Europe, especially Britain, in much the same measure as they have those of Muslims elsewhere, confronted with democratic pluralism. A general statement of the Muslim position will be found in Sheikh Shabbir Akhtar's *Be Careful with Muhammad*. This is far more than just a defence of the Muslim stand in the Salman Rushdie affair. Despite the author's protestations to the contrary, it is difficult to see it as other than an implicit justification of the Muslims' right to set up an Islamic theocracy in Britain as what he considers the only solu-

Nehru, Mandal, Ram and Freedom

Nirmal Goswami



India has produced three ideas in 45 years. These are socialism, Mandal and Ram. All three were meant to expand freedom. They have failed. Progressive increase of economic and political freedom is conspicuously absent. The ideas have also torpedoed pious historians like Lord Acton who believed that the course of human events marched towards liberty. So the three ideological landmarks of India have betrayed freedom and slowed down history.

Our socialism was a curious deviation. Never before had the victorious leaders of a bourgeois revolution adopted such an agenda...

By embracing socialistic development, Jawaharlal Nehru repaid his intellectual debt to his mentors, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, George Bernard Shaw, R.H. Tawney and Harold Laski and settled down to welcome India's growth with social justice.

Staggering investments in the public sector that ranged from steel to bread laid the foundation of massive future sickness. The private corporate sector winked at the bureaucracy, red tape and burgeoning corruption and galloped through its salad days of sheltered market, unquestioned quality standards and profits unimaginable in a free economy. Income disparities between the rich and the poor climbed new heights. India became an ocean of unspeakable destitution and little isolated islands of enormous affluence and influence. The egalitarian society of Nehru arrived.

...V.P. Singh introduced his own input in the process of progress. Mandal entered our socio-political lexicon.

Mandal was thrice tragic. It was originally a deceit, a ploy of a former prime minister to upstage his deputy who had threatened a farmers' rally. Its deeper flaw lay in its inability to symbolise at least a partial transfer of power to a new class and its constituency. Worse was to follow when PV Narasimha Rao dramatised the reservation and upped the quota from 27 to 50 per cent.

All hell broke loose as the ranks of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and the OBCs were swelled by the economically backwards, educationally backwards, purely backward and more or less backward classes. A nine judge constitution bench of the supreme court headed by the chief justice of India deliberated on this semantic karate.

The vicious and high minded attack of the privileged meritocracy on Mandal was inevitable, given the composition of the ruling classes. What came as dismal entertainment was the leaders' comic resolution to play political Robin Hoods and the supreme court's role in turning low cunning into high drama. When last seen, Mandal was licking its eschatological wounds.

Ram was and still is the big idea of this era. It is brilliant because it is so simple. Its sheer size permits access to Ram from many directions. It has enriched beyond measure the cultural anthropology of India. It has reevaluated secularism and redefined the silent majority. When Islamic fundamentalism was thundering through half the world, Ram, like ancient Byzantium, erected the impregnable buffer of Hindutva theocracy.

It transformed obscurantist revivalism into political activism. It gave to the amorphous concept of the Hindu a powerful external identity to relate to.

★

The fact that the Ram doctrine can paralyse a modern, democratic government at the drop of a brick shows the extent of freedom it will allow. Its sense of history begins in mythology and ends in fantasy. So it has no pledge of progress to redeem.

Nehru's socialism died of euthanasia. The ghost of Mandal stalks gloomy corridors. Ram is a high only for the faithful. Each attempt was a new beginning. They have left a trail of devastation. And India has run out of ideas.

Excerpts from the *Business & Political Observer*, November 7.

tion to the problem of the Muslim theocrat's irreconcilable confrontation with secularism...

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It is interesting to note that the Muslims in the former USSR and behind what was the Iron Curtain, were in some respects more content than their co-religionists in the pluralist West. For there, although they were subject to rigorous controls, they were in some cases (the post-Stalinist USSR, Yugoslavia and Romania for instance) accorded specific recognition and some protection by the state, which had the effect of differentiating them from the surrounding non-Muslim population; they were also free of the threat presented by a democratic franchise. It therefore seems to be the official 'indifference' of Western governments — Jinnah's 'state neutrality' — rather than any deliberate discrimination against them, that so upsets the Muslims...

★

It is characteristic of a secular, pluralist democracy that all religious beliefs are tolerated as long as they remain, within reason, within the limits of personal belief and do not impinge unduly upon those who do not share those beliefs. Or put another way, while religious beliefs are tolerated, religious practices and institutions may not necessarily be accorded the same freedom if they conflict with the law or constitution of the wider state. But this is apparently unacceptable to many Muslim spokesmen, of whose attitude the following quotations are typical:

The implementation of Islam as a complete code of life cannot be limited to the home and to personal relationship. It is to be sought and achieved in society as a whole.

That was preached from the *minbar* of a Bradford mosque. A well-known *imam* in France is reported as preaching to the effect that, 'There can be no government contrary to what God has revealed (in the *Koran*)'. He concludes that it is the duty of every Muslim to overthrow every power 'which governs in contravention of that which God enjoins and (to bring about) the erection of the Islamic state.

★

Perhaps the most direct expression of Muslim defiance of Western-style democracy is the following, uncompromising statement issued jointly by the two most representative Islamic organisations in Britain, the Islamic Academy, Cambridge and the 'Islamic Cultural Centre, London, criticising the admittedly egregious 'Swann Report'. The statement insists that the Muslim community:

cannot commit itself to follow all 'current laws' however anti-religious these laws may become through democratic means (my italics).

Quotations to illustrate these Muslim attitudes — discontent with state neutrality towards Islam; a visceral objection to living under a pluralist dispensation; an inability to accept the authority of democratic decision-making when this conflicts with revelation and a refusal to contemplate the possibility of Islam existing simply as a personal belief system, shorn of its political and social institutions — could be multiplied indefinitely. They are clearly constants of the Muslim world outlook, whether in the context of post-imperial India, Nigeria, the Sudan or Muslim settlement in western Europe.

According to a report appearing in *The Times* of 29 October 1991, the initial policies and attitudes of the Muslim parliament which will meet for thirteen days a year in Kensington Town Hall, are predictably conciliatory. It is to send a letter of loyalty to the Queen (the Muslims of India also pledged loyalty to the Crown!) and is likely to confine its attention, in the first instance, to social issues. It is also, apparently, non-territorial. Furthermore, initial reactions suggest it enjoys only limited support from Muslims in Britain. This is not surprising. For it was to be anticipated that the Muslims' first attempts to assert themselves in this way would be tentative. It should be remembered, however, that the Muslim personality initiating this parliament, Dr. Kalim Siddiqui, has in the past adopted attitudes that have seemed far from moderate. His support for the death sentence on Salman Rushdie is well known. He is also reported as having advocated that the British Prime Minister should convert to Islam, as the only way in which the Muslim point of view can get a hearing in Britain a view reminiscent, surely, of the Sudanese *Ikhwan*! Even making allowances for rhetoric, such views and attitudes suggest that an underlying fundamentalist ardour informs this Muslim parliament; and may belie its bland initial presentation...

Mr. Michael Knowles, a prospective Labour parliamentary candidate of Congleton, Cheshire in a letter in the Daily Telegraph drew attention to the manner in which Britain had "extended to fundamentalist Islam a tolerance... we would never extend to any other religious group" and expressed 'his shame and regret at the way the Labour Party has behaved in putting votes before democratic principles'.

Meanwhile, one may be reasonably sure that behind this initiative, there lies a determination, in the hearts of at least some of the participants, to address long-standing Muslim complaints against democratic pluralism. Thus one of the demands one may expect to arise will be for special recognition to be given to Islam in Britain; or rather for an extension of the recognition already conceded. For Muslims, in common with the very much less numerous Jewish religious community and, in theory, with other non-Christian religious groups, already enjoy, for example, the right to apply for a determination entitling them to introduce their own forms of daily worship into British state schools, in place of the mandatory Christian form.

Moreover, while at least some Muslims currently proclaim that the present parliament is intended to be non-territorial, it is difficult to see how these Muslim aims — and especially the constantly reiterated demand for Muslims to be governed by the *Shari'a* — can be achieved other than through some form of Muslim separatism, whereby Muslims will be subject to the writ of their own parliament, largely autonomous of non-Islamic governing institutions and isolated from the surrounding mainstream culture — in other words independent theocratic Islamic enclaves within the wider British state. This may be a long way off. It would be rash to discount it, all the same.

It is also likely, at some point, to involve demands for powers of veto over certain aspects of mainstream democratic decision-making, particularly foreign policy. For this was clearly adumbrated in the letter of the Director-General of the London Central Mosque, to *The Times*, on 24 April 1986, when he warned HM Government that what he claimed to be two million British Muslims would not indefinitely tolerate foreign policies that offended against pan-Islamic sentiment. Similar discontent with British foreign policy was expressed by certain Muslim groups concerning Britain's participation in the Gulf war. They were noted in the *Yorkshire Post* and the *Telegraph and Argus* during January 1991.

If such a campaign makes headway, it seems highly probable that it will result, sooner or later, in demands for some form of territorial separatism for Muslims in the United Kingdom. The ultimate consequences of that are imponderable.

I confine myself here to discovering what the Muslim 'parliamentarians' are likely to aim for in the longer run, and what will be the logic of these aims; not to predicting their chances of success. These depend on complex and protean considerations, among which are the rate of demographic increase of the Muslim population against that of the patril, non-Muslim majority, the pull of the mainstream culture against the

mores of the mosque especially, perhaps, the willingness of Muslim women to go on submitting to the domination of the Muslim extended family male hierarchy, for that is immigrant Islam's most vulnerable Achilles's heel; and the fissile tendencies that bedevil all Muslim initiatives. These cannot all be considered in this article.

But one factor is particularly obtrusive at the present time. It is the will — or lack of it — on the part of the present and future British governments, to stand firm against this Muslim pressure. On 31 December, 1990, Mr. Michael Knowles, a prospective Labour parliamentary candidate of Congleton, Cheshire, published a long letter in the *Daily Telegraph*, in which he drew attention to the manner in which:

As a nation we have extended to fundamentalist Islam a tolerance... we would never extend to any other religious group...

and expressed his 'shame and regret at the way the Labour Party has behaved in putting votes before democratic principles'. He went on to conclude that there is very little to choose in this respect between the present Conservative government and the Labour Party. The former makes such concessions 'mainly for reasons of trade, the latter for electoral advantage'.

Mr. Roy Hatterley's notorious 'immigration' speech at the Labour Party Conference of 1991 indicates that Knowles's criticism was fully justified; and also that it has fallen on deaf ears.

It is clearly not possible, or desirable, in a democracy, to prevent persons with common interests from associating together to pursue these interests, and calling themselves a 'parliament' if they so wish (although the term is unfortunately provocative in the circumstances). Indeed, it may sometimes be useful for the national government to listen to their more reasonable and responsible representations. But the danger arises that if that parliament succeeds in winning a degree of official recognition for itself it will become the thin end of a wedge that will eventually override the normal processes of decision-making established by an adult suffrage to which its members may be, at heart, ideologically opposed. The present climate, in the Labour party at least, which seems to encourage a willingness to trawl for sectarian votes at any costs, is such that this seems by no means improbable.

Mervyn Hiskett was Lecturer in Islamic Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies.

COURTESY: *The Salisbury Review*, March 1992

Fundamentalism

Fundamentalists may have started as traditionalists but have been forced, by events or history or the world at large, in to activism. All see themselves as "fighting back", using violence if necessary, against the forces of secularism or modernism. In so doing they adopt modern weapons — from guns to computers, telephones and television while using traditional symbols, typically holy books, to rally support.

Foremost among fundamentalist aspirations is a "return" to "family values", with women as mothers and housewives and men as the principal or only breadwinners. Rhetorically, if not always practically, all fundamentalists are anti-feminists — although in some fundamentalist groups and churches, women play a more active part than they do in traditional religions, and men are encouraged to take parenthood seriously.

The Economist, March 27th, 1993

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Will Hindutva Contribute to National Integration?

A.G. Philip

The intolerance of communalists of a particular religion is directed against another religion. But, equally important, this intolerance is a state of mind. The establishment of a theocratic state does not exhaust the intolerance; it merely finds another target against which to vent its hatred. This is best seen in the case of Pakistan. After the establishment of a Muslim theocratic state, the dominant, intolerant communalists of West Pakistan needed another target. This was conveniently provided by the Bengali of East Pakistan, with results that we know all too well.

The best local example of a party that thrives on intolerance, not against a particular religion or community, but on intolerance *per se*, is the Shiv Sena. In the sixties, when the party's political ambitions were restricted to Bombay, its ire was directed against south Indians. Then its ambitions spread to the rest of Maharashtra and the target of its attack changed. This was good marketing strategy. In Bombay it could expect to win votes on an anti-south Indian platform. But in Ahmednagar or Amravati, this platform stood as much chance of electoral success as an anti-Eskimo one. The natural choice of a demon was Muslims: they were present not only in Bombay, but also in Ahmednagar and Amravati.

In large measure the shift is only a strategic one. In Bombay's trade unions, for instance, one of the Sena's important demands is 85 per cent reservation for Maharashtrians. That a party can claim to be nationalistic and at the same time raise this demand says a lot about its political skills. It also says a lot about the gullibility of those who are taken in by its nationalistic claims. If a similar demand by the United Liberation Front of Assam can be condemned as secessionistic and if Article 370 is anti-national, it is difficult to see how a demand for job reservations for Maharashtrians can be regarded as nationalistic. Indeed, it hits right at the root of the idea that this country belongs to all of us and that all have the right to settle where we wish.

Will the Sena be a force for national integration? Assume, for the sake of argument, that the Sena and the BJP have overcome their differences (remember they can't even agree on electoral arrangements for seats now) and have formed a unitary government. The formation of such a government would destroy the Sena's *raison d'être*

simply because two political parties cannot simultaneously thrive on the basis of *Hindutva*. Is it difficult to imagine that in order to maintain a distinct identity from the BJP, the Sena's next step would be to market itself as the party of Maharashtrian Hindus (excluding the Dalits)? Is it so difficult to imagine that the logical conclusion would be the division of the Hindu state?

Like the communalists of the erstwhile west Pakistan, the Sena's chauvinism is many-faced, linguistic and ethnic as well as religious. But the BJP is not very different. In the sixties and earlier, for instance, the imposition of Hindi was one of the five points in the national programme of the Jan Sangh. The opposition to pluralism in religion has a habit of extending to language and other areas. What effect would this have on unity?

For answer, compare how India and Pakistan handled the language problem. The Indian State, which has often been accused of excessive centralisation, gave in to the demand for linguistic states, a decision which has since been the butt of countless attacks. Pakistan, on the other hand, responded by suppressing East Pakistan. (The policy of appeasement has been widely condemned in India of late, but in hindsight this appears to be one area where Pakistan might have profitably learnt from India: A little appeasement of the Bengalis would have been in order).

In India, Tamil Nadu, not a Muslim-majority state by any means, had raised the banner of revolt against domination by the Hindi north. The Centre responded with soft measures and the anti-Hindi DMK was allowed to come to power. Is it far-fetched to assert that the Jan Sangh would have regarded the Tamils' demand as an attack on Hindu oneness and acted against them the way Pakistan did against the Bengalis? And with similar results? India is a complex land. If today religion seems to be the ascendant force, remember that it wasn't always so and that it needn't always be so in future. Language, ethnicity, caste and other issues have in the past waxed and waned. The Indian government pacified those who raised these demands, or at least used a combination of carrots and sticks, which is probably why we are still in one piece whereas Pakistan has broken up.

Those who believe *Hindutva* to be a force for national unity would do well to keep all this in mind.

COURTESY The Sunday Observer, February 14

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The Masani Viewpoint

Defining a 'True Muslim Leader'

In *Muslim India* of February 1993, I read with interest and appreciation a long article entitled "Towards a New Muslim Leadership: For struggle, not for capitulation" by Syed Shahabuddin.

The editor spent a considerable amount of time trying to define the qualities of a true Muslim leader which I am sure he thinks apply to him.

The editor was gracious enough not to attack by name, the wrong kind of leader Syed Shahabuddin was warning against.

However, on another page of the journal, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan is quoted in a way which quite clearly points the finger at him. I have written about this matter before in this column and would like to repeat that the Maulana has a valuable contribution to make and Syed Shahabuddin should accept the position that it is good for Muslims to have competition between different kinds of leaders.

How Time Flies!

The other day I received a visit from members of the staff of the Lok Sabha to leave with me a plaque to commemorate the fact that I was one of the few survivors of the Constituent Assembly of India.

I was very grateful to them for the courtesy.

Sad to say that soon there will be nobody left from among the Founding Fathers.

India — a Man's Country

A good example of this is the way in which India's great singer, Shrimati Subbalaxmi, with whom and her husband I stayed with Rajaji at Kalki, insisted on serving me at meals.

I strongly objected to this and we made a compromise which was that after serving me she would sit down and join me at the meal.

This shows the amount of male domination that is instinctive in our country.

Leopold Labedz

Sad news has reached me of the passing away of a good friend and colleague, Leopold Labedz.

His magazine, *Survey*, was one of my favourite bits of reading. What Labedz did not know about the Soviet Union was not worth knowing. He was a man of great courage and spent the last few years in a wheelchair with both his legs amputated.

I bow in memory of this brave man and good friend of mine.

S. Mulgaokar

I am sorry to read of the passing away of Mr. S. Mulgaokar. Apart from being a member of the Executive Committee of the Leslie Sawhny Foundation, Mr. Mulgaokar was an outstanding journalist who upheld the highest traditions of his profession.

It is sad to see these giants passing away.

I once asked Mr. Mulgaokar what was the best edited newspaper in India. That was when he was editing the *Hindustan Times*. Mr. Mulgaokar very generously did not mention his own paper but another daily. That was typical of the man and his generosity.

Lord Bauer's Tribute to Prof. B.R. Shenoy

I was very glad to read the tribute paid to my old friend, Professor B.R. Shenoy, by my other friend, Lord Peter Bauer, in the course of the Professor B.R. Shenoy Memorial Lecture.

There was a time when it was fashionable to be Stalinist or socialist in a crude kind of way and Professor Shenoy was one of the few people with Professor Hannan Ezekial and I who was of the view that India was being launched on the road to disaster which has now proved to have taken place.

Professor Bauer's tribute is, therefore, good to read and I was glad that someone had come to appreciate Professor Shenoy's courage in standing up to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and his Stalinist plans.

In the course of his Lecture, Lord Bauer says, "In his Note of Dissent, Shenoy rejected the general spirit of the majority report as endangering personal freedom and a democratic political system. He also disagreed with several major proposals, including the scale of money creation; the maintenance and extension of state economic controls; and the scope of nationalisation. He argued specifical-

ly that money creation on the scale envisaged by the Majority Report and under the Second Five Year Plan would result in inflation or a balance of payments crisis or both, a prediction which was fulfilled barely a year after the inception of the Plan.

"In these conditions Shenoy's Note of Dissent represented conspicuous moral courage.

"I can, however, say with some confidence that Shenoy's conduct and influence have had considerable impact. In the course of my visits to India between 1958 and 1982 a number of economists told me that they had been influenced by Shenoy in that they revised their opinions or had become more confident in their position through reading his work.

"It is evident from what I have said that Shenoy united moral courage, intellectual integrity and technical competence to an exceptional degree. The few people who possess this combination of attributes are of great value, both in public life and in academic study. They are particularly valuable in the study of society, where they are especially rare. May the successors of Shenoy and his like never fail, East or West."

The Angolan Civil War

So the Civil war in Angola is to go on.

The leopard never changes its spots and the communist administration in Angola can hardly be expected to submit to democratic norms. Mr. Savimbi, the leader of the UNITA rebels is a fighter and is not likely to accept the kind of offer the communist government may make.

It is a pity that the people of Angola have to suffer for this action of the Portuguese who walked out leaving the communists in charge. This is not the only example of scuttling by an imperial power.

The British under Lord Mountbatten did something similar at great cost to our country.

Imperial powers have an obligation to leave the country they have been ruling in safe and democratic hands. Washing their hands of the past is not good enough.

Well Done Mr. Samra!

Police Commissioner Mr. A.S. Samra deserves congratulations on the way he has performed his job and in particular, for the way he has kept the press informed of what is happening.

It becomes necessary to say this because he has been needlessly condemned by the Home Minister, for doing the right thing and for which he deserves to be congratulated.

Torture in Communist China

According to the prestigious international organisation, Amnesty International, torture which is technically barred in Communist China, is in fact, rampant.

Amnesty International says, "Brutal and sometimes fatal, torture has become endemic in Chinese jails in the last decade with prisoners now suffering far more severe abuses than they did ten years ago.

"The Government's continuing campaigns to crush crime and political opposition have fuelled human violence, including arbitrary detention, executions and torture.

"In a 60-page report, the organisation details dozens of cases, including of women and children, who have been viciously beaten, shackled, shocked with electric cattle prods and tortured in other ways.

"We believe the law-enforcement and justice system in China actually foster torture. Prisoners have very few rights in law and virtually none in practice, leading to many criminal and political suspects and prisoners being abused to force confessions and as punishment.

"Although Chinese law forbids torture and China has ratified the United Nations Convention against torture, the Government has done nothing to provide even the most basic safeguards to protect prisoners and has taken only token steps that have simply not stopped the torture.

"One unusually grim method is the 'shackle board', used in Hunan province. A wooden door is laid flat on four short legs and prisoners are chained spreadagled to the door, often for months at a time. Some prisoners have become mentally disturbed and severely affected physically after being shackled to the board for months."

Misuse of Article 356

I have been one of those who have protested against the misuse of Article 356 of the Constitution and indeed hold the view that such an Article should not exist in a Constitution which is truly federal. The most recent misuse of this Article is the dismissal of the BJP Governments in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh and is of the same order as earlier resorted to by this arbitrary measure. I must express my dissent from the dismissal of these three Governments because it suited the interests of a section of the Congress Party.

Besides, by the same logic, the Government of Maharashtra and some of the Congress ruled states should be dismissed for not protecting members of the minority community. Actually a large number of

people died in Bombay and elsewhere as a result of police action.

It is good that financial compensation is being attempted in these cases but this reminds one that, as of now, the survivors of the Sikhs who were burnt alive following Indira Gandhi's assassination, have remained unconsoled.

I am one of those who detest what happened in Ayodhya but this does not justify this kind of retaliation. Action and reaction are equal and opposite and this kind of game can be played by two.

The Indian Express of 21st December carried a survey of questions put to readers and their replies.

I am impressed by the sanity of the replies received. For instance, 67% expressed the view that the Narasimha Rao Government has lost credibility. Only 49% say that the BJP behaved in an irresponsible manner. As many as 59% are of the opinion that banning communal parties is wrong and 54% are of the view that the Prime Minister should not quit.

That I think, is because whoever takes his place will suffer from greater disqualification.

Dismissal of BJP Governments Condemned

While PUCL and CFD strongly deplore the dastardly act of demolition of Babri Masjid and view with great concern the activities of BJP in spreading communalism, we cannot but condemn in the strongest language the arbitrary and undemocratic action of the Central Government in dismissing the State Governments of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh and dissolving their Assemblies. In our view the action of the Central Government is both unconstitutional and against the principles of Federalism which is part of our constitutional set-up.

VM Tarkunde, Adviser, PUCL & CFD
Kuldip Nayar, President CFD
Rajender Sachar, President, PUCL

Vogue Words: Vague Notions

D. Anjaneyulu

Every age has its 'vogue words' — Age of the Common Man, Democracy, Socialism, Egalitarianism, Open Diplomacy, National Integration, Unity in Diversity; and so on. The dominant vogue word these days in India is undoubtedly 'Secularism'.

But very few, including academic scholars, and philosophers, let alone political activists, seem to be clear, in their minds, about the meaning and significance, origin and etymology of the widely popular, but totally misused, word. One can't agree with Mr. Masani more, when he observes: "The use of the word 'secular' by those who do not even understand its meaning is quite nauseating and it is high time we stopped using this term in the present context."

He has also given us a bit of useful information, when he recalls: "Many years ago, no doubt at Mr. Krishna Menon's suggestion, Jawaharlal Nehru brought the word 'secular' into circulation in this country."

The Editors of *Freedom First* (Jan-March 1993) have done valuable service to the reading public by providing an exhaustive list of (authoritative) definitions of the term 'Secularism'. It is very essential, in the present confusing political circumstances in this country, as the expression is flaunted by everybody who is somebody. What is even more deplorable, it seems to mean almost everything to everyone.

It has become a rubric of rhetorical fashion not only to wave the flag of 'secularism', but also to run down 'fundamentalism', equating 'Muslim fundamentalism' with 'Hindu fundamentalism', or maybe vice versa. They are blissfully unaware of the fact that 'Hinduism' may have quite a few sins to answer for, in its social organisation — caste system, orthodoxy, untouchability, stratification, exclusivism (based on a 'holier-than-thou attitude') but not 'fundamentalism'.

For the simple reason that Hinduism is a philosophical, not a historical, reli-

gion. It has no dogma, no founder (like Christ or Mohammed) and no book (like the Bible or the Koran). It is, therefore, absurd, even atrocious, to attribute to it what it has never had; and doesn't have it now, either. The volcanic eruption of violence at Ayodhya and elsewhere is a resurgence, at the best; and backlash at the worst.

It has, by now, almost become a sacred ritual to uphold 'Secularism', and run down 'Hindutva', without understanding the latter either, 'BJP' (not banned) and RSS (banned, despite its record of patriotism and social relief work) have become equally dirty words. The progressive 'Secularists' (mostly from the Hindu community) are either blissfully unaware or prefer to turn the Nelson's eye to the glaring fact that there are no 'secular' States among the Muslim-dominated countries of West Asia (forgetting Kemal Ataturk's Turkey and Sadat's Egypt, which are things of the past). But where the Muslims are in a minority, as in India, they tend to be eloquent about the 'Secular' State.

About religion itself, there is a lot of

avoidable confusion, even in the highest quarters. "Where there is fear, there is no religion", says the quotation from Mahatma Gandhi, used as a tailpiece on p38 (*Freedom First*, Jan-March 1993). Religion is defined in *The Collins Dictionary* as "belief in, worship of, or obedience to a supernatural power or powers considered to be divine or to have control of human destiny."

In the primitive man, religion must have originated in a state of fear of the unknown, the supernatural forces, over which he had no control, e.g. thunder, lightning, rain, deluge etc. Even now, organised religious groups, who happen to be in a majority, do cause fear among the minority groups, as we know all over the world.

The only religion, different from all these, with a code of personal conduct and public morals, unrelated to the supernatural and the transcendental, was probably that of Gautama the Buddha in his time — not that of his present followers, by any means. Professor M.S. Gore hits the nail on the head, when he stresses the vital truth



that "Sarvadharmasamabhavana (equality of treatment of all religions) is not secularism. His words are not only worth quoting, but are memorable: "To me to be secular means being engaged in the practice and development of a personal and social ethical code, which is consistent with rationality and which aims at attaining a humane society in which every individual will have the opportunity to develop to his highest potential."

To which he adds a relevant distinction between two aspects of religion — piety and overt ritual: "Piety is of the individual and ritual of the group; institutionalized religion cannot be extricated from ritual and separatist group identity. This is what limits the possibility of the concept of *sarvadharmasamabhavana* meeting the needs of a secular society."

From which it logically follows that secularism must have a tight, fool-proof definition; and it must have a machinery of effective implementation by a State, with no social inhibitions and political motivations about vote banks.

It cannot be automatically assumed that the more loud-mouthed among the ruling party, who are ready to keep the feet of naked Sadhus on their heads for success in the elections or consult astrologers, palmists and other soothsayers for their prospect in office, are necessarily more 'secular' than some members of the opposition who openly talk of respect for Hindu culture by the religious minorities. Is there any tangible evidence that Mr. Arjun Singh and Mr. Madhav Rao Scindia, for instance, are more 'secular' in practice than Mr. L.K. Advani and the late V.D. Savarkar?

Every now and then, Dr. S.D. Sharma, the President, is shown going up to a sacred hill down south and returning with his head shaven. So also, the other V.I.P.s in office. They can do what they like, but these rituals need not be projected on the media for public consumption.

Some four decades ago, Dr. R.M. Lohia (a queer mixture of originality and perversity) made a reasoned protest against President Prasad publicly washing the feet of *Pandas* (temple priests) at a *Yagna* in Benares. He had a point there, in favour of secularism.

But then, what is to be done now, to make of 'secularism' a State policy, and

not leave it a glossy vogue word that it remains now? At least two or three things would be absolutely necessary:

- 1) A Citizen's religion should be strictly personal and not allowed to intrude our public life. Irrespective of what any book might say;
- 2) Our Constitution is not based on any religious tenets, but on secular-political principles tried and found fruitful in leading world democracies; and
- 3) The concept of a secular State should, and in due course, but without undue delay, lead to the evolution of a uniform civil code, irrespective of any citizen's personal preferences and predilections.

Did Babur Will it?

The so-called will of Babur reproduced (in translation) by Mr. Khushwant Singh in 'With Malice towards One and All' (*HT*, March 13 and also in *Freedom First*, Jan-March '93) has been adjudged to be a downright forgery. A.S. Beveridge, who translated the *Babur-Nama*, dismisses it as a forged document on fifteen counts including language and style, calligraphy and orthography, unroyal quality of the seals it bears, mutually contradictory chronology (on the top 933 A.H. and at the bottom 935 A.H.), titles used for the father and the son, etc.

The will finds no mention in the *Babur-Nama*. It was unknown to Humayun, Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan (who translated Babur's memoirs from Turkish into Persian during Akbar's time), and everyone else till it was discovered during the thirties in Bhopal by Mr. N.C. Mehta.

Besides, Babur's memoirs contain not a word of tolerance towards Hindus, whereas in the will he is all tolerance. In the memoirs he always condemns Hindus as *Kafirs*, an expression conspicuous by its absence in the so-called will. Far from promulgating an ordinance against cow-slaughter, he has not left us even the remotest indication towards it in the memoirs; whereas the so-called will represents him as exhorting Humayun to ban cow-slaughter. It is no less significant that Humayun is reported to have killed

cows in the territory of Maladeva's Jodhpur, for which the Raja condemned him. And, instead of feeling sorry for the indiscretion, Humayun marched against him. (Jouher, *Tezkereh at Vakial*, tr. Major Charles Stewart, p. 2).

Humayun is advised in the so-called will not to desecrate Hindu temples, but he appears to have despoiled some temples or broken some images of Hindu gods at least in one case. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan writes that the *Baradari* called Nili Chhatari at the Nigambodh Ghat below Salimgarh was built by Humayun with bricks bearing broken images (of gods) pulled out of some Hindu building/place. (Sir Sayyid, *Asarus Sanadid*, Delhi, 1965, p. 232).

As a matter of fact, if Babur did leave a will to his son, it is the one which is given by Abul Fazl in the *Akbar-Nama*, Persian text, Vol. 1 (Allahabad, n.d., p. 135). Abul Fazl writes: "When he saw death approaching fast, Babur called his top officials and nobles in his presence, administered them oath of allegiance to Humayun, appointed him his successor, and... gave him lofty sermons and precious testamentary instructions (*wasaya-i-garami*), which could constitute his fortune for abiding sovereignty and cause for lofty happiness." He also showed him the way to charity, justice, beneficence, exertion to win God's favour, indulgence towards the subjects, protection of the people, and repression of rebels and tyrants. He uttered with his holy tongue, "The upshot of my testament, (*wasaya*) is: Be not after the life of your brothers, howsoever much they deserve such treatment." Note that *wasaya* is the plural of *wasiyat*, which means Will.

This deserves to be called the real Will of Babur. It makes no mention of any earlier 'Will' made by Babur, nor shows any indulgence towards Hindus.

Harsh Narain
42/59, Ram Ratna Vajpeyi Marg,
Lal Umrao Singh Park, Narhi,
Lucknow 226 001.

Hindustan Times, 3, April, 1993

A Fabrication?

This has reference to Babar's 'Secret Will', reproduced from the *Hindu* and published in *Freedom First*, (January-March 1993). This alleged will of Babar

or his letter to his son Humayun, made available to the students of history, by the erstwhile State of Bhopal, was shown in one of the meetings of the Indian Historical Records Commission. All the known facts about Babar's death and Humayun's accession to the throne are against the genuineness of this will. (Sri Ram Sharma: *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, pp. 9) Mrs. Beveridge, who translated Babar's diary, "Babar Nama", lists fifteen indications that this document is a forgery, including anachronisms, unroyal quality of the seals, the calligraphy and even the spelling. (Radhey Shyam: Babar.) Dr. Radhey Shyam has brought up some counter arguments but does not categorically assert that the document is genuine. R.C. Majumdar also feels that this document is spurious. (R.C. Majumdar (Ed). *The History and the Culture of the Indian People — The Mughal Empire*, pp. 44)

Prof. Sri Ram Sharma, in his scholarly work, "The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors", based on primary sources, has cited several instances of Babar's religious fanaticism and bigotry. During his regime, the Jain idols at Urwa were destroyed. His Sadr, Shaikh Zain destroyed many temples at Chanderi. Hindu Beg, an officer of Babar, converted a temple in Sambhal into a mosque. Mir Baqi, a general of Babar, demolished the temple in Ayodhya, at the birth place of Rama and converted it into a mosque. During Babar's regime, only the Hindus had to pay the stamp duty and the Muslims were exempt from its payment. (Sri Ram Sharma: *Ibid*, pp. 9)

"For Islam's sake, I wandered in the wilds," writes Babar in his Babar Nama, and prepared for war with pagans and Hindus". He adds, "Thanks to Allah! a ghazi I became". (Beveridge: Babar Nama pp. 574-75) A ghazi is one who slays infidels with his own hands.

Dr. Arvind S. Godbole, Bombay.

Judging from recent events and from the contents of *Freedom First* (January-March 1993), India is nearing "ITS MOMENT OF DECISION" on secular democracy.

Robert W. Stewart
Scottland

Time Moves On

The January — March 1993 issue (page 46) has the following quotation attributed to Napoleon Bonaparte:

"How can you have order in a state without religion? For, when one man is dying of hunger near another who is ill of surfeit, he cannot resign himself to this difference unless there is an authority which declares 'God wills it thus'. Religion is excellent stuff for keeping common people quiet".

It reminded me of another such view expressed by Napoleon Bonaparte in a book I read many years ago, I do not have the precise quotation but it is something like this: "There are two things that enabled him to control the masses: the first thing was that he made sure people had places of worship to go to, and were actively encouraged to do so. The second thing was his making absolutely sure that each and every one

who died, however poor, had a solemn and dignified funeral. He went on to say that he believed that in some way the fact that his coachman contentedly wore his rather tattered overcoat driving the coach in winter while he himself sat inside so warmly clad or the fact that the food left over at his dining table after a meal was enough to feed a whole family of any one of his servants for a week, never gave rise to the slightest thought of irrationality amongst anyone.

Recently, towards the end of February 1993, the Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Krishna Kant stated at a meeting "Religion is responsible for violence and hatred. Spirituality knows no religion and it would unite people." This was said at Hyderabad. Obviously things now are not as simple as they were in the days of Napoleon Bonaparte!

Brigadier R. Lokaranjan (Retd.), Hyderabad

Whither Secularism?

A recent report released by the Parliamentary Advisory Committee clearly shows how the Government tramples upon the very principles of secularism that it claims to uphold.

The Government has sanctioned a whopping Rs. 21 crore this year for Haj pilgrims. Thus, a Haj pilgrim travelling by plane will have to pay only Rs.11,000 instead of Rs. 18,000 — the balance will be paid from the state exchequer. The Government has even waived six lakh rupees as airport tax for Haj pilgrims. The Government will also provide medicines worth Rs. 7,70,000.

In stark contrast, the Government does not spend a single paisa on Sikh and Hindu pilgrims visiting holy places in Pakistan. For the approximately 360 pilgrims visiting Kailas-Manasarovar, the Government spends Rs. 5,50,000.

These facts and figures are shocking, to say the least. The tax-paying public has the right to seek clarification from the Government regarding this waste of public money. All liberal and secular-minded people should condemn this assault on secularism.

ANURADHA MEHENDALEY
Bombay

Indian Express, 17th, May 1993.

The provocation for this letter was an editorial in the *Indian Express* (May 7, '93) critical of the Kerala Government decision to change the weekly holiday to Friday in Muslim-majority schools. The editorial described the decision as one that will undermine liberal forces.

"In Germany, the Nazis came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I was not a Communist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Catholics, but I was a Protestant and therefore I didn't speak up.

Then they came for me, and by that time there was no one left to speak for anyone."

REV. MARTIN NIEMOELLER
(1892-1984)

Martin Niemoeller was a prisoner in Nazi Concentration Camps.

Double Standards

Here is a case of double standards and the warped sense of values of our politicians, intellectuals, and journalists in general (with a few exceptions of course), and our pseudo-secularists in particular:

Chandra Prakash, Dy. Commissioner of Police, Delhi, in 1984, and now the Director-General of Police, Arunachal Pradesh, in his memorandum to the Home Ministry has blamed Rajiv Gandhi, and the then Home Minister and the present Prime Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao, for "taking a decision not to quell violence, not to impose curfew and not to call out the army", when thousands of innocent Sikhs were being massacred, following Indiraji's assassination.

Narasimha Rao has so far neither refuted this grave charge against him nor admitted it either; he has preferred to take shelter behind the shield of silence!

Chandra Prakash says, "I suggested to Gautam Kaul, the Additional

Commissioner of Police, Delhi, that the situation has taken a very ugly turn, rioting and arson had spread over a vast area. I recommended to him that curfew should be immediately imposed and army called out to assist the civil administration. He turned down my recommendation, stating that a meeting had already taken place earlier in the Prime Minister's house where the Home Minister (Narasimha Rao) was also present, and a decision had been taken not to impose curfew and call out the army at that stage". What stage, Narasimha Rao, when thousands of innocent Sikhs were being slaughtered?

Now, no Chief Minister or Home Minister of any of the BJP governments instructed the police not to quell violence, not to impose curfew and not to call out the army to quell the riots. On the contrary, the BJP governments imposed curfew, called the army out and quelled the riots. Hence the least number of deaths in the BJP ruled-states and the maximum number of deaths in the Congress-ruled states like

Maharashtra and Gujarat. Yet, the BJP governments were sacked, but not the Congress governments in Gujarat and Maharashtra. If this is not a clear case of double standards, I wonder what is?

If extreme penalty was warranted (and rightly so) for the killers of Mahatma Gandhi, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and General Vaidya, as murder is a heinous crime, then why not the same extreme penalty for the killers of over 3000 innocent Sikhs in Delhi, following the Indira Gandhi assassination? Another case of double standards.

On the contrary, the killers of these innocent Sikhs are richly rewarded. They enjoy the patronage of the Congress High Command. Some have become union ministers and some have become M.P.s!

The object of this letter is to expose the double standards practised by parties like the Congress (I), Janata Dal, the Communists and other leftist parties whose vote banks have all crashed.

S.S. Bankeshwar

THE
COMPLETE
MAN:



He's a myth
He's real

He's a winner
No not always

He commands
He rebels

He's unchanging
He's impulsive

Demanding
Dating
Discreet

A devil
A dilemma
A dream



raymond's

Parliamentary Democracy

Is it the Best Form of Government?

Y.D. Altekar

The Chief Executive to continue in his office, is required to have majority support in the legislature. This is supposed to ensure his accountability to the legislature. In practice the condition only leads to instability and corruption of the legislators.

Our Constitutional pundits are fond of asserting that our Constitution has withstood the test of time. And yet every time stresses developed — when Mrs. Gandhi declared an internal emergency and went on to suspend the people's right to life and liberty; when Charan Singh helped to bring down the Janata government; when the government of the day tried to scuttle enquiries into the Bofors & Westmoreland deals; or when Devi Lal and Chandrashekhar conspired to bring down V.P. Singh — the people were reduced to complete helplessness. They could do nothing except express their righteous indignation when the government permitted it, or suffer in silence.

People did revolt against this situation, not only at the hustings with the overthrow of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, but also during periods in-between. In 1974 started the Nav Nirman Andolan against its own elected government in Gujarat; towards the end of the '70s the police in Bombay took out a procession to Mantralaya protesting against the allegations made by a minister against the Police Commissioner; and last year people in Pune came out in support of the Municipal Commissioner Ajay Dua against their Corporators. This is indeed a curious situation. Normally the people's representatives in the legislature and other bodies are supposed to look after the interests of their constituency and restrain the executive from misuse of power. As such they should enjoy the full trust and support of the people. We find here, instead, the people urging the executive to curb their own representatives!

How did we come to this state of affairs? Is the Constitution unable to prevent it? The situation is not unlike

that which existed in England in the 17th century when the people banded together and beheaded their monarch.

The Indian Constitution

After independence our Constituent Assembly, adopted the parliamentary form of government. Some members of the Constituent Assembly claimed that this was done after a thorough study of the Constitutions of a number of democratic governments the world over. Mr. Nehru and B.R. Ambedkar were more honest. According to them "we chose a system with which we were thoroughly familiar". After all, the system had already been introduced by the British in 1935 and people had familiarised themselves with its working. According to this system people elect representatives to the legislature which is given the task of keeping a watch on executive performance. "A system of checks and balances" as many of our constitutional experts are fond of saying.

So far, so good. But then we went on to permit the legislators to elect the Chief Executive and, further, gave him the task of forming the government by choosing ministers from the legislature. This completely upset the "checks and balances" and sowed the seeds of instability and corruption.

As Anthony Benn, the British labour M.P. pointed out:

"We cannot expect the ministers to perform the task of watching the government as they themselves are a part of it. Further, since there is a tendency now of enlarging the ministries, the other members of the ruling party also are reluctant to curb their government since they hope to be accommodated in a ministry sooner or later and would not,

therefore, like to get on the wrong side of the government. Thus, there are less than fifty percent of the M.Ps. available for scrutinising government actions and performance, making a nonsense of the system of checks and balances" (*Parliament In Perspective*, B.B.C., August 15, 1982).

"Checks & Balances" — Only in Theory

"No bill introduced by government has been defeated in Parliament in the last hundred years," points out John Creasey (*Evolution to Democracy*). If any government bill is at all rejected there will be an immediate howl from opposition parties demanding resignation of the government and fall of government means re-elections which one is not certain of winning again. Hence the members belonging to the ruling party, and some from other parties, too, prefer to go along with government proposals. Thus the much vaunted "checks and balances" exist in theory.

Perhaps we should not expect such checks from the legislature either! For, the executive themselves are legislators and the executive is but an extension of the legislature. The distinction between the executive and the legislature is getting blurred in other bodies, too. A municipal member is granted Rs. 3 lakhs per year for "discretionary spending"; for an M.L.A. this amount is Rs. 30 lakhs while there is a demand for Rs. 3 crores per year from M.Ps for the same purpose. If the sanctioning and spending authority is the same who is here to exercise control?

The only check on the executive is the judiciary. So the executive tries

every trick in the trade — transfers, withholding confirmations and promotions, supercession, etc. to pressurise the judiciary to fall in line. And finally, by keeping some important legislation out of judicial review the Executive successfully has evaded the judicial checks on its power.

The Present System Leads to...

The Chief Executive to continue in his office, is required to have majority support in the legislature. This is supposed to ensure his accountability to the legislature. In practice the condition only leads to instability and corruption of the legislators. In the last three parliamentary elections no single party has been able to achieve a decisive majority. And this trend is likely to continue since the Congress party which exerted a powerful influence on the older generation, has no appeal to the new generation of voters for whom the freedom struggle is but distant history and who are all too aware of the general atmosphere of corruption and misgovernment for which they rightly blame the Congress party. In such a situation a party can hope to form a government only by winning, by fair

means or foul, support from other parties or from members of other parties.

Political Horse Trading...

Political horse trading and defections are thus a natural consequence of this condition requiring the Chief Executive to have majority support in the legislature. Any person who gets elected immediately gains an enormous bargaining power which he can, and does, utilise for personal gain. Money, a berth in a ministry, or chairmanship of a public sector enterprise or body, all have been used effectively by the aspirants to the Chief Executive's chair to attract support. No wonder candidates are willing to spend hundreds of thousands of rupees on the elections. Bribery, intimidation, booth capturing and even the murder of rival candidates are considered "fair" means of contesting an election. The way is thus clear for the entry of criminals into politics.

Even in coalition governments bargaining can be quite tough — witness the bargaining that went on between the Labour and the Likud parties in Israel about a decade back —

No, the problem is not peculiar to India.

Instability...

A natural consequence of this is of course, instability. Governments are toppled through loss of support in the legislature. The anti-defection law is of no help as has been proved by the successive toppling of Vasant Rao Naik, S.B. Chavan, Vasantdada Patil, Sharad Pawar and other Chief Ministers in Maharashtra, N.T. Rama Rao in Andhra Pradesh, Ramkrishna Hegde and Virendra Patil in Karnataka and Farooq Abdullah in Kashmir, before the completion of their terms of office. The first and the most important job of the executive, thus, becomes guarding his back and avoid doing anything which will annoy any of his supporters. He is, therefore, compelled to suffer incompetent and corrupt people if they are his supporters. And cannot act decisively even when the situation calls for firm action lest such action precipitate his departure. That was the experience of V.P. Singh. It is well known that both Mr. Nehru and Mrs. Gandhi had to suffer the Indian communists, not only for Soviet aid, but to be able to continue in power.

THE COMMUNITY FARES WELL AT TATAS

Community welfare is a social responsibility voluntarily accepted by Tatas many years ago. It was this sense of responsibility that prompted Sir Ratan Tata to finance studies into the causes of poverty in 1912, and the Tata Trusts to establish institutions like the Tata Memorial Hospital for Cancer Research and treatment and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

In fact, Tatas have gone so far as to turn the entire town of Jamshedpur into a model in community living. There are wide roads, tree-lined avenues, hospitals and family clinics, and schools which any community would be proud of.

TATA ENTERPRISES



... and Intrigues

Further, elections to legislatures never settle the question who should head the government. Hence as soon as elections are over, any Tom, Dick or Harry may stake his claim for the honour and indulge in intrigues to achieve his ends. The Janata government tumbled because of squabbles between Morarji Desai, Charan Singh and Jagjivan Ram; the tussle for leadership between V.P. Singh, Devi Lal and Chandra Shekhar brought down the Janata Dal government; and now the same thing is happening again because of the ambitions of Arjun Singh and Sharad Pawar.

Should we not put an end to this senseless charade, which costs the nation an enormous amount through election expenditure, by leaving the choice of the Executive to the people themselves?

Direct Election of Chief Executive

Indeed, if we could introduce the election of the Chief Executive by people directly, preferably using the "Preference Vote" system, it will not only end the unseemly tussle for power, but will also get rid of the other difficulties which we face today — of enabling the Chief Executive to choose his ministers from professionals outside the legislature. In other words we should specifically bar legislators from taking any office of profit, whether in the ministry or other government-controlled assignments, such as chairmanship of a public sector firms. Thus, the people should elect both the legislator as well as the executive, each with different specific functions and each independent of the other.

With the lure of ministership and other lucrative assignments taken away from him the legislator will, hopefully, be able to concentrate on the job in hand and his support or opposition to the executive would then depend only on the merits of the issue concerned. The executive, too, freed from his dependence on the legislature for continuation in office, should be able to concentrate on improving the quality of his performance and act boldly when necessary. The legislature can still exert its control through its power to approve the ministers chosen by the executive and through budgetary control. After all,

even despotic monarchs were brought to their knees by Parliament in England by refusing to sanction new taxes or tax increases.

Thus, by severing the link between the executive and the legislature we simultaneously achieve:

- 1) A more stable government without loss of accountability;
- 2) elimination of rivalry and bickering among the legislators for the post of Chief Executive; and
- 3) removal of the main source of corruption of legislators and their intrigues, by making defections irrelevant to the survival of a government.

Another advantage, and not a mean one, is that since the ministers (including the Chief Executive) do not owe their office to any particular constituency they will not pamper one constituency (e.g. Amethi, Malda, Karad & now Baramati) at the cost of others.

According to a senior advocate of the Supreme Court Mr. Lalit Bhasin (*Indian Express*, June 24, 1984) this change can be achieved through simple legislation, without any amendment to the Constitution.

Electoral Reforms...

The present system of elections, where the candidate who wins the maximum number of votes is declared elected and the party which sends the maximum number of representatives to the legislature is required to form the government, has one drawback. The party which wins the maximum number of seats may not necessarily have the majority of voters backing it. For example, during the last general elections the BJP won the maximum numbers of seats in the UP legislature though they got only 33% of the votes polled. It can be justifiably said, therefore, that a majority of the people were opposed to BJP policies. And yet, it has become customary for parties winning the maximum number of seats in the House to claim that they have received a "mandate" from the people for their announced policies. The fallacy of this assumption was clearly perceived by Mrs. Thatcher who declared after her landslide victory in 1983:

"A large parliamentary majority is a trust, not a mandate to pursue extreme policies."

Justice Tulzapurkar has expressed similar sentiments. He says, "No result of any election however sweeping, can be construed as people's mandate to condone or compound the common-law crimes allegedly committed by those who have been returned to power.... success, at hustings is no license to sweep all dirt under the carpet and enjoy its fruits nonchalantly"

This philosophy is unlikely to appeal to our politicians and we must find another method of curbing their ambitions. "Proportional Representation" is one such mechanism suggested by John Creasey. According to this, parties field not candidates but only symbols in the elections and send representatives to the legislature, their number being proportional to the votes polled. Thus if this system were in force in India the BJP could have claimed only one third of the number of seats in the U.P. Assembly.

Although more representative than the current method of "first past the pole", it gives undue importance to the party system. And the independent candidate does not fit in the scheme at all.

Another method of ensuring that the candidate, declared elected, is acceptable to the majority of voters is to introduce the "Preference Votes" system. In this system, voters would grade the candidate according to their preference, the candidate they would like to get elected being given first preference, the candidate who would be acceptable if the 1st is not available or is defeated being given second preference, and so on.

At any rate it will be dangerous to talk about having received a 'mandate' unless the issue concerned is separately put to vote in a referendum.

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"Religion, Science and Philosophy"

The Relevance of a 19th Century Debate Today

J.V. Naik



G.G. Agarkar

led by Agarkar, in equally strong terms, maintained that "morality and even the highest virtue can exist and flourish without depending in the slightest degree on religion, and that the morality of the common mass will be improved sooner by giving them some insight in modern science and philosophy than by merely appealing to their religious feelings".² The divergent views were pressed by each side with such enthusiasm and earnestness on the passive students and the others present on the occasion as to make some of them waver to which side they should give their allegiance. The debate received wide coverage in the contemporary press, especially in the *Kesari* and *The Mahratta* which published major articles on the subject. This article seeks to examine some of the key issues raised in the debate, which are relevant to the historical consciousness of India today.

The debate was essentially a clash between two schools of Western thought, the one, religious, represented by theologians like Bishop Joseph Butler, and the other, sceptical, of the philosophical sceptics like J.S. Mill and Herbert Spencer to which the then college students were introduced through their text-books.³ Butler was a standard author of moral philosophy in the Bombay University since its establishment in 1857. Ranade, who upheld the claims of religion, had studied Butler's *Analogy and Fifteen Sermons* for his B.A. examination in 1862, and was deeply influenced by them. Agarkar on the other hand, was a keen student of Mill and Spencer who denied the validity of religion in promoting public morality.

In fact, the debate was an extension of the intellectual duel that Ranade and Agarkar had earlier fought over the validity of Bishop Butler's *Analogy and Fifteen Sermons* as a sound system of moral philosophy. The main purpose of Butler's ethical writings was to defend Christianity and also the connection



M.G. Ranade

between religion and morality against the rising tide of deism in 18th century Europe.

There are two important things to be noted in Butler's system of moral philosophy. First, he assumes at the outset the principle of teleology — the existence of "final causes". The teleological interpretation of the world and human nature is, in his thought, an inference from the belief in a divine Creator and the Governor. The second, Butler holds that the dictates of conscience are the Voice of God.⁴ "Conscience", he says, "was put into man by God to point out to him his duty and make him to do it." He, however, grudgingly admitted that conscience is an altruistic principle, and often comes in conflict with self-love. To overcome this difficulty, he brought in his argument from the final causes. "Self-love", he argued, "though confined to the interests of the present world it does in general perfectly coincide with virtue, and leads us to one and the same course of life. But whatever exceptions there are to this, all shall be set right in the final distribution of things. The belief in a Moral Governor of the Universe enables us to suppose

A historic debate on "Religion, Science and Philosophy" took place on 10 May 1985 at a Deccan College (Pune) gathering presided over by R.G. Bhandarkar, the well-known Indologist. The debate was not pre-planned. It sparked off spontaneously from a remark in Bhandarkar's Presidential speech in which he said that religious reformation was a pre-condition and prime necessity for a desired social transformation. Besides Bhandarkar, the other distinguished participants in the debate were M.G. Ranade, V.M. Mahajani, B.G. Tilak and G.G. Agarkar. Principal F.G. Selby of the Deccan College, whose pamphlet on "Butler's Method of Ethics" which was earlier strongly criticised by Ranade as an undesired primer of agnosticism, and William Wordsworth, (grandson of the great poet), Principal of the Elphinstone College, were also present on the occasion.¹

While on the one side Ranade and Bhandarkar asserted that "the existence of the higher virtues or even the commonest morality is indissolubly connected with the maintenance of a certain kind of religion", the other side

The debate was essentially a clash between two schools of Western thought, the one, religious, represented by theologians like Bishop Joseph Butler, and the other, sceptical, of the philosophical sceptics like J.S. Mill and Herbert Spencer. In fact, the debate was an extension of the intellectual duel between Ranade and Agarkar.

that in the long run the path of duty will be seen to have been the path of true self-love."⁵

The book was prescribed for graduate students of logic and moral philosophy, and Prof. Selby had to teach it in the Deccan College. In 1881, he brought out a pamphlet on *Butler's Method of Analogy* to enable the students to judge the method and conclusions of Butler in the light of the Evolutional Philosophy to which alone, in his opinion, one must look for a true psychology of ethics". He criticised Butler for his unsound assumptions and shallow reasoning, and said that "an age of scepticism is generally fruitful in ethical speculation". An age of scepticism does for a country, what nothing else can do. Unless doubt begins, progress is impossible.

Agarkar, a rationalist and a past student of Selby, favourably reviewed the book in *The Mahratta*, and said that "Butler's way of argument bears a close resemblance, and is in some cases identical with the orthodox Brahmanic way of proving moral and metaphysical problems; and the exposition of the fallacies of the one would have led, in some degrees at least, to that of the other".⁶ He also agreed with Selby that acquisition of fresh knowledge is an indispensable condition for every step in social progress but a spirit of doubt and love of inquiry are necessary conditions of such acquisition.

Regarding the question of conscience, he said "Whoever reads Lecky's *History of European Morals* cannot but be impressed with the truth that the elements of conscience of each generation differ from those of the conscience of the preceding generation as well as the succeeding generation."⁷ This variation, he said, is governed by a definite rule, namely, those elements which have an infelicitic tendency grow obsolete in his mind while new elements are added which are felicitic (causing or tending to cause happiness) under special circumstances. Again, he said, history accounts for the

union of religion and morals in older times on account of the non-moral emotions in the low stages of development as well as due to the inefficiency of the social, political and sympathetic functions, and the weakening of that union through every successive stage of intellectual progress thus, the connection of ethics and religion may be finally severed, and the former be treated as an independent science itself.⁸

Ranade could not have missed Agarkar's high appreciation of Selby's rational critique of Butler's fallacies and that must have pained him. A few months later, in January 1882, he wrote a damning review of Selby's book which was as much a rebuke to Selby as it was to Agarkar. "We cannot but regret", he wrote "that the young students of the Deccan College are fed on such pabulum in the most plastic period of their life". He criticised Selby firstly, for his looking down upon "those who believe in immutable principles of right and wrong, as labouring under a delusion"; secondly for saying that "our conscience is a varying quantity, and is the result of inherited experiences of what makes or does not make for happiness"; and thirdly, for denying the existence of God, as "revealed in nature and man", and as a "perfectly good, wise as Almighty Being as Hindus and Christians, Musalmans and Parsis have for thousands of years believed him to be". Further, he accused Selby of accepting "Mill's dilemma of God being either deficient in goodness or power... as unanswerable".⁹

Ranade defended Butler against all the charges brought against him, on the ground that "neither in his *Analogy* nor in his sermons did Butler announce a complete theory of morals and theology". Butler's main object, according to Ranade, was to show that theism and absolute morality were matters of reasonable certainty, sufficient for the purposes of the understanding and for practical conduct."¹⁰

Ranade did not question Selby's right to his own honest convictions. He,

however, regretted that Selby's "position as a teacher in one of our leading institutions should give him unusual opportunities to sap the foundations of his students' faith in matters of such grave import".¹¹ He ended his review on a rather questionable note

"Hindu students especially need strengthening influence which faith in God, and in conscience as his voice in the human heart, alone can give. The national mind cannot rest in agnosticism. The experiment was tried once on a large scale by the greatest moral teacher of this or any age. The failure of Buddhism is a warning that such teaching cannot hold on the national thought... Agnostic and atheistic teaching is certainly out of time at the most plastic period of youth, and can only result in a perversion of the understanding and the decay of all moral earnestness.... Our Colleges are already cried down as places of godless education, and if the neutrality of the Government system of instruction is turned to account for the propagation of agnostic teaching, this charge will be to great extent substantiated. We trust both professors and students will bear this view of the matter in their mind, and avoid all overt occasions for such an outcry.

Ranade thus perceived agnostic teaching as a "national danger".

Ranade's review brought a sharp rejoinder from Agarkar. He once again reiterated the soundness of Selby's work and said that it was his duty as teacher to point out to his students Butler's "Circular reasonings and the false analogies and inductions". He further said that "none but a student that gropes in the dark and believes in all the supersitious notions that our mythology is so full of, can be satisfied with all the arguments of Butler." Finally, he asked, if Ranade, by citing the example of failure of Buddhism is firmly of the conviction that the atheistic "teaching can have no hold on national thought", why should he fear so much the sup-

posed atheistic principles of Prof. Selby or any other Professor?¹²

It was against this background that the Deccan College debate took place, Ranade and Bhandarkar, in upholding the claims of religion, made certain assertions which were vehemently challenged by Agarkar. In one of his assertions, Ranade spoke of Christianity and of Christian philosophers, old and new, with some degree of disrespect and lavished high praise on the ancient Aryans for having developed the best system of religion that the world has ever seen, and to Aryan philosophers for their working out the deepest problems of theological metaphysics. Secondly, he spoke of a direct relation between religion and morality, and of the prime necessity of religion to guide the moral conduct of human beings.

Both these assertions were refuted by Agarkar with equal force. Agarkar argued that morality can exist and flourish without depending in the slightest degree on religion, and that the morality of the common people will be better served by giving them some insight into modern science and philosophy than by merely appealing to their religious feelings. Surprisingly, Tilak supported all the arguments of Agarkar on this occasion.¹³ This made Ranade lose his temper, perhaps for the first time in his life, and he chastised Agarkar and his supporters for denigrating the value of religion as a great moral force.

The debate was neatly summed up in two articles under the heading "Religion, Science and Philosophy" in *The Mahratta*.¹⁴ Very probably they were penned by Agarkar. Referring to Ranade's angry outburst, *The Mahratta* said that this "unhappy incident" showed that "even the most judicious minds, when led away by religious enthusiasm, so easily lost their balance that they readily plunge into fallacies, unpardonable in a neophyte in science and philosophy and cannot see the plainest truths without material distortion. It is such incidents, and they are not rare, that clearly exhibit the power of emotions and passions over reason, when the latter is engaged in the examination of untasteful truth."¹⁵

As regards Ranade's claim of the superiority of Hinduism *The Mahratta* raised the question: What is this Hindu religion? and answered it in the following words: "It is a confused anachronis-

tic record of all the stages through which the religious belief of the ancient Aryans passed in their advance from barbarism to civilization. From the wildest polytheism ... to absolute pantheism in which the soul of man becomes completely identified with the soul of the universe. There is probably every stage of belief to which the Hindoo religion gives its sanction". Is this religion, asked *The Mahratta*, which Ranade wanted the people to follow and revive, each according to his taste?¹⁶

The Mahratta pointed out that the relation of religion and metaphysics, properly so called, is neither direct nor practical; for while religion has become a matter of faith in almost every case, metaphysics still retains its argumentative character which is approachable only by a few. It said that modern science and philosophy are slowly but surely undermining the foundations of religion. But it also maintained that so long as religion cannot be driven off from its last refuge in emotion... it is not possible to hope that science and philosophy will gain their final triumph over religion and relieve it forever from all its concerns in human life. Nevertheless, the writer in *The Mahratta* maintained, through the dissemination of the truths of science and philosophy it is possible to banish the religious hold on the people, but so long as this dissemination is incomplete, the best course to follow is to assume an attitude of indifference towards religion.¹⁷

Notes and References

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National Minorities

Ian Tickle

Peoples would get on better together if they stopped talking about national minorities. George Orwell used to say that we are defined by the words we use, particularly in politics, and minority is not a nice word. It is not nice for the simple reason that it implies comparison with a majority — and such comparison is unnecessary and superfluous.

I would like to take the Swiss example. Switzerland is made up of three main language groups — German, French and Italian. The German language is spoken by more than two-thirds of the population. It is by far the largest of the three groups, and the Italian speakers make up by far the smallest group. But they are all equal. The three languages have equal rights, as do those who speak them.

This avoids any suggestion of comparison. There is never any feeling that any language group is a less valuable component of the country than any other. There is no suggestion that one of them is a minority to be considered over and against a majority.

Though there are countries of many different sizes, they are all sovereign and have equal rights. They all, for example, have one vote in the United Nations General Assembly, and they may all be elected to the Security Council. No one would suggest that Fiji or Haiti has less rights as members of the international community than India or Nigeria because the latter are much bigger and more populous.

So it should be with ethnic, language or any other groups within a country. A tribe with ten members is as valuable a part of society as one with 100,000 members. Neither one of them should be described as either a minority or a majority.

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U.S.-India Relations in the Post-Cold War Era

P.M. Kamath

The greatest event in the history of international relations since World War II, was the end of the cold war in December 1991.¹ Ever since, the nations of the world are engaged in reshaping their foreign relations. India is no exception. Since the end of World War II, U.S.-India relations were affected by the then prevailing cold war. The U.S. considered communism as a threat to its own democratic system and to world peace and, after 1971, the Soviet Union as the only threat to its security and cherished values. Hence, her relations with other countries particularly in the developing world were determined by what I call as the Soviet Equation.² The Soviet Equation in the context of the U.S. can be defined as a consideration by the U.S. as to how its relations with another country help or hinder her global policy of containment of and confrontation with the Soviet Union.

U.S.-India relations were thus conditioned by the Soviet Equation. It is well known that India was partitioned and Pakistan was created on the basis of religion. This religious foundation of Pakistan and India's continued adherence to secular principles made Pakistan see India as the only threat to its security and survival. Thus Pakistan joined hands with the U.S. in its global efforts to contain communism by promoting military alliances. After the Sino-Indian war of 1962 Pakistan drew closer to the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC). Americans were not altogether unaware of the fact that Pakistan had joined the American-led alliance system to subserve her own regional cold war with India. This was summed up by the then U.S. ambassador to Pakistan, Ronald I. Spiers on 20th April, 1982:

Most of our past problems, I think have, stemmed from a different view about the purpose and open-endedness of the security ties which have existed between Pakistan and U.S. since the early 1950s. A principal focus of Pakistani concern has been India, the principal concern of the U.S... is the potential threat and

With the end of the cold war the major thrust in the world is towards democracy. With the Soviet Equation out of the way democracy itself becomes a natural bond between India and the United States. Hence wherever the national interests of the two do not conflict, promotion of democracy worldwide could become a worldwide endeavour.

pressures from the Soviet Union.³

This was, however, overlooked by U.S. policy makers in their broader global objective of the 1970's of containing the Soviet Union. For this broader purpose, the U.S. had coopted the PRC on her side as the PRC considered the Soviet Union its number one enemy. By the time of the Bangladesh War in 1971, the U.S.-Pakistan-PRC axis on the one side and the India-Soviet Union axis on the other was very clear. The global triangular balance of power had become pentagonal in the South Asian context. This was also the pattern in the 1980's — the U.S. confrontation with the Soviet Union over the latter's invasion of Afghanistan.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi then Indian Prime Minister, neither condemned nor condoned the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. But Reagan began his perception of India in simplistic terms — those not with U.S. are against the U.S. But by the mid-1980s he had changed his view of India. In an interview with Derek Davis and Nayan Chanda, Reagan said: "Mrs. Gandhi has said that India is not pro or anti any other country, but instead is pro-India. We accept that position."⁴

The end of the cold war has brought about the demise of the global triangular balance of power. As a consequence, the regional pentagonal balance of power also broke down. What has emerged in the place of the bipolar world of the past is today's unipolar world — only in terms of military predominance and the will power to commit coercive force to achieve global foreign policy goals. But in economic and political terms the world can be described as being multipolar.

Turnabouts in US-India Relations

Even before the end of the cold war, the U.S. had taken steps to improve its own perception of India. This was done under the Reagan Administration. Since India was perceived as tilting towards the Soviet Union, the Reagan Administration desired to wean India away from the Soviet Union and help it to move towards greater autonomy in the military arena.⁵ Hence the crucial decision by the US's National Security Council in October 1984 to permit transfer of technology with dual use liberally.⁶ This gained momentum after Rajiv Gandhi's visit to the U.S. in June 1985.

Indian Security Concerns and Pakistan

But major changes in U.S.-India relations came during the Bush Administration in March 1990 when it clearly and categorically stated that it did not believe that old UN resolutions are any longer relevant to resolve the Kashmir question and a solution to the problem has to be found within the Shimla agreement of 1972.⁷ This was further clarified to suggest that the U.S. does not support any more the idea of a plebiscite in Kashmir. This was subsequently reiterated by the then U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Thomas Pickering.

It is also a significant gesture from the U.S. that it is committed to the maintenance of the territorial integrity of India. This was significant as India faced (what is described by the U.S.) as

Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) promoted by Pakistan in India's north western province of Punjab and in Jammu and Kashmir (JK). Various 'liberation' movements in these two states are demanding secession from the Indian Union on the basis of linguistic and religious sub-nationalism. These separatist movements are funded, equipped and supported by Pakistan. U.S. policy-makers, Congressmen and Senators are now asking Pakistan not to encourage international terrorism in India.

Pakistan has also played its nuclear ambiguity card very well against both the U.S. and India. This is in contrast to India's demonstrated nuclear capability coupled with its political policy of non-weaponisation of nuclear know-how. The U.S. had conclusive proof of Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme before President Bush suspended all economic and military aid to that country in October 1990. The U.S. has maintained pressure on Pakistan to resist from going nuclear. Thus in effect, the U.S. is acting as a security multiplier to India vis-a-vis Pakistan.

Security Concerns vis-a-vis the PRC.

However, in the security arena the greater, though rather remote, threat to India is from the PRC. The two countries have moved a long way from the confrontationist stand of the 1970's to the uncertainties of the 1980's and to develop closer bilateral relations, in the 1990's. Yet there are four main Indian security concerns. First, is the fact that China is a full fledged nuclear power with all weapon systems and delivery systems. Though the PRC recently signed the NPT as a nuclear power, it had hardly any effect on her nuclear behaviour. For instance, when the Indian President was on Chinese soil in May 1992 Beijing exploded a 1000 kiloton nuclear device.⁸ What does it demonstrate? The PRC probably wants to show that her signing the NPT does not prevent her from developing further sophisticated weapon systems. Further, she would like to be part of the five-nation conference on nuclear questions affecting South Asia — whenever it is held, as an equal to two other nuclear powers — U.S. and Russia.⁹

Second, there is the unresolved border dispute between India and the PRC. Though the two countries have decided to place the dispute in the backburner,

Indian security concerns cannot vanish and normal bilateral relations cannot be established till the border problem is resolved. Till that happens there are still many issues of mutual interest between Pakistan and China to make common cause against India that India cannot relax her security concerns. Then there is the question of Tibetan autonomy and the question of violation of human rights. Though the government of India has conceded that Tibet is a part of China, Indians are not satisfied with China's treatment of Tibetans.

There is a new dimension to the PRC's foreign relations in the post-cold war in the context of the democratic movement worldwide — her close cooperation with the military dictatorship in Myanmar. The PRC and Pakistan have been the main suppliers of arms and equipment to the military government to suppress the pro-democracy movement. According to Ms. Than Nu, "China alone has supplied two billion dollars worth of arms in exchange for essential commodities. There is a Chinese military advisor in Myanmar where they are building a naval base for China on the southern most tip of the country."¹⁰ The remnants of communism and military dictatorship cooperating with one another is a direct security threat to India. The U.S. as a supporter of the democratic movement in Myanmar has also not taken kindly to this development. In all these areas where India has divergent interests with the PRC, the U.S. and India have a general convergence of interests.

Economic Factors

The end of the cold war and disintegration of the Soviet Union also witnessed India liberalising her economy by removing practically all socialistic controls and inviting foreign investment. This is no mere coincidence because, with the disappearance of the Soviet Union, India had to look for newer markets to sell her goods and seek new sources of supply of defence equipment. In a sense India lost a captive market for her goods but in reality, the very captive market was acting as a disincentive to economic competitiveness in the country.

With the end of the cold war the major thrust in the world is towards democracy. With the Soviet Equation out of the way democracy itself

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becomes a natural bond between India and the U.S. Hence, wherever the national interests of the two do not conflict promotion of democracy worldwide could become a common global endeavour.

Conclusions

Apart from the major changes that have taken place, one very important development since 1991 is the growing cooperation in defence matters between the two countries. This was signalled through their cooperation during the Gulf War when India permitted U.S. Air Force planes to refuel in Bombay. In July 1992 for the first time the two navies held joint naval exercises in the Indian Ocean. There are also continuous service to service contacts through seminars and visits by high ranking officials.

It is not that there are no problems in U.S.-India relations. Thus for instance, India and the U.S. hold divergent views on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT). The U.S. wants India to sign the NPT. India has been insisting on a time bound agreement for global nuclear disarmament. This is a moralistic argument only to retain her nuclear option if the PRC and/or Pakistan force a nuclear war upon her. There are other problems like U.S. efforts to deny India cyrogenic engines for her space programme by pressurising Russia not to supply the engines.

India needs the U.S. more than the Americans need India. It is in this con-

text that there is a lurking fear that the PRC may try to develop a joint front with India against the U.S. particularly in the fields of human rights and linking development assistance with human rights. Thus for instance, the communique issued after the conclusion of PRC Prime Minister Li Peng's visit to Delhi in December 1991, expressed their joint concern over the dangers of an "international oligarchy" (a reference obviously to the U.S. along with its Western allies) trying to pose as a protector of human rights, worldwide. Again when the Premiers of India and the PRC met in New York in February 1992, Li Peng said while greeting Narasimha Rao: "We seemed to have consulted each before drafting our speeches at the Security Council, since there was a great deal of parallelism on major issues."¹¹ It must be said here that Indian violation of human rights cannot be equated with those of the PRC. India is fighting, with its back to the wall in the two states of Punjab and J&K, against externally aided terrorism. On the other hand, in the case of the PRC it is the government itself that violates the human rights of its citizens to suppress political dissidence.

The U.S. and India will have to fine tune their bilateral relations by keeping in mind the fact that in the long run the democratic bond is far more durable than a relationship between a pluralistic democracy and a one-party state.

Notes and References

1. U.S. President George Bush, in his national

security report to Congress in March 1990 spoke of the U.S. goal as moving beyond containment. See *The Times of India* (Bombay), March 22, 1990. Later, Boris Yeltsin in his first meeting with President Bush in the U.S. in January 1992 said that the two are no longer "potential enemies". See "Yeltsin drops U.S. cities as nuclear targets," *International Herald Tribune*, January 27, 1992. But here I have taken December 8, 1991 as the effective date of the end of the cold war, as it was on that day the Soviet Union formally disintegrated.

2. See P.M. Kamath, "Indo-U.S. Relations in the 1980s: Politics of Security", *Problems of Non-Alignment*, vol. 2, No. 4 (December 1984 — March 1985), p. 341.
3. *U.S. Pakistan Relations* (New Delhi: USIA), p. 5.
4. *The Far Eastern Economic Review* (Hong Kong), May 17, 1984, p. 34.
5. See Stephen P. Cohen, "Right for Right Reasons? The Reagan Administration and South Asia", a paper, presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, March 25 to 27, 1988.
6. For details see Dilip Mukerjee "U.S. weaponry for India," *Asian Survey* (Berkeley), vol. 27, No. 6 (June 1987), pp. 595-614.
7. *The Times of India* (Bombay), March 8, 1990.
8. For details on the nuclear issue affecting India-Pakistan relations, see P.M. Kamath, "The Viable Alternative," *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, April 11-17, 1992, pp. 16-17.
9. See P.M. Kamath, "Caution a Watchword," *The Observer of Business and Politics*, July 20, 1992.
10. In an interview with *The Times of India* (Bombay), April 5, 1992.
11. Subhash Chakravarti "Triumph all the way," *The Sunday Times of India* (Bombay), February 9, 1992.

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Telephone Rackets

There was no need for Mr. Rajesh Pilot, Union Minister of State for Communications, to go in disguise to witness the functioning of an STD/ISD racket in Delhi. Even if he goes as the Union Minister, he would have been offered such a service without the least hesitation. In most metros, as also other towns, some of the telephone employees run rackets with impunity, in collusion with higher ups, as they consider such corruption virtually as a fundamental right. Over the years, they have become bold because the Department is reluctant to take any action, since too many people at all levels are involved, and staff unions and associations rush to protect their members instead of pro-

tecting public interest.

Phone lines of law-abiding subscribers, particularly those who are naive enough to trust the Department and retain STD facility which they seldom use, are diverted illegally for a fixed sum to smugglers of contraband, foreign exchange havala dealers, gamblers, bootleggers, unscrupulous businessmen, and dishonest subscribers who wish to contact relations in India and abroad.

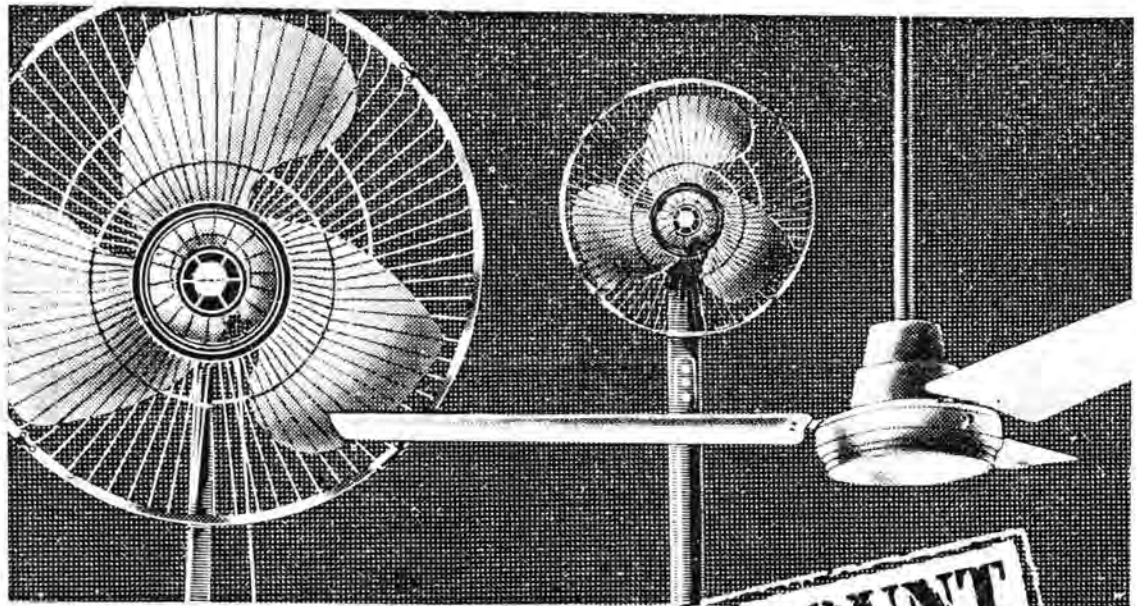
The Department is reluctant to take effective action:

1. When detected, supported by recorded evidence, the Department files a First Information Report (FIR)

with the police, but declines to publicise the names of staff members and the parties involved. In billing disputes, all other phones other than the one involved in the dispute are disconnected to pressurise the subscriber to pay up. But dishonest subscribers who divert lines are apparently spared such action!

2. The Division Engineer and his staff should be held accountable for illegal line diversion where subscribers are able to prove line diversion, and made to pay up the amount to the aggrieved subscribers.

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Yeltsin and Gorbachev

A.G. Modak

While Yeltsin was clear about the goal to be achieved Gorbachev appeared to waver. From Yeltsin's point of view the contradictions that cropped up in the USSR were catastrophic; Gorbachev on the other hand, treated such contradictions as non-catastrophic. In Yeltsin's view the Soviet Union needed major surgery. Gorbachev on the other hand felt that the system could be improved with proper medication.

After the failure of the coup in Russia Boris Yeltsin inflicted several humiliating blows on Mikhail Gorbachev, and the latter too launched attacks and counter attacks on the former. The friendship that prevailed between these two leaders in the early years of perestroika disappeared giving way to bitter antagonism.

What happened?

It is obvious that whereas Yeltsin was very clear about the goal to be achieved Gorbachev appeared to waver. From Yeltsin's point of view the contradictions that cropped in the USSR were catastrophic; Gorbachev, on the other hand treated such contradictions as non-catastrophic. No wonder Yeltsin opted for serious surgery on the body of the USSR. Gorbachev, on the other hand, hoped that the system could be improved with proper medication. Yeltsin supported anti-establishment causes like privatisation, marketization and liberalization. Gorbachev on the other hand was the typical Man who takes the middle path. He stated time and again that nationalisation of the means of production had not put an end to the feeling of alienation in the USSR. Yet, he opposed the process of denationalisation! Gorbachev favoured the market; but in the same vein added that the market should be a socialist entity.

"The Man of the Middle"

On February 28, 1991 Gorbachev delivered a speech at Minsk almost exclusively glorifying his middle-of-the-road course. He went to the extent of praising Alexander Solzhenitsyn for advocating middle-of-the-road policies as the only option available for the Soviet Union. In this context one is reminded of Bakunin's description of the "Man of the Middle". According to

Bakunin such a man is convinced of the location of the truth — in the middle, between revolution and reaction. Therefore when revolutionaries hold that two times two is four and reactionaries hold that two times two is six, he argues that the correct answer must be five. (Peter van Ham, "Soviet Economic Reform and East-West Economic Relations", in *Problems of Communism* — January-April 1991, P. 149.) Yeltsin, on the other hand has been blunt and outspoken. Once he realised that the vanguardist system of Leninism was at the root of the "nomenklatura's" control over appointments of party-state elites, he began to plead for the replacement of the Party Programme by the Democratic Platform. Gorbachev however continued to stress that a mere amendment of the Party Programme was enough to deliver the goods.

From 1990, Yeltsin began to advocate full independence for the republics of the USSR. 1989 saw destabilization and panic in the entire communist world. That year also saw Soviet readiness to welcome support towards German reunification. The conservatives in the USSR, were shocked particularly in the background of the Brezhnevian advocacy of limited sovereignty for east European states. These diehard elements naturally insisted that Gorbachev should take steps to consolidate power in the Soviet Union. Therefore, in January 1990 they supported the Ryzkov Plan to strengthen Central power. Gorbachev opposed the Ryzkov Plan though he did not opt for decentralisation either. The CPSU's Central Committee meeting in February 1990 therefore offered a forum for conservatives to attack Mikhail Gorbachev. The President of the USSR thus faced simultaneous chal-

lenges from two opposite sides — both Yeltsin and the conservatives shared the same assessment of Gorbachev though from different perspectives.

Yeltsin — The Pragmatist

Yeltsin gives the impression of being petulant and impatient. His enthusiasm perhaps led Gorbachev to appoint him in 1986 as Moscow Unit Secretary. The speeches delivered then by Yeltsin exhibited his eagerness to remove obsolete parasites from the CPSU. Within a year, the same quality of enthusiastic impatience which prompted Gorbachev to offer him a senior post in the CPSU hierarchy proved costly. The next three years provided additional fuel and ultimately Yeltsin left the CPSU in 1990. His resignation speech was quite dramatic. Yeltsin had, by that time, become the President of Russia and supported a switch-over to a multi-party system. "As head of the highest legislative body of Russia", he said, "I am obliged to obey the will of the people and their plenipotentiaries". For a people who were fed up with bureaucratic ways for seven decades, Yeltsin's impatience to break with the totalitarian past was welcomed by the Russian people who treated Yeltsin as a hero and became critics of Gorbachev. Leonid Vasiliyev, a columnist of the *New Times* aptly commented (September 10, 1991) that not Gorbachev, but Yeltsin was the symbol of "our democracy in those days crucial for our country and for the world to a certain degree". In John Morrison's book, "Boris Yeltsin", we find the following description of the Russian President: "He is a heretic who broke the rules of the *nomenklatura* and, by spilling the beans on the hypocrisy of privilege, fatally undermined their claim to omnipotence."

By 1989, the Soviet people had become vocal; the world observed a revolution from below in the USSR and Gorbachev failed to come upto their mark. Probably the manner in which Nikita Khrushchev was dismissed in 1964 persuaded Gorbachev to ensure that he did not suffer the same fate. This was perhaps why he tried to please the conservatives in the CPSU. When he incorporated in his Presidential Council people like Boris Pugo, Gennady Yanayev and Vladimir Kryuchkov, an impression was created that Gorbachev was trying to endear himself to the conservatives, military officials and rightists in general. The truth, of course lay elsewhere. Most people in the Soviet Union, left or right, were irritated with their Hamlet! As we know, the rightists staged a coup against Gorbachev and the CPSU too deserted him.

Within a year after the August coup, Yeltsin experienced the pains of power. As the Russian economy tumbled so did Yeltsin's popularity. Demonstrators who came out on the streets shouted slogans pointing out that if Boris Yeltsin was the favourite of the Americans, Mikhail Gorbachev was a favourite of

the Germans. To consolidate his power Yeltsin began issuing decrees, launching attacks on Gorbachev, reshuffling personnel. One could say that Boris Yeltsin was repaying Gorbachev in kind for the treatment he had received from the latter. It is true that Gorbachev treated Yeltsin rather shabbily in October 1987 when the latter was informed of his removal from the political hierarchy. But the fact is that almost everyone considered Yeltsin to be unstable, unpredictable and wayward. Secondly, Gorbachev fought Yeltsin on the political plane; he refused to reduce this to a personal level. This was reflected in the fact that Gorbachev invited Yeltsin to work as a minister even after 1987; it was reflected subsequently at the 28th CPSU Congress, when Yeltsin's name was incorporated in the Central Committee of the CPSU.

"But Yeltsin's hatred of Gorbachev, is however, more personal, more visceral. At the same time Yeltsin is a pragmatic, populist leader. He judges the pulse of the people and then rushes to grab every opportunity. His emphasis on the ethos and culture of Russia, no doubt strengthened his bonds with the people.

Gorbachev, on the other hand is an idealist and a romantic. As leader of the USSR he sought to promote the principles of universal cooperation and the significance of a "European Home". The Russian people however preferred a Russian Home.

The Marginalisation of Gorbachev

In March 1991 Gorbachev organised a referendum in the USSR. His aim was to get public endorsement for the preservation of the USSR. Apparently he did succeed in his venture, but a close study revealed that he employed various tricks such as a loaded media campaign, inducements to voters, multiple voting, etc. Still the results of the referendum were disappointing for Gorbachev and his colleagues. Six republics did not participate in the referendum, big cities like Moscow and Leningrad refused to give overwhelming support to Gorbachev. Certain republics practically ignored the question put to them by the Kremlin and supported decisively the supplementary issue of their independence. For Gorbachev, the whole scenario was getting more and more pathetic. Yeltsin's

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How you can safeguard yourself against AIDS

People of all communities, age and sex can be affected by the AIDS virus (HIV). A person who is once infected, will remain infected for life. AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is caused by a virus called HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). The virus attacks and destroys the cells of the body's immune system, and the body is unable to fight diseases, which ultimately leads to death. Until a drug or vaccine is found to fight the AIDS virus **prevention is the only cure.**

Symptoms

During the earlier stages of HIV infection, the symptoms are vague and often similar to those of common ailments. Some of the symptoms are: **fever** (more than 3 weeks duration), **loss of weight** (more than 10% of original weight), **skin rash and diarrhoea** (more than 3 weeks duration). **AIDS is the end-stage of the HIV infection. It can take many years to reach this stage. The infection at any stage can be passed on to others.**

Prevention

The AIDS virus (HIV) can be spread in three ways.

1. Sexual intercourse (homosexual or heterosexual)

- Avoid sexual intercourse with multiple partners, infected partners and prostitutes. The proper use of condoms is necessary.

2. Blood or blood products

- Blood should be tested for HIV antibodies before being used for transfusions.
- Needles and other skin-piercing instruments should be sterilised before use. It is best to insist on disposable needles and syringes.
- An HIV carrier should not donate blood or share toothbrushes, razor blades and needles.

3. From infected mother to baby, either before, during or after birth

The AIDS virus does NOT spread through casual contact like shaking hands, touching and hugging. Neither does it spread through food, water, sneezing, coughing, insects, toilets, swimming pools and sharing cups.

There is no need to fear and shun persons who are infected with the AIDS virus. They need a lot of Tender Loving Care (TLC) to help them live out their life with courage and dignity.

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stars were however getting brighter. People found in Yeltsin a leader with an inner force and courage, committed to long-overdue radical changes which the crisis-ridden country was craving for. Then came the August coup against Gorbachev. And, surprisingly, it was Boris Yeltsin who came to Gorbachev's rescue. He mobilised public opinion against the architects of the August coup. It was Yeltsin's initiative and courage that led to the freeing of Gorbachev. But the alliance between Yeltsin and Gorbachev proved to be a very short-lived phenomenon. When Gorbachev refused to learn any lesson from the August coup, and engaged in dilatory tactics, Yeltsin backed out of the alliance. He expected Gorbachev to confront members of his government who had supported the coup. He wanted Gorbachev to take the initiative in liquidating the empire of the USSR. He requested Gorbachev to end CPSU rule. Mikhail Gorbachev's response was not to respond. Yeltsin then threatened and Gorbachev was compelled to accede to a demand that he had resisted for over six years — to make the Presidency a decorative or ornamental office. Within four months of the August coup, Yeltsin completed the marginalization of Gorbachev. Gorbachev was asked to retire and was thus deprived of even the decorative post!

Hounding Gorbachev

The antagonism between Yeltsin and Gorbachev sharpened after Gorbachev's retirement. The world saw the two leaders trading charges and countercharges. In Gorbachev's interview in *"Komsomolskaya Pravda"* in May 1992 he criticised Yeltsin's policies. He referred to Yeltsin's authoritarian ways and the sectarian stance of the present Russian leadership. But he did not demand the dismissal of the present government, because "unhitching of horses in midstream would worsen the situation". Vyacheslav Kostikov, Yeltsin's press secretary accused Gorbachev of trying to destabilise the social and political situation in Russia. He also threatened legal action. Subsequent events proved that the threat was not empty. When Yeltsin asked Gorbachev to testify before Russia's highest court's hearing the case against the banned CPSU. When Gorbachev refused, Yeltsin issued a decree and took away the spacious

property given earlier to Gorbachev's research centre; he took away the limousines at Gorbachev's disposal and replaced them with less comfortable models. A ban was placed on Gorbachev's foreign trips and his passport was confiscated. It was pressure from abroad which facilitated Gorbachev's trip to Germany to attend the funeral of former German Chancellor, Willy Brandt. But, in exchange, Gorbachev had to compromise by consenting to testify before the court though in private. Mr. Nikolai Fyodorov, the Russian justice minister declared his intention to put Gorbachev on trial for his participation in the gulags and the bloody purges in the USSR. Recently, Yeltsin charged that Gorbachev was aware of the Soviet massacre of thousands of Polish soldiers in the Katyn forests in 1940. He also pointed out that all Soviet leaders including Mikhail Gorbachev pleaded hypocritical silence over the Soviet downing of a South Korean jet in 1983, which killed 263 persons.

London *Times* columnist, Bernard Levin has described the humiliation and denunciations heaped on Gorbachev as being shabby. "Mr. Yeltsin, drunk or sober, though on balance, probably drunk, wants to hound Gorbachev into silence". (London *Times*, October 8, 1992) Mr. Levin has reminded Yeltsin that Vaclav Havel who came forward to lead the Czechs after the dismissal of the communists from Prague refused to be vindictive against the previous rulers. Vanessa Redgrave, the celebrated actress and a leading Trotskyite also condemned Yeltsin for his vendetta against Gorbachev in a letter she handed over to the Russian foreign minister during his visit to London in October 1992. Eduard Sornolov put it rather well when he wrote:

"If even the leaders of the country, public and political figures speak of Gorbachev as only the mob can speak of him, then Russia is in bad shape and there is nothing for us to hope for. People who are not able to esteem a great man, cannot run their state successfully." (*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, October 13, 1992)

What astonished the world was the fact that barring a few persons like Sornolov, practically no Russian intellectual found it necessary to condemn Yeltsin's campaign against Gorbachev. In fact, certain intellectuals even sup-

ported Yeltsin. Vladimir Kulistikov thus endorsed Yeltsin's actions on moral grounds. In his opinion, an official investigation of documents including those of the Gorbachev period is justifiable, as it is likely to highlight leftist terrorism and violence. (*New Times*, No. 24, June 1992)

Gorbachev Vindicated?

There are however indications that Yeltsin may ultimately be compelled to moderate his postures. Thus he succumbed to pressures and allowed Gorbachev to go to Germany to attend the funeral of Willy Brandt. Yeltsin also showed his readiness to sign a collaboration arrangement with Ruslan Khasbulatov, the chairman of the Congress of People's Deputies who confronted Yeltsin, when the latter sought to weaken the power and influence of the Congress. Yeltsin accepted the demand of Khasbulatov and replaced his reformist Prime Minister by another person. Yeltsin, moreover seems to have reconciled himself to a moderate definition of Russian nationalism. This definition asks Russians to take pride in their cultural heroes rather than in their military men. It asks people to carry forward the legacy of authors and poets. The definition, in other words, seeks to discard the Tzarist tradition of imperialism. It was perhaps the influence of this line of thinking which led Yeltsin to adopt less provocative postures when dealing with Moldavia and the Ukraine.

A prediction made by a Russian weekly deserves to be quoted here:

"Yeltsin's rapprochement with neo-communists is out of the question. A softening in his relations with the radical democrats is equally unlikely. An uncompromising drive for a market economy spells death to a people's President. Theoretically speaking, only the moderate national-patriots still have a chance of joining the President". ("Is democratic Russia finished?" in *Moscow News*, no. 24, 1992)

Ironically Yeltsin is now, through sheer necessity; compelled to take a middle-of-the-road approach; the very approach which led Yeltsin to attack Gorbachev. History has indeed come full circle.

Dr. A.G. MODAK is a Reader in the Centre for Soviet Studies, University of Bombay

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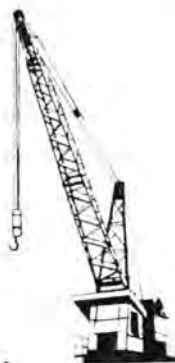
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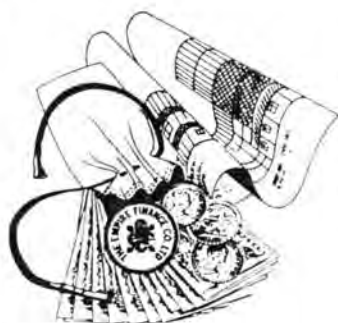
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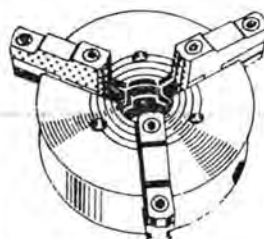


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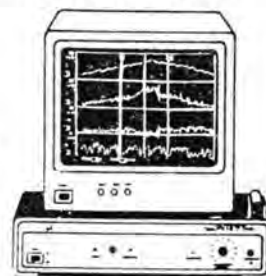
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Why Russia is in Chaos and China Isn't?

China's senior leader Deng Xiaoping, though no longer in office intends to use the Year of the Rooster to prepare his succession. The Chinese New Year is regarded as more significant than the western variety of that institution, and it is traditionally used for new beginnings. Deng is about to tackle the fact that so many of his former colleagues refuse to take his retirement seriously.

Policies since the Tienanmen Square massacre have been based on the idea that economic progress does not have to be accompanied by political reform. Chinese politicians take great delight in pointing to the evolution of the former Soviet Union to confirm their point. There, political reform led to economic chaos, and many people in Russia as well as China think that if the communists were still in power in Moscow people would be better off than they are today.

But this is a myth, and the more reflective among the Chinese leaders, certainly including Deng himself, are well aware of it. The development of economic prosperity in a number of east Asian states — an excellent example being South Korea — was started and fostered by dictatorial regimes; but there always comes a point when economic progress outstrips the totalitarian framework. In other words, economic reform does not depend on immediate political reform, but the second has to follow the first after a reasonable period of time.

The real lessons of the Soviet Union for Deng and his colleagues is that the change from dictatorship to democracy can engender chaos. It is this element which has led to the present economic straits in the former Soviet Union, not the fact of reform itself. In China the

chosen instrument for preventing such chaos is the army. The last twelve months have seen a gradual process of replacing army commanders of doubtful loyalty by those absolutely true to Deng and his policies.

President Clinton indicated before he took office that he had grave doubts about the Bush policy of not provoking China. But this may well be another idea which he will have to revise upon further consideration. George Bush was an old China hand, and he had a good grasp of the byzantine contradictions at work in the Peking hierarchy. It is true that since the suppression of the pro-democracy movement China's human rights record has been appalling. This is not something which can be ignored by the free world — an expression which may still be used in relation to China. Every conceivable effort should be made to support the work of human rights organisations in drawing attention to abuses and seeking to remedy them.

But it difficult to be too sanctimonious if there is a perception that in more fundamental terms China is marching in the right direction. Such a perception is certainly at the heart of Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten's approach to democratisation in the Crown Colony. He does not accept the idea of many Hong Kong businessmen that his policy is virtually suicidal for the territory in view of Peking's hostile reaction. He believes that he is conforming to deeper currents in Chinese society and that by the time the Chinese take over there will not be an unbridgeable gap in political status.

China responds to attempts to make it change its habits with threats. It has

also countered Chris Patten's plans for greater democracy in Hong Kong with threats. But there is something of the Peking ballet in all this. Striking attitudes is an art in itself. The utterance of threats does not have to be followed by carrying them out. It may simply be seen as an attitude of defiance.

The western ethic on threats is different. If the west makes threats it expects to see direct results. And if these results do not appear they expect to carry out the threats. This is why George Bush was certainly right in his conviction that it was pointless to threaten reprisals as a way of persuading the Chinese to improve their human rights record. China is a land of mystery, and its rulers do not react as westerners react. Those engaged in the opium wars of the last century were forced to learn this lesson the hard way, and it will be a shame if a new administration entering office in Washington in 1993 should ignore the evidence of history.

At present the Chinese fear chaos more than they regret democracy. They have had more than their due share of chaos in the present century, and they know that its consequences may be worse than lack of democracy. This is not to say that they value freedom less than any other set of human beings, but they also have the conviction that freedom has a number of prerequisites which must be present first. And they know that chaos would bring their economic progress to a halt in very quick time.

Swiss Press Review

Russia's Mafia: The 'Organizatsia'

Like nazism, communism engendered crime. But the nazis were defeated in war, and the worst were weeded

out. There has been no decommunistication. The criminals are still among us. Until the demise of the Soviet Union

they mostly stayed at home. They had no need to emigrate when they had a license to kill in their own country.

They are still active in the successor states of the Soviet Union. Rising crime has been identified as one of the chief threats to democratisation. A leading politician in Moscow recently said that President Yeltsin would succeed in his reform endeavours only if he could control the present wave of crime.

In the euphoria of post-communism the danger was not widely recognised. It should have been, because it was inevitable — and steps should have been taken in the immediate aftermath. It was possible to kill communism — but the communists would not die with it. The top dogs could be neutralised, for their names were known. But the thousands of small operators — those who did the dirty work — are still alive and kicking. It will take generations before we are rid of them.

The mafia has its origins in Italy, the triads are Chinese, but the "organizatsia" is Russian. It exudes the old order, and it is spreading throughout the world. Its main power base outside its own territory is in New York, that great melting-pot of cultures. Just as the mafia expanded from Sicily to New York, so the "organizatsia" has transferred much of its violence from Moscow to the great American metropolis.

Until the demise of the Soviet Union, the Russians of Brooklyn were fairly peaceful people. Of course crime was not unknown among them, but it was not as rife as among most other ethnic communities. There was nothing to compare with the no-go areas of Harlem or Bedford-Stuyvesant or the mindless violence of mafia hangouts.

Now all that has changed. Little Italy in Manhattan has its counterpiece in Brooklyn's Little Odessa. This is the nerve centre of the New York branch of the "organizatsia", a Moscow baby fast rising to adulthood and joining the mafia and the triads to become one of the most powerful criminal organisations in the world. Its operators show no pity and are marked by an extraordinary level of violence, much of which is used against its own people. It shows many of the characteristics of the defunct Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to which all these epithets could also be truthfully applied.

In the days of the Soviet Union only the privileged could leave the country. The emigré community in New York and other western cities were afraid of KGB infiltration and sometimes suffered greatly from it. But many of its operatives were known to the CIA and the FBI, and its deadly menace was confined mainly to emigrés who were politically active. With the demise of the Soviet Union the gates of that huge land Area were thrown open. In 1990 more than 60 thousand Russians joined the community in the United States, and the flow has been increasing ever since. The American police authorities cannot keep up, and the "organizatsia" is free to ravage as it pleases.

Criminals from the Soviet Union are able to build on tentacles long established, probably with the tacit support of Leonid Brezhnev's Kremlin. The first time the "Russian mafia" came to the attention of the FBI was in 1975. At that time recent immigrants from the Soviet Union were defrauded on a large scale by bogus Soviet sailors who "sold" them sacks of gold roubles which

turned out to be full of potatoes.

In spite of the large number of Russian-speakers in the United States, the FBI found it difficult to infiltrate the "organizatsia". The law enforcement agencies had no Russian tradition approaching the Italian tradition which had been built up in several decades of anti-mafia combat. It had to wait for its first breakthrough until 1983 when it received a manuscript from an unknown source entitled "Everything about the Russian mafia". This contained information about the leaders of the organisation and its structure. The FBI was naturally suspicious, but in fact everything contained in the report turned out to be true. It showed that the "organizatsia" laid great stock on connections which it had been establishing with the real mafia.

Since then leaders have succeeded one another, and there has been no further breakthrough on the 1983 scale. The law-enforcement agencies seem to be powerless to break the Russian crime syndicate. As fast as the mafia goes down, the "organizatsia" rises; and the police say that the level of intelligence of the Russian crime operators is much higher. The FBI estimates that in the New York area there are more than 300 full-time such operators, which is more than all the Cosa Nostra families taken together. Many of them are thought to be former KGB operatives who prefer crime to the dole. And the fact is that there is pretty little difference between what they are doing now and many of their activities when paid by the Kremlin. Except they are earning more now.

Swiss Press Review

Peace Failure in Angola

Namibia was a success story, neighbouring Angola was not. But Angola was far more complicated, and there was a lot less goodwill. The elections took place not because they were ordered by the international community, but because each side thought it was certain to win. In trying to ensure fair play the United Nations was in an adversarial position, and it did not realise this sufficiently to invest enough in main-

taining the peace agreement.

In the first place, the elections were not supervised adequately. For this to be done all polling stations throughout the country should have been supervised. The United Nations did not have the staff to do this and now claims that it would have been impossible. But one of the UN supervisors who was also involved in the exemplary Zimbabwe election over ten years ago claims that it

would have been quite feasible to do much more than was done in Angola.

The other aspect where the United Nations failed most dismally was in its duty to disarm the two sides. It is now clear that this task was not carried out at all. If it had not been, the present situation could not have come about. Fighting has been taking place — sometimes sporadically and sometimes with remarkable intensity, but always

with large quantities of arms — ever since the elections. UNITA can be accused of refusing to accept the result of elections which may or may not have been broadly fair, while the MPLA seems to have decided that the time has finally come to get rid of its opponent once and for all. The risk is that the situation will now deteriorate so far that Angola will be back to the state of chaos in which it has been ever since it gained "freedom" from the Portuguese. Jonas Savimbi has spoken quite openly about the risk of the "somalisation" of Angola, which would mean that yet another country would be added to the lengthening list of those without a functioning government.

Because there is a general realisation of this danger — and only because

of this — peace still has a chance. UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali wants the leaders of the two factions to come together in Geneva to make peace. They have done this before, and he argues that they can do it again. He says that if they fail he will consider bringing the UN mandate to an end and leaving the country to fend for itself. This is of course not a reasonable policy choice for the United Nations, and although the threat is scary it is unlikely to be carried out. The secretary general takes the view that the world organisation — and his own office — exists to serve members, and this is the conviction which underlies the very large extension of the presence of the United Nations throughout the world since he took office. In Angola, however, the United

Nations has to take something of a political position. Mr. Boutros Ghali knows that the people are sick of war and that there is a strong trend to calling down a plague on both houses. He would like to take advantage of that.

The world community cannot really give up on any international crisis. When things go badly wrong as they have done in Angola, the secretary general in fact has no alternative to taking a deep breath and starting again from scratch. He is aware that the latest large-scale mission by the United Nations — which is to bring peace to Mozambique — has little chance of success or even of getting off the ground if the Angolan venture fails.

Swiss Press Review

Terrorists in Sudan

The United States has reportedly informed Sudan that it is thinking of adding it to the list of countries known to harbour terrorists. This is a little late in the day. On April 14, 1992, *Swiss Press Review* and *News Report* reported as follows:

"Sudan is the new terrorist refuge of the Arab world. Friendly with both Iran and Libya, the present Sudanese regime harbours terrorists from both countries. Iranian Revolutionary Guards have been sent to training camps near Khartoum to prepare terrorists for action in Europe and elsewhere. Sudan is in fact replacing Lebanon in this respect. The Egyptian authorities are increasingly alarmed at the situation, and they have recently told Sudanese officials that they consider the existence of the terrorist camps as a provocation which could lead to military action"

In view of recent events, both in Egypt and other parts of the world, it is a pity that this particular news item was not given more attention when it appeared. There is not a single word in it which does not apply with even greater force today. Now that the United States has itself been the victim of a serious terrorist attack, however, and now that terrorism is a daily occurrence in Egypt, people are beginning to sit up and take notice.

Events in Sudan are largely lost in

the murk. It is clear, however, that the country is going from one depth of poverty to another. It has become a fundamentalist state, and this is being emphasised more and more in the hope that it will obtain help from wealthy, fundamentalist Iran. This assistance will probably be forthcoming, but at a price. There are signs that Sudan is becoming nothing less than a satellite of an increasingly imperialist Iran — which is staking much on the idea that the Islamic revolution in Teheran which brought down the Shah a decade ago could well be repeated in Cairo.

Secular Egypt is understandably worried about the possibility. Now there are indications that Iran intends to set up a naval base at Port Sudan, on the Sudanese coast not far from the Egyptian border and only 800 miles south of the Suez Canal. Egypt has always maintained that because the Nile is essential to its life in every conceivable way events upstream are of vital importance to it. It has always maintained a last-resort right to intervention if Sudan should become too hostile. This would indeed be the case, it is now being stated in Cairo, if Iran established military bases there.

An Iranian military presence in Sudan could be accompanied by the

presence of Scud missiles, and President Mubarak of Egypt is on record as having said in the recent past that if this happened "we would hit them in 24 hours". But, as the Gulf war has shown, taking out Scud missiles is not an easy task — even for the vast resources of the United States. There is evidence that in spite of all the United Nations inspections that have taken place, Iraq is still in possession of such missiles — and Scuds may already be stationed in Sudan.

This is a new crisis area which can now be added to the many others at present troubling the world. We ignore it at our peril.

Swiss Press Review.

The real guarantee of freedom is an equilibrium of social forces in conflict, not the triumph of any one force. In trying to build, or defend, a free society, our first concern should be to make sure that no one gang or group — neither the proletariat, nor the capitalists, nor the landowners, nor the bankers, nor the army, nor the church, nor the state itself — shall have unlimited power.

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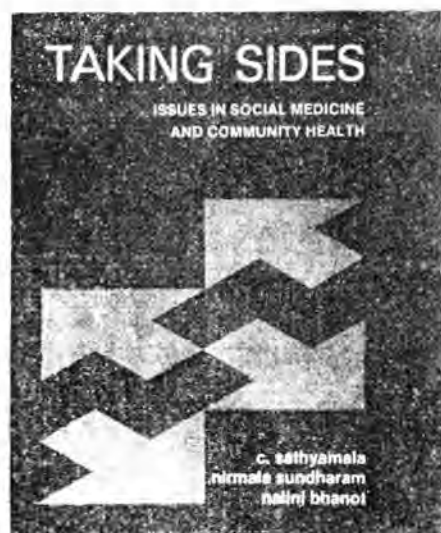
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BOOK REVIEWS

TAKING SIDES: ISSUES IN SOCIAL MEDICINE AND COMMUNITY HEALTH, by C. Sathyamala, Nirmala Sundharam and Nalini Bhanot; Horizon India Books, P.O. Box 3224, New Delhi; 1992; pp. 320; Rs. 300



Reviewed by
Prema Nandakumar

Our Member of Parliament, Mani Shankar Aiyar can be brutally revealing at times. Recently he had been touring his constituency in Tamil Nadu which consists of 600 Panchayats that envelop 1800 villages. He went to one of the villages, Tiruvheezhimizhalai, a culturally rich pocket on the banks of the Cauvery. He went to the Primary Health Centre there consisting of a two-bed clinic, a women's clinic and family quarters for doctors.

But Aiyar found no doctor. The doctors come only for a 'few hours'. It was noon, yet there was no doctor. The pharmacist complained there was no water in the pipes. Poor Cauvery delta! Only tablets for headache were available in the PHC. If other medicines were needed, one must apply to the higher authorities elsewhere. When the villag-

ers complained of cholera cases, the pharmacist countered them by referring to the phenomenon as merely heavy diarrhoea.

There was no electricity. The beds were torn, unused. So were the bathrooms choked up with broken bottles, boxes and cardboard cartons. A Primary Health Centre in a five-acre site with 25 workers meant to serve 20,000 people is in this sad state, sighs our Member of Parliament in the Tamil daily, *Dinamani* on 6th March, 1992. Panchayati Raj alone can rectify all these ills, is Aiyar's pronouncement. There ends the part of the politician in this tragic drama.

Fortunately, committed doctors, social scientists and voluntary workers cannot be satisfied with mere statements. They have been watching the scenario here and elsewhere (long before politicians came for a bout of vote-fishing), and have been working with dogged determination. It would have been good if Aiyar had recorded these beams of light in the darkness. VHA for instance. But then, our Members of Parliament are in such a hurry. They haven't much time. At least Aiyar has spoken out with candour. For this, much thanks.

What astonishes me in India is not the poverty, the indifference, the suffering. With such a vast population living below the poverty line and the politicians showing camp-fire abandon in their attempts to hold on to the *kursi*, one cannot expect a social paradise here. What never fails to astonish me is the commendable work of our voluntary organisations all over the sub-continent. They get no advertisement, media attention or thanks. Yet they go on with a rare faith in the ultimate triumph of the human spirit.

The three authors of this book belong to this small group of idealist workers. Dr. C. Sathyamala has had extensive experience working with the Voluntary Health Association of India and the Bhopal gas victims. Engaged in

rural health programmes, she has successfully adopted for Indian conditions. David Werner's *Where There Is No Doctor*. Nirmala Sundharam and Nalini Bhanot are social scientists connected with VHA and have involved themselves in issues like minimum wages, land alienation and medical technology.

Taking Sides is a vital publication that clarifies health concepts in the light of India's rural experience. Tiruvheezhimizhalai is brought to us in a realistic, insinuating and imaginative manner as the experiences of the voluntary health worker, Radha. What irritates Radha is that the villagers accept the indifference and callousness of the doctors of PHCs with equanimity. However, soon she realises that the western modes of health care will not be quite suitable for Indian villages. The failure of the PHC visited by our MP was because of wrong planning at the governmental level:

"... our planners were greatly influenced by western models of health care. These models relied heavily on high cost, hospital based, curative services provided by doctors using elaborate diagnostic aids and equipment. Since it was believed that only doctors were capable of diagnosing and treating diseases, training of this category of health workers became one of the first priorities. Nurses and paramedical workers were considered less important. Therefore less attention was given to the training of these workers."

More and more doctors were produced, specialists sprouted all over, and the drug and equipment industries with the help of doctors got the government to spend heavily in urban areas for setting up sophisticated hospitals: "This is not hard to understand as the top administrators and planners themselves came from the richer sections of the urban population and it was in their interest also that hospital facilities should be provided in urban areas first."

There is then the vast divide between what is taught in the medical colleges in

terms of the western experience and the hard, rural reality. Our young doctors "know very little about the most prevalent diseases in the country."

How poor are the villagers? The authors present plentiful data. I add a bit from a village in Tamil Nadu. A poor farmer spoke to me of his cousin's experience. The cousin has two girls and a boy. The girls were given only limited quantities of *kezhvaragu* (ragi) gruel and received no schooling. They were put to work as sheep grazers. The boy received buttermilk, rice and vegetables. The elder girl attained puberty when hardly twelve years old. Due to undernourishment and wandering in the hard grazing areas, she was very short. When the cousin looked for boys, there was a demand for heavy dowry: "The girl is no better than a dwarf and you must make it up somehow!"

In its cyclopaedic range, *Taking Sides* is highly educative. We get a capsule history of western medicine and the history of Indian medical systems. When the book enters the health status of women, we notice a tragedy too deep for tears. Whereas under normal circumstances the sex-ratio favours women, in India there are but 933 women for every 1000 men, according to the 1981 census. Why so? But then, what else can we expect when the female child gets lesser nutrition, women get lesser medical attention than even animals in some areas (you lose money when a cow dies; you are paid to marry another girl), ladies are invariably the victims in revenge acts and female infanticide is openly practised. Of course, amniocentesis tests see to it that the female child has no chance to see the light of day.

As the authors pile Pelion upon Ossa, we stand overwhelmed. So even our so-called developmental plans take away the little nutrition hitherto available to the villagers! For instance, the much-paraded 'Operation Flood' meant to help the villagers sell their milk to urban consumers by providing milk storage and processing facilities:

"Formerly, fresh milk was not a direct cash commodity in the rural areas. Being unstable, and subject to spoilage on storage, milk was either used fresh or soon processed for production of ghee. The ghee was essentially the cash commodity from milk and was usually sold. The buttermilk produced during the ghee-making process

was abundantly available and was consumed by the family members in the rural areas. (Buttermilk is a nutritious food consisting of protein and minerals). But with the setting up of cooperatives with efficient milk collection and modern storage facilities, fresh milk itself has become a cash commodity and is drained away from the rural people."

While the surplus milk goes to the urban consumer as cheese, ghee, milk powder, butter, icecream and chocolate, the villager is denied the plentiful buttermilk he had previously. Of course, he can watch well-fed actors consuming protein-rich food for chocolate advertisements in the community TV of the Panchayat!

There are also the horrors of medicine prescription which are playing havoc in the countryside. But the authors are not interested in mere criticism. *Taking Sides* is an excellent handbook for the rural health worker. Once the worker is able to get tuned to the wavelength of the villagers, she can work wonders. Poverty and disease can be humbled with sincerity and dogged perseverance.

In fact, drugs themselves are never a solution for the rural population. The rural population would do well to adhere to the relevant practices handed down by tradition along with the needed help from modern medicine. There has to be a collective struggle in changing what is rotten in the present socio-economic condition. Mani Shanker Aiyar's simplistic solution of empowering the Panchayat will not usher in the golden age for the rural population.

A careful reading of *Taking Sides* will definitely help the common man in joining the collective struggle. Each one of its carefully drafted sections is aimed at breaking the national somnolence regarding healthcare. The unsparing exposure of drug-peddling by doctors and industrialists tells us why our curative services are so badly off. Mani Shanker Aiyar does not realise that perhaps the absence of medicine at the Tiruveezhimizhalai PHC was a blessing for the villagers! For, given a chance, doctors prescribe large amounts of antibiotics and sulpha drugs which is quite irrational. Such over-prescription is due to wrong diagnosis (when a doctor often sees upto 100 patients in a few hours), lack of proper knowledge about

drugs, aggressive salesmanship by drug companies, non-availability of the cheaper drug (an artificial scarcity resorted to by the drug industry now and then), prescription of free medicine from non-English speaking countries (as our doctors cannot read the accompanying literature), the doctor-chemist axis, the psychology of the patient (that tonics are necessary), and wrong intake of drugs. *Taking Sides* gives hints upon choosing a first line drug, a simple ingredient drug which is effective, easy to take and cheap.

After consuming the statistics and first-hand data in *Taking Sides*, we know that our nurses, paramedics and other rural health workers are facing a very difficult job. But success in the task is not impossible, going by our experience in limited fields of action, say the authors. They are right. A land which worships the Divine as Dhanvantari carrying a pot of nectar and a leech has always known that good health and effective cure are always possible if there is sincerity, faith, perseverance and compassion. The book teaches these four qualities to the rural health worker. We shall overcome.

DR. PREMA NANDAKUMAR is an author and journalist

PALKHI. A PILGRIMAGE TO PANDHARPUR by D.B. Mokashi, translated from the Marathi by Philip C. Engblom; Disha Books (Orient Longman); 1990; pp. 291; Rs. 80



Reviewed by
R. Srinivasan

Religious pilgrimage is important in the life of not only the Hindu, but the Christian, the Jain and partly the Muslim too. In the olden days every Hindu had a cognitive map of India, made up of nodal points of pilgrimage — Gaya, Benaras, Badrinath, Kedarnath, Pandarpur, Dwarka, Rameswaram. Many had hopes of visiting as many of these as were possible; a few succeeded. At the local level the pilgrimages have been popular and there have been groups moving exclusively within the region. Some of these have developed into pan-Indians wanderings. The Ayyappa pilgrimage is one such. But the pilgrimage of groups starting from different parts of Maharashtra and congregating in Pandarpur is peculiar to Maharashtra. While these groups of pilgrims wending their way from different parts of the state to Pandarpur are well-known to Maharashtra, outsiders are not familiar with this at all. The book is valuable for exposing us to a religious and social experience so central to Maharashtra. Non-Maharashtrians do not participate in these group pilgrimages; though Karnataka has a large numbers of Vithoba devotees they come individually but not with these groups.

Palkhi is the account of regional pilgrimage recounted by a famous novelist, D.B. Mokashi. Originally written in Marathi it has been admirably translated by Philip Engblom and well produced. Since the cult of Vithoba is central to Maharashtra's culture, reading this is one of the easier ways of entering into the life of the average Maharashtrian. Mokashi was no worshipper but joined the group out of curiosity intending to study the entire experience with some detachment. He has vividly described life in the continuous move that it involved; the elaborate arrangements so casually arranged and the variety of men and women whom he met. It is interesting to meet through these pages the entire kaleidoscope of Maratha humanity — men, women, young and old and many belonging to the upper and lower strata of society. They bring along with them their individual woes and problems but try to overcome

these by immersing themselves in repeating the name of Vithoba and merging in to a larger and all enveloping reality which absorbs all these nagging trivialities and offers the sustaining *shanti* so necessary to humans if they are to be in this world. There are regulars who have gone grey in their pilgrimages, year in year out — this is the only experience that has meaning for them.

Each group is organised around a palanquin, a *palkhi* carrying the symbolic representation of one of the revered saints of Pandharpur, — Jnaneswar and Tukaram being the most prominent among them. The regular pilgrims organise themselves around them and elaborate arrangements are made for the comfort of the pilgrims on their long religious march. The fellow feeling, the sense of belonging, the final feeling of accomplishment do elevate; however, the cares and troubles of the mundane world tend to penetrate and disturb the pilgrims and these are personified in the external grouseurs and nit-pickers.

This is the recollection of a son of the soil to an intense religious-social experience spread over a few weeks shared by a large number in the state. No one interested in modern and traditional Maharashtra can afford to miss this book. An absorbing account and one hopes that there will be similar accounts of the Ayyappa phenomenon as well.

Dr. R. SRINIVASAN is a retired Professor of Politics University of Bombay.

The spectacle of what is called religion; or at any rate organized religion, in India and elsewhere, has filled us with horror, and I have frequently condemned it and wished to make a clean sweep of it.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

It is conceivable that religion may be morally useful without being intellectually sustainable.

JOHN STUART MILL

If tolerance of diversity involves an admitted element or risk to national unity, intolerance involves a certainty that unity will be destroyed.

ALAN BARTH

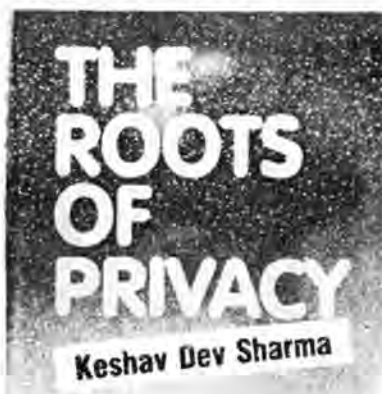


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THE ROOTS OF PRIVACY, UNDERSTANDING PRIVATE AND PUBLIC BEHAVIOUR by Keshav Dev Sharma; Popular Prakashan, Bombay; 1991; pp. 320; Rs. 300



Understanding Private and Public Behavior

**Reviewed by
Harshida Pandit**

The author claims to have discovered the process of privatization which according to him is the "transformation of social relations on the pattern of the household which provides the key to understanding the cultural variations in nations and practices concerning privacy. Privatization explains intimacy in public places; corruption in public transactions; the strength and weakness of marriages; the breakdown of the family in certain societies; the private use of public space; feeling comfortable or otherwise in crowded settings; loneliness etc." While deliberating on these aspects of human behaviour the author tries to explain the relationship of an individual with his/her society, household vs the outside world and discusses in detail, the different dimensions of private and public behaviour.

In doing so he takes help from various sociological theorists from Marx and Engels to Max Weber, Robert Paine and Peter L. Berger. He quotes them extensively agreeing with some and criticising others with some vehemence.

Reading through the chapter "Private and Public" in the context of modern sociological theory one feels uneasy with the analysis offered and the author's thought-process. What is the use of quoting others when you do not

have an original explanation of your own to offer.

The chapters entitled "Theoretical Aids to Understanding Private and Public Behaviour" and "Private and Public in the Cross-Cultural Context" do offer some penetrative interpretations which are helpful. Of course we are all painfully aware of the gaps in human knowledge and the fact that there are plenty of grey areas. It is in this context the author's efforts to establish a link between privatization and socialisation are to be commended. His analysis and interpretation of Indian society would be found acceptable by most thinking readers. It is good to be self-critical and looking inward. But such an approach may not be quite right when evaluating an alien culture. Measuring American societal norms and culture through Indian yardsticks is doing injustice to the American society.

Indian society is changing dynamically at all levels, and at a pace unprecedented in a thousand years. Basic values and institutions have been metamorphosed. Sociologists have yet to grasp these in their fullness and the author's accusations about the enormous lacunae in the empirical studies of these is unfortunately true. Those

who take on boldly to analyse these suffer from ideological blindness.

Even after wading through the 300 pages of this volume it is not certain that the reader will get a clear idea of private and public. Indians generally are not familiar with the concept of privacy. They will be more confused after reading the book. Nobody is likely to agree with the author's remark that "Gandhi indeed was in league with the British in their conspiracy to push low technology in India to ruin its once vibrant economy. It is now a historical fact, although not commonly known, that Gandhi indeed was a British agent, transplanted from South Africa into India by the British, first of all, to prolong the British rule in India beyond what was possible without any loss of British life in India, and secondly, to destroy the other faction of the freedom movement run by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal, who wanted to throw the British out physically in the fashion of the American revolution." These words, to say the least, about the Father of the Nation are very uncharitable. Does the author have any proof?

Dr. Harshida Pandit is a social activist. She was Head of the Dept. of Psychology, SNDT University, Bombay.

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SMALLER.
IT ONLY SEEMS
THAT WAY.

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BODINAYAKANNUR	KUNDARA	TIRUNELVELI
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COIMBATORE	METTUPALAYAM	TUTICORIN
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What Readers Say about Freedom First

I have been a subscriber in the past to *OPINION/Kaiser-e-Hind* and *Freedom First*. All these have been solely devoted to the cause of human regeneration. This is well-recorded in your "OUR MISSION".

I have now stepped into my 83rd year and do not do much reading; instead, I indulge myself in self-examination and find considerable satisfaction: nirvan. To pass on your message to the next generation, I have made my grand-daughter Rashmi Bal a Life Subscriber of *Freedom First*. I however find that the new generation is interested more in Star TV, throughout the day:night and consequently immune to any self-thinking.

To ensure that OUR MISSION reaches the grass roots, the Gandhian way, you may bring out editions in Marathi and other regional languages as well — perhaps half the present size, to economise. One sheet in all these editions should also be tri-lingual viz. English/Hindi and the regional language concerned

Brigadier N.V. Bal (Retd.), Pune

All the articles in this issue (January-March '93) were thought provoking and very timely brought out. I wonder as to how many readers would take the message seriously. To those "Indian Englishmen", it is only a recreation and relaxation to read it and then forget about it. Those who are really concerned, the message does not reach them as they do not know English language. I feel you are only throwing pearls to the pigs.

I send herewith Rs. 30/- towards annual subscription.

Lt. Col. J.M. Jadeja (Retd.), Baroda

I have just received a copy of '*Freedom First*' Jan-Mar '93 issue, and have found it interesting. I am mailing separately to the publishers my letter subscribing to the Quarterly. The copy sent to me must have been complimentary.

The contents of *Freedom First* Jan-March '93 issue have not only brought out so well many attributable facts contributing to what happened, but matters just not at all known to most of us, encouraging I hope, interesting comments in your next Quarterly.

Brigadier R. Lokaranjan (Retd.), Hyderabad