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The Brezhnev Visit

NISSIM EZEKIEL

The Indo-Soviet communique on Brezhnev's visit made no mention of Afghanistan. Mrs. Gandhi claims it was in the interests of "sanity", and a "political settlement", as against, presumably, a military one. Overlooking Poland, Brezhnev offered the West a five-point "peace" programme in the Gulf area. India is praised for its role in the "non-aligned" movement.

The strategy and the ideology behind it are plain, but the principles are dubious. The Soviet Union demands the right to expand its hegemony without "interference". India recommends appeasement in order to avoid "confrontation".

On all national and international issues, India's policy-makers and their supporters are now inclined to abandon principles in favour of power factors. Congress (I) members ask for the reimposition of the Emergency. Measures are considered for down-grading the Judiciary and controlling the Press. Systematic propaganda is made for a change in the system, so that state and national governments may remain "stable" regardless of their performance.

Democratic institutions are criticised in India without any reference to an oppressive dictatorial and totalist ideology which dominates large parts of the world. Diversionary tactics are repeatedly adopted in the face of pressing economic problems, while at the same time the "down-trodden" and the "underprivileged sections of society" are invoked in every relevant or irrelevant context.

Any commentary on current events is useful only to the extent that it suggests clarifications and defines specific norms. The Brezhnev visit, for example, was an opportunity for India to take a stand against the invasion of one country by another. Mrs. Gandhi did that, in fact, theoretically, but compromised her convictions in practice. By that failure, she weakened her

image internationally, added to the confusion of the non-aligned nations and reduced India's political stature. She also destroyed the role India may have played in halting the expansionist compulsions of the Soviet Union.

In exchange for this all-round surrender, India is promised crude oil and weapons. However practical and realistic politics has to be, it is self-defeating if it is totally unprincipled. Mrs. Gandhi could have boosted India's morale by upholding her avowed beliefs instead of trading them for material goods.

Those international forces of peace which have rightly rejected the Soviet view of that blessed word are not deceived. Not only the independence of Afghanistan but the idea of independence has been betrayed by the Indo-Soviet communique. The bogus forces of "peace", by which they mean an eventual communist take-over without resistance, have been greatly encouraged by it. Their strategy is working well.

No doubt, other norms, other conclusions. But I wonder how many Indians who think of these things really believe that India emerged honourably from the Brezhnev visit!

Similarly, how many believe that a change to the presidential system would benefit our impoverished masses? Is there anything substantial which cannot be done for them in parliamentary democracy?

If an Emergency is reimposed, those clamouring for it may not escape its clutches. Their friends and relatives, not only their political enemies, could be imprisoned without trial. Arrests under the National Security Ordinance have already begun. It is by no means obvious that the persons arrested endanger the security of the nation, that a fair trial for them is unnecessary. Today **them**, tomorrow **us**.

A free press and judiciary have always been and will always be the best guarantees of human rights. Whenever they are violated, there is no other recourse than to the press and the judiciary. To put those under executive power is to enter the perpetual darkness of tyranny and terror.

The Brezhnev Doctrine : A Grand Design?

PRAN NATH LEKHI

The subject is not merely of topical interest but of vital importance to our country. It need not be said that the entry of Russian forces in Afghanistan, the situation in Poland, the enunciation of 5 points before our Parliament by Brezhnev on "peace", could be part of a grand design.

The first Brezhnev doctrine was the outcome of the needs and requirements of the Russian government in the late 60s and the 70s. It was a mere variant of the original comintern strategy of a Russo-Centric model of the world.

The first Brezhnev doctrine was the Russian reply to the international criticism against the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Pravda in an article (25.9.1968), formulated it in these words,—

"Those who speak about the 'illegal actions' of the allied socialist countries in Czechoslovakia forget that in a class society there is not and there cannot be non-class laws. Laws and legal norms are subjected to the laws of the class struggle, the laws of social development."

Thus was born the concept of limited sovereignty, but limited only for smaller nations—Russia to determine the limits! This in a nutshell appears to be the situation in both Afghanistan and Poland today.

There is a dangerous similarity in the clauses of the Indo-Soviet Treaty (1971) and the Soviet-Afghan (1978) Treaty relating to "consultation" in the event of internal threat. Similar is the cause in the Warsaw Pact Treaty; "consultation" would mean armed intervention by Russia, if events in Poland and Afghanistan are precedents.

The second Brezhnev doctrine reminds us of the Monroe Doctrine :

(i) not to set up foreign military bases in the Persian Gulf area and on the adjacent islands; not to deploy nuclear or any other weapons of mass destruction there;

(ii) not to use or threaten to use force against the countries of the Persian Gulf areas; and not to interfere in their internal affairs;

(iii) to respect the status of non-aligned nations chosen by the status of the Persian Gulf areas; not to draw them into military groupings with the participation of nuclear powers:

(iv) to respect the sovereign right of the States of that area to their natural resources;

(v) not to raise any obstacles or pose threats to normal trade exchanges and to the use of sea lanes linking the States of that area with other countries of the world.

Brezhnev appealed to India for "understanding and support" of his new doctrine. Before any Indian support is extended, it is necessary to understand what it means in the setting of the present-day world.

The five principles are unexceptionable, but some pertinent questions beg answers:—

(a) why have Persian Gulf countries been chosen for the special dispensation, without consulting them if they need a Russian mouthpiece?

(b) why should these principles be limited to the Gulf nations and not also apply to every country of the world, including Afghanistan?;

(c) who determines what the non-aligned nations think, as third world or non-aligned nations themselves?;

(d) the sea lanes are not facing any present threats, why mention them?;

(e) has the Russian government decided to give up its own bases in the Indian Ocean (they are of course not strictly in the area of the Persian Gulf but adjacent to it)?;

(f) does the advocate of limited sovereignty understand "respect" for the "sovereign rights of the States" as it is generally accepted in international law?

The veto in the UN Security Council by Russia on the resolution sponsored by non-aligned nations on Afghanistan makes the Russian pretensions to respect the status of the non-aligned suspect.

We cannot overlook the fact that Afghanistan is the first non-aligned nation attacked by Russia. Who invited the Russians in that country? If it was Amin, he was killed within two days of the entry of the Russian troops.

Setting up a Russian military base in Afghanistan belies the honesty and content of the very first item of the new Brezhnev Doctrine.

There are many other vexed questions which, in the background of the events in Afghanistan, crop up in the mind of every patriotic Indian whose thinking and conscience are not bogged down or misled by extra-territorial loyalties.

M. R. Masani

His 75th Birthday

The Rajaji Forum of Madras arranged a Citizens Meeting recently to felicitate Mr. M. R. Masani on his 75th birthday. Mr. C. Narayanaswamy presided. A resolution was passed referring to Mr. Masani's "leadership, his parliamentary activities and ... his spoken and written word."

Mr. P. C. Satagopan, Convenor of the Rajaji Forum, described Mr. Masani's crucial role in the Swatantra Party from 1959 to 1971. He said that it had helped to resist totalitarian trends in the Congress and the socialist myth which it tried to propagate.

Mr. C. R. Narasimhan spoke of the fruitful relations between Mr. Masani and Rajaji. He praised the qualities which had brought the two men together and enabled them to work in harmony for over a decade in the interest of the nation. Mr. Narasimhan eulogised in particular Mr. Masani's skill as a parliamentarian and his persuasiveness as a public speaker.

Mr. S. S. Mariswamy in his speech mentioned Mr. Masani's books, and singled out "Our India" as a true picture of the country's main resources and problems. He gave a short account of Mr. Masani's career from the formation of the Congress Reform Party to the present day.

Rajaji Forum. 4, V. S. Mudaly Street, Saidapet, Madras-600 015.

LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL

The Liberal International in 1981 intends to continue its policy of strengthening the contacts between the member parties, and of intensifying relations with liberal forces in the third world. Our last three congresses in Zurich, Ottawa and Berlin have prepared the ground

1981 will become a very important year for international liberalism since we will decide at our congress, which will be held from 24-26 September in Spoleto, Italy, on a new basic document called "Liberal Appeal 1981". This follows the 1947 Manifesto and the 1967 Declaration of Oxford.

In spring the LI plans to organise two seminars. One will be held in Hong Kong in cooperation with our friends from the Hong Kong Reform Club, will continue the energy debate started in 1979 in Stavanger,

The second will bring together LI members and liberal personalities from the United States to discuss the future relations between the USA and Western Europe.

If you are interested in any of these events please contact the Liberal International secretariat at 1 Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HE.

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The New Information Order

Threat to Freedom

One way in which the difference between democracy and dictatorship can be expressed is this: democracy is dedicated to giving people what they want and dictatorship is dedicated to giving people what they need. The new information order which is up for discussion by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) implies that in the sphere of information there is not enough of what people need and too much of what they want.

It is in contravention of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which, in its Article 19, guarantees the right to freedom of expression including "freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers". Freedom is about what people want, not about what others say they need.

It seems a strange change in atmosphere between December 1948, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN General Assembly, and October 1980, when the new information order is being discussed by a United Nations specialised agency, UNESCO.

Here is one very alarming symptom of the present situation. Mrs Gandhi's India has been in the forefront of those countries which have been pushing for the new information order. It is a country which in the years since independence, and for many years previously has had a noisy, critical and independent press. It was an untidy but a free press. Its practitioners have been dedicated to bringing the people the sort of news coverage they want.

This is not the sort of thing that Mrs. Gandhi likes. During her State of Emergency she completely muzzled the free press. The muzzle was taken off during her brief period in the political wilderness; but new steps have been taken to bring back the muzzle. Newspapers in India can now be banned and journalists and writers jailed by any local magistrate who feels that they deserve punishment on the grounds that they bring the government into hatred and contempt, or preach disaffection, disloyalty or enmity.

These are, of course, accented words; what they really mean is that anti-government publications can be banned. Naturally, it will depend on how the new regulations are applied, but if applied in all their severity it will mean another interruption, perhaps permanent this time, to the free press in India.

Back to UNESCO. Mrs Gandhi no doubt has what she regards as excellent motives for what she is doing. India is a shambles. There is unrest in many parts of the country, and the economic situation is very bad. No doubt the press sometimes contains items which cause trouble, and steps have to be taken to prevent this. But common sense demands that these should be limited, not blanket attacks on freedom of expression.

There is also flagrant corruption in India, much of it within the government. In many cases in the last few years, immense corruption rackets have been brought to light by articles and investigations in the press of precisely the type which are being banned in the new regulations.

This is a classic case of throwing the baby out with the bathwater. There is no possible justification for this kind of infringement of liberty of the press.

This is the sort of pronouncement which ought to emanate from a meeting of UNESCO. It is unlikely that it will, however, for there is a built-in majority for practically anything that Mrs Gandhi undertakes, whatever its intrinsic merits.

This is a pretty hard thing to say about an international organisation of considerable longevity and international repute. The answer is that it has not always been like that. We have noted the change which has taken place between the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the General Assembly in 1948 and the talk about the new information order which is going on today.

In 1948, the General Assembly had a built-in majority of democratic states. Those few members which were not democratic, including the Soviet Union and its satellites, were so ashamed that they had to pretend allegiance to all the democratic principles which the democracies enunciated.

This is why there was so little opposition to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The representatives of democratic countries passionately believed in these principles and thought that the time had come when it would be possible to bring them to the populations of countries which had been deprived of them in the past. The dictatorships took a cynical attitude to the whole debate because they knew that what they said and did at international gatherings had no connection at all with what they would do at home.

We have had an up-to-date version of this in the matter of the Helsinki Declaration. Here again, the

democracies meant what they said; the dictatorships did not.

Today, sad to say, there is a built-in majority of dictatorships in the United Nations General Assembly and in UNESCO. This is why it is possible for enormous time and effort to be devoted to finding a philosophical and ideological justification for basic attacks against the freedom of the press.

It is not easy for the defenders of freedom to riposte effectively. Churchill said that democracy was not a good system of government but simply the least bad one. The same can be said of freedom of the press. Any kind of freedom is open to abuse and is in fact frequently abused — not least by those who seek to install a dictatorship where today there is freedom. But the existence of these abuses does not mean that a system which replaced freedom of the press would be better.

There are some rather basic questions to be asked. We know who decides what people want. But who decides what people need? The government, the officers of the dictatorships. And indeed a case can be made out for a benevolent dictatorship — a limited case, in certain places, at certain times. But how can international legal frameworks be defined which can establish the difference between a benevolent and a malevolent dictatorship?

Some dictators — all would agree on Idi Amin — are obviously malevolent; but they can take as much advantage of phenomena like the new information order as Mrs Gandhi or any potentate whom a UN majority deems to be benevolent. And what right have members of the United Nations to decide about the intentions of rulers all over the world?

It is obvious that one dictator will support another, just as one democracy will support another. That is a fairly sound principle, but not one which ought to govern votes in a forum purporting to represent the Community of Nations.

Yes, indeed: of Nations. It is the United Nations. Not the United Rulers. Not a back-scratching outfit.

This is not a question of defending the type of press which is prevalent in the Western democracies. It is a matter of defending freedom of the press. And throughout the world, in Third World countries and in Communist countries, there are high-minded men and women who are ready to do this.

And it must be remembered that it is not so easy for them. Frequently they are called upon to suffer for their belief in freedom. And they need help, not hindrance from those of us who have no problems about freedom in our countries. And they need help, not hindrance, from the international community.
Swiss Press Review, No. 21.

STATESMAN Awards For Rural Reporting

At the inaugural session of a Seminar organised by the Leslie Sawhny Programme and the International Press Institute at Agra, in December 1978, Mr. C. R. Irani, President of the IPI, announced three Awards for excellence in rural reporting.

On 16 September 1980, the first series of these Awards, for 1979, were presented to journalists whose articles had been selected by a panel of judges comprising of Mrs. Nayantara Sahgal, Mr. Rajmohan Gandhi and Mr. G. S. Talwalkar.

The first prize of Rs. 5,000 was given to Mr. Rajnarayan Mishra (Hindi), senior editor of **Desh Bandhu**, a daily newspaper published from Raipur. The second prize of Rs. 3,000 was shared by Mr. Kishore Shah, a free-lance journalist, and Mr. Gobind Thukral, a staff correspondent of **The Indian Express** in Chandigarh (who collaborated on an article), and Mr. Bharat Dogra, a free-lance journalist.

The third prize of Rs. 2,000 was shared by Mr. Somesh Das Gupta and Mr. Satya Sain.

At the Prize Distribution meeting, a panel discussion on Rural Reporting was organised, the participants being Mrs. Rami Chhabra and Mr. K. Kurien, with Mr. Rajmohan Gandhi serving as Moderator.

The Statesman brought out a publication to mark the occasion, which included the Reports for which the Awards had been made. The publication also provided a biographical note on the prize-winners.

The Statesman instituted these Awards to enhance public awareness of the social, economic and political changes in our villages, to help bridge the gulf between rural and urban areas in India. Reports and articles published during 1980 are invited for consideration of the next awards.

A CORRESPONDENT

People's Union of Civil Liberties

An All India Civil Liberties Conference was held at the Aiwan-e-Ghalib and the Gandhi Peace Foundation on November 22—23, 1980. The response to the sponsoring letter that had been sent out was far greater and more enthusiastic than the organisers of the Conference had expected.

After a thorough discussion at an ad-hoc Subjects Committee meeting, it had been decided to invite representatives of all national political parties to the inaugural function as well as to the Conference. Accordingly, invitations were sent to all parties including the Congress (I).

The huge Ghalib auditorium was packed to capacity soon after the Conference opened. Arun Shourie welcomed the delegates, particularly those who had come from distant parts of the country. He also read messages received from Acharya B. Kripalani, M. C. Chagla and Nani A. Palkhivala.

Presiding, V. M. Tarkunde explained that the proposal was to form a broad-based organisation whose objectives would be confined to the defence and advancement of civil liberties. He emphasised that persons with different opinions on the economic and political institutions suitable to the country are invited to join, provided they agree that civil liberties must be upheld in the country at all stages of development, now and in the future. He said that the civil liberties of the people who are agitating for economic betterment ought to be protected in all eventualities.

All the political parties which had been invited responded to the invitation. Political leaders who spoke on the occasion included Charan Singh, Y. B. Chavan, Shyamsundar Mahapatra, E. M. S. Namboodiripad, Bhupesh Gupta, Ram Jethmalani, Shabuddin, H. N. Bahuguna, Pritish Chanda, Satyanaraian Singh and Manjit Singh Khara. Persons not belonging to any political party who spoke at the inaugural session included Nayantara Sahgal, Soli Sorabjee and Devkant Kakati from Assam.

Speakers agreed that civil liberties were facing threats from various quarters and that the fight for civil liberties remained important, irrespective of which government came to power. They welcomed the idea of a new All-India organisation to uphold and promote civil liberties.

A small section of the audience raised slogans against the decision of the organisers to invite Mr. Shyamsunder Mahapatra, the General Secretary of the Congress (I). When Mr. Mahapatra started speaking, a larger number in the audience was offended by his statements, such as the one that "in its 100 years of history the Congress led by Mrs. Indira Gandhi has always stood for individual liberty and freedom".

In spite of the efforts of the President of the Conference, Mr. V. M. Tarkunde, and others, the audience could not be pacified. In the event, Mr. Mahapatra was prevented from completing his speech. Mr. Tarkunde apologised to him for the conduct of the part of the audience that had prevented him from speaking. Delegates who spoke later chided the audience for its intolerance. While seeing off Mr. Mahapatra, who left a short while after his speech, Arun Shourie again personally apologised to Mr. Mahapatra for the disorder in the hall. The organisers were therefore surprised to hear on Radio and Television (November 23) a strongly worded statement from Mr. Mahapatra dubbing the Conference a political meeting called to denigrate the name of the Prime Minister. He suggested that the organisers had decided to create further instability in the country by fomenting agitations.

At the conclusion of the first day's session, an announcement was made that those who were in general agreement with the draft constitution of the proposed organisation (previously circulated) and who wanted to be members should attend the next day's session at the

Introduce

FREEDOM FIRST

to your friends

Gandhi Peace Foundation. Two sessions of the Conference were held in the auditorium of the Gandhi Peace Foundation. The hall was packed to capacity at both.

The draft constitution of the organisation was first discussed in detail, clause by clause. A number of amendments were either accepted or rejected. The constitution as amended was then accepted. The audience unanimously decided that Mr. V. M. Tarkunde should be the President and Mr. Arun Shourie the general secretary of the organisation for the first term. These two, along with other members of the Organisation Committee (Pran Chopra, Surendra Mohan and Manjit Singh Khara) were authorised to nominate members of the National Council and the National Executive Committee for the first term. The delegates passed a resolution moved by Arun Shourie on the programme of work for the next twelve months.

Because of the strong sentiments against preventive detention laws, and in particular against the National Security Ordinance, which was voiced by several speakers, a special resolution calling for the withdrawal of the National Security Ordinance and the repeal of all laws authorising detention without trial, was proposed by Nikhil Chakravorty and unanimously adopted.

In addition, several resolutions were adopted including one calling for the immediate release of the South Korean Democratic Leader, Kim Dee Jung, another calling for the protection of civil liberties of all sections of the people in Assam, a third condemning the blinding of alleged criminals by the police in the Bhagalpur district, Bihar, a fourth against police atrocities in Narasempet district in Andhra Pradesh, and a fifth calling for the immediate release of the ailing Naxalite leader Nagabhushan Patnaik.

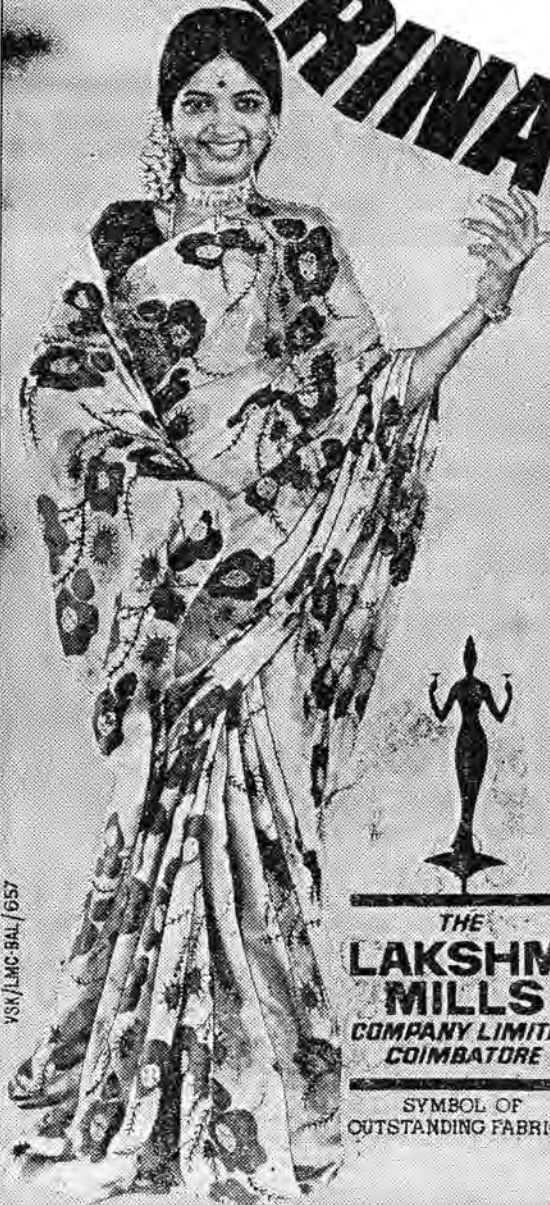
S. M. Joshi delivered a valedictory address in which he counselled delegates to focus initially on a few specific tasks so that the new organisation could produce results in a short time.

Mr. Tarkunde concluded the Conference by expressing his confidence that within the next 12 months, branches of the organisation would be set up in every State, and Lawyer's Committees for the defence of civil liberties at the seat of every High Court. He thanked the volunteers for their devoted work, the Gandhi Peace Foundation for the manifold facilities made available to the Conference, and to the J. P. Institute of Human Freedoms set up by Nani A. Palkhivala for granting a handsome donation to cover the expenses of the Conference.

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VOICES—1

THE SPASTICS

The Constitution of India states that "the disabled are entitled to the same rights and privileges as other citizens." This is a laudable principle in theory. What happens in practice, especially to those who are disabled with a multiple handicap as a result of cerebral palsy?

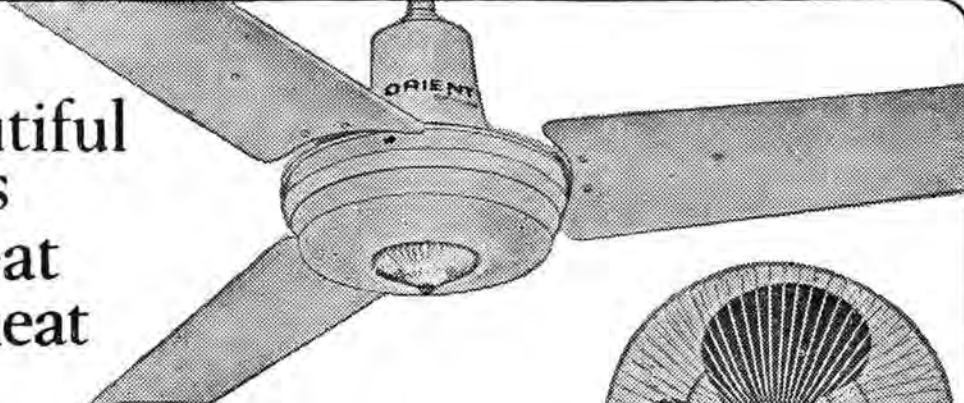
It is estimated that 24 babies with cerebral palsy are born each day, and that there are 1 per thousand cerebrally palsied persons in the population. In India, with a population of 800 million, this constitutes a sizeable minority of approximately 8 million. Yet, it is only in October 1980 that the cerebrally palsied have been recognised by the government of India as a group of the disabled, warranting equal consideration along with the blind, the deaf and the orthopaedically handicapped. They are now entitled to assistance in education, employment, health and welfare, economic needs, rehabilitation, housing and travel. Thus, even within the disabled population, the cerebrally palsied have been regarded as the "untouchable".

In education, it is only as recently as in 1973 that special educational facilities have been provided for the cerebral palsied child by the Spastics Society of India. This is despite the fact that 60% of them are

of average or above average intelligence, 35% are educatable and some 5% are severely subnormal in intelligence. For the cerebral palsied child who is severely multiple-handicapped (unable to walk independently, to communicate coherently, to use his hands adequately), this has meant in most cases a complete denial of his right to education. There are few facilities for the kind of special education which he requires. For him, integration into a normal school setting is at present an illusion.

In normal school there is neither the provision of special aids to assist him, nor the availability of trained special education teachers to teach him. In addition, with the majority of the normal child population still illiterate, the disabled and especially the multiple-handicapped are not considered to be a priority for education. Society is thus propagating and strengthening the belief in "karma", punishing the child and his family for their supposed misdeeds in previous lives, subjecting them to a life of frustration, despair and hopelessness.

It has been emphatically proven that given the opportunity for education, rehabilitation and expert help, adequate facilities and special aids, the educated cerebral palsied child is able to pursue a normal school career, to pass examinations and proceed to higher education. He is also able to obtain professional qualifica-



Beautiful ways to beat the heat

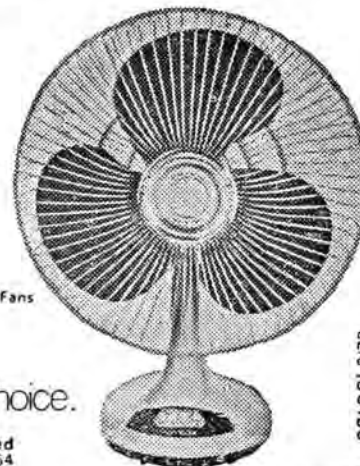
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tions in many fields and earn an independent living in a number of occupations.

However, in the area of employment, there are few openings for the cerebrally palsied in most occupations. In addition, in most of the special employment bureaux for the handicapped set up by the government, they have not been permitted to register, because of the multiple nature of their handicaps. The government has also legislated that there should be a provision for employers to offer 3% of their openings to the handicapped. This legislation is a white elephant, especially for the multiple-handicapped who are not considered at all for employment.

The slightest modifications to machinery, and the surroundings can be made to accomodate the disabled, but little or no consideration is given to this by employers. Also, there is scant provision for sheltered employment, and the Government Vocational Rehabilitation Centres do not accomodate the cerebrally palsied. The majority of them are therefore destined to a life of dependency and inertia, further handicapped by society's negligence and ignorance.

Similarly, in areas of health and welfare, the cerebrally palsied have little hope of receiving adequate provision. It is only in major cities that there are hospital facilities providing preventive medicine (ante, natal, and post natal services) and special medical and para-medical services, the latter including speech, physio and occupational therapy vital for the treatment of the cerebrally palsied. In the smaller townships and villages, the ones who survive are likely to become further handicapped and a burden to themselves and society.

Little economic aid is provided by the government for the disabled person and his family. A few scholarships are available for education, loans are offered for self employment. Parents of the disabled are entitled to a minor tax exemption if their child is attending a hospital or a recognised educational institution. Travel concessions are also available. However, there are so many restrictions and so much red tape, that the concessions are difficult to obtain, and have to be fought for rather than being a right of the disabled.

Transport and access are also major problems for the cerebrally palsied. Inadequate transport facilities mean that parents are often unable to take their child for treatment or to school. Inaccessible buildings, shops and theatres mean that the severely handicapped person has little opportunity to break out of his narrow world and become an integrated member of the community.

For the cerebrally palsied, life must often seem to be an eternal struggle, against himself and his environ-

ment. Feelings of inadequacy, worthlessness, anguish and despair must often overwhelm him, as he faces a society which seems to be lacking in understanding and sensitivity towards him, upon which he has to be dependent for most of his life. His is a very restricted world, and often he must feel like a prisoner locked behind bars, with society, because of fear and ignorance, as his goaler. For him, the right to live is still in question.

EDWINA BAHER

VOICES - 2

RURAL GROWTH

1. Intensive training courses should be organised, at all block levels, in comprehensive Rural Development Programmes, so that migration to urban area may be stopped. By development of Animal Husbandry, Forestry, Horticulture and rural-based industries, the population of 71% devoted to agriculture can be gradually diverted to other avocations, preventing further fragmentation of agriculture holdings due to the Law of Inheritance.

2. Proper survey of the requirements of farmers, village artisans and agricultural labour should be made in each panchayat area by voluntary organisations and officials of various Departments, and managers of Nationalised Banks.

3. State-level Agro-Industries Corporations should be set up with various branches operating at grass-root levels.

4. Simplification of administrative procedures should be adopted immediately.

5. Decentralisation of power should be extended as early as possible to the district level at first and then to other levels, after budget allocations for the year are made for various works.

6. Panchayats should be given the responsibility of carrying out various programmes. There should be forests allotted to each panchayat which will provide new wealth and employment and also maintain the ecological balance of rural India.

7. Need-based Education should be imparted to suit local conditions from Primay Schools to Adult Education Centres.

8. Priority should be given to rural health programmes and family planning. If the population increases at the present rate of 2.2%, whatever progress we make will be of no use.

N. K. Ganapaiah, Secreary-General,
The Farmers Federation Of India,
Post Box 30, Saklasapur, 573134,
Karnataka.

THE WORLD OF BOOKS

MY OWN BOSWELL

by M. Hidayatullah. Arnold Heinemann, Rs. 85/-

It is difficult to imagine who would be interested in this book other than the friends and relations of the author. This applies to many autobiographies but one expects that a former Chief Justice of India, who acted as President, and who is now Vice-President, would have something to say of interest to the general public.

Mr. Hidayatullah fondly describes his ancestry, his childhood and his relatives, young and old. He comes from a learned Muslim family of North India settled in Madhya Pradesh, and his own academic career reflects his intellectual background. A distinguished career in Law and in the judiciary followed his education in Nagpur and in Cambridge universities.

Starting as an advocate in Nagpur, the author became Advocate General of the Central Provinces for three years. He was Judge of the High Court and then Chief Justice in the same court. In 1958 he became a Judge of the Supreme Court and Chief Justice of India in 1968 from which position he retired in 1970 at the age of 65.

The author gives a detailed and at times amusing account of events and personalities, but this is confined to lawyers, judges and law courts. Even the few references to political events and figures are of little interest because Mr. Hidayatullah expresses no opinion on them. For example, on Mr. Giri's resignation in 1969 as acting President to stand for election as President, the author says nothing about the political implications of the free vote allowed to Congressmen by Indira Gandhi.

There is passing mention of the consequent split in the Congress but only because Mr. Hidayatullah as acting President in place of Mr. Giri, might be advised to dissolve the Lok Sabha if Mrs. Gandhi lost her majority. He makes no comments on the unprincipled defections which followed.

1969 brought President Nixon for a visit to India, and as the author was then acting President he gives a detailed account of the banquets, speeches and various events but provides just two short sentences about his impressions of President Nixon!

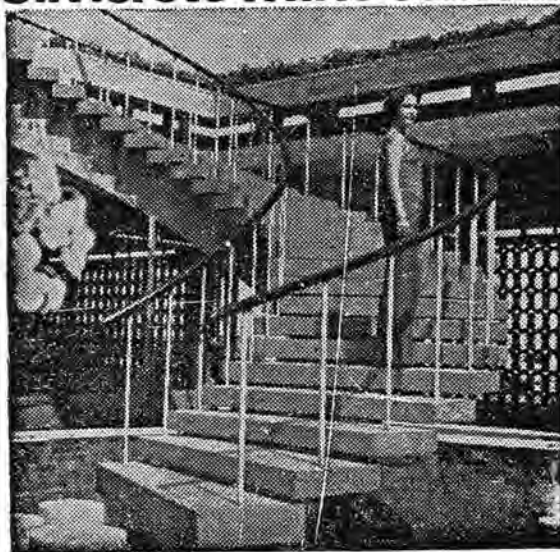
It is extraordinary that in a book of this length, there is hardly any mention of important political and economic matters which agitated the entire country.

The only references to the Freedom Movement are a few remarks about writs of Habeas Corpus and the detention of political prisoners. There is hardly anything on Partition. The only comment on Jinnah relates to an invitation issued to the author to go to Pakistan as a Judge of the Federal Court. There is nothing about Gandhiji, no comments on Nehru's Prime Ministership, no mention of Sardar Patel, Rajaji and others who were most prominent on the Indian scene during the author's lifetime.

Of course, there is nothing about the Emergency! It is no defence of the author to say that his life was spent in the judicial sphere and therefore his memories are necessarily confined to it. One who rises to be Chief Justice of India and its acting President cannot be excused for avoiding discussion of controversial issues. One would not know from reading this book what great pressures have been exerted on the judiciary in the last few years.

Other judges and legal luminaries have written their autobiographies without feeling obliged to confine themselves to their professional field. For example, the second part of US Supreme Court Justice William Douglas's memoirs, covering the same period, 1939 to

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1975, "The Court Years", is also intended to cover his judicial career, but it abounds in comments — not all friendly, on colleagues and events.

Douglas's philosophy was a relentless defence of individual rights. He liked to create precedents rather than to find them. His acid comments on Richard Nixon are in refreshing contrast to Mr. Hidayatullah's few insipid ones.

Justice Douglas believed that it was the purpose of the U.S. Constitution to keep the government off the backs of the people. Alas, one finds no such stimulating comment in the book under review. It is obvious that the author was unwilling to speak out on controversial issues, but such memoirs of a period of strife can only be dull.

MEHRA MASANI

INDIAN VERSE BY YOUNG POETS

Edited by Dr. Pranab Bandyopadhyaya. United Writers. Rs. 40.

An anthology of young poets is unique on the Indian-English poetry scene. There are a few anthologies, but none devoted exclusively to the young. This one was therefore eagerly awaited. Truly representative, it would have proved that there is a new viable generation of poets. It was obviously too much to expect, for Dr. Bandyopadhyaya's selection disappoints — right from the Editor's Note.

The Note tells us this is not an anthology of truly young poets. Poetry has no age limit and "renowned" (and aged) regional poets have been included because "their introduction to the English-speaking world is fresh". This, the editor claims, makes them young. So the title is misleading.

It is stated that 300 contributions were received by the editor and out of these 122 "capable poets" were carefully selected. Having read them, one wishes greater care had been exercised in the selection, for most of the poems just don't make the grade. But then, had enough care been exercised, there would have been no Indian Verse By Young Poets—there aren't enough good poems in the selection to justify an anthology.

The editor doesn't seem to know what constitutes a good poem. Dull, banal, uninspiring poems make up the greater part of the anthology. A few lines from *The Law of Life* by Suga will suffice to illustrate the point:

"Birth, growth, decay and death
at which wise men

neither leap for joy
now weep for sorrow
but accept the inevitable, the immutable."

Where is the insight, or well-handled language? Old threadbare sentiments are reiterated in worn-out words. Hardly poetry.

The same can be said of A. Raghu's **Tears No More:**

"He is dead.

Yes. He is dead.

No more laugh. No more tears.

No more anything."

This is clumsy, crude non-poetry.

And then there is the poem on Subhash Chandra Bose where "the first alphabet of each stanza when joined together forms the word 'Bose'". Not to mention the very uninspiring thought and language.

One suspects that the majority of the poets have been included because they are either Supreme Court judges or established lawyers, or Heads of Departments, or award winners or widely published. Also poets who are listed in the **International Who's Who in Poetry, Men of Achievement**, etc.

There is the poor English to contend with also. "I forgave your wild/desires of reading my poems in/secret" (Page 104), "The sound of last bullet died down", "the soldiers unhurt", "Jim ruminates the days/he passed in the warmth of Lucy" (Page 126), "the good sense hints me to say" (Page 130). There are others too, not to mention the bio-data of C. K. Sreedharan which says he "has taken up writing English poems since 1973."

Add to all this the innumerable printing errors, and **Indian Verse** becomes extremely annoying.

NIMMOO KINGER

MUNSHI : SELF-SCULPTOR

By Jayana Sheth. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay. Pp. 251. Rs. 65.

This is in effect two separate works. One is a critical discussion with biographical over-tones, linking Munshi's life with his beliefs and ideals, relating them to his numerous historical plays and novels. The other, included perhaps as a sample of his literary productions, is a translation by Mrs. Sheth of **Dhruvaswaminidevi**, one of Munshi's most ambitious plays.

More than a writer, it was Munshi the political activist and journalist who had an impact on his time. The paradox of his life was that of many Indians, born to a cultural climate at least as Western, even to the English medium of instruction in schools and universi-

ties, as Eastern in the numerous constraints and rituals of its society.

While Munshi's plays and novels are nearly always deeply enmeshed in India's ancient history and mythology, bearing titles like the all but-unpronounceable **Dhruvaswaminidevi**, he can say, in one of his early works, "I created the modern woman with the right to love as she wills and live her own life; the man who is prepared to live the life that he is born to, unabashed and triumphant; united minds and linked wills; the joy of life as it is lived—richly, spontaneously and sinlessly."

The sentiments sound blase enough. But the fact remains that while it had already become the fashion of the day to pay lip-service to the emancipation of women, in reality a far more conservative approach was practised by most. Perhaps due to the circumstances of his own life, Munshi was a feminist more than half a century ago, in words as well as in fact: he married a widow at a time when widow-remarriage amongst all but the fringes of Hindu society was virtually unknown.

What has all this to do with Munshi's work? Lilavati Munshi's summation of her husband is valid — "He has great capacity of provoking the hearts and minds of men. But his sparkling intellect is associated with an unconcealed egotism." **Dhruvaswaminidevi**, whose central theme is the love of Chandragupta, the great Gupta King, for his brother's wife, and his eventual marriage to her, relates closely to Munshi's personal experience. The critical point, of course, is whether it rises beyond personal statement. Is it literature, or even fiction?

Personally, I don't think so. One is of course dealing with an English translation and not the original Gujarati, but the language is not just archaic, it is stilted to the point of being embarrassing. One example should suffice. Chandragupta in the throes of passion: "Yes, my veins are throbbing as though I am delirious — like inflamed fire you are burning me within ..."

LINA MAYADAS

NO, SIR.

By P. G. Mavalankar. *Sannishtha Prakashan*,
Pp. 314. Rs. 45. Ahmedabad.

This is a compilation of twenty or so speeches in Parliament by the author. Normally, it would not have amounted to much, but for the fact that they

were delivered between July 21, 1975 and November 6, 1976, during the Emergency in India.

The author was an Independent Member of the Lok Sabha and is Founder-Director, Harold Laski Institute of Political Science, Ahmedabad. His book is a faithful chronicle of those years when the Judiciary was made subservient to the Executive, basic democratic principles were flouted, and the Constitution subverted.

Opposing the motion by Jagjivan Ram approving the Proclamation of Emergency, on July 22, 1975, Professor Mavalankar said, "Are we heading towards one-party rule and then on to one person's rule? Is this not the beginning of a naked dictatorship?"

Son of Late Hon. G. V. Mavalankar, first Speaker of Free India, whom Nehru described as "the Father of the Lok Sabha", Professor Mavalankar was often accused by Emergency Speaker G. S. Dhillon of exceeding the time allotted to him. His retort, which was pithy, and not recorded in the official debate was, "But, Sir, what about the Government exceeding their limits. . ."

Discerning readers will sense a parallel with what the Prime Minister has been saying these last few months. One only hopes that a climate is not being created to justify a second imposition of the laws and measures which are already manifesting themselves in the form of Preventive Ordinance Detention Acts in a few States and in the National Security Ordinance.

K. BALASUBRAMANTYAN

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Soviet Bloc Network of Friendship Treaties

In recent years the USSR has concluded friendship and cooperation treaties with a number of Third World countries. It also has special treaties with several countries in which Soviet troops are stationed.

The friendship treaty concluded between the Soviet Union and Syria in Moscow on 8 October 1980 marks a further extension of the network of treaties which the Soviet Union has signed with Third World countries since the 1970s. The other treaties with these countries are as follows:

- UAR (Egypt — 27 May 1971, unilaterally
abrogated by Egypt on 15 March 1976)
- India — 9 August 1971
- Iraq — 9 April 1972
- Somalia — 11 July 1974, unilaterally
abrogated by Somalia on 13 November, 1977
- Angola — 9 October 1976
- Mozambique — 31 March 1977
- Vietnam — 3 November 1978
- Ethiopia — 20 November 1978
- Afghanistan — 5 December 1978
- South Yemen — 25 October 1979

The treaty with Vietnam (a "Socialist country") states that the sides regard assisting each other "in defending Socialist gains" as their "internationalist duty"; in this respect it resembles the treaties between the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies in Eastern Europe and is unique among those with Third World countries. Whereas the treaty with Afghanistan provides (Article 4) for the signatories to "consult each other and take by agreement appropriate measures to ensure the security, independence and territorial integrity" of their countries, the Syrian treaty provides for immediate consultation on security matters, without commitment to action, like the treaties with Egypt, Iraq, Somalia and Angola; it is in stronger terms than those with Ethiopia and South Yemen (PDRY) which require the signatories to "endeavour immediately to contact each other". The treaties with Iraq, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, South Yemen and Syria provide for military cooperation, as did the two subsequently abrogated (with Egypt and Somalia). The Syrian treaty, unlike those with Egypt and Somalia, does not refer specifically to training soldiers to handle Soviet weapons.

The Soviet Union has always attached great importance to such treaties, in order to set existing favour-

able relations in what it hopes will be a durable formal framework in international law, and to consolidate the political and economic influence which first made the conclusion of the treaties possible. The Soviet leaders also regard the treaties as milestones in the "world revolutionary process".

In the treaty with Afghanistan, the signatories declare themselves "determined to develop the social and economic achievements of the Soviet and Afghan peoples, to safeguard their security and independence, to come out resolutely for the cohesion of all forces fighting for peace, national independence, democracy and social progress". Support for the unity of all forces fighting for "peace, national independence, democracy and social progress" is expressed also in the preambles to the treaties with Angola, Mozambique, Vietnam, Ethiopia and South Yemen. The treaty with Syria simply declares a common determination to "come out in favour of national independence and social progress", though at a Kremlin dinner for President Asad, President Brezhnev linked Syria more explicitly with the world Communist movement: "The friendship between the Soviet Union and Syria, which has been growing from year to year, symbolises... the unity of the two greatest forces of the present-day world, Socialism and national liberation, and their cooperation in the struggle for universal peace and social progress." (Pravda, 9 October 1980). Nevertheless, the treaty commits the Soviet Union to respect Syria's policy of non-alignment, like the treaties with India, Somalia, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Afghanistan and South Yemen. These countries, for their part, affirm their respect for the "peaceful policy of the USSR".

In recent months the Soviet Union's allies in the Warsaw Pact have been active in concluding friendship treaties with countries outside Europe. Bulgaria signed treaties with Vietnam and Laos in October 1979 and with Ethiopia in July 1980; Czechoslovakia with Vietnam and Laos in February 1980; the German Democratic Republic with Angola and Mozambique in February 1979, with South Yemen and Ethiopia in November 1979, with Kampuchea on 7 March 1980, and with Cuba in June 1980; and Hungary with Ethiopia and Mozambique in September 1980. Presenting his country's treaty with Vietnam to the Volkskammer in December 1977, the GDR Foreign Minister, Oskar Fischer said: "The treaties (ie those with Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Vietnam) strengthen the influence of the Socialist community of States on world events."

(The East German news agency, ADN, 21)

The Soviet Union does not necessarily regard these friendship treaties as adequate in themselves. Soviet spokesmen frequently justify the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 by citing the Soviet-Afghan friendship treaty (Article 4, quoted above) together with Article 51 of the UN Charter (which upholds the "inherent right of individual or collective self-defence") and repeated "invitations" from the Afghan Government. The Soviet Union felt it necessary to conclude a separate treaty with Afghanistan to cover the presence of Soviet troops there. Similarly, the Soviet Union concluded treaties with Poland (1956), Hungary (1957) and Czechoslovakia (1968) in which those countries formally agreed to the presence of Soviet troops on their territory.

The terms of the "Treaty on the temporary stay of the limited Soviet military contingent on Afghan soil", whose ratification was announced on 4 April 1980, have not been published, but they are likely to be similar to those in the treaty governing the presence of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia, concluded in October 1968, two months after the Warsaw Pact invasion of that country. In both cases the territory of one signatory was occupied by the armed forces of the other, the Soviet Union; but the treaty with Czechoslovakia was made public at the time of its signature.

The treaty with Czechoslovakia states (Article 2) that "the temporary presence of Soviet troops on the territory of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic does not violate its sovereignty". According to Articles 4 and 5, persons serving with the Soviet forces and members of their families are not subject to passport and visa control when entering, staying in and leaving Czechoslovakia, and they and their equipment are exempt from customs and border inspection. Article 9 covers matters of jurisdiction. Offences committed by members of the Soviet forces or their families would be dealt with by Czechoslovakia courts or military tribunals, but these provisions "are inapplicable to crimes or misdemeanours committed by persons serving with the Soviet troops when discharging their duties in areas where military units are deployed".

The significance of the description of the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan as "temporary" may be judged from the fact that the USSR still has over 60,000 troops in Czechoslovakia, though the Czechoslovak party leader, Gustav Husak, told his party Congress in May 1971, with Soviet approval, that "The aim of ... overcoming the internal crisis has been accomplished".

Background Brief

Foreign Office, London.

De Facto Presidential Government in India

P. M. KAMATH

The first-ever non-Congress government at the Centre formed by the Janata party was pulled down by the defections of some 76 MPs, and Morarji Desai was forced to resign on July 15, 1979. Since then a series of political defections and counter-defections, shifting of political loyalties by smaller political factions from one national party to the other, and the consequent political uncertainties at the Centre have led some observers to revive their advocacy of a Presidential form of government for India.

The Presidential government is known for fixed executive tenure. The President, who is both the head of the state and the head of the government, has full powers to make and unmake his Cabinet. The Members of the Council of Ministers hold their office during his pleasure, and he can hire and fire them at his will. On the other hand, in the parliamentary system that we have, the President is merely the constitutional head of the state. The Council of Ministers remain in office at the pleasure of the President, but in reality the President is controlled by majority support in the popularly elected House of the People. The Council of Ministers can remain in office for a maximum duration of five years, but it does not enjoy fixed tenure. Its continuance in office depends upon majority support in the House of the People.

I do not propose to discuss the merit or otherwise of Presidential government for India. I propose to argue that between July 15, 1979 and January 14, 1980, in fact we had in India, a *de facto* Presidential government. I will show, incidentally, how the President, next only to political defections, had contributed to the development of an atmosphere suitable to questioning the legitimacy of the Parliamentary government in India, during the period. On the resignation of the Morarji government the President of India Sanjiva Reddy followed the constitutional nicety of inviting Y. B. Chavan, then leader of the Opposition, to explore the possibility of forming an alternate government, and got a "no". The President was hailed for his most appropriate *parliamentary behaviour* by friends and critics alike. Since then, the President within a parliamentary system began to act in the spirit of an Executive President.

The President took the most unprecedented step of inviting two contenders — Morarji Desai and Charan Singh — simultaneously to explore the possibilities of forming an alternative government. Both were asked

to submit a list of MPs supporting their respective leadership. After scrutiny of the lists submitted by the two contenders, the President found that Charan Singh enjoyed the support of a greater number than did Morarji Desai. The President invited Charan Singh to form the government, and he was sworn in as the fifth Prime Minister of India on July 17, 1979. Charan Singh was asked, however, to seek a vote of confidence before the end of August, 1979.

The House was summoned to meet on August 20. But political horse-trading failed on the eve of the session. Mrs. Gandhi, who had extended her support to Charan Singh to become the Prime Minister, withdrew the same. Without facing the House, Charan Singh tendered his resignation, and advised the dissolution of the Lok Sabha. The President, after a series of consultations with various political groups, decided to accept Charan Singh's recommendation, dissolved the House and asked him to continue in office as the caretaker Prime Minister of a caretaker government. He proposed to hold general elections in December 1979. Hence, after the resignation of Morarji's government, the government that succeeded was in fact non-representative and non-parliamentary. It was the longest-lived caretaker government in India.

Charan Singh's government did not face the Lok Sabha even for a minute. The House having been dissolved, the groups or individuals who, outside the Lok Sabha, had agreed to support the government, began to withdraw their support. What was the original majority in the House that sustained the pleasure of the President who placed Charan at the helm of national affairs? There was no test of majority in the House. But the coalition gradually began to disintegrate. First, Charan Singh asked for and secured H. N. Bahuguna's resignation. Later, Brahmananda Reddy and Zulfikarulla also resigned. On December 19, Charan Singh asked and secured the resignation of two of the AIADMK ministers. The President obliged Charan Singh by accepting all these resignations. What was left was an alliance between the Lok Dal and Congress (U) whose total strength in the dissolved house was only 133. Could a government in a Parliamentary system survive with such minority support? It would have been removed from office long ago. But Charan Singh's government enjoyed fixed tenure, until the January 1980 elections restored Parliamentary government.

How democratic was the President's action in asking the two leaders to submit a list of their supporters simultaneously? It is normally, the right of the largest single party to explore the possibility of forming a go-

vernment. Was it fair for the President to demand a list of the supporters of a particular leader for his scrutiny? The test of majority has to be made on the floor of the House and not in the office of the President. An objective analysis of the President's action shows that it trespassed the limits of constitutional propriety. As Morarji Desai claimed, the President had made up his mind to install Charan Singh as the Prime Minister. Charan Singh's government was entirely a creation of the President.

Some commentators find fault with the Constitution in not providing for a situation like the one faced by President Sanjiva Reddy. The Constitution cannot be expected to anticipate and provide for every kind of situation. Much depends upon how the constitutional office-holders act to exercise their powers. Was the President left without any alternative than the one which he adopted? Certainly not. He did not exhaust all possible solutions available to him in the crisis. On the resignation of Charan Singh, the President could have called Jagjivan Ram, as the leader of the single largest party, to explore the possibilities of forming an alternate government. If the President had invited Jagjivan Ram, the leader of the Janata opposition, following the precedent created by himself in inviting Y. B. Chavan, he would have presented himself in the most objective role.

The President, it was reported, felt that an invitation to Jagjivan Ram to form the government would have started a process of defections. Having installed a defector as the Prime Minister, he had no moral right to prevent further defections. Nor does he have

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a constitutional responsibility to prevent defections. The constitutional role of the President in a parliamentary system is limited to calling upon the leader of the majority party to form the government and, in case there is no party with an absolute majority, to invite the leader of the largest single party to explore such a possibility. The President is free to repeat this exercise in turn by calling upon different groups to form a government so as to be convinced that no leader is in a position to provide a government. But the question whether a particular leader is in a position to provide a **stable** government or not is a subjective matter and does not fall in the realm of the President's discretion.

Was the President bound to accept Charan Singh's advice to dissolve the Lok Sabha? Since Charan Singh had failed to fulfil the President's condition of seeking a vote of confidence, he had his discretion not to accept the same. In the absence of majority backing in Parliament, Charan Singh's advice was on the same footing as the advice of any other factional leader, which might or might not be accepted by the President. However, Charan Singh's Law Minister, S. N. Kacker, had said that the need to secure a vote of confidence was a "friendly" suggestion of the Presi-

dent. Therefore, Kacker failed to see how advice tendered by those who never faced a defeat on the floor of the house can be said to be not binding.

Is not the parliamentary system based on the assumption of a continuous accountability of the Council of Ministers to the elected representatives, and through them to the electorate? Was it not that Charan Singh advised dissolution of the Lok Sabha because his defeat was a foregone conclusion on August 20, if he had faced the Lok Sabha?

The President's actions and inactions in the political crisis of that time created a Presidential government in India. The President, on the other hand, claimed to have acted according to "the dictates of his conscience". In politics, conscience has been a cover to justify actions which do not have a constitutional, legal or political basis.

If the President can justify one action on the basis of conscience, he may do so in any other situation as well. By justifying his action on the basis of the dictates of his conscience, President Sanjiva Reddy set a bad precedent, having himself been the political victim of a "conscience vote" in the 1969 presidential elections.

WANTED : Poems of the Emergency

A researcher, collector, co-translator of contemporary Indian poetry, I am seeking your co-operation in a joint Indo-US project that has been growing for the past two years. We are looking especially for your help in finding poetry written during the Emergency period of 1975-77 that responds in some way to those national events, protesting silence, sycophancy, etc. . . or merely expressing social or personal confusion within that political context and time.

The immediate aim of the cooperative project is to publish in English an anthology of such poems from various regions in India, together with a symposium of essays examining the critical issues these poems raise.

A Fulbright lecturer in American literature at Delhi University for 1971-72, I returned to India for four months in 1978 to collect Emergency literature from all over the subcontinent.

In the next few months the US journals LITERATURE EAST AND WEST and JOURNAL OF SOUTH ASIAN LITERATURE will publish essays with a selection of 30 poems each that I prepared as a kind of preview of the projected anthology-book. The

In the summer of 1981 I will travel again to India to settle problems of translation and selection. I will also arrange for prominent critics to see the collection and write comments on the important issues these poems raise. In addition, I will make final arrangements for publication of the anthology and essay-symposium in India as well as in the US, perhaps Britain, later.

Although I have been working on this project for two years (along with my duties as an English professor and other writing — poems, reviews, articles on American, especially black, literature). I know that many good Emergency poems have eluded my search. Besides the KAVI general anthology and individual magazine poems and books, I have substantial collections in Hindi done by Baldev Vanshi, in Marathi by Dr. Arun Limaye, in Malayalam by K. Ayyappa Paniker, and in Kannada by Chadrashekhara Patil.

(DR.) JOHN OLIVER PERRY

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