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GEETA DOCTOR

A BLESSING IN DISGUISE ?

S. V. Raju

Judging from the shrieks of delight of her supporters on the one hand and the breast-beating of those who oppose her on the other, one would almost believe that Mrs. Gandhi is back as Prime Minister of India! It may not be irrelevant to remember the elementary fact that all that has happened is that she is indeed back — but as one among 520 members of the Lok Sabha. And this is represented to the public by the press (which she heartily detests) as a “turning point in the history of the country”. She should be grateful to the press for giving her all this build up and of course to the immature politicians of the Janata Party for converting a by-election in a remote constituency in South India into a national referendum.

Freedom First has the highest regard for Jayaprakash Narayan the father of the second revolution in India. And yet, this great man, rendered invalid by the dictatorship of Mrs. Indira Gandhi erred when in his message to the voters of Chikmagalur he observed: “What is at issue is not the success of this or that individual but the future of democracy and the values of justice and freedom which were restored barely eighteen months ago.” JP err-

ed not because he was not right but because he imparted to this by-election an importance that it should not have been given. His comment on her victory was more to the point and should have been the Janata strategy from the start. He said that Mrs. Gandhi's victory was an “isola'ed event” and “did not represent any political trend that might generally influence the shape of Indian politics.”

A reader wrote in the *Statesman* that if Mrs. Gandhi won, it would be the beginning of the end of democracy in India. Janata's campaigners led by George Fernandes, another victim of Mrs. Gandhi's emergency asserted during the campaign that Chikmagalur will decide the future of democracy in this country. The cream of the intellectual community in the State of Karnataka pitched in, in favour of the Janata candidate. And Chandrashekar the President of the Janata Party confidentially asserted that Mrs. Gandhi had no chance of winning “unless there is bungling.” Who bungled? George? From the point of view of the campaign itself, George Fernandes waged a magnificent offensive. Though

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SPECIAL NUMBER

Readers of *Freedom First* will be glad to know that the next issue i.e. January 1979 will be a Special Number with many more pages containing delectable fare from such personalities as S. P. Aiyar, K. D. Desai, Rajmohan Gandhi, C. R. Irani, V. B. Karnik, V. B. Kulkarni, R. M. Lala, Mehra Masani, Minoo Masani, S. K. Ookerjee, Muriel Wasi, Taya Zinkin and others.

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"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



OF CABBAGES & KINGS

"A Private Visit"

Throughout the period of the Emergency and, in fact, till November 12, 1978, Mrs. Indira Gandhi did not visit any democratic nation in the West. She did go abroad during that time but only to Sri Lanka where a kindred Prime Minister ruled *a la* Mrs. Gandhi (and just as ignominiously thrown out) and to somewhere in Africa to participate in non-aligned summitry. Probably she feared, and rightly so, a hot reception from overseas Indians in the West whom she could not control except to impound their passports where possible. For alas, MISA was useless in keeping Indians abroad on leash. There was also the free press in these countries which being out of reach of her Censors kept up a constant barrage exposing emergency misdeeds.

This couldn't last long and the opportunity to preside over the 89th birthday celebrations of her father was too good to miss. The court in Delhi which is trying her gave her permission to leave Indian shores for ten days subject to an undertaking that she would not comment on political matters. The Janata Government obliged by providing a diplomatic passport. The only thing lacking was some kind of status and this she secured by getting herself elected to Parliament. It is interesting in this connection to note the reason she gave at a news conference in London on why she chose Chikmagalur and not Samastipur in Bihar. She blamed the Janata Government for not announcing the election date for Samastipur! It was only after Chikmagalur that the Janata Government announced the polling dates, she said. Interesting on two counts. First, she was determined that she should be a member of parliament before emplaning for London, otherwise how did it matter whether she returned to Parliament now or a month later. Secondly, her statement was quite at variance with what she said on this matter during the campaign. She told a gathering at Karkala in the Chikmagalur constituency on October 30 that it was not out of any selfish motive that she was seeking the Chikmagalur Lok Sabha seat. It was the plight of the weaker sections, especially Harijans and minorities that had moved her to contest from the constituency. Comment is superfluous.

And so this great champion of the underprivileged flew into London, First Class in an Air India

Jumbo and checked in at the Claridges in a room that cost only \$ 100 (Rs. 1,635) a day.

The London *Times* columnist Bernard Levin a champion of civil liberties everywhere wrote in agony that there were still Englishmen "courtiers in high places" he called them who would welcome her to Britain. He found it incredible that Mrs. Gandhi should still enjoy "any support at all outside the ranks of those in India who were themselves indelibly stained by their service of the regime and those in Britain who touted for her while she was debauching Indian democracy". He was answered by another journalist Peregrine Worsthorne who in a letter to the editor of the London *Times* observed: "If Hitler were to rise from the dead, I would not be surprised if millions of Germans could be persuaded to vote for him again, just as millions of Frenchmen were prepared to die for Napoleon long after he too had been exposed as a callous megalomaniac."

"Evil is very often attractive. That is what makes human affairs so difficult..."

The purpose of Mrs. Gandhi's "private visit" was largely successful even if she had to face demonstrators and had to retreat without delivering her speech at a public meeting in Southall — and that was to serve notice to the statesmen of the world that she was back and they better take note of the fact. —SVR.

Ghosts at Matheran

Memories don't count for much on mountains. For memories are part of man and a man is but a small thing on top of a mountain, even a small mountain such as Matheran is, when seen from the plains.

From the top, however, the entire perspective changes, one's eye begins to measure the scene in centuries. That pile of stones on the opposite hill one recognises as a fort, crisply etched against the sky, as a warning to marauders; that ox-bow lake was once a bend in the river that now flows straight through fields which once upon a time must have been jungle. In the far distance, a grey, ghostly, pile of concrete fingers points to the sky and announces itself to be Bombay: the *urbs prima* of India in the year 1978, and yet the sea glimmering beyond, hints at the way it was in the past, and may one day be again, in the future, when that mirage too has passed.

Perhaps there is no harsher reminder of the in-

exorable passage of time in Matheran, than in the old mansions that are to be found decaying on its choicest slopes. One of the most imposing among them has a splendid entrance on which is carved with magnificent simplicity "Haji Cassim — Shipowner". What pride he must have felt the first time he drove through those gates, what a supreme sense of having arrived at such a station in life, that the very invocation of the word "Shipowner" was enough to advertise his fame and power. And the house itself was built somewhat like a ship, or fortress, in red stone with massive balustrades and a ramp in the middle which may have been a drawbridge. Yet it is obvious now that no one has gone through those imposing gates for a long time, and the only presence that walks through the grand old house, are the green shadows of the trees outside, whispering rumours of decay and ruin.

Another place for melancholy contemplation is in the small Municipal library where one may become a member for the price of one rupee. The latest books are in Hindi, Gujarati and Marathi, English belongs to the past and takes one back to the days of Victoria. There are green bound editions of the life and works of Byron, standing next to the latest poetic socio-histories by Browning. Fiction is represented by Fielding and Smollett, with Walter Scott and Dickens as the 'avant garde' writers, and politics, more recently, by a single copy of "The New Class" by Dhillon. Philosophy has a strange representative in Oscar Wilde whose most hilarious work "The Importance of Being Earnest" heads the list.

Among the books there was one by a gentleman named Arthur Crawford whose experiences in India sometime in the last century make it obvious that in the realm of greed and political expediency things haven't changed much. Talking about the poor quality of the Konkan soil he notes, "The Peshwas being all Konkan brahmins, naturally desired to develop their native country, and to this end granted large tracts on perpetual or long improvement leases, to their relatives and Court favourites. Thus sprang up a system of cultivation of a most disastrous nature which continued up to 1850. The grantees, (middlemen farmers or Khotes as they are called) encouraged by the liberal terms of their Sanads, imported from the Dekhan, bodies of husbandmen under short agreements of one or two years. Levying an almost nominal grain rental from them, and granting them free right to cut timber, fuel or fodder whenever they thought fit these 'ooprees' or wandering husbandmen proceeded to denude the hillsides in the wasteful mode known as 'kumar' cultivation which consists in firing the jungle and sowing the plots thus cleared. Heavy crops were raised for perhaps two years at most, when the 'ooprees' moved to repeat the devastating process elsewhere. In a short time, not only were the hillsides denuded of vegetation, but the soil, which the roots of that vegetation held together, was washed down by the rain and has silted the tidal creeks for miles along the course, utterly impeding navigation except for row boats". Almost identical reasons have been advanced for the disastrous floods in Bihar and Bengal this year, due to the clearing of

the Terai areas which acts as a sponge to the lower regions, through the leasing of it to landless peasants and dispossessed labourers, by politicians anxious to secure a few votes.

Another interesting piece of information related to the detection of ghosts and spirits. Apparently the hill folk have a belief that if you meet a charming young woman in the jungles you must look first at her feet, for if they are set backwards, she is a spirit out to tempt unwary males. An opportunity to test this occurred on that very evening, when the lights on the entire hill station went out. Suddenly we were forcibly transported back a few centuries. Petromax flared in a few shops but for the most part a pall of the most appalling darkness descended over everybody. The stars hung lower menacingly and the darkened trees leered in a thousand unimaginable shapes and forms, filled with strange noises. Strangers clutched each other in panic, only to find themselves embracing the tail or flank of a horse that had come trotting silently by their side. It was as good a time for the evil ghostess to make her appearance, as any, and then the full realisation of her power struck. How, even if we were to meet her, would we be able to look at her feet? On such hair raising uncertainties are all ghost stories based. —GD.

"DECRUITMENT" IN DENMARK

In Denmark a new management game is being played called "Decruitment". It is becoming a painless alternative to the often painful process of retirement, where a man after some 40 years of service, is given perhaps a gold watch and a farewell party and told to go home. Though retirement, after a certain age, should come as no surprise to anybody, it is, all the same, one of the most shattering adjustments to make. The Danes are trying to make it less so by taking a cue from the example of Tage Nielson, a manager of one of the largest stores in Denmark. When he was 54, Tage Nielson decided that he was tired of the continual responsibilities of his top position and would prefer to work as a junior clerk in the same company.

"I have never regretted my decision" Nielson is reported to have said. "I now work 40 hours a week instead of the average 60 to 70 I was putting in before. I've learned to enjoy life."

The report goes on to mention that in a survey taken among Denmark's 150 largest companies, the majority of the older managers preferred this gradual process of phasing out their careers to complete retirement.

"One former senior manager" continues the report, "is now a clerk in the buying department. Another handles complaints from customers. Another helps compile statistical information. Yet another is an assistant in the operations department..." And even more incredible as it may seem to class-conscious and status-sensitive Indians, one of the other persons, is Sigvald Bangsær, a Manager of a large department store, who changed his job to be a

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BLESSING IN DISGUISE? — Continued from Page 1

according to someone who was there, the Janata campaign lacked even an elementary organisation.

As a press correspondent put it: "Never in the history of the elections in India have the people of a single constituency been exposed to so much political education as the Chikmagalur electorate..." And yet, as the popular joke goes, "the operation was successful but the patient died."

Chikmagalur was Indira Gandhi's right from the start. It was indeed the safest of constituencies for Mrs. Gandhi or for that matter any candidate who had the support of Mr. Devraj Urs. (see *Freedom First*, November 1978.) Talking to Richard Wigg, the correspondent of the *London Times*, Mr. S. Nijalingappa, the veteran Congressman, now Janata, had a point when he told him that his party should have begun 'educating' the southern voters the day the sitting Congress MP stepped down for Mrs. Gandhi.

As for George Fernandes, his comment on Mrs. Gandhi's victory was a classic. He is reported to have observed that since the election was not postponed (there was a move during the campaign which failed) he had never expected his party to win! When asked why he so boldly had said otherwise, he replied: "A General never tells his troops they are going to lose." (*India Today*, Nov. 16-30). This may be so. But is it necessary to convert every battle into a Waterloo or a Kurukshetra? Another report has it that had not George Fernandes put in such herculean efforts, the Janata candidate Mr. Veerendra Patil would have lost his deposit. But then, if the Janata Party had decided not to convert Chikmagalur into a prestige contest, one doubts whether Veerendra Patil would at all have been the candidate. It would have been some obscure local politician, victory over whom would have deprived Mrs. Gandhi of the opportunity of equating her return with an endorsement of her policies. The net result of the importance given to her by-election has been to provide the impression to the world at large that Mrs. Gandhi has been rehabilitated and the only alternative to the Janata Party typified by the editorial comment in *The Guardian* (Nov. 14): "She is tainted and besmirched but she remains the force of the other India — an India of reform and development."

Does Mrs. Gandhi's entry into the Lok Sabha mark the beginning of the end of democracy? It need not be so. In fact, there are many who feel that she is highly over-rated. While the two forthcoming by-elections in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh will be significant due to the fact that they are being held in states which decisively rejected Mrs. Gandhi's party in March 1977, there is at present no evidence of any snowballing effect, at least on the politically conscious electorate of Bombay city for instance. On the very day the Chikmagalur result was blazoned across the front pages of the city's papers, Bombay's citizens voted in the elections to the Bombay Municipal Corporation. The results were a resounding success for the Janata and its allies against a combination of the Indira and Swaran Singh Con-

gresses. In fact, for the first time in its history, the Bombay Municipal Corporation returned a single party or group with an overall majority. Equally interesting there was not much visible rejoicing in the city over Mrs. Gandhi's victory. The bursting of crackers is a noisy but traditional method of applauding victory in the city. Few crackers burst the day the result was announced. But the few there were, were from areas dominated by slums or by the poorer sections of the population.

This at once is an indication of the kind of divisions that are being fostered. It is not so much North versus the South that Mrs. Gandhi is depending on, but a policy of championing the have-nots who have the votes against the haves who have fewer; in championing the harijans and the backward classes who again have a larger slice against the caste Hindus who have a smaller slice and again the illiterate majority against the literate minority. Divide to rule appears to be the strategy Mrs. Gandhi has embarked upon to return to Delhi. That she commands the almost fanatic devotion of the poor and uninformed is illustrated by the following from *Sunday* (Nov. 19): Mr. Lawrence Fernandes, brother of George Fernandes, while campaigning in Chikmagalur spoke to an old woman in a village who claimed that she was obliged to vote for Mrs. Gandhi. "Why?" asked Fernandes. "Because the price of rice has come down in the last year. She has lifted the ban on inter-district transactions so we can buy our rice stock from other places," she replied. But don't you know that this is an achievement of the Janata Party? Last year, Mr. Morarji Desai replaced her at the Centre. The rice ban was lifted after he became the Prime Minister," Mr. Lawrence Fernandes countered. But the lady was adamant. "No, why are you lying? Indira amma has done this. She is the Prime Minister."

And Indira Amma is greatly aided by the unending squabbles within the Janata Party. With a patronising air Mrs. Gandhi, basking in the glory of her victory told newsmen that she was neither for "disturbing" the Janata Government nor for "pulling it down". And she added something which unfortunately is very much true. "The Janata Party is conveniently and effectively doing so itself and our party does not have to do it".

It is a pity that instead of a "So what Mrs. Gandhi," there is obvious consternation in Janata ranks. For this, they have themselves to blame. Ours is perhaps the only democracy where a ruling party with an overwhelming majority is put off its stride by a by-election reverse.

As the *Economist* of November 11 puts it: "Mrs. Gandhi's by-election win needn't and shouldn't mean that she is marching back to power."

If the Chikmagalur debacle serves as a shock therapy compelling the squabbling constituents of the Janata Party to bury the hatchet, the election of Mrs. Gandhi would indeed prove to have been a blessing in disguise.

But if, as the *Economist* puts it, "Janata does not start acting like a government in New Delhi and in the states it will eventually find itself an aberrant interlude between Indira Gandhi regimes."

A DEDICATED SERVICE, THE ONLY HOPE

C. Rajagopalachari

Had Rajaji lived he would be a hundred years of age this month. He died on Christmas Day, 1972 at the age of 94. His statue is being unveiled in Delhi and a postage stamp will be released in his honour. A voracious reader and a prolific writer Rajaji could easily be described as among the greatest statesmen India has produced. When he was in his seventies Rajaji founded the Swatantra Party to combat the evil of statism masquerading as socialism. The following article is as relevant today as it was when he first wrote it in the Swarajya of May 3, 1963.

The Fate of a Nation is doomed if corruption poisons its life in every sphere, as most people feel and complain that it does today in our land. Administration at all levels, the economic controls which Government exercises over those engaged in production and distribution, the transport service by road, rail and air, the elections that are held to recruit persons to the various public bodies from the villages up to Delhi, these and the other public activities are poisoned with this fatal poison, and the process is so widely prevalent that people seem reconciled to it. Democracy is disclosing itself as a puppet dancing to the pull of money-strings. It is painful having to say all this about one's own country, one's own people and one's own administration. But the evil cannot be got rid of by being unconfessed and our sufferings borne in silence.

There are hardly three persons feeling optimistic about the situation out of, say, three hundred who either moan in deep pessimism or who, making personal profit out of it, do not object to but admit the prevailing evil. The other day I was talking to a gentleman whose age, status, experience and activities entitled his views to every respect. He described things in vivid and painful detail, with his eyes glistening with sorrow. He painted a picture of utter gloom for the country and I could not disagree with him.

"My name was in the waiting list as No. 8. I sent my man to look into the matter. He spent five rupees and my name was advanced in the list to No. 1 — I don't know how. I found my seat, and when I looked about I saw three berths going vacant.

Judges are taking bribes. District magistrates and others tell me that the salaries they now get are inadequate, and they must "carry on as others do", and so on. I would gladly have rejected this dark picture but my own experiences lead me to the same dismal verdict.

Human nature cannot tolerate this state of affairs. The crisis will lead to revolution of some kind, communist or fascist or military. The people have to face this corruption on one side and high prices and unbearable tax-levies on the other. Oppression and corruption must lead to revolt, and passing through anarchy, democracy must turn into dictatorship. Neither can the resulting tyranny escape the total evil of the times. The dictatorship will not be a relief, for that, too, will be corrupt.

The only hope for the nation lies in the possibility of restoring good government. Once upon a time, just fifteen years ago only, the administration was on the whole honest and, broadly speaking, good and efficient. The interference, of ministers and others with legitimate and illegitimate powers de-

rived from so called democracy has transformed a fairly good government into an intolerably bad administrative machine. Can we retrace the steps and secure an improvement in the morale of our administrative machinery? I believe we can. Let us hope we secure a dedicated set of young people to join the service ranks in all departments through whom we can get this revolution of character accomplished. In order to hope for this, we should make sure of a few things besides appealing to intelligent youth to dedicate themselves to a holy war against corruption.

We must elevate the simple life to the status it had enjoyed in Gandhian and pre-Independence days. It is the standard of life that has corrupted and is corrupting our souls.

We should make administration less expensive by reducing the number of people engaged in that unproductive but important work, while at the same time paying adequate salaries to those employed.

The development of productive industries, should be unhampered by controls and bureaucratic hurdles, so that they may grow quickly and absorb more and more of intelligent young men instead of their being driven by necessity to government service.

Less taxation and less inflation, abandonment of the wholly wrong plan of finding industrial capital by oppressive taxation, and release of private capital and private initiative from the barbed wire entanglement of Central planning — these will help to a large extent in cleaning the air of the poisonous fog of corruption.

There is hope if the young men and women of our country vow to live simply, and to be honest under any circumstances and in any employment. Education is of no use if this dedicated spirit does not crown the acquisition of useful knowledge. Rectitude and rectitude only can save us. Hope thus rests on the restoration of faith in God and even this must be given by Him. May He give us the faith in His mercy and enable us to save our dear motherland, which does not deserve the fate that overhangs it.

OUT OF SIGHT OUT OF MIND?

A Taiwan airliner will be kept out of sight when Mr. Teng Hsiao-ping, the Chinese Deputy Prime Minister, arrives at Bangkok international airport on Sunday.

The Chinese Embassy in Bangkok asked the Thais to prevent any Taiwan aircraft from landing at the airport that day. The Thais refused, but they have made arrangements to ensure that Mr. Teng does not see the airliner.

— *The Times*, London, November 3, 1978.

IN DEFENCE OF INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

Margaret P. Joseph

There has been such a proliferation of Indian writing in English in the past few years, that it has come to be regarded as a literature in its own right. The defensive attitude of fifteen to twenty years ago has now changed to one of growing awareness and acclaim and academic circles have contributed their share of encouragement by elevating this branch of study to the dignity of a University subject for graduates and post-graduates. It is of vital importance that in evaluating this literature, we keep at the same time a sense of balance and cultivate healthy critical standards.

The late Professor David McCutcheon has written a collection of essays published by the Writers' Workshop, Calcutta, calling for objectivity in Indian critics, and remarking that when "set against the achievement of world literature in all ages" Indian writing in English "is as yet insignificant". This is hardly surprising when we remember that Sanskrit literature goes back to the Vedas and Chinese literature to the 6th century B.C. (some of the prose and poetry written at the time being still extant). English literature traces its beginnings to the 8th century A.D. with Alfred's writings and Beowulf, whereas, American literature gained international fame only about 150 years ago with Washington Irving, Fenimore Cooper and Edgar Allan Poe. This actually was sixty years after the Americans attained Independence and was the time when we in India were just beginning to adopt English as a medium of literary expression. The slender output of our first hundred years may be ascribed as much to the social history of the period as to the claustrophobic effects of imperialism which denied the people any sense of national identity. Knowledge of English was confined to the minority who benefited from educational institutions run mainly by missionaries. Political restlessness and economic privations had a share in diverting energies from literature; and the prose and poetry written could have benefited from Melville's famous advice to his fellow Americans "It is better to fail in originality than succeed in imitation".

England threw its shadow over our literature as well as our politics. With Independence came a new consciousness of nationhood and a corresponding increase in literary effort. David McCutcheon calls this a "strange irony" but the relation between the two, is far from adventitious. In fact the growth of Commonwealth Literature stems from the break-up of the English Empire and the emergence of identity in young nations. African writing in English and French has developed only in the last twenty-five years and Australian and Canadian literature have not had to face the linguistic problems of older civilisations. Thirty years in the history of a nation, are, therefore, like a moment in eternity and the insignificance of our achievement is no cause for worry.

A more dangerous aspect to be taken into consideration is that some works may find acclaim far

beyond their merits. Foreigners are no doubt amazed that Indians are competent in English, while we Indians wish to show the world how accomplished we have become in a foreign language. The result is a lowering of critical standards and a frightening lack of critical discrimination. While we do not have to denigrate as negligible all Indian writing in English, we must at the same time realise that more water must flow down the Ganga before this writing gains an international reputation based on the drama, fiction and poetry of a substantial group of writers — not just one or two. What is necessary therefore is a sense of proportion and discipline in the critic. As far as the creative writer is concerned I am convinced that no writer worth his salt would wish to be judged with amused condescension just because he is writing in a foreign language. Critical norms must be universal; and merely because a novel is written by an African or a poem by an Indian, lower critical standards than those applied to English or Americans must not be followed; they would be an encouragement to mediocrity.

On the credit side of the balance sheet is the fact that Indian writing in English has several competent novelists and poets (but few dramatists as yet). R. K. Narayan's style may be lacking in elegance but his evocation of South Indian small-town life has not yet been equalled by any other Indian novelist. Manohar Malgonkar paints vivid pictures of Indian history even though he does not always exercise sufficient control over his material. Raja Rao's, "The Serpent and the Rope" is a good example of a metaphysical novel, and as such will appeal to philosophers, rather than the general public. Kamala Markandaya's books depict with unusual sensitivity characters caught in the throes of the East-West conflict and her command of English results in a range of metaphor that inspires respect; but dangers arise when style begins to call attention to itself, a film over meaning. However there is no call for pessimism! A new generation is bound to produce writers of even higher calibre.

It is widely believed that for the Indian image to be convincingly portrayed, only an Indian language will be suitable. This may be true in the case of those who have learnt English after learning their mother tongue, for quite often their style is academic or ostentatious and betrays an occasional glimpse of the native idiom. Experience which has to undergo mental translation before it can be effectively projected will usually suffer a change in the process. It is for this reason perhaps that Michael Madhusudan Dutt wrote in the 19th century "Let those who feel that they have springs of fresh thought in them fly to their mother-tongue".

But since the time of Dutt the astonishing spread of English-medium schools, (amidst all the fervour for a national language) is producing a new generation that quite often is learning English first, and the mother-tongue second. Even among the older generation, I am sure there are many who by

force of circumstances, speak, write and-most important — think, in English. Urban social habits in India are in a state of flux and after Independence we are growing more westernised than we were before, because the stigma of colonial domination is no longer identified with the West. Therefore, as the years pass, there will assuredly be many (though always no doubt a relatively smaller number) who will write instinctively and idiomatically in English.

Good written English in any part of the world however, still follows the norms set two hundred and fifty years ago by Swift, Addison and Steele. Therefore the contemporary pre-occupation with the need to discover an English style "that will be distinctively Indian and still remain English", as one critic says, is not merely paradoxical but irrelevant. If regional identities are to be conveyed in order to give a faithful picture of the Indian scene, dia-

logue would be a suitable medium, not narrative. There are pitfalls here, too, for peculiarities in dialect can cause a stumbling-block to full identification of reader with character — especially if we hope for an international audience. Keats is said to have found the Scotch dialect in Scott's novels, difficult to understand. The same holds good for an Indian dialect, not only to a non-Indian, but even to an Indian belonging to a different region from that in which the novel is set.

The answer to this problem would be to use colloquial, not a regionally modulated diction, such as R. K. Narayan successfully gives his characters. Writing in English about people who do not normally speak or think in English ought not to constitute an insoluble difficulty. After all Milton's Satan utters magnificent rhetoric, and was English his native tongue?

OF CABBAGES & KINGS —

security guard.

"I can honestly say I never miss being a top manager despite all the power and influence that goes with the job" says Bangsaer (according to the report) now a spry 62. I admit though I get the itch to intervene when I see managers handling a situation badly. But then I think to myself they're young, they'll learn".

One cannot see such a scheme working out in India even though it sounds eminently practical.

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Before that happens there would have to be some parity between what a manager is paid and what a security guard is paid and then perhaps we could raise issues about the dignity of labour and a sense of pride in doing, whatever job there is to be done, well. Of course in politics there was once an attempt at such a tactic, known as the Kamaraj plan, and now that we have a Prime Minister of 83, it is an indication of how that worked — or failed! — GD

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WORLD NEWS

TOKYO, THE WORLD'S COSTLIEST CITY

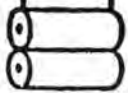
The United Nations released its monthly list of the world's most expensive cities yesterday and it was bad news for people living in Ougadougou, West Africa, where it apparently costs more to live than in New York City, the benchmark by which most of the world judges expensive cities.

But Ougadougou, although more expensive than New York, is not the worst place you can live: there are 21 cities more expensive than Ougadougou, and 54 more expensive than New York, the costliest being Tokyo, followed closely by Kinshasa, Zaire.

New York ranked about midway on the list with Washington further down. Cheapest of all the cities was Colombo, Sri Lanka, where the cost of living is about half that of New York.

The list was a compilation of the relative cost-of-living indices in September for 125 cities where the United Nations maintains sizeable staffs. New York, the UN headquarters base, was given the arbitrary value of 100, with the other cities on the list assigned numbers relative to it. Tokyo ranked highest at 162 followed by Kinshasa (161), Accra (145), Brussels (144), Panama, Bahrain (139) and Bonn (138). Next came Copenhagen (135), The Hague (133), Paris (130), and Vienna (also 130) the world's 10th most expensive city.

— *The Guardian*, October 28, 1978,



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SADAT, YES, BUT WHY BEGIN

No one can be surprised at the Nobel Peace Prize being awarded to President Sadat. He has been the obvious candidate ever since his visit to Jerusalem last year. His peace initiative has undoubtedly been the most courageous and imaginative contribution to world peace in the past year, or indeed for some years past. It required a real break with the accepted mental habits of the world in which any Egyptian president must live. It was absolutely foreseeable, that it would be attacked as a betrayal by a very wide range of Arab opinion, and that Egypt as a result would be, at least temporarily, isolated in the Arab world of which she is the natural leader. But President Sadat came to the conclusion that only in this way could peace be achieved, and peace for him was the overriding priority. If any one deserves a peace prize it is surely a leader who can act like that.

But it is hard not to feel that by making Mr. Sadat share the award with Mr. Begin the Nobel Committee have detracted a good deal from its value. That may seem ungenerous. It is of course true that it takes two to make peace, and that Mr. Begin has responded to the initiative with some important concessions: recognition of Egyptian sovereignty in all Sinai, offer of autonomy to the Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, agreement to the removal of Israeli settlements in Sinai. The last of these, at least, caused genuine heart-searching in Israel and particularly in Mr. Begin's own party. A degree of statesmanship was therefore required for it. Israeli sources have claimed, moreover, that the Sadat initiative was far from being as unilateral as it seemed, that it was prepared by secret diplomacy initiated from the Israeli side, and that the offer to concede all Sinai, at least, was made secretly before Mr. Sadat came to Jerusalem.

All that may be true. But even if so, Mr. Begin was only pursuing a line of diplomacy well marked out by previous Israeli governments: that of prising Egypt away from the Arab coalition facing Israel. It is hard to imagine that any Israeli prime minister now could actually have refused to welcome Mr. Sadat in Israel, and unlikely that any would actually have refused to concede Sinai (a demilitarized Sinai, of course) once the offer of a peace treaty with Egypt, unconditional on agreement by any other Arab party, was on the table. By contrast it is hard to imagine that any other Egyptian leader would have acted as Mr. Sadat has done. There was a qualitative leap in his diplomacy which Mr. Begin has not had to reciprocate.

— *The Times*, London, October 28, 1978.

THE WORLD'S FIFTH LARGEST MUSLIM POWER

One of the things seldom remembered about the Soviet Union is that it is (after Indonesia, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh) the fifth Muslim power

— *The Times*, London, October 26, 1978.

POLISH COMMUNISTS IN A DILEMMA

Editors of Poland's state-controlled Press received two directives from the censor's office after Cardinal Karol Wojtyla became Pope John Paul II. The first: no photograph of the Pope was to be wider than one column. Second: no headline on a story about the Pope was to be wider than two columns. Only the few small-circulation Catholic publications got a little more latitude. These directives, strictly applied, reflected the acute anxiety and uncertainty that the Papal election caused the country's communist rulers.

After an urgent conclave of its own the politburo accepted the situation as gracefully as it could, and the three top leaders sent a cordial joint message to the new Pope. The president and prime minister set off to Rome for the installation Mass, and more than 1,000 pilgrims were allowed to make the journey. This initial burst of concessions, which could scarcely have been withheld without serious risk of hostile demonstrations, was capped by Polish television being allowed to transmit live the three-hour service.

But what the party leadership gave with one hand it tried to take away with the other. For instance, in Cracow the Catholic weekly paper, with a circulation officially limited to 40,000, was firmly turned down by the Cracow party authorities when its deputy editor pleaded for a double ration of newsprint for that momentous week.

Even the permission for 300 Cracow pilgrims to fly to Rome in three charter aircraft of the Polish state airline was qualified by an extraordinary, punitive charge for the flight. According to Bishop Julian Grobicki of Cracow this was fixed at 100 American dollars for laymen (\$150 dollars for priests).



Courtesy: Herald Tribune, October 24

plus an additional sum for each person, bringing the total to roughly three months salary per pilgrim. The authorities did make a special effort to speed up the issue of passports, but these were withheld from several people.

Another striking example of pouring of official cold water on the occasion, was the complete absence in the Pope's birthplace, Wadowice, near Cracow, of any flags or publicly displayed photographs except at the town's main church. When I asked inhabitants the reason, they said sadly, "We have not had permission for any public demonstration".

— *The Sunday Times*, October 29, 1978.

The measure of achievement



99 years ago, we were a single, simple dyeing unit. Today, our textile complex is one of the largest in the world. In 1977, sales crossed the Rs. 80-crore mark.

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- The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry 1972 Award for pioneering export achievement.
- The Government of India Award for outstanding achievement in export promotion for 1972-73.
- The Government of Maharashtra Directorate of Industries Prize for best export performance for 1973-74.
- The Texprocil Award for outstanding export performance in 1976-77.

How's that for achievement?

BOMBAY DYEING

WORLD NEWS — Continued

SPEAKER HEDGE PLEASE NOTE

German MPs may soon have to pay fines for the privilege of calling one another liars and similar unparliamentary names. The floor-leader of the minority Liberal Party in Bonn has proposed that instead simply of being called to order — which costs nobody anything — MPs who are rude to one another should forfeit £40.50 per insult (a day's pay). It would be a kind of high priced swear-box with a fixed penalty for every offence however mild or however serious. The floor-leader, Mr. Torsten Wolfram says that language in the Bundestag, once bad, is now getting even worse.

Research by the parliamentary staff of *Die Welt* and of the West German news agency DPA, suggests that two favourite descriptions of a political opponent — "liar" and "prattling idiot" — invariably invoke a rebuke from the Speaker. But there are others. "Hypocrite" is not allowed. Nor are "rabble," "shameless demagogue," "impostor," "deceiver," and "prisoner of wells." Other unparliamentary language, attributed by *Die Welt* and DPA to the Social Democrats' Parliamentary Chairman, and Bonn's most accomplished parliamentarian, Herbert Wehner, includes the words "hooligan," "wrecker," "vagabond," "comedian" and surprisingly — "Father Christmas."

As insults go some of these are vigorous words. But if the Bundestag will forgive us it has to be said that they are relatively unsophisticated. For out-and-out postgraduate vilification the student of insult must turn to the older democracies. A *Guardian* reporter, filing from the National Assembly in Paris, once reported an Honourable Deputy as having said that "the Minister of the Interior lies as naturally and as often as he breathes." There was also, of course, Disraeli's description of the Government, as "a range of exhausted volcanoes" — though he spouted thus outside the House. Under the proposed arrangements for the Bundestag, Disraeli would even now be treading towards the sin bin, pursued by a yellow card.

The Guardian October 27, 1978.

LESSONS IN PRAGMATISM

HONG KONG, Oct. 29 (WP) — Like an eager if overage pupil, China has embarked on an ironic pilgrimage to learn from its ancient cultural offspring and once bitter enemy — Japan.

Communist Party leaders in Peking tell visitors that they plan to follow the example of the 1868 Meiji Restoration and the Japanese economic miracle. Chinese Deputy Premier Teng Hsiao-ping arrived in Japan with the announced intention to "learn from ... the great, industrious, heroic and wise Japanese people". A Cabinet-level delegation is following him to explore "the secrets of the high-growth Japanese economy".

In Japan, the Chinese find lessons in efficiency and enterprise not so tainted by the rugged individualism they find so distasteful in the West. Japan suggests a way to build modern factories without losing too much of traditional arts, a way to borrow from the West without being controlled by it. Japan offers economic vitality without immense income differences or social schisms. It insists on a respect

for elderly leaders that sits well with China's current gerontocracy.

When a new government took over in China in 1976 after the death of Mao Tse tung, analysts wondered how much it would change Mao's policy of economic self-reliance and what foreign examples it might follow.

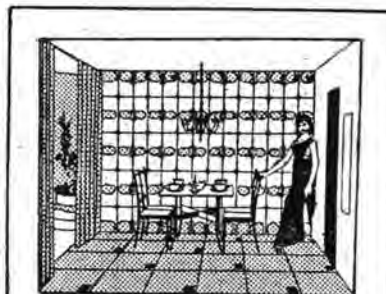
The most prophetic answer came in an unusually detailed wall poster that appeared on a busy street in Canton on January 23, 1977. With language and authority that seemed to indicate inspiration from very high in the Communist Party, the poster pronounced open envy of the Japanese.

"In 1957, Japan produced about 10 million tons of steel, approximately the same amount as China," the poster said. "But in 1972, Japan's steel production was more than 100 million tons while ours was only 29 million tons."

"Does this mean," the poster asked, "that the Chinese people are less intelligent than the Japanese, that we are less diligent? Does it mean that Chinese natural resources are inferior to those of Japan or that our social system is somehow lacking?"

"No," it concluded, "but many major changes in the Chinese economic system were necessary." Then it listed a series of measures that in the 21 months since have become officially enshrined as China's new economic programme: Factoryworker wage increases, bonuses, strict cost accounting, more consumer goods, higher incomes for peasants and rapid introduction of foreign technology.

Jay Mathews, *Herald Tribune*, October 36, 1978.



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Book Review

GANGA, Sacred River of India, with photographs by Raghbir Singh and an introduction by Eric Newby; Perennial Press, Hong Kong; price US \$ 30-00.

The *namavali*, or chain-of-names with which its devotees woo the river Ganga, contains as many as 108 names, ranging from "Thou who are born from the lotus-like feet of the God Vishnu," to "Thou who leapest over mountains in sport." But this list contains no such name as the *Ganges*, which must be regarded as the 109th name of the river, coined by the British; a capricious linguistic distortion that has gone into maps and gazetteers and into geography textbooks.

It is thus good to see that Ganga, this ancient and euphonically satisfying name should have been preferred as the title of a handsome coffee-table book brought out by the Perennial Press of Hong Kong.

'Ganga', even though nothing in the book says so in so many words, is an attempt to tell the story of the river from its source to its mouths, in words and pictures, and while doing so, to explain the river's importance in the Hindu religion as well as in the life of the land through which it flows. That it succeeds remarkably well in achieving this object is a tribute to the manner of its telling, for it is a joint effort by two accomplished craftsmen in their separate spheres, Mr Raghbir Singh, and Mr Eric Newby.

Mr Singh is one of India's most sought after photographers, and Mr Newby the author of one of

the most interesting and informative books on the river to have come out in recent times, 'Slowly Down the Ganges'. What is perhaps more important, both photographer and writer profess to have an emotional involvement in their subject. Mr Singh says that he had always had "a passion for ... the river," right from his childhood, and Mr Newby, that he "loves all rivers."

Mr Newby restricts himself to explaining the river's place in the Hindu religion, relying heavily upon Sanskrit quotations from the scriptures and prayer-books as well as from myths and legends. But he also supplies interesting snippets from less esoteric sources to try and explain why the Ganga should be held in such high esteem by the Hindus: because it makes the land fertile, he suggests, by bringing down "335,000,000 tons of silt every year." Or because its water possesses miraculous qualities; "Bottled, it will keep for a year," he quotes some one else as saying; or that cholera germs die in it within a few hours; or even that "a tank reputed to be fed from it," has the power of dissolving human bones within three days!

Mr Newby's text, which had fitted neatly into the more leisurely pace of his travelogue, is not here seen to its best advantage, and takes on the aspect of a high-school level crash course on the significance of the Ganga in the Hindu religion.

But then Mr Raghbir Singh's pictures are not such that they need wordy explanations. He has mastered the art of making his photographs speak for themselves. What might have, in less skilled hands, turned out to be a series of monotonous riverscapes, is a book that unfolds a story as it goes along. Even though Mr Singh may not have intended it, his photographs create the impression that, in proportion as the Ganga becomes accessible to its devotees, it loses some of its holiness, that, for the last thousand miles of its course, it is too much a part of the daily life of the people who live along its banks, the farmers, the boatmen, the fishermen, the cowherds and others, to remain the special preserve of a religion. In the words of a Sanskrit verse that Mr Newby does not quote, "the river descends to the earth and degenerates into a hundred sluggish mouths."

In a collection of a hundred or so excellent photographs, it is not easy to select a few for special mention except as a matter of purely personal preference. The ones of the source of the river have a magic quality about them; it is difficult to dispel the impression that one is present at the creation of something celestial. A thousand miles down the river, the monsoon effects are just as spectacular. The group of women in wet clothes huddling together and the farmer lugging a load of waterlogged corn against a stiff breeze, have the power to make you want to turn up your collar against the wind and reach for your umbrella. For Hindus and non-Hindus alike, a book to covet and to keep.

Manohar Malgonkar

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INDIAN SOVIET RELATIONS 1947-77

Edited by V. B. Singh, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd.,
pages 80; Price Rs. 20/-.

In international affairs, relations between two nations are not always friendly because of their love for each other or because either has a genuine interest in the welfare of the other. In fact a multitude of complex factors make up international relations. Political and economic stakes, the location of a nation in a certain region, geo-political factors and ideological compulsions often dictate the trends in international relations and bilateral relations is only a cog in the wheel of international relations. Therefore to nurse the concept of 'friendly nation' is, to put it mildly to be politically naive.

"Indo-Soviet Relations 1947-77" is a compilation of articles written on various aspects of Indo-Soviet relations like diplomacy, culture, science and technology, economy and defence. Perusing this thin volume, the biased and propagandistic motives of the authors are hardly concealed and this predictably results in lack of objectivity, causing academic devaluation of the subject.

Most of the book is more or less a chronological record of exchange of visits of Indian and Soviet delegations, signing of pacts and agreements, celebrations of friendship weeks or giving a list of Soviet aided projects and programmes.

The authors have failed to examine Indo-Soviet relations in the context of changing patterns of international relations in the light of *detente*. While

lauding Soviet help during the Bangladesh crisis, the authors make no mention of the initial Soviet backing to Pakistan on the Kashmir issue, which later changed due to cold war considerations.

R. S. Upadhyaya, one of the authors, in his article "Cultural Relations" quotes The Soviet Encyclopaedia (1971) edition on the Gandhian philosophy as a 'socio-political doctrine which acted as a progressive force stimulating India's freedom struggle and was a genuinely popular anti-imperialist movement.' Did not the same Soviet Union also dub Gandhiji 'imperialist agent' in the early fifties? Suffice this example to illustrate the double standards of Soviet friendship.

This book will no doubt serve as a 'Bible' to the innumerable Russophiles in this country but for a dispassionate student it is not of much value.

Nitin Raut

BUTTON SHORTAGE IN SIBERIA

Workers on the new trans-Siberian railway have been issued trousers without fly-buttons because of a button shortage, the Soviet party newspaper "Pravda" said in Moscow on Tuesday.

The shortage on the Buryat sector of the railways was the second example of supply difficulties in recent weeks.

Last month "Pravda" reported that tooth brushes were not available in certain parts of Siberia. On that occasion the paper advised readers to clean their teeth with shotgun cleaning brushes.

Times of India

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LOOKING FOR MR. GOODBAR, ON A SATURDAY NIGHT, FEVERISHLY

Tony Manero is a nineteen year-old paint shop assistant living in Brooklyn, New York. His brother is a Catholic priest, his father is unemployed and all Tony lives for is the weekly night of revelry on Saturdays, at the local discotheque.

Theresa (Terry) Dunn is a teacher at a school for the deaf. She has to leave the constraints of a catholic upbringing to live her own life in the city and her evenings are spent picking up on experiences amidst the sordid glamour of the singles bars, until events finally get beyond her.

Typical young Americans? No, of course not — yet these two characters are the subjects of two important movies released in the States last year and still drawing attention in theatres around the world — Tony in *Saturday Night Fever* and Terry in *Looking for Mr. Goodbar*. Though the two productions were made entirely independent of each other, there is an uncanny resemblance between them, both in what they have to say about the new trends in American life styles and about the two individuals involved — both young both looking for release, both undergoing a catharsis, at a peak of stress they even flee to the same refuge, the New York subway system. Even in their major differences there is a certain logic: Tony's story is filled out with straight humour and entertainment although it involves the death of a friend, while Terry's tale is harrowing, despite the flashes of fast humour, and ends with her own gruesome death.

But beyond these features and, possibly, beyond the expectations of the film makers themselves, is the view these two movies offer of an America we rarely see. Gangsters, car chases, romance, slice-of-life realism and total fantasy — you name it, the American movie industry has offered it up; yet in these two films, seen together, one can glimpse the emergence of a new mood, a nebulous, uncertain message. It is as if the film makers set out to take two fairly ordinary portraits, printed them and then saw in their photographs the shadow of another dimension.

Let's take Tony first: here's your average young guy, nothing much in his head, nothing unusual about his family, nothing interesting about his gang, nothing spectacular about his girlfriends and even though he is a superb dancer he discovers at the end that he's not tops at that either..... but wait a minute, are we talking about a current American hero, a maker of trends, or some little nobody who became the focus of attention for no particular reason?

Take a closer look: Tony is handsome — maybe the eyes are too close together the mouth too wide, the nose unbelievably long and that low-slung hairline a sign of feeble mental activity — but alright, the composite has a raw gutsy appeal, very male, very distinctive. Then his family — standard cliches:

his mother has the kind of wasted beauty looks of a hundred Italian mothers; there's the little old grandmother, there's the run-to-seed father, crabby in the way of retired men; there's a pretty kid sister; and there's a brother who's a priest. During the movie the brother leaves the priesthood, causing a pall of doom and despair to fall over this household where to have a son in the Church is to have a first class pass to heaven. The gang is made up of four Italian-American punks whose names and faces are entirely interchangeable. The girlfriend, Annette is pretty in a plump, forgettable way; we've all met her sometime in life — the silly adoring kind of girl who, as Tony says, only talks about her married sisters, and herself aspires only to be another married sister. Stephanie, who attracts Tony's attention because she dances well and dancing is the only thing he cares about, is more mature, ambitious, hoping to go places in her job as a social secretary. She's pretty in a brittle, inconsequential way, foreshadowing how her features will set into the middle-class effigy of what is truly pretty or truly chic. Her conversation, her accent, her desires for such mundane graces as tea-with-lemon, all betray her pathetic longing to rise above her background, symbolized by her intention to cross the Verrazano Bridge to live in a flat on the other side, in glamorous uptown New York.

The story line is intentionally only a main event in a multi-ring circus: Tony plans to compete in the disco-dancing competition at the 2001 Discotheque, where he is king of the dancing rink. The side-shows include: Tony dumping Annette as a dancing partner, in favour of Stephanie; the member of the gang who has got his girlfriend pregnant; the sudden burst of violence against a neighbouring gang of "spics" (Puerto Rican immigrants); Stephanie's moment of truth when Tony meets her ex-lover. They are all sharply drawn vignettes accumulating a picture of ordinary, middle class life, which even in a big sophisticated city like New York, has only a cheap lustre. Tony speaks of the disco-competition as if it were a major international event — "they'll be comin' in from all around" — and with a slight shock we realize that he means it, that his ideas of the world outside are truly that small.

In the end there is only a faint ray of promise for Tony, suburban socialite. His night of catharsis starts when he and Stephanie win the competition but not before Tony realizes it has all been rigged in his favour because the judges are fellow Italian-Americans, and not because he is any better than the rest. In frustration he attempts a crude assault on Stephanie, but she's a tough Brooklyn girl — she knees him and walks out of his life. Annette then achieves legitimate group status in the backseat of the car with the other members of Tony's gang; the father-to-be member falls off the Verrazano Bridge

to his death and Tony flies away from his gang to do some soul-searching amidst the graffiti-scarred transports in the bowels of the city. Dawn sees him going to Stephanie's apartment to beg forgiveness. The last shot shows him framed against the morning light, holding Stephanie's hand in truce; maybe he'll be more than a paintshop assistant, maybe he will be Stephanie's boyfriend, maybe he too will cross the bridge someday, but that is all. A small horizon of success in a life of no ambitions — so much for the contemporary hero!

Terry's story is at all times a lot bleaker: for a start, she is in her twenties, and not merely at the threshold of adulthood. Then, as a member of the conservativ, narrow-minded and non-immigrant (or not recently immigrated) segment of the American population, the background she has to fight is harsher on her than ever it was on Tony, perhaps also giving credence to the idea that men can get away with their excesses whereas, in the movies at least, women still cannot. For her, the ground rules include having to leave home rather than face her tyrannical father when she comes back late; to living alone and celibate or shackled to one man. While Tony is basically portrayed as a non-intellectual facing the philosophical issue of growing up, Terry is sensitive and intelligent — expressed by her dedication to her job teaching little deaf children how to live normal lives. Tony's brother is initially an example to emulate, while Terry's elder sister — who is viewed as the prettier, successful one — divorces twice in the course of the film and indulges in a squalid personal life, and the other one is merely a baby-machine. It is obvious that neither of these alternatives appeals to Terry — but does she have any other options?

And perhaps that is what makes the films interesting — the idea that even in America, the land of dreams come true, there are not always so many choices. We are taught to believe that Americans live a life of unrestrained freedom so removed from our own, with our social restraints and communal tensions, but here are two movies showing two characters buckling under exactly such pressures. Equally, there is no attempt to make dramatic or tragic figures out of Tony and Terry — we accept readily that these are not intrinsically important people and even as we become involved in their lives we are not deeply affected by what happens to them.

In short, here are two movies which tell us something we might have guessed but are not usually told — that the American Way is not always the best or happiest one. What is even more surprising is that we are told this indirectly, almost unintentionally because it is not at all clear that the directors were concerned about how the movies would be read by non-Americans. Squalor is not the theme of either of the movies, but that is what comes through most strikingly, from the cockroaches and filth of Terry's apartment to the crude realities of sex in the backseat (almost entirely censored in India). At one time ugliness and Americana could not be mentioned in the same breath but in these two movies the concepts have merged so completely they are not even the focus of attention. And at the end, it is hard to tell what their composite message is: for the film makers, maybe, they are a preview of what must happen all over the world as we unerringly follow the American example; for ourselves, perhaps, a timely warning.

Manjula Padmanabhan

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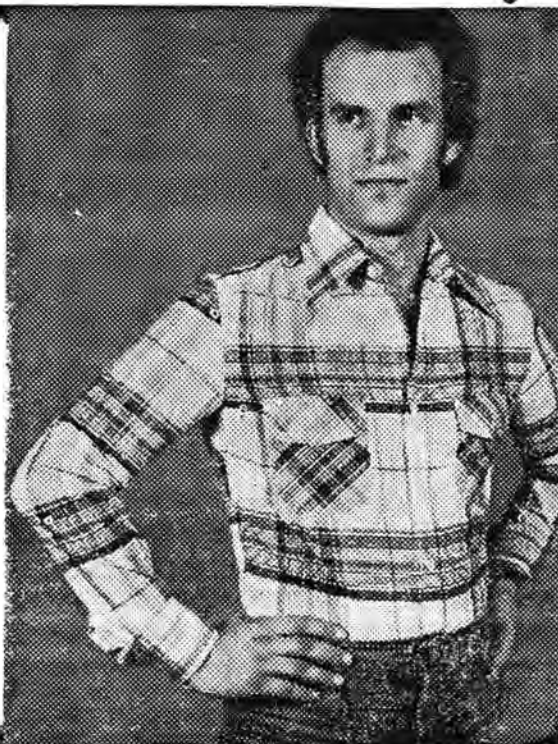
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Letter

WHY JAGUAR, WHY NOT VIGGEN

Sir:

After a lengthy controversy, the Government has finally decided to buy the Anglo-French Jaguar. However, in comparison to the Viggen and Mirage F-1, the Jaguar falls short on many counts.

The Viggen has a top speed of 1320 mph (Mach 2) and the Mirage 1450 mph (Mach 2.2) while the Jaguar has a top speed of only 1057 mph (Mach 1.6).

The radius of action on a typical 'hi-10-hi' Mission of the Jaguar is 600-1315 km; of the Mirage 520-1100 km; and of the Viggen 800-1500 km. Here the Jaguar possesses a marginal advantage over the Mirage but, is out-classed by the Viggen.

As far as acceleration is concerned (from brakes off) the Viggen climbs to over 36,000 ft. in 1.8 minutes whereas the Mirage does it in 3 minutes and the Jaguar comes limping up in 3½ minutes. Besides, the Viggen can operate on a runway of about 500 metres, whereas the Mirage needs 1150 metres and the Jaguar around 1600 metres fully loaded. And the most amazing thing of all — fully loaded (Maximum Ordnance) the Jaguar can only do 430 mph! (Janes All the Worlds Aircraft).

According to an RAF survey by *The Economist* in its issue of 17th to 23rd December 1977, the Jaguar has been described as 'theoretically supersonic' in fact underpowered. With weapons hanging on its wings it would have difficulty keeping up with the Buccaneer (which flies 'in reasonable conditions, just below the speed of sound').

In the words of *The Economist*, one suspects that a poorish aircraft is being stretched out further over the years than it should be!

As far as avionics are concerned, the Viggen is among the few aircraft in the world with the advanced 'X-Band' pulse, Doppler radar.

Though the U.S. vetoed the Viggen deal, it is common knowledge that the Government was leaning towards the Jaguar and that the Viggen and Mirage deals were not pressed.

The critical financial position of the Swedish economy also makes them eager for collaboration and further development of the Viggen. In any case, the Jaguar is inferior to the other two and the NATO forces are planning to phase it out gradually.

It is freely stated in our country that politics cannot be eschewed in any major decisions whether they relate to flood relief operations or locating multicore projects. One wishes to avoid a feeling that the decision to buy Jaguars does not come within the ambit of such general reputation. The defence of the country should at least be out of the political arena. The wisdom of the choice cannot be decided by assertions, one way or the other; but by results if there comes a need, God forbid, for using these in combat. Till then, it is only a question of exhibiting our wares during Republic Day celebrations!

Ranjan Guha

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

—Tennyson

"Even the Shah of Iran could find some corner
of his country to elect him today.

—*The Economist*, November 11, 1978.

Politicians with a backbone are a rare phenomenon.

Himmat, November 3, 1978.

I am not important. What I do is important.

Datuk Hussein Onn,
Malaysian Prime Minister,
Statesman, September 24, 1978.

If ever there was an example of the capacity of
the government to give a good word a bad name,
consider the word 'privacy'.

— Fred Graham, *Herald Tribune*,
September 11, 1978.

The Pentagon now finds that it can recruit what
it regards as high-quality females for about the same
price as low-quality males.

Time, October 30, 1978.

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My esteem in the country has gone up substantially. It is very nice now that when people wave
at me, they use all their fingers.

Jimmy Carter, *Time*, October 30, 1978.

A new "invisible man" has been born within
our midst — the South-east Asian refugee.

Bayard Rustin, *AFL-CIO Free Trade
Union News*, June 1978.

The Socialist parties of Western Europe, with
the exception of the German Social Democrats, seem
to have a death wish.

John P. Roche, *AFL-CIO Free Trade
Union News*, June 1978.

President Carter, like the dollar, has been over-
sold.

The Economist, October 21, 1978.

Whatever the politicians and their bureaucratic
sidekicks might say, it is just not possible for an
import business of Rs. 800 crores to go on year
after year without active assistance from the right
quarters.

— *India Today*, November 5, 1978.

Politics is like paddling a canoe, you lean a
little left, then a little right to move straight ahead.

— Governor Jerry Brown, *The Observer*,
November, 5, 1978.

During two weeks in China, the only people I
saw wearing Mao Pins were foreign tourists.

— *Newsweek* correspondent
Fred Coleman, quoted in *The Statesman*,
November 5 1978.

If the Conservative party believed it could gain
votes it would not only kill its own grand mother, but
eat her too.

— Mr. Enoch Powell, *The Guardian*,
October 12, 1978.

Their (the PLO's) ungratitude and obscenity
have gone beyond all limits.

Anwar Sadat, *Newsweek*, October 23, 1978.