

"I'm Fighting for Value-based, Clean Politics"

In the wake of the sordid happenings in Karnataka in recent weeks, we are privileged to carry an exclusive interview with the beleaguered Chief Minister of that State, Ramakrishna Hegde, who spoke to SUMANT BANKESHWAR in Bangalore recently. Mr. Bankeshwar also met Veerappa Moily, leader of the Opposition and a key figure in the raging controversy over the alleged attempts by the Congress (I) to topple the year-old Hegde Ministry, who gave his version of the happenings.

SB: Mr. Hegde, as one noted commentator observed a few days ago, "even by our debased standards of conduct in public life in recent years, on either version, Mr. Byre Gowda's or Mr. Moily's, what is alleged to have taken place at the dead of night at Cubbon Park on 13th November, 1983, is a sordid affair." If Mr. Moily's version is to be believed, he has been defamed through forgery. I asked Mr. Moily what action he proposed to take against Mr. Byre Gowda. He replied that he would not like to waste his time in filing a defamation suit against Mr. Byre Gowda. I told him that he should then not have made such an allegation, if he was unable to prove it in a court of law and vindicate himself.

RH: Well, as you have seen yourself, he has made a fool of himself. When the notorious Moily tape was played before the press reporters and all the reporters said that they could very well recognise his voice, he was helpless and had nothing else to say. To say now that the tape is a fake one and that Mr. Byre Gowda has made a forgery is an after-thought. If he has got any self-respect and honour, he should file a defamation suit against Mr. Byre Gowda for forgery in a court of law and vindicate himself.

SB: You have got two options. One is a Commission of Inquiry, and the other, the Assembly's Committee of Privileges. The best course left to you is to set up a Commission of Inquiry, preferably by a Re-

solution of the State Assembly so that the Committee of Privileges thereafter may be asked to act on the Commission's findings. Disturbing though the silence of our Prime Minister is on this issue, why should you wait for any action from Delhi? Why not immediately appoint a Commission of Inquiry to demonstrate your earnestness and establish your *bona fides*?

RH: Well, I have thought about this. If our Government appoints a Commission, the State Bank of India and the other persons concerned may refuse to appear and give evidence before it, as happened in the case of the Shah Commission before which Indiraji and others concerned refused to appear and give evidence. The Shah Commission was thus helpless. It may not therefore serve our desired purpose if we appoint a Commission. The Government of India could have appointed such a Commission, but obviously it is not going to do so.

SB: Did Indiraji question the authenticity of the Moily tape?

RH: No, she has not questioned the authenticity of the tape. She has not replied to my letter either. The only option left to me now is to refer the matter to our Assembly's Committee of Privileges.

SB: Well, to demonstrate your earnestness and establish your *bona fides*, you could still appoint a Commission of Inquiry, irrespective of its outcome, and then go to your people for their final verdict.

RH: Yes, I could do so. The question is whether it is worthwhile spending our valuable time and money just to demonstrate our earnestness, when I know in advance that its outcome would be zero and when there are more important things to do with our limited time and resources.

SB: What about the Committee of Privileges?

RH: Yes, I am going to appoint it.

SB: Any comments on Mr. Moily's statement that he would go to the people's court to vindicate himself

and absolve himself of the charges of bribery against him?

RH: Getting himself elected will not absolve him of the charges of bribery made against him. In an election, the people vote for the party which they support and not for its candidate, and in any case, not on any particular issue. An election is not a referendum at all. As you have yourself said in your interview with Mr. Moily, even Billa or Ranga could have got themselves elected on any ticket of a political party enjoying the maximum support of any of the electorate in a particular constituency. As you know, even hijackers got themselves elected in the last general elections on the Congress(I) ticket. They do not therefore cease to be hijackers after their election as MPs.

SB: The Janata party in Karnataka, unlike in other states, is essentially a party of ex-Congressmen, who have inherited the same Congress culture, is it not?

RH: I beg to differ from your views. It is true that most of the people in our party are ex-Congressmen. The Congress culture that you are referring to is not the original Congress culture. After the Congress split in 1969, a new Congress culture was developed by Indiraji which is alien to the original Congress culture. The era of defection culture started only after the Congress split in 1969. The only exception was when Shri Charan Singh defected from the Congress with a view to becoming the Chief Minister of U.P. Before the Congress split, the Congress party adhered to certain values. These values were totally destroyed after the Congress split. Of course, I do not say that all Congressmen were honest and had excellent characters. If you could recall, the Congress(O) has always been a victim of defections, and has never tried to bring about defection. Our team is well experienced to face the hostile pace and spin attack of the Congress(I) and is not going to collapse even on a wet Karnataka wicket.

SB: Well, it would be more appropriate to distinguish between the pre-Independence and post-Independence Congress culture.

RH: You are right in a way. Before Independence, there was no question of power and pelf. Politics became a business only after our Independence, and totally debased after the Congress split in 1969. Mobilising people by bringing them in trucks, buses and cars, organising public rallies and creating personality cults are alien to the original Congress culture. Gandhiji and Pandit Nehru did not need trucks, buses or cars to mobilise people for their public meetings. A big public rally was organised by us recently in Bangalore and our people were surprised that there were no trucks or buses or cars which brought in people. We do not believe in the truck culture. We have been experimenting here on value-based politics

which we want other states to follow. Some people suggested to me that I should also buy the Congress(I) MLAs which I refused. In the first place, I am opposed to buying MLAs like cattle as a matter of principle. Secondly, I have no money to buy them, even if I want to. I only believe in the power of the people and in educating them about their rights and duties.

SB: According to a cross-section of the people I have interviewed in Bangalore, the Janata MLAs who were about to defect did not defect because the price offered to them was too inadequate.

RH: Some of our MLAs said on the floor of our Assembly that they were offered Rs. 20 to Rs. 25 lakhs and they refused to defect. The Congress(I) should therefore think twice before bribing them. The public reaction is also very strong against defection and a potential defector is very much afraid of the public reaction.

SB: I am told some MLAs have already begun taking advance money from the Congress(I) and are now merely negotiating for the balance amount before finally defecting to it.

RH: (Smiles). Some of our MLAs might have taken money from the Congress(I), but they have not defected so far. I do not think that they will defect because the public reaction is very much against defection.

(Continued on page 7)

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CALLING UNESCO'S BLUFF

K. S. Venkateswaran

IN TERMS of sheer courage and decisiveness, few actions of the Reagan Administration have matched its announcement, made on 29 December 1983, that the United States had finally decided to withdraw from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) at the end of this year. The decision, which has not come a day too soon, was based on Washington's view that "continued U.S. participation (in UNESCO) does not serve the interests of the U.S."

The reasons underlying such a view are as familiar as they are sound. A recent editorial in *The Times* (London) summarised these reasons admirably. "UNESCO," it said, "wastes money and does a lot of silly things. It puts out a good deal of high-minded drivel. It gets involved in political disputes over matters such as the status of Israel. Too often its members indulge in the luxury of abusing the developed nations that provide most of its funds. It wastes time and money on pernicious ideas like the 'new world information and communications order', which is a cover for attempts by undemocratic regimes to control information."

No impartial observer of UNESCO's activities in recent years can seriously challenge these facts. Nor can anyone accuse the U.S. of acting hastily or without deliberation because, for several months now, Washington has made its displeasure over UNESCO's waywardness abundantly clear in domestic as well as

international fora. Indeed, the announcement of withdrawal was made only after the State Department undertook a careful and comprehensive study of American participation in some 96 international organisations. If UNESCO was singled out for punitive action, it was, as one commentator pointed out, because "its activities were considered the most contentious among U.N. agencies and the most inimical to American interests."

Last year the Heritage Foundation, as part of its U.N. Assessment Programme, published a study which is particularly revealing in that it casts serious doubts on the continued American support for the U.N. itself. "Through the U.N.," concluded the study, "the U.S. is inadvertently supporting Marxist guerilla-terrorist groups. American taxpayer dollars are being used to promote the New International Economic Order. Americans are being passed over for U.N. Secretariat posts, while KGB agents, in violation of the U.N. Charter, hold high positions. And a group of nations claiming to be 'non-aligned' in reality almost always endorses the Moscow line."

These are incontrovertible facts which those (including many in India) criticise the Reagan Administration's recent action would do well to recognise. Fortunately, even while taking such a drastic step, Washington has indicated its willingness to reconsider its decision if UNESCO saw reason, however belatedly, and reformed itself before the year is out.

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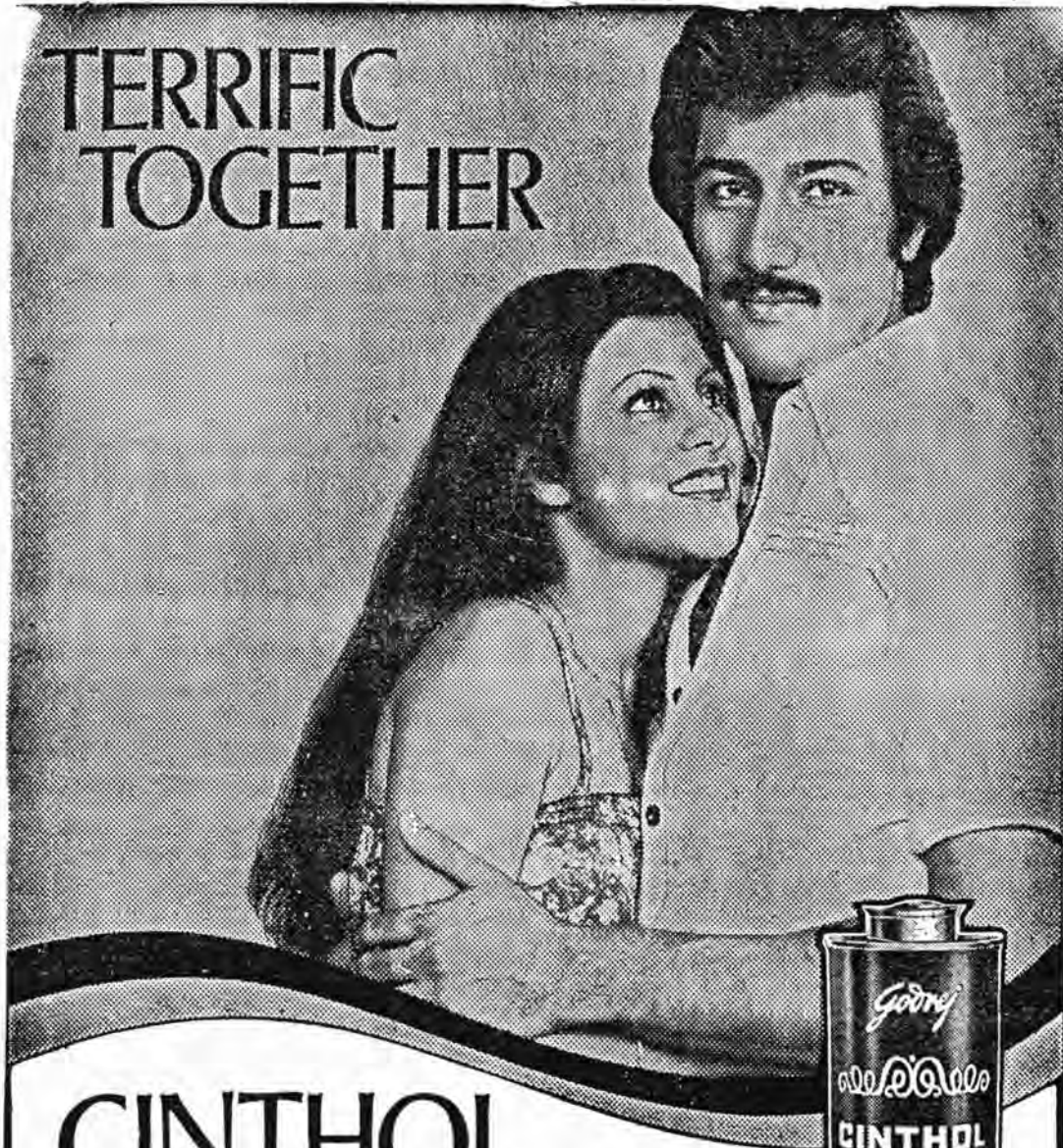
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AS I SEE IT

Minoo Masani

I MAKE no apology for reverting to the subject of Grenada. One would have thought that developments during the past few months since I wrote (in August 1983) supporting the intervention by Caribbean and U.S. forces would have opened people's eyes but, since the recent Congress(1) meeting in Calcutta passed a resolution condemning the overthrow of the Communist tyranny in Grenada, it would appear necessary to dispel whatever ignorance and confusion remains by mentioning some facts which have not been adequately published in India. Here they are:

(1) The Democratic Party in the U.S.A., which had condemned President Reagan's action, have now publicly apologised for their misguided criticism and admitted that the action was justified. *The Herald Tribune* reported: "House Democrats back from an inspection tour of Grenada have endorsed President Ronald Reagan's invasion of the island, prompting Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill Jr., a Massachusetts Democrat, to declare that the military action was justified. Mr. O'Neill had challenged Mr. Reagan over Grenada last week, saying 'Mr. President, your policy is wrong'. On Tuesday, he issued a statement supporting the invasion after meeting the Congressmen he sent to the island last weekend. The overwhelming consensus of the members of the delegation, Mr. O'Neill said, was

that a real potential threat to the American citizens existed in Grenada. 'Since this was the case, I believe that sending American forces into combat was justified under these particular circumstances.' Thus Mr. O'Neill, a strong critic of the President on most domestic issues, has now given Mr. Reagan support for his military endeavours in Lebanon and Grenada."

(2) A full-page advertisement appeared in the *New York Times* signed by 110 Britons including several Conservative Members of Parliament apologising to President Reagan for earlier British doubts on the subject.

(3) The Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in New Delhi refused to condemn the Caribbean and American intervention.

(4) All U.S. Armed forces have already withdrawn from Grenada.

(5) The latest news from Grenada is that thousands of citizens have signed a petition appealing to the U.S.A. to allow Grenada to have some form of association with the U.S.A. which would permit it to enjoy stability and protection from being exposed once again to the tender mercies of the Soviet Union and Cuba.

It has been heartening for me to receive a large number of letters from the readers of *The Statesman* congratulating me on the stand I had taken last August.



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From this I conclude that public opinion in India is much more aware than is generally imagined.

* * * * *

Our politicians seem to spend a great deal of time indulging in recrimination about what happened several years ago. The latest example of this is the controversy that has been going on between Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee and Mr. Morarji Desai. Mr. Vajpayee has alleged that there was an understanding that Mr. Morarji Desai should retire 2½ years after his nomination as Prime Minister and allow Mr. Jagjivan Ram to be Prime Minister in the second half of the 5-year period. Mr. Morarji Desai has flatly denied that there was any such understanding. Mr. Vajpayee has accused Mr. Desai of hiding the truth. Long live Opposition unity!

Most of us are of course in no position to judge about the truth of this matter but, as it happens, I was fortunate enough to be told by my friend Jayaprakash Narayan, when he came to Bombay after the nomination of Morarji Desai as Prime Minister, about what happened within the Janata Party. In a blow by blow account, JP gave credit for the choice to Acharya

NISSIM EZEKIEL HONOURED

Prof. Nissim Ezekiel, distinguished poet and immediate past editor of *Freedom First* has been chosen for the prestigious Sahitya Akademi award for his collection of poems entitled "Latter-Day Psalms". We in this journal are particularly proud of Prof. Ezekiel's achievement and join his numerous admirers in offering our heartiest congratulations to him.

—Editorial Board.

Kripalani. It was he who persuaded the Party to authorise JP and himself to select the leader and, when the authority was given to the two of them, it was he who rooted for Mr. Morarji Desai's nomination. At no point in his detailed recital did he mention any such agreement about sharing the term of office of Prime Minister as is now suggested by Mr. Vajpayee. It is not likely that Jayaprakash would have forgotten to mention this point, and I am therefore inclined to believe that what Mr. Morarji Desai says is true.

(Courtesy: *The Statesman*)

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SB: You came to power with an express promise of abolishing defections. Instead of introducing an anti-defection Bill, you are reported to have invited prospective defectors to defect as long as they have the time, meaning before your proposed Bill is introduced.

RH: No, I have never said so. You are wrongly informed. Secondly, we introduced an anti-defection Bill within 15 days of my becoming the Chief Minister. But, let me explain to you that this Bill, even when passed in our Assembly, will not be effective unless our Constitution or the Representation of the People Act is amended. Both these are Central enactments. The Bill introduced in the Kashmir Assembly stands on a different footing, as J & K has got its own Constitution, and the question of amending our Constitution does not arise in the case of J & K. Under the circumstances, with our limited powers, we can only curtail certain privileges of the legislators who defect, such as cutting down their salaries and allowances etc.

SB: Your Bill therefore cannot be effective at all.

RH: Yes, I quite agree with you that the Bill will not be effective, but to establish our *bona fides* and demonstrate our earnestness, we have introduced this Bill. We have also introduced the Lok Ayukta Bill in which even the Chief Minister is included. In no Lok Ayukta Bill in other states is the Chief Minister included.

SB: You seem to be a besieged person, battling all the time for your very survival. You are not even given time to settle down. How long do you hope to continue like this?

RH: I agree with you that a Chief Minister should be allowed to settle down. In spite of the many constraints under which I have to work, I have been able to do many things which any Chief Minister can be legitimately proud of.

SB: You have made five out of the fourteen independent MLAs Chairmen of Boards and Corporations to keep them happy. You are forced to divide spoils equally among your partymen, the 32 KKR men who joined your Party when the Government was formed, and the independent MLAs supporting you. You are thus forced to sacrifice talented persons and recruit mediocre persons for your very survival at the cost of efficiency. If you have to fight all the time for your survival, when will you find the time to administer the state and provide a clean and efficient administration?

RH: I do agree with you that I have to work under many limitations and constraints. In our country with so many religions, castes and sub-castes, and when we have to give representation to each and every group, every district and so on in our cabinet so that they all have a sense of participation in the administration

of the state, the standard of efficiency is bound to suffer. Even in the case of our Prime Minister, who is an undisputed leader of her party, the standard of efficiency is suffering because she too has to work under many constraints. She is also not able to form a cabinet of talented persons, although she could afford to do so. She has to give representation to every community, caste and sub-caste, apart from giving representation to every state, right or wrong, because she has to carry the country with her. This is bound to cost in terms of efficiency, merit and standard. This is democracy and democracy has never been known as the most efficient form of government. Yet, a democratic government is better than any other form of government. In a democracy, a semi-literate man can become an education minister and a person knowing nothing about law can become a law minister.

SB: And MPs and MLAs who know nothing about law can legislate for the country, leaving the judges and lawyers to interpret them.

RH: Yes, you are quite right.

SB: Mr. Moily keeps on saying that yours is a minority government. Your comments, please.

RH: The question is whether I am enjoying the confidence of the majority of the MLAs in our Assembly. If not, the Congress(I) can throw me out. What about the Congress(I) government in Kerala, which has got only 15 members? What about the Indiraji government in Delhi after the Congress split and before the 1971 elections? Was it not a minority government, supported by the DMK, CPI and CPM? Let Mr. Moily refresh his memory before harping on the minority character of our government. What is wrong in forming a minority government? Is it against the Constitution or against the law of the land? Let him approach the Governor, prove his majority and then make his claim.

SB: Never since our Independence has the credibility of our political parties and political leaders reached its nadir as it has now.

RH: Yes, what you say is true. That is why I am trying to promote the idea of value-based, clean politics. During our freedom struggle, only those who were motivated by patriotism, love for the motherland and sense of sacrifice entered politics. In today's money-oriented politics, most of the people who have entered politics are only motivated by power and pelf. There is an appalling fall in the standard of debates in our Lok Sabha as well as in the State Assemblies. There is a steep fall in our moral standards too. The general standard in every field, except perhaps in science and technology, has fallen alarmingly. I do not know whether this is a world phenomenon, but it has happened in many countries. It is a cycle. The present phase of degeneration, I hope, will pass over soon.

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"I'll Take the Matter to the People's Court"-Moily

(This interview with Mr. Moily was conducted on 16 December 1983 at his residence. After the recent "Moily Tape" incident, he has become allergic to tape recorders. When I took out my tape recorder, he initially objected to the recording of my interview with him, but subsequently gave in, when I told him that I was not interested in interviewing him unless I was allowed to tape record my interview with him—SB.)

SB: Mr. Moily, as one noted commentator observed a few days ago, even by our debased standards of conduct in public life in recent years, on either version, Mr. Byre Gowda's or yours, what is alleged to have taken place on 17th November, 1983, at Cubbon Park at the dead of night, is a sordid affair. If your version is to be believed, you have been defamed through forgery according to Macaulay's Penal Code of 1860, which still governs us. What action do you propose taking against Mr. Gowda?

M: The tape is a fake one. It is nothing but political vendetta. There is no point in filing any defamation suit against Mr. Byre Gowda alone. I shall have to file suit for defamation against all newspapers and journals which published reports and commented on the so-called Moily tape. The burden of proof will be on me. As a criminal lawyer myself, I know how difficult it is to prove that the tape is a fake one.

SB: Of course, the burden of proof will be on you. You should not have then made an allegation that the tape was a forgery.

M: I would rather prefer to take this matter to the people's court than move any court of law.

SB: You mean contesting the next elections on this issue?

M: Yes.

SB: But, in the elections, people vote for a political party and not for the candidate who contests the elections on its ticket. Sometimes, even a good candidate gets defeated while even hijackers get elected, as happened in the last parliamentary elections. So, this business of going to the people's court to absolve oneself of the charges made against one is meaningless.

M: I have got the so-called Moily tape right here which I shall play before you. Tell me whether it is audible in the first place or whether you can recognise my voice.

(The tape is then played. It is hardly audible and Mr. Moily's voice cannot be recognised.)

SB: Yes, the tape is inaudible and your voice cannot be recognised. But, is this tape a defective one? I am meeting the Chief Minister, Mr. Hegde, tomorrow morning and I shall ask him to play the original tape.

Only after hearing the original tape, can I form my opinion.

M: Well, you can hear the original tape and come to your own conclusion.

(I heard the original tape the next morning. It was quite audible and Mr. Moily's voice could be recognised.)

SB: Do you mean to say that some ventriloquist was engaged by the Janata Party?

(Mr. Moily pauses for a few moments. He probably does not know what "ventriloquist" means.)

M: Who is a ventriloquist? I do not know who has imitated my voice. There are many persons in Bangalore who sing just like Mukesh or Mohamed Rafi. The Janata Party might have hired the services of somebody who could imitate my voice.

SB: The Karnataka Government has got two options. One is a Commission of Inquiry and the other your Assembly's Committee of Privileges. The best course would be to set up a Commission of Inquiry preferably by a Resolution of the State Assembly that the Committee of Privileges can be asked to act on the Commission's findings. Will you support such a step to clear yourself of the charge of bribery to change Mr. Byre Gowda's political affiliation?

M: Why should I support any such step? My conscience is clear. I don't want to clear myself of the bogus charges against me. I have already said whatever I wanted to say on this subject and I have nothing more to add. I do not want to become a pawn in the hands of the Janata Government which wants to malign me. If Mr. Hegde has got guts, let him appoint a judicial Committee of Inquiry.

SB: Since the Janata Party in Karnataka is essentially a party of ex-Congressmen who have inherited the Congress culture, both the Congress(I) and the Janata Party in Karnataka are equally experienced in the art of engineering defections and toppling elected governments. When do you hope to succeed in ousting the Hegde Ministry?

M: Well, I am not an astrologer, but I am confident that the Janata team will collapse shortly. It is living on oxygen in an intensive care unit. Yes, the Janata Party in Karnataka is a party of ex-Congressmen. What they represent is perverse Congress culture. I would rather say that it is a party of ticketless Congressmen. Those who did not get our tickets in the elections went over to the Janata party.

SB: You say that the minority government has no right to exist. Well, was not Indiraji's government in Delhi, after the Congress split and before the 1971 elections, a minority government?

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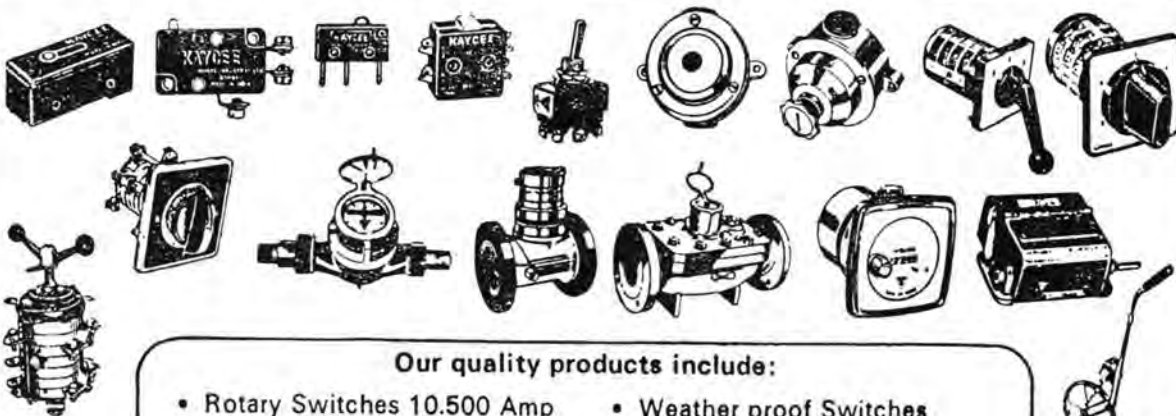
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M: When was that? I don't remember.

SB: It is rather strange that a responsible leader like you and a prospective candidate for Chief Ministership does not remember this eventful period.

M: (No reply).

SB: Even if you succeed in toppling the Janata ministry, where is the guarantee that you will be able to form a stable government? There are already six persons, including Mr. Bangarappa (who has jumped back on the Congress(I) bandwagon) contending for Chief Ministership.

M: There may be many claimants to the Chief Ministership in our party, but this issue is always decided by our High Command in consultation with all our MLAs and after taking the consensus.

SB: Is not "consensus" a fraud and a sham, as it just means the voice of a Big Brother and nothing else? As soon as a leader is selected by the High Command starts the dissident group's campaign against him.

M: It is not so at least in Karnataka. Our leader will be chosen by the High Command after consulting all our MLAs and we shall stand by the High Command's decision.

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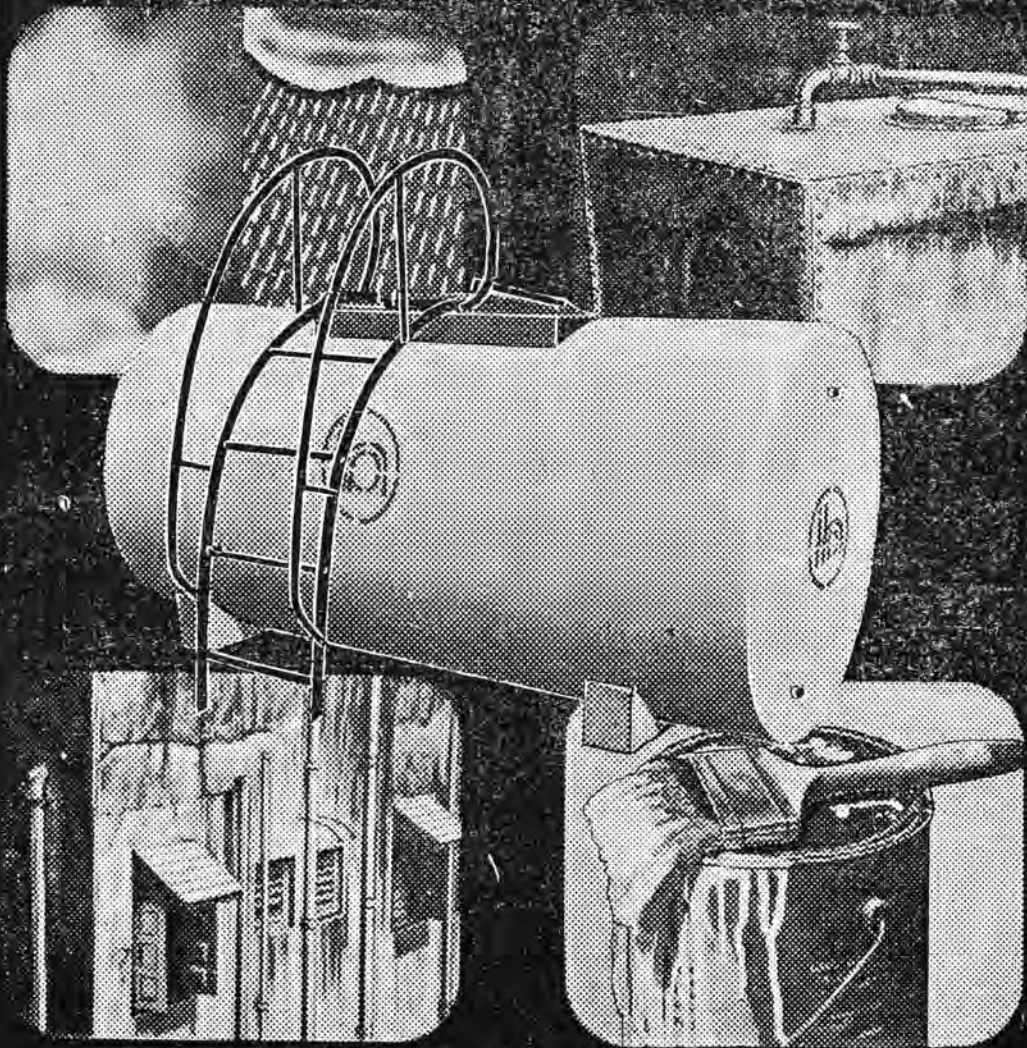
The *Freedom First Foundation* held its inaugural function at the IMC Committee Room, Bombay, on 10 January 1984. Presided over by Mr. M. Masani, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, the programme, entitled "1984: A Tribute to George Orwell", consisted of lectures by Prof. Nissim Ezekiel, distinguished poet and former editor, *Freedom First*, and Prof. P. G. Mavalankar, Director, Harold Laski Institute, Ahmedabad.

In his introductory remarks, Mr. Masani briefly outlined the objectives underlying the creation of the Foundation. Freedom, he asserted, was indivisible, but unfortunately not many people have an adequate idea and understanding of the meaning and value of freedom and its implication in day-to-day life. The Foundation, he said, was established as a non-partisan, educational, charitable Trust for the promotion of the values and ideals of a free society, and would, to this end, organise lectures, seminars, study-classes, etc., and also publish and/or subsidise the publication of periodicals, books and pamphlets on issues related to freedom.

Prof. Ezekiel in his talk eulogised George Orwell both as a writer and as a sensitive human being, in whose presence, he said, "one always felt the need to say something without resorting to the normal clichés of social usage." Referring to Orwell as one of the great sceptics of the twentieth century, Prof. Ezekiel observed that, apart from being a profound political thinker, Orwell was a skilful user of the English language. Although his style often tended towards the austere and had therefore a comparatively limited appeal, his passion for precision made him a model for writers in English. Orwell, more than anyone else, instinctively understood the major role that language plays in self-deception and deception of others, as is borne out especially in his brilliant invention of "Newspeak" in 1984.

In his tributes to Orwell, Prof. Mavalankar asserted that the message of 1984 was not the inevitability of totalitarianism but that totalitarianism can be challenged, effectively and successfully, if only man had the courage to stand up and act. In the context of recent happenings both in India and abroad, especially the gradual destruction of important social and political institutions, Orwell's writings have a relevance which cannot be over-emphasised. "To be a good individual," stressed Prof. Mavalankar, "would be the best way of paying our tribute to George Orwell."

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A LETTER

Sir,

In his article entitled "Rescue, Not Invasion" (FF, Dec. 1983) Mr. Masani has lauded the American action in Grenada in glowing terms and has sought to compare the events there to a hypothetical situation in India where he envisaged similar happenings.

I join issue with him on both counts. In the first place, there is no comparison between India, which is a sub-continent, and Grenada, whose entire population could be seated in the combined capacity of the Brabourne and Wankhede Stadia in Bombay. If the coup mentioned in Mr. Masani's hypothetical scenario had taken place in India, not even the U.S. could have ended it within two days as happened in Grenada.

On the second count, let it be stated once and for all that the U.S. action was based on what the Reagan administration regarded as being in its best interests and was certainly not undertaken out of any sympathy for the people of Grenada, or even out of any love for the late Mr. Bishop. Admittedly, I am writing this with the benefit of hindsight but disclosures subsequent to the happenings reveal (a): that the U.S.A. had been contemplating such an attack for quite some time and even held military exercises in preparation for it; and (b) that it regarded the death of Mr. Bishop as the right time to take action.

Mr. Bishop himself had spoken (at last year's Non-aligned Summit in New Delhi) of American hostility

towards his regime. While Mr. Bishop was alive, the U.S. did not act because it could not be assured of help from the local people, who evidently supported his policies.

I am not for one moment supporting or even condoning the murder of Mr. Bishop. What the people who overthrew him did was reprehensible in the extreme. The point I want to make is that the U.S. action was motivated purely by opportunism and self-interest and does not merit the fulsome praise showered by Mr. Masani's article. There are numerous instances of the United States supporting repressive right-wing military dictatorships all over the world. It will be recalled that in 1973 the elected Marxist government in Chile was overthrown by a military coup that was subsequently found to have been aided and abetted by the C.I.A. through an American multinational company operating in Chile. No one should be surprised, therefore, if an announcement is made in a few months that oil or some other mineral has been discovered either on Grenada or just offshore, the right to exploit which will naturally be assigned to one or more multinational companies having the tacit support of Washington.

—Satish J. Shah

Bombay

(Mr. Masani's comment on the line of thought contained in the above letter is to be found on page 5 of this issue of Freedom First —Editor.)

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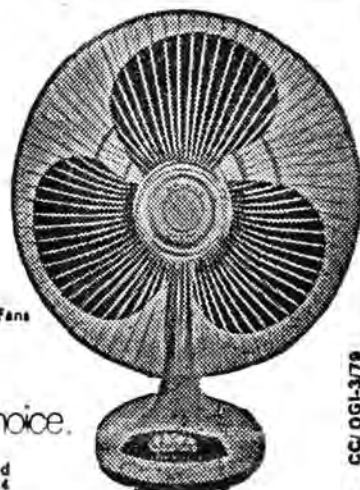
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BOOK REVIEW

AFGHANISTAN WILL NOT DIE by S. K. Bain;
1982; Satyam Shivam Publishers, 27 A. K. Pal
Road Extn., Calcutta 700 034; Pp. 166; Rs. 37.50.

THE RULING Russian brigands who masquerade as communist revolutionaries have planned to subjugate the entire mankind for their exploitation. In the process, they have destroyed freedom in their own country and have enslaved the Russian people. These inhuman rulers destroyed an estimated 2 crore citizens and sent an equal number to the slave labour camps. They have devised a system of governance which is engaged in a permanent civil war with their own unarmed subjects. They have perfected techniques of enslaving other nations as well. The communists in the non-communist countries have been acting as fifth columnists for the expansion of the dreaded Soviet empire.

As part of the Soviet strategy of global conquest, the neutral Afghanistan of 15 million people had a high priority. On 27 December 1979, Soviet troops murdered their own communist protege in Kabul, President Hafizullah Amin, and his family, invaded Afghanistan and imposed the exiled communist puppet, Babrak Karmal, as the head of the government.

However, the Russians had possibly underestimated the indomitable spirit of freedom alive in the hearts of the overwhelming majority of the Afghans. They rose in insurrection against the hated Russian imperialists. This book narrates the unforgettable saga of the unequal fight between the poorly-fed, ill-clad and inadequately-armed people and the well-armed and resourceful Soviet troops.

In spite of four years of continuous death, destruction, loot, torture and terror perpetrated by the Soviet troops on the ill-armed Afghan people, the Soviets hardly control 10 per cent of the urban area and arterial roads, while the Afghan *Mujahedins* (freedom-fighters) fighting guerilla warfare all over the country control and command 90 per cent of the urban and rural areas. They have caused 8000 Russian casualties—2000 dead and 6000 wounded, up to March 1982, and many more thereafter. However, for preserving their freedom, the brave Afghans have paid a very heavy price: 3 lakhs dead, 7 lakhs wounded and disabled, 35 lakhs preferring refugee life in Pakistan and Iran, the destruction of property worth 20 billion dollars (as at March 1982). Yet, the insurrectionary *Mujahedins* are so powerful that, disregarding all international conventions, the Soviets have been using poison gas to snuff out the lives of the Afghans.

The Russian marauders have been pillaging and exploiting Afghanistan in every conceivable manner.

The Kremlin has been charging upward of 3 billion dollars per annum for the cost of "defending Afghanistan" plus interest at the rate of 16.4 per cent per annum. All Afghan economic transactions and exports have been reoriented to serve the USSR's needs, on dictated terms.

Afghanistan's main foreign exchange earner is its natural gas. This is siphoned off to Russia and its supply measured on meters installed there which the Afghans have no right to inspect. As against the international price of 160 dollars per 1000 cubic metres, the Soviets pay a paltry 37 dollars to Afghanistan.

Immediately after the invasion, the Soviets expropriated 275 tons of *lapiz lazuli* gemstones. They did not even spare a large jar of uncut emeralds from a city museum.

Afghanistan was self-sufficient in food except for sugar prior to the invasion. In order to starve and subjugate the resisting people, the USSR has compelled the Afghans to switch over to a cotton crop. Needless to say, it takes away the cotton and adjusts the payment thereof against its defence cost claims.

This communist-imperialist invasion, and pillage of a neutral, non-aligned and free nation has infuriated world opinion. No less than 16 nations of the world voted against the Soviet Union in the U.N. General Assembly and called upon it to leave Afghanistan. Unfortunately, though India's security is vastly endangered by the invasion, our government has shamelessly failed to denounce this naked aggression and declare support to the brave Afghans.

—M. B. Shah

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(Approved by I A T A)

CULTURAL ROUNDABOUT

THE CURRENT presentation by Hosi Vasunia of Jean Kerr's *Mary Mary* (sponsored by the NCPA) is replete with wit, humorous situations, a fast pace, polish and sophistication. The play revolves round a book publisher Bob McKellaway, his ex-wife Mary, his fiancée Tiffany Richards, his income tax expert Oscar Nelson, his neighbour and a former friend Dirk Winston. At Oscar Nelson's instance, Mary returns to Bob McKellaway's home, ostensibly to help Oscar Nelson trace certain expense items—an exercise which makes the couple reminisce over the various holidays and other events during their five years of marriage. The ending is of course, entirely predictable.

Hosi Vasunia and Ruby Patel in the lead roles are utterly natural. Director Adi Marzban manages his star studded cast very well. His attention to the minutest details is noteworthy.

* * * *

THE NEW London Wind Trio—Neil Black (oboe), Roger Birnstingl (bassoon) and Keith Puddy (clarinet)—offered a delightfully entertaining soiree of chamber wind music at the Tata Theatre. The evening consisted of eight items of well distributed solos, duos and trios. The composers chosen were German, French and, of course, English.

The programme opened with Mozart's Divertimento No. 5 in B Flat K186 and with the opening bars one could immediately feel the close unison of the three musicians and the technical excellence of their effort. This was followed by the solo oboe rendition of *Fantasie* by George Philip Telermann. Neil Black well highlighted the sensitivity and the imagination of the composition. Beethoven's Duo No. 3 in B flat was marked for its vigorous finale (fourth movement). The first half of the evening ended with the very light Concert Champetre with its four movements so neatly delineated by its French composer Henri Tomasi. The rhythmic quality of the piece came off strikingly.

The second half of the evening opened with Jean Francaix's Trio for oboe, clarinet and bassoon with its four movements. The fourth movement scherzo left a strong impact. Next were the two English composers: Alan Ridout with his *Prospero and Caliban* for solo bassoon (marked for its dramatic quality) and Malcolm Arnold and his *Fantasy* for solo clarinet. The finale of the soiree was Five Pieces for Reed Trio by Jacques Ibert which was very sensitively rendered.

This very enjoyable concert was co-sponsored by the British Council, the NCPA and the Hongkong Bank.

—S. I. Clerk

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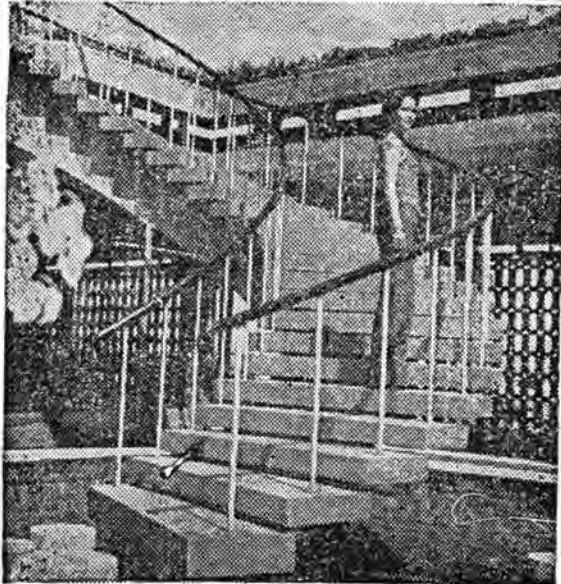
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WITH MANY VOICES

The Government's belief in Hindu astrology has put off Queen Elizabeth II's arrival here on Thursday by an additional five minutes.

—*Express News Service*, New Delhi, November 16.

In Moscow, an American diplomat once said, the people who know don't talk and people who talk don't know.

—*The Economist*, October 29.

The first American cruise missile has arrived in Europe, and Europe is a slightly safer place as a result.

—*The Economist*, November 19.

There comes an age when you have to leave the active campaigning to people of the relevant generation. So far as I know, the only virtue of old age is that one isn't compelled to go out and make political speeches.

—John Kenneth Galbraith quoted in
The Herald Tribune, December 3-4.

Anyone who condones the violence must share the guilt.

—*The Guardian*, November 22.

No Chinese starts bargaining seriously until he sees the person he is haggling with start to walk out of the door. Only then does he judge how far he can push a deal.

—*The Economist*, October 1.

Why do we Americans and Indians get along so well but our government don't?

—Ambassador Harry G. Barnes quoted in
The Times Of India, November 30.

Mrs. Thatcher has apparently given the family pants back to her husband.

—Letter to the Editor, *The Economist*, November 12.

Tedious, tiresome, exhausting.

—Lee Kuan Yew, describing the 10-day Commonwealth conference, quoted in *The Herald Tribune*, December 1.