

A Chief Minister as Clown

NISSIM EZEKIEL

The service of the naive, in politics as in other areas, is that it brings into the open widely held values. It gives voice to the voiceless, and reveals attitudes that are otherwise concealed.

From that point of view, both Mr. Antulay and Mr. Bhosale have played and continue to play an important role in our public life. Mr. Antulay institutionalises and glorifies corruption. Mr. Bhosale announces that Mrs. Gandhi is a goddess and that he prostrates himself before her. The implied modes of thinking and feeling, though rarely announced so bluntly, are normally acceptable in India.

In attacking Mr. Antulay and Mr. Bhosale we are not attacking individuals only but the way of life they represent. It should not be our case against them merely that they preach what they practice instead of dealing behind the screen or under the table. It is naive of them to preach as they do, but it is no more than naivete. Our demand is not for more sophistication but for more clarity, honesty, self-criticism and soundness in thought and action.

In a letter to the editor of a national newspaper, a correspondent writes about Mr. Bhosale: "It is one thing to be a flatterer: it is worse for a chief minister to be proud of being one and to admit it publicly. If Mrs. Gandhi must surround herself with sycophants she should choose only those capable of not appearing to be so." (The Times of India, 15 Feb.)

The proposed remedy here, though not worse than the disease, is still a disease. Unless intended to be ironic, it suggests that clever and subtle flattery, which refutes the label, is preferable to the straightforward variety which boasts as it blusters along.

We need as a people to learn that loyalty and faith need not be blind. They do not require the sacrifice of self-respect, independence of mind and analytical assessment of leaders or policies. Prostration before the image of a goddess or god is part of a religious ritual. It should have no other place in our lives where our relationships are with human beings, with whom we share the limitations and weaknesses of being human.

That Mr. Bhosale provided Mr. Antulay with public office so soon after being indicted for corruption by a court of law is a grievous reflection on both of them.

Maharashtra is singularly unfortunate to have as Chief Minister now a man so immature that he thinks his prestige is enhanced if he is referred to as Barrister. All talk of giving him a fair chance, and not assessing him till he had the time to act on some major administrative and political questions, is already proved an exercise in futility.

Mr. Bhosale simply does not have the calibre, the stature, even the dignity needed for high office. There is something of the clown in his personality. That he believes the myth of Mr. Antulay's "dynamism" is evidence of his political ineptitude.

There is not the slightest prospect, in my view, that Maharashtra will make much progress because of the administrative and political abilities of Mr. Bhosale. If it does, it will be in spite of him. As for Mr. Antulay the end of the road is not yet. He will keep bobbing up in his characteristically vain and melodramatic manner which, he thinks, impresses people. And he will go down, his head bloody but unbowed, over and over again.

It is Maharashtra and India that will pay the price for all this tomfoolery.

A VARIETY OF COMMENT

K. S. VENKATESWARAN

1. The Limits of Aid

WHEN Ronald Reagan spoke out his mind on international development issues at the Cancun summit meeting last November, many in the Third World interpreted his remarks as but another manifestation of Western insensitivity to the appalling poverty of the so-called less developed countries (LDCs). The American President was roundly castigated for the alleged lack of sympathy which characterised his pronouncements on, among other things, the relevance of direct financial assistance to the LDCs.

Which is not really surprisingly, because not only was the burden of Reagan's song disappointingly unconventional (from the Third World's point of view) but, more significantly, the American President did precious little to camouflage his remarks in the euphemistic lingo that has so dominated discussion on sensitive international questions over the years.

"Unless a nation puts its economic and financial house in order, no amount of aid will produce progress," observed Reagan with characteristic candour, the stern message intended to hit the LDCs where it hurts most. Reagan's no-nonsense approach to economic development, laying as it does tremendous stress on individual initiative, freedom of choice and extensive reliance on the open market, could hardly be expected to gladden the hearts of his Southern colleagues, most of whom were incurably addicted to centralised planning, massive state intervention and strangulating controls on private enterprise. Their reaction was as swift as it was predictable.

How long, one wonders, will such meaningless semantic exchanges continue? And to what end? The LDCs might have some justification in their case against Western economic practices, e.g. growing protectionism in certain European and American markets, but to routinely dismiss the validity of the thesis that aid from the affluent North can play only a subordinate, catalytic role in development, is to show a reckless contempt for history.

2. Antulay and the Law

EVEN as many in the legal profession and outside began resigning themselves to accepting the disappointing judgement of the Supreme Court in what came to be known as the "Judges Case", a bright ray of hope appeared on the judicial horizon. The Bombay High Court delivered its momentous judgement in the Antulay affair.

Apart from the immediate political implications that followed Justice Lentin's historic ruling, the case is singularly significant for at least two important reasons of a far-reaching character.

First, it has demonstrated, more vividly than ever before, the true strength and value of a fearless, independent judiciary in a democracy governed by the rule of law. This aspect deserves to be highlighted in the prevailing atmosphere of widespread cynicism, sustained assiduously by politicians whose allergy to judicial independence is only too well-known.

Secondly, the verdict against Antulay has established the salutary principle that, given the will, determination and public spirit, it is possible even for an ordinary citizen to bring to book an errant holder of public office, however high and powerful, if he has a reasonably good case.

Called *locus standi* in strict legalese, the latter aspect was, incidentally, underscored by the Supreme Court itself in its recent judgement. As one of the senior counsel appearing in that case pointed out, it constituted a major victory for the petitioners, despite their case being dismissed on merit in the end. Whether or not more of our fellowmen will avail of this invaluable right remains, however, a moot question.

3. American Sanctions

ONE of the ironical off-shoots of the recent developments in Poland, has been the criticism which the American sanctions have provoked from many countries, notably those in the socialist camp. The diplomacy of sanctions, goes the charge, represents at best a modified technique of imperialism.

What is curious about the allegation is that these very countries have been more vocal than the rest in their vigorous advocacy of stringent sanctions against South Africa and, to a lesser extent, against Israel, both in the United Nations and outside. To reconcile their present aversion to the diplomacy of sanctions with their undisguised stand in the past, is not easy.

The question that deserves to be asked to assess the justness of the American action, according to our socialist friends, is whether the general mass of the Polish people has in any significant way benefited, directly and immediately, by the sanctions. By the same token, it can be asked with equal earnestness and relevance whether by isolating South Africa on all fronts, any significant improvement in the condition of the teeming mass of that country's black population has been achieved.

Although the answer to both questions is admittedly in the negative, hypocrisy and blind prejudice prevents those who have, overtly or by silent acquiescence, endorsed the blatant suppression of human rights in Poland, from acknowledging the utility of the American move, however symbolic it might seem in the present context.

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RED DISINFORMATION

Propaganda is something the Communists use with impunity. They thus come out winners more often than not in the propaganda war with the democracies.

Propaganda is something the Reds can toy with more effectively than anyone else. They are not encumbered by the truth, or by the niceties of pledges or morality. They cut corners with facts in the ruthless pursuit of their goals.

Take the Soviet Union: in its continuing ideological war with the United States, it has come up with something even better than propaganda: disinformation.

In the propanganda war, the U.S. has definitely taken a back seat to the Soviets.

This is the word from the director of the U.S. International Communications Agency, which used to be the U.S. Information Service (USIS). This agency is, of course, the vehicle with which the U.S. counters Russian propanganda and, for good measure, issues answering assertions of its own.

His assertion is that, in recent days, the U.S. has reacted much too slowly to a spate of Soviet propaganda offensives.

This has resulted in the lackadaisical attitude of America's allies in Europe. Soviet disinformation has more or less caused the anti-American sentiment among Europeans, according to him.

The Soviet disinformation drive among Europeans is that they are the peace lovers and the Americans the warmongers. The Americans are the ones, as pictured, trying to insinuate their Pershing and cruise missiles into Europe, while the Soviets will have nothing of this. As the Soviet disinformation tactic puts it, the Americans couldn't care less what happens in Europe so long as they steal a march on the Soviets. Who cares about Europe so long as America is safe? That's the Soviet disinformation line.

The free world started fighting lies and inaccuracies with the facts.

Another project is Dateline America, a news feature service. American information officials are now keeping their fingers crossed. Can staid, impersonal and straight reporting of the facts cope with Soviet disinformation and propaganda?

The American predicament, it seems, is being suffered in U.S. ties with Red China. Peking is even now unleashing its disinformation campaign against the Americans, has in fact had this disinformation campaign going for some time now.

Peking has, in truth, been conducting a two-pronged disinformation drive vis-a-vis the U.S. First, it has held out the possibility that its massed armies can immobilize the Russian war machine in their common borders. Second, it has stuck to the line that it has nothing but peaceful intentions with respect to the Republic of China on Taiwan.

It is a sad fact that the U.S., has played right into Red Chinese hands in trying to use the Red China Card against the Soviets. Peking does not really have to bend over backward in gearing its disinformation campaign in this regard. The U.S. is just too willing to get its neck in the noose on this one.

Regarding the Taiwan question, the Americans too often fall easy prey, as the Red Chinese have been playing coy on the subject. Their recent peace offensive is a prime example. It does not fool us, but it has raised doubts among many Americans on our receptivity to what they think are amicable, fraternal gestures from Peking.

Disinformation on a sweeping scale is what this amounts to. Peking has made a winning game of this enterprise. Our objective, then, is to prevent the Reds from loading the bases, to get them to strike out the next time at bat.

That calls for counter-disinformation, or counter-propaganda if you please. We should get our message to the Americans, strongly and persuasively.

We are lucky in this respect that President Reagan has replaced Jimmy Carter and his cohorts who sold us out in their hurry to play the Red Chinese card.

But we can't be too complacent either. Reagan is beset on all sides with the demands of world politics, the constraints on American leadership of the free world. We have to dig in, to get in a fewicks of our own, or as much as we possibly can. Helping those Americans and all others who believe in our cause is helping ourselves.

RAMA SWARUP

TURKEY IN TURMOIL

RASHMI TANEJA

Military sources say that 40,000 persons have been detained, of which nearly 30,000 have been indicted. Several hundred trade unionists are also reported to be under detention. Almost 85 death sentences have been passed and 11 have been carried out. Torture is said to be practised in the country's jails; some of the victims have died.

The scenario is not General Jaruzelski's Poland, but General Kenan Euren's Turkey. And yet, in spite of the infringement of human rights, the imposition of martial law in Turkey has not evoked the emotional outbursts of rage on the same scale as did the Polish crisis.

Today, 17 months after the *coup d'etat*, the military administration apparently enjoys the support of the majority of the population. Most Turks find it difficult to forget the earlier years. For three years the Turks lived through a nightmare of violence, civil strife and anarchy. Fierce gang warfare between left and right armed extremists ravaged the country. 5000 died in 1980 alone.

Along with the violence people recall the feuding politicians and their corruption, the battered economy, the runaway inflation, the severe shortages and the flourishing black market.

The armed forces have restored law and order. There are few assassination attempts now on the streets of Ankara. Most of the terrorists have been rounded up and their arms seized. Indeed, the authorities claim to have been remarkably just and even-handed in their crack-down on the terrorists of the far-left and far-right.

The rulers have scored some economic gains too. During the late '70s, the Turkish economy had been shattered by oil price rises, growing indebtedness abroad, stagnant exports and a spiralling import bill, which were the climax of protectionist policies adopted by successive governments for over half a century. By 1979, there were acute shortages of essential commodities. Inflation peaked at 120% in 1980.

The rate of inflation is down to 40% and productivity levels have risen markedly. Exports

were up in 1981 by almost 55% over the previous year. Trade with the Middle East is buoyant. The Turkish markets are now ripe for foreign investment.

The series of measures to shove up the economy were ushered in two years ago under the civilian government by the Finance Minister Mr. Turgut Ozal, and adopted by the military regime. The recovery has to a great extent been assisted by the constraints imposed by the administration. Strikes are banned and trade union activity is prohibited.

According to some experts the recovery may be short-lived. There is some scepticism whether the economic turnaround will be able to rescue the country from its state of collapse.

Since their intervention on September 12 1980, power has resided with the five-member National Security Council, headed by General Euren. The Generals have promised to restore democracy sometime in 1983 or 1984. There seems little reason to doubt their intentions. After all, the military holds a good track record in handing back power to the civilian politicians at the appropriate time.

During the last two decades power has seen-sawed between the governments of Mr. Bulent Ecevit, leader of the Republican People's Party, and Mr. Suleyman Demirel, chairman of the right-wing Justice Party, interspersed with periods of Military rule.

Recent actions by the Military have however given cause for unease. On October 16, last year the National Security Council disbanded the political parties. As a matter of fact, the parties, 18 in all, had already been banned from engaging in any political activities for over a year. The council also announced the formation of a consultative assembly, consisting of handpicked members, unsullied by any association with the "irresponsible politicians of the past".

The consultative assembly will prepare a new constitution and draft new laws relating to political parties and the electoral system. The message is clear, the system must be cleansed before a fresh start is made. If the regime's plans for the new Turkish republic succeed, it

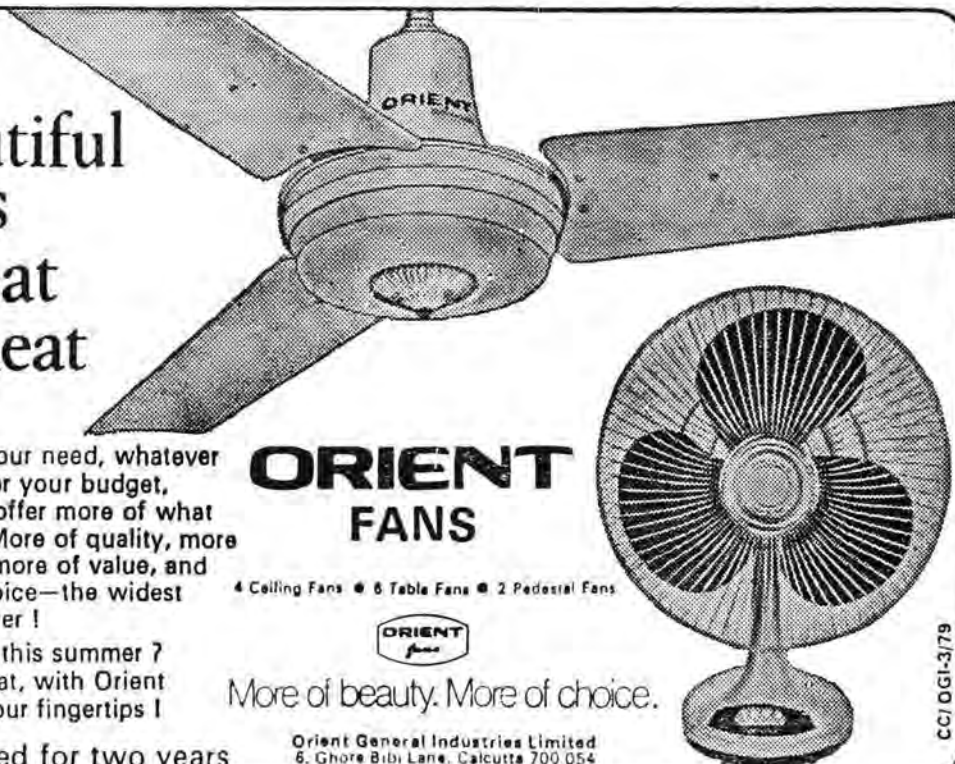
is probable that the new constitution will vest power in an authoritarian centralised administration with General Euren perhaps as its first president.

As a member of Nato, developments in Turkey have been viewed with disfavour by the West European partners of the alliance. The generals' reaffirmed commitment to Nato have met with approval in Washington. While disregarding the repressive aspects, President Reagan has promised military and economic aid worth 900 million in 1982. Turkey is now strategically important to NATO on its vulnerable south-eastern flank, particularly as the new socialist government in neighbouring Greece under Mr. Andreas Papandreu has taken up an anti-Nato posture.

What of the future? While the mass of the population appears quiescent, disgruntled voices

are being heard. The politicians, out in the wilderness are hostile to the Generals. When the former Prime Minister and leader of the Republican People's Party Mr. Bulent Ecevit publicly censured the regime, he earned himself a 3-month jail sentence. The journalists operating under severe restrictions oppose the regime too. Also embittered are the university academics who face the threat of being transferred to the remote eastern provinces to improve educational standards there.

These stirrings of discontent may yet flow into a broad-based opposition to the regime, but only with the passing of years. Time may prove to be the enemy of the Generals. It looks as if the descendants of Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the Republic, will spend the next few years in the shadows.



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THE WORLD OF BOOKS

AGAINST THE TIDE by Minoo Masani. Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. Price Rs. 95.00 Pp. 393.

LOOK BACK WITH CANDOUR

In chronological sequence, the second part of Minoo Masani's *Memoirs* picks up from where he left off in his earlier book, *Bliss was it in that Dawn!* That was the point where a lusty band of idealists had managed to tether their boat called "Independence" and make their way to the discovery of an idea called India.

In spirit, the present book leaps back forty years to another one, smaller, bound in simple handwoven cloth, with the title 'Our India' which was to set a whole generation of young Indians thinking about what they were still about to inherit.

'Against the Tide' also looks to the young, who might wonder what has happened to this inheritance, in a manner, that in spite of the obvious autobiographical framework, and to that extent self-justificatory tone, is meant to educate, inspire and prod them by the relentless logic of his thought to tackle the decades ahead.

One commentator has described Masani as the only "modern politician" in post-independence India. He means perhaps that Masani alone has a capacity for a carefully thought-out almost scientific understanding of his role and, by inference, of his actions. This is what makes his analysis of the major events and personalities of the last three decades more than just another personal account of a much-written-about era.

Masani argues his case out from the vantage-point of a passionately committed liberal, without ever letting his emotions get the better of him. Under his scrutiny, enlivened by his trenchant witty style, which does not make allowances for anyone, not even himself, each stormy epicentre of recent history becomes a turning point that throws up questions likely to engage the attention of any thinking person at any time in a free society.

In a book called *State of Emergency* the authors have created a fictitious African country

in the throes of post-independence survival and invited the reader to try and control the course of events by giving him a series of choices. These propel the story forwards to another set of choices, and so on till a series of different scenarios put an end to these choices.

Masani also invites the reader to play this game of "if only" by setting his scene in such a manner that the reader is compelled to consider the different choices open to people. Their manner of taking action is described, with a commentary on their possible motives, a detailed exposition of his own thoughts and actions during the situation, and finally the end result.

One may or may not agree with Masani, but one cannot help admiring the absolute clarity of his presentation, his fairness even to those people towards whom he has been obliged to take a stand of lifelong opposition, and the inflexible adherence to principle behind every issue.

Perhaps the most controversial part of the book is the story of his stormy relationship with the "prince" of Indian politics, Jawaharlal Nehru. It is not without a certain poignancy, which lingers in the tribute that Masani pays to the man himself. This does not, however, distract him from pursuing his role as the most celebrated Nehru-baiter of the fifties, or diminish his conviction that more than anyone else, Nehru led the country step by step into the chaos of lost opportunities that bedevils it today.

It seems as though every turn that Nehru took, whether in the matter of non-alignment or of economic policies, his stances on the world stage with regard to his neighbours or issues such as Hungary or Formosa, the dissenting figure of Masani stood by his side, breathing fire and logic down his neck. One cannot say whose was the greater capacity for endurance but, out of the conflict, was forged the role that Masani took upon himself. It was that of a leader who gave voice, meaning and character to the idea of an Opposition.

It is not without some irony that this most crucial of roles in a healthy democracy which was all too often represented as a form of anti-national behaviour leading to "fissiparous

tendencies", the most often mentioned bogey of the fifties, should now seem like a model of parliamentary behaviour. Even contradictions are taken today as a sign of growth. The issues that were raised then were for the most part issues that debated the fundamental rights of the individual and how best to create a society that would safeguard them. Politics in Bismarckian terms is the art of the possible, and to men who dreamed the impossible idea of a new India, the biggest betrayal lay in the manner in which Nehru tailored their dreams to fit what was possible to him.

The central portion of the book details the various phases in the formation, growth and eventual decline of the Swatantra Party. In the process Masani, who had dedicated his book to "the memory of Rajaji, the great dissenter" delineates the role played by this great statesman from the South. He once commented: "The danger of communists does not come from the discipline of their organisation or their sabotage activities but from the intellectual instability of the educated class."

This instability is the tragic flaw that Masani attributes to Nehru's thinking, which made him a democrat in his mind but an autocrat in his actions; which prompted him to kick capitalism out through the front door and invite State Capitalism in its stead; which led him to preach non-alignment in one breath and implore aid from the West in another, most notably at the time of the Chinese attack. Masani's greatest indictment of Nehru is that it was this chronic ambivalence that allowed him to legitimize the communist credo by giving it an aura of respectability with which to strengthen their hold on the popular imagination.

The effect of this instability was to make for a leadership that continually functioned from a position of insecurity, that saw any opposition to it as a threat to its own survival. Conversely, this insecurity, which was projected as a danger that could easily convulse the infant state, was used as a reason for promoting authoritarianism as the only way of moving forward with single-minded purpose.

"No democracy can survive if all power is concentrated in the hands of one party and there is no other party strong enough to prevent the misuse of that power," wrote Masani in his elec-

tion manifesto of January 1957. Twenty-five years later the effects of not heeding to that cry are being felt with as little hope to there being a solution. If at all, the situation is worse, for it is accompanied by a widespread ignorance that is the result of our educational system, the cynicism that no system can possibly work, and the traditional fatalism that makes a mockery of all action.

It is in this sense that the book serves as a corrective. It not only shows what one individual can do "against the tide" but in restating the old debates he fought on "Bread and Freedom", the dangers of a totalitarian state, and the hypocrisy of thinking left and living right, Masani underscores the idea that Freedom is not a gift that can be taken or bestowed on anyone. It is above all a matter of right thinking.

As Masani explains regarding the word Swatantra: "Swatantra, as I have often explained to foreign friends, is a beautiful concept. It is something more than mere freedom in English or *freiheit* in German. It does mean freedom, but it also means something more. The best translation would be self-propelled, self-motivated, self-determined, that is, the decision comes not by coercion from outside but by decision from within. It is the individual counterpart of national self-determination. In that sense it is the epitome of the liberal idea."

This positive attitude shows Masani looking back so that we can look ahead. It shows him as a warrior of the heroic mould whose only motto continues to be that which he had chosen long ago to head the "Many Voices" page of "Freedom First": "To strive to seek, to find, and not to yield."

GEETA DOCTOR

Dr. AMBEDKAR: LIFE AND MISSION by
Dhananjay Keer, Popular Prakashan, Bombay,
Rs. 80-00.

History is replete with instances of man's inhumanity to man. Slavery, which is the most heinous of such oppressions, has existed from the earliest days and subsists in one form or other in some parts of the world even now. But the scourge of untouchability appears to have been a speciality of our own country.

No one knows how this pernicious system originated, though many believe that it was an off-shoot of the caste system which has scriptural authority and possibly some relevance in a primitive setting. Once it took root, the encrustation flourished in all its ugliness in different parts of the country.

One of the worst-affected areas was Kerala. There the notion of pollution was developed to such absurd lengths that persons were categorised as "untouchables, unapproachables and unseeables" — those in the last category could move about only at night! Saints, Reformers, Poets and others tried to put an end to these practices, but to no avail. It required a man of herculean ability and determination to deal with the situation. Such a man of destiny was Ambedkar.

Dr. Ambedkar came from a fairly well-to-do family in the Konkan region of what is now Maharashtra. But he had the misfortune to be born a Mahar, a caste classified as untouchable. On account of this he had to undergo untold humiliation for many years. When he was quite young, he and his cousins were thrown out of a bullock cart in which they were travelling merely because they were untouchables. The whole day the poor children had to wander about without even drinking water. On another occasion, he was beaten up for having slaked his thirst at a "forbidden" well. So the iron entered his soul quite early in life, and this rancour and sense of grievance against his co-religionists persisted to the end.

Fortunately, a god-father in the person of the then Ruler of Baroda, Maharaja Sayaji Rao, took Ambedkar under his tutelage and enabled him to proceed to the United States for higher studies. Once he got this flying start, the brilliant scholar that Ambedkar was managed to garner as many degrees and qualifications as the U.S. and the U.K. could confer on him — of course within the limitations of the time and resources available to him. By the time he was called to the Bar in England in 1922, he had made his mark not only among his own people, but also in Western India. From that it was quite easy for him to enter the arena of national politics.

I had the privilege of working fairly closely with Dr. Ambedkar when he was at the height of his power and fame. He was then the Law Minister in the Government of India and the

Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly of India. (I was then an official of the Constituent Assembly). He brought all his erudition and dynamism to the task entrusted to him, and was a match for all the other legal luminaries and political leaders who dominated the Constituent Assembly. He was rightly called the Father of the Indian Constitution. The "unfortunate" school-boy who was pushed out of a bullock cart in Konkan had come a long way!

The book under review, by Dhananjay Keer, gives a very vivid account of how this miracle happened. In the course of his narrative, the author gives equal prominence to the life-long struggle of Dr. Ambedkar in removing the disabilities of the down-trodden communities of the Hindu faith. In this endeavour he came into direct confrontation with Mahatma Gandhi himself, but pursued his course of action undaunted.

Orthodox circles howled at him in anger, but this only made the learned Doctor more cheeky and truculent. He redoubled his efforts to attack the citadel of orthodoxy by all the means available to him, e.g. temple entry, opening of tanks and wells, to Harijans, and promotion of education. However, the furious pace of his activities was bound to affect his health, and he realised that time was running out for him. So we find him towards the fag-end of his life carrying out the threat which he had always made, that he would lead his people out of the Hindu fold.

Hence the spectacular conversion to Buddhism at Nagpur on 14th October 1956. It was an act of defiance, but could also be considered an acknowledgement of his inability to wipe out the stain of untouchability from Hindu society during his life-time.

The task of portraying the life of such a remarkable personality as that of Dr. Ambedkar is not an easy one. The biography by Dhananjay Keer which is now in its fourth edition has already been acclaimed by many as a fair and truthful study. He has shown great understanding and sympathy in delineating the character of a very brave man who fought against odds throughout his life. This biography has much relevance to the present times when the "Harijan issue" is once again threatening to be a disturbing factor in our national life.

K. V. PADMANABHAN

FREEDOM FIRST

KHUSHWANT SINGH'S EDITOR'S PAGE.

Controversial Editorials from *The Illustrated Weekly* and *Sunday*. (India Book House, Bombay, Pp 195, Rs. 12)

Khushwant Singh's pen is versatile, by turns caustic and serious, always honest, and above all totally irreverent. This neat package of editorials from *The Illustrated Weekly* and *Sunday* is no exception.

Of these, the notes on eminent personalities are by far the best. Writing often of friends or employers, he has the knowledge that comes from having worked in close proximity with them. Yet his sketches are not maudlin or senti-

mental, nor are they so distant as to be dry-as-dust narrations of life histories.

Strangely enough, even at his most critical, Khushwant often balances the score by evincing an almost sneaking admiration for the victim. His note on Krishna Menon is a case in point. Almost entirely critical, it nevertheless manages to put across Krishna Menon's genius — even if only for losing friends.

Khushwant is concerned about the poor, but never patronizing. He is irritated when people give money to beggars, is upset because he cannot get to a friend's death-bed in Pakistan, frankly admits that he has a complex about whites, and reserves the term "Natural Gas" for the speeches made by our politicians. As he says, "Vitriol makes better ink than honey".

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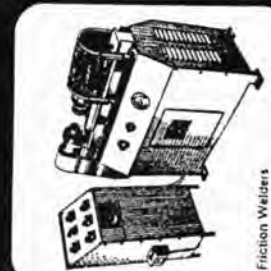
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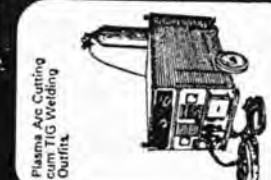
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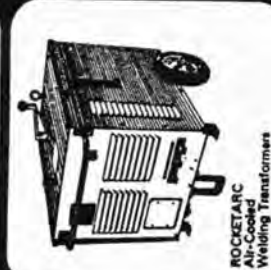
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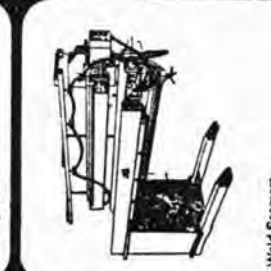
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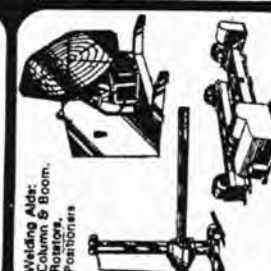
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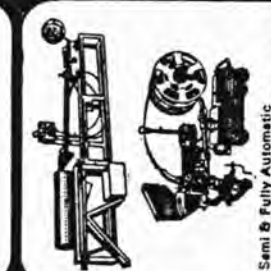
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Satya Saibaba's "Deemed" University

Satya Saibaba established a degree college at Puttaparthi, Anantapur District, Andhra Pradesh, three years ago. Suddenly, on 20th November 1981, this college was declared as "Deemed University". Perhaps this is the first degree college to attain the status of a deemed university without establishing a post-graduate college. Saibaba's miracle worked on the University Grants Commission.

Mr. Y. V. Chandrachud, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, inaugurated the "deemed" university. He may be a devotee of Saibaba or he may not, but the chairman of the U. G. C. Dr. Mrs. Madhuri Shah, is. Be that as it may, she and the U. G. C. went out of their way to recognise a degree college as a deemed University. One after the other, speakers condemned the present-day education system and universities, and praised Saibaba and his degree college deemed University.

Satya Sai's centre of higher learning, that is, the deemed university is free to frame its own syllabus, conduct examinations and confer degrees. There is another college at Anantapur town established by him which is meant for women. It is under the Sri Krishnadevaraya University. But the U. G. C. allowed Satya Sai Baba to treat this women's college which is 30 miles away from the deemed university, as a part of its centre for higher learning.

Another institute at Bangalore, again established by Satya Sai, also was allowed to become part of it. Centres in other parts of the country established by Satya Sai may be allowed to function in the same manner. The Government of Andhra Pradesh was informed about these developments, but the State Education Minister and the State Education Department officials were not invited to the function, nor were they involved in affairs regarding this deemed university.

Mr. T. Anjiah, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh was present at the inauguration and hence everything was taken for granted. Mr. O. P. Mehra, the Governor of Maharashtra came all the way from Bombay to attend the function in order to condemn all the ten universities of Maharashtra, and to praise Sai's Institute.

The U. G. C. has indeed set a bad precedent. The Aurobindo Ashram, Rama Krishna Math,

Anand Marg, Jamat-e-Islami, Christian Missionary groups and numerous other religious institutions can also demand from the U. G. C. that institutions run by them be given the status of universities. When devotees and disciples occupy high positions, they are expected to see that their religious faith does not interfere with the taking of decisions in matters secular.

According to Justice Chandrachud, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, "Integral education" is the sole criteria of higher education for which he praised Satya Sai's deemed University. The Aurobindo Ashram also claims that it imparts "integral education". They should explain and elaborate the meaning of this mystic word "Integral".

Mr. Chandrachud added that duty, devotion, purity, meditation, yoga, etc. are needed for academic excellence. It would not be proper to hurt the sentiments of a person who is occupying the highest position in the judiciary of the country. So let us leave it at that.

The U. G. C. Chairman said that moral values have been eroded from the present education system. She hoped that spiritual wisdom, discipline and devotion would be imparted in Satya Sai's University. She has forgotten one simple fact: that in India, Hinduism, spiritualism, yoga, meditation and other religious aspects had been taught and practised over the centuries, and that Hinduism is a way of life. There is no aspect of our day-to-day life which is untouched by Hinduism. Yet an erosion of values has taken place.

Hinduism and spiritualism have failed us totally. No amount of rejuvenation will solve the problem. This apart, the ashrams and the religious institutions reiterate the slogans of discipline. From their view-point, discipline means unquestioned belief in religious sayings, total devotion to godmen, and complete surrender of the individual self.

This attitude kills the scientific spirit of questioning, quest for knowledge and search for truth. It is exactly what is happening in Sai Baba's institute. We are backward because we lack the scientific spirit. Whatever progress we have achieved so far is only due to the application of the scientific method.

N.I. in *The Radical Humanist*, Jan. 1982.

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A Gift for Mrs. Gandhi

As the old year came to its end, Mrs. Gandhi received a very special present which must have delighted her. The Supreme Court struck a most powerful blow in favour of authoritarianism. It stultified judicial independence, making the holder of high judicial office a creature subject to the Executive's will.

The Law Minister, the instrument of the Prime Minister, would hereafter be the arbiter of the judge's fate. He was here today, but he might in a month's time be on the other side of the country, if the Law Minister thought he was too independent or found a decision or two of his awkward for the Government. The difference between him and any government servant carrying out orders would get less and less, until it finally disappeared. He might still on occasion roar like a lion, but only as a "lion beneath the throne." Soon, to keep his place he must be constantly looking over his shoulder to see whether the government approved. If it frowned, he must quickly amend his ways and win favour.

The Supreme Court having in effect established the supremacy of the Executive over the Judiciary, the rest must follow. We congratulate Mrs. Gandhi on this signal success; we offer our condolences to all lovers of freedom and to the inoffensive people of the country on this great misfortune that has befallen them. "Ah freedom is a noble thing" sang old Dunbar, but here we have one of its strongest bulwarks being overturned by those whose foremost duty, one would have thought, was to defend and protect it.

Tyranny shall flourish then, and you and I and all of us lie down and be unconscionably oppressed, without hope of redress? So it would seem, aye, it may well be so. But the spirit of man is unconquerable and we must cherish it and let its flame burn brighter, so that it may still overcome.

OPINION, Jan 5, 1982

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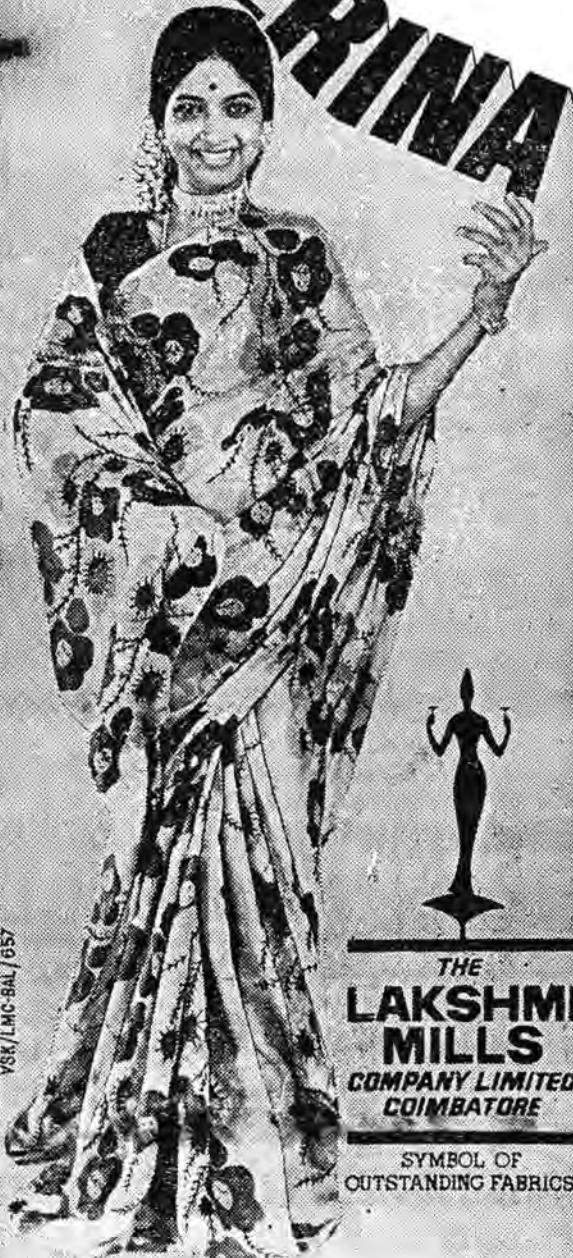
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