

MORARJI DESAI TALKS TO FREEDOM FIRST

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH SUMANT BANKESHWAR

THE Janata Party led by Shri Chandrashekar created a unique record by losing deposits in almost all the constituencies in which it contested in the recently held mini-general elections. The present Janata party is a combination of the old PSP rump and the old Congress (O) rump, consisting of only leaders without any followers or mass base or cadre. It is not even a cohesive party. Its recent quest for unity of the opposition parties was therefore quite understandable. It wanted to ride on the back of the Lok Dal and the BJP, and claim a share in the seats to be contested. Neither BJP nor BLD found any use for the Janata party.

The entire Janata Party is passing through an agonising reappraisal of its future, after its miserable performance in the recently held mini-general elections. Its top leaders have started even doubting its very existence. They are now thinking of joining the Congress (I) or the BJP or the BLD. But, the ever-optimistic Shri Morarji Desai still hopes and thinks that the Janata Party is the only National Alternative to the Congress (I), because it stands for Gandhian principles! "The Janata Party is the re-incarnation of the good old Congress led by Mahatma Gandhi. The Congress (I) is not the original Congress at all. Sooner or later, both the Congress (I) and the BLD are bound to disintegrate, especially after the departure of Indiraji and Charan Singh from our political scene. All the traditional Congressmen, now in different parties, believing in the Congress culture, will ultimately join the Janata Party. The present Janata Party is the real Congress party, as conceived by Mahatma Gandhi," said Shri Morarji Desai.

I interviewed Shri Morarji Desai on Sunday, 20th June at 10.30 a.m. at his residence. I was warned by

some journalist friends of mine that I should be prepared for his counter-questions. The interview was, however, quite friendly! Fortunately, he did not ask me any counter-questions (for a change?). I was told that to interview an arrogant and self-righteous Morarjibhai would be a harrowing experience. These journalist friends were proved wrong!

When I told them, after the interview, that my interview with Morarjibhai was quite friendly, they said, "Maybe now, since he has lost his power and become mellowed."

Morarjibhai had no objection to my interview with him being taperecorded, because he always speaks the truth, and unlike other politicians, he never eats his words or contradicts his statements. Morarjibhai, however, requested me to send him my draft interview for his approval before sending it to the press, and I agreed.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Bankeshwar: Is not the search for a National Alternative by the leaders of the non-communist parties, who destroyed the Janata Party, like a search for a non-existent black cat in a dark room?

Morarjibhai: What is the meaning of that? Do you think that India will be leaderless after the departure of Indiraji? The National Alternative will emerge when there is a vacuum at the top. What after Nehru, what after Indiraji ... are all questions arising out of lack of self-confidence in oneself or in our country. Are such questions asked in the U.K. or in the U.S.A.? The future of no country depends upon a single individual.

B: The Congress (I) is held together by just one individual — Smt. Indira Gandhi. The BLD without

Shri Charan Singh will cease to exist and the Janata party has neither cadre nor mass base in any state of our country. After the departure of both Indiraji and Shri Charan Singh from our political scene, our political field will be left free for the cadre-based parties like the BJP and the communist parties. Your comments, please.

M: You are a victim of press propaganda. The so-called cadre is a misnomer. Where was the cadre when the Janata Party won the elections in 1977? The people liked the Janata Party and voted it to power. It is better to have volunteers rather than a paid cadre. What is required is dedication. The paid cadre is not that useful in this respect. Does dedication come from a paid cadre?

B: What is the reason for the Janata Party's debacle in the recently held mini-general elections?

M: The reason is quarrels which led to the split in the Janata Party. The voters have now become very politically conscious.

B: Do you think that there is any possibility of a National Alternative emerging in our country for a long time to come?

M: Yes. The Congress (I) just cannot last long. When there is a vacuum at the top, a National Alternative is bound to emerge to fill it.

B: Is it not ridiculous that the same old party wreckers, party splitters and the demolition squads of all parties should now think of re-uniting to create a National Alternative?

M: Yes, it seems ridiculous. The leaders who split the Janata Party will not change. They have not learnt any lessons from their past experience nor are they going to learn any lessons. They have lost their credibility. I do not think they will ever change in the light of their experience.

B: In your autobiography you have said that you have not taken any decision in your life under pressure, and yet you now say that you took Mr. Charan Singh back into your cabinet under pressure. Your comments, please.

M: What I have said in my autobiography is that I shall not deviate from the path of truth under pressure. Taking Mr. Charan Singh back into my Cabinet was a political decision, which has nothing to do with the truth. I was completely opposed to taking him back into my cabinet, but when all my cabinet colleagues were in favour of taking him back into the cabinet, how could I have opposed it? I would have been called undemocratic if I had not bowed to their unanimous verdict.

B: The whole concept of "consensus" is just nonsense.

Election of a leader by secret ballot is democracy and selection of a leader by consensus — to avoid the election — is the very negation of democracy. Had you been elected as the leader of the Janata Parliamentary Party — I have no doubt that you would have been elected if there was an election — Shri Charan Singh and Shri Jagjivan Ram would not have felt that they were robbed of their prime ministership. Although Shri Jagjivan Ram and Shri Charan Singh did make a contribution to the Janata victory in 1977. Mr. Jagjivan Ram, who moved the Emergency Revolution in our Parliament, and Mr. Charan Singh, who is very well known as the Prince of Defectors, who could defect to any camp at any time to achieve his life's ambition to become the Prime Minister, would have been routed by you, if there had been an election for the post of the leader of the Janata Parliamentary Party. Why did you not insist on election and why did you opt for a consensus candidate?

M: Who said that I opted for a consensus candidate in 1977? As a person believing in democracy, I wanted the leader of the Janata Party to be elected by secret ballot. When all senior leaders of the Janata Parliamentary Party opted for consensus and not for election, I had to bow to the majority opinion, or else I would have been dubbed as undemocratic and a dictator.

B: Almost all the Janata leaders, including those who have left the Janata Party, now say that your greatest blunder was in taking Charan Singh back into your cabinet. When you sacked him, and rightly so, they say that not even 30 M.P.s were behind him. You may call this as "becoming wiser after the event". But, a senior Janata M.P., Mr. H. V. Kamath, who was staying with me at my residence for a night a couple of days after you had sacked Mr. Charan Singh, had confidently told me that not more than 30 M.P.s would back Mr. Charan Singh if he were to defect from the Janata Party.

M: Yes, what Mr. Kamath said was true at that time. But when all my cabinet colleagues forced me to take him back into my cabinet, I would have been called very rigid, undemocratic and dictatorial, if I had not accepted their advice. The majority of the Janata M.P.s were, however, opposed to my taking Mr. Charan Singh back into my cabinet.

B: What will be the political scenario after the departure of Indiraji and Charan Singh?

M: A much better future, because all the traditional Congressmen now in different parties believing in the Congress culture will join the Janata Party which stands for the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi.

B: Why was the Janata Party thrown out of power by our people in the last general elections?

M: I am not sorry for that at all. The voters punished us because of internal quarrels in the Janata Party. The Janata Government did not let them down at all, but the Janata Party did.

B: Do you think that the re-alignment of political forces is possible only after the departure of Indiraji and Mr. Charan Singh from our political scene?

M: After Mr. Charan Singh, the BLD will cease to exist. There is no doubt that the Congress (I) will just disintegrate after Indiraji's departure. As I said earlier, all the traditional Congressmen in the BLD, the Congress (I) and other parties believing in the Congress culture and Mahatma Gandhi's ideals will join the Janata Party which is now the party trying to work on the lines of Gandhiji's ideals.

B: Why has Haryana become a land of Ayarams and Gayarams?

M: Because it is also the home of Kurukshetra where brothers fought brothers. You should not forget that.

B: So far as Haryana is concerned, there was nothing to choose between Bhajanlal and Devilal. Devilal had kept all his followers in his farm for his security under lock and key, guarded by armed Nihangs, and Bhajanlal had bought all the independents and some M.L.A.s belonging to the BLD and the Congress (J). These elected M.L.A.s of Haryana are no better than the cows that are for sale in any Mandi. The poor cows

have no choice and they are not offering themselves for sale, whereas these elected M.L.A.s are offering themselves for sale. In fact, to compare them with cows is an insult to the cows.

M: Quite true. Even those who were expelled from the Congress (I) were rewarded with ministerships.

B: What is your comment on Governor Tapase's invitation to Bhajanlal to form the government?

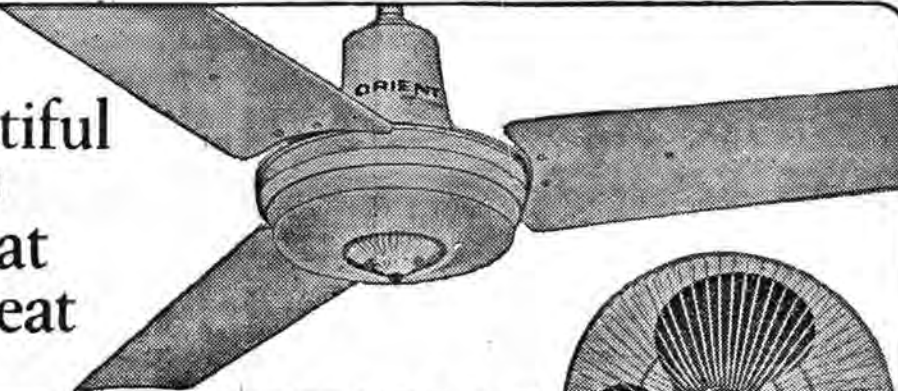
M: Shri Tapase was constitutionally right. Bhajanlal was the leader of the largest single party in Haryana and he was rightly called to form the government. In Haryana, there was no united front of the BLD and the BJP as in Kerala, where there were two separate United Fronts which fought against each other, and the leader of the Front which won the majority of the seats was called to form the government.

B: Why did the Janata Party fail miserably in West Bengal?

M: The Janata Party made a mistake in supporting the Congress.

B: With all our faults, democracy has survived in India. Why?

M: What does this show? Democracy is in our blood as it is the basis of our ancient culture. It is this country which gave democracy to the world, not Britain or America. Communists can never come to power



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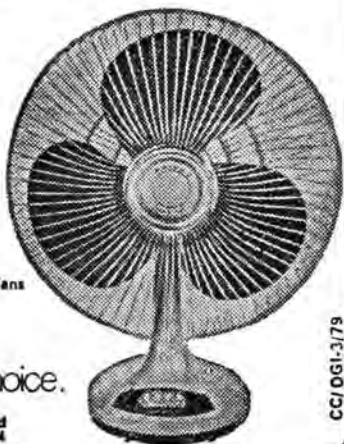
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in India. We have learnt our history from the British and the history we have learnt is all wrong.

B: You said that democracy has survived in India because democracy is in our blood. Till recently Pakistan was a part and parcel of India and has inherited our culture. Then why has democracy failed in Pakistan?

M: Because Pakistan is made an Islamic country. Islam has worked as a dictatorial religion. Islam and Democracy can hardly go together.

B: Is Christianity also dictatorial?

M: No. That is why democracy has survived in West European countries and America.

B: Is Judaism dictatorial?

M: Not dictatorial, but not fully democratic either.

B: Then how is it that democracy has survived in Israel? In Israel, there is parliamentary democracy, a free press, independent judiciary, and every citizen there, irrespective of religion, has got voting right. What else is required to prove its credentials as a democratic country?

M: There is democracy in Israel, but it acts in a dictatorial manner on some occasions, especially in its disputes with neighbouring Arab countries.

B: May I have your comments on the "No-War Pact" offered by Pakistan? Between two friendly countries, there is no need for such a pact, and between two hostile countries, it is just meaningless, as each can violate the pact with impunity. Aggression is not yet defined by the United Nations!

M: India and Pakistan are neither friendly nor hostile, but suspicious of each other. "No War Pact" is necessary to forge friendly relationship between India and Pakistan. Indiraji is not interested in it as she is influenced by the U.S.S.R.

B: Don't you think that the acquisition of F-16 and Pakistan going nuclear a threat to India's security?

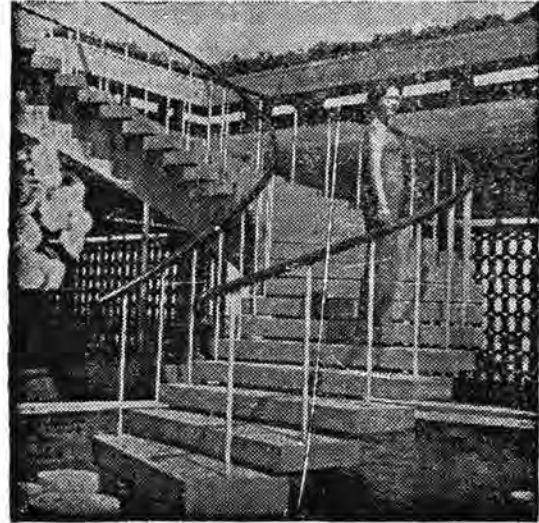
M: F-16 does not frighten me at all. We have got equally good weapons. If Pakistan goes nuclear, we can destroy its nuclear base in half an hour, just as Israel did in the case of Iraq.

B: Why has democracy failed in Bangladesh?

M: Again, because it is an Islamic country, and Islam, as I said earlier, tends to be dictatorial. Do you think that Mujib was democratic or secular? He was a fanatic, and leopards do not change their spots. You should not forget his role in the horrendous communal riots in Calcutta before our partition.

(Contd. on p. 15)

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A VARIETY OF COMMENT

K. S. VENKATESWARAN

1. LORD DENNING

IT is one of the saddest ironies of our time that Lord Denning, perhaps the greatest judge since Lord Mansfield and arguably the most celebrated jurist of this century, should have to step down from the Bench under circumstances that are not exactly cheering.

Although we have been assured that the unsavoury controversy which surrounded the publication of his latest book, *What Next in the Law?*, had only hastened, and not prompted, the announcement of Lord Denning's retirement, it is painful to reflect that in the England of today the bias and bigotry of a section of public opinion should so easily succeed in annihilating that most prized of British possessions, viz. freedom of expression.

Be that as it may, there can be no gainsaying that with the exit of Lord Denning from the legal scene, the curtain would finally have rung down on a glorious era. There will doubtless be tributes galore to the learned judge for his outstanding qualities of head and heart, but today, more than ever before, the question uppermost in the minds of his numerous admirers is whether the torch that he almost singlehandedly held alight in the face of severe odds, will be passed on, to liberate "future generations from captivity that may be more irksome than our own." The portents, alas, hold out little room for hope.

2. SPURIOUS DRUGS

EVEN if Sir William Osler, the distinguished Canadian physician, was being cynical when he observed many years ago that "the desire to take medicine is perhaps the greatest feature which distinguishes man from animals," few will deny that his jibe has almost become a truism in our age. Given this unpleasant reality, it is impossible not to be perturbed by recent accounts of the increasing proliferation of spurious and sub-standard drugs in India.

The seriousness of the situation is compounded in no mean measure by a near-total reluctance on the part of government to identify the real causes of the problem and to initiate speedy remedial action based on considerations of efficacy alone.

Instead of, for instance, tightening the enforcement procedures of the FDA (which is charged with the

responsibility of checking the spread of substandard drugs), the government, spurred by purblind ideology, has embarked on a disastrous plan of abolishing the brand names of pharmaceutical preparations, albeit in stages.

The move, which has temporarily been thwarted by a Court order, is as meaningless as it is counter-productive, particularly in the Indian context. For one thing, innovation in the drug industry is bound to suffer drastically due to the lack of incentive that generic substitution will bring about. For another, the abolition of brand names will, as likely as not, catalyse the flooding of the domestic market with spurious drugs manufactured by countless tiny units with little concern for quality control requirements. More significantly, the change to generic prescribing is hardly likely to bring down drug prices as these prices are already under a strict regimen of multi-tier control — a fact often glossed over by the apologists of the governmental move.

'HUGE' SOVIET PETROL THEFTS

A Soviet official has been quoted as saying that the nation suffers "huge losses" of petrol every year because of carelessness and theft. An article published in the newspaper, *Socialist Industry*, quoted the official as saying that the losses stem from "the irresponsibility of administrative heads, the absence of appropriate controls, poor organisation of labour, and mass forgeries." — AP.

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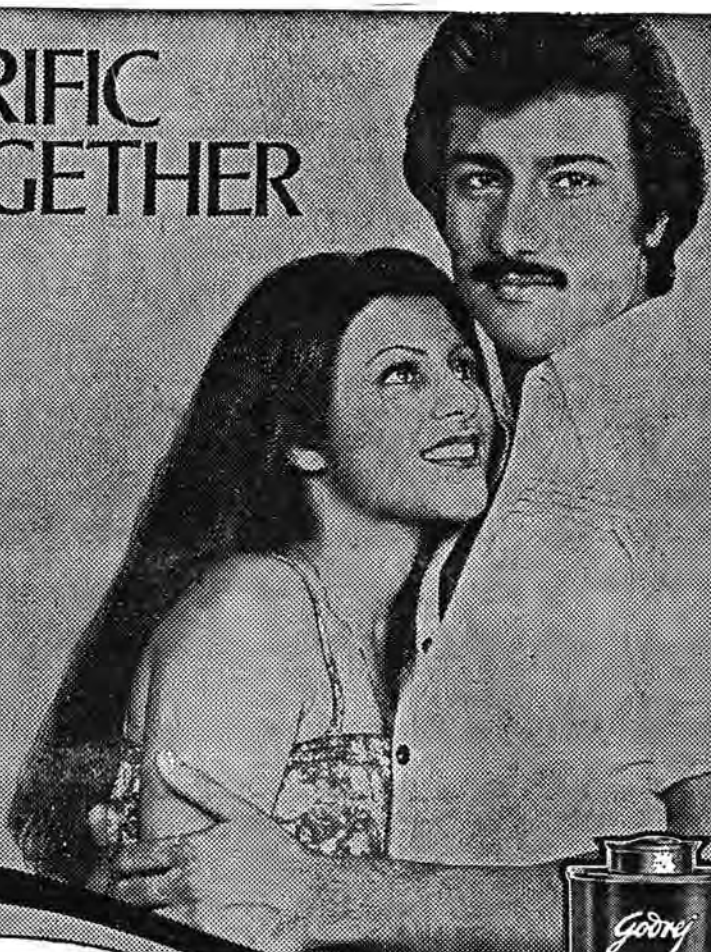
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NIRMALA JOSHI

THE discussions and developments on Pakistan's offer of a No-War Pact to India and India's counter-proposal of a Treaty of Friendship and Peace is being watched with anxiety and reservation by the Soviet Union. The road leading to the final accord and complete normalization of Indo-Pak relations is no doubt strewn with formidable obstacles.

Whether these difficulties will be overcome by the two countries and they ultimately succeed in agreeing on either a No-War Pact or a Treaty of Friendship and Peace is difficult to say. But what is most surprising is the Soviet anxiety and reservations to these preliminary moves for normalization of relations between India and Pakistan.

The Soviet anxiety about the No-War Pact became abundantly clear at the time of my discussions with a group of important Soviet Indologists during my recent visit to Moscow. The Soviet experts on India vigorously argued against a No-War Pact and, more interestingly, against a Treaty of Friendship and Peace between India and Pakistan. They contended that such a Pact or Treaty would not be in the interest of India for the following reasons:

First, Pakistan, since the days of its establishment has never been friendly with India. It has attacked India militarily four times so far. Therefore, the present offer of a No-War Pact by Pakistan is not sincere, and it is only to convince the U.S. Congress that Pakistan is peace-loving and deserving of military assistance, particularly the F-16s. Second and more importantly, the Soviet Indologists argued that conclusion of a No-War Pact by India with Pakistan, a country that is a part of a developing U.S. and China Axis, and an integral part of the U.S.-designed "Strategic Consensus" directed against the Soviet Union, would almost certainly impart a set-back to Indo-Soviet relations.

A Treaty of Friendship and Peace is unacceptable to the Soviets, because it would automatically downgrade the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation signed in 1971. The Soviets believe that a treaty of friendship of the Indo-Soviet type is a reflection of long years of friendship and co-operation between two nations. It enshrines their positive attitudes and policies to promote peace. Therefore, there cannot be such a treaty between India and Pakistan, which have been in conflict.

India's offer of a Treaty of Friendship to Pakistan is viewed with annoyance by the Soviets and is considered to be a clever and deliberate attempt to

downgrade the existing treaty between India and the Soviet Union. In short, the Soviets are unhappy about the nature of the present dialogue between India and Pakistan.

What explains the Soviet attitude towards the No-War Pact? The Soviet anxiety and reservation on the proposed No-War Pact or Treaty of Friendship arise from the fact that the Soviet Union is more concerned with its own interests than with the interests of India. It looks at the developments in the Sub-continent through a Super-Power prism. Looked at in this way, while a No-War Pact when realized is in the best interests of India, it would not subserve Soviet interests. Probably it fears that Pakistan, once free from pressures on its Western borders, would not only be able to manage the Baluchis or the Pathans, but could cause difficulties for Afghanistan.

If the Soviets retaliate against Pakistan either under the pretext of hot pursuit or under any other pretext, it would certainly involve the United States, with all its dangerous consequences. Moreover, a Pakistan which is at peace with India and an integral part of the United States's strategic consensus may play a more effective role than it is otherwise possible to in the Middle East and the Gulf region. Besides, if India and Pakistan succeed in coming to an agreement on the No-War Pact (and also if India improves its relations with China), it would greatly reduce the importance of the Soviet Union for India. In the existing circumstances in the Middle East, the Persian Gulf and the India Ocean the Soviet need for India has greatly increased.

Finally, the Soviet might have been disappointed for yet another reason. They expected that sale of weapons to Pakistan would inevitably result in an arms race in the subcontinent. India, as in the past, would rely on the Soviet Union to meet the situation. This would enable the Soviets to deepen their involvement in India, which they want for a variety of reasons. A No-War Pact would deny to the Soviet Union an opportunity to increase its arms sales to India.

Whereas India believes that a No-War Pact or a Treaty of Friendship with Pakistan is to its advantage.

India no longer views the developments in the region through the Soviet prism. Soviet presence in Afghanistan vitiates a cardinal objective of Indian foreign policy, namely, keeping the area free from Super-Power rivalry. Super-Power confrontation so close to India's borders is bound to have disastrous

(Contd. on p. 15)

Sino-Tibetan Relations—A New Turn

BHUCHUNG K. TSERING

EVER since the Tibetan government in exile started its delegation diplomacy in 1979, every delegation that went to China and Tibet has been raising a hornet's nest, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse. The first delegation left for Tibet in a hush, and even the high-powered National Working Committee was informed only at the 11th hour. This sudden action of the government made the masses wonder as to what really was going on.

The second delegation had to cut short their trip when a massive crowd shouted anti-Chinese and pro-Dalai Lama slogans while the delegates were in Tibet. The Chinese obviously did not like this and hence the whacking. The third group was an "educational group" and did not evoke much reaction. The fourth would have left for Tibet a long time back but for a minor fact which displeased the Chinese, and hence the withdrawal of invitation to the fourth group. This fact was the rousing welcome given by the Tibetans in Delhi when Leonid Brezhnev visited it in 1980.

The Chinese are also believed to be displeased by the stones that were thrown at their embassy on the occasion of 10th March in 1980. But the external reason for the cancellation of the trip as given by the Chinese was that nothing much had happened in Tibet since the visit of the third delegation which warranted a fresh survey.

For a while after that, delegation diplomacy subsided quietly in the way it had begun. Then, on the night of April 23rd, this year, three very high ranking Tibetan Officials, two Kalons (ministers) P. T. Takla and Juchen Thupten Namgyal, and the Chairman of the Tibetan Peoples' Deputies (Tibetan Parliament) Gyari Lodoe Gylltsen, left for Beijing. On the eve of their visit a press note was issued giving the purpose of their visit. They were to "continue the contact with Beijing that has been established since 1979". (As far as we know, the only contact that has been established in 1979 was the sending of the delegations!).

Within a few days of their arrival in Beijing (29th April to be precise), the Chinese issued a 'press note saying that they will allow the Tibetans to open a "Bureau" at Beijing. This led to speculations in Tibetan circles about its veracity. Even earlier, when a Tibetan magazine reported that a Bureau would be opened soon in Beijing, the "Kashag" (Cabinet) denied the report, calling it "baseless". But the fact of the matter seems to be turning the other way.

The Tibetan side neither issued a rejoinder nor commented upon the Chinese press note. This intentional silence led to more opinions, and even **The Tibetan Review**, (an international magazine) noted for its factual reports, concluded editorially, "it is now fairly certain that the Tibetan government in exile wishes to open a bureau in Peking". The **Review** further commented that "if the office is of obvious benefit to the Tibetans, they would have surely trumpeted the details as loudly as possible instead of trying to play down any leakage or rumour", thus expressing a negative feeling on the happenings.

Till the time of writing, the "Kashag" has not issued any rejoinder to the above report which, incidentally, was entitled "The Case of the Confused Ministers", thus hinting that even the Ministers may not really know what they are doing. A call to the "Kashag" office, enquiring about the veracity of the "bureau" issue, received a reply from an official who said "he could not say anything on the matter".

To top all these ominous signs, the three-member "high ranking delegation" has since returned to Dharamsala, but they too have remained silent on the matter, thus making everyone feel that a "bureau" will really be opened in China.

With the Tibetan administration keeping its dealings with China under a blanket of secrecy, and not making available facts on which its policies are based (in this case the stand that it has taken in discussions with the Chinese), many interesting rumours occur. A Tibetan magazine, as far back as in September 1981, reported even the name of the person who would eventually hold the post of the head of the Bureau.

Be that as it may, the million-dollar question is: what will be the international status of this "Bureau"? Judging by the stand taken by the Chinese on the Tibetan issue, it is certain they will not accept it as the representative of a separate country; and then, if the last 23 years of our stay in exile, in an alien land, is to be justified, the Tibetan government should not accept, even at its worst, a status less than what India gives to our Bureau in Delhi (unofficial recognition, shall I say?).

With the Tibetan government dumb on the issue, we can only speculate. Digging out some facts of history might be of some help in our endeavour.

This "Bureau" is not the first Tibetan office in China. Even before, way back in the forties and fifties of this century, there were a few offices of that kind. In 1934, the then Koumintang government of China

opened an office known as "Office of the Commission for Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs". This office is even now functioning in Taiwan and looks after "Tibetan affairs" really well.

Then there was an office known as "Xixang Pentitui" (Office of Tibet) in China which existed before 1949. With the change of government in China and the arrival of the Communists, two more offices were opened in Peking in 1952. They were Talai Pentitui (Dalai Lama's Office) and Pening Pentitui (Penchen Lama's Office). It would really be interesting and helpful to know what kind of status these offices enjoyed and what sort of work they undertook.

This writer contacted a few sources in Dharamsala but they either did not know or would not tell. Did these offices enjoy the status of a foreign Mission? If not, how and due to what circumstances were they established? What were Russia's and British India's stand on these offices? The answer to all these questions might reveal some significant facts. But then silence again.

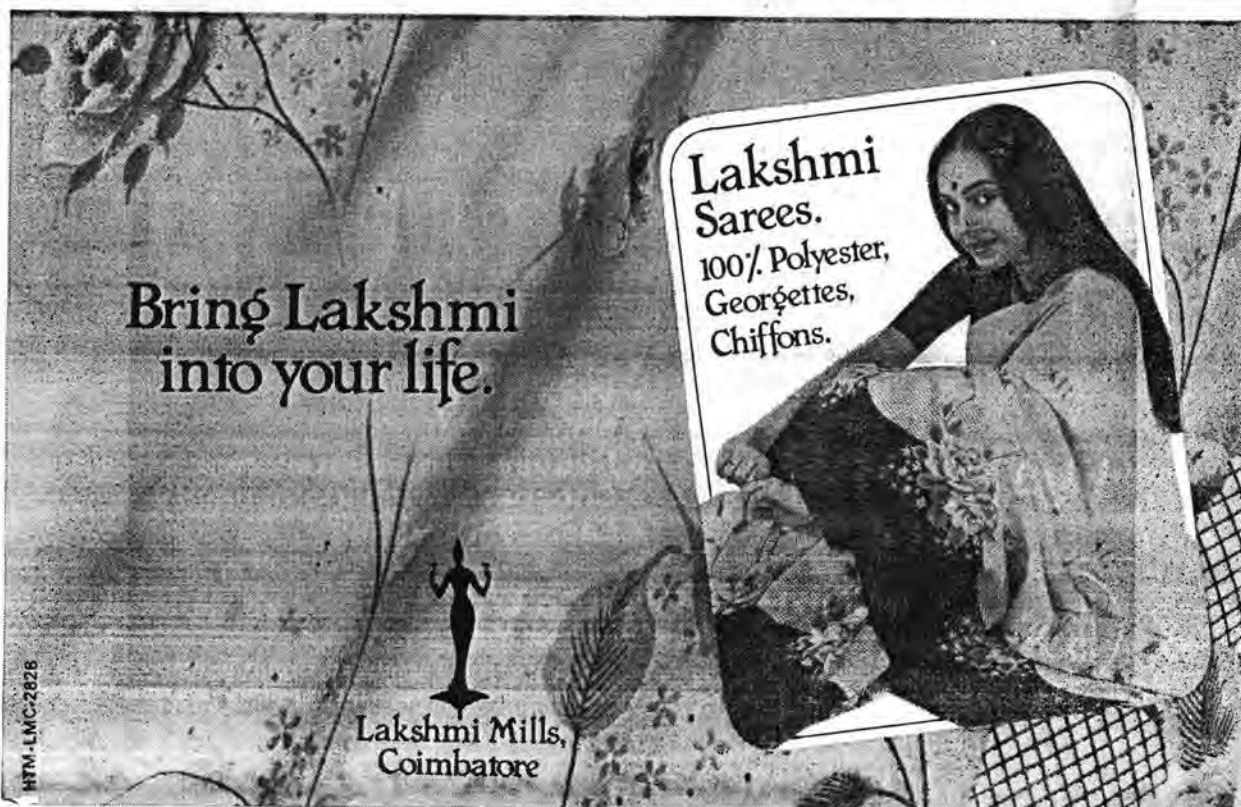
From the continued and uneasy silence maintained by the Tibetan side, one wonders whether the outcome of the present parley with China is to the disadvantage of the Tibetans, and whether the "Bureau" after all might not be somewhat like the Sikkim House or Arunachal Bhavan that we find in Delhi—representative of a province!

What will be the reality only time, or if sanity prevails, an announcement from the Tibetan side can tell. Whatever stand the Tibetan government is taking right now, it would be more fruitful if it is disclosed to the masses. This will lead to discussion and there are chances that a neglected point might be noticed.

One understands that in a government's working there are what is known as "state secrets", but then does this mean that the masses should be kept in the dark when their very fate is being decided? I do not think so. People need to be told the truth, whether it is bitter or sweet.

If autonomy is being contemplated, spell it out and see whether the masses accept it. Give out the details and the circumstances. The reality of the situation warrants that some compromises should be made but this should be a two-way traffic. It should not be that the Tibetan side does the compromising while the Chinese stick to their rigid stand.

China needs a tranquil solution to the problem as much as the Tibetans do. So announce to the people what the solution is. If the "Bureau" is to be opened, why not announce it to the world and even invite the diplomatic corps for the inauguration? It would not be a bad idea. That is, if the Bureau represents a separate nation.



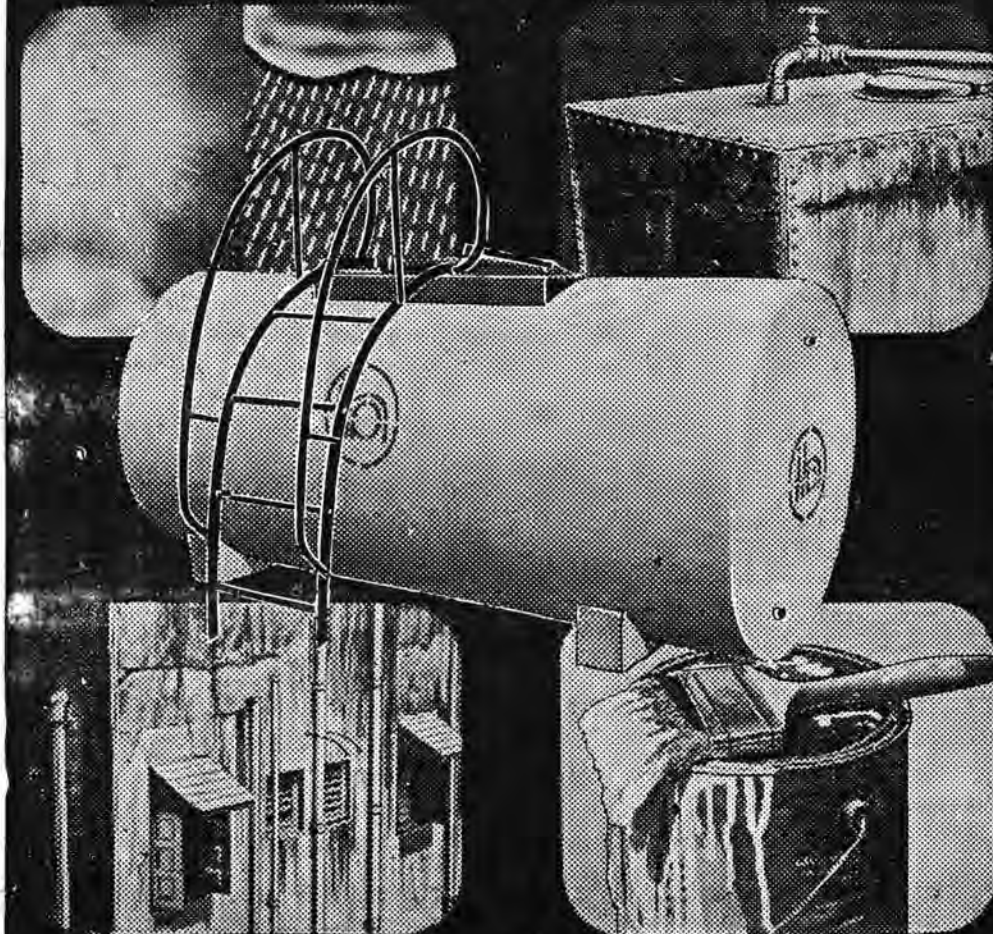
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THE WAR IN LEBANON

NISSIM EZEKIEL

IS there really nothing to be said in defence of Israeli action against the P.L.O.? Reading press comments in India and abroad one is sometimes inclined to think so. But the issue is obviously less simple than it is so often made out to be. If it is fully and objectively studied, the case for Israel's military invasion of Lebanon begins to emerge.

In the first place, it is not an invasion with the aim of conquest. The aim is the restoration of Lebanese independence. That accounts for the welcome which the Lebanese people in large numbers gave to the Israeli troops. They realised that they were being freed from the tyranny of the P.L.O. terrorists. Otherwise, it would be a fantasy of Israeli propaganda.

World media, despite its opposition to the Middle-East policy of the Israeli government, could not and did not conceal the fact that major sections of Lebanese opinion accepted and welcomed that policy. And they did it in spite of the material damage and the loss of lives.

To call Israeli policy genocide is of course nonsense. To equate Zionism with fascism is worse; its objective is to isolate the present Israeli government from the Israeli people and Jews all over the world.

Facing a few undeniable truths restores the perspective on Israel-Arab relations and the role of the P.L.O. Above all, Israel has the right to exist and to take all measures necessary for ensuring its existence. Unlike many other nations, it is not in a position geopolitically to grant all the time in the world to forces building up around it with the sole purpose of annihilating Israel. The P.L.O. has declared many times, quite openly, that it believes in war, in destroying Israel by war. Faruq Qadums, for example, Director of the P.L.O. Political Department, once said: "We shall never allow Israel to live in peace... We shall never recognise Israel..."

Do we Indians support that stance? Does the World support it? If we do, and if the world ignores Israel's appeals for security of borders and freedom from terrorist attacks within Israel, how do we expect the Israeli government and people to react?

Let me say at this point that Israeli public opinion is unquestionably divided on the wisdom of the June 6 invasion of Lebanon. Unlike the Arab states, with the exception of Egypt, Israel is an open society, and opposition is freely expressed. The Israeli press and radio-television reflects it, resisting any attempt to suppress dissent. Mass protest demonstrations are held, and counter-demonstrations too!

In contrast, P.L.O. Palestinian Arab terrorists murder P.L.O. Palestinian Arab moderates not only in the Middle East, in Arab territories, but in London, Paris and Brussels. The Syrian government kills its civilian opposition members in large numbers and this year, 1982, wiped out 25,000 Syrians in the Syrian town of Hama for not being subservient to the Syrian government's dictates. What the Syrian troops did in Lebanon, disguised as "peace-keeping" militia, was to undermine Lebanese sovereignty, in collaboration with the P.L.O. From 1975, Muslims and Christians have killed one another till the casualty figures exceed 100,000. Is it not clear that the political risk taken by the Israeli government, of embittering Arab opinion still further and of inviting world condemnation, may actually bring about an improvement in the condition of Lebanon? There was no way of doing it without destruction of property and loss of lives, but the P.L.O. and Syria have been taught a lesson which they had to learn, sooner or later. It is one of the revealing features of the Israeli initiative that no Arab nation is willing to provide refuge to the remnants of the defeated P.L.O. terrorists, not even Syria.

Military solutions must be followed by political solutions. The Middle-East problem can be solved only on the basic premise that Israel exists and its existence must be recognised by all the Arab states. A Palestinian state backed by the ideology of an Islamic *jihad* or holy war against Israel with the aim of its ultimate destruction cannot be accepted by Israel and the Jewish people. Any other kind of Palestinian state is not conceivable at present. So the only way out is Palestinian autonomy within the framework of international supervision. Even this is possible only if the ultimate goal is peace with Israel and not as it is now, the destruction of Israel.

Such an argument may seem a far cry from the usual one-sided denunciation of Israeli policy as expansionist, aggressive and racist.

What that denunciation means is that Arab attempts to destroy Israel are not aggressive whereas Israel's resistance and counter-attacks are.

It means that Islamic calls for a *jihad* are not racist whereas Israel's military answer to it is.

It means that the Palestinian Arabs, 500,000 of whom are living in Israel, may demand a state of their own as a first step towards the elimination of Israel from the Middle-East, most of its people killed and

(Contd. on p. 15)

BOOK REVIEW

OUR FOREIGN POLICY

REASONS OF STATE: *Political Developments and India's Foreign Policy under Indira Gandhi, 1966-1977*, by Dr. Shashi Tharoor; Vikas; 1982; Pp. 438.

IN a recent interview to a Bombay-based weekly, the Israeli Consul in India, Mr. Yosef Hasseen, made some tellingly valid points which were remarkable as much for their unanswerable logic as for the refreshing absence of diplomatic prevarication. The Indian politicians, he said, were simply afraid of the Arabs; that they were competing with Pakistan in denouncing Israel in order to impress the Arabs; that the Indian media, by and large, have supinely followed the official line in their attitude towards West Asia; that, despite India's demeaning subservience to the Arabs over the years, the former have consistently been unfair to India, and so on.

The denizens of South Block will doubtless decry these politically inconvenient remarks as being inspired by the omnipresent "foreign hand" (in this case Zionist) as will the motley crowd of pro-Soviet "experts" in academia; but it is difficult, nay impossible, for any objective observer of foreign affairs to deny the essential fairness of Mr. Hasseen's analysis. Indeed, considering the virulence with which our half-baked politicians have revelled in attacking Israel in and out of season, it is tempting to imagine that Mr. Hasseen was being more or less charitable in his assessment.

Abject

Evidently, West Asia is but one example of the utterly irrational and abject character of India's foreign policy. However, it is illustrative at once of several serious infirmities which, in the prevailing climate of growing cynicism, have received far less attention than they deserve, e.g., the reckless abandonment by our politicians of plain commonsense in favour of spurious ideologies, the sickening spinelessness of our senior policy-makers in the bureaucracy, the total impotence of public opinion on foreign policy issues, etc. Such duplicitous and self-defeating stances have led, inevitably, to what one perceptive writer called diplomatic perversions and a general loss of credibility.

Credibility, however, has hardly ever been the hallmark of India's foreign policy, as the author of the book under review so convincingly establishes. "Indian diplomacy," says Dr. Tharoor, "failed to meet regional as well as global challenges. It did not define for India a place in the international system that would fuse the

needs of security as well as national development. The conception of policy and its diplomatic articulation did not relate interests and goals to principles and behaviour, especially failing to subordinate rhetoric consistently to a pragmatic calculation of costs and gains."

Nor is it surprising. Indeed, it is only a natural consequence of the indefensible policy of rank **ad hocism** initiated by Nehru and scrupulously followed by successive governments, with little regard or concern either for vital national interests or for accepted principles of morality. The relentless pursuit of elusive ideological dogmas, the substitution of personal preferences and prejudices for national values, the deliberate suppression of growth in organisational structure, the total lack of perspective in evaluating and reacting to international events, all contributed to a directionless drift which only intensified with the passage of time.

Exclusion

Apart from an unquenchable thirst for personal popularity, the disgraceful conduct of foreign affairs by Nehru (and later by Mrs. Gandhi) — as reflected especially in their outrageously self-righteous pronouncements — sprang from what Leonard Beaton characterised as a feeling of "exclusion" from the

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central direction of world affairs. "A posture of moral superiority is available to those who find this a satisfying compensation for their lack of influence." The tragedy, however, is that, in the process, the country, far from growing in stature, has only been continuously losing its self-respect in the comity of nations.

One explanation of the deplorable lack of coherence and consistency in India's foreign policy is to be found, as Dr. Tharoor points out, in the contradictory and self-defeating ideological premises laid down by Nehru and blindly accepted by his successors to this day. Paul F. Power identified these premises as: anti-imperialism, liberal internationalism, neutralism, neo-Marxism, Gandhism and Hindu nationalism (the last of which being, of course, never officially endorsed). Even such an unsatisfactory set of principles, unrelated as they are to "any direct conception of the national interest", came to be applied with a selectivity that was calculated to dispel any illusions of pragmatism and balance.

Dr. Tharoor cites as examples of such a tendency the care with which Mrs. Gandhi refrained from applying anti-imperialism to the Soviets over Czechoslovakia, liberal internationalism to Black Africa or neutralism to the Arab-Israeli dispute. "The fact that sanctimoniousness was sporadic, however, does not transform it into pragmatism," he says, "Hypocrisy was still less pragmatic than silence." Few could seriously disagree with that assessment.

Antipathy

Demonstrably, the most unconscionable facet of India's foreign policy has been the pathological antipathy towards the West in general and the United States in particular, cultivated assiduously over the years. The disastrous implications of this antipathy on bilateral relations with the U.S., for instance, has been documented so well by now that it hardly needs elaboration. However, the ridiculous lengths to which it has been carried by successive governments has, besides wreaking havoc with India's relations *qua* disinterested third countries, also made us the laughing stock of the world.

Nehru's petulant characterisation of Thailand in 1957 as a "Coca-Cola economy" and his equally odious labelling of Japan as a "US lackey" are cases in point. They, however, pale into insignificance when compared to Mrs. Gandhi's almost paranoid obsession with "American imperialism", reflected as often as not in her intemperate outbursts on the alleged CIA presence

in India. A classic example of this obsession was provided in September 1975 when she told a Delhi audience, referring obliquely to the subversive proclivities of the CIA, that "we are surrounded by dangers... There are people in the world who are far more powerful than we are, who want to change the government of India (that) we want to build. This is the major danger."

According to Dr. Tharoor, "Mrs. Gandhi's attacks on the CIA represent an interesting manifestation of (two factors) — her insecurity and her identification of opposition, real or imagined, to her as a threat to the nation." That the latter tendency continues to govern Mrs. Gandhi's impulses to this day has been made amply clear by some of her most recent pronouncements.

Monopoly

In all fairness to Mrs. Gandhi, however, it may be pointed out that hostility to America has never been her monopoly. This was particularly evident during the Janata phase when, contrary to popular expectations, not only was little effort made to neutralise the effects of past recriminations *vis-a-vis* the U.S., but there were, to be sure, some strident voices even in government which expressed resentment over American initiatives in no uncertain terms.

Though not strictly part of his present work, Dr. Tharoor's assessment of the Janata's conduct of foreign policy is, by and large, fair. His indictment of the Desai Administration's signal failure to establish better *rapprochement* with the ASEAN countries, for instance, is as faultless as his favourable reference to the growth of a certain modicum of professionalism in policy-making under Vajpayee's stewardship. However, it remains to the eternal shame of the Janata that, despite the promising utterances of some of its more seasoned constituents, the government, "on its own and with the restraining influence of its opponents, did not venture very far from the parameters circumscribed by the Gandhi Administration." The story, alas, is as sad as it is sordid.

All said and done, Dr. Tharoor's study provides a keen insight into the highly unpredictable methods of foreign policy-making in India, just as it reveals a balanced approach that is refreshingly free of doctrinaire predilections. If only for that reason, the book is a welcome addition to the growing body of otherwise largely pedestrian literature on the subject.

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(Contd. from p. 4)

B: In our slavery, we had a galaxy of great, brilliant and patriotic leaders like Lokmanya Tilak, Shri Gokhale, Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel, Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, Lala Lajpat Rai, and revolutionaries like Veer Savarkar, Bhagat Singh, Udham Singh, Madanlal Dhingra, Chapekar brothers and so on, whereas in our freedom we have leaders like Bhajanlal, Bansilal, Devilal, Gundu Rao, Antulay, Ayarams and Gayarams... Is this also a global phenomenon?

M: Yes, it is a global phenomenon. If you have studied history, you will find this kind of phenomenon in almost all countries. In adversity, great leaders emerge, and in prosperity or complacency only Bhajanlals, Bansilals and Devilals will flourish.

B: What is your advice to our politicians?

M: When wealth and power are lost, nothing is lost. When health is lost, something is lost. But when character is lost, everything is lost. Our politicians should learn this simple philosophy in their life.

(Contd. from p. 7)

consequences for India. What is of vital importance is to reduce and ultimately eliminate Super-Power conflict, and not further aggravate it by endorsing views which have aggressive overtones.

Exacerbation of Super-Power Conflict and uneasy Indo-Pakistani relations would lead to an arms race of gigantic proportions. Such a costly arms race India can ill afford. It would upset India's development plans and set the economy backwards by a number of years.

Normalization of Indo-Pakistani relations would strengthen stability in the sub-continent. Pakistan could effectively deal with the challenges posed by the millions of Afghan refugees, and could contain the mounting domestic unrest.

In the absence of a better understanding between India and Pakistan, it could tempt the military rulers to launch a sneak attack on India just to divert the attention of its people from internal problems to an external threat.

(Contd. from p. 11)

the rest allowed to survive are second-class citizens, whereas Israel's denial of this outrageous demand is denial of "legitimate rights of Palestinians."

It means that the Soviet missiles in Syria have a right to be there, even if their only purpose is to destroy Israel, while Israeli attacks on them are proofs of military arrogance.

Think it over, my friends and fellow citizens.

AUGUST 1982

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I'm not a consensus politician or a pragmatic politician. I'm a conviction politician.

—Margaret Thatcher quoted in the *Sunday Times*, June 27.

We live in a wondrous time in which the strong is weak because of his moral scruples and the weak going strong because of his audacity.

—Bismarck quoted in the *National Review*, February 19.

The principle that "an Englishman's home is his castle" is so important that it over-rides the duty of the police to search for material evidence of crime.

—Ruling of High Court, reported in *The Times*, May 26.

I have spent half my life fighting to free this country and I thought we had done so. Now I am not so sure.

—Nkomo quoted in *The Guardian*, June 17.

Britain fought precisely because no one thought it could or would.

—Editorial in *The Herald Tribune*, June 16.

Objectivity depends on where you are standing at the time.

—Nicholas Timmins in *The Times*, June 5.

The Congress party is part of a monumental system of extortion in which permits and government jobs, from bus conductor up, carry a price vastly in excess of what the same permit and job cost to obtain a decade ago.

—*The Economist*, May 22.

Why is the West obsessed with Walesa? What does it matter if he uses a safety razor on his beard or eats mushrooms for dinner?

—Stanislaw Ciosek, Poland's Minister for Trade Union Affairs in the *Times*, June 7.

My three greatest loves . . . women, tennis and taking pictures.

—Jacques-Henri Lartigue, aged 87, in the *Times*, June 7.

It is so easy to give up smoking. I have given it up so many times.

—Mark Twain quoted in the *Indian Express*, June 9.