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Freedom First

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PRICE
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INDIAN AGRICULTURE A Stunted Giant

Bhanu Pratap Singh



Can the Democracies Survive?

Jean Francois Revel

In Which Century?

Minoo Masani

V. B. Karnik
A Tribute



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Dear Friend,

November was both a month of sorrow and joy for us here at *Freedom First*. The Honorary Secretary of the Democratic Research Service and former editor of *Freedom First*, V. B. Karnik passed away on November 5. He died as he had lived, with great dignity. As Geeta Doctor observed in a letter: "He was really a very sweet and kind person. I think what we should learn from him is the art of expressing one's opinion or convictions quietly in the face of opposition. I am sure we will all miss him." Indeed we will.

We dedicate this issue of *Freedom First* to his memory.

On November 20, last year, our founder Minoo Masani completed eighty. Friends and admirers got together to felicitate him on the happy occasion. The Democratic Research Service and *Freedom First* owe their existence and continued work through three decades entirely to his interest and dedication to the cause of freedom and dissent which, incidentally is the title of a volume of essays in his honour gifted to him on his birthday. We wish him many more happy returns.

On the subscribers' front *Freedom First* continues to make headway. Readers abroad and in our own country continue to encourage us with their comments. Lord Denning, the famous British jurist writes: "It is one of the best literary magazines produced in India that I have seen." Mr. Robert Goldmann formerly of the Ford Foundation observes: "*Freedom First* is getting better all the time!" Mr. Gottfried Wust of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation considers that the "new *Freedom First* is making big progress." We are grateful to Mr. Thomas Gay (ICS Retd.) now settled in Pune, Maharashtra, and Mr. Sidheswar Mukherjee of Chinsura, West Bengal for their detailed comments on the contents of earlier issues.

Essay Competition

The judges of the Essay Competition have, in their wisdom, decided that the first prize be shared between two students, Ms. Ventiris D'Souza and Ms. Reno Noronha. There is no second prize. Our congratulations to the winners. The prize-winning essays are being carried in this and the next issue.

We wish readers a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

—Editors

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With Many Voices

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

It's not true that the British divide and rule. It is we who divide and they rule.

—N. A. Palkhivala, citing a pre-Independence remark, *Indian Express*, August 19.

Rajiv wants to create Singapores and South Koreas in India on the shoulders of the farmers. That will not do.

—Sharad Joshi, *India Today*, November 15.

Basically for some odd reason there is the foregone presumption that women just don't pee in public.

—Shalini Ramachandani-Sharma, *The Sunday Observer*, December 15.

To institutionalise political power as real estate is to perpetuate feudalism as a way of life.

—Darshan Singh Maini, *The Sunday Observer*, December 15.

When one starts a headcount, there's hardly a major political leader (in India) who has not tried to induct his son or son-in-law, his *bahu* (daughter-in-law) or *beti* (daughter) into political life through questionable means.

—Darshan Singh Maini, *The Sunday Observer*, December 15.

A lie does not lose its character merely because it comes out of the mouth of a Minister.

—Ramnath Goenka, *Indian Express*, November 30.

The French press was unimpressed by the stock phrases with which Mr. Gorbachev (or *Gulgachev*, as one newspaper brutally called him) replied to questions on human rights.

—*The Economist*, October 12.

There have been westernising leaders in Moscow before; but sooner or later the other part of the Russian spirit, the dour weight of Slavocentrism, has reasserted itself.

—*The Economist*, October 12.

And even as energetic a salesman as Mr. Gorbachev will find it hard to sell a Russia that still has the KGB, labour camps, vanished Sakharovs and a numb silence where intelligent opposition ought to be heard.

—*The Economist*, October 12, 1985.

The greatest enemy of India today is not America or Pakistan, but the politicians. No enemy can possibly weaken the country so effectively as the politicians in power.

—Abir Padhy, *Debonair*, November 1985.

An energetic younger Soviet leader pursuing Stalinist policies is worse for us than an invalid Soviet leader.

—Henry Kissinger, *Gentleman*, October 1985.

British plants have become inefficient due to the deadly combination of appeasing management and powerful unions.

—Gordon Wise, *Gentleman*, October 1985.

We have been turned into a nation of law-breakers by the Congress (I) and its illustrious founder. The Congress (I) is the fountainhead of all corruption.

—M. V. Kamath, *Mid-day*, December 20.

Of Cabbages & Kings

Minoo Masani Felicitated

THE MINOO MASANI Eightieth Birthday Felicitations Committee organised a subscription dinner on November 20 and a tea-meeting on November 26 to felicitate Mr. Minoo Masani on his eightieth birthday. Both functions were well attended. A volume of essays entitled *Freedom and Dissent* was presented to Mr. Masani (for details see back cover of this issue).

Speaking at the Dinner, Mr. J. R. D. Tata who presented the volume to Mr. Masani paid tribute to the "liberalism of the mind of Mr. Masani" and said that he had "fought for causes with complete integrity and sincerity" no matter what the cost.

Mr. C. R. Irani, Managing Director of *The Statesman* presented Mr. Masani with a rarely awarded memento on behalf of *The Statesman* in recognition of "his contribution to free speech in the country."

Former Swatantra Member of Parliament and now President of FICCI, Mr. D. N. Patodia recalled Mr. Masani's contribution in Parliament and the interest he took in guiding newly elected Members on the intricacies of parliamentary activity. He gave instances of how he (Patodia) has benefited from such advice and guidance.

Excerpts from Mr. Masani's speech on the occasion is printed on page 11 of this issue under the title "On Turning Eighty."

Among the numerous messages received were three from the Chief Ministers of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, and from Mr. Farooq Abdullah. A cable of greetings from the Liberal International was signed by Senator Giovanni Malagodi, President of the Liberal International and the following Vice-Presidents: Austrian Deputy Chancellor Steger; Deputy Prime Minister Gol of Belgium; EEC Commissioner Christoffersen of Denmark; Foreign Minister Genscher of the Federal Republic of Germany; Madame Simone Viel, President of the Liberal Group in the European Parliament; Prime Minister Hermannsson of Iceland; Israel's Minister Sharir; Mr. Frits Bolkestein, Netherlands' Minister of Foreign Trade; Vice-President Esquivel of

"the time has come," the
walrus said,
"to talk of many things:
of shoes-and ships-
and sealing wax-
of cabbages -
and kings -"

- Lewis Carroll



Panama and the Rt. Hon. David Steel, M.P. of the British Liberal Party.

—SVR

A Timely Reminder

CONTROVERSIAL as some decisions of the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) have been in the past, it is gratifying to see that there still remain certain aspects of the PUCL's work which are calculated to restore the faith of those who are becoming increasingly disillusioned with the organisation's functioning. The most recent example is the publication of a booklet entitled *Black Laws 1984-85* which is a compendium of legislation threatening the rule of law in India.

Besides giving the full texts of the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1985, the National Security (2nd Amendment) Ordinance, 1984, and the Terrorist Affected Areas (Special Courts) Ordinance, 1984, the booklet also reproduces relevant extracts from the infamous Rowlatt Act of 1919—which, ironically, appears far less draconian than the Special Courts Ordinance of 1984. For good measure, there are also brief commentaries, both on the Anti-Terrorist Act and on the functioning of the 1984 Black Laws in the Punjab. The conclusion is damning: "We believe that the present political system is bent upon subverting the principle of freedom and justice, and destructive of the fundamental rights of the individuals. There is an urgent need to build public opinion and to bring popular pressure against the black laws of 1984-85." A commendable effort, indeed, by the PUCL.

Another equally welcome addition to the growing body of human rights literature is the tract entitled *Voices From a Scarred City* published by Lokayan, a Delhi-based voluntary group. This tract is a collection of articles on the mindless violence that was unleashed on Sikhs in the capital and elsewhere follow-

ing Mrs. Gandhi's assassination. Contributors to the volume include Rajni Kothari, Raj Thapar, Darshan Singh Maini, Baljit Malik, Veena Das and Inder Mohan.

As the editors Harsh Sethi and Smitu Kothari explain in their preface, "the carnage of Sikhs in Delhi and other parts of India is fast fading from public memory. It is only the survivors who continue to quietly grieve, with their hopes of securing justice from the State facing rapid erosion." The pathetic performance of the officially-appointed Mishra Commission of Inquiry, coupled with the steadfast refusal of the administration to bring to book the perpetrators of this unprecedented savagery, only serve to underline the seminal role that voluntary bodies like Lokayan can and should play in educating the public on the misdeeds of those in high places.

—KSV

The Politics of Broadcasting

THE categorical and repeated assertions of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi that the time is not ripe for radio and television in India to be granted autonomy from government control should serve as an eye-opener for those who retain a touching faith in the 'liberalism' of the new dispensation in Delhi. This patently spurious argument put forward by Mr. Gandhi for keeping the media in shackles would do any tinpot dictator proud.

Unfortunately, it has been a curious aspect of the ongoing debate on the subject that even the most vocal advocate of autonomy has not thought fit to put forward what is an *obvious* solution to the impasse created by the government's unwillingness to loosen its grip on AIR and Doordarshan, viz. the establishment and development of private radio and television stations. Novel as the idea may seem in India, it is not without parallel elsewhere in the world, as a recently published book, *The Politics of Broadcasting* (edited by Raymond Kuhn; Croom-Helm), indicates.

Italy provides the most illuminating example. Until very recently, broadcasting in that country was a closely-controlled state monopoly, with the government allowing little freedom for the dissemination of views antithetical to its own interests. When rumblings of protest over this tight control of the media became apparent in the late fifties, it offered the predictable sop: a second television channel (equally tightly controlled) and a massive expansion of the television network, covering no less than 86 per cent of the population in less than six years. When even this failed to stem the growing dissatisfaction among

the Italian public, the government tried yet another trick—it enacted a law shifting control of the official media from the executive to parliament. Expectedly enough, this measure too made little difference because of the in-built governmental majority in parliament that ensured the retention of indirect executive control.

But real change was not long in coming, though from an altogether unexpected source. In 1975 the Italian Constitutional Court delivered a series of judgments which truly revolutionised broadcasting in that country. First, the Court ruled that state monopoly was not justified (except at the national level). Next, it declared that establishing cable television networks and transmitters for foreign as well as local television stations was legal. More important, it ruled that state monopoly over broadcasting would be valid only "if it could offer a full range of programmes, if it could be impartial in news output and open to all cultural developments, if it could guarantee the 'right of access' and 'right of reply' subject to parliamentary control and, finally, if it could ensure that journalists could fulfil their professional duties."

The results of these verdicts were as dramatic as they were heartwarming. By 1983 Italy had between 700 and 800 private TV stations and between 6000 to 8000 private radio stations. "32 million Italians enjoy a multichannel television system which gives them on average between seven and eleven channels for approximately 13 hours a day... In some cities it is possible to select from eighteen to twenty channels. In Venice, Milan or Turin, for example, the well-equipped Italian household can receive programmes from a variety of foreign stations transmitting from France, Monaco, Switzerland, Austria and so on, as well as native Italian output... By 1981 Italy reached the highest density of radio and TV stations per capita in the world: one radio station for every 16,000 inhabitants and one television station for every 93,000 inhabitants."

Agreed, numbers may not be all; that quantity is no assurance of quality. But the very provision of *choice* to the consumer (on the intelligent exercise of whose judgment will, in the ultimate analysis, depend the character of the fare offered) is a change that is as welcome as it is far-reaching. How one wishes some public spirited group in India takes up the initiative and moves the Supreme Court for similar relief. The Supreme Court will, in turn, be rendering a signal service to the cause of freedom by following the example of its Italian counterpart and releasing broadcasting in India from the vice-like grip of state control.

—KSV

V. B. Karnik—A Tribute

Vilas Patankar

ON NOVEMBER 5, 1985, Mr. V. B. Karnik breathed his last. The only consoling thought then was the memory of a blood curdling event approximately four decades and more ago which, through sheer stroke of fortune had saved Mr. Karnik from being fatally stabbed. It so happened that Mr. Karnik was briskly climbing up the flight of steps leading to the Mumbai Girni Kamgar Union's office along with Mr. Wamanrao Kulkarni. Suddenly two men came rushing down the staircase with glittering knives to attack Mr. Karnik. In a split second Mr. Kulkarni threw himself between Mr. Karnik and the assailants. There was a big commotion. A crowd gathered. The two men were nabbed and were to be handed over to the police when Mr. Karnik, gently but very firmly said—"leave them alone. This episode must end here. Let us forget it and concentrate all our attention upon making the best possible medical aid available to Wamanrao." The assailants were dazed, so were the people gathered there. Truly did Mr. Karnik resemble the Bishop in *Les Misérables*. I cannot estimate the debt we all owe to Mr. Kulkarni who risked his life gravely to save that which was so very precious to the society as a whole.

A Serene Presence

Since my early childhood, I had always experienced a feeling of serenity and confidence in Mr. Karnik's presence, because it was reassuring. He always radiated wisdom, sympathy and an indescribable moral courage. A visit to Ratilal Mansion, where Mr. Karnik resided for many years was always enjoyable. He was very affectionate to us children and found time to tell us many new and interesting things. Mrs. Karnik was very lively and hospitable.

At all hours of the day visitors streamed in, to have a word with Mr. Karnik. His friendly hand of assistance was extended to them all with warmth and no expectations. I am reminded of an incident which influenced me greatly somewhere in 1957. I was standing close to Mr. Karnik at the entrance to the Luxmi Narayan Temple Garden at Kemps Corner. Mr. Karnik was receiving invitees to the reception arranged to mark the wedding of his elder son Arvind. For hours people came almost in a continuous stream. Mr. Karnik respectfully welcomed them all with the traditional namaskar and had a word or two with each before he asked someone to escort them to their seats.

Mr. Karnik did not move away from his position at the gate to give special attention even to a V.I.P. like Mr. Y. B. Chavan who arrived with a group of political stalwarts, because each invitee to that reception was as important as every other and deserved the same attention.

Mr. Karnik's supreme control over his emotions and his sense of duty were equally amazing. Many years ago Mrs. Karnik was admitted to the Cama Hospital for abdominal surgery. Mr. Karnik stood by her side and comforted her till she was ushered into the operation theatre. In the next moment he was on the lawns of the hospital fully engrossed in writing the editorial for *Independent India* which had to be despatched to the press before Mrs. Karnik was brought out of the operation theatre. But more astounding was the fortitude and self-control shown by him when he arrived at Bombay from Delhi after a conference, only to be told about the death of Mrs. Karnik who was cruelly murdered. Relatives and friends had thronged the house before Mr. Karnik arrived at Ratilal Mansion. They were all stunned by the incident. None

A Life of Great Dignity

V. B. KARNIK was a pillar of the Democratic Research Service and its journal, *Freedom First*. For as long as I can remember, he was Honorary Secretary of the Democratic Research Service and for several years he was Editor of *Freedom First*. In fact, I handed over the editorship to him and he, in turn, handed it back to me! Even during the last two or three years when he could not attend office, Mr. S. V. Raju and I used to call on him at his home in Bandra to post him with developments and seek his guidance and advice. His passing away therefore is a great loss to us.

Karnik lived with great dignity, even though it was often accompanied by poverty. He died with just as much dignity because, when he regained consciousness after his last attack, he asked that all artificial aids like tubes and drugs should be withdrawn and that Nature should be allowed to take its course. He told his family that he had lived a full life and that, at the age of 82, he did not want to artificially prolong his existence.

Minoo Masani

knew how to comfort Mr. Karnik when he would step into the room where Mrs. Karnik lay dead. Mr. Karnik, certainly was not of the common mould. With exemplary serenity he entered the room, stared at her loving, innocent face, bowed to her in reverence and said—"she should have been spared such a tragic end. How unfortunate of us both that I was not present by her side when she needed me most." I would only say that destiny was unforgivably cruel to Mr. Karnik and his wife. They undoubtedly deserved the fairest deal possible at her hands. Top officials of the Bombay police swung into action and began investigations. Mr. Karnik realised that it would cause harassment to many innocent people. He requested the whole episode to be closed. "Cruelty need not be repaid with cruelty. One precious life is lost, never will it be retrieved." This was Mr. Karnik's humanism. He did not merely propagate it. He practised it to the maximum.

Hatred and envy never touched his heart. This explains the reason for his fearlessness and exceptionally self-effacing nature. Way back in 1960, was organised a seminar to mark the formation of the State of Maharashtra. Mr. Karnik was the architect of the seminar and the inspiration behind it. It was he who had conceived the idea and executed it marvellously. The sessions of the seminars were spread over three days. Each of the sessions was attended by men of eminence in the country. In every way the seminar was a success entirely because of Mr. Karnik. Still, when the most notable participants were taking leave at the last session and thanking as well as congratulating Mr. Karnik, he pointed out to us who had only carried out his orders and said it was all possible because of these young people. This quality of self-effacement made me feel more proud of him.

Mr. Karnik was a class by himself and had set rigorous norms of thought and action for his own self. Gently did he beckon others to follow, but did not ever impose those norms upon others because that would have been inconsistent with his truly democratic spirit and temper. Mr. Karnik's rationalism had made him realize, unlike most others, the limitations of reason. This guarded him against insolent and authoritarian behaviour. He was content with registering his differences with ideas and practices in an unambiguous but gentle manner. Mr. Karnik always kept his mind open to absorb new ideas because it was useful in weaving a meaningfully rich texture of thought through the combination of good constituents from apparently incompatible theories. Of course, there was never a craving for novelty for the sake of it. He had to be convinced about the intrinsic quality of an idea

or a scheme before he would swear loyalty to it! But once Mr. Karnik had made a decision, he did not ever flinch for fear of courting unpopularity or for the sake of benefiting even the dearest of friends. He was courageous, but never adventurous. Throughout his life he strove for excellence in everything he did.

The truly great are known by their courteous behaviour towards their subordinates. Many a time I used to be with him in his office for long hours. But there was not a single occasion on which I saw him reprimand any one of the staff for their failings.

In 1962, Mr. Karnik consented to direct the election campaign of Acharya Kripalani. Throughout the period of the campaign right from the early hours of the morning to late hours of the evening, Mr. Karnik was on his toes. He had accepted that responsibility as a matter of duty to the nation to help bring into parliament men wedded to democracy and liberalism. And the Acharya was contesting against Mr. Krishna Menon. Mr. Karnik spared absolutely no possible effort. Personally Mr. Karnik addressed quite a number of meetings—we felt his presence almost everywhere. During those hectic days as I moved throughout the constituency on Mr. Karnik's behalf, I found volunteers of all grades very conscious of their responsibility to Mr. Karnik. As the day of elections drew close, tensions grew, election campaign fever began to rise. The atmosphere everywhere was charged, tempers were often uncontrollable. But Mr. Karnik's presence made a difference. People's tones were automatically lowered in his presence. They became sober and decent, one intuitively respected the man who did not lose his calm or poise even during the most exacting moments.

His choice of words reflected his innerself. His style was clear and lucid. The rare command he had acquired over the written as well as the spoken word was the result of years of scholarship coupled with crystal clear thought. Even his voice which was vibrant did not reflect either infirmity of body or mind but utter sincerity of purpose and maturity of thought. Extensive reading from early childhood had strained his eyes and he was compelled to wear thick glasses. However, his eyes did not lose their glitter or sharpness. It was difficult to look straight into them without being impelled to bow in reverence.

Mine has been a humble attempt to put into words my indebtedness to him and pay my homage to his memory which shall be my most valued treasure. May his soul rest in peace.

—VILAS PATANKAR teaches at the
Ruparel College, Bombay.

Indian Agriculture — A Stunted Giant

Bhanu Pratap Singh

IN OLD CHINA, parents used to bind the feet of their female children to retain their small size, which was considered beautiful in those days. In post-independence India, Nehru and Mahalanobis opted for a development strategy which they considered progressive, but which has prevented Indian agriculture from growing to its full stature. According to this strategy, the rate of economic growth is essentially a function of capital formation in large scale enterprises, particularly in the public sector. Hence most of the capital and other resources of the country were diverted to achieve that end. In this strategy, agriculture is supposed to play no vital role except to provide food for bare subsistence, raw materials for agro-based industries, and surpluses for industrial growth. Development of agriculture for its own sake, or improving the economic and living conditions of agriculturists were considered secondary, though, for political reasons, lip homage was paid to agriculture all the time. But for the policy constraints imposed by this strategy, Indian agriculture would have grown much faster and by now our country ranked amongst the major exporters of farm products. Rajiv Gandhi claims that he is following the policies laid down by Pandit Nehru and Smt. Gandhi, and we have no evidence yet, at least in the farm sector, to disbelieve him.

Nature's Bounty

India enjoys many advantages in respect of agricultural production. Our cultivable area exceeds fifty per cent of our geographical area, which in the world, as a whole is about 11%. Though our population is large, per capita availability of arable land in India equals the world average if we leave out three countries viz. U.S.A., U.S.S.R. and Canada, and is 63% more than in the rest of Asia. We also have ample supplies of water which can enable us to irrigate 113 m. hectares of land. But our greatest advantage lies in our moderate climate which enables us to grow two to three crops in a year whereas in most other countries, due to severe winters, only one crop can be harvested in a year. Thus, it is not the lack of natural resources—land, water and sunshine—which is the cause of widespread under-nourishment of our people. The low productivity (yield per hectare) of our land, which is approximately one-third of what is obtained in advanced countries and two-third of the world average is due to poor utilization of nature's bounty. Other indicators of the continued backwardness of our agriculture are:

- (i) that the growth of our farm production during the decade 1971 to 81 has been the slowest, among countries of South East Asia, except those of Bangla Desh and Nepal;
- (ii) that our foodgrains production in 1981-82, a record one till then, was only 8.82% of the world production though our share in the total world arable land and population were 11.76 and 15.66% respectively; and
- (iii) that our average per capita caloric intake continues to be 10 to 20% below the minimum required for healthy living. If all Indians had the purchasing power to buy two square meals a day for themselves, the record production of 1983-84 would fall short of the demand.

Potential Of Indian Agriculture

The claim that the potential of Indian agriculture is of gigantic proportions is based not only on theoretical considerations, but on results already achieved in certain parts of the country. Punjab, whose agricultural land is less than 3% of the national total, has in 1983-84 contributed 9.75% to the national foodgrain production, registering a productivity which is more than three times the average of the country. There is however nothing special about the Punjab. On the National Demonstration Plots, scattered all over the country, which are laid out by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research to determine the production potential of crops in different parts of the country, mean yields of Paddy, wheat maize, *bajra* and *jowar* have been obtained, which are 3.00, 2.56, 3.31, 6.34 and 6.12 times respectively of the national average yields. The overall low productivity of our agriculture is not due to the niggardliness of nature but the low rate of inputs-application.

In agriculture, its potential should be regarded as the capacity of an industrial unit. Percentage utilization of capacity is an important criterion to judge the performance of an industrial unit. If the same criterion is applied to agriculture, it would be found, that its capacity utilization (actual production in relation to potential) is very poor, perhaps no more than 30%.

Performance of Indian Agriculture

Next, let us see how Indian agriculture has performed in the recent past as well as in the long run.

First, we take a close look at the performance of the sixth Plan in respect of foodgrain production. Perfor-

mance of any plan should be judged not by looking at the production figure of only one year, but of all the five years singly, as well as collectively. The original targets of foodgrain production set for the years 1980-81, 81-82, 82-83, 83-84 and 84-85 were 135.0, 138.5, 142.0, 148.0 and 153.6 million tons respectively. The actual production in these years were 129.6, 133.3, 129.5, 152.4 and 146.2 million tons. Except in the year 1983-84, in which production was 4.4 million tons higher than the target, production in other years fell short of the targets. The net total shortfall in foodgrains production during the sixth Plan has been 26.1 million tons, and yet this plan has been acclaimed as highly successful in raising agricultural production! This claim is based on the performance of only one year viz. 1983-84. But that should not lead to any complacency.

Our per capita caloric intake remains less than the minimum required for healthy living. What is still more alarming, is the rapid fall in the per capita availability of pulses, which is the only source of protein for poor families. From an average per capita availability of 25.3 kgms. per annum during the five year period 1955-59, it has declined to only 13.6 kgms. per capita during the five year period 1980-84.

The average annual foodgrain production during the sixth Plan period was 138.2 m. tons. During the first Plan period, the average production was 63.0 m. tons. Over the 30-year period from the first to the sixth Plan, the average annual growth rate works out to 2.65 per cent. This can be said to be the long term growth trend of foodgrains production in India. How this has fluctuated in different 5-yearly periods, is shown in the following table:

Quinquennium Growth Rates of Foodgrains Production

Five Year Periods	Average Total Foodgrain Production in m. tons	Percentage growth in Production over the Previous quinquennium
1950-51 to 54-55	63.06	—
1955-56 to 59-60	72.87	15.56 (2.93)
1960-61 to 64-65	83.01	13.92 (2.64)
1965-66 to 69-70	87.01	4.81 (0.95)
1970-71 to 74-75	103.02	18.41 (3.44)
1975-76 to 79-80	120.04	16.52 (3.11)
1980-81 to 84-85*	138.2	15.13 (2.86)
Average annual growth over the 30-year period	—	2.65

Figures in brackets denote average annual percent growth during the quinquennium.

* Based on provisional production estimate of 1984-85 at 146.2 m. tons.

From the tabulation, it can be seen that the growth of foodgrains production in the last five years has not been the fastest. In fact, it has exceeded the growth rate of only two previous quinquenniums.

Before we discuss the reasons for the continued backwardness of Indian agriculture, let it be understood that the present accumulation of large foodgrains stocks in government godowns is not due to overproduction in the country, but unnecessary imports during the years 1982, '83 and '84. During these years total internal procurement totalled 49.73 m. tons, and the off-take from the public distribution system was only 44.40 m. tons. Thus there was no scarcity of foodgrains in the country, and yet during these three years 8.02 m. tons were imported. These imports were made not to make good any deficit in the country, but to keep farm prices depressed. In a year of record production, imports were also the heaviest since 1975. It is on account of this mismatch between record production and record import, that not only will the Government of India lose heavily, but farmers too will suffer throughout the country.

Poor Capital Formation In the Farm Sector

Indian agriculture cannot be modernized on empty assurances only. Its capital and other needs will have to be fully met. It is surprising that no one in the Planning Commission has yet quantified the capital requirement for the modernisation of our agriculture, much less drawn out a scheme for raising it. The importance of assessing the amount of capital needed for agricultural development has been realised by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO). They appointed a group of experts to study, with reference to the developing countries, the prospective and policy issues of world agriculture upto the year 2000. Among other subjects, they have also dealt at some length, with the capital input requirement of the developing countries for their agricultural development. In their publication "Agriculture Towards 2000", they have suggested that the incremental net capital-output ratio applicable in case of agriculture during the period 1980-2000 will be 3:1. But if we take into account the depreciation in the existing facilities, the incremental gross capital output ratio (ICOR) will be 4.5:1. Our own experience of deployment of capital for agricultural development confirms the F.A.O. estimate. Incidentally, the ICOR of industrial units in the public sector in India, according to a World Bank report, is 28:1.

The Cultural Question

In our country, unless we double our farm production within the next 15 years, which is quite feasible,

it will not be possible to reduce the poverty of our masses to any appreciable extent. Doubling of our production during the next 25-30 years will be of no great help, because, in that period, our population will also have nearly doubled, leaving us nutritionally and otherwise at the same level as at present.

Doubling of production within 15 years requires an annual growth rate of 5%. If this growth rate is to be achieved, gross capital formation in the farm sector should be of the order of $5 \times 4.5 = 22.5$ per cent of the value added by agriculture. Therefore, the most crucial question is: how do our planners propose to raise capital formation in the farm-sector to the level of 22.5 per cent of the value added by agriculture? According to the National Income Statistics, gross capital formation in the farm sector during the nine-year period 1972-73 to 1980-81 was 10.79 per cent of the value added by agriculture. During the same period, gross capital formation in manufacturing was 39.99 per cent of the value added by that sector. That explains the faster growth of manufacturing industries. There is, indeed, no inherent superiority in manufacturing industries as producers of wealth for the nation. On the same capital investment, returns from agriculture are much more than in manufacturing industries. The government's own preference, however, is evident from the fact that in the public sector, capital formation in manufacturing has generally been 50 per cent more than in agriculture, though the contribution of the latter to the NDP is more than twice that of the former. Not only did the government not invest adequately in the farm sector, but it has also effectively retarded capital formation within the farm sector by turning the terms of trade against farmers. Since 1970-71, the procurement price of wheat has been raised by 2.06 times, whereas price index of "all Commodities" has risen by 3.57 times (week ending 22nd June '85). Consequently, farmers have now to sell 73.3 per cent more of their wheat, as they did in 1970-71, to buy the same mix of goods. As far as farm inputs, except fertilizers, are concerned, the situation is even worse; they have now to sell 27.1, 111.9, 112.3, 88.9, and 139.2 per cent more of their wheat compared to what they did in 1970-71 to buy the same units of fertilizers, diesel, electricity tractors and agricultural *phowrah*. Because productivity of wheat has not increased fast enough to cope with the relative price increases of other commodities, the real income or the purchasing power of farmers has sharply declined. Any impartial analyst can see, that as a consequence of price twists the drain of income of the farm sector to the rest has been of a higher order than what the government has been spending on agricultural and rural development.

Captive Producers and Captive Consumers

The above noted price situation is not due to the natural law of supply and demand, but due to policies pursued by the government. Briefly stated these are: distribution of foodgrains procured within the country and purchased from abroad, at prices which are much lower than their economic cost, thereby forcing the farmers to sell their products at less than the subsidized price; imposition of restrictions on trade, processing and movement of foodgrains; continuance of indirect taxes on farm inputs both by Union and State governments; and forcing farmers to buy shoddy farm implements, domestically produced, at much higher prices though similar implements of a superior quality are available in international markets at cheaper rates. The farmers have thus been reduced to the status of "captive producers and captive consumers."

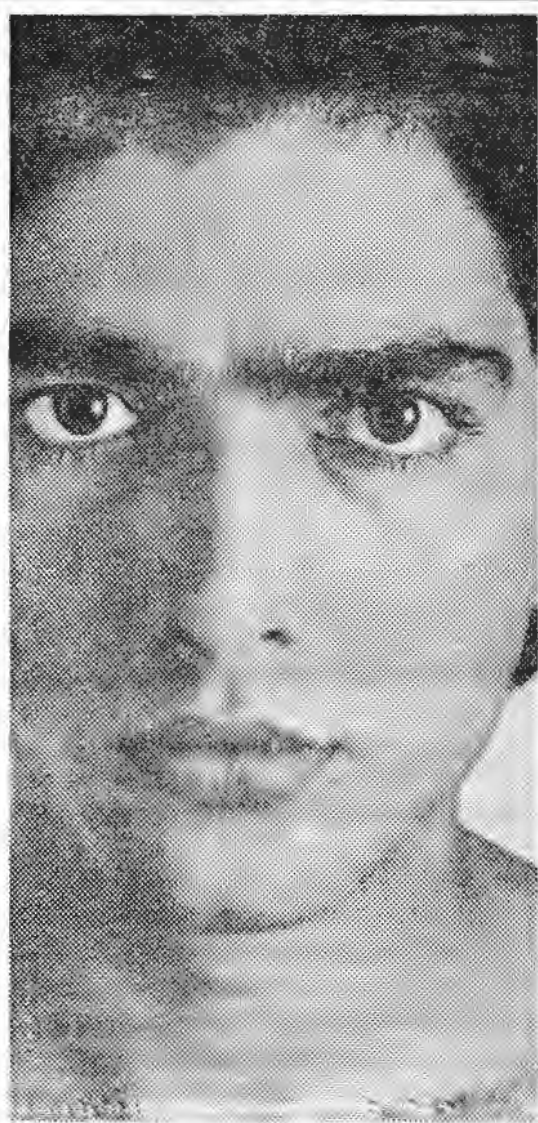
In the distribution of scarce national resources too, rural people have not yet received their due. If the demands of power and credit from the rural areas are adequately met, the face of rural India can change within a decade. But inspite of the tall claims made, power made available to the farm sector is no more than one-sixth of the total consumed in the country; and direct advances to the farm sector by the scheduled commercial banks no more than one-seventh of the total advances made by them.

The price squeeze and the deprivation to which the farm sector has been subjected have considerably retarded the growth of inputs-consumption and agricultural production. These are consequences of the policies pursued so far. The first step towards rural progress would be to change these policies and let the farm sector retain its surpluses for its own development. This could be done by restoring the farmers' right to sell their produce at the best price that they can get. This would be possible only when a network of rural warehouses is provided; all restrictions on trade, processing and movement of foodgrains withdrawn; and the practice of dumping of doubly-subsidized imported foodgrains in the country stopped. Moreover, the villages should be made more liveable by providing safe drinking water, better communications, schools, hospitals etc. In short, exploitation of the farm sector through price manipulation must stop, and the rural people should get their due share of budgetary allocations and scarce national resources such as power and credit, which ought to be in proportion to their contribution to the national income, if not to their numbers.

RHANU PRATAP SINGH is a former Minister of State for Agriculture, Government of India.



A FRESH TWIST TO SHAVING.

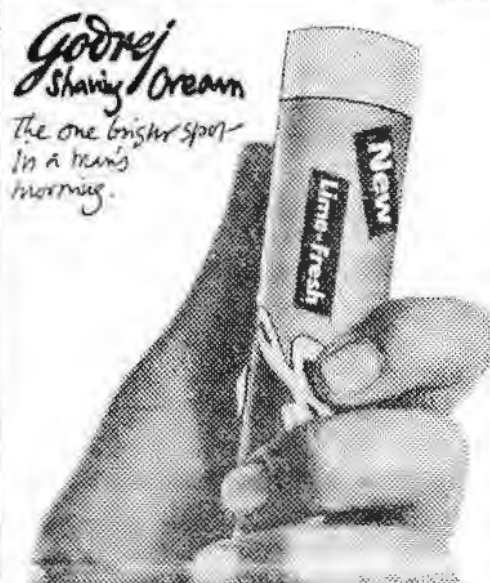


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On Turning Eighty

Minoo Masani

I WAS ASKED this morning what it feels like to be Eighty. By way of answer, I told the story of what happened when the same question was put to the French singer and actor Maurice Chevalier whom many of us have seen in films like *GIGI*. His reply to the question how he felt at eighty was: "Not bad—considering the alternative!"

But first let me thank my young friends for having invited me to this function and for having organised it.* I was first approached by them some time back with three proposals. The first was to inform me that they were putting together a volume entitled *Freedom and Dissent* to be published today. Since I was not asked to contribute to the volume nor consulted about it, the question of me giving my consent did not arise. I look forward to reading this lovely and elegant volume which has been presented to me by Mr. J. R. D. Tata on behalf of those who have prepared it.

The second was an enquiry as to whether I would accept a purse to be donated to the various good causes with which I am associated. This suggestion I firmly declined to consider.

The third proposal was to invite me to attend this dinner function tonight. I hesitated for some time and there were two reasons for this. One was that I thought that it was more an occasion for consolation than for congratulation! The second reason was that I had an uneasy suspicion that my young friends were, in a discreet manner, suggesting that the time had come for me to retire.

I finally agreed and I shall tell you why. Some years back, when my esteemed friend A. D. Gorwala had reached the age of seventy-five, I was deputed by a group of his friends to approach Mr. Gorwala and request him to join us for dinner on the evening of his birthday. All my persuasion failed to shake his negative reply. I remember the deep disappointment that was caused to my friends when I reported the result of my mission—a disappointment which I myself shared. We certainly admired Gorwala's motives but we felt that he could have been a little kinder and a little more flexible and not denied us the pleasure.

I am deeply moved and touched by the goodwill that has been expressed towards me. For whatever little I have been able to do, I owe a debt to various

people. At the risk of invidious distinction, I think I should mention my parents, to whom I am indebted the most; the Principal of my school, Jalbhai Bharda, who was a great headmaster; Mahatma Gandhi; Rajaji, and my friend and old chief, J. R. D. Tata, who taught me the value of perfection which he himself was always trying to achieve. Last but not least, my gratitude to my younger friends who treat me as one of themselves and thus have helped me to escape becoming old and decrepit. Even so, I am conscious of my many failings and numerous mistakes, one of the failings I have failed to overcome is impatience which Mr. Tata once described as my 'inability to suffer fools gladly.'

Regret for one's mistakes is inevitable but, by and large, I have no regret for having been a heretic and a gadfly. Mr. Harold Macmillan once observed that being Leader of the Opposition was great fun. I certainly enjoyed playing that role. I suspect that there is a touch of the Irish in me. An Irishman was once shipwrecked on an island. When he opened his eyes, he found a circle of natives standing around him. He asked them: "What Government do you have in this place?" But before they could reply, he said, 'In any case I am against it!'

Now about old age. I was delighted when President Ronald Reagan made the observation that these days middle age begins at seventy. But, all the same, growing older is a painful process because of the wear and tear of the body. As Professor Gilbert Murray put it: 'I don't like doing things a little worse than I did an year before'.

I envy the young man in his youth or the prime of life and I would cheerfully give my right arm—I am left handed—to be fifty again. But I find there are consolations about old age. If I were asked which ten years of my life I have enjoyed the most, I would perhaps say the last ten, because one's perception and appreciation of what life means and of friendship, companionship and kindness is heightened at a later stage of life. When we are young, we are arrogant and take all the good things of life for granted. It is only when we are nearing the end that we realise how precious are these things and particularly our human relationships.

In case any of you expect any advice from me, I have none to give. I have come to learn that nobody learns from anyone else's mistakes. Some of us do

* A felicitation dinner organised in his honour on Nov. 20.

not even learn from our own mistakes! In any event, I am reminded of what happened when an elderly Prime Minister of Britain referred in the House of Commons to the younger Pitt as 'a young fool'. Pitt retorted: 'I may be a young fool, but there is no fool like an old fool'.

Someone once parodied the Lord's Prayer:

"Lord, you know better than I know myself that I am daily growing older. Keep me from getting talkative and particularly from the fatal habit of thinking that I must say something on every subject and on every occasion. Release me from the craving to try to straighten everybody's affairs. Make me thoughtful, but not moody; helpful but not bossy.

With my vast store of wisdom it seems a pity not to use it all, but you know, Lord, that I want a few friends at the end."

If I am asked what I have achieved, I would say "Damned little". If complimented on my sacrifices, I would say that I have made none. Even my terms in prison, I remember with much nostalgia. In the end, we all do what we want to do. For me, the highest form of satisfaction has been to say, write and do what I like. That of course is a luxury for which one should cheerfully pay the price.

I recall a beautiful essay of Robert Louis Stevenson entitled *Eldorado*. I remember the last few words which make very good sense to me and which I would like, if given the choice, to serve as my epitaph: "It is a far far better thing to travel than to arrive and the true success is to labour".

"Do Your Own Thing"

"Do your own thing but *know* what you're doing. Know the price you've got to pay. The danger involved in doing it. The possibility of rewards. But most importantly, do it because you want to do it. Find motivation for doing something, and let the rest of the world dig dry wells in the desert and pray for rain. Don't let what other people say, or think, affect you or your being. Or take time away from you. That's the most precious thing we have—time. We're all strangers. The only thing we have is ourselves. One being in time and place."

— Richard Jessup
Threat, pg. 215

Malagodi on Masani

To an organisation like the Liberal International, which for a long time was almost exclusively confined to a small number of European countries where liberalism in the western sense had first been born and flourished, Minoo brought an ocean breeze which dispelled the stuffiness which could otherwise have stifled us. Here was a thinker and a fighter who expressed the need for freedom in the context of the highest values of a civilization entirely original, and quite different from ours. At the same time we never felt that he was an alien; he was one of us, a great liberal on par with the greatest in our lands. If in these last years the Liberal International has found it possible to expand in every corner of free Europe from Norway to Spain; to find new friends in Asia, from Japan to Sri Lanka; in Africa, as a political home for the Progressive Federal Party which fights courageously against apartheid; and for the only party in constitutional opposition, the *Parti Democratique* of Senegal; in North America, from Ottawa to Washington; in Central and South America, from Nicaragua to Brazil and Argentina—well these are the fruits ripening on a tree which Minoo has helped us to plant and tend in a better way from which his living presence elicits the perfume of work well done, of love for country and freedom.

I wanted to write an essay in honour of Masani on freedom in the Third World as seen by a liberal who believes he is at the same time ecumenical and rooted in the ethical and political soil of the Old World. But could I have said essentially more about Minoo? About his easy, deep and simple way of understanding and presenting "Mother India", of fighting and working for its freedom and modernization without departing from its fundamental traditions? I do not think so. Such things are perhaps best said and understood in the simple language of a life spent for them and of the friendships which are born therefrom.

It is in this spirit that I wish Minoo long and fruitful years of further work—for himself, for India and for liberalism all over the globe.

Senator Giovanni Malagodi
President, Liberal International

Traditions and Trends in Marathi Newspapers

D. B. Karnik

NEWSPAPERS in Marathi language have a distinct tradition of their own. This tradition was laid down by different thinkers who started newspapers to propagate their ideas. The thinkers belonged to different political and social faiths. For instance, Bal Gangadhar Tilak stood for nationalism. Agarkar, on the other hand, gave priority to social reform which he emphasised should precede freedom of the country. The valiant pioneer of the social reform movement was Jyotiba Phule, who condemned orthodoxy, the Brahmin rule and tyranny over untouchables and women. Jyotiba was almost a revolutionary in thought, word and deed. He started the Satya Shodhak movement as a counterblast to Brahmin domination and oppression. It was Jyotiba Phule, who started the first school for women in the teeth of Brahmin opposition. Jyotiba's ideas were upheld by Agarkar, who through his weekly named *Sudhakar* bravely urged the common people to rise in revolt against all kinds of orthodoxy. Tilak through his paper *Kesari* gave a clarion call against British rule and declared "Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it". There ensued a struggle between forces of nationalism and forces who stood for social reform.

To Awaken Political Consciousness

This tradition is still continued by Marathi papers with a broader perspective, as a result of the spread of education and development of trade, industry and agriculture. The advancement of nationalist struggle brought forth many newspapers both in the cities and villages of Maharashtra. They challenged British authority and supported the freedom struggle launched by Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders. While the predominant content in the Marathi newspapers was to awaken political consciousness among people, the social reform movement also got equal publicity as well as patronage. After attainment of independence, the nation took strides in achieving social objectives, which meant amelioration of the conditions of poor people and giving them equality in social status. This was the objective of the movement launched by Dr. Ambedkar for the upliftment of the so-called untouchables. Maharashtra was one of those provinces, which responded to the appeal of both Jyotiba Phule and Dr. Ambedkar. Marathi newspapers have always championed the causes of the depressed classes.

During the struggle for independence and after when Congress and other political parties advocated the path of socialism, a new factor attracted the attention of newspapers and the content of the editorials as well as news changed considerably to welcome the new trend of thought. Maharashtra again took the lead in propagating and popularising socialism, because the labour movement in Bombay led both by socialists and communists as well as by the Congress Left, upheld the Russian Revolution as the harbinger of equality and prosperity. Under the influence of socialist thought, a co-operative movement also took root in Maharashtra, much ahead of any other province and co-operative sugar factories, co-operative banks and such other institutions sprung up in Maharashtra. This co-operative movement has been instrumental in establishing what is known as the sugar lobby as a powerful force in Maharashtra.

Social Causes

Marathi newspapers thus have four distinct trends towards influencing public opinion. Basically they stand for nationalism which now means national endeavour for progress. Secondly, now that the country is free, responsibility for raising the standard of living of the people and bringing in social equality has to be shouldered by society. Newspapers being part of society have to help this progress, which they do in adequate measure. Thirdly, the fight against orthodoxy and upliftment of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes have to be the next target of propaganda. Marathi newspapers have, by and large, tried to ventilate the grievances of these God-forsaken people. Lastly, Marathi papers have been generally in the forefront in respect of popularising socialism though they have been critical about the advance of communism.

Marathi newspapers can be divided into two sections, viz. City papers and papers in the rural areas. City papers, particularly those, which are published in Bombay wield tremendous influence throughout Maharashtra. Other cities which can claim substantial readers in their own areas are Poona, Nasik, Nagpur and Aurangabad. There are also district papers which prosper through *Zilla Parishads* and co-operative factories. Distinction has also to be made between chain papers, which are affluent and others conducted by companies or individual owners having limited circu-

lation and small papers which are dependent on advertisements from local bodies.

Marathi newspapers do debate serious issues. There are national issues like the Punjab or Assam problems. Considerable heat is brought about in these discussions, because a large number of papers are influenced by the ruling party, while many others support the point of view of the opposition. Among the opposition, the Bharatiya Janata Party has many more adherents in the Press, being trained basically by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh—the R.S.S. This trend has been dominating the Marathi newspapers. It has been the trend which opposed Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi during the years before independence and after. Even now, this trend displays seeming support to Rajiv Gandhi, though privately, journalists of this thinking would wish Rajiv Gandhi to fail in his effort to take the nation to the 21st century through computerised technology.

Lively Discussions

Generally newspapers in India tend to take a negative view of developments in the country. Marathi newspapers are no exception to this rule. But in Maharashtra, the co-operative movement has caught the imagination of the people and under the influence of Dr. Ambedkar, the depressed classes have been gaining strength against the machinations of the orthodoxy. The so-called untouchables do not find themselves in the wilderness now, as before. They agitate for their rights, launch movements for redressing their grievances and make their voice felt in the Government, in educational institutions and in social fields. The neo-Buddhist movement is making inroads in the society and newspapers have to write either for or against them, if they insist on naming a university for Dr. Ambedkar or asking for greater admissions in the services or in educational institutions. Marathi newspapers both in the cities and in the districts have been giving a lot of space to articles written on the sociological aspects of such issues as the Reservation policy, labour-management relations, fair price for agricultural products, removal of imbalance between different regions, impact of decentralisation, etc. These are all vital issues, connected with the lives of the common people. Newspapers hold differing view points on these issues and a lively discussion takes place when strong views are expressed on both sides.

Newspapers in Marathi can be said to be influential in moulding public opinion. It is because they are edited by serious-minded people, whose opinions are generally held in high esteem by the people. There is

a strong reading class particularly in the districts which gives thought to the opinions expressed by newspapers. Readers, however, have to be differentiated between those who stay in the cities and those who stay in the villages. The city people have hardly any time to go through all the material published in the newspapers, including the editorials. They just scan the headlines before leaving for work and are satisfied that they have read the paper. The village people, on the other hand, read the paper thoroughly and form their independent opinions. These opinions may not tally with those expressed in the newspapers. But they are formed on the basis of the news and views expressed by the newspapers.

The Village Readers

Village people who may not be very well educated show critical faculties which are developed out of their experience and practical judgement. It is very difficult for newsmen to understand their judgements unless they could feel the pulse of the people through live contact with them. Many of the forecasts of the journalists are found to be wrong in assessing the opinions of the village people. It is necessary for the journalists, therefore, not to thrust their opinions on current happenings, but to keep an open mind and weigh their judgement with an eye on the psychology of the common people and their likes and dislikes. It is indeed gratifying to note that the common people through their unknown and unfailing judgement have disproved the general expectations of both leaders as well as newspapers. This happened in the two elections of 1977 and 1980. Since then, Marathi newspapers have realized the necessity of interpreting events through the judgement of the common people and have started taking an objective view of the happenings in the country. These happenings connote both destructive and constructive activities. The first category leads to sensationalism, which may pay rich dividends in respect of the sale of the paper. But the latter category leads to providing material to the readers about developmental projects and constructive activities which ultimately, results in educating public opinion. Marathi newspapers are now-a-days catering to the desire of the people for education as well as enlightenment.

This is being provided by them through articles published in the newspapers on construction, irrigation, housing, social welfare, family planning and allied subjects. It should be noted that Marathi newspapers and journals have been vying with each other in giving publicity to the great work being done by Babu Amte, the champion of all suffering people, particu-

larly the lepers. Activities in the Adivasi areas are getting maximum publicity in Marathi newspapers. This publicity has highlighted the work being done at Kosbad, the abode of Anutai Wagh who has been receiving numerous awards for pioneering work among the Adivasis. A more noteworthy experiment which received due publicity in Marathi newspapers is the rescue work for the liberation of *Devadasis* in Belgaum area. It is really creditable that Marathi journalists are introducing to the public new experiments on the liberty and dignity of women. In a way, this justifies the efforts made by both Jyotiba Phule and Agarkar.

Marathi newspapers have also started the Sunday issues for their newspapers with magazine sections dominating issues which have a special reading class interested in articles which deal with basic social problems, or introduce new theatre or drama or poetry and which also debate current controversies, either political, social or religious. What the readers want are thought-provoking articles intended to educate the people and the Sunday issues cater to their needs. These articles are influential in moulding public opinion. They also bring up new trends in the field of literature or drama. They are also helpful in highlighting the activities of great dramatists like Vijay

Tendulkar, who has established his reputation as a champion of lost causes.

Of course, the major portion of newspapers is generally devoted to politics. It may be politics connected with the ruling party or the opposition parties according to the view-points held by the editors. It may also be politics dealing with rivalries in the trade union movement or among co-operative factories or among the politicians themselves. This leads to journalists developing into king-makers or idol-breakers. This also leads to a sort of vested interest developing among them resulting either in adulating a particular set of politicians or outright condemning others. Some newspapers exhibit the tendency to exaggerate the faults of certain politicians and ultimately lead to character assassination. This tendency has been so rampant nowadays that like all the other elements in society, the newspapers also are losing their credibility among the public. This does not augur well for the Marathi newspapers which have a distinct tradition of their own. In their own interest as well as in the interest of the public, Marathi newspapers have to preserve this tradition.

D. B. KARNIK is a former editor of the *Maharashtra Times*.

Birds Of The Same Feather....

Minoo Masani

Am I glad that I resigned as Chairman of the Minorities Commission! I had done so as a protest against the lack of seriousness on the part of the Janata Government. But, evidently, the present Congress Government in Delhi is as lacking in seriousness about Minorities as was the Janata Government. According to a press report a few days back, the Minorities Commission is virtually defunct because it has no members left and there is no present prospect of its reorganization.

It is obvious that all governments in Delhi, whatever their political colour, share a desire to express their concern for the minorities while doing very little for them.

Another similarity among politicians of all parties is their desire not to hand over the patronage and perquisites of having All India Radio

and Doordarshan. I was greatly amused when on 27th August Mr. L. K. Advani called for more autonomy for these services. Look who is talking! It was precisely Mr. Advani who as Minister for Information and Broadcasting in the Janata Government throughout the life of the Janata Government failed to pass a Bill to do the needful, with the result that the Government monopoly was handed over to Mrs. Indira Gandhi in 1980.

It can be safely said that there is very little to choose between Indian politicians, to whatever party they may belong. They are birds of the same feather, and not very pretty ones at that.

Courtesy: *The Statesman*

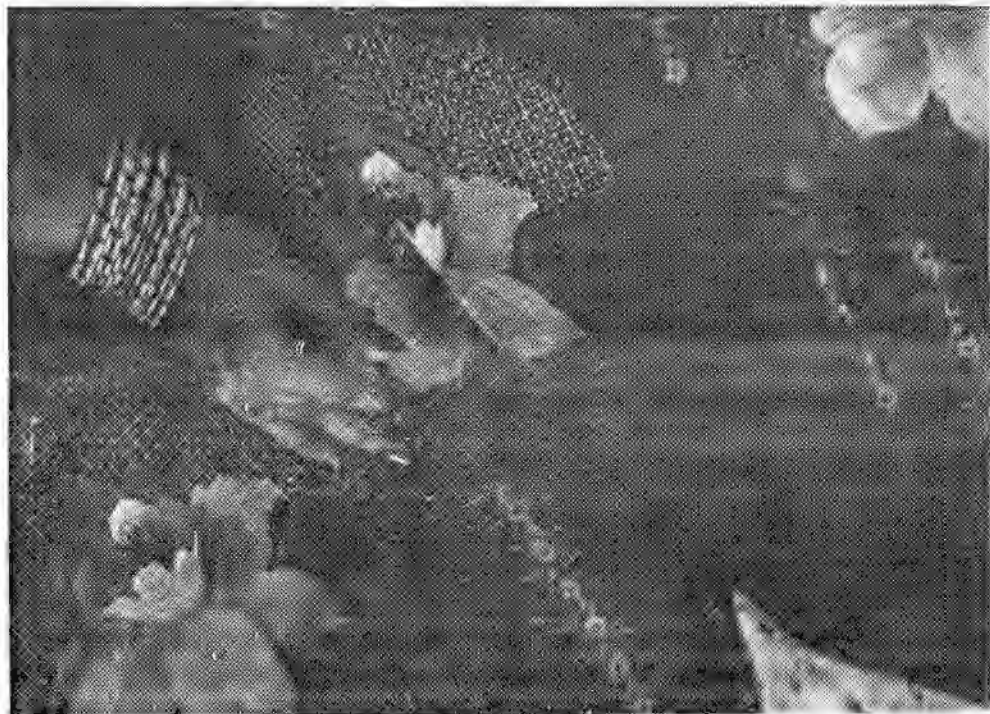


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In Which Century ?

Minoo Masani

NOT MANY YEARS AGO, in the early 60's, former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and I were having one of our debates in Parliament. During one of these exchanges Nehru suddenly deviated from his attack on me and said: "There is one thing in favour of Mr. Masani—like me he thinks like a modern man." I mention this because I do not want anyone to think that I lag behind anyone else in the desire to modernise India, to go in for high technology and any other aspect of life which the present Prime Minister refers to as entering the 21st century. It is a good slogan and I am entirely in its favour. But India will enter the 21st century whether she likes it or not. There really is no option. The point is whether we are going to enter the next century happily, ready for the problems which will face us, or we are going to be dragged into it unwillingly by the scruff of our necks. In other words can we really be ready to enter the 21st century.

My own feeling is that the problem is one of human beings rather than of technology and unless the people of India particularly those who live in the villages can be geared to the 21st century, can we really make the most of it? We have the nuclear bomb but the human being is still dominated by nationalism, chauvinism, national sovereignty—concepts which are out of date. An American journal once said very correctly many years ago that "the most under-developed territory is that which lies under the hats and caps that men wear". If that is true of America, it is also true of India. In other words, as someone has said, high technology in the hands of today's human beings is like giving a violin to a monkey!

The Human Element

In my college days, I read the Montagu Chelmsford Report, which was sympathetic to India. It started by saying that the people of India live in many centuries—from the 10th to the 20th. I think that was a fairly accurate statement. Today we would probably say we live in the 15th to the 20th centuries. That is probably the measure of our improvement. Even today there are parts of India in the countryside that live in the 15th, 16th or 17th century.

In a recent article Russi Lal observed "He is a bold man who talks of the 21st century in a country where age old customs like caste and dowry live side by side in families of even scientists who prepare to launch satellites in space." He was referring to one

of the features we find—that people who are extremely modern in public life can be of the very old type at home in relation to their wives and children.

What are the indices by which we judge how ready we are for the 21st century? In late 1969, I was appointed on the Railway Accidents Enquiry Committee. We went around India for a whole year researching as to why accidents in railways take place. The unanimous conclusion to which Justice Wanchoo, our Chairman, and all of us came to was that it wasn't gadgets that were lacking; there were all sorts of fail-safe devices in the signal-box and the locomotives. The cause of the accidents was always human failure. In spite of all the safety devices the railways could think of, the Indian signalman or the Indian driver managed to have crashes and destroy life. It was almost always the human element. In my own office building in downtown Bombay, the other day, the power supply failed and everything stopped including the lights, fans, airconditioning and the lifts. Many offices were in complete darkness. We worked by candle light—romantic but not very practical. It took 48 hours for this power breakdown to be put right. For me it seemed an inordinately long time.

The Government of Maharashtra very wisely announced on the 15th of July that cars which were not certified to be pollution-free would not be allowed on the roads and, would be prosecuted. We went dutifully, paid Rs. 25, and got a certificate that the car was pollution-free. Then the Government of Maharashtra postponed the deadline to 15th August. But now they have announced an indefinite postponement. Why? Because the Government of Maharashtra haven't the guts to stand up to popular pressure from those who had not conformed to discipline. In other words, the Government of Maharashtra gave in to indiscipline. I wonder why we spent Rs. 25 and waited for hours outside petrol pumps. Why were we made to go through this exercise for no purpose?

Last year someone posted a letter to me from Peddar Road and I live on Warden Road. The walking distance from Warden Road to Peddar Road down Sophia College lane is just about 10 minutes. But that letter took 15 days to reach me. I received an apology from the Post Master General, who very generously conceded that there was no excuse.

Belief in Mumbo-Jumbo

Caste, untouchability, roster by reservation, superstition, astrology, mumbo-jumbo of all kinds abound.

Recently Russi Lala visited a village outside Panchgani. He talked to the Sarpanch and the Sarpanch very proudly told him that they had lakhs of rupees allocated to repairing temples. Russi Lala asked: "What about the gutters and sewers which are stinking to high heavens. Don't you think that money should be spent on sanitation rather than temples?" He said that the Sarpanch was horrified at Lala's scale of values. He felt that repairing temples was much more important than keeping the town clean! This is the world of superstition, mumbo-jumbo and astrology.

Our banks take about a month to clear up-country cheques. Recently I saw officers of banks on a *morcha* in Bombay city waving red flags and shouting slogans exactly like unskilled labourers and I thought to myself: "What have we come to when bank officers, not clerks but officers, behave like *mazdoors* and go down the streets blocking traffic?" They are a demoralised lazy lot in the nationalised banks as we all know.

Punctuality is very low. The other day, a smart young lady who was engaged in computer work came to see me half an hour late, even though the appointment was made at her request. The fact that time is money is not understood in India, even in Bombay. The fact that every minute wasted is a minute of money spent has not entered our psyche. Low punctuality and low productivity is a disgrace in industry. Nehru said "*Aaram Haraam hai*". In 1975 Mrs. Gandhi gave a slogan: "There is no substitute for hard work." Both excellent sentiments. But we have only to look around particularly in Government offices, and we will find how little work is being done. And now, with a 5-day week, our Government have rewarded their own employees. I have tried to calculate how much an average Government employee works in India. Allowing for a 5-day week and week-ends, you reduce 104 days: there are about 20 public holidays (in India there are too many of these), so we further reduce 124 days out of 365, leaving 241 working days per year. Out of these provide for sick leave, casual leave, privilege leave, these take up an average of 60 days. So the average Indian worker or government employee works 180 days in the year. Exactly 6 months. For the remaining 6 months he is idle. Is there any wonder that our productivity is as low as it is? I therefore welcome the recent decision of the Supreme Court that Government employees can also be sacked without an official enquiry like the rest of us. When we can be given a month's notice by our firm and asked to go, why should a Government employee have this ridiculous security which makes him

a lazy drone who does not do an honest day's work.

The Brakes on Progress

Then there are stories of our Customs. Passengers coming into Sahar airport have enough to complain about. The snail's pace at which the Immigration queues move, the difficulty in obtaining trolleys for our baggage, are among the many experiences, that are not exactly earning a good name for our country. There is also resentment against the 5 or 6 rupees charged at the airport, where the toilets stink. Our Prime Minister talks of high technology to get into the 21st century while it takes eight hours to clear passengers even through the green channel. Now these are examples of how human beings can put the brakes on progress and, even if we get the silicon chip, what we will do with it makes me shudder.

Take our population. Contraception has been there for many years and has been legal in India for decades and yet we breed like rabbits. Most people in the villages do not know the technique or have the facilities to practice birth control.

We have no common civil code. In the Constituent Assembly of India, I tried to move that India should have a common civil code. I was outvoted by my Hindu friends in the Congress Party. They said that India was not ripe for a common civil code. Thirty years have passed and we still are not ready. Muslim women are being treated like dirt.

Not Hindi but Hindustani

We have no common language. We once had English and we are destroying it. Even now we can only talk to the people of other States in English, but the Hindi lobby is too strong. The Hindi lobby of fanatics who hate both Urdu and English, took over soon after Independence and for thirty years now have been trying to destroy the only link language we had, Hindi will never be the national language—not that it should not but it cannot be. I am more for Hindustani—so was Gandhiji—which all of us can speak but not the Hindi lobbyists. The Hindi lobbyists who have control over Radio and TV, see to it that no Urdu word or English word is allowed to 'pollute' the Hindi language. I am not able to follow the TV or AIR news bulletins in Hindi but the films I do. Bless the Indian films. They are creating a national language called Hindustani.

Our laws are archaic. Our primitive adoption law which women are trying to reform for the last ten years, still hasn't gone through Parliament. We don't have brain death in India. In civilised countries, you die when your brain dies and your kidney and eyes

are put to good use, but not in our country. So long as one is breathing on a respirator, even though he is a vegetable and has no brain left, he is alive. In other words, I am alive in Bombay but I am dead in London or New York in the same condition.

There is a horrible section in our Penal Code which says that, if a man tries to commit suicide, he should be sent to jail if he fails. If he succeeds, of course, he is "beyond the jurisdiction of our police and courts. But I am very glad, that the courts are now revolting. The other day the Delhi High Court refused to send a young man who had tried to commit suicide to jail. They not only refused but also said that Section 309 is barbaric and unworthy of a civilised society, a blot on our civilisation, and should be removed. So public opinion is at last ahead of our laws.

The same with euthanasia, the right to die which is not yet accepted. You have a Bill now circulated for public opinion, moved by Prof. Varde, on the 5th of July 1984. The Maharashtra Legislative Assembly decided to circulate the Bill for public opinion. The Bill only says that if a doctor, in response to a patient's wish who is terminally ill with-holds treatment, he should not be sent to jail. That is all. I am grateful to the Maharashtra Government for circulating it for the public to state what they feel.

A Sad Picture

And finally, indiscipline. Indiscipline in Parliament, where people hit each other. A recent headline in a newspaper read 'Fisticuffs in Parliament'. This happened in my time too in Parliament when people would attack each other physically and verbally on the floor of Parliament and the Speaker, poor man, sat doing nothing. On our roads we see what happens—overtaking on the left, cutting across, changing lanes. In schools and colleges we have indiscipline and I am told invigilators are threatened with murder if they dare to stop the pupil from copying in an examination.

This very briefly is the state of our human development. It is a sad picture in many ways. We are making progress but I think our Prime Minister's desire to enter the 21st century, in the right sense of the word though a laudable one, is not likely to be satisfied unless certain other things are done to pull up the human element and not worry so much about gadgets. What India needs today is free and compulsory secondary education, which is not there, drinking water in villages which isn't there, a fair price for the farmer for the food he produces, which isn't there, and many other things one can talk about.

Our economic policies are of the 19th century. You can't enter the 21st century carrying Karl Marx and

his 19th century baggage along with us. You have to choose between Marx and the 21st century. And that, as I see from Delhi, still hasn't been done, although there are some signs of awakening. Judging by the result of the last A.I.C.C. meeting in March 1985, and the one in Bombay in December one has to be an optimist to believe that Karl Marx will at last be dumped where he belongs—in the scrap heap of history.

So, in many ways, in our laws, in our social mores, in our behaviour, we still haven't entered the 20th century. My slogan would be: "Let us enter the 20th century before it finishes". Let rural India be pulled into the 20th century so that we are ready to leap forward into the 21st.

Not by Government But by People

It is not fair to leave all this to the Prime Minister or to any Government because Governments have their limits. The people of India also have a role to play in modernising this country. I do believe that the Prime Minister with his influence could be more usefully engaged if he fought social backwardness, superstition, corruption, dishonesty in his own Party—his Party is the main obstacle to progress in India. I have been a Congressman in my time and know that most of the obscurantist, chauvinistic, communal people are today in the Congress Party. It is they who are holding us back. The Prime Minister should make his own Party a little more modern than it is, at least a little 20th century minded.

I am all for Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's 21st century *Yatra*, as he calls it. I am prepared to join. Personally I have no difficulty in joining it because I am a modern, cosmopolitan person. But I feel that many Indians would find it very difficult and would not agree to go into the 21st century because they know no better and the fact that we have denied them primary education for 30 years, that we have denied them a common civil code, denied them fair prices for their produce, denied them drinking water in the villages, shows that the blame is not theirs. We as citizens of big cities, with the resources that we have, the education that we have, have a higher responsibility. We should join the Prime Minister in his very laudable desire to modernise India and to take part in the world of the future. But in order to do that let us face the tremendous problems that confront us. Let us take some steps in that direction. These steps are not always popular because there is a lot of resistance from conservative elements but the more reforms we bring about, the quicker we shall be and readier we shall be to enter the 21st century.

Walchand Hirachand. The man who dared to transcend the impossible.



Walchand Hirachand was a man of rare talent. A visionary, with the power to lift the veil of the future. Who believed, with total conviction that his life's mission was to free India from her economic bondage. He knew India's needs. More, he knew India's capability.

While others held back, hesitating, Walchand fearlessly set up enterprise after enterprise. Proving to the world that, given but the opportunity, Indian technology need never lag behind.

Walchand gave India an indigenous automobile industry. He freed the seas for Indian shipping. He set up the country's first aircraft manufacturing unit. Modernised engineering. Undertook monumental construction work. Built dams, bridges, barrages. Introduced mechanisation and scientific method into agriculture. Revived many a flagging industry. And more, revived every Indian's faith in his own abilities.

This then, is the rich inheritance he left behind. Today, the vast industrial empire that Walchand founded has proved more than worthy of his faith. Taking Indian technology further than ever before.

Striving for a streamlined efficiency of operation in every area—from consultancy to construction to transport to heavy engineering to agriculture. Earning national and international renown in all activities and spheres he entered—whether in mammoth construction works, or water management, or machinery, or precision hardware for nuclear projects and space research.

Today, these industries remain his greatest memorial. Bringing home to every Indian, a justifiable pride in India's capabilities.

Premier Construction Co. Ltd. • Hindustan Construction Co. Ltd. • Indian Hume Pipe Co. Ltd. • Premier Automobiles Ltd. • Walchandnagar Industries Ltd. • Ravalgaon Sugar Farm Ltd.
• Vikhroli Metal Fabricators Ltd. • Acrew India Ltd. • Bombay Cycle & Motor Agency Ltd. • Gangs Bridge Construction Co. Ltd. • Walchand Tannur Cement Co. Ltd.
• Walchand & Co. Pvt. Ltd. • Share Investment Trust Pvt. Ltd. • National Rifles Ltd.

Prize Winning Essay

We the Inheritors The India of Tomorrow Ventiris D'Souza

IN THE YEAR 1498 there descended upon the shores of India invaders of an alien country. The lack of a national sense of unity and the absence of a national governing body were the sole causes of the events which followed. Our defences were undermined, our people enslaved, our resources and national wealth plundered and an entire nation subjugated to fill the coffers of an imperialist country. It was centuries before Indians were shaken out of their passivity enough to fight for what was rightfully theirs—the freedom to live their lives without interference from a foreign body.

All the momentous events which followed culminated in the state of affairs prevailing in India today. The troubles afflicting our country today 38 years after independence seem to be of insurmountable dimensions and every step we take reveals to us how much more there remains to be done.

A look around India's neighbours shows us that we are one of the few democracies existing today while all around us prevails anarchy, despotism, military rule, dictatorship, unlawful occupation of one country by a more powerful one, monarchy and tyranny. Today we find the world on the brink of a nuclear holocaust. The superpowers have a nuclear arsenal enough to wipe out the world more than 13 times over.

As Basil O'Connor said "The Nations of the world continue to wage war like physical giants and seek peace like intellectual pygmies." Terrorism has become a part of the international game being played by the forces which are out to create chaos and terrorise the people into passivity in order to push the world on the brink of a nuclear war. The tension between the superpowers has escalated as is evident by the militarisation of not only earth but also space. Billions of dollars are spent in acquiring arms while thousands die of malnutrition every day.

Amid all these international calamities externally, India is also plagued internally by the malignant forces of hunger, corruption, ignorance and disease to name a few. Freedom is an empty word for many Indians who live in places that are not fit to be called houses, for those who live in rags and for those who see their children growing up without the mini-

mum of food or education. Statistics reveal that 40,000 Indians live by selling their blood in cities, 10 lakhs are beggars, 22 million are unemployed, 16.5 million child labourers contribute to more than 25% of the total income of the poorest families. According to the late Raj Krishna, economist and former members of the planning commission if the poverty ratio remains 50%, if unemployment remains 8% and if the rate of growth of the economy in the long run does not rise above 3.5% then it is easy to predict that there will be 460 million people below the poverty line in 2000 A.D. This would mean that the number of poor in India on that date would be more than the total number of people who became free in 1947.

Death from starvation and malnutrition are common place. Diseases that are usually only minor nuisances in well nourished individuals are devastating to the malnourished. Differences in perception, experience, expectation, wants and needs, education, culture, values, priorities and personality are the primary causes of conflict. A distorted vision of religion, caste, creed, language has contributed much to communal violence and as a result of disharmony in the country, progress is hindered. Unjust laws, corruption, lack of social conscience and the concentration of ownership in the hands of a few people make the majority of Indians economically powerless. Frequent politically instigated strikes in India today are responsible for the general spirit of indiscipline, neglect and defiance. Modernization is not possible without economic growth and economic growth is hindered by the unchecked growth of population.

The youth today are the inheritors of legacies of all the centuries bygone and the pioneers of the pathways that future generations will tread upon. Are we capable of shouldering the burden that we are called upon to lift? Today's youth are susceptible to the adverse influence of the media. There exists a high degree of juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, alcoholism, disorientation and a progressive erosion of cultural and family values among the youngsters of today. We have difficulty in maintaining some kind of harmony among so many different influences and often fall prey to the forces of corruption. The youth today greatly differ from the youth of the pre-independence era who

were forged in the fire of patriotism, sacrifice and dedication to the nation. It is commonplace for youth today to be blinded by avarice and proceed to western countries without sparing a thought about their allegiance to their country for whom their desertion proves costly. Many of our youth seem to have caught the 'aping the west' syndrome neglecting the gems present in Indian culture.

The youth however provide the one glimmer of hope that is eternally fresh and promising in a world torn by strife and calamities, segregated by race and religion, divided by rich and poor. The qualities of unalloyed enthusiasm, unbiased views, undiminishing optimism which are so abundant in youth are what the tired world sorely needs today.

There is an imperative need to harness the energies, enthusiasm and creative ability of youth to the tasks of nation-building, the preservation of world peace and promotion of international co-operation and understanding. This participation will lead to development and progress which in turn will bring about peace.

The India of tomorrow depends on the youth of today. We must tackle the problems that beset us as it is our duty towards the generations that come that they be provided with better conditions to live and work in.

- * The impediments to modernization of India like hierarchy, parochialism and regionalism, absence of a rational outlook, fatalism, lack of competitive spirit, unwillingness to adopt long term approaches and objectives will be removed.
- * Education based on science, technology, research, vocational and technical education will bring about rapid modernization.
- * The growth in per capita income will become much slower in the richer countries because levels will reach such high proportions that there will be no motivation for accumulating wealth. On the other hand, the desire for improving living standards will continue to motivate the developing nations.
- * There will be no alienation of scientists and engineers from the poor who are clamouring to receive the benefit of their education. Hence knowledge will not be concentrated in cities alone. The massive brain drain will be halted as suitable incentives and challenges will be pro-

vided within the country. The country will not depend only on imported western technology but be self-reliant and the energies of its scientists and technologists will be mobilized for tackling its particular problems.

- * As a result of technology there will be accelerated economic growth in rural India. The economy will be market based, the methods of production modernized and the use of modern means of transport and communication will lead to greater geographical mobility. The integrated rural development programmes will be strengthened and expanded leading to total rural re-generation.
- * In urban areas there will be an enlargement of the role of the public sector without bringing about a concentration of economic wealth and power. Prices will be kept in check to ensure availability of essential commodities to consumers at reasonable prices. There will be a complete revitalisation of the economy throughout the nation.
- * There will be application of scientific knowledge and techniques in every sphere from personal hygiene, sanitation and removal of disease to personal computers; from use of nuclear energy, solar energy and wind energy to recycling of waste for energy; from space technology to exploitation of marine life; from control of population and unemployment to automation of industry.

India has remarkable resilience which has enabled it to withstand the impact of numerous external influences. Many civilizations like the Greek and the Roman declined after reaching their peak but the amazing nature of Indian civilization has enabled it to absorb favourable influences and reject the unsuitable ones thus enriching it. We stand at the threshold of the 21st century and at a critical junction of transition. All that is old and outdated has to give way to the new. As Charles Kettering said "The world hates change but it is the only thing that has brought progress". The youth today have the ability to bring about the necessary changes but lack the wisdom, experience and foresight to judge what has to be rejected and to retain what has stood the test of time. India tomorrow will be led by the youth and elders in co-ordination with each other to bring out the best in our country and its people.

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The English Way of Thinking

Dhiren Bhagat

IN 1975, a few months after the Emergency was declared, I left for England and (not surprisingly, as I look back at it) became very interested in British political institutions. Whenever I had a free evening I would make for the Visitor's Gallery of the House of Commons and sit through long boring debates which then appeared to me incredibly glamorous and interesting. It was only in the following year that my enthusiasm for parliament took a knock and it was all the work of one man. I read Woodrow Wyatt's *Turn Again, Westminster* and was cured of my obsession: speaking in the House, he showed me, was a matter of sitting up till you caught the Speaker's eye and then speaking to a chamber with fifteen people in it, none of them listening but each in turn trying to catch the Speaker's eye. Becoming a Minister, he revealed to the innocent 18 year old that I was, was a matter of persistently sucking up to the P.M. You joined the Labour Party if the girls at the Labour Club were better looking the year you went up to Oxford; the Tories if OUCA gave better parties. Like most eyeopeners, it overstated the case and though I was aware of this even then, I was simultaneously grateful that Wyatt had spared me a lot of wasted time. Thereafter, I paid more attention to poetry.

For some peculiar reason Wyatt does not mention this book—or, for that matter, any of his books—when listing his many achievements in this hardly modest memoir.* I suppose he became a politician in the end and fell for that most vulgar of modern concerns, mass influence. ('I had more influence writing weekly in the *Daily Mirror* than as MP'. Perhaps, but its this mad illusion of 'influence' that disturbs.) In 1965 when Labour was in power but Wyatt had failed to make it to Government, Hugh Cudlipp of the *Daily Mirror* asked him how he would spend his time. "I'm going to write a book," I replied. I had in mind some pompous work intended to explain the workings of politics better than Bagehot. 'What do you want to write a book for? No one will read it. It will have no influence.' He stopped. 'You'd do much better to write a column in the *Daily Mirror*. Dick Crossman had a lot of influence with his.' Since 1965 Wyatt must have written a thousand columns but I have never read a single one. His book, however, did explain to me the workings of politics better than Bagehot's did.

The futility of parliamentary life was not the only revelation in Wyatt's life. In 1772 Horace Walpole, falling in love with a building James Wyatt had designed, wrote to the architect asking if these Wyatts were descended from Sir Thomas Wyatt, the poet. This innocent query started a legend, and soon the Wyatts came to believe that they were in fact descended from the Tudor knight; Woodrow's father would stamp his writing paper with a large black crest. ("He would complacently repeat a story of how he had visited a newly rich man who proudly pointed out a freshly painted coat of arms above the fireplace. 'Do you like them?' 'Yes,' my father replied, 'they're mine.'") Life for Sir Woodrow seems to have been a series of eyeopeners. On page 24 (at the age of 34) he discovers he is no relation of the poet, on page 26 that the Lyle in his father's name is not a grand Scottish connection. On page 31 (very late in life) he learns that his father was stupid after all, had barely scraped a Pass Degree at Oxford, wasn't the Double First he was brought up to believe. And cramming for Law Moderations at Oxford young Woodrow learns the hard way that benzendrine doesn't keep you awake. But none of this seems to shake his optimism.

Thanks to Wyatt's wartime tour of India and his meetings with Indian politicians, Stafford Cripps took on the 26 year old Labour MP as his Personal Assistant on the Cabinet Mission in 1946. Though Pethick Lawrence was technically the leader of the team and Wyatt merely Cripps' assistant, Woodrow soon became the agent of the entire team, carrying messages back and forth and serving chiefly as Jinnah's confidante.

Earlier it was Wyatt who—in the India debate in the Commons in December 1945—first suggested that 'we must say clearly and unequivocally to India that on a certain fixed day we are going to leave India with our troops and officials'. Writes Wyatt: 'I learned afterwards that my speech requesting the announcement of a fixed date of withdrawal finally tipped the balance in favour of what I had been advocating for so long. The India and Burma Committee of the Cabinet had before it on 20 December a draft statement in a Cabinet paper which had been gestating since the debate. Wavell's extraordinary plan for gradually removing what remained of the British presence to the Muslim majority provinces was discarded.' After India was successfully divested, life became altogether pettier. 'I had been an active and not

*Confessions of an Optimist; Woodrow Wyatt; Collins; Pp. 364; £12.95.

wholly insignificant participant in the voluntary surrender of the greatest empire in history; greater than that of the Greeks, the Romans, of Alexander the Great. Whatever I did in the future would never be on so grand a scale as that.' Apart from his parliamentary career Wyatt joined the *New Statesman* and later Michael Foot's *Tribune*, married again, slept around, moved house, travelled in America but none of these diversions seem to have really got him going, not even his brief stint (six months) as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Financial Secretary to the War Office in 1951. As a supporter of Hugh Gaitskell he thought he might get somewhere but as the Labour Party drifted leftwards it was time for another Wyatt eyeopener.

When Labour came back in 1964 George Brown asked Wilson to include Wyatt in Government. Wilson didn't oblige. Wyatt in return tried his best to scupper the Steel Nationalisation Bill. (Wyatt could see the merits of a 51% programme but thought the 100% nationalisation programme would kill the industry.) Wilson had a majority of 3 and Wyatt engineered that the Bill would be killed. (It was; till 1966 when Wilson bounced back with a large enough majority. Wyatt has the last laugh though; Julian Melchett, the first Chairman of the nationalised Steel Corporation tells him later: 'You were right about that 51 per cent. We're getting such constant government interference we can never make steel work.') At University Wyatt

edited a joint Oxford and Cambridge magazine for 'good writing' *Light and Dark* in which appeared an account in Mass Observation style of an Oxford University Conservative Association meeting addressed by Lady Astor:

Lady Astor: I've always thought—er—felt (sniggers in Hall) that having all this *culture* laughter) . . . not that you take much notice if you're anything like my sons (laughter) . . . most important thing in the world today is the English Way of Thinking (two or three Hear! Hear!) I'm a Virginian that's why I believe in the English Way of Thinking . . . you're Conservatives . . . you might be Bolsheviks by the time you're forty (laughter). If you're Bolsheviks at the age of nineteen you'll be confirmed Conservatives by the time you're forty. (Louder and longer clapping, clapping five seconds.)

After *Light and Dark* collapsed Wyatt ran *The Oxford Camera*. Before it shut down 'we ran a campaign to get Philip Toynbee elected as the first Communist President of the Union. I was not a Communist but I liked Philip Toynbee and it was fun'.

Today Wyatt's heroes are Margaret Thatcher and Rupert Murdoch. I suppose Lady Astor was right. Illusions wither with age. It's the English Way of Thinking.

DHIREN BHAGAT is a free lance journalist.

An Unjustified Ban

Minoo Masani

Nothing can be more childish than the hysterical outburst by K. K. Tiwari of the Congress (I) against the People's Union for Civil Liberties and the People's Union for Democratic Rights for their excellent report on the massacre of Sikhs in Delhi last November, which included the names of the main culprits. Mr. Tiwari has blamed these bodies for providing a "hit list" leading to the recent assassinations of some Congress (I) elements. But at least one of those assassinated was not even mentioned in this report. It was the failure to order a judicial enquiry that forced these bodies, along with some others, like the Citizens' Commission, to point a finger at the

guilty. Surely everyone in Delhi knew who were the ring-leaders and this report was not necessary for their identification.

Equally unjustifiable is the banning on September 12 of the Citizens For Democracy (CFD) report on the Punjab entitled "Report to the Nation, the Operation in Punjab". Murder will out. No amount of banning and censorship will hide it. The original sin was committed in Delhi in the first days of November 1984 and it is that which needs to be put right and not reports of what may have happened.

Courtesy: *The Statesman*

Can the Democracies Survive?

Jean-Francois Revel

DEMOCRACY may, after all, turn out to have been a historical accident, a brief parenthesis that is closing before our eyes.

If so, in its modern sense of a form of society reconciling governmental efficiency with legitimacy, authority with individual freedoms, democracy will have lasted a little over two centuries, to judge by the speed at which the forces bent on its destruction are growing. And, really, only a tiny minority of the human race will have experienced it. In both time and space, democracy fills a very small corner. The span of roughly two-hundred years applies only to the few countries where it first appeared, still very incomplete, at the end of the 18th century. Most of the other countries in which democracy exists adopted it under a century ago, under half a century ago, in some cases less than a decade ago.

Democracy probably could endure if it were the only type of political organization in the world. But it is not basically structured to defend itself against outside enemies seeking its annihilation, especially since the latest and the most dangerous of these external enemies—Communism—parades as democracy perfected when it is in fact the absolute negation of democracy, the current and complete model of totalitarianism.

The Handicaps of Democracy

Democracy is by its very nature turned inward. Its vocation is the patient and realistic improvement of life in a community. Communism, on the other hand, necessarily looks outward because it presides over a failed society and is incapable of engendering a viable one. The *nomenklatura*, the body of bureaucrat-dictators who govern the systems, has no choice, therefore, but to direct its abilities toward expansion abroad. It is also more skillful, more persevering than democracy in defending itself. Democracy tends to ignore, even deny, threats to its existence because it loathes doing what is needed to counter them. It awakens only when the danger becomes deadly, imminent, evident. By then, either there is too little time left for it to save itself, or the price of survival has become crushingly high.

In addition to its external enemy (once Nazi, now Communist), whose intellectual energy and economic power are primarily destructive, democracy faces an

internal enemy whose right to exist is written into the law itself.

Totalitarianism liquidates its internal enemies or smashes opposition as soon as it arises; it uses methods that are simple and infallible because they are undemocratic. But democracy can defend itself from within only very feebly; its internal enemy has an easy time of it because he exploits the right to disagree that is inherent in democracy. His aim of destroying democracy itself, of actively seeking an absolute monopoly of power, is shrewdly hidden behind the citizen's legitimate right to oppose and criticize the system. Paradoxically, democracy offers those seeking to abolish it a unique opportunity to work against it legally. They can even receive almost open support from the external enemy without its being seen as a truly serious violation of the social contract. The frontier is vague, the transition easy between the status of a loyal opponent wielding a privilege built into democratic institutions, and that of an adversary subverting those institutions. To totalitarianism, an opponent is by definition subversive; democracy, for fear of betraying its principles, treats subversives as mere opponents.

What we end up with in what is conventionally called Western society is a topsy-turvy situation in which those seeking to destroy democracy appear to be fighting for legitimate aims, while the defenders of democracy are pictured as repressive reactionaries. Identification of democracy's internal and external adversaries with the forces of progress, legitimacy, even peace, discredits and paralyzes the efforts of people who are only trying to preserve their institutions.

The Industry of Blame

Already besieged by this combination of hostile forces and negative logic, the democracies are also harassed by guilt-producing accusations and intimidation such as no other political system has ever had to tolerate. Like the "industry of vice" that reform groups used to talk about, there is now an "industry of blame"; it promotes the now universally accepted notion that everything bad that happens in the Third World is the fault of forces necessarily and exclusively located in the "more advanced" or "rich" countries, meaning, in almost every case—and for good reason—the democracies.

The major shareholders in this industry of blame are, first, the despots who oppress the peoples of that

unfortunate Third World with impunity. Next come the Communist countries, exploiting the underdevelopment abroad that they cannot remedy at home and converting the poor nations into totalitarian military fortresses.

Here too, in what are termed North-South relations foreign and domestic enemies of democracy are converging; their manoeuvres are of no help at all in improving the lot of the poor countries, but they are marvelously effective in undermining the democracies' confidence in their own legitimacy, their own right to exist. The "progressive" support some Westerners give to the worst of the Third World regimes is merely a geographical relocation of what for sixty years was "progressive" support of the Soviet Union and, later, Mao Zedong's China: complicity by a part of the Western Left *against* the peoples of the less-developed countries and *with* the tyrants who enslave, brutalize, starve, and exterminate them.

It seems, then, that the combination of forces—at once psychological and material, political and moral, economic and ideological—intent on the extinction of democracy is more powerful than those bent on keeping it alive. Democracy is not given credit for its achievements and benefits, but it pays an infinitely higher price for its failures, its inadequacies, and its mistakes than its adversaries do.

Real and Imaginary Inadequacies

Indeed, democratic civilization is the first in history to blame itself because another power is working to destroy it. The distinguishing mark of our century is not so much Communism's determination to erase democracy from our planet, or its frequent success in pursuing that end, as it is the humility with which democracy not only consents to its own obliteration, but contrives to legitimize the victory of its deadliest enemy.

It is natural for Communism to try with all its might to eliminate democracy, since the two systems are incompatible and Communism's survival depends on the annihilation of democracy. That the Communist offensive is more successful, more skillful than democracy's resistance, will be seen by history as just another example of one power outmanoeuvring another. But it is less natural and more novel that the stricken civilization should not only be deeply convinced that it deserves to be defeated, but that it should regale its friends and foes with reasons why defending itself would be immoral and, in any event, superfluous, useless, even dangerous.

Civilizations losing confidence in themselves: an old story in history. They stop believing they can sur-

vive, because of an internal crisis that is both insupportable and intolerable, or under threat from an external enemy so strong that the only remaining choice is between servitude and suicide. I do not believe democracy is in either predicament, but it acts as if it were in both. It seems almost eager to believe in its own guilt and in the inevitable result of that guilt. Democracy's predecessors hid such beliefs as shameful even when they thought, or knew, they were doomed. But democracy is zealous in devising arguments to prove the justice of its adversary's case and to lengthen the already overwhelming list of its own inadequacies.

Are these inadequacies real or imaginary? Some are real, of course, just as there is real cause to blame specific democracies or the democracies in general for some of the injustice and misfortune in the world. But many of these alleged inadequacies and much of the democracies' responsibility for the world's ills are exaggerated or conjectural or purely imaginary. And besides, are those real faults serious enough to provide moral justification for totalitarianism to exterminate the democracies? And why are the imaginary flaws so widely credited in the democracies themselves, which thus consent to their own calumny?

If democracy does succumb, it will not be to the sort of internal crisis, an essential lack of viability, that nearly wrecked it between the two world wars. From 1919 to 1939, the democracies seemed to be eaten from within by an irresistible malady that raised a rash of right-wing dictatorships. One after another, they capitulated to authoritarian or totalitarian governments born of their own inability to govern themselves. In Central Europe, almost none of the parliamentary regimes established after World War I were still functioning ten years later. In Western Europe, first Italy went fascist, then Portugal, Germany, Spain. Of the great European powers, only Britain and France remained faithful to democracy, and in France democracy was so feeble, so incoherent, and so beleaguered that there were grave fears for its survival.

The situation now, as the century nears its end, is nothing like that. For the first time since 1922, when Mussolini took power in Rome, all of Western Europe is democratic. The Greek colonels' seven-year dictatorship (1967-74) ended with their fall and a reinforcement of democracy there. In Spain, the *Putsch* dreaded since 1975 was tried and failed. The most dangerous, most unrelenting attacks against democracy have come from the revolutionary Left: red terrorism in Italy, Spain, and West Germany, and a minority attempt in 1975 to saddle Portugal with a Communist military dictatorship.

Despite these trials, the old democracies have held firm and the new ones have survived and even developed. The laborious effort the Left periodically makes to frighten people with the specter of a neo-Nazi peril in Europe always collides with the brute fact that none of the fascist movements in Europe today has reached party status or has managed to elect a member of any parliament. As for the stupidly inflated notion of an "extra-parliamentary Left" that flourished in Italy and Germany around 1970, it expressed nothing more than the revolutionary Left's inability to seduce enough voters into making it parliamentary.

Yet while democratic institutions are no longer challenged politically from within, the societies, civilization, and values democracy has created are being increasingly questioned. Self-criticism is, of course, one of the vital springs of democratic civilization and one of the reasons for its superiority over all other systems. But constant self-condemnation, often with little or no foundation, is a source of weakness and inferiority in dealing with an imperial power that has dispensed with such scruples. Believing one is always right, even when the facts say otherwise, is as blinding and weakening to a society as to an individual. But assuming one is always wrong, whatever the truth may be, is discouraging and paralyzing.

Not only do the democracies today blame themselves for sins they have not committed, they have formed the habit of judging themselves by ideals so inaccessible that the defendants are automatically guilty. Clearly a civilization that feels guilty for everything it is and does and thinks will lack the energy and conviction to defend itself when its existence is threatened. Drilling the idea into a civilization that it deserves defending only if it can incarnate absolute justice is tantamount to urging that it let itself die or be enslaved.

Democracies in a Bind

The same problem has invariably plagued the foreign policy of the democracies in the struggle against Communist imperialism. From the day President Truman declared that "it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure," the democracies were locked of their own free will into an almost insurmountable bind. For they laid down the condition that to have the right to resist absorption into the Communist empire, a country must be irreproachably democratic. In so doing, the West condemned itself to failure or opprobrium. It became the prisoner of an insoluble, self-

imposed dilemma: either it allowed most of the planet to sink under Communist domination, or, too often, it would be called on to protect countries that did not have democratic governments.

The trap was a boon to Communist propaganda, which on this point was widely supported by the liberal Left in the democracies. And honesty does command that any democrat with consistent ideas deplore the hypocrisy of defending human rights and individual freedom while supporting authoritarian governments. The best of these may be no more than relics or revivals of archaic power structures, the worst are violent, police-run fascist regimes, or pseudo-democracies where elections are held only spasmodically; rarely, if ever, are they genuinely faithful to the ideal of the rule of law on which the West claims to base the legitimacy of its diplomacy and its defence.

From the outset, then, the game has been unfair. Strategic necessity is regarded as justification enough for a Soviet presence in another country, or a Soviet alliance with or aid to that country; anyone calling for further excuses is requested, even in the West itself, to mind his own business. A democracy, on the other hand, is not granted the right to defend the vital barricades of its own security unless the democratic imperative is obeyed. If it is not, the West's duty is evidently to cede the territory in question to the Communists who are unhampered by this democratic obligation.

Thus, defending the independence of South Vietnam in the 1960's and 70's was tinged with infamy because the South Vietnamese regime was hardly one of exemplary purity. But the Hanoi regime had no need to furnish guarantees of its purity to win the right to defend itself or to attack its neighbours. Progressive and even centrist opinion throughout the world granted North Vietnam "popular" legitimacy on trust, which its history after 1975 did not support, but which its totalitarian and aggressive behavior even before 1975 never seemed to diminish.

Better still: if Moscow's worldwide strategic interests so require, the Soviet Union is allowed to ally itself with traditional-style fascist regimes that dispense with even a facade of progressivism. And the Soviets can do so without bringing down on their heads the vehement criticism that world opinion levels at any democratic nation attempting the same expedient. The Soviet Union and Cuba, for example, loudly took Argentina's side against Britain in the 1982 Falkland Islands war simply because it was obviously in the Kremlin's interest to oppose the Western democracies; suddenly, no one in the Communist world minded the evil interna-

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tional reputation of the "odious and bloody fascist dictatorship" of the junta in Buenos Aires.

The Soviet Union, then, is licensed by most people to safeguard its economic interests and capitalize on its strategic advantages by realistic links with any government notorious for its disregard of human rights. But we hear only clamor and vituperation when a Western country is cornered into collaboration with South Africa or the Shah's Iran or Turkey.

Double Standards

This double standard gives the Soviet empire an automatic advantage over the West: it not only can defend itself and expand without having to bother about the rules governing the foreign policy of the democracies, but its satellites and clients are also exempted. This is really a two-pronged advantage; although it need not respect human rights at home, the Soviet empire is free to condemn violations, real or fictitious, anywhere else, to exploit them and set its agents to exploiting them. It can even provoke violations, using terrorism to elicit repression in the Western countries or those associated with them.

The Soviet Union, then, enjoys the privilege of being entitled not only to defend its empire, but to enlarge it without being judged on the basis of its subject states' standards of living, social justice, political freedoms, or respect for human rights. When subjugated peoples rise against Communism, the West usually refrains from helping them, thus recognizing the legitimacy of Communist domination in all circumstances. The Communists, on the other hand, recognize the legitimacy of no government outside their empire, least of all in the democratic countries.

Conversely, the democracies suffer the theoretical handicap in their struggle with the Soviet Union of being responsible on all the above mentioned grounds both for their own behavior and for that of their allies. For example, when military governments took over in Greece in 1967, and in Turkey ten years later, the question immediately arose in the democracies of whether these countries, which had broken faith with democracy, deserved to remain within the Western defense system. But when Poland declared a state of martial law to allow its army to shore up the shaky Communist-party dictatorship, Westerners immediately argued that no real liberalization is possible in a country like Poland because *it is a vital strategic zone for the Soviet Union*. Yet Turkey is just as essential to the West as Poland is to the Soviets. Driving it out of NATO, or even suspending weapons shipments to the Turkish army (which was done because of the Greco-Turkish conflict over Cyprus in 1974), means

opening a fatal breach in the Atlantic alliance's southern flank.

Detractors of the United States and the "free world"—the expression is usually employed as a term of derision, as though there were not really a free world and a slave world—have always maintained that we cannot fight in the name of democracy by consorting with non-democratic countries. And, of course, it would be ideal if the democracies could survive by defending only other democracies. In most cases, however, this moral ideal runs up against local traditions of government or de-facto situations the West cannot easily alter. President Carter's human-rights policy, under which he suspended American aid to the dictatorships in Argentina, Chile, and Bolivia, produced no political improvement in these countries, but the Soviet Union leaped into the breach to increase trade with them. In Iran, Carter hastened the fall of what was certainly a detestably tyrannical regime—which was succeeded by a much worse one.

It takes a profound ignorance of history to blame American imperialism alone for the long Latin American tradition of coups d'état, military dictatorships, civil wars, corruption, revolution, bloody terror, and repression; all this goes back to the very founding of independent states nearly two centuries ago. On the African continent, it is striking that one-man, one-party rule has triumphed almost everywhere, in North Africa and Black Africa, in the former French colonies as in the former Belgian and British colonies, in "progressive" and "moderate" regimes alike. Even such leaders as President-for-Life Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia and Zimbabwe's Prime Minister Robert Mugabe, after opting for multiparty systems when their countries received independence, soon changed their minds on the ground that one-party systems are "more in tune with the African character." Some of the most barbarous examples of internal genocide, like the slaughter in Burundi, had nothing at all to do with Western "imperialism"; neither have some of Africa's most monstrous tyrants, such as Uganda's Idi Amin. And for the people of Uganda, the country's "liberation" from Amin by troops from "progressive" Tanzania inaugurated an era of suffering and martyrdom that has been every bit as abominable as the one that preceded it.

In any case, the free world's moral turpitude and political inconsistency are recognized, proclaimed, and condemned whenever it collaborates with largely or wholly undemocratic governments that violate human rights, whether it merely accepts them passively or assists them actively. To escape this contradiction and avoid condemnation before the tribunal of free-

world opinion, the West must therefore deny itself the support, in its struggle against Soviet expansionism, of any country that is undemocratic and disrespectful of human rights. This principle means that the right of the democracies to defend themselves must be subordinated to the conversion of the whole world to democracy. Clearly, this can only lead to the disappearance of what subsists of democracy in today's world.

In short, without always going so far as to approve, we nevertheless consider it natural for the Soviet Union to defend its interests, increase its power, install its henchmen through a craftily spaced series of coups d'état and purges. No one asks these imperialists to make the people they capture happy; no one thinks the Communists can be scolded into retreating. Nor does anyone in the democratic camp recognize his own right—not openly, at least—to fight Soviet imperialism with its own weapons. Instead, the free world again risks being accused of impure complicity with a reactionary “feudal” regime when it defends Saudi Arabia, say, against the undermining and subversion that the Soviet Union and its agents, including the Libyans, have been carrying on there for years. The moral is that the Soviet Union must be allowed to take over the Arabian peninsula unless all the countries here mold themselves to Western democratic ideals, an eventuality I would wish for but scarcely expect, at least in the immediate future, which is all that counts.

Soviet Interests in Africa

Also at stake in the immediate or very near future is the fate of southern Africa, especially that of the Republic of South Africa, which has earned the rightful hostility of all defenders of human rights for its official policy of racial segregation. That it should be excluded from all international sports events is not surprising—until we remember that the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, North Korea, and Rumania, which have as many or more human-rights blots on their records, do take part in these events.

This is another example of the double standard. But athletics is just a side issue here. What really matters is whether the West should, as the most enlightened and respectable voices of Western public opinion recommend, refuse any political and strategic cooperation with South Africa until apartheid has been eliminated. Considering that, at best, it would take a long time to end racial segregation in South Africa, that the Soviet Union is already strongly entrenched in the region, and that the slow process of reform might be

radically accelerated by an uprising of South Africa's blacks, the West might gain little from abandoning South Africa and would certainly be seriously weakened. For, as we know, the sea route around the Cape of Good Hope is the main channel for our supplies of oil from the Persian Gulf. Moreover, South Africa's soil holds most of the world's deposits of rare minerals outside the Soviet Union, supplying most of the metals needed by the industrialized countries.

In other words, if South Africa were to come under Soviet influence, Moscow would control not only its own vast mineral resources, but also those of South Africa and Namibia, where the pro-Communist SWAPO (Southwest African People's Organization) is likely to take power. The Soviet Union would then have a stranglehold on most and, in some cases, all the minerals vital to our industries. It could block oil shipments to us—if it had not already shut them off at the source along the Persian Gulf. That kind of economic power would make the Soviet Union master of the West without recourse to war, nuclear or conventional, in Europe.

The Soviet Union's great strength lies in its freedom to invade areas where history has left the decaying remnants of archaic regimes that are important to the West's security or are sources of vital materials. Never mind that these regimes are replaced, as they always are, by bloodier, more repressive Communist police states and that the change leaves the area's poor more starved than they were before. The Soviets still come out ahead. For local and world opinion perceive the *relative* advantages of the old regime and the horrors of Communist putrefaction only after the new regime is in power and irreversible.

When the West tries to protect archaic regimes or those of “modernistic authoritarians” like the Shah of Iran from disintegration, or attempts to restrain their abuses, it cannot help seeming to defend the Right against the Left, the past against the future, the billionaires against the poverty-stricken masses. The fact that when the Communist Left overturns the Right it brings with it rampant famine, the camps, and the boat people never works as a *preventive*. If the West tries to pressure an archaic regime into becoming more liberal, either it is accused of “interference” by outraged nationalists, or its well-meaning proselytizing shoves the country into unforeseeable chaos, as exemplified by the Islamic revolution in Iran. And while the Ayatollah's bloody terror may now be partly anti-Communist for essentially religious reasons, the Kremlin knows very well that in the long run, when the brink of anarchy is reached, Iran may topple into the

Soviet camp, but is unlikely ever to tip back into the free world.

The Soviet Union's advantage over the free world is that neither world opinion nor, of course, its own muzzled public expects it to preach to its allies before associating with them, or to hold on to its satellites by any method but sheer force; it is not even required to provide enough food for the peoples it absorbs into its imperial system.

But "international opinion"—the phrase describes part of the free world's public opinion plus Soviet propaganda—will not accept violation of the rules of democracy by the West's friends. Even when such countries as Taiwan, South Korea, Malaysia, and Singapore develop thriving economies that most other nations in the Third World envy and that would bring cries of admiration from the Western Left if they blossomed under Soviet banners, they are not appreciated. For they have curtailed their citizens' freedom. The socialist regimes, of course, have obliterated freedom without even achieving comparable prosperity.

This inequality of duties that so favours the Communists over the free world, however, prevents no one from turning around and equating the two sides when argument requires it. The technique for doing this seems fair but is in fact discriminatory; it simply consists of lumping the democracies and the Soviets together in iniquity.

This technique represents a change of tactics. Almost throughout the 20th century, the politically cross-eyed Left in the democracies has unsheathed its fury only against the crimes of the capitalist world. Around 1970, the amnesia that periodically rejected unsavoury disclosures about the Communist world began to show cracks. Tell-tale scars remained after each new cleansing absolution. Soon the mass of facts grew too dense to deny out of hand. At this point a new hoax was devised.

The New Hoax

It consisted of admitting the existence of Communist crimes and failures provided these could instantly be matched by equivalents in the capitalist world. Communism was now absolved not because it never sins, but because the democracies sin as grievously. In this new dialectical game, everyone is free, without necessarily being dishonest, to retail the misdeeds and failings of totalitarian Communism, but on condition that we hasten to present their capitalist twins. Any deviation from the rule is immediately vilified as "selective indignation" and earns the severe censure of impartial players.

For example, a doctrinally pure French Socialist, Louis Mermaz, president of the National Assembly since 1981, replied to a reporter's question about the gulags: "I am as horrified as you are by the gulags, which are a perversion of Communism. But I ask that you also condemn that monstrosity of the capitalist system: hunger throughout the world that kills 50 million people each year, 30 million of them children." The retort, remarkable for its speed, is less so for its objectivity. For the parallel is only apparent: the gulags are a "perversion" of Communism, but famine, according to the Socialist leader, is a product of the basic nature of capitalism. And while the magic of parallelism makes the Communist sin almost venial, that of capitalism remains mortal. Indeed, absolution is usually a one-way grant—to forgive the horrors of Communism. It seems unlikely that, if questioned on famine in the world, Mermaz would have replied with a diatribe against the gulags; he would have protested violently against the shocking malnutrition of some of our fellow humans, and he would have been right. That the gulags exist does not make Third World poverty less morally intolerable. But by what sorcery is the reverse true?

Besides, the magician was using phony statistics. As demographers know, some 50 million people die in the world every year. They can't all die of starvation and three-fifths of them can't be children. The fight against infant mortality in the poor countries has reduced its incidence, which is why their populations are increasing. Nutritionists estimate the number of deaths annually due to malnutrition at 10 per cent of the total *and this includes the Communist countries*, which slightly weakens the indictment of capitalism. Death from starvation in the Communist world may be better hidden, but the victims are just as dead as any others. Mao's successors have confirmed what demographers had already determined from their study of Chinese population patterns; that tens of millions of Chinese died of starvation in 1960-70.

A final objection to the Mermaz comparison: the gulags came into being by *deliberate* political decisions of Communist governments, whereas historically, capitalism has in fact rid Europe of the periodic famines that plagued it until the middle of the 18th century, as they now do the less-developed countries. Capitalism has even begun to relieve starvation in some of the poorer countries, India and Brazil for example, which now export foodstuffs. Much, enormously much, remains to be done everywhere before all mankind can enjoy the high nutritional standard that not even the capitalist West reached until the 19th century. But this problem has nothing whatever to do

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with the question at issue; the deliberate creation by an organized political regime of a repressive concentration-camp system that doubles as a system of government.

I am not going here into why industrial capitalism, the first and only system of production that has wrested people from penury and that could perform the same service for those still experiencing penury, is the most decried. Nor will I waste time arguing at length that since the 18th century, the nations where industrial capitalism has developed also happen to be those where modern democracy took root. This does not mean that these countries have kept consistent faith with democracy, or that democracy is found wherever capitalism goes. But it does mean that two centuries of history are witness to a general concomitance between capitalism and democracy, I will only note that this monumental file of evidence has been filched and that the democracies themselves have adopted the Communists' image of the world and their perspective on history.

The falsest and most pernicious characteristic of this image and this perspective lies probably in the antithesis between socialism and capitalism, between totalitarianism and democracy. This functions in most minds as an interpretive grid, even for those opposed to socialism. Its imposition is not the least of disinformation's victories, for this disinformation no longer bears on events, but on ideas, it is philosophical disinformation, a sort of ideological mole that has burrowed into the understanding most of us have of these forces.

Adopting this grid means accepting the principle that any regime that is less than perfectly democratic may be likened to totalitarianism and so loses its right to defend itself against Communism. Since the world is full of governments that are neither totalitarian nor democratic, their futures are sealed. For one thing, because none of the democracies, even those recognized as such, is perfect, and since there are oppressive features to any society, which regime can claim a genuine right to defend itself against Communism? None. And, following the same line of reasoning, if all that need be done to legitimize Communism is to show that capitalism has its faults, its vices and crises, then let world power be turned over to the Communists at once, on the principle that the best way to correct a limp is to cut off both legs.

The Reality of Totalitarian Communism

The real antithesis is not that of totalitarianism to democracy or Communism to capitalism, but of totalitarian Communism to all the rest. Communism is a

necrosis of economics, totalitarianism a necrosis of politics, of the body civic and of culture. As a dead society, totalitarianism can be contrasted with countless social forms now and in the past that cannot be called democratic as the term is understood in a few societies today, but which were not and are not dead, either. Medieval Europe, Ming China, African, Polynesian, and American societies before their contact with Europeans, the France of Louis XV and Napoleon III, Elizabethan England, the Spain of Philip IV, India under the Gupta dynasty and the Germany of Kant's day were neither democratic nor totalitarian, but they were all living societies that, each in its own way, created valuable civilizations.

The existence of injustice, persecution, oppression in a group is one thing; for a group to be a negation of human nature in every aspect of its structure and ideology is something else again. This is the group to which totalitarianism belongs. True, today we believe that to fulfil themselves, all societies should aspire to democracy, progress towards it, and finally achieve it. I certainly do. Nevertheless, thousands of social organizations down through history, while not comparable to modern democracies, were not negations of humanity and did contribute elements of civilization to our present patchwork culture.

Unlike capitalism Communism is not an economic system, it is a political system that must necessarily asphyxiate an economy. We should therefore refuse to lump Communism in with other authoritarian systems or them with it. Totalitarianism endangers not democracy alone, but life itself. Communism is not simply one despotic political system among many, or one inefficient and unjust economic system among others. In normal life, despotism and inefficiency are among the rare qualities that can be corrected, as is shown by all of history—except the history of Communism. To survive, Communism seeks to destroy not just existing democracy, but every possibility of democracy.

* Any society of any type in the world today can accede to democracy, with a single exception: Communist society, which cannot go democratic without destroying itself. Understandably, then, totalitarian strategists try to reverse or block this tendency in the still malleable world around them. What is less easy to understand is that they can recruit some of their assiduous disciples from among democracy's guides and thinkers.

But recruit them they do. Broad sectors of public opinion and of the West's political and cultural elite see the democracies as more reactionary, more damaging to the Third World, more aggressive militarily,

especially as regards nuclear warfare, than the Soviet Union and its satellites. Westerners who favour an effective nuclear deterrent and a verifiable balance of forces are still viewed as "conservatives," "right-wingers," "warmongers," or, at best, as "cold warriors." Those "liberals" advocating unilateral disarmament or, at any rate, prior and increasingly juicier concessions to the Soviet Union without reciprocal guarantees are considered generous souls who love peace.

In practice, what these "liberals" are really promoting is an imbalance that would enable the Soviet Union to force its economic and political will on a growing number of countries without going to war, thus enlarging an already spacious orbit. For history teaches us that never, anywhere, have concessions coaxed the Soviet Union into making concessions. From this unhappy truth, for which they are in no way responsible, the democracies do not conclude that they must change their diplomatic approach, but that they must concede still more.

* * *

True, the people often show better judgment than the elites and the activists. In 1982, a survey revealed that all the peoples of Western Europe except the Spanish thought the growth of the Soviet military potential was more important in explaining international tension than the growth of America's military potential. (This had its clownish side, however: by a margin of 45 per cent to 21 per cent, the French people believed that American interest rates and the dollar's role in international finance were much more serious causes of tension than the USSR's bulging arsenal.)

Despite an improved and, by 1981, clearer perception of Soviet power, or perhaps because of the realism of that perception, most Europeans, and not just militant pacifists, said that if their countries were invaded, they would rather submit than resist. Asked in another poll, "If the Soviet army entered French territory, do you think the President of France should immediately open peace talks with the Soviet Union?" 63 per cent of the French answered "yes," 7 per cent favoured the use of nuclear weapons, and 31 per cent thought France should fight, but without using its nuclear missiles.

* * *

Any normal person naturally hates the idea of war, and, of course, this feeling interferes with proper public information about strategy, as though the information itself were dangerous. But a Soviet "peace" is synonymous with subjugation, for which the West is already being psychologically conditioned, and its continued pursuit will lead by imperceptible stages to a

state of undeclared but total satellization. Even economic weapons, not to mention military deterrence, have been forbidden to the West, or rather, the West has forbidden itself to use them. This refusal to apply stern economic sanctions against the Soviet Union must have vastly reassured the men in the Kremlin. And if the West can no longer resort to a credible strategic deterrent or to economic weapons, what is there to prevent the Soviet Union from continuing to trample the sovereignty of other countries, other continents, the whole world?

The practical conclusion Communist leaders draw from Western military and economic passivity is that they can go right on doing what they have been doing. Jean-Francois Deniau, a former cabinet minister under Giscard d'Estaing, quoted a high Soviet official as having told him:

We took Angola and you did not protest. We even saw that you could have beaten us in Angola—the government was on our side, but it was within an ace of giving up—and that you did nothing to win; on the contrary. And when, to save ourselves, we sent in 30,000 Cuban soldiers, Ambassador Andrew Young, a member of the American cabinet, said it was a positive step and an element of stability. All right, we noted the fact and included it in our analyses. Then we took Mozambique. Forget it, you don't even know where it is. Then we took Ethiopia, a key move. There again we noted that you could have replied via Somalia or Eritrea or both. No reply. We noted that and put it into our analyses. Then we took Aden and set up a powerful Soviet base there. Aden! On the Arabian peninsula! In the heart of your supply centre! No response. So we noted: we can take Aden.

* * *

Communism considers itself permanently at war with the rest of the world, even if it must occasionally agree to an armistice. This is nothing to be indignant about. We must simply recognize it; unless we do, we obviously cannot begin taking suitable political countermeasures. The Communists' war is fought in many ways. If necessary, this includes military action, but to Communism's leaders, all forms of action are part of this war, beginning with negotiation, at least their very particular notion of negotiation.

In their minds, the aim of negotiation has never been to reach a lasting agreement, but to weaken their adversary and prepare him to make further concessions while fostering his illusion that the new concessions will be the last, the ones that will bring him stability, security, tranquility. The Soviets' "peace"

propaganda, which to them means convincing others not to defend themselves, always overlies a threat of war, of implicit intimidation that exploits our very justifiable fear of an atomic cataclysm. This belligerent demand for peace merely summons the democracies to buy their security with slavery; it is an elaborate way to say "surrender or be wiped out." It has been called "attack through pacifism."

Because in its social system, as in its foreign policy, Communism is meeting increasing disapproval, Communist leaders do not rely much any more on honey to catch their future victims (except, perhaps, in some badly informed Third World countries). Having given up trying to seduce the unwary by pretending to represent leftist ideals, they are stripping off their mask and using pure force. Unlike the Western leadership, which is tormented by remorse and a sense of guilt, the Soviet leaders have perfectly clear consciences, which allows them to use brute force with utter serenity both to preserve their power at home and to extend it abroad.

Many in the West take comfort from the internal weaknesses of Communism—especially its economic inefficiency. But I for one am more frightened than comforted by these weaknesses. A system that has grown so strong despite so many failings, that increasingly dominates the world even when no one wants anything to do with it, at least not the majority of the people in the countries it seeks to penetrate, and that, where it is in power, everyone except the *nomenklatura* longs to be rid of—this system must nevertheless embody a principle of action and a monopolization of power more effective than any mankind has ever known before. Communism and the Soviet empire are unprecedented in history. None of the classic concepts that make the past intelligible explains Communist imperialism. The Soviet empire does not follow the bell-shaped expansionist curve of previous empires. Yet the democracies persist in believing that it will decline of itself and inevitably grow more moderate.

The truth is, however, that *the longer Soviet Communism lasts, the more expansionist it becomes* and the more difficult it is to control. Other Communist states, notably Cuba, Vietnam, and North Korea, have shown similar propensities for conquest. It does not follow that because Communism is showing signs of rot and suffers reverses, it will turn to the path of peace. Except when they were disintegrating, few other empires had to deal with as many national and popular rebellions as the Soviet empire has had since 1953. But it has withstood and quelled them without going to pieces. And these difficulties have in no way

slowed its expansionist thrust.

* * *

The closer we get to the end of the century, the more Communist imperialism becomes the chief problem of our time. No other threat to world freedom has endured as long. Other totalitarian systems were defeated or simply crumbled with age. In many other unhappy countries that have been or still are ruled by dictators, democracy and dictatorship—or, at least, adulterated forms of dictatorship (and democracy)—have swept in and out like tides. Only Communist totalitarianism is both durable and immutable.

What should non-Communist Countries do?

To the question of what should the non-Communist countries do, I am tempted to answer by turning to Demosthenes. "Some people," he said, "think they can stump the man who mounts the tribune by asking him what's to be done. To those I will give what I believe is the fairest and truest answer: don't do what you are doing now."

This is not as summary an answer as it seems, even to today's problems. What, indeed, *can* we do? To go on as we have been doing would guarantee the continued advance of totalitarianism, for, as experience has shown, it will not be stopped by its own weaknesses and internal failures.

A second option is based on the hope that the Soviet Union will change its ways voluntarily if we acknowledge its place in the sun and show clearly through concessions that we have no intention of attacking it. Anchored to peaceful coexistence and detente, this option has too adequately proved its harmfulness to warrant further discussion. But since we have yet to scrap it, I can only warn people not to count on it to save us. It will keep us out of war by ushering us into subordination or slavery.

A third choice proposed, reviving—horrors!—the "cold war," which we are so repeatedly admonished not to do, really does not exist, since there has never been a cold war. What is called the cold war has simply been a toned-down version of detente that has certainly not attained its theoretical goal of "containment." The democracies selfishly thought to use detente to guarantee their own security by signing treaties finally and officially confirming the subjugation of the peoples already under Communist dictatorship. In this they have failed. All we have succeeded in doing is abandoning these enslaved peoples to their masters. As he was being exchanged for a Chilean Communist, the Soviet dissident Vladimir Bukovsky found a cruel symbol of this complicity: "The Chekist [secret policeman] who took off my handcuffs remarked for my edification: 'These hand-

cuffs, incidentally—they're American.' And he showed me the stamp. As though I had waited this long to learn that since the Soviets took power, or just about, the West has been supplying us with handcuffs, literally and figuratively."

Yet this complicity has not brought us the security we expected from it. Never were the democracies more vulnerable, more baffled, more exposed to the blows of Communist imperialism than they were when the so-called detente period ended. The years since 1981 have been especially tragic, with confusion sown in the democratic camp by the Polish and Afghan affairs, by the democracies' gradual but irresistible acceptance of Soviet military superiority despite the more and more threatening, impudently biting, and brutal way the Kremlin talks to them.

Some responsible thinkers are pessimistic enough to believe that the West has become so docile that it can no longer call a halt without risking war. I have reached the opposite conclusion. I am convinced that the Soviets are intent on maintaining their nuclear superiority over Western Europe as a way to increase their pressure on us *without* being dragged into a general war while gradually disengaging the United States from the continent of Europe. Thus the Western nuclear deterrent remains the principal guarantor of peace it has proved to be for the past thirty-five years. The *nomenklatura* doesn't want to die either.

Once this first point is well understood, and acted upon, the second article of a worthy foreign policy

would be to reply to any Soviet encroachment with immediate reprisals, mainly economic and to make no further concessions without manifest, equivalent, and palpable counterconcessions. The free world's revised foreign policy must and can have a precise objective: to make the Soviets understand once and for all that the irrevocable prior condition for resumption of negotiations and the granting of concessions of any kind is a definitive halt to Communist imperialism everywhere in the world.

Activating this new policy, which really would be no more than a return to normal diplomacy, presupposes an almost total Western intellectual reconversion, sound understanding—at last—of what Communism is and how it works, and a hitherto unprecedented harmonization and coordination of policy among all the democracies. This amounts to saying that while such a new diplomatic departure appears objectively possible, it seems to me highly unlikely because of the intellectual frivolity, indecisiveness, and discord of the men called on to apply it. And that is why I fear that democracy may not survive the closing years of the 20th century.

JEAN-FRANCOIS REVEL, the distinguished French political commentator, is the author of *Without Marx or Jesus* and *The Totalitarian Temptation*, among other books. The present essay is drawn from his new book, a long and detailed analysis of the disadvantages from which democracies suffer in their conflict with totalitarianism. Entitled *How Democracies Perish*, it was published by Doubleday in 1984. Copyright 1983 by Jean-Francois Revel; translation copyright 1984 by William F. Byron.



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Who is Afraid of Competitive Free Enterprise and Liberalism?

Arvind Deshpande

JUDGING from the discussions held at a seminar on 'The Social Market Economy and the Countries of the Third World' organised jointly by the Leslie Sawhney Programme and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation of West Germany in Bombay on July 17 and 18, 1985, it would appear, the answer is 'everyone', except of course Count Otto Lambsdorff, former Minister of the Economy, Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Minoo Masani and a few others.

As the Count perceptively observed while speaking on the 'Relevance of the Market Economy', industrialists used to protectionist policies, politicians and bureaucrats wickling enormous power in a centralised economic system, professionals and intellectuals distrustful of tycoons, ideologues and the poor who have never known what competitive enterprise in an open society can do, will all oppose the change. A participant who could not understand why everyone was fighting shy of accepting the inevitable said that the real reason seems to be that a strong vested interest has developed in the existing system where the public sector has become the private sector of the politician, the bureaucrat, the trader and entrepreneur who thrive on it and the indisciplined worker, with the 'consumer' left to fend for himself and live in a despondent milieu of 'choicelessness' and resulting 'voicelessness'.

Real Test of a Liberal Policy

Count Lambsdorff was very clear on what 'liberalism' meant. He said that a totally free economy in today's world is a rarity. Yet, it is only the liberals who insist, as Gandhiji did, that the need is for governments, politicians, civil servants and even industrialists to shed power, encourage initiative and participation and transfer power to the consumer and the people. Liberals insist on competition in a free enterprise economy, ensure social responsibility, equity and justice to the poor and disadvantaged with the State intervening only to keep the 'balance' and protect the weak from exploitation. He said that the real test is, which system is more effective and less costly. According to him ensuring the rules of the game, the legal and policy frame-work—yes. Interference and undue controls—no.

Mr. P. L. Tandon, a veteran professional manager pleaded for de-emotionalising the whole debate of the private vs public sector. He pointed out that the

public sector was not really public but the state sector with diffused accountability and without public participation in shareholding. If we want returns (and not perennial losses) on the colossal amounts invested, the public sector must operate in an 'industrial and management' culture and not in the present 'administrative' culture. The real fear about privatisation is the fear of the industrial culture which insists on profits, results, performance and accountability. He commended the West German model of having a Managing or Operational Board and a policy-making Supervisory Board.

The role of the nationalised banks and the Life Insurance Corporation came in for criticism. It was proved with facts and figures that consumers were unhappy with regard to the quality and cost of service, social utility and obligations. Yet, Prof. V. M. Dandekar said that we must accept the nationalisation of LIC and Banks and strive to introduce reforms and social objectives. Mr. Sharad Joshi and some other participants seemed puzzled by Prof. Dandekar's conclusion.

A discussion on bureaucratic constraints on the Indian economy was initiated by Mr. Viren Shah. The consensus was that delays, arbitrariness and a host of other restrictions were due to politicians' interference in administration and intolerance of independent advice offered by civil servants as also the civil servants' reluctance to stand up and be counted. There was all round demoralisation and victimisation of the civil service. Mr. Tandon who thought this was due to the vertical and hierarchical decision-making process, suggested a change-over to the horizontal and consultative system practised in industry. There was also complete absence of continuing education and training for both political masters and civil servants. It was a pity that the fundamental issue of big government either corrupting or making even honest politicians and bureaucrats hapless victims, was side-tracked. It is in the nature of big government to accumulate power and stifle freedom.

Identifying Liberals' Allies

What then was the lesson of the seminar for liberals? It was to identify clearly the real allies of liberalism. They are the millions of consumers consisting of small and middle farmers who have remained

poor and insecure, the fixed income people, the middle level managers, professionals and self employed who find that T.V. and AIR are for government, that the Life Insurance Corporation of India is for those who are in the income bracket of Rs. 3000 plus per month; that nationalised banks are for employees and loan *melas*; that the municipalities are for builders, contractors and slumlords; that hospitals are for doctors, nurses and rich Arabs; and that the telephones are for the rich. It would appear that Lord Acton's famous

dictum about absolute power corrupting absolutely will, for our society, read, "absolute helplessness and choicelessness corrupts absolutely". Economic compulsions, consumer resistance and a sustained educative effort will in the end prevail. Liberals must continue such educative effort and learn to serve the country's cause despite temporary failures and setbacks.

ARVIND DESHPANDE is the Hon. Secretary of the Leslie Sawhney Programme of Training for Democracy.

Letter

Why *Freedom First* should Tone Down its Anti-Soviet Stance

While I gratefully appreciate the terms in which you have taken notice of my observations about toning down the 'Anti-Soviet stance' in the interest of *Freedom First*, I wish to restate my faith in the efficacy of Liberal democracy as contrasted with the political systems which stems from totalitarian forms of government under whatever garb they might appear.

When the Second World War ended, the mantle of Britain was taken over by America, and its policies began to assume an imperialistic character. The Indian intelligentsia had always associated with the American connection the noble ideas of Lincoln, Wilson, Emerson and Whitman. All this changed overnight. The Americans began to flaunt in our faces their immense wealth and armed might of which a hideous example was the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima. This was followed by open and unabashed support of highly oppressive dictatorships which were trampling underfoot those very principles by which the Americans stood when fighting for their freedom and liberty.

America was ideologically close to us but it appears their liberal system and ideas do not guide their policies towards other nations, especially nations of the third world.

Now what could we do except grasp the proffered hand of a Soviet alliance in circumstances such as they existed at the time when Kissinger told us in plain words that we could expect no help from them against a Pakistan-China combination. We were face to face with the possibility of grave danger. But the news of the Indo-Soviet treaty of peace, friendship and alliance came to be and everyone heaved a sigh of relief.

It was an alliance between two governments and not a marriage of two distinctly different political systems. India's hoary traditions and the moral and intellectual

background of our educated classes who provide leadership and moral tone to the country's life have dug such deep roots in the ideals of liberal democracy that it is not easy for anybody to pull them out of it. So India has not gone communist. In fact it is too large a country with a federal outlook and it cannot be swept by one large broom howsoever sturdy. India cannot be a client state of any foreign power.

Our foreign policy is pragmatist and things as they stand at present, have brought us closer to the Soviets. They have been our traditional allies in international forums. They have been our most substantial trading partners. They have been virtually our most reliable suppliers of military hardware with the technology that lies behind its production in our own country. Hence our relations are clear and intimate at present. No one can see too far into the future. So in this material sphere there is much give and take between us. But our social and political systems are different from each other.

We draw more inspiration from Athenian ideals of freedom and liberal democracy, while the Soviets are more the heir of the Byzantine system of administration and social system. It would not be too much to say that the Soviet system is virtually Czarism reborn, with the difference that it has put on the red cap of communist ideology. We shall brook no interference in our own social and political order and there is no question of our interfering with their system in a like manner.

Hence my submission is that what I wrote about toning down the anti-Soviet stance was not so much out of my love for this totalitarian octopus as my desire to enable a wider reading public to become familiar with the ideas of my favourite journal which stands out with unsullied record among a host of such publications. As for myself, I abhor every form of totalitarianism wherever it may be. You may be interested to know that with the imposition of the Emergency in 1975 I turned my back on the Congress and have never regretted my decision since.

Prof. R. M. Sinha

Profiles of Indian Liberals

C. Y. Chintamani (1880-1981)

R. Srinivasan



FIFTEEN YEARS after the passing away of Sir C. Y. Chintamani, his fellow Andhra journalist and friend bemoaned in a radio talk that there were as yet not a single biography of his hero. The first biography has appeared forty-four years after the passing away of the great Liberal leader. This short book should be read by all Indians, concerned about

the future of liberal values and is an excellent introduction to this remarkable gift of Andhra to the world of Indian Liberalism. A new generation will be grateful to Shri Varma and the National Book Trust for this publication.*

In several respects Chintamani remained an Andhra in spite of living for nearly four decades in Allahabad. Even as a schoolboy he amazed his teachers by his detailed knowledge of contemporary British and Indian politics and by his equally studious neglect of his books. Politics literally coursed in his veins and even while in school, he used not only to contribute to journals, but soon acquired one and tried to run it in his native Vizianagaram. By the time he entered college, he was compelled to shoulder the entire burden of his family. This prevented him from joining as member the Servants of India Society which he fain would have done. He had to earn a living and for a brief while he tried his fortune in Madras under that most eminent of newspaper men—G. Subramania Iyer. This great editor not only reduced his pay from Rs. 30 to Rs. 20 but described him as 'careless, indolent, and incompetent.' However, within a decade his name was to shadow that of Subramania Iyer himself.

A Relentless Critic

Sachchidananda Sinha, the great man of public affairs, recalls the young Chintamani then in his bare

twenties writing to him that he agreed with his views and that he would be happy to serve him on his weekly on a salary of Rs. 40. This overwhelming confidence in himself remained typical of him. By 1909, Sinha along with Malaviya and Pandit Motilal Nehru acquired a paper, *The Leader* and made Chintamani the editor. Within an astonishingly short period, he made it an important paper, and the cost of it was his often working for twenty hours a day, in all capacities, in spite of poor health, which broke down once seriously enough for people to despair of his very survival. The paper was a terror to bureaucrats, the government and stern on the failings of leaders of all varieties, Congress, Swarajist and Liberal. Even his venerated guru Gokhale did not escape his fire.

Criticism of Motilal and Sapru, led to Motilal resigning from the directorship of the newspaper. The editor had to oppose Malaviya on his stand on whether Indians should stand for office under the Montford Act. But Malaviya was Chairman of the Paper. Chintamani tried to escape from the dilemma by tendering his resignation. But the Pandit's argument was that while the paper could survive his non-association, it would immediately collapse if the editor were to resign. Consequently, the Chairman resigned to establish the right of the editor to criticise his policies—surely unique in the annals of world journalism.

Similarly, his relentless criticism of the Congress and of Gandhi inevitably led to a decline in the circulation of the paper. While lying sick in bed, Chintamani was approached by the directors to request him to soften his stand on the Congress which was adversely affecting the paper's circulation. Chintamani was sympathetic to their stand but his solution was simple—he would resign as editor. The directors beat a hasty retreat.

Such independence inevitably brought its rewards, by way of fines submitted to the government, being taken to task on charges of contempt of court etc. Though reputed as a Liberal paper it was critical of liberal leaders as well. He took up causes and relentlessly pursued them in his columns till he got redress. A mere editorial on a subject was not something that would satisfy him.

Though born to edit and run newspapers, experience in the world of journalism and a liberal philosophy

* C. Y. CHINTAMANI by Ravindra Nath Varma. National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1985, pp. 83, Rs. 11/-.

which he inherited from a thorough assimilation of the Congress presidential addresses had groomed him in the value of public participation; consequently, he could not help entering into active politics, both as a spokesman and champion of liberalism and as a legislator.

In the U.P. Legislative

Twice elected as president of the Liberal Party (the National Liberal Federation), he remained one of the most eloquent opponents of the populist style of politics associated with Gandhian satyagraha and non-co-operation. Earlier, he had opposed the entry of the Extremists into the Congress and had tirelessly argued for the urgency of introducing civic elements into politics, and to build up the institutions of liberal democracy. He scarcely minded the unpopularity that he was courting from the public. "Immediate swaraj is an euphemism for revolution. And revolution cannot be accompanied by appeals to constituted authorities. But non-co-operation cannot achieve it either. . . . Unceasing work in the various spheres of national life so as to make of Indians a more efficient as well as a more united nation and organized and sustained efforts in the political field to secure much needed reform in the administration, military no less civil, are the only means by which we can hope to achieve success." He was equally concerned at intolerance of dissent which was gradually seeping into the crevices of the Congress. The blows that the High Command dealt to Khare, Nariman, and Subash Bose made him despair of the Congress which he believed in its "moment of triumph seek(s) to tread the path of despots, while muttering the accents of democracy." Equally he was critical of the non-co-operation of the Congress towards war efforts. Like M. N. Roy, he believed that fundamental issues of civilization and its very survival were involved in the war.

As member of the legislature (U.P.), he was in the Opposition and its accredited leader and here he continued the thoroughness of Gokhale in his mastery of details and the debating skills of Satyamurthy. He was indeed feared in the House and the bureaucracy had no reason to love him—for he was merciless in his exposure of them. Legislative records in the U.P. never reached such heights as when he was in the House; had he succeeded in being elected to the Central Legislature of the country, the nation would have gained a legislator of sterling qualities.

It is not well-known that it was he who was responsible in persuading (when all had failed) Gandhiji to go to London and participate in the Round Table Conference. He too had participated in the first Conference and was to prove more than a match to the British ministers. Along with Sastri, he was to win

encomiums from the British participants, for his mastery of political facts and principles and his skill in argument.

During the dyarchy days, he was also a very successful minister though only for two years. He brought great and totally unsuspected skills to bear upon his responsibilities. He was more than what the bureaucrats had expected of him for they could not bamboozle him; his enormous memory, his thorough knowledge of Acts and regulations stood him in good stead as did his sure grasp of details. He would take up the files late at night after dinner and work often till 2 a.m. All the time he was running his newspaper as well! With the Conservative Party coming to power in England and with a new Governor it was evident that the climate of opinion was changing and that he would not be able to function with self-respect. On a question of principle he resigned as minister.

Deeply religious, though not in any narrow sense, Chintamani was committed to social reform and this he demonstrated in practise by getting married to a widow. Though he believed in high ideals he did not cherish low living. He liked the good things of life, though he could scarcely afford all of them. But in being steadfast to his values, he scorned position, wealth and status. Alone of Indians, he was offered a position in the India Council in London, by the then Secretary of State but he chose the humbler but more spiritually rewarding duty of editing his beloved newspaper. It is good to remember this; how many in contemporary India would emulate him?

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(Approved by I A T A)

How Western Self-Hate Helps Moscow

Peter Bruer

ACQUIRING client states by fomenting discord is a commonplace of history. Read Thucydides.

We need to ask, why is the climate so hospitable to Soviet efforts in the Third World? People there are certainly not hostile to the West and its products. They are eager for western watches, transistors, drugs and bicycles. Nor is it poverty which makes communist propaganda attractive. It is the relatively prosperous, urbanized and articulate groups with western contacts who most readily embrace and articulate the communist creed—politicians, teachers, media and professional people, and the politicized military.

These groups, which dominate the inarticulate rural majority in the politics of the Third World, especially in Africa and much of Asia, have only the haziest ideas about Marxism-Leninism, but they realize that it is both a system of ideas and a convenient political programme and welcome a system which promises them even closer and lasting power over their subjects.

It was the West, especially Britain, which conferred power and prestige on the new elite by undermining traditional local institutions and leaders, a deliberate but unnecessary rejection of the earlier policy of transferring power to accepted but reformed local leadership.

The culmination of this process was the destruction of the Kabaka of Uganda and his followers in 1966, on the eve of what promised to be one of the few genuinely democratic elections in Africa, and one which the party led by the Kabaka was almost certain to win. The tanks and other hardware with which Dr. Obote destroyed this leader were provided not by the Soviets but by the British.

For many decades a flow of misinformation emanating from the West has reached the Third World, both about the merits of the Soviet system and alleged western misconduct. A recital even of a few examples suggests that it is hardly necessary for the Soviets to turn the Third World against the West. We do it for them.

The educated Third World reader learns, for example, that the last major work by the Webbs, who founded the London School of Economics and are entombed in Westminster Abbey, is entitled: *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation* written, incidentally, at the height of the Stalinist terror. The student of Harold Laski, acclaimed on both sides of the Atlantic, reads that Vyshinsky was "doing what an ideal minister of justice would do if we had such a person

in Great Britain". That too was written in the mid-1930s.

Mr. Kingman Brewster, Professor of Law at Harvard, President of Yale, American ambassador to Britain, and now master-designate of the oldest Oxford college, proclaims that he is appalled and ashamed that nowhere in the United States could black revolutionaries expect a fair trial. And it was not a Soviet spokesman but C. P. Snow, guru of British and American intellectuals, who wrote that "in overall strategy the socialist economy has been a major success. That is, it has produced national wealth, not only in the Soviet Union, but in other socialist countries, very fast; almost certainly much faster than it could have done under capitalism".

More effective has been the persistent denigration in the West of the West's conduct towards the Third World. It was not a Soviet propagandist but Old Etonian Cyril Connolly who wrote in *The Sunday Times* under the heading "Black Man's Burden: It is a wonder that the white man is not more thoroughly detested than he is . . . in our dealings with every single country, greed masked by hypocrisy, led to unscrupulous coercion of the native inhabitants . . . cruelty, greed and arrogance, characterized what can be summed up in one word, exploitation . . .".

According to a leaflet distributed at Cambridge University a few years ago by a Third World pressure group, "We took the rubber from Malaya, the tea from India, raw materials from all over the world, and gave almost nothing in return". In reality, the British took the rubber and the tea to those countries, not from them, as the plants were taken there by the British in the 19th century.

Even when more restrained language is used, criticism of the West is often in the realm of fantasy. Shirdath Ramphal, Secretary General of the Commonwealth, charged the West in an address to the Trilateral Commission in March 1980 with responsibility for the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The reason was that more aid would have helped Afghanistan "to stand on its feet economically to grow as a nation with economic, social and political institutions stabilized against the erosions of poverty and so against pressure from without".

Afghanistan is one of the most backward countries of the world. To suggest that yet more aid from the West would have enabled it effectively to resist invasion is fantasy. As it was, Afghanistan resisted Soviet

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Added Incentives to the Karnataka Film Industry

Substantive increases in the amount of subsidy to the films made in Karnataka has been announced by the State Government from the 1st of JANUARY 1986. Full length colour feature films will get a subsidy of Rs. 2.50 lakhs and Black and White films Rs. 1.50 lakhs. In addition, Art and Experimental films will get Rs. 3.00 lakhs as subsidy.

Since 1966, Karnataka Government has given nearly Rs. 6.00 crores as subsidy to 656 films.

NEW AWARD :

Apart from the State awards for the best films, Artists, Directors, Technicians and Musicians, the State Government have instituted this year a special award of Rs. 1.00 lakh to the best Director in memory of the Late Shri S. R. Puttanna Kanagal.

TAX EXEMPTION :

Kannada films exhibited in theatres throughout the State are being given 50% exemption from payment of entertainment tax.

SHOOTING PERMISSION :

The Government have centralised and simplified the procedures in getting permission to shoot on locations.

FILM INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Based on the reports of the Expert Committees constituted for the purpose, the Government of Karnataka is formulating comprehensive plans for the development of the film industry in the State.

The Karnataka Government is a pioneer in providing subsidies and incentives for qualitative and quantitative development of the film industry in the State.

KARNATAKA INFORMATION

forces for much longer than the much more advanced Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

It is not in *Pravda* or *Izvestia* but in *The Guardian* that we read: "A quarter of the world's population lives, quite literally, by killing the other three-quarters". We read also of "social cannibalism which has reduced over three-quarters of mankind to beggary, poverty and death, not because they don't work, but because their wealth goes to feed, clothe and shelter a few idle classes in America, Europe and Japan . . . Money-mongers in London and New York and in other western seats of barons living on profit snatched from the peasants and workers of the world".

In the same vein, a prominent American clergyman, Professor Ronald Sider, writes: "It would be wrong to suggest that 210 million Americans bear sole responsibility for all the hunger and injustice in today's world. All the rich developed countries are directly involved . . . we are participants in a system that dooms even more people to agony and death than the slaves system".

Such fantasies are readily taken up by Third World politicians supported by the West, and are often advanced in publications or platforms provided by it. Kwame Nkrumah was, until his downfall, a very influential African leader, widely praised in the West who initiated the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Here are some of his characteristic utterances: "They (the colonialists) took our lands, our lives, our resources and our dignity . . . It was when they had gone and we were faced with the stark realities, as in Ghana on the morrow of our independence, that the destitution of the land after long years of colonial rule was brought sharply home to us".

In fact before the British there was not a single cocoa tree in Gold Coast Ghana, nor a network of roads and rail. When they left there was a huge cocoa acreage, all of it in African hands, as well as an effective system of transport.

The West further undermines its own position by exaggerating the importance of Third World countries of no strategic significance and with no economic or military power beyond that conferred on them by the West itself: witness countries such as Ghana and Tanzania.

While the West must resist Soviet attempts to seize real strategic vantage points we should, nevertheless, consider what can be done to make conditions less tempting and propitious for such moves.

We should systematically assist those Third World governments that promote a society to which the Soviet system has little appeal. This means, broadly, a society in which personal and legitimate property is

effectively protected, and in which individual economic initiative is given scope, including freedom to develop commercial contacts abroad.

But much the most important task is, alas, also much the most difficult. We should ask why, in recent decades, we have succumbed to totally unfounded feelings of guilt, accepted the most outrageous, evident and damaging falsehoods, and deferred to rulers who treat their people with contempt, brutality and even inhumanity, and who have no real power except that conferred on them by the West.

How have our faculties of simple observation, reflection and rational thought come to erode, even evaporate, amidst awe-inspiring advances in knowledge? It is as if some invisible monster had ravaged our self-confidence and our abilities.

These features of our culture have often been noted! Many diverse explanations—inevitably conjectural—have been offered, such as the unhinging effects of rapid change and the multiplicity of information and opinion that impinges upon, even envelopes, people; uncritical preference for remote information over direct experience; the growth of specialization; the loss of traditional religious belief and the rapid erosion of traditional values; the denial of personal responsibility under the impact of determinism; guilt born of affluence, coupled with disappointment that the unprecedented prosperity of recent decades has failed to yield satisfaction and happiness; and others as well.

Whatever the reasons, there is now an evident lack of poise and reflectiveness in the West which greatly affects the stance of its leaders and opinion-makers, both towards the Third World and the Soviet Union. We ought to think hard about the forces behind this since a society, however technically proficient, whose leaders are lacking in intellectual clarity and moral courage is not well placed to resist internal and external threats.

The changes suggested here may make a modest contribution to improvement in this complex realm. What can be expected, however, is that if the West regains clarity and self-confidence, it would improve relations with the Soviet Union.

Present and future Soviet leaders will know where they stand, and will be less tempted into adventures. And the West's new confidence may well effect the conduct of the Soviets towards the peoples under their control. Here lies the best hope of genuine East-West improvement.

Courtesy: *The Times* (London)

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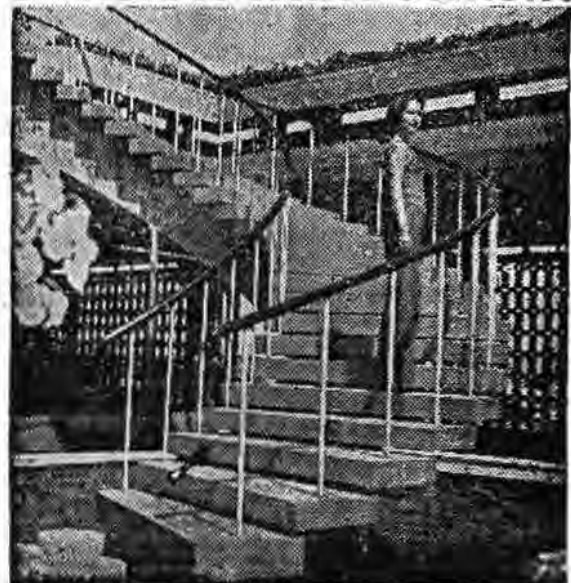
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The Origins Of Peaceful Coexistence

Peter Sager

MARXIST-LENINIST IDEOLOGY regards transition of the world to a Communist-ordered society as an inevitable process of history. According to Lenin, the duty of the Communist Party as the *avant-garde* of the proletariat was to encourage this process. Lenin gave such action greater importance than Karl Marx. "Give us an organisation of revolutionaries and we will lift Russia off its hinges" is a Leninist and not a Marxist statement.

When Lenin took over power in Russia in October 1917, the country was weakened by war. Lenin had hoped for the immediate outbreak of the proletarian revolution in all the industrialised nations. There seemed to be indications that this was possible, at least in Germany and Hungary.

But these hopes melted. Despite this, however, Lenin was able to overthrow the so-called counter-revolution in Russia and stabilise his regime politically. This period of War Communism brought the country to economic ruin. However, for Lenin the main problem was elsewhere. "Here we have the greatest difficulty of the Russian revolution, its greatest historical problem", he said; "it is necessary to redeem the international revolution by realising the transition from our revolution, which is a small revolution, to a world revolution".

In the same speech, on March 7th 1918, Lenin also explained: "If the European revolution is delayed, then the worst defeat looms before us, for we have no army, we have no organisation. We are not able to solve these two problems immediately. If a man does not understand how to accommodate himself to reality, if he is not willing to crawl through the dirt on his belly, then he is no revolutionary but only a babler".

Lenin's "Breathing Space"

Accommodation to reality, then, was the contemporary requirement. The opportunity for practising this emerged with the "breathing space" which was provided by the victory of Soviet power in Russia. In April 1918, Lenin further explained: "In the face of this situation, it is only the discord between the imperialist powers which gives us a real—rather than a paper—guarantee of peace. . . It can be understood that with such uncertain protection our soviet socialist state finds itself in an unusually vulnerable and critical condition. We must strain our strength to the utmost in order to take advantage of the situation pro-

vided for us by this breathing space to heal the horrible wounds which the war has inflicted and to lift the economy of our land. Without this, a serious increase in our capacity for defence cannot be considered".

The Leninist theory of the "breathing space" is the origin of peaceful coexistence. The first time he spoke of this was in an interview with a German newspaper correspondent, Karl Wiegand, on February 18th 1920, which was published three days later in the *New York Evening Journal*. In answer to a question about his plans in Asia, Lenin answered: "The same as in Europe, peaceful coexistence with the people, with the workers and peasants of all nations who awake to a new life—without capitalists". Here Lenin's conviction of the inevitability of a real war is hardly camouflaged. Even more clearly, speaking of the bourgeoisie, he said on May 5th 1920: "The inevitability and, considered in the perspective of world history, not at all distant, final victory of the proletarian revolution cannot be prevented".

With this theory, peaceful coexistence was also inevitable. But for Lenin this did not mean the stated or unstated will of two different and antagonistic systems to live and let live without one attempting to overthrow the other. On the contrary, peaceful coexistence was to be correlated with the "breathing space", which came from the fact that although the Soviet Republic was already too strong to be conquered by capitalism it was not itself yet strong enough to revolutionise the world.

In another important speech on the same subject on December 6th 1920, Lenin said: "As long as we have not taken over the entire world, as long as we are still weaker than the others militarily and economically, we must maintain the rule that we take efficient advantage of the discord and opposition amongst the imperialists. . . As soon, however, as we are strong enough to overthrow capitalism in its entirety, then we will immediately hang them".

Fooling the "Capitalists"

Whenever Lenin addressed a "capitalist audience", however, he hid these beliefs. On March 22nd, this is how he instructed the Soviet delegation which was about to set out for the Genoa Conference: "Strike out without fail every reference to an 'inevitable violent revolution and the inevitability of a bloody

struggle"... Strike out without fail the idea that our 'historical concept includes the use of force'... Strike out without fail the words that our historical concept stems from the inevitability of a new world war... Under no condition should we use such horrible words, for that would mean working into the hands of the enemy".

Today's concept of peaceful coexistence—the travesty of meaning associated with it in Soviet ideology—dates from this time. If a war is militarily impossible, then the war must be conducted politically. Just as the German philosopher, Clausewitz, defined war as the continuation of politics, Lenin understood politics as another form of war.

From Lenin's time on, and still today, peaceful coexistence in the Soviet vocabulary is identical with the international class struggle. It does not preclude ideological war, it remains one of the ways of approaching the aim of world revolution—only without using war in a military sense as its instrument.

Soviet foreign policy regularly propagates the idea of peaceful coexistence whenever it is in a period in which it has to argue from weakness. This is the case today, in the light of the Soviet Union's deep economic crisis.

Courtesy: Swiss Press Review

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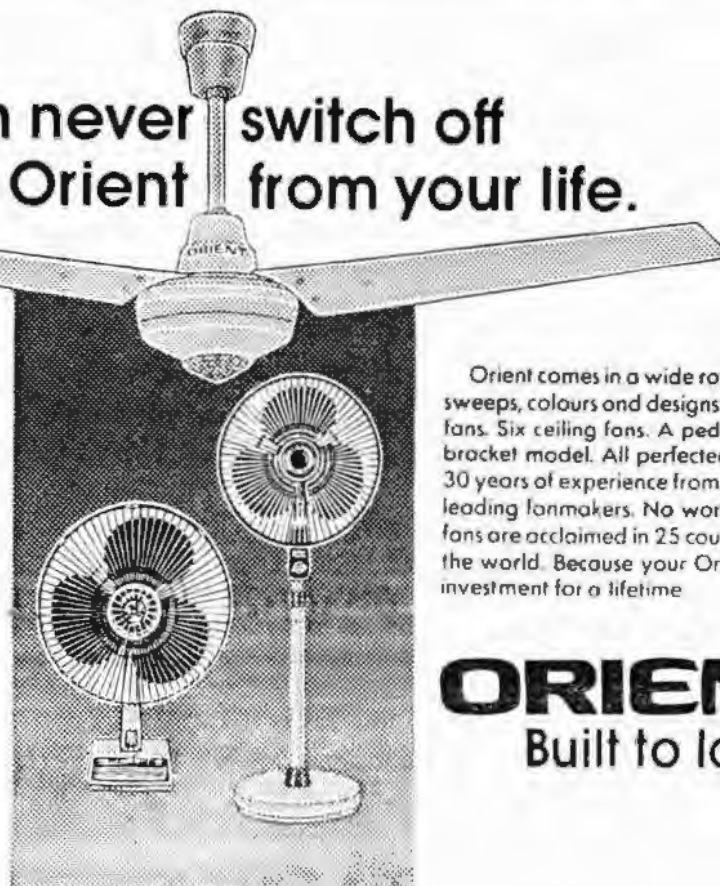
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Video or Film?

S. I. Clerk

THE American Video Programme on 3rd, 4th and 5th December 1985 at the Tata Theatre under the auspices of the Indo-US Sub-Commission on Education and Culture and organized by the Directorate General Doordarshan in cooperation with The National Centre For The Performing Arts, American the Film Institute and United States Information Service (USIS) was, in its way, quite an eye opener.

For one thing, the large 65' x 3½' (100" diagonal) screen on the stage and three monitors at different positions in the auditorium "serving" the large Tata Theatre auditorium (capacity of over 1000 audience) amply demonstrated that video today can easily cover large size auditoriums. As such, video screenings are no more restricted only to strictly limited audiences but may be viewed in regular theatres.

The Festival itself consisted of daily sessions from 8 to 9 p.m. The first day's screenings related to "The Expansion of Knowledge" and there were videos on topics of Children's Television, Education Television, Science and Medical Television and Video. The second day had the subject "The Advancement of Culture" and the topics covered were Traditional Performing Arts, Video Art, Music Video, Video and Computer Graphics, Television Commercials. And the last day concentrated on "The Spread of Information" with the specific topics: Corporate Video, Documentary and Non-Fiction Video, Technologies of Video.

The Festival obviously demonstrated how video is dominating the present day world of the visual in America. We in India too are more or less following the footsteps in the same direction. And hence the primary question: Can video totally replace the film?

In a way this is a natural question when one thinks of how the talkie has replaced the old silent films (except for some 'art' films) or how colour has virtually 'killed' black and white photography (both movie and still).

An obvious advantage of the video over the film is that the results are immediately available while in film one has to wait till it is processed in the lab and the rushes may be seen. This implies considerable savings in time and money and energy in the retakes. However, basically film still has certain advantages over the video. Thus, film permits fluid slow motion and/or time-lapse sequences because the speed (at

which it is shot) can be varied from a single frame a day to several thousand frames per second. Video usually has been restricted to the fixed 30 frames per second (film usually is 24 frames per second). Slow motion in video may be realized through playback and video time lapse involves 'heavy' editing. One could go on and on but in the process one may find oneself in a mire of all sorts of technicalities!

Incidentally, the word 'movie' originated sometime in 1906 or 1907 while motion pictures shot on and projected from film were in existence some two decades earlier. On the other hand, the word "television" was coined in Paris in 1900. Only some 25 years later recognizable images (moving) could be transmitted electronically. The word "video" was used only after television broadcasting was in existence. It is American; the English 'equivalent' would appear to be "vision."

No doubt these days there is quite a debate all over as between video and film for shooting movies. Some insist that all movies will be shot in video because it is economical. Some maintain that movie theatres will in the not so distant future use video projectors and get their 'films' via satellite. The 'extremists' insist that movie theatres will die away and people will watch movies at home only—just as it is said that soon, thanks to the computers, one need go neither to school/college/office but study/work only from one's own home.

However, a movie theatre has certain advantages over home viewing. Its pitch darkness, forcing one to be glued to one's seat and pay all attention to the images on the screen in their own way imply far more concentration and more enjoyment of the 'programme'. On the other hand, television viewing at home offers one the comfort of one's favourite chair, no need for expensive commuting (to the theatre, standing in queue for a ticket) or dressing up. But then there are also so many diversions in home viewing—visitors, telephone calls, snacks, *et al* and, of course, the commercial breaks during one's eagerly awaited favourite programme.

In all probability, we might land into something which offers advantages of video, film, home viewing, movie theatre. The present-day rapidly advancing technology can make all this possible.

BOOK REVIEWS

FREEDOM AND DISSENT: Essays in Honour of Minoo Masani, ed. by R. Srinivasan; Democratic Research Service; Pp. 248; Rs. 120.

PERSONAL FAMILIARITY with the subject of a book is not exactly conducive to objectivity while reviewing the book. In dealing with this volume of essays in honour of Minoo Masani, therefore, I will confine myself to commenting, albeit cursorily, on the rich and varied fare that the sponsors of the volume have been able to put together, without, of course, detracting from the compliments that are legitimately due to Masani for his yeoman service to Indian public life.

The essays cover as diverse a range of subjects as a volume of this kind can conceivably accommodate—liberalism, constitutional protection of the individual's rights, academic leadership, freedom of the mass media, populism in Indian politics, the duty to dissent, consumerism, the corrupting influence of foreign aid, international flow of information and state patronage of the arts. There are also, for good measure, a couple of anecdotal pieces on Masani by those who have had the privilege of working closely with him over the years, and a long, illuminating interview which Frits Bolkestein, the Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade, conducted with Masani some six years ago.

Arguably, the most dominant characteristic of Masani's life has been his willingness (some would say eagerness) to dissent—a trait that has not only won him more than his fair share of detractors, but also ensured his exclusion from positions in public life that he would have embellished as no one else would have. But, as Nani Palkhivala points out in his essay, "the duty to dissent is dictated by the realisation that in a democracy citizens have to practise obedience to the unenforceable" — a realisation that has, alas, always been at a discount in post-independence India.

Palkhivala's essay also addresses another important issue, viz. the persistence of unwisdom in government. Quoting Barbara Tuchman's pioneering study on the subject, the author avers that "governments act unwisely because politicians cannot admit error, they lust for power; they lack self-confidence and magnanimity; they are more interested in image than in substance; they rarely get the right information let alone know how to act on it." The consequences are there for all to see. "The history of the Republic of India for several years upto 1984 was a sorry chronicle of the follies of our administration," he says, and analyses

two of the most pernicious of these: constitutional fundamentalism, which allows the letter of the Constitution to be satisfied while burying its spirit fifty fathoms deep, and sterile socialism, which has all but destroyed enterprise and honesty in this country. Not everyone will, however, share Palkhivala's optimism about the new government's determination and ability to make a clean break with the sordid past.

In the area of freedom for radio and television, for instance, the optimism is far from justified. As Mehra Masani trenchantly observes in her essay, the continued reluctance of the government to loosen its grip on AIR and Doordarshan is "not in keeping with our claims to be a democratic state and the stand of the Rajiv Gandhi government is entirely out of step with the desire to take India forward into the 21st century." The same criticism can be made of Mr. Gandhi's attitude vis-a-vis the debate on the so-called 'new world information and communications order', a subject which Cushrow Irani discusses at some length in his contribution. "Unthinking endorsement of the positions taken under the pressure of the numerical majority of the Soviets and their allies is not worthy of (Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's) emerging reputation," says Irani, and not without reason.

Indeed, the persistent refusal of the new government to abandon the traditional pro-Soviet stance on international issues offers as good an example as any of the essentially *status quoist* nature of Rajiv Gandhi's policies. Minoo Masani, more than anyone else, has attempted to expose this dangerous tilt with a crusading zeal for years, and it is a pity, therefore, that the sponsors of the volume under review could not get someone to write on this subject which is so close to Masani's heart.

That criticism, of course, is not to detract from the essential worth of the book. Contributions from Soli Sorabjee, C. D. Narasimhaiah, F. A. Mehta, Nissim Ezekiel and Peter Bauer, among others, offer a delectable treat which the lover of freedom will find irresistible, the occasional laxity in proof-reading notwithstanding. All in all, a significant addition to the expanding body of literature on freedom.

—K. S. Venkateswaran

BROADCASTING AND THE PEOPLE by Mehra Masani; National Book Trust; Second Edition; 1985; Pp. 169; Rs. 13.50.

THE free flow of information through competing media is the precious lifeblood of all open societies. It ensures the feed-back from people to government

which is essential for stable government. Wilbur Schramm, a leading authority on the mass media observed that the mass media have four important functions viz., that of being a forum, a watchman, teacher and entertainer. In India the media developed without any consensus of what they were expected to do. Official pronouncements on radio and television frequently referred to their educative role, yet in practice they have rarely risen above providing mass entertainment to urban audiences. The time devoted to film music and popular films on both these media indicates that they are primarily a source of entertainment. Experts on mass communication in the 1960s spoke of the possibility of raising the level of public taste and of creating an informed public. In practice the broadcasting media have come perilously close to creating a mindless generation through the cretinisation of youth. Official control of radio and television not only ensured their high propaganda value in building up the image of the ruling party and specially of the Prime Minister but they also emphasize a fairly effective birth-control of creative ideas. The bureaucratic organisation of AIR and Doordarshan leave little scope for originality in arranging programmes or in experimenting in new ways. G. C. Awasthy in his *Broadcasting in India* (1965) observed about the status of the Station Director: "Standardization is not enforced merely on a few basic issues, but on every imaginable point, which means, there is no scope for initiative at the station. It will be difficult to find an organisation where more standardization and centralization have been enforced than in AIR and at such high cost."

Twenty years later the situation is probably the same. The Government of India has done no more than pay lip-service to the autonomy of the media. Even the Janata Government which promised autonomy and set up the Committee on Broadcasting under the chairmanship of B. G. Verghese prevaricated and shelved the question.

The second edition of Mehra Masani's *Broadcasting and the People* has ably and eloquently argued that the crisis in Indian broadcasting has been due to a total lack of any broadcasting policy. Decisions have been taken in this important area on grounds of expediency rather than with full understanding of the role the media could play in nation-building and development. Government has frequently succumbed to pressures. Mehra Masani observes "Before deciding on the technology to be used the service to be provided should have been clearly defined by those in authority so that the most appropriate technology could be chosen. In India the government was under pressure from the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO),

to sanction its plan for an Indian satellite (INSAT) to be launched even before any long-term and well-defined communication policy had been formulated. No wonder then that the TV services which were to be provided by INSAT were required to fit the technology instead of fulfilling our communication needs."

The need to introduce colour TV does not seem to have been examined from all aspects keeping in view its cost and other considerations. As Mehra Masani notes, colour TV has no special advantage over the black and white from the point of view of educational instruction. She observes that even in the U.S.A. (in 1984-85) the TV sets sold in black and white have been 35% of the total. In Western Europe 31% and in the rest of the world 65%. "The argument that even small countries have adopted colour TV requires to be considered. Why have these countries adopted colour TV? In Iran, the Shah of Iran introduced colour TV to cover the coronation of the Empress Farah. In Uganda, Idi Amin brought in colour TV at a cost of \$6 million to cover a meeting of the Organisation of African Unity and also to cover his most recent wedding in 1975. In Thailand it was introduced in a great hurry to cover a beauty competition. We, not to be outdone, started on colour TV in a hurry to relay the Asian Games."

One is compelled to conclude that the introduction of colour TV was inspired by the desire to eulogise the Prime Minister rather than to serve the needs of the country.

At the beginning of the 1960s the so-called 'Development Decade' there were high expectations as to what the media could do in the transformation of rural India. J. C. Mathur picturesquely described the media as *New Lamps for Aladdin* (1965). These expectations were utopian even then, considering the poor development of communication in the country. According to UNESCO a country needed 5 radio sets, 10 copies of a newspaper and 2 cinema tickets per hundred of the population to enable it to be a 'developing' country. By these modest criteria India was far below the UNESCO minima. Even today, as Mehra Masani noted, the radio reaches no more than 20% of the population and this mainly in urban India.

The role of the media in bringing about rural change has been inhibited by technical as well as socio-cultural factors. When community sets are provided the audience consists mainly of men and children, the women being excluded. The language and idiom of the broadcasts have ignored the linguistic variations that exist in every part of India. Mehra Masani rightly observes that although the role of the electronic media in bringing about changes in traditional rural

societies is limited they can be effective when they supplement and feed the inter-personal channels of communication. We still do not know when people change their ideas and consequently their ways of life but it is certain that they will not do so merely because urban elites tell them to do so. Here, as elsewhere, the experience of rural folk is an important factor. Perhaps the greatest single defect in AIR's rural programmes has been the absence of effective feed back. Audience research has been spotty and perfunctory. The chapter on Broadcasting for Rural Progress gives a comprehensive account of the problems in this area.

Broadcasting and the People bears on every page the author's wide experience with broadcasting. It is a book that deserves to be read by everyone interested in the role of the audio-visual media in our traditional society. It is critical of government official policies and provides a great deal for policy-makers to reflect upon. It is perhaps too much to expect Doordarshan to have it discussed by experts in one of its programmes! If I am asked to refer to one single comprehensive and balanced account of the experience of broadcasting in India I shall have no hesitation to mention Mehra Masani's book.

—S. P. Aiyar

THE FALL OF A SPARROW by Salim Ali; Oxford University Press; 1985; Pp. 260; Rs. 110.

BEFORE offering the many bouquets which this fascinating book deserves let us get rid of a couple of small brickbats (one of them a "left-handed" brickbat, anyway). A map or two would have assisted the reader who cannot pinpoint Tavoy and Uppsala, nor even Bamian and Garbyang. And a Family Tree of Alis, Tyabjis and related families would have helped the reader to keep his bearings among the various members of this highly distinguished flock as they fly in and out of the pages.

This book will appeal not only to the serious ornithologist and humble "bird-watcher", but also to the historian, the sociologist, all observers of the Common Featherless Biped, and to all those who love a good story and an amusing anecdote.

SA's autobiography, some parts of which have been painstakingly assembled after many decades, opens with his fledgling years in Bombay which (to the great loss of us all) has passed for ever: an uncrowded city of horse-drawn trams where 48 eggs could be bought for one rupee. We soon meet the sparrow who fell and gave the book its title. We read of Burmese days when SA was unwittingly laying the

foundations of his future life-work, meeting the first of the book's various colourful characters, and being permitted by an all-seeing Providence to fail as a businessman. A second fortunate failure was his inability to obtain an official appointment (although his political views and sturdy individuality would no doubt soon have parted from it).

1924 to 1929, despite the companionship of his ideally matched wife and the friendship of such personalities as Sarojini Naidu and Maulana Shauqat Ali, were years of insecurity. 1929 however brought the opportunity of studying abroad, and a benevolent destiny took him to Germany rather than to England. Here he met and studied under Prof. Stresemann, who became his gratefully acknowledged Guru.

After 1930, SA never looked back, and he regards the two decades 1930 to 1950 as the most productive period of his career. The Ornithological Survey of Hyderabad saw the beginning of a series of regional surveys which have made the world—and even SA's fellow countrymen—aware of India's immense avian treasures. About this time he came in contact with the great Hugh Whistler, who sent him a clear and comprehensive set of guidelines which are given in Appendix 1. The reader will have already noted SA's readiness to accept wise advice and help from any quarter, while never being deterred by any man's eminence from correcting an error of scientific claim or of civilised behaviour.

An "interlude" in the Nilgiris, where he met R. C. Morris (one of those strange British birds who turned their migration to India into permanent residence) prepared him for the Travancore-Cochin Survey which afforded him the greatest satisfaction of all his surveys. Operating from Bhawalpur State, he studied the bird life of the Rajasthan desert. Two years earlier, he had visited Afghanistan in the company of the dynamic eccentric, Col. Meinertzhagen, whose scientific ability must have far exceeded his judgement of human character. (His extraordinary opinions on the species *salimalius* are given with engaging frankness in Appendix 2).

In July 1939, an idyllic stay at Dehra Dun was abruptly terminated by his wife's tragic death from blood poisoning. Henceforth he made his permanent home on Pali Hill, Bombay, with his hospitable sister and brother-in-law.

During a rewarding but arduous trip to Mansarovar, described in Chapter 12, it was only SA's presence of mind which saved him from the attentions of an armed robber. Chapter 13 introduces that singularly lovable character Lok Wan Tho, whose memory is kept fresh after his untimely death, by innumerable superb

photographic studies and various generous donations.

An account of Flamingo City in the Rann of Kutch during the "peak rush" is followed by the story of how Bharatpur's Keladeo Ghana was transformed from a 4000-duck-in-a-day slaughterhouse into today's unique sanctuary—just in the nick of time, after enlisting help at the very highest level. An account of birding in Bastar State is remarkable chiefly for the courage of SA's "foolish" (yet unavoidable) night-long journey through a forest threatened by a man-eating tiger.

Chapter 17 tells of SA's "second love"—motorcycles—and of phut-phutting over parts of Europe after attending the prestigious International Ornithological Congress at Uppsala in Sweden. Chapters 18 and 19 deal with six individuals for whom SA holds a special regard. Foremost among these is his elder brother the late Hainid Ali ICS, for whom this reviewer has cherished an enduring regard ever since he had the privilege of serving as Hamidbhai's Personal Assistant more than 50 years ago.

In Chapter 20 the author reconciles the apparently opposing claims of scientific ornithology and bird preservation. Chapters 21 and 22 are about the books SA has written and the prizes he has won for what some of his own relatives considered a "misspent" life. Chapter 23 mentions a few of the thrills of bird-watching.

An Epilogue in which SA declares his articles of faith is followed by the two Appendices, of which the second contains extracts from some important letters which he has received—including two which commiserate his long-departed wife upon the reported death of her spouse! (The Japanese say that "he who by mistake is said to have died lives longer"! let us hope that this will continue to hold good in SA's case). The book is completed by a Glossary of Indian words, an Index, and more than 70 photographs and fascimiles.

The author's style is simple and direct, possessing that very "readability" at which he confessedly aims, enlivened by the humour for which he is so well-known, and spiced by occasional touches of malice which is never bitter save when directed against the selfish slaughter of our vanishing game.

The production shows the excellence which we expect of the Oxford University Press and any reader who wishes to spot the only two printing errors in the whole book may beat the bushes of pages 85 and 137.

—Thomas Gay

SNAKES AND LADDERS, THE DEVELOPMENT GAME by Jay Dubashi; Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; Pp. 290; Rs. 85.

THE colourful title of the book is more than matched by its contents. These, though they represent a compilation of work published as a column on current economic affairs in a prestigious journal, do not have the disjointed scrappiness of occasional "pieces" haphazardly collated. They are coherently placed together in six sections: "The Politics of Economics"; "Growth, Stagnation and Poverty"; "Plan, Planning, and Policies; Business and Businessmen"; "The Foreign Dimension"; "Men and Machines." Under each of these topic-heads, one obtains, as a bonus, the history of post-Independence Indian economics. Though Mr. Dubashi has not (to the best of my knowledge) been a formal member of the Swatantra Party, much of his economic thinking is very much in consonance with Swatantra philosophy. He is a vocal critic of the public sector; of woolly-headed Fabian Socialism, and the myth that monopolies are benign, so long as they are not in private hands. He is indeed one of the perceptive few, who realises that it is useless to expect an open liberal and modern society in an economy which functions as a highly centralised adjunct of the State. Indeed it is his thesis, that given our kind of Statist economy, the evolution of the Emergency was an inevitable political development.

Mr. Dubashi has a gift for the telling statistic: for example that Government owns 65% of the bread industry; 98% of coal; 85% of banking; 100% of life insurance; 32% of bulk drugs. It imports 76% of the total goods imported into India. It owns 70% of all national wealth. The entire offices of the Indian Public Sector in India, use 80% of the installed air conditioning in this country. Government uses 60% of all passenger cars on the roads. Every fourth air passenger works for government, and one out of every three passengers in the First Class of a train, is also a government servant.

Mr. Dubashi does not see any basic or inbuilt conflict between Agriculture and Industry. For example, he traces one myth to its logical conclusion. If we accept that the first requirement for sound agriculture is a water-supply source independent of rains, this would mean dams, electrical installations, turbines, these in turn necessitating cement and steel for construction, in an inter-related chain. On Gandhian economics, he feels that Gandhi formulated his economic theories without expert knowledge, and long before an industrial infrastructure had come into existence. On the political stances of various Parties, he opines

that all of them accept certain fundamental conditions of growth, and only differ in the emphasis given to each. Here, his first chapter and the introduction, are most telling. Apparently, when the Janata government came to power, and he was appointed Economic Adviser, he devised a Plan which involved more or less scrapping the Industrial Policy resolution of 1956. Although the Party had actually committed itself to de-centralisation in its Manifesto, the document was dumped, as unceremoniously as the author himself. Apparently, the eco-political scene in India, bears out the French refrain "*Plus C'est la change, plus c'est la meme chose.*" "The more it changes, the more it is the same." Another interesting theory propounded by the author, is that our planning process confuses production with productivity. Mere production in absolute terms, does not make for a larger national cake. Productivity does. But this involves getting the most efficient returns from the application of high technology to capital. He points out that if the Industrial Revolution had been stalled in England, because machines replaced workers and the steam engine overtook the stage coach, Britain would not have been the world leader it became. On the other hand, Britain today is falling behind even an Asian power like Japan, because its workers are misusing Union strength to hold back the march of needed modernisation.

The area of the book's greatest weakness, is the lack of Mr. Dubashi's own solutions for what he thinks has gone wrong. His analysis is always cogent, compelling, and provocative. But one needs to deduce what might be done by way of a corrective, through second-guessing his X-Rays of economic ailments. For instance, when he deals with modernisation, and productivity, it would be useful if he had suggested what is to be done between the time workers are thrown out of jobs while hi-tech is being introduced, and the creation of new jobs, when hi-tech has altered the pattern and pace of the economy. Since India has no social security such as Britain, the dole cannot cushion the effects of unemployment, in a population already burdened with surplus labour. In view of the fact that the Prime Minister intends to push hi-tech in a big way, the social effects of the policy and ways to minimise the hardship which will ensue in the initial stages, deserve the attention of all thinking people, like the author.

This apart, he has written a most illuminating and enjoyable book, refreshingly free from the jargon which is affected by expert writers on technical subjects. The book is, in its way, a literary delight. It is

strongly recommended even at its fairly steep publication price.

Louella Lobo Prabhu

SADAR-I-RIYASAT by Dr. Karan Singh; Volume 2 (1953-1967); Oxford University Press; pp. 162 Rs. 100.

COMPARED to the first volume of his autobiography which was absorbing, Dr. Karan Singh's second volume has come as a disappointment. This is more an account of his own activities, his inner development and of his relationship with his spiritual mentor—Sri Krishnaprem—than a story of the trials and tribulations of India during the period 1953-1967 crammed with many important events.

As the head of a strategic State and an active participant, he could have thrown some new light on the political events during this period. He has revealed nothing new or startling. His comments on these events and on our national leaders only conform to the generally held views about them. For instance:

1. Morarji Desai is rigid and self-opinionated.
 2. S. K. Patil was blunt and amusing.
 3. T. T. Krishnamachari was brilliant but cynical.
 4. Ashoka Mehta always looked a picture of misery.
 5. Krishna Menon was wily and mephistophelian.
- He was responsible for introducing an element of politicization into the army that had disastrous repercussions. Strong-willed, arrogant and suspicious to the point of paranoia, Krishna Menon fully exploited his closeness to Jawaharlal Nehru by pushing his own favourites in the Defence Ministry and, worse, in the Services. Krishna Menon and General Kaul between them had led us into a military and political disaster. The blatant manner in which General Kaul was boosted and factionalism introduced at all levels in the armed forces could not but have tragic repercussions.

Dr. Karan Singh is all praise for Nehru and Indira Gandhi. This is understandable as he has been waiting for long to seek re-admission to the Congress (I)!

One good and practical suggestion made by Dr. Karan Singh deserves serious consideration by our national parties. He has suggested that Jammu should be merged with Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh centrally administered as Jammu and Ladakh have been totally neglected by successive regimes in Kashmir.

—S. S. Bankeshwar

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There is urgent need to promote the acceptance of the values of freedom and dignity of the Individual among our people and specially among the young. The only hope lies in the efforts of voluntary organisations specifically dedicated to the promotion of these values. A long-term programme of sound popular education in the meaning, implications and responsibilities of freedom in all its aspects is necessary.

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