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REFORM IN SOUTH AFRICA

K. S. VENKATESWARAN

TO ATTEMPT discussing South African affairs in an objective, dispassionate manner is at best a risky enterprise in India. Mention Pretoria in even a faintly favourable light, and you find yourself in the midst of an avalanche of protests, the magnitude of which has to be seen to be believed.

But still, the effort is worth making. For right now, that controversial country—which the *Washington Post* once described as “the most vital and ambitious social laboratory in the world”—is on the threshold of sweeping reform, with far-reaching consequences for the entire sub-continent. Cynics have, of course, dismissed the proposed changes as yet another public relations gimmick by the racist regime, while the motley group of professional South Africa-baiters have mounted a fresh offensive aimed at thwarting the process of peaceful change.

Essentially, the reforms suggested aim at bringing about “an order which will ensure that political rights and socio-economic aspirations of all the peoples of South Africa are catered for on the basis of justice and equality.” Towards this end, the new Constitution proposes, for the first time in the history of the Republic, the inclusion of Coloureds and Indians in the

national political process by providing for the formation of three separate chambers of the central legislature, one each for the Whites, the Coloureds and the Indians. At the apex of this tricameral system would be a racially-mixed President’s Council which will have significant power and responsibility as the final arbiter in the event of any conflict among the chambers on matters of national importance. Each chamber, however, retains exclusive jurisdiction to decide on matters relating to its own community.

While these proposals are, in the South African context, truly revolutionary and therefore welcome as far as they go, not everyone agrees that they go far enough. One major criticism that the proposals have evoked (from those who are not hawkish enough to reject them outright) is that despite the Government’s repeated assurances, no effort has been made to bring about similar changes at the provincial level. As one newspaper pointed out editorially, “to some extent the legislative arrangement at the top is not so important to the average individual as the arrangement at local government level. That is where the ordinary person can influence events more effectively, and that is where the practical needs and wishes of communities

can best be monitored, debated and satisfied.”

The Government, on its part, continues to affirm that it is only a matter of time before this grievance is redressed. Unfortunately, the credibility of such affirmations has been seriously eroded by official pronouncements to the effect that reforms at the local level are its “own affair”. In a blistering editorial, the leading Johannesburg daily *The Star* expressed “grave misgivings about the Government’s intentions ... in its stated desire to consider local government as an ‘own affair’ a phrase that will surely become as infamous as all the other phrases used to mask apartheid.”

Whatever the merits or demerits of the proposed changes—and it is doubtful whether these will become apparent until after they have been worked in practice for a while—one fact which even the most diehard detractor of the Pretoria regime will find hard to deny is the relative freedom and thoroughness with which the proposals have been debated. Black majority rule in South Africa may still be a distant dream, but given an atmosphere conducive to peaceful evolutionary change, the lot of the ethnic population cannot but improve in the years to come.

AS I SEE IT

MINOO MASANI

MR. ANDROPOV is not likely to repeat the contemptuous quip which Joseph Stalin made to Churchill at the Yalta at the end of World War II in reply to the comment that the Pope would be unhappy: "And how many divisions has the Pope got?" The answer to that question has been given by Pope John Paul II and that answer is "a helluva lot".

According to a correspondent in the *Herald Tribune*, the Pope has "undertaken the liberation of Eastern Europe. It is not too much to describe in these words what he has begun with his second visit to Poland". The Pope of course is a brave man but one would be entitled to wonder whether he is not taking on a bit too much when NATO has failed for decades now to do the job. Such cynicism is, however, in my view, uncalled for because many things are done by moral and spiritual force which military force does not achieve. Gandhiji's liberation of Indians from British rule is an excellent example of such success. The Pope obviously does not expect Soviet arms to withdraw from the other side of the Iron Curtain. He is endeavouring to change the condition in which the Poles and others in the captive countries of Eastern Europe live under Soviet occupation. In attempting this he is showing statemanship which has been defined as "recognising the inevitable and trying in an intelligent way to hasten it along."

The stirring effect of the Pope's visit to Poland was somewhat marred by a controversy that is raging in the Western press. It started with an obviously inspired article in the Vatican paper *L'Osservatore Romano* which said that the Pope had advised Lech Walesa, the Solidarity leader, to step down from active leadership and become "leader emeritus" so that Solidarity and the Polish dictatorship could come to terms with the help of the Church. Though the Editor was asked to resign immediately as a result of this gaffe and both the Pope and Walesa have contradicted the story, it has left an unpleasant taste in the mouth and evoked passionate protests from friends of Polish freedom. The Church, in its history, has not hesitated to sacrifice courageous individuals like Cardinal Mindzenty for the sake of surviving behind the Iron Curtain. It is possible, therefore, that the Pope somewhat subtly suggested to Walesa during their private conversation that, if the Polish regime was to come to terms with Solidarity, with the help of the Church and without provoking Russian intervention and re-occupation of the country, his own temporary retirement might not be too big a price to pay.

The Western press has quietly reproved the Vatican. An editorial in the *Guardian* of June 28, 1983 observes: "Mr. Walesa's position is precarious. To the Polish people, to the West and, above all, to the Kremlin, his every move is, respectively, an inspiration and an irritation. Perhaps national reconciliation—and freeish trade unionism—will be more easily achieved with Mr. Solidarity out of the limelight. But, if General Jaruzelski is to be allowed an easy veto over who runs Poland's putative new unions, then their freedom will not be worth much. Mr. Walesa is popular precisely because he emerged from the people against the wishes of the authorities."

More explicit is the comment of William Safire in the *Times* of the same date: "That may suit Poland's sawdust Caesar, and it may relieve those in the Vatican who fear that a rise of Solidarity would lead to a crack-down on the Church as well as a Soviet invasion of Poland. But it is not right. In undermining Walesa—and that is what he is clearly perceived as doing—the Pope is not wearing his moral vestments. The Church, to endure, is sometimes required to make deals with totalitarians, but it is wrong to weaken the following of those who call for political freedom by presuming to stand in their place. For the individual, obedience to God does not require obedience to tyranny. The Pope should uphold and protect Walesa, not try to replace him."

The situation reflects the inter-play between the various powers in Poland—Solidarity, representing the forces of freedom, the Church, and the regime. Military power is however with the Kremlin and the Soviet army which all Poles fear and hate.

The question that everyone is asking is what the Kremlin will do now. From the fact that the Polish Premier, General Jaruzelski was given the Order of Lenin in Moscow on July 5, it would appear that the Kremlin is well pleased with the job that its stooge in Poland is doing!

* * * * *

An event which seems to have escaped notice in the Indian press is the formation in London on 24 June 1983, of an International Federation of Conservative Parties called the International Democratic Union which the London *Times* has amusingly named the "Conintern".

Is it not strange that the Conservative parties of the world have taken 119 years after the formation of the

first International Working Men's Association to take this step? Even the Liberal International, of which I happen to be a Patron, was established as far back as 1947.

Mrs Margaret Thatcher, who participated in the move, pointed out that the Conservative International was able to start with the support of 150 million people, "double the size of the Socialist International and it girdles the world". Present were representatives of the Japanese Liberal Democrats Party, the German Christian Democrats led by Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Herr Franz Josef, M. Jaques Chirac, the Gaullist Mayor of Paris, the U.S. Vice President, George Bush and representatives from Austria, Canada, France, Greece, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Finland, Cyprus, Malta and Liechtenstein.

At a time when the electorate in Europe have been voting Conservatives into office in one country after another, this latest development may be expected to foster that trend.

(Courtesy: *The Statesman*, Calcutta)

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SOVIET AGRICULTURE

S. K. BAIN

SO MUCH is written about Soviet agriculture these days that it does not require a specialist to guess what is right or wrong about it. It is not true to say that the anti-Soviet elements and forces are making too much noise about an uncomfortable stage of Soviet agriculture to unfairly malign the Socialist state. For too long the Soviet authorities have been drum-beating their grand victories in collective farming, whereas the adverse comments on those victories are being heard only recently after the ground for the adverse comments has been solidly laid by the "victors". We can refer to both Soviet and capitalist experts on the subject to infer what is right or what is wrong with it.

Soviet Union published from Moscow with beautiful lay-out and illustrations in its issue No. 9 of 1982 commemorating the 60th anniversary of the USSR (founded in 1922) contains special articles on all the main aspects of state activity, including sports, but there is no mention of agriculture (except as) part of a number of tables under the heading "Year After Year". That minor table has a cryptic heading, "Growth rates for gross agricultural production between 1922 and 1981", and it gives a state-wise break-up which varies from 1.5 to 13.3 over the year 1922 with index 1.

Obviously the growth rate and the actual volume are two different things. For example, in any undulating graph such as a sinusoidal curve, the growth rate is maximum when actual value is the lowest. In the year 1922, the Socialist government was already well established after having come to power in November 1917, and actual production figures must be available. But that figure has not been given in the fleeting reference to the achievements in agriculture!

A better clue is available in issue No. 8 of *Soviet Union* which contains an article on "Engineering Service For The Fields". An intricate chart of the organisation for farm support is provided, which looks perfectly rational, like a PERT/CPM solution. This chart gives the impression that everything is right with Soviet agriculture, or should be so by all accounts. But another article in the same issue with the heading, "Soviet Agrarian Policy: A New Stage," frankly admits that the present is not good while the future will be all right with Soviet agriculture. Significantly, the article deals with statistics from the year 1965 to 1982 i.e. the Brezhnev era.

The article laments and admits: "... the USSR has the worst climate for crop farming. . . . Although this country is investing sizeable funds in agriculture,

the returns—in the form of foodstuffs—have not been adequate enough. In the near future, more produce of high quality and more diversified descriptions will be required . . . some 160,000 million roubles, a figure that has stunned foreign commentators, will be appropriated in the 1980's for the social restructuring of the countryside. . . . The vast-scale Food Programme will, of course, have repercussions far beyond the boundaries of the country. *Le Monde* of Paris wrote for example: "without renouncing purchase of whatever it needs abroad, the Soviet Union is intent on reducing food imports from capitalist countries. It is held in Moscow that some states are attempting to turn normal commercial deals into a tool of political pressure."

After quoting *Le Monde* for a cushion effect, the article finally is more frank than ever: "It needs to be recalled that poor harvests in the past few years forced the Soviet Union to buy grain, meat and other products from abroad. In future too it is not going to stop buying abroad what can help it boost its food resources. . . ."

The Soviet view of its agriculture will now be contrasted with the views of a capitalist expert on

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agriculture, and we will find that a half-full bottle and a half-empty bottle is the same thing. Mr. Lester R. Brown is the capitalist expert on the world food problem who in the 1960's coordinated a programme to help increase food production in some forty developing nations. He is the author of several books dealing with world food and population issues. Mr. Brown notes in a study: "U.S. and Soviet Agriculture: The Shifting Balance Of Power":

"The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that the 1982 grain harvest will fall short of the planned target of 238 million tons by as much as 68 million tons. This year, the Soviet Union will seek to import some 40 million tons of grain, most of it from North America.

In 1975 the Soviet Union and the United States signed a five-year grain agreement which was extended for one year in August 1981 and again in July 1982. On October 15, President Reagan offered to sell to the Soviet Union up to 23 million tons of U.S. corn and grain."

According to Mr. Brown, the Soviet agricultural output peaked during the years 1975 to 1978 and thereafter started declining. The decline is too pervasive to blame the weather.

Centralised planning and control, combined with lack of incentives and competition, handicap Soviet agriculture. Mr. Brown further notes that mechanization in Soviet agriculture remains at an insufficient level. The existing machines are of poor quality and poorly utilized, and fertilisers and pesticides are not

properly utilized. Visiting foreign delegates have seen vast numbers of farm machineries being rushed long distances on urgent call, and it is likely that often the machines reach late for the harvesting or sowing. The visitors have also seen vast tracts of fields burnt due to excess fertilisers or crops overgrown with weeds.

Mr. Brown asserts that the striking contrast of the American success in agriculture is built around the individual farmer, who has an unmatched flexibility and devotion to his own acres.

The growing dependence on food imports presents serious problems for the Soviet leadership. If not resolved, the current agricultural crisis, Mr. Brown notes, will threaten the Soviet leadership's legitimacy, which is based in part on "its ability to satisfy the aspirations of the Soviet people for a better life". During the last three years, numerous work stoppages and consumer protests in the Soviet Union have been reported.

Even the proposed massive increase in investment in agriculture may not improve matters much, as without a structural change in organisation and policy much of the increased investment will be absorbed in inflated bureaucracy and wastage resulting from over-investment panic. Unfortunately, any structural change is looked upon by the leadership as the very negation of the ideals of the state, and any suggestion in that direction is rejected in contempt as revisionist conspiracy. Here lies a dangerous self-made and self-sustained trap for the Soviet system of agriculture.

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THE FRIGHTENING STORY OF THE SOVIET SECRET POLICE

JUAN FERCSEY

ALTHOUGH THE secret police firmly controlled the Soviet Union for 65 years, it could not reach the No. 1 position until the rise of Yuri Andropov. Western correspondents in Moscow reported that people in the Soviet capital whispered "KGB . . . KGB . . ." This name is so terrifying that several "Kremlinogues" thought that Andropov could not be First Secretary because of his KGB background. That is why he left the KGB officially last May, dedicating himself for a few months to the job of Suslov, the Party ideologue who died last January.

The story of the Soviet secret police is an extraordinary "thriller", with millions of victims, among them five former heads of the same espionage and repressive apparatus. Several predecessors of Andropov rose—and fell—under the fire of an execution squad, in the same prison where they killed thousands of victims. But for the time being, the entire story of the KGB—Checa at the beginning—was not told. Only five major books were published on the topic because it is extremely difficult to get material on this immense apparatus which employs 250,000 agents, inside and outside the Soviet Union. As a matter of fact, this is by far the largest "company" in the world, the largest espionage network and the largest "archipelago of prisons and slave labour camps" in history.

The first head of the Checa—which stands for "Combating Counterrevolution and Sabotage"—was Feliks Dzerzhinsky, an austere and merciless revolutionary, and a close colleague of Lenin. He was of Polish descent. From December 1917, the Checa began a reign of terror. An official decree "On Red Terror" in 1918, *authorized* the Checa to arrest and execute suspects *without courts or trials*. In a few years, the name Checa was tied to such horror that it was changed to GPU—Political Directorate of the State. Later, it was named OGPU, meaning Unified Directorate. Dzerzhinsky died in 1926 and was buried near the Kremlin Wall in Red Square.

In 1977, marking the 100th anniversary of Dzerzhinsky's birth, Yuri Andropov, then Chairman of the KGB, delivered the main address. It was in front of the KGB headquarters in the frightful Lubyanka prison, a monument of Dzerzhinsky emerges.

Dzerzhinsky was the confidante of another Pole, Vyacheslav R. Menzhinsky, and made him his deputy. Menzhinsky expanded informant networks in the 1920s in every village, factory and commune; his idea was

that *everybody should spy on his neighbours*.

The OGPU organized the yearly show trials, and administered a network of slave labour camps. It also carried out Stalin's farm collectivisation policies, slaughtering resisting peasants. A secret police report informed Stalin that the death toll—including those who died from hunger and diseases following hunger—amounted to three and a half million; other observers said that the number was closer to five and a half million.

Menzhinsky died in 1934 and was succeeded by his deputy, Genrikh G. Yagoda, who was responsible for the killing of most of the resisting peasants. But again the organization's name was changed because Moscow wanted to be admitted into the League of Nations. The OGPU became the GUGB, Chief Directorate for State Security and a Branch of NKVD—"Narodnyi Komissariat"—which also encompassed the Comintern, dedicated to *subversion outside the Soviets*.

Yagoda was a pharmacist, and according to several authors on books on the Soviet secret service, he personally conducted research and experiments on prisoners in the basement cells of Lubyanka. But because of this kind of interest, Stalin thought that he was not vigorous enough to organize and control the great purge trials which began in 1934. Stalin simply ordered his arrest and his case was a model of a show trial: he was accused of being a foreign spy and a murderer, and was shot. He confessed that he had authorized the poison deaths of both Maxim Gorky, the famous Russian writer and his predecessor, Menzhinsky.

The purge trials of the 1930s horrified the world. The Moscow trials ordered the execution of Soviet Party leaders whom Stalin could not dominate in life. Also, an incredible number, 30,000, military officers, foremost among them Marshall Thukachevsky, were executed, along with 500 to 3,000 members of the security apparatus administered then by Yagoda's successor, Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov.

A reviewer said that Stalin was a short man and he liked Yezhov because he was even shorter. No more than five feet tall, Yezhov was known as "the bloody dwarf" because terrorism reached a peak under him. But Stalin suddenly realized that Yezhov knew too much about him and decided to get rid of Yezhov. In 1938, Yezhov disappeared. Some observers believed that he landed in a mental clinic; others believed that

he was killed, perhaps in the same cell where Yagoda was liquidated.

Then came Lavrenti Beria, a Georgian like Stalin, who tracked down Leon Trotsky in Mexico and ordered his assassination by an agent, who became the confidante of the exiled Russian revolutionary. Beria reorganized the police apparatus, creating another branch: the NKGB, entrusted with internal security, frontier guards and labour camps. The NKVD became the administration of the secret service. After the war, Beria, who also organized guerrilla activities against the Germans, became a member of the Politburo and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

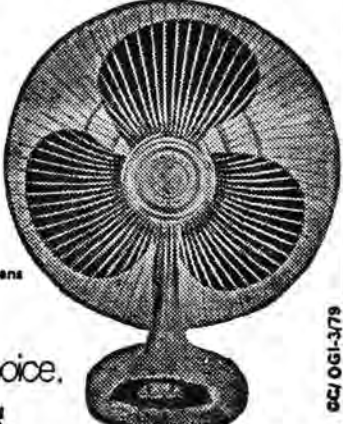
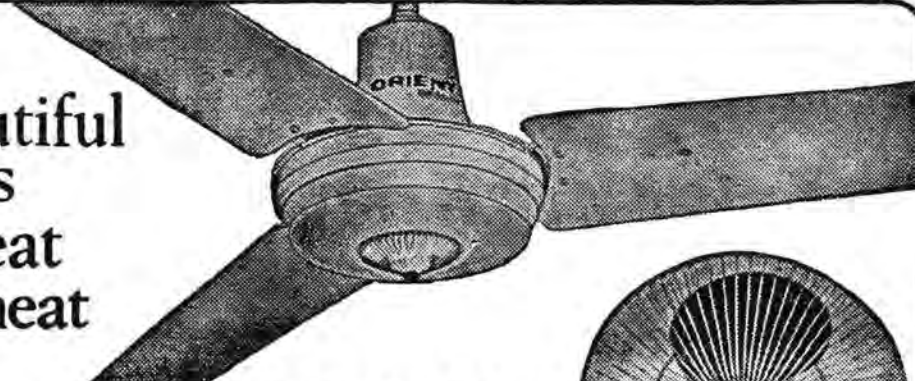
The NKGB was then changed to MGB, a Ministry headed by Vsevolod Merkulov, a Beria protégé; but soon he was replaced by General Victor Abakumov, former head of *Smersh*. This terrorist organization whose name means "death to spies" became well known through Ian Fleming's James Bond stories. But Beria saw a danger to him in Abakumov and convinced Stalin that the man was plotting against him. Shortly after, both Abakumov and Merkulov were shot in Lubyanka.

When Stalin died, Beria wanted to merge the MVD and the MGB. His potential power was so great that his colleagues, frightened of him, decided to kill Beria. His "friends", Khrushchev, Malenkov and Molotov obtained the support of Army leaders who also were afraid of Beria. Suddenly, Beria was arrested, and three months after Stalin's death, was tried as "a foreign spy" and executed in bloody Lubyanka.

In March 1954, the security apparatus' name was changed to KGB, responsible for political police functions and clandestine operations abroad. The KGB cleared the way for members of the GRU also, the military intelligence. Yuri Andropov directed the activities of the KGB for 15 years. After he left, the new head became his protégé, Vitaly Fedorchuk. But Andropov decided in mid-December to designate Fedorchuk as Interior Minister, and the new man in the KGB is Viktor Chebrikov, his deputy, another Andropov-confidante.

An author of "KGB", British journalist Brian Freemantle, wrote: "The Soviet Union needs the KGB because without it there would not be a Soviet Union."

(Antar-Sanchar)



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CONTINUED SOVIET EXPLOITATION OF AFGHANISTAN

RAMA SWARUP

ON APRIL 26, 1983, the anniversary of the Communist takeover was celebrated in Kabul for the fifth time, but Afghanistan's chaotic economic situation gave very little occasion for rejoicing. Faced with the unbroken resistance of the Mujahiddin freedom-fighters, the regime can no longer hide the extent of opposition among the Afghan people to the attempt to rule them according to the traditional methods of the Soviet Union.

On April 11, Prime Minister Soltan Ali Keshtmand admitted that the Afghan government is no longer able even to levy property taxes. In 1978-79, these taxes brought in 280 million Afghanis, while in 1981-82 the figure sunk to 16 million Afghanis.

In spite of the enormous increase in the funds set aside for "defence and security", Keshtmand admitted that the freedom-fighters had succeeded in destroying three-quarters of the country's communications network as well as putting out of action half the number of schools and hospitals and several electric power stations.

Keshtmand told a group of financial experts that, for these reasons, the state of Afghanistan's finances was critical; production figures in all spheres have sunk dramatically, spending on the army has risen, and state revenues have reached such a pass that many important tasks which should be taken by the state simply cannot be carried out. Among these, Keshtmand mentioned provision of transport, energy production and irrigation.

So, in spite of all the official praise loaded upon it, Soviet economic aid is not sufficient. Presenting the state budget of 1982-83 on March 17, Keshtmand said that the spending plan of all the ministries had to be halved. This is *after* a massive reduction in the country's development projects. On April 11, the Communist Party newspaper even suggested that the impossibility of carrying out the economic directives of the Central Committee constituted an act of treachery in itself.

President Babrak Karmal, speaking on the eve of the anniversary of the Communist takeover, declared that



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economic development was closely bound to the fate of the revolution. "The solution of our economic problem," he said, "is of the greatest importance in widening the social base of the revolutionary regime and the social and political isolation of the counter-revolutionaries".

But these words have remained without effect, particularly in the sphere of agriculture. It can be extrapolated from a recent report by a former member of the Agricultural Development Bank—who has since fled to Pakistan—that the cultivated acreage throughout Afghanistan has been reduced by half since the Soviet invasion. Whereas Afghanistan was at that time in a position to cover its own needs in the production of cereals, it is now increasingly dependent on the Soviet Union; in 1981, it imported 74,000 tons; in 1982, 115,000 tons; and in 1983, a projected 160,000 tons.

The Agricultural Development Bank is entirely dependent on high interest loans from the Soviet Union. Farmers are unable to repay loans, either because they have fled or because they cannot harvest their fields. This position has been made worse by the Soviet policy of "scorched earth": by destroying harvests, the Soviet occupation army is trying to starve the freedom-fighters out.

Nor are the other communist countries in Eastern Europe in a position to help with Afghanistan's economic difficulties. Moscow has been forced to convert 31 million clearing dollars (which can only be used within the Communist orbit) into hard currency so that Kabul can buy a minimum of sorely needed consumer goods outside the Communist block.

In spite of all this, the Soviets continue to sponsor a number of development projects which bring benefit to themselves. The natural gas fields at Jarqaduq and Khwaja Gogerdak in the north of the country are being brought into operation with all possible despatch. According to a *Tass* report, production of gas should soon be increased from 2.4 thousand million cubic metres in 1982-83 to 4.1 thousand million cubic metres. But the important thing is that more than 95 per cent of this natural gas is consumed by the Soviet Union.

Indeed, Moscow is extremely interested in all the natural riches of Afghanistan. In spite of the guerrilla war Soviet prospectors are to be found throughout the country. According to a report by the Afghan Press Agency, freedom-fighters attacked a group of Soviet minerologists in Farah Province on March 26 and killed two geologists.

It is also reliably reported that the Soviets are work-

ing in conditions of extreme secrecy at a mine near Koh Mir Daoud in the north-west between Herat and Shinand. Only Soviet citizens are allowed near the project. Blasting has been heard there, and stones weighing between two and three kilos are taken across the frontiers into the Soviet Union by helicopters. The Afghans believe they contain uranium ore.

Before 1978, the Afghan government was thinking of building railway connections with both Iran and Pakistan. Now these projects have been shelved, and an agreement has been reached with the Soviet Union providing for the construction of a railway from Kabul to the Amu Darya River, which forms the frontier with the Soviet Union.

From all these developments, one over-riding conclusion can be drawn: however bad the economic situation of Afghanistan, the Soviets have shown that they know how to assure their own interests and their own strategic goals.

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BOOK REVIEW

GODS AND POLITICIANS by Bruce Grant; Allen Lane; 1982; Pp. 198.

ONE OF the few wise things I have done in my life is not to write a book on Brazil after having done a short stint in that country as Ambassador of India in the late forties. It is easy to write a diplomatic journal or memoir about a country where you have served as an Ambassador but it is extremely difficult to produce a book that will stand scrutiny in the country concerned. I had already seen too many books of this nature which showed that there is a great deal to be said for the old Persian adage: "The more I know, the more I know how little I know".

Bruce Grant's *Gods and Politicians*, which is mainly about his assignment in New Delhi as High Commissioner for Australia during the years 1973 to 1976, is, along with most books of its kind, like the proverbial curate's egg, good in parts.

For one thing, the author is an extremely good raconteur. Whatever he has seen or undergone personally is aptly described. Such, for instance, are the descriptions of how he presented his credentials to the President of India and the description of an Indian wedding. So also are his descriptions of his fellow Ambassadors and of Indian women in New Delhi.

Bruce Grant's attitude to India and all its works is extremely friendly and tolerant. Indeed, some might consider him too forgiving of our foibles. His picture of India through Australian eyes and his treatment of the interesting question whether Australia really wishes to join Asia, as the Australian Government desires, are fair and balanced. So is his description of how controls have bred corruption and of the general elections in India in 1977 and in 1980.

But who told Grant, as he alleges on page 20 of his book, that Moscow supported Delhi against Peking in 1962? Quite to the contrary, it was later revealed that Khrushchev was, in fact, an accessory to the Chinese attack. This important fact was brought out in an article in *Opinion* by A. G. Noorani, on 6 April 1965, entitled "Russia and the Chinese Invasion". As a result of his research, Noorani was able to quote a crucial editorial from the authoritative Peking paper, the *People's Daily*, of 3 November:

"On October 13 and 14, 1962, Khrushchev told the Chinese Ambassador the following: Their information on Indian preparations to attack China was similar to China's. If they were in China's position, they would have taken the same measures. A neutral attitude on the Sino-Indian boundary question was impossible. If anyone attacked China and they said they were neutral, it would be an act of betrayal."

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As Noorani quite rightly put it:

"Shorn of communist jargon and stripped of the doubletalk understandable in the circumstances, it clearly shows that a week before the Chinese invasion was launched, Khrushchev signified his approval of it. When, on October 8, he was informed that India was about to launch a massive attack on China against which the latter must defend itself, he could not have failed to guess the truth that the Chinese planned to attack India. After five days' deliberation, he gave his blessing couched in the same terminology."

Towards the Emergency of 1975-77 Grant adopts an attitude of restrained and constructive criticism. He goes along with the critical attitude adopted in general by the Indian intelligentsia to which he is sympathetic. But this critical attitude is tempered by his relative detachment from the Indian scene and his close contacts with the Establishment.

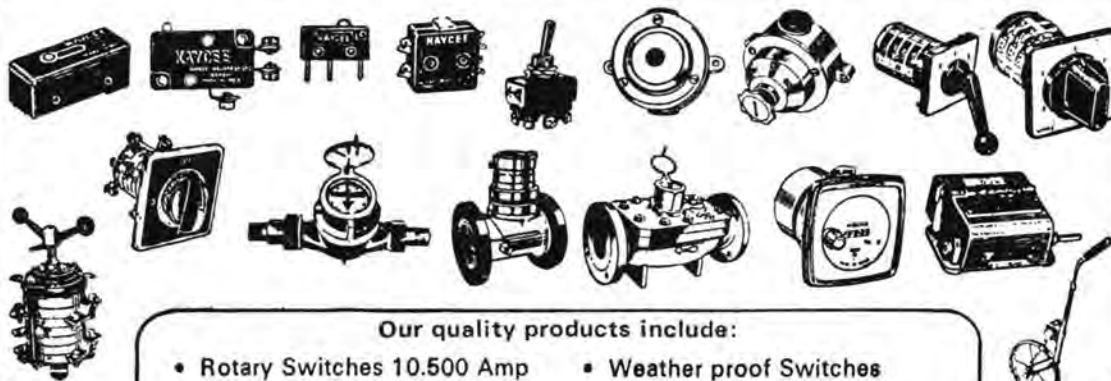
It is when the author turns to developments in Australia during that period that he goes somewhat haywire. That he was appointed to his position by Mr. Gough Whitlam, the then Prime Minister of Australia, is not something that can be counted against Bruce Grant. His nomination of Mr. Whitlam as a

candidate for the Jawaharlal Nehru Award and his rushing back to Australia on leave to campaign for Mr. Whitlam during the parliamentary elections there certainly reveals his ardent admiration for Mr. Whitlam as also his partisanship. Where he can be faulted, however, is the gross misunderstanding of the issues at stake and the attempt at a false equation and parallel between what was happening in Australia and what was happening in India.

The trouble starts right from the Preface where the author observes, "during the period 1973-76, when I was posted to New Delhi, India and my own country Australia experienced crises that shook each to its foundations, culminating in the declaration of Emergency in India by the Gandhi government on 26 June 1975 and the dismissal of the Whitlam Government on 11 November the same year. These separate crises at roughly the same time—each a test of democratic political systems—became linked in my own mind and influenced subsequent decisions and actions." This is where all the confusion starts.

Quite clearly, Prime Minister Whitlam's attitude to Sir John Kerr, the Governor-General of Australia, was precisely that of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi towards President Fakhruddin Ahmed. Both the Prime

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Ministers looked upon the Head of State as someone who was there to affix a rubber stamp on their own political decisions. Critics of Mrs. Gandhi like myself had always alleged that her successive nominees, Presidents Giri and Fakhruddin Ahmed, were intended to serve as mere rubber stamps, which was not what the Constitution had laid down.

When Mrs. Gandhi went to the President on the morning of June 26, 1975, to demand ratification of the Proclamation of Emergency she had already declared the previous night without the sanction of the President or Parliament, she had violated the Constitution.

The resort to a *fait accompli* is not compatible with a constitutional democracy and the President would have been perfectly within his right to dismiss her from office, dissolve Parliament and invite someone else to form a new government and get a mandate from the country at an immediate General Election. That is what the President should have done, but did not. If he had, there might have been a real parallel between his act and that of the Governor-General of Australia.

Sir John Kerr, the Australian Governor-General, was, however, made of sterner stuff. He was not prepared to be treated as the Prime Minister's rubber stamp. When Mr. Whitlam disregarded, over a period of time, his repeated suggestion that the Prime Minister should agree to a dissolution of both Houses of Parliament and should face the country because the Governor-General felt that he had lost its confidence, Governor-General Kerr dismissed Prime Minister Whitlam from his Office and invited Mr. Malcolm Fraser, the present Prime Minister of Australia, to

form a Government and face a general election. In the result, the people of Australia backed the judgment of the Governor-General by defeating Mr. Whitlam and returning Mr. Fraser to office. Since the proof of the pudding lies in the eating, one would have thought that the Governor-General was proved to be right.

Unfortunately, Grant and some others in Australia and elsewhere have been unable to see this and have gone on protesting that the Governor-General's behaviour, which incidentally had the support of the Chief Justice of Australia, Sir Garfield Barwick, was unfair and dictatorial.

Conceding, however, that Grant has a right to hold on to his opinion, what is hard to take is when he goes on to equate Sir John Kerr's action in dismissing Mr. Whitlam with Mrs. Gandhi's action in imprisoning Mr. Morarji Desai and Jayaprakash Narayan without trial. He is able to arrive at this amazing conclusion by ignoring the basic similarity in the attitudes of Mr. Whitlam and Mrs. Gandhi, both of whom insisted on regarding themselves as masters and the Heads of State as mere rubber stamps. Nor is this similarity in the position of the two Prime Ministers altogether surprising because both of them were populists who were inclined to believe that their hold over a temporary majority in the lower House of Parliament entitled them to disregard the checks and balance which exist in a real democracy such as the Head of State, the Courts of Law and a free Press.

M. R. Masani

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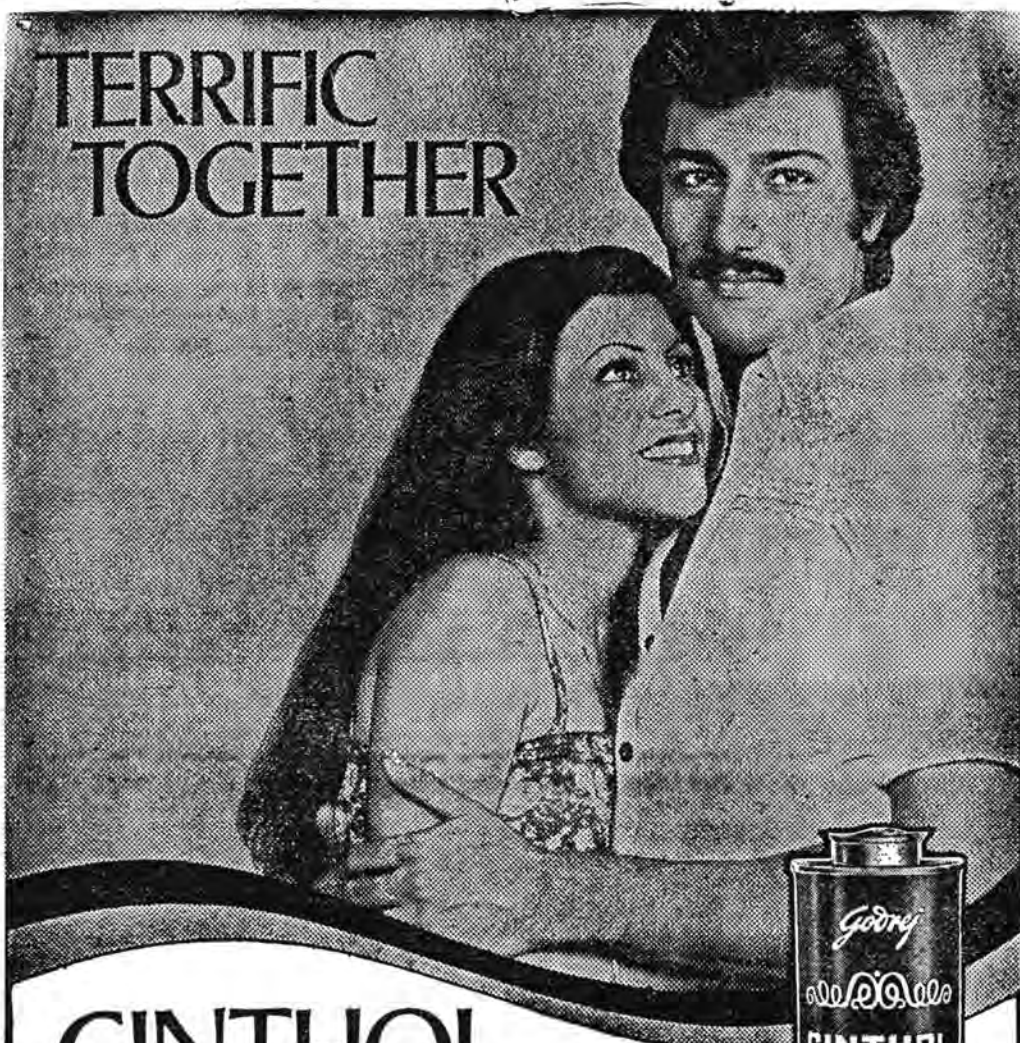
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WITH MANY VOICES

Imprisoned in every fat man a thin man is wildly signalling to be let out.

—Cyril Connolly quoted in *Sunday Times*, July 3.

Britain has said in this election that it is ready to change at Mrs. Thatcher's hands.

—*The Economist*, June 11.

There is no surer means of overturning the existing basis of society than to debauch the currency.

—John Maynard Keynes in 1919 quoted in *The Economist*, June 11.

The reaffirmation that one can be conservative without being authoritarian, patriotic without being chauvinist, and that belief in free market is not incompatible with accepting a duty, as Mrs. Thatcher put it, to "use our joint resources to help bring the benefits of economic prosperity to the developing countries", is welcome and should be heard loud and clear.

—*The Times*, June 25.

Had the match been played in Bombay they (the Indian Team) would not have been more enthusiastically saluted.

—John Woodcock, Cricket Correspondent, *The Times*, June 27.

President Mitterand has made clear that he is one of the fiercest anti-communists in Western Europe and the French President knows communists better than Mr. Reagan—he still has two of them in his Cabinet.

—*The Economist*, April 9.

I want a capital-earning democracy. Every man a capitalist and every man a man of property. Property induces responsibility in society.

—Mrs. Margaret Thatcher quoted in *The Sunday Observer*, May 15.

India is a sub-continent with complex problems.

—Chief Minister Ramkrishna Hegde of Karnataka, June 1983.