

A QUARTERLY OF LIBERAL IDEAS

Freedom First

January 1988

No. 396

Price

Rupees Five

Sardar Patel – A Re-appraisal

– Jayaprakash Narayan

The “Indianisation” of the Constitution

– B.K. Nehru

**The Essence of Democracy –
Not Majority Rule**

– Minoo Masani

The Urban-Rural Divide?

– V.I. Chacko

Rule by Districts

– M.V. Kamath

**The Theory of Development
and the Future**

– Amlan Datta

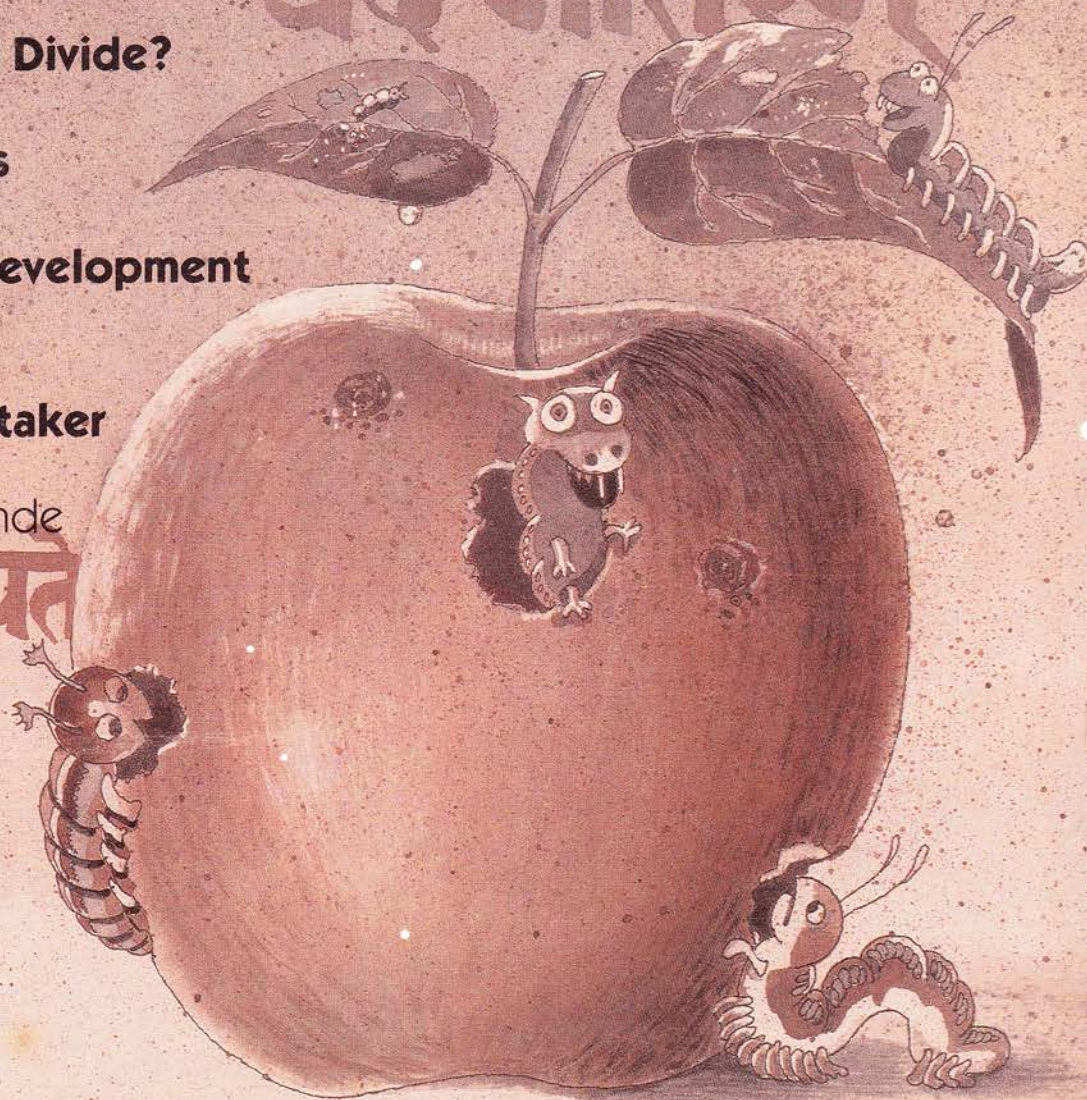
**A National Caretaker
Government**

– Arvind Deshpande

SWARAJ IS MY
BIRTH-RIGHT

वंदे मातरम्

सत्यमेव जयते



Freedom First

A Quarterly of Liberal Ideas

FOUNDER

Minoo Masani

EDITORS

S.V. Raju
R. Srinivasan

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Jehangir Patel

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Geeta Doctor

ADVISORY BOARD

Adam Adil
Sumant Bankeshwar
S.I. Clerk
Arvind Deshpande
Nissim Ezekiel
Aziz Madni
S.A.A. Pinto
Nitin Raut
Abe Solomon
Ashley Tellis

COVER & ILLUSTRATIONS BY

Vinay Chandorkar

LAYOUT

M.G. Talwadekar

PUBLISHERS

Democratic Research Service
4th floor, Maneckji Wadia Bldg.
127, Mahatma Gandhi Road
Bombay 400 001
Tel: 27 39 14

Published by J.R. Patel for the
Democratic Research Service and
printed by him at Parsiana Publications
Pvt. Ltd., 300 Perin Nariman Street,
Bombay 400 001

Typeset at Ace Fototypesetters, 6, Sailor
Building, 3rd floor, (Above Pyrkes
Restaurant), 373 D.N. Road, Bombay-1.

Freedom First Invites you to A Lifetime Association

A payment of Rs. 300 entitles you to receive copies of *Freedom First* for a lifetime.

It may not make much financial sense to you, for what we are offering means, in effect, a 15-year subscription. The only marginal benefit to you, is doing away with having to renew your subscription each year.

But the benefit to the cause of promoting the ideals and values of a free and liberal society is immense. We have been publishing *Freedom First* continuously since 1952. It has not always been easy working as we have been on less than a shoe string. We are confident that we can continue to do so for the next 30 years – **with your support.**

Your lifetime contribution will help us to place the journal on a reasonably firm financial position.

If you find *Freedom First* of value and its objective – to put the Liberal point of view across – worthy of support, won't you respond to our appeal and return the form below completed along with your cheque?

Incidentally for overseas subscribers the lifetime association would mean a one-time payment of \$ 100 or £ 60.

Lifetime Association

I would like to respond to your appeal for my lifetime subscription.

I enclose my cheque for Rs./\$/£ _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTAL CODE

--	--	--	--	--	--

SEND PAYMENT TO: *Freedom First*, 4th floor, Maneckji Wadia Building,
127, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 400 023, India.

Dear Reader

In the September 1952 issue of *Freedom First* we were privileged to carry an article by JP entitled "Incentives to Goodness" in which he rejected Marxism. It required intellectual courage of a very high order to publicly say 'I was wrong'. Over two decades later JP did another reappraisal – this time of that great Indian, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel – often called India's Bismarck. The occasion was the inauguration of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's "Sardar Patel Sabhagriha" in Cochin. JP was writing in a special issue of the *Bhavan's Journal* to mark the occasion. This, incidentally, is the *only* memorial to the Sardar in the whole of South India.

In reproducing that article (see page 5) we pay tribute not only to JP but to Sardar Patel whose 112th birth anniversary fell on October 31, 1987. The Sardar passed away at the age of 75 on 15th December 1950.

In his reappraisal, JP refers to Sardar Patel's political wisdom equally in matters of foreign policy and refers to a letter he wrote to Pandit Nehru warning him about Communist China and its imperialist ambitions in general and its annexation of Tibet in particular. Elsewhere in this issue we reproduce extracts from his letter of 7th November 1950 to which JP refers.

We have been fortunate in securing from the Leslie Sawhny Programme, various papers presented at a seminar in Bangalore in August last year on "Problems of Democracy in India". We publish four of these papers by Mr. B.K. Nehru, Mr. M.V. Kamath, Mr. Minoo Masani and Mr. V.I. Chacko. Readers would find much to ponder over what these four eminent men have to say.

With much reluctance we have been compelled to hold over two of our features: "Profiles of Indian Liberals" – this time on Karsondas Mulji – and Mr. Bhanu Pratap Singh's "The Rural Perspective." Both these will appear in April, 1988.

And finally our thanks to *The Statesman* for Mr. Masani's comments which are from his column in that daily.

The Editors

Contents

January 1988
No 396

Price
Rupees Five

Sardar Patel – A Re-appraisal	Jayaprakash Narayan	5
A National Caretaker Government	Arvind Deshpande	9
The "Indianisation" of the Constitution	B.K. Nehru	11
The Essence of Democracy – Not Majority Rule	Minoo Masani	15
Rule by Districts	M.V. Kamath	19
The Urban-Rural Divide?	V.I. Chacko	23
The Theory of Development and the Future	Amlan Dutta	29
The Barbaric 'Sati Ustav'	S.S. Bankeshwar	35
Forward – Towards the 21st Century	Louella Lobo Prabhu	37
PLUS: Joseph Brodsky – A Note by Nissim Ezekiel and Cabbages & Kings, The Masani Viewpoint, From the Foreign Press and Book Reviews		

**Freedom
First**
A Quarterly of Liberal Ideas

Freedom First wishes its readers a Happy New Year

WITH MANY VOICES

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

Interestingly terrorism has brought about industrial peace in Punjab. There have been no strikes, lockouts, or retrenchments during the period.

Frontline, October 3

There can be few things more absurd in Indian politics than the sight of Rajiv Gandhi and V.P. Singh competing for the leftist label.

India Today, September 30

...the English are batty. They actually *practise* democracy instead of enshrining it in a Constitution like we do. Perhaps that's why they don't have a constitution.

Anil Dharker, *The Sunday Observer*, October 18

The Rajput, it is said, wears his arrogance like a caste mark.

Times of India, October 4

Herbert, to be immortal, your speeches don't have to be eternal.

Mrs Humphrey to Senator Hubert Humphrey, *Indian Express*, October 4

The kickback man

They seek him here, they seek him there
 The Indians, they seek him everywhere.
 Is he a foreigner, NRI, or is he of Desi clan
 That darn, elusive kickback man

Brig.(Retd) N.B. Grant, *The Sunday Observer*, October 4

For their own sakes and for the rest of the world,
 Americans need to tighten their belts in 1988

The Economist, December 19

The former Philippine president, Mr. Ferdinand Marcos used to send his wife Imelda on a special mission to Moscow when he wanted to screw more money out of the Americans. President Zia, whose anti-Russian sentiments are strong, would not of course adopt such crude tactics. Would he?

The Economist, November 28

This (Bihar) is the world's first genuine Marxist State. It is the only place where the State has really withered away.

Mark Tully, *Listner*, August 13

People complain that the vulgar newspapers place undue emphasis on sex and crime. Well they are the only things which happen in urban society.

Auberon Waugh, *The Spectator*, October 10

Here is a Prime Minister who in thirty three months has changed his Cabinet twenty three times.

Arun Shourie, *Express Magazine*, October 25

...the politicians in India have come to regard the public sector as a kind of socialist *Kamadhenu* dedicated solely to their personal benefit.

T.C.A. Srinivasa Raghavan, *Indian Express*, November 28

Charging uneconomic prices and maintaining uneconomic labour forces becomes the proof of socialist practice. The Congress, so far, has been the main beneficiary of this technology.

T.C.A. Srinivasa Raghavan, *Indian Express*, November 28

Now we are having the experience of a Harvard man presiding over the department of personnel. Only those trained by Harvard scholars now stand a chance of getting senior positions.

A senior South Block Mandarin, *The Week*, November 29

We have enough religion to hate one another but not enough to love one another

Nani Palkhivala, *Hindustan Times*, August 5

OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

Two Great Indians

Two great Indians, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Chakravarti Rajagopalachari died in December. The Sardar on December 15, 1950 and Rajaji on December 25, 1972. These two men who had so much in common were not as close to one another during their lifetime. Had they been, post independent India's history could perhaps have taken a different and happier course. The Sardar supported Dr Rajendra Prasad for President, while Nehru rooted for Rajaji. The strong man that he was the Sardar had his way and Rajaji returned to Madras. Less than a decade after Sardar Patel's demise, Rajaji founded the Swatantra Party.

Sardar Patel would have chuckled from the heavens, for the Swatantra Party's policies were a continuation of the Sardar's and opposed to the ruinous policies of Mahatma Gandhi's heir - Pandit Nehru.

Such are the ironies of politics, of history itself.

Both men were not given to ostentation. They lived simple lives neither left any patrimony other than their ideas and the example of their lives. They did not need swarms of security men to protect them, nor did they create a distance between themselves and the people.

They were alas, the last of the Gandhians whom Gandhiji did not find as worthy as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to be named 'successor'.

We, the generations that followed, are still paying for that sad lapse in judgement.

SVR

"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



Greetings Cards as a mark of austerity in the context of the extensive drought prevailing in the country. All have remarked upon the ridiculousness of this gesture particularly because during the past few months our government has not been noted for any restraint in its spending and it is not as though the drought struck the land all of a sudden.

What is surprising is that none around the political decision-makers seem to have seen the incongruity of all these gestures of government but became privy to what certainly are indefensible patterns of public expenses - whether it be financing expensive pointless *utsavs*, specially designed planes to attend international conferences, holidays in exotic and distant islands or cabinet meetings in Game Sanctuaries. The Mahatma, no less than Rajaji, Patel and Nehru (inspite of his aristocratic tastes) practised a sense of restraint. While we do not expect the epigoni of Jawaharlal to have the austere habits of the Mahatma, we surely expect his colleagues to indicate their disapproval by keeping away from such vulgar ostentatious exhibitions. If anything it indicates a distancing of the political leadership from the social realities of the *praja* in whose name they rule. It needs a sense of integrity to say that one represents a poor country and therefore one's public image ought to reflect this reality. It is this that distinguished people as different as Lincoln and Truman from the present power holders in Delhi.

to a swoop on nearly a hundred people all of whom have been incarcerated under the Internal Security Act by which they can be detained without trial for an indefinite period. The excuse of the government has been that this has been done mainly to arrest the deterioration of the relations between the Chinese and the Malays. Most of the detainees have been critical of Prime Minister Mahathir. The UMNO consensus which gave a unique stability to that country is obviously under very heavy strain. Since many of them are critical of the government it is believed that the step is mainly to intimidate the opposition.

The Government, it is feared is caving in to the demands of the *Bhumi-putra* and its policies have alarmed the ethnic minorities, particularly the Chinese. For instance, it wants to promote non-Chinese teachers in Chinese-medium schools which led to loud protests. In fact there is a fear that these schools at the primary level may not have the government guarantee for continuance that they had in earlier times. Also, there is a new economic plan to enhance the corporate capital holdings of the *Bhumiputra* to 30% by 1990, while now it is less than 20%.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister ordered the shut down of newspapers critical of the government and these are regarded as a blow to the freedom of the press. The press in the country is generally subservient to the government though in recent months they had been giving space to the activities and pronouncements of the opposition.

Will the lights go out in Malaysia?

RS

Away with Greetings Cards!

The Press has commented extensively upon the decision of our Prime Minister not to send individually, New Year

Anti-democratic forebodings in Malaysia

The last two months have witnessed the Government of Malaysia resorting

Tibet's Annexation – Sardar Patel's Warning

The following is an extract from Sardar Patel's letter of November 7, 1950 to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru asking the latter to beware of Communist China's expansionist designs following China's annexation of Tibet. But then those were the days of Hindi-Chini bhai bhai, when Nehru swallowed Chinese protestations of friendship, hook, line and sinker only to be sadly disillusioned 12 years later. The Sardar's warning proved prophetically true and India was dragged into the disastrous 'war' with Communist China. Readers will remember President Radhakrishnan's characterisation of our China policy as one of "credulity and negligence."

The full text of the letter can be read in Volume 10 of Sardar Patel's Correspondence, edited by Mr. Durga Das and published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad.

It is impossible to imagine any sensible person believing in the so-called threat to China from Anglo-American machinations in Tibet. Therefore, if the Chinese put faith in this, they must have distrusted us so completely as to have taken us as tools or stooges of Anglo-American diplomacy or strategy. This feeling, if genuinely entertained by the Chinese in spite of your direct approaches to them, indicates that even though we regard ourselves as friends of China the Chinese do not regard us as their friends. With the Communist mentality of "whoever is not with them being against them," this is a significant pointer, of which we have to take due note. During the last several months, outside the Russian camp, we have practically been alone in championing the cause of Chinese entry into the U.N.O. and in securing from the Americans assurances on the question of Formosa. We have done everything we could to assuage Chinese feelings, to allay its apprehensions and to defend its legitimate claims in our discussions and correspondence with America and Britain and in the U.N.O. In spite of this, China is not convinced about our disinterestedness; it continues to regard us with suspicion and the whole psychology is one, at least outwardly, of scepticism, perhaps mixed with a little hostility. I doubt if we can go any further than we have done already to convince China of our good intentions, friendliness and goodwill. In Peking we have an Ambassador who is eminently suitable for putting across the friendly point of view. Even he seems to have failed to convert the Chinese. Their last telegram to us is an act of gross discourtesy not only in the summary way it disposes of our protest against the entry of Chinese forces into Tibet but also in the wild insinuation that our attitude is determined by foreign influences. It looks as though it is not a friend speaking in that language but a potential enemy.

In the background of this, we have to consider what new situation now faces us as a result of the disappearance of Tibet, as we knew it, and the expansion of China almost up to our gates. Throughout history we have seldom been worried about our north-east frontier. The Himalayas have been regarded as an impenetrable barrier against any threat from the north. We had a friendly Tibet which gave us no trouble. The Chinese were divided. They had their own domestic problems and never bothered us about our frontiers. In 1914, we entered into a convention with Tibet which was not endorsed by the Chinese. We seem to have regarded Tibetan autonomy as extending to independent treaty relations. Presumably, all that we required was Chinese counter-signature. The Chinese interpretation of suzerainty seems to be different. We can, therefore, safely assume that very soon they will disown all the stipulations which Tibet has entered into the past. That throws into the melting pot all frontier and commercial settlements with Tibet on which we have been functioning and acting during the last half a century. China is no longer divided. It is united and strong. All along the Himalayas in the north and north-east, we have on our side of the frontier a population ethnologically and culturally not different from Tibetans or Mongoloids. The undefined state of the frontier and the existence on our side of a population with its affinities to Tibetans or Chinese have all the elements of potential trouble between China and ourselves. Recent and bitter history also tells us that communism is no shield against imperialism and that the Communists are as good or as bad imperialists as any other. Chinese ambitions in this respect not only cover the Himalayan slopes on our side but also include important parts of Assam. They have their ambitions in Burma also. Burma has the added difficulty that it has no McMahon

Line round which to build up even the semblance of an agreement.

Chinese irredentism and Communist imperialism are different from the expansionism or imperialism of the Western Powers. The former has a cloak of ideology which makes it ten times more dangerous. In the guise of ideological expansion lie concealed racial, national or historical claims. The danger from the north and north-east, therefore, becomes both communist and imperialist. While our western and north-western threat to security is still as prominent as before, a new threat has developed from the north and north-east. Thus, for the first time, after centuries, India's defence has to concentrate itself on two fronts simultaneously. Our defence measures have so far been based on calculations of a superiority over Pakistan. In our calculations we shall now have to reckon with Communist China in the north and in the north-east, a Communist China which has definite ambitions and aims and which does not, in any way, seem friendly disposed toward us.



Sardar Patel — A Re-appraisal

Jayaprakash Narayan

Rajaji once unburdened his heart by publicly confessing to a wrong he had done to Sardar Patel. I find myself in a similar situation: the dominant feeling within me today is one of self-reproach, because during his life-time I was not merely a critic but an opponent of the Great Sardar. For his leadership in the Struggle for Independence I had great admiration and respect. I also knew that Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel loved India with all his mind and heart. To him, everyone from Kashmir to Kerala was his kinsfolk. He worked and lived for the *Yogaskshema* of all Indians.

An Impeccable Commander

And yet we Congress Socialists, who wished to see India take to the path of Socialism, considered the Sardar a "reactionary" who was and would remain a defender and supporter of Capitalism. The Sardar's reason for diappearance with us was that as a Marxist I criticised Gandhiji's views and opposed them although I must say that even then I respected him to the point of reverence. To some extent we enjoyed Jawaharlal Nehru's support. But Nehru never shared the Congress Socialist platform and never lent his support to any important resolution or amendment that we moved in the Congress Working Committee or the All-India Congress Committee.

Gandhiji's personality partook of a divine extraordinariness. Although we, i.e. Acharya Narendra Deva, Achyut Patwardhan, Ram Manohar Lohia, Minoo Masani, Asoka Mehta, myself and other socialists hardly ever missed an opportunity of criticising him, yet because he found our criticism innocent of ill-will and unmotivated by considerations of self-interest, Gandhiji always gave us the respect due to freedom fighters, and by his revolutionary deeds, and more so, by his love and affection, he strove to win us over. That was why whenever Gandhiji gave the call and led the struggle for Independence, we Congress Socialists were ready to follow him as loyal soldiers in spite of our reservations with regard to non-violence.

So long as the reins of the country were in the iron hands of the Sardar, the "progressives" — the socialists and communists as also the leftists in the Congress — all complained that Sardar Patel made it impossible for Jawaharlal Nehru to change the economic and social structure of the country. But with the passing away of Sardar Patel in 1950, Nehru had 13 to 14 years to prove himself. But apart from verbal changes in the professed aims of the Congress, little progress was made towards socialism. The rich have become richer and the poor poorer and unemployment has mounted.



Jayaprakash,

On such occasions we unhesitatingly accepted the Sardar as our General.

The Congress Socialist Party was not yet born when Vallabhbhai Patel brilliantly organised the Bardoli Satyagraha. As the *Sardar* of that unique struggle, we had great regard for him. We knew that he was an impeccable commander who would not compromise on any terms with British Imperialism. Still, because of our different ideologies, the gulf between us remained. We continued to regard him as a supporter of Capitalism and a foe of Socialism.

After Independence, the adroitness with which the Sardar integrated the various Princely States with India, peacefully and with the consent of the rulers, was something unique. No leader but the Sardar could have pulled off the feat. Even a leading "revolutionary" like former First Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party and Prime Minister Nikita Krushchev could not help admiring this. "You Indians are wonderful people. You have liquidated the Princely States without liquidating the Princes" he remarked during his visit to India in 1955.

The intransigence of the rulers of Hyderabad and Junagadh did give the country some anxious moments. But acting on the principle that only the people of a State could decide whether the State was to accede to India or Pakistan or was to remain independent of both, Sardar Patel brought about their accession with the consent of the people concerned and in the teeth of opposition by the rulers.

The Kashmir issue alone was somehow left to Pandit Nehru, which proved to be unfortunate for the Nation. Because of Panditji's mishandling, the issue no longer remained an internal affair, as it should have been but smouldered as an international issue in the United Nations and its Security Council, making it possible for Pakistan to rake it up every now and then. Many a veteran leader in the country maintains that had the matter been handled by the Sardar

(and it fell within his domain) he would have found a satisfactory solution, and thus prevented its becoming a perennial headache for us and a cause of bitterness and animosity between India and Pakistan.

Kashmir and Tibet

How the Sardar would have solved the problem only those who were very close to him could say. Or perhaps even they could not, for the Sardar might not have disclosed his mind or, may be, practical-minded as he was, he might have thought it pointless to apply his mind to the problem until he was called upon to handle it. Once he came to grip with it, he would have doubtless studied all aspects of the problem and come to a decision after deep deliberation.

From the time I threw myself wholly into the Independence Struggle (this dates back to 1931, although in response to Gandhiji's call for Non-cooperation I had boycotted the Patna College in 1920-21 and later gone away to the U.S.A. for further studies), I had been told that Jawaharlal was con-

sidered an expert on foreign affairs in Congress circles. But two or three years ago I read in the *Bhavan's Journal* founded by Shri K.M. Munshi, a letter that the Sardar had written to Jawaharlal Nehru in November 1950 in connection with Tibet and it forcefully brought home to me the man's greatness. I was struck by Vallabhbhai's matchless mastery even of subjects in which he was not considered an expert. Looking back at the history of the past few years, I am convinced that had Jawaharlal Nehru heeded the Sardar's advice, China would not have become the menace to us that it is. As the Tibet issue came up before the Political Committee of the U.N., the then Indian representative, the Jam Saheb, was instructed to give the baseless assurance that India was convinced that China and Tibet would peacefully settle the issue between themselves. When India, which had close ties with Tibet, talked in this vein, it was only to be expected that other nations would not bother about the issue.

History is witness to the heavy price India has had to pay for Nehru's unwar-

ranted assurance. No one can say with certainty how the U.N. would have addressed itself to the problem in the absence of such an assurance. Considering the situation as it then was — China's involvement in Korea, her comparative weakness and the degree of her national unification and integration — I feel that with a little backing from the world community, the successor to the 13th Dalai Lama, who had proclaimed Tibet's complete independence on the morrow of Sun Yat-Sen's revolution, would not have been forced to flee his homeland and seek asylum in India; the Chinese army would not be sitting atop the roof of the world; and the Tibetan people would have been spared the pain and suffering inflicted on them by the Chinese dictatorship.

It is undeniable that there were periods in history when Tibet was a part of the Chinese Empire, but they were temporary instances of imperialist annexation. Those who hold that China has acquired the right to treat Tibet as an inalienable part of the country by virtue of imperialist aggression and annexa-

Raymond's Suitings

The ^{Best} guide to the well-dressed male



tion are either ignorant of Tibetan history or are afraid to criticise the big powers. Tibet was one of the subjects on which I had strong differences with Jawaharlal. All that has now passed into history. If I mention it, it is only to throw into bold relief the Sardar's foresight.

An Offer to the Congress Socialists

I remember an incident which was for me an important and unforgettable experience. India had been partitioned and Sardar Patel was the Home Minister and Minister for Indian States. Congress Socialists had not yet left the Congress. It was either August or September 1942. The Sardar was housed in Birla House, where Bapu was also staying. I had gone there to meet Gandhiji. While coming out of his room, I ran into the Sardar's, who affectionately put his hand on my shoulder and said: "The part that you played in the 1947 Movement has wiped out all differences between you and me", and added: "what do you Congress Socialists expect the Congress Governments to do? I should like to know if you have any specific programme that you want us to follow."

I realised the seriousness behind the Sardar's offer. Later I discussed the matter with Acharya Narendra Deva, Achyut Patwardhan, Ram Manohar Lohia and other colleagues. We formulated a programme in the form of a policy statement and sent it to the Sardar. Copies were sent also to Panditji and the Congress President, Acharya Kripalani; and of course, to Bapu. So far as I remember, some discussions of the document took place in Bapu's presence. Jawaharlalji did not evince much interest. The Sardar was not present, but it was apparent that he found it impractical and academic. Later, the matter was discussed with Acharya Kripalani. But nothing tangible emerged. In retrospect, I can unhesitatingly say that the document was a sample of bookish socialism and had little relation to the burning problems our country was faced with. It did, however, contain some pragmatic and practicable suggestions which could be accepted by the Congress Government. But on the whole that plan was undeniably bookish and it widened the gulf between us and the Sardar.

So long as the reins of the country were in the iron hands of the Sardar, the "progressives" – the socialists and communists as also the leftists in the Con-

gress – all complained that Sardar Patel made it impossible for Jawaharlal Nehru to change the economic and social structure of the country. This I learnt from some responsible Ministers. But with the passing away of the Sardar in 1950, Nehru had 13 to 14 years to prove himself. But, apart from some verbal changes in the professed aims of the Congress, little progress was made towards socialism, as is plain for everybody to see. The rich have become richer and the poor poorer and unemployment has mounted. Those who had voluntarily suffered privation and spent their youth behind bars succumbed to the lure of power and a life of ease and comfort. Nehru himself chose to shift from 17, York Road (which was by no means a small place) to the palatial house of the erstwhile Commander-in-Chief re-named 'Teen Murti'. Nehru maintained that he did so to maintain the "dignity of State".

What Price 'Dignity of State'?

At a meeting with him in December 1947, I asked Nehru if it behoved the Prime Minister of a poor country to live in a fabulous palace. I reminded him that on his return from a visit to the U.S.S.R., he had written in his book with obvious admiration that the great leader Lenin lived with his wife and sister in a two-room flat in the Kremlin. Nehru replied, rather irrelevantly, that the Russian Ambassador, who had come to see him a few days back, had arrived in a magnificent limousine flanked by two equally grand limousines. I protested that Russia was now a developed country and a big power but India was still in an early stage of development as Lenin's Russia, and that pomp and show ill became our national leaders. But the discussion came to an abrupt end when Nehru recalled a facetious remark by Sarojini Naidu. Sarojini Naidu, a born jester, had once humourously

remarked that "it takes Birla's millions to keep Gandhi in poverty". This naturally silenced me and I never raised the question with Jawaharlal again. But the consequences of that initial mistake can be seen in the ostentatious pomp and grandeur of our rulers which mock at the millions of wretched dwellings in the name of the "dignity of State".

As compared with the Prime Minister's mansion, the Sardar's official residence (No.1, Aurangzeb Road) was modest, though he was not a socialist. If Jawaharlalji had not been so obsessed with the "dignity of State", and had he not set the example, the Sardar and his other Cabinet colleagues might have followed Gandhiji's advice and lived in much smaller houses. The large mansions of British days could then be utilised for public purposes. The ministerial grandeur of Nehru's making has had a snow balling effect. It has done immense harm to a poor country and has created an impenetrable barrier between the rich and the poor.

The Great Organiser

During his tenure, the Sardar kept a watchful eye on the Congress organisation, the Congress Ministries and also on the Ministers' conduct. He put down with an iron hand whatever corruption he found. His organisational skill was unmatched and he was not unfamiliar with political manoeuvres. But the starkly immoral means that have been employed today for office and power were impossible in his days. He was an extraordinarily good judge of men. He favoured the deserving ones. The corruption and unabashed pursuit of selfish ends, which have become today, in the words of Vinoba, the accepted social code, he would not have tolerated. He knew the value of office and power but he knew too, the limits of compromise with idealism for the sake of these. Today no limits are recognised.

Nehru too held to the tradition for a few years. But because his hold over the Congress organisation was not as great as the Sardar's, he turned a blind eye to proliferating opportunism, immorality and corruption. Not that he liked them, but he often condoned unethical conduct on the plea that if one was a capable worker or an able administrator, his other faults should be overlooked. Lal Bahadurji, during his short spell of Prime Ministership, strove to remove those who were known to be corrupt. It



is possible that if he had been spared a few more years, Lal Bahadurji would have curbed the rampant defections, floor crossings, power of money, particularly black money, rabid casteism, etc., which are the bane of present-day politics. The disease has been allowed to assume dangerous dimensions. When Gangotri itself is poisoned, the waters of the Ganga are bound to be contaminated right up to Gangasagar. As the Bible says: "When the Salt loses its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?"

Administrator Without Peer

Vallabhbhai Patel is greatly admired for his administrative ability, but I feel that in offering certain privileges to I.C.S. personnel he did not take enough precautions to ensure that the newly-constituted I.A.S. should not be infected with the ills of the I.C.S., their mental make-up, their way of working and their attitude towards the people. Still, I believe that if the Sardar had lived longer he would have moulded the Central and State administrations in a fashion that things would not have come to such a sorry pass. Right from the Appleby Report to the Hanumanthaiya Report, there has been no dearth of recommendations for administrative reforms. But all the reports of the Committees or Commissions have been shelved and no major change has been introduced. Some top administrative officers are doubtless honest, capable and patriotic. But the 'Steel Frame' within which they have to work and the tradition they have to uphold, not to speak of the obstreperous interference by politicians in day-to-day administration, make it extremely doubtful if we shall ever be able to build up a cadre of administrators who are fearless, independent, dedicated and friends of the masses. It is therefore but natural to remember the Sardar.

During our struggle for freedom, giving vent to our yearning for welding the whole of India into a well-knit political entity under one Central Authority, we always wistfully used the alliteration "Kashmir to Kerala". As I have mentioned, the master-architect who translated this dream of the ages into reality with superb statesmanship and consummate skill, so silently, swiftly and without bloodshed — in less than three years — was the Indomitable Sardar.

This is undoubtedly an unsurpassed accomplishment in the history of not

only India but of the whole world. Never before in our long and chequered history of over 5,000 years, not even under Samrat Vikramaditya, Akbar the Great or Ashoka the Great was India so transformed and a third dimension of administrative cohesion given to her ageless cultural and geographical unity.

Much has been written about the Sardar's personality and life, but the memory of his extraordinary qualities is getting dim. It is therefore in the fitness of things that the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, of which he was one of the founders, has over the years taken concrete steps to perpetuate the sacred memory of the Sardar.

Honouring the Sardar

In 1962, the Bhavan set up a full-fledged Engineering College in his memory. In his inaugural address, Jawaharlal Nehru hailed it as a fitting "working memorial" to a great *Karma yogi*. It was significant that, though not keeping fit, Panditji specially flew to Bombay for the purpose.

During the Sardar Centenary Year in 1974, the Bhavan dedicated to the Sardar, a College of Mass Communications and Management and a Hall in the Delhi.

As there is no suitable memorial to the Sardar in South, I am very glad that the Bhavan is now dedicating a modern *Sabhagriha* in its Cochin complex to the memory of the Great Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who, as Rajaji had said, was Laxmana to Gandhiji.

I can do no better than conclude this reappraisal by quoting the eloquent and moving tribute which Jawaharlalji had paid him in the Indian Parliament: "History will record Sardar Patel's services in many pages and call him the builder and consolidator of the new India and say many other things about him. By many of us he will perhaps be remembered as a great captain of our forces in the struggle for freedom and as one who gave us sound advice both in times of trouble and in moments of victory; a friend and colleague and comrade on whom one could invariably rely as a tower of strength which revived wavering hearts when we were in trouble".

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was greater than his deeds and truer than his surroundings. When will come such another?

**trusted by
generations;
tested by time**

ACC

cement



THE ASSOCIATED CEMENT COMPANIES LIMITED

A National Caretaker Government

Arvind Deshpande

A Plea for A National Government

Deeply concerned by the continuing political stalemate and the crisis faced by our country, we are making an appeal to the President of India as also to our fellow citizens to give serious thought to the proposal for setting up of a National Government to overcome the current crisis.

It is evident that we now have a Government at the Centre which has lost much of its credibility and moral legitimacy and will find it increasingly difficult to solve the problems of drought, terrorism, communalism and general law and order.

The dilemma our people face is that they can elect a Government but cannot force it to work honestly and efficiently. It was proved in 1974 and is being proved now that a party that

has a large majority does not necessarily provide stability. Though limited in importance when it comes to large national contours, elections in our country have continued to prove impotent in shaping public affairs. In fact they are becoming increasingly negative in nature i.e. they are more a vote against than a vote for. People may vote decisively but parties, whether winners or losers, interpret the vote in ways that have little to do with the people's verdict.

Before our people lose faith in the vote itself, we must search for a solution. And the only solution, if we wish to avoid a tragic repetition of the Emergency, is to install a National Government for a short period of six months and then have a fresh election. Such a National Government

could include eminent persons from outside political parties.

This interregnum would also provide the necessary hope for the people and the time for sensible politicians across party lines to think for the country and work out a new alignment of forces. It is, therefore, for the President and right thinking people to insist on a National Government between now and the next election. This alone will provide hope and continuity to our Democracy.

S.S. Bankeshwar, Arvind A. Deshpande, Nissim Ezekiel, Kekoo Gandhi, V.B. Kamath, M.S. Kirloskar, M.V. Kamath, M.R. Masani, Manohar Malgonkar, Madhu Mehta, N.P. Nathwani, Babubhai J. Patel, D.N. Patodia, M.A. Rane, S.V. Raju, J.D. Sethi, (Dr.) M.K. Vaidya.

Writing in *The Indian Express*, of August 2, 1987, Mr. Ashis Nandy, one of our most perceptive social scientists and commentators observed:

"The Iron Law of Indian Politics, operating since the late 1960's and likely to operate through the 1990's, specifies that (1) victories in national elections will always tend to be decisive; (2) the electoral support base of the victorious will always tend to shrink in about two and a half years, give or take six months; (3) each government will go out discredited, if not in disgrace and (4) either the opposition or a section of the ruling party in the garb of opposition will capture power in the next election to begin the cycle all over again."

Mr. Nandy further says that in Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's case the two and half year honeymoon is now over and during the dreaded second half, nothing seems to go right. He predicts that "the hysteria in Indian public life will increase, there will be state sponsored xenophobia and ultra-nationalism which may even find expression in adventure in international affairs and a vague suspicion towards

all dissenting ideologies and ways of life. In order to survive in and cope with Indian politics, the politically alert citizenry will have to work towards an unheroic ending of the present regime."

Need for Public Debate

The plea for a National Government, we have made here, is one such attempt to foster a serious debate on a possible solution to the unending cycle of crises we have been facing these past twelve years or so.

I might also invite attention to an editorial by Mr. V.M. Tarkunde, eminent jurist and civil liberties crusader in the February '87 issue of the *Radical Humanist*. He wrote: "there is a political vacuum in which no party is really popular but the least unpopular party continues to govern. The party system has failed the people" and added that "a very helpful suggestion has been made by Mr. R.K. Patil the Gandhian leader who was a member of the Planning Commission. He suggests that we should have a National Government at the Centre consisting of a cabinet of

ministers drawn from all political parties in proportion to the parties' strength in the legislature. The formula of a National Government has the merit that it shows the way in which we may experience a transition from the present party system to a partyless democracy."

However Mr. Tarkunde, who agreed to sign the appeal with us wanted the National Government to comprise only of elected MP's from all parties. I find a contradiction in Mr. Tarkunde's stand that if parties have failed the people then why insist on a National Government consisting only of party MPs? In fact many readers of newspapers who commented on our appeal have suggested that it should predominantly be a *Government of talents and non-party experts* and our Constitution does permit such appointment for six months.

"Choicelessness"

While our people voted decisively in 1971, 1977 and again in 1985, what did they get in return? Each time they have been let down and the process is be-

coming negative, a kind of people facing "choicelessness." Perhaps an interregnum in which non-party citizens carry on the Government will show both to the politicians and the people that what counts most in a democracy is moral legitimacy and not merely elected majority.

Mr. H.M. Seervai, expressing his inability to sign our appeal, wrote to us that, "as long as the Council of Ministers enjoys the confidence of the majority of the House of the People it is not for the President to put it to the Council that they should form a National Government. Such a Council can undoubtedly be adopted effectively if members of the Lok Sabha move such a proposal in the House, assuming that they have reasonable chances of serving a majority of the House to support their proposal — which appears unlikely."

But it may be mentioned that another eminent lawyer, Mr. Soli Sorabji, writing in *The Times of India* drew attention to a Supreme Court judgement which ruled that the President can dissolve the Lok Sabha if he thinks that it and the Government do not reflect the wishes of the people. In any case, unless the question of the President's powers is decided by a reference to the Supreme Court, the debate will continue and remain inconclusive.

While the former Chief Minister of Gujarat and Janata Party leader, Mr. Babubhai Patel agreed to sign our appeal, another veteran Janata Party leader, Mr. N.G. Goray expressed his inability. According to him what we are asking the President to do is in effect to declare an Emergency under Art. 352. Can the President on his own (subjective) evaluation do this? asks Mr. Goray. Moreover will opposition parties agree to such power being given the President? And how will the voting process become less negative after six months of a National Government? Mr. Goray avers that such a step by the President amounts to a kind of palace revolution and might end in greater sympathy for the present Prime Minister. Mr. Goray therefore recommended that we should only go the Jayaprakash Narayan way and awaken our people to bring about change in Government.

All these are indeed valid points that need to be seriously considered. But we should at the same time remember that

While our people voted decisively in 1971, 1977 and again in 1985, what did they get in return? Each time they have been let down and the process is becoming negative, a kind of "choicelessness." Perhaps an interregnum in which non-party citizens carry on the government will show both to the politicians and the people that what counts most in a democracy is moral legitimacy and not merely elected majority.

our President is elected not by one party but by the country as a whole and he is the Head of the Republic. Moreover the demand for a National Government is made openly, not secretly as is the case with a palace revolution. The weakness in resorting to a JP type agitation, is that whenever people come out on the streets against a government, our Constitution permits the imposition of an emergency, which takes away our freedom and makes the party which has done wrong more powerful than before. Is this a way out? A national government for six months is a better alternative than an emergency or a situation of continuing drift or even chaos.

Many journalists, editors and others, and in particular, Mr. Girilal Jain of *The Times of India* have raised two important issues in the debate on the President's role and his powers. These are:

- (a) the absence of a credible alternative to the Congress Party at the Centre, and
- (b) the need to protect and preserve the Indian State.

The simple answer to the first is that, theoretically, there can be no alternative to the Congress because it is an umbrella party, a peculiarly Indian phenomenon, a power structure which embodies all shades of opinion and which included in the past, both Mr. S.K. Patil and Mr. V.K. Krishna Menon and includes today, Mr. V.P. Singh and Mr. Kalpanath Rai. Such a Party by its

very nature (like Hinduism) cannot have an alternative. In other words, the alternative to the Congress will be another Congress.

In practice, however, during 1977, the late Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan tried to set up an alternative — essentially a loose coalition of opposition parties — but that did not last. It is unlikely that our people who, instinctively and rightly so, want stability at the Centre will prefer such a loose coalition again. Besides, opinion polls show that Mr. Rajiv Gandhi gets around 35% support and no other leader including Mr. Vajpayee, Mr. Hegde, Mr. V.P. Singh, gets more than 11% support.

What then is the way out if a leader or a government enjoying a large majority begins to lose credibility and moral legitimacy and people start protesting? Under our Constitution, in the event of breakdown of moral authority we can declare an emergency but that affects freedom and makes the same government more powerful and even less accountable. No one wants a repetition of 1975.

National Caretaker Government

So we must search, not for an alternative but for a *contrast*. Such contrast can only be provided by a National Government for a short period i.e. before fresh elections are held. If a Prime Minister can err on a decision to impose an emergency, why cannot a President ask for a National Government in a crisis? The late Rajaji rightly insisted on such government as a caretaker government between elections.

Perhaps the right words to use would be a "National Caretaker Government" which term is explicit that the government of talents installed by the President is in the nature of an arrangement to steer the Ship of State through an interregnum while the people are asked to make their choice at an election to be held six months hence.

As for the Indian State, what exactly is its basis? Obviously, it is the *will* of our people to remain free and independent, rule ourselves, preserve our Constitution and its republican nature and ensure the *moral* legitimacy of the government of the day. It is not merely having a party with a majority in Parliament. The tragedy is, our people can elect a government but cannot force it to be honest, efficient and ethical.

The "Indianisation" of the Constitution

B.K. Nehru

The Constitution of India, as framed, had very great checks and balances against the exercise of arbitrary power. But the practices that have developed over the years as a result of the gradually accelerating pace of the "Indianisation" of the Constitution have eroded, if not almost destroyed, all the checks and balances that existed

The checks and balances the Constitution provides furnish strong safeguards against the exercise of arbitrary power. They have, however, in actual practice, not proved to be as effective as they were intended to be. I shall deal with each of them separately, show how they were intended to work and how and why they and their functioning has been eroded.

The President

The President is often mistakenly supposed to be an ornamental cipher; his function being merely to rubber-stamp the decisions taken by the elected executive government. This was certainly not intended to be so; we wanted his position to be the same as that of the monarch in England, on the pattern of which country our whole Constitution is framed and was to be practised. It is true that the Queen of England cannot, by convention, veto legislation which has been passed by both Houses of Parliament but the Queen has not only the right but the duty to advise, to encourage and to warn the executive government in the light of her own independent reading of the situation in the country and internationally. The effectiveness of such advice as the Crown may give arises from three factors. The first is the great public esteem in which the institution of the monarchy is held, the second is the information available to the Palace and the third the experience of the occupant of the Throne.

The public esteem is a product of history and the belief in the impartiality of the Crown, the experience is based on the normally long tenure of office of the Sovereign. The sources of information are many and varied. They are, first, a regular weekly audience given to the Prime Minister every Tuesday afternoon

at which the Prime Minister advises the Queen about the latest developments and the intentions of the Government. The second is the masses of State papers that are sent to the Palace every day on every important subject, including foreign affairs. Thirdly, it is the enormous number of callers on the Queen who must, by the compulsions of convention, call on her on first appointment and on demitting office. These include all Cabinet Ministers, many (I am not sure if this applies to all permanent Under Secretaries — corresponding to our Secretaries to Government — Judges of the High Courts, all Lords Lieutenant of the Counties (who are her own representatives) and all British Ambassadors or High Commissioners. Where an "Order-in-Council" is to be issued the Minister concerned has to be personally present to explain it to the Queen.

This was how our system was also intended to work. The duty of the Prime Minister to inform the President, and the right of the latter to ask for information, is clearly stated in Article 78 of the Constitution. But over the years, the in-

formation presented to the President has been greatly reduced. First of all, the convention that the Prime Minister should see the President every week, which was scrupulously followed by Jawaharlal Nehru until as late as 1962 (when President Radhakrishnan himself told him that in view of the Chinese aggression and other pressing matters and his indifferent health, he should reduce the frequency of his visits) has been gradually eroded to the point at which there is no fixed interval at which the Prime Minister calls on the President. The extent of State papers sent to him by the various Ministers for information has also been gradually reduced. The British convention that all high officers of State should call on the Head of State was never followed in India from the beginning; it was left to the individual whims of these officers whether they should or should not seek an audience and many of them did not do so. One of the great sources of information to the Head of State was thus closed to him. The latest development is that the right of the President to be informed is sought to be denied to him. Article 74, which says that the President "shall, in the exercise of his functions act in accordance with" the advice of the Council of Ministers, is sought to be interpreted as governing Article 78. The effect is to say that the President cannot ask for information unless the Council of Ministers advises him to ask for it, thus reducing Article 78 to an absurdity.

The character of the Presidency also underwent a change. Our first President Dr. Rajendra Prasad, although a politician, had in effect retired from politics and had no political ambitions. The second and third Presidents Dr. Radhakrishnan and Dr. Zakir Hussain had never been politicians at all. It was

The original Preamble to the Indian Constitution.

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;
LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;
EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all
FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation
IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.



The car that makes a lot more carsense!

Powered by the Nissan engine

This modern and fuel-efficient 1.18 litre engine makes one litre of petrol stretch through 17 kms (according to the Government of India test procedures).

The synchromesh system for all four forward gears ensures smooth gear change and easy transmission.

Takes on any road

The well-suspended body makes for good road holding. Adequate ground clearance makes it ideal for out-of-city driving.

It's got safety built into it

Fade-resistant disc brakes on the front wheels with servo assistance for reduced pedal effort and instant

stopping. Large windscreen for better visibility. The door frame, roof and floor panels are individually pressed out of single metal sheets to ensure a structurally stronger body. They all add up to a safer ride.

Just the right size

It's compact enough to spell fuel efficiency and easy manoeuvring. And big enough to seat five comfortably. There's more legroom inside and more luggage space in the trunk.

The look says sleek

Clean, elegant lines. Polyurethane bumpers and steering wheel. Wraparound tail lights. A smooth paint finish. Ribbed upholstery.

Contoured, reclining front seats. Every part spells sleekness.

From Premier Automobiles, —of course!

The Premier 118 NE combines the sturdy body of the Fiat 124 and a modern, fuel-efficient 1.18 litre engine designed in collaboration with Nissan. PAL engineers have tested and perfected the model to suit Indian climates and road conditions.

After all, we've always given you the better car. Now, with new horizons opening up on the car scene, isn't it natural the better choice should come from us?

PREMIER 118 NE



The Premier Automobiles Limited

from the fourth Presidency onwards that practising politicians, who continued to take an active interest in political affairs, started being elected to office. The consequence was that the advice of the President ceased to be impartial or at least appeared to the general public to have ceased to be so. If the President belongs to the same political party as the Prime Minister it is difficult for him to differ from somebody who is, in the party hierarchy, more important than he is. If he belongs to a different party (as has happened twice) his advice is suspect.

The prestige of an elected President cannot of course be equal to that of a hereditary monarch but no effort has been made to increase or maintain it. The President has, however, always been a man of experience from whose advice Ministers could have benefited. But the denial of information to him coupled with the effort to have a "safe" party man in Rashtrapati Bhavan, has almost reduced to a nullity the check which the President was supposed to exercise on hasty action by his Council of Ministers.

The States

The States were never, of course, designed to check the exercise of arbitrary power by the Central Government but they were certainly designed to limit that power in so far as the functions in List II of the Constitution are contained. The power of the States has also been eroded but not so much because there were defects in the original distribution of powers but because of two factors which have altered the character of that distribution. One is that we decided to have a planned economy. As the country was one economic unit the plan was necessarily formulated on an all-India basis, and certain powers, particularly in terms of licensing and control of industry, had to be vested in the Centre though they were intended to be reserved for the States. The second, and perhaps even more important, factor was the monopoly of power that for so many years was vested in the Congress party, which rules not only at the Centre but in almost all the States. The Congress Party, like all other all-India political parties, is highly centralised in its functioning. Consequently, while the intention of the Constitution makers was that the States would be free to elect their own Chief Ministers and follow

their own policies, the working of the party system has resulted in the Centre telling the States who should be the Chief Minister and who should be the M.L.As. Furthermore, the resistance that one would have normally expected the States to exercise against the erosion of their powers was itself eroded because of party discipline.

Both these factors are now changing. There is a welcome retreat from licensing and controls. This will, to some extent, restore the balance of economic power between the Centre and the States. The second is the erosion of the strength of all-India parties themselves. This development is, of course, in some ways, unfortunate but it does restore the genuine autonomy of the States. As the party in power at the Centre is now different from the party in power in many of the States, it is reasonable to expect that the unwarranted encroachment by the Centre on their powers will not be as easy as in the past. The danger, of course, is that the States may become so chauvinistic as to disregard the Central Government and the national interest it represents.

The Supreme Judiciary

The one big difference between our Constitution and that of Westminster is the power of constitutional review vested in the judiciary. In Britain, the King-in-Parliament is sovereign and the validity of no duly enacted law can be questioned in any Court. In India, the President-in-Parliament is not sovereign; it is the Constitution that is sovereign and the interpreters of the Constitution are the judiciary of which the pinnacle is the Supreme Court. Laws can be, and are, declared null and void. Further, the enormously wide powers conferred by Article 226 on High Courts "to issue to any person ... directives, order or writs...for any ...purpose" does not have a counterpart in Britain. The check of the judiciary on executive and legislative action is, therefore, in India very strong. Indeed it has often been exercised to encroach on the powers of those authorities.

This check has, however, been itself eroded partly by the action of the executive, partly by the behaviour of the Supreme judiciary itself. To deal with the second point first. All the judiciary can do is to state what the law is; it has no power to enforce its decisions. It is

for the executive to enforce those decisions; if it does not, it is in breach of the Constitution and is guilty of contempt of court. However, what has happened is that some Judges of the Supreme Court and, following their example, some Judges of the High Courts, in pursuit of the concept that their function is not to interpret the law but to enforce their view of social justice, have, at various times issued orders and commands which, as a result of their very inadequate knowledge of political and administrative conditions, were totally unenforceable and really had nothing to do with the interpretation of the law. The result has been that not only these orders, which were *ab initio* impracticable, not enforced but the awe in which judicial orders should be held was gradually eroded so that even the very legitimate orders of that Court are now obeyed only at the whim of the executive government. The position is so bad that where the Supreme Court has declared a particular practice to be a fraud on the Constitution (viz. the repetitive re-promulgation of Ordinances) no notice has been taken by the government of Bihar. The practice has been resumed and the Governor has blindly continued to sign unconstitutional Ordinances.

The second factor in the erosion of the authority of the judiciary has been the practice that at one time achieved considerable and very harmful significance, viz., the appointment of judges on political grounds. Even though after appointment the Judge may become as independent and impartial as any other, the suspicion in the public mind remains that justice is not impartial. Further, while it is desirable that the Chief Justice and a proportion of other judges of High Courts should be "outsiders" the manner in which transfers have taken place gives rise to the suspicion of political motivation and of punishment for judicial independence. Moreover, the fact that a dignified and comfortable life can no longer be lived on a government pension leads to the natural desire in Judges to ensure that after retirement they should get membership of the numerous commissions and committees that are forever being appointed by government for which retired Judges are in great demand. Public belief in the impartiality of the Judges can be restored by, first, reducing the predominant voice of the Cen-

tral Government in their appointment, secondly by choosing judges from outside the State on their first appointment and thirdly by assuring judges, as in the United States, a pension equal to their salaries.

The Bureaucracy

The position of the bureaucracy under the Westminster pattern of Government is of very considerable autonomy. There is clear demarcation between the responsibilities of the political and permanent parts of the executive branch of government so that the executive power can no longer, even in theory, be regarded as one but must be regarded as two. The function of the political executive is to lay down policy, have that policy enacted in the laws and the manner of its administration encoded in the rules and regulations made under the Acts. The actual administration is not, however, done by the politician but by the duly empowered bureaucrat; no individual case is normally referred to the Minister unless it involves an exception to the policy laid down by him or has political repercussions. The bureaucracy provides, therefore, a strong check on the arbitrary powers of the executive for, while the political executive can alter policies, he cannot show undue favours to anybody because he does not himself take individual decisions.

In India, however, almost from the very beginning Ministers have decided individual cases; as time went on, this became the rule rather than the exception, particularly in the States. Consequently, the entire administration, which grows from day-to-day like Topsy, is rendered ineffective and inoperative while it is the will of the Minister, without regard to laws or rules or regulations, which decides the cases. If a civil servant has the temerity to point out that the Minister's action is illegal, the civil servant is transferred. Recalcitrant and independent civil servants can be, and are, suspended. Promotions can of course be, and are, denied to civil servants who insist on the laws being obeyed.

The powers of transfer, suspension and denial of promotion are used by Ministers to bend civil servants to their will. In the Westminster pattern ministers do not have these powers. Appointments, transfers, promotions suspen-

sions and disciplinary actions are all decided by a group of senior civil servants themselves. These are, of course, subject to the approval of the Prime Minister (but no other Minister) but, by convention that approval is practically never withheld. If our parliamentary system is to provide good government it is essential for the civil services to have the same functions, independence and autonomy that they have in Western democracies.

The Individual M.P.

The individual M.P. of the ruling party does not, in a parliamentary system, provide any great check on the operations of the executive. As the parliamentary system has developed, (not only in India but everywhere), the position of the Prime Minister has ceased to be *primus inter pares* but has become as dominant as that of the President in the presidential system. But whereas in the presidential system the President has little control over the members of the legislature except through his moral authority (and his control of patronage), in the parliamentary system the members of the legislature are controlled by the Prime Minister through the party whip. When the party issues a whip (and it does so for any situation which the leader of the party thinks is of importance) the individual member of parliament has no option but to vote as ordered. There is in the modern parliamentary system, therefore, no check that the individual member of parliament can exercise on the executive nor indeed much influence that he can bring to bear on the contents of legislation. Such influence as he has and such check as he can exercise is only through meetings of the members of the legislature party where, at least in theory, he has the right of free expression. But while this right is actually put into practice in Western democracies, in India, with our feudal traditions, it is seldom that individual members of parliament are willing, even at party meetings to go against the known wishes of the leadership.

Members of the legislature belonging to the opposition have even less voice in the formulation of policy and the control of the Administration; whence their non-parliamentary actions. Questions play a useful part in uncovering the hidden reason of executive actions

— but ruling party members are not allowed to put inconvenient ones. Legislation can be influenced by references to Select Committees — but that is now seldom done. The Consultative Committees are useful and Committees such as the Public Accounts Committee and the Estimates Committee certainly do exercise a certain check on governmental wrong-doing — though here again the party mechanism interferes with the freedom of speech.

The conclusion of my paper, in short, is that whereas the Constitution, as framed, had very great checks and balances against the exercise of arbitrary power, the practices that have developed over the years as a result of the gradually accelerating pace of the "Indianisation" of the Constitution have eroded, if not almost destroyed, all the balances and checks that existed. It is for this reason that people such as myself have been unsuccessfully arguing for a revision of the Constitution in such a way that new checks and balances may be created which cannot be destroyed by the processes of "Indianisation".

MR. B.K. NEHRU is a distinguished Civil Servant.

Constitutionalism Theory & Practise

The fact that there is no tradition of constitutionalism in the country and little respect for the law established by general agreement explains the wide disparity between the theory and the practice of the Constitution. In August 1959 when the Minister for Food and Agriculture resigned, he explained that although he was minister he had no control over the food policy. He pointed out that the target of food production was suddenly raised at a meeting of the National Development Council — in which it was not even on the agenda — and that the Ministry of Food and Agriculture was not even consulted.

S.P. AIYAR

*Constitutionalism in India in Studies
in Indian Democracy*

The Essence of Democracy — Not Majority Rule

Minoo Masani

In polyglot societies majority rule can have no meaning where there is a permanent majority of those bound together by a common race, common religion or common language. It is not democratic for such a majority to impose its will on minorities. Thus, for instance, in Sri Lanka the domination of Sinhalese over Tamils and Muslims is not democratic. In India the domination of Hindus over Sikhs, Muslims, Christians and others is not democratic.

Many years ago Mr. E.F.M. Durbin, a junior member in a Labour Government in Britain published a book entitled: *The Politics of Democratic Socialism*. In one of his chapters Mr. Durbin after rejecting various tests of a real democracy, came to the conclusion that where there was no effective opposition there was no democracy. According to him, the right to dissent is useless unless it is actually allowed to be exercised.

This may be a good starting point for us to consider in our own context, what makes for the essence of democracy.

Majority Rule

Some people would reply that democracy means majority rule. How wrong they are! Stalin and Hitler after coming to power repeatedly won elections by huge majorities which were presumably bogus and then carried on ruthlessly oppressive and tyrannical regimes. The dictators of the Black African countries who are often ferocious autocrats also claim to have been elected by a majority. As the anthropologist, Elspeth Huxley has put it, "One man one vote, once."

The President Mr. R. Venkatraman, referred to this in his inaugural address as President on July 25 that "most of the newly independent countries which adopted a democratic form of Government have lapsed into dictatorships". There are countries covered by Mr. Venkatraman's statement in Asia and Latin America which also qualify along with Africa.

The concept of majority rule is a particularly pernicious one in countries which are not of a homogeneous nature ethnically, linguistically or religiously. Examples of such countries are the Union of South Africa, Fiji, Sri Lanka and of course, our own country. In these countries there is a built-in permanent majority based on race, language or religion. Majority rule in such

cases would mean the tyranny of the majority community over the minority community or communities. In South Africa the result of one man one vote majority rule would be the domination of the Blacks over the Whites and the coloured peoples including Indians who are all minorities. In Fiji it would mean the domination of the Indian immigrants over the original inhabitants there. In Sri Lanka it would mean the domination of Sinhalese over Tamils and in India it would mean the domination of the Hindus over the Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and other minorities. It is quite obvious therefore that majority rule is not democracy and can often be undemocratic.

Limited Government

It is quite clear that a Government which is not limited to essential purposes but dominates economic, educational, literary and artistic life of the country cannot be a democratic one. Where this happens an effective opposition ceases to be possible and Mr. Durbin's test cannot be fulfilled.

This has been proved by the case of the Soviet Union, Communist China and others in our time.

Italian theorist Benedetto Croce was able to foresee this when he wrote in the last quarter of the 19th century that where the Government or the State tends to become the only employer and the only landlord, that society ceases to be democratic because there would be no one left to oppose except at great peril. That is why he argued that in a free society there have to be "autonomous social forces" such as a farmer owning his land, the industrialist owning his factory or business, the shopkeeper owning his own shop and the professional man like the lawyer or doctor or consultant who works for himself. Later developments have proved how right Croce was.

In my opinion, India is in the border

line between a limited government and a total one. Excessive controls, destruction of the balance of the mixed economy, "control of the dominating heights of the economy" as Jawaharlal Nehru grandiloquently described it, through giant industrial corporations, the control of the State over universities and the absence of economic freedom, the institution of Sahitya Academies and other Government institutions which have undermined the independence of writers, artists and other members of the intelligentsia.

There have been repeated attempts to destroy the freedom of the press. All these have brought India to the position where it is possible to say that the so-called "Socialist pattern" and democracy cannot co-exist for long. This already happened for a brief period of two years after 1975 and could easily happen again for a longer duration. Therefore it is that the liberal insists that unless Government is limited and kept in its proper boundaries, it cannot be called a democratic one. Mahatma Gandhi said "that Government is best which governs the least".

Sharing and Participation in Power

Democracy has been defined as Government of the people, for the people and by the people, the last of these being the most important of the three. The sharing of power has to be both horizontal and vertical. It should be horizontal in the sense that minority groups have a right to participate in the Government of the day along with the majority.

Vertical participation is equally important. The infra-structure of a democracy lies with grass roots vigilance and initiative which keeps political parties and governments on the straight and narrow path. Where such grass roots vigilance and initiative are weak as in India today, political parties float on top without any infra-structure without in-

ternal democracy and with "Kangaroo Courts" which 'expel' members without even asking them to show cause.

The element of grass roots vigilance is not one that can be created by law. It is primarily one that is dependent on home and school education. Training of the young and the right to think for themselves, training in the right to stand up to authority – whether domestic, industrial or political, when the conscience demands it. Gandhiji defined a real *satyagrahi* as one who defies a law which he thinks is immoral even if he is in a minority of one, provided he is prepared to pay the price for his act. In other words, democracy is contingent on the existence of independent, aware and courageous citizens who are prepared to speak up for their rights and do not always count the costs. As the poet said:

"They are slaves who dare not be,
In the right with two or three".

The main enemies of such initiative are the cult of personality, misguided loyalty to party "high commands", sycophancy which abounds in the capital and other parts of India and the presence of a controlled economy where the permit, licence or quota is a pre-condition to economic survival.

Reservation

There remains the problem of ensuring participation and sharing in power by the backward classes in society who are unable to pull their full weight along with the rest of society. Such are the scheduled castes (Harijans), the scheduled tribes (Adivasis) and the backward classes. As a remedy but not to last more than ten years, our Constitution provided for reservation of seats in legislatures and jobs in government service for these classes. Unfortunately this device has become a habit. Every ten years Parliament prolongs its life because by now the spokesmen of the poorest classes have become a vested interest. Also it provides one of the main points of corruption in our public life. The politicians therefore go along with this easy way of professing to provide social justice.

Both the U.S. Supreme court in *Bakke's* and the Supreme court in our country have in the case of the State of Kerala *vs* Thomas arrived at similar judgements taking the line that affirmative action in favour of these classes has

to be both temporary and moderate. Any discrimination that is permanent or excessive should be struck down as *ultra vires* of the Constitution.

I believe that the time has come for Reservations to be terminated and if, that is not feasible at least to be phased out.

Proportional Representation

A much more civilised way by which minorities including the backward elements of society can be ensured fair representation in these legislatures is some form of proportional representation. The only democratic countries in which the rule of the race course viz. "First past the Post" is practiced are U.K. and the U.S.A. where minorities whether ethnic, linguistic or political are denied their fair share in the legislature. The recent re-election of Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, however welcome it might be on political grounds, illustrates the archaic nature of this system since she obtained only a minority of votes cast but a big majority in parliament as a result of gross under-representation of the Alliance of social democrats and liberals, who polled a large proportion of the votes but succeeded in getting only a miserable number of seats in parliament.

The Anglo-Saxon system involves a waste of millions of votes which remain un-represented in Parliament. Votes cast in the country do not carry the same weight since the votes cast for some party carry more weight than those cast for other parties. Even the principle of "one man one vote" is thus violated since one man does not get one vote. Some get more than a vote and yet others have no effective vote at all.

In India which has followed the archaic British system since independence, not once has the Congress Party secured a majority of the votes cast. Yet in every parliament including the present the Congress Party has been in a huge majority which is entirely bogus and does not reflect the will of the people.

If therefore justice has to be done to minorities the acceptance of some form of proportional representation is a must.

Division Or Separation Of Powers

Where power is allowed to be centralised in a few hands in Government,

democracy shrinks. That is why, in all written democratic constitutions, there is provision for a division of power or functions.

The separation of powers in the U.S. Constitution between the President and the Administration, Congress and the Supreme Court is a good example of three independent authorities functioning side by side and often clashing with one another. Even where there is a parliamentary form of government as in France after De Gaulle amended the Constitution and in Sri Lanka after Jayawardhene amended it, though there is a Prime Minister responsible to Parliament, there is also a President who acts as a check on the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. It is not therefore true that in every parliamentary democracy the Prime Minister and Cabinet can over-rule the President. Quite the contrary. The Constitution of the Republic of India as it emanated from the Constituent Assembly, of which I was proud to be a member, did precisely this by curbing the powers of the Prime Minister and Cabinet of the day through.

- (a) The President,
- (b) The Supreme Court,
- (c) The Civil Service,
- (d) The States and
- (e) The fundamental rights of the citizen.

Unfortunately most of these checks have been eroded by those in office in Delhi through their lust for centralising power in their own hands.

Rule Of Law

The essential pre-condition of democracy is what is called in Britain the rule of law and in the U.S.A. 'due process of law'. This protects the citizen from arbitrary action on the part of the Government of the day and gives him the protection of the Courts in case the law is violated. Obviously, when the Courts are not independent and there is no rule of law, rule by parliamentary majority can be highly tyrannical and undemocratic.

Individual Liberty

The State is made for the individual and not the individual for the State. This is a basic principle of liberal democracy. The rights of the individual therefore become the supreme consideration. As Lord Acton has put it liberty is the supreme good. Hence Freedom First. In some countries like the U.S.A., India and

several others, the fundamental rights of the citizen are guaranteed under a written Constitution or what is often called The Bill of Rights. Britain is one of the few real democracies which have no written Constitution or Bill of Rights, and technically Parliament is sovereign and can pass any law it likes. However, as Dicey points out, if the House of Commons were to pass a law that all blue-eyed babies should be put to death, the people will throw parliament out the following day! This is what you call the 'external check' which exists in Britain without a written Constitution.

Another old saying which draws attention to this priority is the Biblical one which says: "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's". In our context, the individual's conscience is his God.

Freedom Of The Press

What applies to the individuals' right to dissent applies with even greater force to the press. Freedom of the press is of course an essential part of a free society.

Polyglot Societies

In the case of multi-lingual, multi-ethnic or multi-religious societies, the importance of these safeguards become more marked.

Majority rule can have no meaning where there is a permanent majority of those bound together by a common race, common religion or common language. It is not democratic for such a majority to impose its will on minorities. Thus, for instance, in Sri Lanka the domination of Sinhalese over Tamils and Muslims is not democratic. In India the domination of Hindus over Sikhs, Muslims, Christians and others is not democratic and in South Africa, the domination of Blacks over Whites would be undemocratic.

It is not enough in such cases that members of minorities are included in Governments or Cabinets. In Sri Lanka and India as of today, such minority membership is only at the behest or *meherbani* of the majority. It is important for ministers belonging to minorities to be elected by their own kind

through proportional representation.

The only country where this is being practised is Switzerland owing to the existence of three groups – German Swiss, French Swiss and Italian Swiss and of Cantons which are jealous of their independence. The Government of Switzerland is run by a Council which is elected by proportional representation by members of Parliament who, in turn, are themselves elected to Parliament by proportional representation. This means a National Government or a permanent coalition of sizable linguistic groups and political parties.

The Swiss Constitution goes further and provides that the position of Chairman of the executive or the Prime Minister shall rotate among the members. It also provides for maximum autonomy to the Cantons which are almost sovereign and minimum government by the Government of the Confederation.

Joseph Brodsky

There are some facts which should interest every reader of *Freedom First* about this year's Nobel Prize-winner for Literature, Russian-born Joseph Brodsky.

The first is that he spent 20 months in hard labour under a Leningrad Court judgement. Charge: "Social parasite." Age: 24.

Second, none of his books have been published in the Soviet Union.

Third, he left his country for the U.S.A. in June '72 and became an American citizen five years later.

As a Russian citizen, he had studied Polish and became acquainted with many writers of the West whose works were officially kept out of the Soviet Union. In the U.S.A., he had access to them all, and acknowledged their influence when it deserved mention.

Needless to say, he was equally free to study the great Russian writers, and knew that he belonged to their cultural ethos. He never abandoned his country in spirit, brooding perpetually over its tragic fate under

Communist tyranny.

Knowing clearly what Soviet rule meant, he looked through its horrors, and also through the very different social, economic and political realities of the West, to the perennially dark side of existence.

I am not sure Brodsky's credo can be called "absurdist" in the comprehensive implications of that concept. It has too much in it that is positive, and almost prescriptive if not heroic.

Whatever the nature of life may be, considered in its essence as inclusive of meaningless suffering, Brodsky does not adopt a passive attitude to it. His poetry and prose have a strong moralist strain, even if with a rather limited, sometimes orthodox source. That source, which may be called temperamental, is puzzling in so great a poet. There is something rather schoolmasterish about it, and overlooks the creative abundance of the opposed world view, as if it has no right to exist. It is never, of course, equated with communist totalitarianism, now in a phase which ought to lead to the end of its one-party gov-

A Note by Nissim Ezekiel

ernment.

Exile, as expected is a frequent theme in Brodsky's poetry, but he never exploits it, he transcends it. The variety of poetic forms he uses and the originality of his linguistic techniques within the traditional patterns have been repeatedly described. They need to be interpreted by the serious reader as modes of enhancing the poet's message, and not as playful expressions of mastery over the medium. Ultimately, what we experience is the struggle of the poet with life and its complexities, not only with words, images and rhythms. I quote a characteristic Brodsky statement:

"The world will stay false.

The world will stay eternal.

Maybe within reach of the mind
but still without end.

Meaning that faith in Self and God
will be in vain.

Meaning that the illusion and the
road
are all that remain."

("Pilgrims")

If it's urgent 'DHL it.'

DHL is the surest, fastest way to send your time-sensitive commercial documents or parcels. Country-to-country, city-to-city and

desk-to-desk. Anywhere. Anytime. Over 750 offices in 162 countries. No other courier in India offers a wider global network.



**OFFICIAL COURIER
TO RELIANCE CUP 1987**



DHL
WORLDWIDE EXPRESS[®]

DHL, THE COURIER DIVISION
OF AIRFREIGHT PRIVATE LIMITED



You couldn't express it better.

DHL, THE COURIER DIVISION OF AIRFREIGHT PRIVATE LIMITED. • Ahmedabad • Alleppy • Bangalore • Baroda • Bhopal
 • Bhubaneswar • Bombay • Calcutta • Chennai • Coimbatore • Cuttack • Delhi • Dispur • Gandhinagar • Gandhinagar • Guwahati • Hosiur • Hyderabad • Indore • Jaipur • Jammu • Jamnagar • Jamsheer • Kanpur • Kalamassery
 • Karur • Kottayam • Lucknow • Ludhiana • Madras • Madurai • Mangalore • Mysore • Nagpur • Patna • Pondicherry • Pune • Quilon
 • Rajkot • Secunderabad • Shriharipur • Surat • Tirupathi • Tirupur • Trichy • Trivandrum • Tuticorin • Varanasi • Vijayawada • Visakhapatnam

Rule by Districts

M.V. Kamath

The truth of the matter is that for over 80 percent of India's population, that is for those who do not live in urban agglomerates, government means the district administration. A select few – rich farmers, lawyers and businessmen, including contractors – have access to government at the state level. To almost all, the Union Government is too distant and impersonal to matter.

Over the years it has come to be increasingly accepted that the present structure needs to be changed for something more workable. Exactly what that structure should be has been the subject of some discussion, but never on a sustained basis.

Addressing a news conference in New Delhi on 30th July 1986, Karnataka's Chief Minister Mr. Ramakrishna Hegde called for a 4-tier federal system consisting of mandal panchayats, zilla or district parishads, state governments and the Union Government. The idea was to decentralise power to the largest extent possible so that people even at the lowest level exercised control over their own economic destiny. Mr. Hegde advocated the 4-tier system to combat what he called the growing trend in sub-nationalism as a manifestation of regional aspirations. Mr. Hegde felt that regional aspirations could never be suppressed and there was a distinct danger of their growing into an anti-national force.

In his own way Mr. Hegde has sought to decentralise power within his own state Karnataka by conceding more power to the districts which will henceforth increasingly deal with their own progress within prescribed financial parameters. It is too early to judge the success or otherwise of the Karnataka experiment, but it is certainly a brave move.

District Governance

The truth of the matter is that for over 80 per cent of India's population, that is for those who do not live in urban agglomerates, government means the district administration. A select few – rich farmers, lawyers and businessmen, including contractors – have access to government at the state level. To almost

all, the Union Government is too distant and impersonal to matter.

The Constitution-makers left the future of the districts in the hands of the states which found the old British system of ruling the district through the Collector a convenient way of governance. But, as Nirmal Mukherjee (a former Cabinet Secretary) pointed out in a series of articles in the *Indian Express* (11 September 1985), district governance is widening in its scope, the Collector is becoming less effective and "the time may come, and has perhaps already arrived, when Collector Raj can no longer cope with district governance". This is where, one supposes, the Karnataka government's experiment comes in.

At present taking the country as a whole, there is a three-tier system, based on the old British pattern. Under that we had the Governor-General and Viceroy at the apex, the Governor at the provincial (Presidency) level and the Collector at the district level. There was an inherent symmetry in this system. Independent India replaced the upper two tiers by democratically-elected governments linked federally rather than hierarchically, but retained the Collector at the district level for the sake of administrative convenience.

One view is that there is really no need to change the existing system provided some kind of efficiency is introduced in the system, firstly, by limiting the size of the district and secondly, by making the Collectorate more responsive to the public on the pattern introduced in Maharashtra's Ahmednagar district by a young Collector Anil Kumar Lakhina. Lakhina based his reform on three premises: Regulation of the clerk-public contact; demystification of office

procedures and accessibility of documents both to the staff and the public.

In the matter of delimiting the district-size, the procedure in different states has been rather haphazard. Some states inherited large districts in 1947 (Bastar district in Madhya Pradesh, for example, is larger in area than Kerala!). But, the movement towards limiting the size of districts (especially, population-wise) has been going on and whereas there were 360 districts all over India in 1971, there were 412 in 1981. There are still some districts that are unmanageably large, as for example, the district of 24 Paraganas (10.7 million population) and Midnapur (6.7 million) both in West Bengal, and if one were to limit the population of any district to between 1.5 to 2 million, we can well see an increase in the number of districts by the year 2000 A.D to over 500.

But this presumes that the existing three-tier system with the middle tier – the state – demarcated on the basis of language is ideally suited to India. Here again, there are differences of opinion.

Sub-nationalism

One stream of thought holds that linguistic states have wrought untold damage to the essential unity of India and should be scrapped. The other stream disputes this and points to the Soviet model as a success story.

The Soviet model sounds alluring, but what is forgotten is that the State is held together by the iron hoops of the Communist Party which will not tolerate separatism even when it is theoretically permitted. In theory, all the states in the USSR have considerable autonomy, they enjoy the right to have their own constitutions (Article 16) as also the right to secede from the USSR (Article

17). In practice of course, no state would dare to secede with the rigorously vigilant communist parties keeping everybody in line.

The view of this second stream was well presented by Prof. Gurbhagat Singh of the Punjabi University writing in *The Statesman* (11 August 1986). According to Prof. Gurbhagat Singh, the ideal solution for India is a 'multi-national' federation, in which each 'sub-nation' sharing a common language, a particular geography, history, folklore and shared cultural traditions, is a distinct unit in the larger federation. The only hitch in this argument is that it has been tried and its shortcomings have been painfully exposed.

The trouble with fostering 'sub-nationalism' is that it tends to turn people inwards. Sub-nationalists tend to build walls to protect themselves from others restricting free movement of people from one linguistic area to another. The argument is generally made that this is no big deal considering the fact that intra-state migration is limited to a very minute percentage of people.

But the issue is not as simple as it seems. In Jammu & Kashmir those hailing from other states of the Indian Union cannot buy property, nor do they have voting rights. In their own country some Indians thus become involuntarily alien.

Linguistic States

Linguistic divisions have also spawned border disputes as between Maharashtra and Karnataka over parts of Belgaum district. River water disputes remain endemic and have not been solved for decades. Not even the Eradi Commission Report has resolved

the differences between Punjab and Haryana. In the hill district of Darjeeling in West Bengal, the Gurkhas have been asking for a separate state cut out from an already truncated Bengal. This is sub-nationalism run amuck. Similarly, in the north east, the Nagas and the Mizos want to live in their protected areas, safe in their little cocoons, free to live their lives without outside contamination. And the country as a whole has seen the extent to which the Assamese have gone – and are still prepared to go – to maintain their distinct and sovereign identity.

Theoreticians like Prof. Gurbhagat Singh hold that all this is acceptable and that each sub-nationality must be free to grow in the direction their conscience dictates untrammelled by thoughts of an 'Indian' nationality. What they don't understand is that they are really impeding, not encouraging progress of the sub-nationalities and thus damaging the rapid growth of the nation as a whole and that their faith in the alleged "cultural and political dynamics" of sub-nationalism is not only misplaced, but counter-productive.

What is more, they forget the imperatives of an expanding industrial class which tends to unify people of all linguistic groups and cultural affinities. In an age of high-speed communication and instant assimilation, it is foolish if not downright folly to believe that sub-nationalism can flourish. Whatever the compulsions of sub-nationalism they tend to be subsumed under the larger demands of a society that demands unity.

From this the question arises: Is there any way in which the inner needs of sub-nationalism, as expressed by the existence of linguistic or culturally close-knit states can be preserved even while the concept of linguism itself is negated? Several suggestions have been mooted over the years. And it is just as well to remember that the idea of dividing India along linguistic lines had its detractors even as early as 1947. Mahatma Gandhi himself, who was not opposed to the creation of linguistic states had sounded a warning against them during his last days insisting that "if each province began to look upon itself as a separate, sovereign unit, India's independence would lose its meaning and with it would vanish the freedom of the various units as well".

The Report of the J.V.P. Committee (consisting of Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel and Dr. Pattabhi Sitar-amayya, three men of talent, political sagacity and human experience, not to say seniority in the Congress) stated categorically as under:

- (a) "When the Congress had given the seal of its approval to the general principle of linguistic provinces, it was not faced with the practical application of the principle and hence it had not considered all the implications and consequences that arose

from the practical application.

- (b) "The primary consideration must be the security, unity and economic prosperity of India and every separatist and disruptive tendency should be rigorously discouraged.
- (c) Language was not only a binding force but also a separating one.
- (d) "The old Congress policy of having linguistic provinces could only be applied after careful thought..."

Many of the fears of the elders, unfortunately, have come true. At one time it was hoped that the 3-language formula (English, Hindi and the local language) would be implemented in each state so that in the Hindi states encouragement would be given to the study of one or the other of the southern languages, but, as one wit perceptibly remarked the only three languages currently being taught in the Hindi states are Hindi, Hindi and Hindi. Instead of being a federal state in the true sense of the term, India is in danger of being a loose confederation of independent, sovereign states, fighting with each other. That trend has to be reversed.

What gives linguistic states their power and sense of separateness is their very size, that goes to encourage linguistic jingoism. By the year 2001, there will be three states in India in the one hundred million population class: Uttar Pradesh (174 million), Bihar (109 million) and Maharashtra (95 million). Four others will be around 80 million: West Bengal (84 million), Andhra Pradesh (82 million), Madhya Pradesh (81 million) and Tamil Nadu (75 million). Three more will be over 50 million: Karnataka (57 million), Rajasthan (53 million) and Gujarat (53 million). Are these governable sizes? Karnataka would have a population almost that of present-day Great Britain, and West Bengal would have a population greater than that of either France or West Germany. Pointing these facts out, Mr. Nirmai Mukherjee recently asked: "Is there not a case for a second States Reorganisation Commission to delineate more governable states out of the existing ones without breaching the linguistic cultural principle?" Mr. Mukherjee added that the creation of new states by putting together adjoining culturally-linked areas of two or more existing states should not also be ruled out.

District as the Primary Unit

That, of course, is just one suggestion. There has been a suggestion that instead of small states, there should be just five mega-states, simply designated as Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western and Central India, but then what would apply to the present mega-states would apply to them as well. They would just be too big and unwieldy. The alternatives then would be either small states, carved out of the existing large ones (with the exceptions of mini-states like Goa, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, etc.) or the scrapping of the very concept of states and a return to the district as the primary unit.

Either way it would call for an amendment of the Constitution and there is no reason why the Constitution cannot be amended.

In order to stimulate discussions and, hopefully, agreement, I submit the following proposals for consideration.

1. The states as at present composed are too big to be efficiently and effectively administered. Besides, they have become centres of inter-regional rivalries and large-scale corruption. For the better administration of the country, therefore, it is suggested that the present states be dissolved.
2. By the year 2000 AD, India's population is expected to reach the 1 billion mark. Presuming that no district shall have more than 2 million population, one can envisage the creation of 500 to 520 districts in the country. Each district in the future shall be the basic administrative unit with its own zilla parishad (District Board) and the full right to determining its socio-economic development.
3. Districts with geographic contiguity and common economic problems shall be grouped together to form a Zone, irrespective of the prevailing language of the district. But no Zone shall have more than ten districts under its jurisdiction.
4. The Executive Authority of the Zone shall be a Zonal Commissioner who will be a senior member of the Indian Administrative Service of the rank of Chief Secretary. On the basis of 520

districts, we shall then have between 50 to 52 Zones or *Jan-pads*.

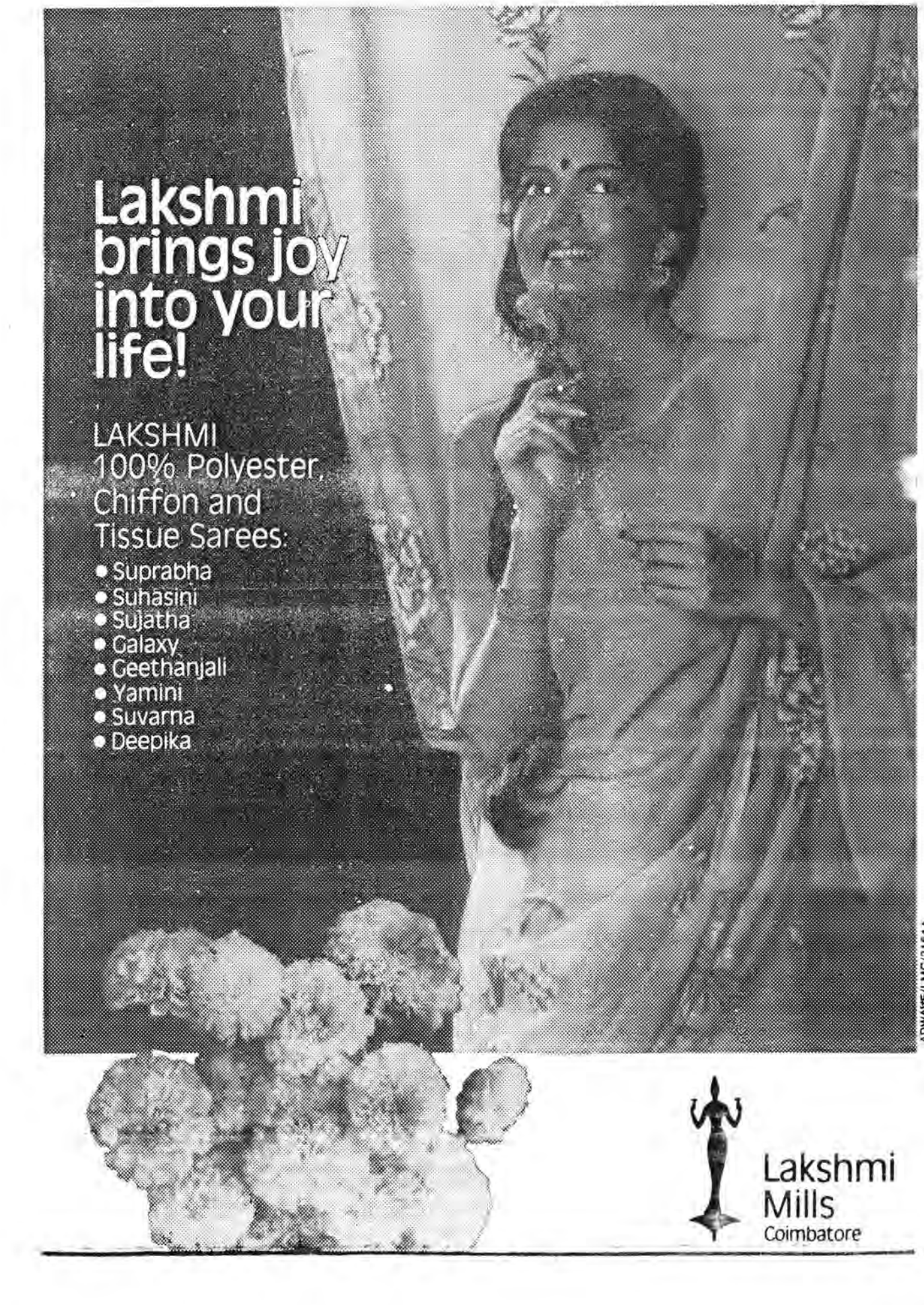
5. The Zonal Commissioner shall be advised by the Chairman of the Zilla Parishads on all issues and disputes pertaining to their districts. The Zonal Commissioner will be the final arbiter.
6. The Zonal Commissioners shall be appointed by the Home Ministry in consultation with a Parliamentary Committee on Home Affairs.
7. Each district will be free to decide the language of local administration but the language of communication between the district and Zonal Headquarters shall be English.
8. Similarly, the language of communication between Zonal headquarters and the Union Government shall be English.
9. Each district shall elect one member to the Union parliament which will then be composed of between 500 to 520 members.
10. The Members of Parliament shall be mandatorily members of various Committees (such as Committee on Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs, Appropriations, Defence, Appeals, etc.) to advise the Head of Government who shall simultaneously be Head of State.
11. No Member of Parliament shall be a member or chairman of any office of profit. His sole duty shall be to help in legislating the laws of the land.
12. The Head of Government (and State) shall be elected directly by all the voters in the country as in the United States.
13. The members of his cabinet shall be chosen from *outside* the Parliament at the President's discretion and will be replaced or dismissed also at the President's discretion.
14. All cities with a population of over 30 lakhs shall be deemed to be districts in their own right, with the right to form a separate district government.
15. Each Zone shall be served by a High Court for speedy disposal of cases. The language of the High Court shall be English.

16. Each Zone shall have an Inter-District Finance Committee presided over by the Zonal Commissioner for allocation of financial resources.
17. For powers of the Zilla Parishads and Zonal Councils, see the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India.
18. In the matter of education, each district shall have the right to set its own norms, within guidelines laid down by the Union Government and against standards of excellence set by model schools run in each district by the Union Government.
19. There shall be a River Valley Authority for each river, whose membership shall strictly be restricted to the Chief Engineers of the districts through which the rivers flow. The Chairman of the Authority shall be appointed by the Union Government whose decisions shall be final.

Advantages of this System

1. In the first place, this would mean complete devolution of power to the districts, compelling politicians to focus attention on their own districts.
2. By the dismantling of the unwieldy edifice of State Legislatures, Chief Ministers, Ministers, etc, corruption will be correspondingly reduced to a minimum.
3. There will be an automatic end to border disputes, since there will be no linguistic focal point as such.
4. The party system will become defunct as the best individual can normally be expected to be elected to Zilla Parishads, Chairmanship, and to the Presidency.
5. With elected members debarred from holding offices of profit, the spoils system will be under control.
6. Rivalry between regions for control of state finances will come to an end as there will be no states, and Zilla Parishad Chairmen will have no more than advisory functions. The bureaucracy which today groans under corrupt ministers will now be strengthened and be able to give of its best, freed from fear of demotions and transfers.

MR. M.V. KAMATH is a well-known Columnist



Lakshmi brings joy into your life!

LAKSHMI
100% Polyester,
Chiffon and
Tissue Sarees:

- Suprabha
- Suhasini
- Sujatha
- Galaxy
- Geethanjali
- Yamini
- Suvarna
- Deepika

ADWAVE/LMC/3164A



Lakshmi
Mills
Coimbatore

The Urban-Rural Divide?

V.I. Chacko

If a socialist pattern of society created an extremely wealthy minority and a great majority of the poor and indigent after 35 years of planned development and control, should we not ask whether planning and control, have any relevance to progress or development or for a fair distribution of created wealth?

Countries that have not specifically adopted egalitarianism and public ownership of the means of production or central economic control and planned development as objectives have progressed and achieved a greater measure of general well-being.

Michael Lipton, a development economist and social scientist of international standing has written an evocative book on the urban bias in developing countries and tended to suggest by the title of his book why the poor stay poor. (*Why People stay Poor, Urban Bias in World Development*).

I remember, not long after its publication in England, Dinesh Singh, our Minister of Commerce at the time, was persuaded to depute one of his secretaries to distribute money from the Accumulated Pool Fund of the Rubber Board in Kottayam to "small holders" in rubber. It did not bridge the urban-rural divide but it was a gesture fit for a *rajah*. The more recent loan *melas* belong to the same genre. Prof. Lipton's book has had a wide audience and pervasive influence.

I have been trying to understand the problem of rural poverty for a long time, long before I had heard of or met Prof. Lipton or read his book. It was this interest that persuaded me to experiment with a number of rural projects in the Nilgiris between 1967 and 1976. I cannot say that I have learnt a great deal about the causes of rural poverty and urban wealth but, reading through Michael Lipton's interesting work and the subsequent intellectual ferment it created among development economists and the flood of affirmatory literature that followed, one is impressed by the apparent iniquity.

Against the Tide

Quite frankly, it is becoming awkward to hold a view contrary to the one held by many of my friends, whom I respect for their kind and benign nature and wide reading. For many, the perpetra-

tors of the iniquity and its victims are so sharply etched and symbolized by the urban-rural paradox in India that no further investigation or analysis seems called for.

The ancient city states of Byzantium, Athens, Rome, Venice and Carthage seem to have influenced progress and civilization far beyond their borders, encouraged trade and commerce, provided the sinews of war as well as stimulated the advance of the arts, science and philosophy.

As for modern city states like Singapore and Hong Kong, they have no rural populace which they could exploit to enrich themselves. We do not have evidence of any urban bias or anyone being impoverished as a result.

It may be relevant for us to note the modern aggregations within large national states that have the same urban characteristics as the ancient or modern city states. Our sense of contrast arises from juxtaposing urban and rural contrasts within a single national entity. In every country there are urban entities such as Moscow or Milan, Paris or London, New York or Shanghai, with hinterland comprising vast extents of rural country and populace. The polemic of rural-urban divide does not seem to have arisen in those countries in the way it has done in India. It leads to the question whether this has arisen because we have a ready disposition to believe that wealth is created only by the exploitation of the peasants and workers; that there is a conspiracy against the poor; that their sufferings and deprivations arise from the machinations of others.

It must be a stunning disavowal of the

socialism we have practised for 32 years if it has resulted in an urban bias and the concentration of wealth in the cities. In pursuit of socialism many key industries have been taken over by the government, enormous resources transferred from private into public hands, vast new state enterprises established, the commanding heights of the economy occupied, heavy taxation imposed, all sources of funds including the banks brought under control, government printing presses kept busy to produce more money, and external borrowing steeply increased. All this in order to make state control over the economy and society as complete and extensive as possible. If, after 32 years of all this it has resulted in such disparity of wealth in society — a visible display of that wealth in the cities which so offend our sensibilities — something has obviously gone wrong.

The adoption of the planning objective for the establishment of a socialist society, was further elaborated by the Indian National Congress at the Avadi Session in 1955. It resolved that the principal means of production should be transferred to the state. The Prime Minister considered that there was no other way for the transformation and progress of the country. The subsequent development that took place from that policy base cannot be repudiated or ignored as having no relevance to the social and economic conditions that emerged from the adoption of successive five-year plans for the speedy implementation of socialism in India. Seven such Five-Year Plans have passed us by.

Urban Wealth and Rural Poverty

Likewise, we have to consider whether the urban populace of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago or Tokyo, London, Rome or Paris impoverished the countryside in their respective cases. There may in fact be a symbiosis between their growth and affluence and the general prosperity.

If greater credibility and respectability are gained for the belief that the poverty and misery of the rural population are directly the result of evident wealth in the cities, will this nation be universally prosperous if the wealth in its cities is transferred to the rural poor of India? The anaemic of a nation cannot be kept healthy by a regime of blood transfusions. We must try to apply our mind to the art of wealth creation, the accumulation of such wealth to be applied for the creation of more, so that by its spread, more and more people are sucked into the beneficent process. Or is it a path that Marx has not prescribed or Lenin evangelized and therefore outside intellectual respectability in India?

If a socialist pattern of society created an extremely wealthy minority and a great majority of the poor and indigent

after 35 years of planned development and control, should we not ask whether planning and controls have any relevance to progress or development or for a fair distribution of created wealth? Countries that have not specifically adopted egalitarianism and public ownership of the means of production or central economic control and planned development as objectives, have progressed and achieved a greater measure of general well-being. In contrast, we find the gap widening between the few rich and the vast majority of the poor in India. Countries which did not opt for egalitarianism or for centralized control of the economy do not show the same degree of poverty or inequality as we do in India. Was the whole panoply of socialism and central control a device to establish the political power of a party – an effective central rule in an otherwise difficult imperium?

Planning and India's Poverty

India still remains within the group of low income economies with over 70 per cent of the population in old-world agriculture; with not more than 36 per cent of the people literate, with the country's

share in the world trade less than one half of one per cent; with a life expectancy of 56; and a child mortality rate nearer 100. If more than 70 per cent of the population shared 35 per cent of the GDP, (as against 50% in 1951) one gets a fairly clear picture of the small size of the national cake available to the rural population of India.

In 1951, the first year of the First Five Year Plan, the population in rural India was 85 per cent or over 300 million. The decennial rise in population which began with just over 80 million, increased by 100 million in the following 10 years and 130 million between the years 1971 to 1981 raising the aggregate to 670 million. By the next census, the population of India may exceed 830 million. Probably more than 250 million of them urban and 580 million rural as against the 300 million which formed the rural community in 1951.

Nearly thirty years ago, a western economist referred to the "presence in India of a highly articulate intellectual class fluent in English" but he did not explore the formidable influence they had in strapping on a socialist framework to an ancient and tradition

LEADERS SINCE A LONG TIME CONSOLIDATED COFFEE LIMITED

12,500 acres of coffee plantations. Country's largest curer, curing about 20% of the total production.
Over 40 years of experience.

Growing coffee by employing the best cultivation methods. Consolidated Coffee also grows, Tea, Cardamom, pepper and oranges. A leading exporter of Coffee, they are also authorised clearing & forwarding agents.

CONSOLIDATED COFFEE LIMITED

Pollibeta - 571 215
KODAGU

bound agrarian society. This was in conformity with the sentiments of its early political leaders who probably believed that government could administer into existence a social revolution. This neatly conceived policy was aimed at achieving equality, prosperity and social justice.

The egalitarian posture is probably a reaction to the cultural traditions of rank, status, caste and authority. The line of least resistance was to go along with these conditions and adopt measures affirming primitive rural values and slowing down the modernization of agriculture even as government went ahead with industrialization with varying levels of technological sophistication and operational scales. Against the reality of population pressure on land, the government persisted with an egalitarianism in rural land and development policy that merely held agriculture back. The holding up of the 1983-84 grains output as an achievement of government planning and guidance is merely propagandistic. Other countries, without planning or egalitarianism have achieved similar or better records of yield and growth in agriculture.

Underlying the argument of urban bias is to some extent the fixed fund theory advanced by Dobbs. If some sections appropriate a larger share of the national cake, then, inevitably the rest should get that much less. Thus, according to this theory the opulence of India's urban society is directly related to the misery and deprivation we witness in India's rural society. We must be careful that our dislike of the grasping, the corrupt or offensively self-centred rich in the cities does not cloud our judgement.

The Other Side of Land Distribution

In 1957 when the ceiling law on land was first introduced it was presented as a measure capable of making our agriculture a progressive production system and of ushering in justice, peace and prosperity in the countryside. The design of land reform was to limit individual household ownership. Thirty years ago an academic zeal for land redistribution was evident in the ardent advocacy of the limitation of land to earn an equivalent of Rs. 3000/- per annum. There is little hard evidence that Indian agricultural production or social contentment or egalitarian wealth distribution increased during the past

25 years because of land redistribution.

The agricultural census of 1976-77 established that farm sizes were breaking down at the rate of 2.5 per cent per annum, or roughly equivalent to our population growth. There were 35 million farms of less than one hectare each and 44 million units of less than 2 hectare each. They were sub-subsistence farms, the owners of which were in need of outside employment to supplement their income. About 26 million other farms were at the subsistence level, most of them on the top edge of the exchange system either by the nature of the crop they raised or by the small surplus they could occasionally market.

If these small-holding units could not produce enough to meet their household needs and the 44 million households were outside the monetized economy, do we gain a glimpse of the casualties of rural poverty?

We do not know whether the government had in view a permanent peasantization of agriculture with the probable aim of following the Russian example of eventually setting up collectives or state farms. Lenin's pre-revolution prescription for a militant proletariat and peasant society had its purpose. It was to capture power. But by November 1918 Lenin was warning against petty land holding and its dangers. Professor A. Negro Vode of the USSR referred to land nationalization, expropriation of landlords and capitalists and the Soviet State's assistance to the peasants, as creating the conditions necessary for the restoration of agriculture.

Since we have the opportunity to judge agricultural progress in the USSR from more recent appraisals by their communist Party General Secretary, we may enquire whether land redistribution under the ceiling laws in India was motivated by political or economic objectives.

If we are particular about India's experiment with State Farms, we may look at the highly publicized establishment of the Suratgarh Farm in Bikaner in 1954 and the generous gifts provided by the USSR of a wide variety of farm machinery, equipment and breeding stock. The 12 state farms own 34,000 hectares of land. In 1968, the 12 farms were placed under a State Farm Corporation established by the Ministry of

Agriculture. The last we heard of this venture was the Minister's threat to close down the enterprise unless it could get out of its year-after-year losses.

The government pursued a land policy which conformed to socialistic ideals. By that policy it could establish its egalitarian credentials as well. Perhaps, its enthusiasm for emulating the USSR without really understanding Indian society and its historical evolution may be responsible for the slow change in Indian agriculture and its backwardness, though our publicity machine and some dedicated academics want to proclaim its success. But to see its reality, like Potemkin's towns, you must go behind the frontage.

A Cruel Choice

We cannot account for the appalling spread of poverty in rural India unless we understand its cause and manifestation. The rural world is the bedrock of our old traditions and orthodoxies. We have fused old and primitive agricultural practices into cultural traditions. We have romanticized an ancient age of greatness and contentment. Whether we have dreamed this up as many races have done about their glorious past while groping their way back to it or is this an escape from reality? I do not know whether a modern industrial state or society can be built on this dream. But we should apply our mind to the problem of wealth creation and rural adequacy against the pressure of population growth. It imposes a cruel choice upon us.

Given the yawning disparity between our rural achievements and the growth of the industry and services sector over the past 35 years since socialist planning was adopted, we have to assess the validity of our planning assumptions.

When we discuss the urban-rural divide we are drawn into arguments about government's intervention in the pricing of agricultural crops and its effect on the urban dependants, as well as the increasing number of landless people entering the labour market. According to Prof. Dantwalla, the bias of modern policy makers was against the urban class and generally anti-industry. In 1978 he wrote in "Agricultural Development of India"

To sum up, the facts are that far

from 'forcing down producers' food prices, the policy-makers in India have kept food prices high and displayed a big farmer and anti-urban and anti-poor bias. Those vicariously concerned with the LDCs 'wretched on earth' would do well to advise policy makers against the folly of high prices of food. The (big) farmers in India have enough incentives from the negligible agricultural taxation and heavily subsidised critical inputs like irrigation water and electricity for their pump sets. To the extent that any bias can be deduced from price policy, one can as well discern an anti-industry bias on the part of Indian policy-makers. For several years, the controlled prices of cement and steel were kept so low that the manufacturers were unable to plough back adequate funds for replacement and modernisation of their units."

Then what is the explanation for urban wealth and rural poverty? Are they two different and isolated phenomena with no interaction?

The Process of Indian Industrialization

As Robert McNamara once said any developing country can set up a manufacturing plant and make it work on owned or on borrowed capital and transferred technology. But to modernize a country's agriculture is quite a different proposition. Once a government superimposes on its tradition-bound massive, but ancient, agriculture a mechanical limitation of growth and distributive justice particularly and immediately applicable to one factor namely, land, modernisation of farming becomes an extraordinarily slow process. The rise in productivity could lag far behind the growth in population. The classical model of agriculture as the source of early capital accumulation has been rejected with a ceiling pitched to subsistence. At the same time the break-down value of land has risen out of all proportion to its crop production worth. This has only induced the increased sale of small plots of land, the proceeds going into trade or industry in the towns. The dispossessed of the villages become the trekking to the towns.

Indian industrialization actually began long before the country's independence. There were many well established industries like jute, textiles, engineering, steel, plantations and service industries like insurance, banking, agency houses,

shipping, railways, road transport, and so on. With Independence, planned development, central control of the economy and public ownership were upstaged. Industrialization meant heavy and basic industries. The urban bias was inherent in this development. High priced and uncertain farm products arose from the backwardness and inadequacy of the whole agricultural system as it has emerged.

It would be wrong to overlook the fact that the government tried to promote smallness in industrial ventures by using the licensing mechanism to limit their size. India is probably the only country to penalize a factory for exceeding its licensed output. New coffee-curing works (where coffee from the farms is processed and graded to make it fit for the market) could not exceed a throughput capacity of 3000 tonnes per annum. In the '60s a tyre factory could not exceed 300,000 tyres per annum. The heart of the problem was that licensing and capacity limitations were means to distribute government patronage as widely as possible. But even more importantly, the government did not see the public that was to be served. It has no vision of the market and the people who were served by it. The public was an abstraction. The government's interaction was with its licence-seekers and petitioners.

Adam Smith's observation that the size of an enterprise sets the limit to the division of labour was evident in the whole growth process of early transition from agriculture to mercantilism and industrialization. The systolic-diastolic reciprocity between rural and industrial processes was not an organic process. If agriculture in its broad setting remained in its 17th century state, Indian industry was reaching out to the 20th century. If the city young were imitating Western fashions and ways of life, the village youth were 200 years behind.

Conclusion.

In conclusion I request readers to ask themselves the question whether our rural poverty is not due to our traditional attitudes and practices in an agrarian mind that is not conditioned for change. Our adaptation rate is very low. While science and technology influence an increasing number of farmers, the heart of our problem is organization, for which intellectual growth provides the direction. In brief, is our response to the

challenge of modern technology, organisation and population explosion, only a life boat strategy?

When India achieved independence, we believed in a strong foundation of individual freedom and right to property. These two rights provided the bed-rock for the re-assertion of our dignity and self respect. Very soon we were doing a double march towards a centrally planned, controlled and regulated economy in which individual rights and freedom were made subservient, and institutions deprived of their autonomy in order to facilitate state control and planning.

What should perturb us is the slow decline and erosion of autonomous and spontaneous institutions without state patronage or interference and the increased dependence of both businessmen and the rural community on government patronage for every initiative and benefit. Only those in power and those attached to the exercise of that power are first class citizens, the *nomenclatura* of India. All those who are not subserving them are beyond the pale, a faceless mass. They are the people. They are the carriers, the water drawers, the people who must slink away when VIPs are on the road, watch the heaven-born from behind barricades and provide the frenzied crowd scenes at public receptions.

Those who have a real concern for the Indian people in this the 40th year of our Independence must ask whether we are not witnessing a far more serious divide. The common people are being taken for granted. They have to barricade roads, obstruct traffic, riot, murder and destroy in order to draw attention to their existence and their problems. This divide between the ruled and the ruling is perhaps far more dangerous and damaging than the urban-rural divide.

MR. V.I. CHACKO is the Former secretary and Adviser, United Planters' Association of South India

Do you imagine that a state can submit and not be overthrown, in which the decisions of law have no power, but are set aside and trampled upon by individuals?

— Socrates

Hands off Indian Express

I consider the various acts of persecution of the *Indian Express* indulged in by the Union Government to be *mala fide*, mean and vindictive in character.

Ever since the *Express* performed a public service by publishing President Zail Singh's letter accusing the Prime Minister of misleading Parliament, there has been one act of aggression after another against the *Indian Express* which now bids to become New Delhi's public enemy number two, second only to Pakistani!

In a statement published in the *Indian Express* on 16th November 1987, Mr Ramnath Goenka said:

"In the last 45 days 10 prosecutions have been launched against the *Express* group. About 25 show-cause notices have been issued. Several of us, including me, have been interrogated again and again.

"The customs authorities have detained equipment in Bombay. An official of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence has said in Bombay that equipment and newsprint being imported by the group is liable to be seized and auctioned.

"For reasons which no one in the Government will explain, our newsprint quota has not been released since September. In the case of the Bombay publications the quota has not been released even for July-September

"In spite of the opposition of the overwhelming proportion of workers, a 'strike' was engineered to stop our publications in Delhi. As of yesterday, November 14, 600 of the 670 workers and employees reported for work. But, as for all of last month so also yesterday, they could not work from the premises of the *Express* because of the failure of the police to prevent the violence which is being en-

gineered and organised by outsiders.

"And now comes the news that the Government has in effect expropriated the building of the *Express*, all equipment in it, and terminated all our rights to the plot and everything that stands on it. By a single flourish of the pen we have been reduced to being trespassers in our own premises. This is in clear violation of every relevant law."

Lawbreakers should of course be punished but when one lawbreaker is selected for repeated acts of persecution while other equally guilty people are ignored, one cannot help feeling that the real motive of the Government's action is not enforcement of the law but the desire to silence an inconvenient newspaper.

The November-December issue of the prestigious *Index on Censorship* published in London refers to the prosecution of the *Indian Express* and lists India as an offender in the dubious company of South Africa and Ghana.

Mr. Madhu Mehta of the Hindustani Andolan has performed a public service by appealing to readers of the *Indian Express* to assert themselves on this issue. That is appropriate because the newspaper belongs to the readers as much as it does to the proprietor. In a free society the consumer is king and the ultimate judge of a newspaper's policies are its readers. So 'hands off the *Express*'.

Anti-Defection Law

As if the present law on defections, which I have denounced more than once in these columns is not pernicious enough, the Congress (i) party bosses have expressed the view that it doesn't go far enough. According to them, Mr. V.P. Singh, Mr. Arif Mohammad Khan and others whom they illegally and arbitrarily expelled

from their own party should also be forced to resign their seats in Parliament. Mercifully, the law as at present says that only defiance of the party whip in Parliament can involve the loss of a member's seat.

Now the Congress bosses want to place the Member of Parliament entirely at the mercy of the party caucus and give it the power of life and death over a Member of Parliament. This is naked fascism and has nothing to do with democracy. It is to be hoped that even now this scandalous idea will be dropped and we shall hear no more about it.

Meanwhile, the existing law is under attack in the Courts both in Bombay and Delhi and it is to be hoped that it will be struck down as *ultra vires* of the Constitution.

What's Wrong with Casinos

There are not many decisions of the Union Government I find it possible to approve, but there is one from which I cannot withhold support and, that is the announcement by the Ministry of Tourism to the Parliamentary Consultative Committee that Government have decided to set up casinos in a limited number of hotels to meet one of the desires or needs of foreign tourists. It is well known that a large number of Indians, who are unable to gamble in casinos in India, at present visit Kathmandu in Nepal for the purpose.

Hypocrisy being one of our national failings, there has been some ballyhoo about the adverse effect that this step to encourage tourism would have on India's image abroad. Frankly, the less said about that image the better! But what hypocrisy to suggest that gambling is not an Indian institution! Am I wrong in recalling that Draupadi was gambled away and sold by her husbands, the Pandavas, to pay off gambling debts? And then, what about the Maharashtra State Government Lottery which

is advertised on television almost every evening? Finally, what about the Western India Turf Club and other race courses where thousands of people congregate to bet in horse races and the Government takes a cool percentage of the takings at the tote?

So far as I am concerned, therefore, believing that tourism has been a much neglected industry in India, I am very much in favour of any reasonable measure that will attract tourists to India. So, although I do not visit casinos and have no desire to do so, I think that for once the Union Government have done the right thing!

'Forgery' Did You Say Comrades?

Now that Russian writers have been told that they may end their silence on Stalin's crimes and character, those who have been bludgeoned into silence all these years are telling the truth. Pasternak has been restored to favour and Russia is to publish 'Dr. Zhivago'. Sakharov, as we know, is now in Moscow. Solzhenitsyn is still banned but no doubt the time will come when he too will be welcomed back from exile.

All this reminds me of the dark days in the 1930s when Jawaharlal Nehru got angry with me for denouncing Stalin's purges which he naively defended as justified. When I published Lenin's "Testament" from his sick bed when he lay paralysed and helpless in the grip of that monster Stalin, who was already in power, asking that Stalin be removed from his office as General Secretary because he was rude, brutal and chauvinistic, the Communist Party of India denounced me for publishing a 'forgery'. It may interest them to know that that forgery is now accepted as genuine in their own Soviet Fatherland!

It is sad that Lenin, who brought about the Bolshevik dictatorship, lived long enough to taste its horrors. Two reports from Moscow were re-

A Mockery of a Conference

I was a member of the Organising Committee, along with Jawaharlal Nehru and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, of the Asian Relations Conference which met in Delhi in 1947. It was a pleasure to attend that Conference which was a great success.

A caricature of that meeting was held in Delhi on October 2 this year, also under the same name but entirely lacking in the spirit of the earlier function. There was indeed a tragic contrast between the earlier function and the meaningless one that was organised in Delhi earlier this month. On this occasion the Indian Prime Minister chose to attack 'outside' intervention and invasion in Asia. But what about invasion from within Asia itself? A case in point is that in 1947 a delegation from Tibet which was accepted as a sovereign, independent State was welcomed by us in Delhi. The flag of Tibet flew proudly alongside the flags of other nations.

Where was Tibet on this occasion? The Tibetan people in Lhasa were bravely fighting the Chinese Communist occupiers of this country at the same time as this *tamasha* was being performed in Delhi. Some of the newspaper headlines read: "Eight Tibetans killed in Chinese firing"; "Dalai Lama's call to end repression"; "Troops patrol Lhasa streets"; "Six die as Tibetans fight the cops"; "Police seal monasteries"; "Troops break up Lhasa rally"; "Tibetan monk' plea to U.S."; "Hun-

dred monks held in Lhasa."

On October 8, the U.S. Senate condemned the Chinese Communist repression in Lhasa and suspended further aid to Communist China.

Not a word emerged from Delhi in defence of Tibetan freedom against Chinese Communist imperialism. The speakers were too busy attacking 'outside' elements to notice that, within Asia itself, there was the crude imperialism of Communist China over Tibet. On the other hand officers of the Ministry of External Affairs chose to scold the Dalai Lama for daring to raise his voice on behalf of his people.

Unfortunately, Jawaharlal Nehru and India were responsible for the betrayal of Tibet when the Chinese Communist armies invaded Tibet. Under the dishonest plea that 'sovereignty' and 'suzerainty' meant the same, New Delhi connived at Chinese aggression. When the Tibetans appealed to the United Nations for protection, it was the Government of India to its shame, who asked its representative, the Jam Saheb, to dissuade the U.N. from helping the Tibetans.

The Conference in Delhi on October 2 was of a piece with India's guilty record in regard to Tibet. I am glad I did not accept an invitation to participate.

cently published: "Stalin's insult shocks Lenin" (September 20) and "The rebuff that killed Lenin" (September 21).

Lenin was so incensed with Stalin's brutality as the communist boss while he lay paralysed in the Kremlin that he actually wrote an article for publication in *Pravda* denouncing Stalin and demanding his removal. When the article was placed before the Politbureau, Trotsky, whom it suited, naturally asked for its immediate publication in *Pravda*. Sta-

lin, however, had a characteristic response. 'Yes', he said, 'it will be published, but only one copy would be published of that particular issue of *Pravda* to be shown to Lenin'. That is as far as Lenin's article got! The majority of the Politbureau, whom Stalin was later to liquidate, voted with Stalin against Trotsky because he was in power. "Power", as Mao Tse-tung correctly explained, "flows out of the barrel of a gun".

The Theory of Development and the Future

Amlan Dutta

We continue with the second instalment of the Ashok Kumar Sarkar Lectures delivered by Prof. Amlan Dutta. The first part appeared in the October '87 issue of Freedom First

In this, the second part, Professor Dutta takes a look at the Soviet and Capitalist experiences; third world problems and explains why Japan has progressed while India lags behind; the complications posed by the proliferation of technological innovations and the onset of the "Consumer Society."

After the Russian revolution, many in the anti-socialist quarters of the West thought that the new Soviet system would not last long. That surmise has been proved untrue. There are both good and bad aspects of the Soviet economy. There, the inequality in the distribution of wealth is relatively less. But stratification in organizational and military systems, in the balance of power and the presence of specially privileged groups cannot be denied. Unemployment in its naked form is not there. On the contrary, quality standards of consumer goods cannot be maintained. Due to overcentralization and lack of initiative at the lower institutional strata, various difficulties have surfaced. But the important thing is that it is being found possible for this new system to be directed towards change and reform, it is not breaking apart. Soviet society has been successful in preserving itself and in industrializing rapidly. The cynical predictions of foreign critics have been belied. The new middle classes that have come up in Soviet society are not in favour of destroying this system, rather, they are interested in bringing it towards reform. There are of course some youth within the Soviet Union some writers, artists and intellectuals who are extremely critical of the present system, people whose writings are being circulated behind the back of the government. Still, it is better to assume there will not take place any sudden revolutionary change in the present economic and political system.

The same has also to be said for the capitalist system of industrially developed countries. Marx had thought that with the growth of capitalism, contradictions too would grow. In any capitalist country, growth of capital will result in the workers' and capitalists

gathering round two opposite poles; friction will sharpen between the two camps; the working classes would dig the grave of capitalism. That is, granting Marx's theory, the inherent conflict in society is most severe in the advanced capitalist countries; there the crisis is deepest. But the revolution took place in 1917 in undeveloped Russia where capitalism was but in an infant stage. Leaders like Lenin have, however, given an explanation for this. Capitalism has spread out all over the world, creating a long chain made up of many countries and the weakest link would snap earliest under the tension. Still, we must admit that it was hoped in Russia even after the revolution, following the theory of Marx, that revolution would spread to one or more developed capitalist countries. But things happened otherwise. Almost seventy years after the Russian revolution no advanced capitalist country has fulfilled Lenin's revolutionary expectations.

Many oppose birth control out of religious conservatism. Even Marxists... argue that the population problem being a creation of capitalism, there is no need for birth control under socialism. In the last four decades, capitalist Japan and socialist China have shown uncommon enterprise in birth control

The Middle Class

This has become clear during the past ten to fifteen years. During this period economic crises appeared once again in the capitalist world in a big way. Naturally one would expect that during this period popular opinion in some countries would become strongly leftist, and a revolutionary atmosphere would become irresistible. But that did not happen. In advanced capitalist countries like England and America votes were cast in favour of conservative parties. More remarkably, popular support for the communist party in France became unquestionably reduced. There is no doubt that in the western world the organized worker lost much of his revolutionary fervour. In the consciousness of the new middle class in these countries, the desire for social stability was much stronger than for unexpected disorders. Imperialist exploitation was shown as the cause behind all this. The advanced capitalist world thus staved off revolution with the help of this desire for social stability. It has to be considered how much weight this explanation carries.

After the Russian revolution the thought that was current in the revolutionary world was – when will the revolution arrive in the western countries. It was said that through Peking (Beijing) and Calcutta the revolution would reach Europe and America. That is, China and India are the two props of imperialism; if these two countries slip out of their hand, capitalism would soon collapse in the western hemisphere. India has become independent; China turned communist. But there has been no revolutionary change in the western capitalist countries as a result of this.

After the second world war Japan, Germany, France, Holland, Belgium

Where cranes, machine tools,
instrumentation, finance, glass and textiles
come together:



Empire Industries

A multifaceted company with various enterprises. All striving towards one goal. Excellence. All making human life a little better, a lot easier.

Garlick Engineering:

An undoubted leader in the designing and fabrication of medium and heavy duty cranes.

Empire Machine Tools:

An engineering division, marketing and servicing sophisticated machine tools manufactured in West Germany, Switzerland, Japan, and the U.S.A. A distinctive market leader.

Empire Instrumentation:

A division recently created to design and market electronic instruments and instrumentation systems. Keeping up with new trends in technology.

Empire Finance Co. Ltd:

A non-banking finance company leasing capital equipment to industrial units. Also engaged in warehousing and hire purchase activities.

Vitrum Glass:

One of the most sophisticated plants in India manufacturing amber glass bottles. Supplying to the best known pharmaceutical companies like Parke Davis, Pfizer, May and Baker, Burroughs Wellcome and Glaxo. An acknowledged leader in the field.

Empire Dyeing:

The biggest and best textile processing house in India, dealing with both cotton and man made fabrics. Well known here and throughout the world for its dependable performance.



Empire Industries Ltd.

414, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel,
Bombay 400 013
Phones: 4920003/4920304
Telex: 011-73888 (EMPR IN)

Where Excellence Leads

and many other countries lost their colonies. Yet, the capitalist economy in these countries, having brought in some necessary changes, is approaching an improved standard of living. The example of Spain is also remarkable. Having left Franco's dictatorship behind and reducing the dependence on colonies, Spain is advancing by adopting the ways of conventional western democracies. There too capitalism has been modified, but has not broken down.

Systems Adapt; They Don't Die

Some might say that all these countries are being sustained by 'imperialist' America. Hence, the protective powers of America are depicted in an exceedingly large form. When merciless warfare had been going on in Vietnam, many thought that the control over Vietnam was very necessary for the American imperialistic economy. Vietnam has been lost, America has been defeated in the war, but the American economy has not crumbled. Not only due to causes which are colonial, but due to various imbalances in the contemporary period, the advanced countries have confronted greater difficulties. This is acceptable. The capitalist economy, especially in the advanced countries depends on a far flung market. Often, due to unexpected changes in the situation, this economy loses its equilibrium, after which it is both time consuming and hard to adapt to the new situation. Even the economists of the Classical Age were not unfamiliar with such setbacks. To this has been added the new organizational changes and the complexities arising out of it; for instance features like large workers' organizations or the tendency towards monopoly in the giant industrial concerns, as a result of which it becomes difficult to check inflation. Changes in capitalism have become inevitable due to these problems, but not its sudden destruction. This means whatever might be our personal attitude towards Western Capitalism and Soviet Socialism, it is realistic to accept that the world will go on for a long time with these two systems.

Of those advanced capitalist countries which are investing capital in the third world, America, due to several reasons, is first on the list today. A section of the rising middle classes in the third world is active in the struggle

against foreign capital. Naturally this struggle is marked by the symptoms of nationalistic movements. The currents of the agitation against the old established feudal and military rule have also merged into this movement. There has also been a fusion of various types of socialistic ideas with the nationalist outlook. As a result the diversity of the nature of governments that have come up is remarkable. So is their instability. There have been fresh pacts with foreign powers. A dramatic illustration of this can be seen in Bangladesh. Yet, Bangladesh is not the sole example. In quite a few countries of the third world, foreign assistance has entered once more. In some countries American support is most important, and in some the Soviet Union's. Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Ethiopia even in these countries which are near each other there are many differences. On the whole while there is unquestionable dominance of American capital it is equally clear that third world countries are not following the American or the Soviet path unilinearly or permanently. Their natural momentum lies in a different direction. There is no simple proven path in front of America or the Soviet Union today.

It is not enough to say how much a particular class is dependent on surplus value. It is necessary to consider more deeply what is the nature of its connection with the indigeneous society

Narrowing of Differences

When we talk of one world, or world peace, it is advisable to bear this in mind. Just as the archaic idea that the world will be unified under the banner of one religion is unrealistic, so is the idea that one ideology will unify the world. Some ideas, some values, are necessary. There is the need for the recognition of coexistence, the desire for the oneness of humanity. But then man has to proceed along many diverse paths.

The recognition of coexistence does not, of course, mean that today's sys-

tem of differentiation will be permanent. As we noted earlier the two systems we have marked as capitalism and socialism are both being altered. The question is, in which direction do their dynamism lie? Are the differences between the two increasing or decreasing? There are not enough reasons to believe that in the process of change these two systems will attain stability by arriving at the same end. However, their differences are narrowing down in certain respects. We often do not notice this in the loud squabbles and the din of politics. Yet, this is a feature worth noting. Among the theories we had for so long supposed there were extreme contradictions, gradually it would appear, there is in reality a conflict of two partial truths. There are indications of this in recent history. Before we turn to that, we need to state some of today's problems particularly those of the third world.

Third World Problems

All the pain and suffering in the world have been explained by the theory of exploitation. The labourer does not have the ownership of the instruments of production. The labourer creates value, yet earns a wage for his livelihood; he does not have claims over the surplus value. Thus exploitation. But it is incomplete. There are many causes behind world crises and third world poverty which cannot be grasped properly by that theory. The theory of exploitation is useful, but sole dependence on it is not rational.

In no country today does the working class earn the whole of the value produced. The army and the bureaucracy are dependent only upon surplus value. This is true of all countries; as much in the U.S. as in the Soviet Union. Soviet troops are fighting in Afghanistan sustained by surplus value. Some may draw a difference between the two in the sense that the bureaucracy and the army are working in the interests of the capitalists in America; and in the interests of the worker in the Soviet Union. But China does not think that the Soviet bureaucracy and army are serving the interests of the labourer. There is no end to the debate. On the whole, in no country does the working class receive the entire surplus value.

America was once a colony of England. Her raw materials like cotton, wheat, and tobacco were exported to

Britain, while industrial products and capital from that country used to come to America. Even after America had achieved independence, this was the character of commerce between the two countries for a long time. India too was part of the British Empire. Raw materials from here also went to that country, and industrial goods came to this country from Britain. But between these two examples of colonialism cited, there is a big difference. To grasp this properly, we have to turn directly to questions of society and culture.

The Indian and Japanese Experiences

In India, the new middle class created by the influences of British imperialism became severed to a large extent from the old society and its own culture. The fear of such a gap was not there in America. The culture with which the newly educated Bengali middle classes became acquainted, had certain ideas which can be considered valuable. Many gifted people of that age appreciated them as values. But in the process the newly educated groups lost touch with the people of the country. Those who could have provided the leadership in the villages of Bengal, learnt English and became urbanized. Here lies the beginning of a major social disintegration. Not only did rural industries suffer due to the competition from mill cloth, a general disaster came down on a wider part of society pervading our economy and culture. Our losses cannot be measured by how much the English got out of it. This is not a game where there has to be a balance between gains on the one side and losses on the other. The textile industry of Manchester could not be maintained properly in the end. Textile factories have been established in this country. But India's rural society has not regained its equilibrium.

In the last quarter of the 19th century Japan became interested in western science and technology. Japanese youth in large numbers travelled abroad with the wish to develop their own country. Japan went rapidly ahead with western technology. This was not mere fascination or blind imitation. Japan was particularly careful about preserving her own culture. Both its good and bad offshoots are discernible. But Japan has been spared the kind of disintegration which was seen in India.

We can come to a general conclusion from such facts. It is not enough to

Just as the archaic idea that the world will be unified under the banner of one religion is unrealistic, so is the idea that one ideology will unify the world

say how much a particular class is dependent on surplus value. It is necessary to consider more deeply what is the nature of its connection with the indigenous society. There is a relationship between exploitation and economic development on the one hand and class conflict on the other. But this relationship is not very simple. The rapid economic growth of Japan in modern times has attracted everybody's attention. Capital cannot be formed without exploitation. There is indeed exploitation in Japan. But there the separation between the owners and the workers has not been as profound as it has been in the West. On the contrary, a common loyalty of the workers and owners towards the business organization, quite like a family tie, is still important. This has been considered as one of the main reasons for Japan's economic development. This has not been possible in India. Considering these things more thoroughly, various issues such as old caste distinctions and colour differentiation during the British period come under scrutiny.

Controlling Population Growth

In backward, countries, population growth has made the economic problem more complicated. The problem is clouded by many prejudices. Arthur Lewis is a famous economist from the West Indies. He is till now the only economist apart from Europeans who has been awarded the Nobel prize in economics. He had a simple model. In underdeveloped countries, labourers are available for industries at low wages because there is an unlimited number of labourers in the impoverished countryside. These workers from the countryside are partially employed or unemployed. The capitalists have not deliberately created this army of the unemployed, rather, they are inextricably involved with poorly developed agricul-

ture. With the expansion of industries, these underemployed people are attracted to industry from agriculture. Gradually, the number of unemployed and semi-unemployed become less in the agricultural sector; their wages rise in agriculture and industry. In a country like India, from the time of the second world war and particularly in the last thirty years, there has been considerable development and expansion of industry. Yet, the number of unemployed and half-employed persons has also grown during this period. This needs an explanation. The Lewis model does not correspond to our situation as it does to the experience of industrial development in the West during the first phase. There are reasons for this. In recent times science has given us the means to reduce both the rates of birth and infant mortality. These ways and methods were not known so much in the 19th century. Today's developing countries have started to adopt these methods. But in the underdeveloped countries the rapidity with which the death rates are falling is not matched by a slowing down in birth rates. During the last century, in the developing countries of Europe, population increased at the rate of 1.5% per year or less. In today's developing countries the rate of growth is 2.5% and even more in some places. In these countries, industries have expanded, the number of labourers employed is growing, but at the same time the numbers of the unemployed and semi-employed are also increasing due to the fast growth of population. It should be remembered that the prospects of applying labour-saving technology in the countries which are trying to develop, are much more than what was possible in the 19th century.

For such reasons, in a country like ours, it has become necessary to give particular attention to population control. What is required is a scientific outlook, correct propaganda and organization. Many oppose birth control out of religious conservatism. Even Marxists, thinking in terms of the theory of exploitation, argue that the population problem being a creation of capitalism, there is no need for birth control under socialism. In the last four decades, capitalist Japan and then socialist China have shown uncommon enterprise in birth control. Between the years 1965 and 1975, in both India and China the

annual growth rate of population was approximately 2.5%. Since then, in China, it has been rapidly brought down to a level even below 1.5%. This has not been possible in India. The time has certainly come to shun conservatism and comprehend the matter. Otherwise a difficult problem would be made unnecessarily more difficult.

When is Technology Relevant?

There are some complexities relating to modern technology which have created more obstacles for backward countries. Although science and technology are related to one another, it is necessary to remember the difference between the two. Pure science is universal. Its basis lies in the cooperation of scientists from all over the world; the closer this cooperation, the better. Technology is associated with application. The problems of application differ across periods and countries. What is known as modern technology originated principally from the necessities of this application in industrially developed countries. It is necessary to consider this while using technology borrowed from developed countries, for underdeveloped or less developed countries. In the 19th century, the gulf between the technology of developed and less developed countries was not as much as it is today. That the backward countries can borrow from advanced countries is considered to be a big advantage for the latter. There is no doubt that in certain respects, this is an advantage. But in the less developed countries, there is a fascination for modern technology among the new middle classes, which is weakly connected to the welfare of the country. Thus, some caution is required in this regard.

For instance, many labour saving devices have been invented in the field of agriculture. In places like America, Canada or Siberia, the population is proportionately less in comparison to the area of land. There are special advantages in the use of labour saving devices. But the situation is different in India or China. Here, limited application of agricultural implements is suitable. Otherwise the use of labour becomes restricted and the number of the unemployed rises. There are many large machines for removing soil, by which, with a few men, a much larger amount of earth can be transported from one place to another. But in the poor coun-

tries where there is an abundance of labour power, how far the use of such machines is reasonable is a point to be considered.

It is also necessary to think about medicine in this context. The appalling state of hospitals in a city like Calcutta is known to all who have suffered. There are many causes behind this situation. There are indeed, administrative weaknesses. But the fundamental problem is overcrowding. Many people are turned out unjustly, and there is no proper space for those who are admitted. The main reason for this overcrowding is the lack of medical facilities in the villages of Bengal.

Those who teach in the medical colleges are more or less acquainted with the medicine of the advanced world. Many of our students, having been instructed by them are honourably employed in the developed countries. But our doctors, familiar with modern methods of treatment, cannot make much headway in the countryside. The kind of appliances and medicines required for putting their training to use, are not available in the villages of this country. The old methods of treatment were perhaps not so scientific or so advanced in terms of technology. But the *hakims* and *Kabirajas* of this country treated their patients as best as possible with plants and herbs and other ingredients close at hand. Their thinking and innovative energies were devoted to this. Modern medical treatment cannot find its way to our village, and is not of much help to the poor of the city. Highly advanced technology

In modern society the individual is attracted towards consumables. This, not so much for enjoyment as for establishing their own claims towards consumer goods. Competitive society is intrinsically inclined in this direction. The consumer goods my neighbour possesses I too must have; otherwise I become inferior

has these disadvantages. Maybe the urban rich are benefited but its link with the welfare of the country is weak. Developed technology does not necessarily mean technology which is suitable.

However, the instruments of propaganda are on the side of advanced technology. Thus caution is all the more necessary. It cannot be said that all multinational business organizations are harmful for developing countries. Nowadays, these organizations are being invited everywhere including socialist countries. But there is a possibility of a danger in trying to bring together the technology of highly developed countries – sometimes the machinery rejected by these countries – and the labour of underdeveloped countries. It is necessary to try out these projects with economic and social perspectives in mind. International cooperation for development cannot be disregarded. But self-sufficiency has to be given a particular value. Adversities are on the cards, if there is a lack of effort over this.

The Consumer Society

Modern society has been termed as a 'consumer society', i.e. its emphasis is towards the consumer, and on consumption for contentment. There is a well-known distinction between pleasure and happiness. What we get by satisfying our senses can be called pleasure; happiness lies in the satisfaction of the soul. Soul, here does not denote anything outside nature. Happiness of the soul is there in the union with other people. This communion can be achieved through renunciation, and also by sharing happiness. Consumption drives men towards self-centeredness. All this is somewhat philosophical. Now let philosophy be. On the whole, in modern society the individual is attracted towards consumables. This, not so much for enjoyment as for establishing their own claims over consumer goods. Competitive society is intrinsically inclined in this direction. The consumer goods my neighbour possesses, I too must have; otherwise I become inferior. This is a law of competitive society. The root to the grief and problems of modern man can be traced to this.

The world has become much smaller now. Thanks to the cinema and television, the images of good living in developed countries are projected before

the people of relatively poorer countries as if they were next door scenes. That life-style comes within the range of expectations of the educated middle classes of the developing countries. Those who can afford to, go abroad soon after college, especially to America. Those who remain emulate the lifestyle of foreign countries at home. A competition is on, some consequences of which can be considered. One, the problems of our own country no longer occupy the centre of our attention. Two, a substantial part of the family income is spent on these articles of consumption which become symbols of status. Only a small part is left for basic necessities. The problem appears as much in the worker's family as in that of the middle classes: As a result, wants are never satisfied despite rise in incomes.

Urban Incomes and Rural Poverty

The income of the middle classes in the cities of Asia and Africa are much larger in comparison to the common people in those countries. There is a simple reason for this. In these countries average per capita income is much smaller in relation to that of the de-

veloped countries. The income of the common people cannot rise above the per capita. But the income of the new middle class is not determined according to this scale. They do not look towards the villages of their own country but towards the cities of the industrially developed countries, where the average income might be thirty times or more. Before Ghana became independent, I once visited that country. A new university was being established there. Due to the lack of highly educated people in the country, professors had been imported from abroad. Naturally, their pay had been fixed in accordance with pay scales in England, and even a bit higher than that. After independence, the salaries of native professors were fixed in terms of the pay of the foreigners. Otherwise, they would have had no position in society. Similar was the case with foreign mechanics employed in Rhodesian Mines.

The market for the skills of the new middle classes is an international one. Thus their aims lie beyond. An Air India pilot flies his plane to American airports. He will demand a pay comparable to

that of pilots there, otherwise his dignity is at stake. Air India cannot be distinguished much from the other Indian airline IAC as there is no fundamental difference in their set up. There is an expectation of comparative pay among the officers in high posts in different government organizations. This way, as the size of the new middle income groups keep growing, the standard of their income becomes disparate against the poverty of their country. The more their incomes exceed the country's average, the more the incomes of the common people fall below it. In many developing countries, there has sprung up this new bastion of inequality over the ruins of feudalism. Not only has the misery of the indigent grown, within the ranks of the rich, alienation on the one hand, and mutual anarchy on the other, has spread like a secret disease.

From these problems one should come to possible solutions. It is better to admit at the outset that the process of cure for social ills is much more complex and difficult than their diagnosis.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Translated by Sudipta Sen

WITH BEST COMPLIMENTS FROM

COFFEE LANDS LIMITED

(Registered Office: SAKLASPUR 573134)
KARNATAKA

Growers of Coffee, Tea, Cocoa, Orange, Pepper and Cardamom in
Hassan and Chikmagalur Districts, Karnataka State.

Our Range of Products includes Quality
Tea and Cocoa Products

The Barbaric 'Sati Ustav'

S.S. Bankeshwar

Sati 'Utsav'? For lakhs of people, who witnessed the barbaric show of the self-immolation of Smt. Roop Kanwar on the pyre of her dead husband, a gruesome tragedy was an 'Utsav' (meaning a festival). They called it *Sati Utsav*. What a monstrosity indeed!

Why not a *Pati Utsav*? Why should a Rajput husband too not immolate himself on the pyre of his dead wife, if there is any justification at all for a *Sati Utsav*?

All this gruesome tragedy in the land of Rama, Krishna, Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi! *Satyameva Jayate* and non-violence are supposed to be our national mottos. What hypocrisy indeed? Rightly has it been said that hypocrisy is the tribute that vice pays to virtue.

Are we taking our country to the 21st century or taking it back to the dark medieval ages?

What is even more shocking indeed is that the Shankaracharya of Puri should have justified and glorified this barbaric custom. Mercifully, all other Shankaracharyas have condemned this monstrous custom as it has neither religious nor social sanction. I request these enlightened Shankaracharyas to save Hinduism from fundamentalists and obscurantists like the Shankaracharya of Puri.

No *Dharma Shashtra* has ever sanctioned the burning of widows on the pyre of their dead husbands. This *Sati* tradition has, however, got a historic justification. There was no tradition of *Sati* in India before the Muslim invasion. This *Sati* custom is unknown in any part of our country, except in Rajasthan, where, for historical reasons, the brave widows of the brave Rajput warriors, who lost their lives on the battle fields in their wars against the Muslim invaders resorted to self-immolation to save their honour and chastity so that they were not kidnapped, molested or raped by the invading Muslim aggressors. Perhaps in the circumstances then prevalent there may have been some

justification for this kind of self-immolation.

There was some noble sentiment behind it and it was all voluntary. But, has this got any relevance today?

Mr. N.C. Chaturvedi, AICC General Secretary in charge of the states' political affairs, has justified the silence of the Rajasthan Congress leaders on the specious ground that they have to live amidst people who have deep faith in the tradition of *Sati*. (How can they afford to lose the votes of these lakhs of demented *Sati* supporters and admirers?). What is important for them is their votes! Their cowardice and the dehumanising and monstrous values they uphold for their selfish ends must have shocked all human beings who have got some conscience and decency still left.

It is shocking to learn that those who attended this barbaric '*Sati Utsav*' were a couple of Congress M.Ps and a number of M.L.As belonging to all political parties as they did not want to lose this huge vote bank of illiterate, brainless, demented and superstitious people!

The police *chowki* was barely a mile away from the place where the *Sati* was committed. Thousands of people had gathered at this place hours before. A long *Sati* procession was taken out with full-throated cries of '*Satimata ki Jai*'. Either the police were deaf or were totally inefficient and incompetent or they connived at this crime. In either case, the entire police personnel of this police *chowki* should be dismissed and the Superintendent of Police too for dereliction of duty and for his statement that the police did not want to hurt the religious sentiments of lakhs of *Sati* admirers and hence did not intervene.

Some persons defended Smt. Roop Kanwar's act of self-immolation as her fundamental right to die with dignity. What a distortion of my friend Minoo Masani's advoca-

cy of the right to die with dignity!

In the first place, was this decision to commit self-immolation a voluntary act? The following facts speak for themselves:

Smt. Roop Kanwar had been buried under a heavy load of firewood and the funeral place was guarded by a large number of sword-wielding Rajput 'warriors' so that she could not escape!

When the fire died out, the partially-lit Smt. Kanwar screamed for mercy and help. What crime had she committed that she should cry for mercy?

A few persons, with some human decency and conscience still left who could not bear to see the pains of Smt. Kanwar but unable to help her, quietly left the place in tears and utter shame, as they were helpless in a crowd of lakhs of *sati* admirers and sword-wielding Rajput 'warriors' guarding the pyre and as the police did not want to intervene lest they hurt the religious sentiments of lakhs of people who had assembled to watch this barbaric show (as the Superintendent of Police said). None had the courage to protest against this barbaric *tamasha* and help that poor, innocent and beautiful girl of 18!

The fire was re-lit with vengeance by those who were determined to murder her. What barbarism indeed!

According to a report in the *Hindustan Times* of 28th September, 1987, Shri Maal Singh, Smt. Roop Kanwar's husband, was undergoing treatment for impotency during the period when he was married to Smt. Roop Kanwar. It is now further disclosed that from the time of her marriage on 17th January, 1987 and upto her '*Sati*' on 4th September, 1987, Smt. Roop Kanwar had barely spent 20 days at her husband's place and returned to her husband on hear-

ing of his illness only a few days before his death.

It is impossible for any person even with elementary intelligence to believe that there was any great attachment or infatuation between this young girl and her husband. It was not a love marriage which could have led her to commit suicide.

The report in the *Hindustan Times*, adds that during her sojourn at Jaipur after her marriage, Smt. Roop Kanwer was involved with a boy from the 'Mali' caste and eloped with him for three days. If this is true then it knocks the bottom of her having committed 'voluntary sati'.

The disappearance of the doctor who treated Shri Maal Singh and who is alleged to have drugged Smt. Roop Kanwar is intriguing indeed.

It is disgraceful that both the parents and the parents-in-law should have glorified her 'sati'

which it is understood resulted in their becoming millionaires overnight reportedly with fantastic donations pouring in from stupid, superstitious and illiterate people for the 'glorious' sacrifice made by 'Satimata' Roop Kanwar.

What is even more disgraceful and tragic is that businessmen and traders should have exploited this 'pilgrim' centre and stepped in to make a fast buck by opening road-side hotels and shops selling eatables and Roop Kanwar's photographs.

This one horrible incident is reason enough for all of us Indians who never lose an opportunity to brag about our great cultural heritage to hang down our heads in shame.

Money will buy a pretty good dog but it won't buy the wag of his tail.

— Josh Billings

The Origins of Sati

The custom of burning widows on their husbands' pyres was also an importation into India. Herodotus describes it as practised by the ancient Scythians and Thracians; if we may believe him, the wives of a Thracian fought for the privilege of being slain over his grave. Probably the rite came down from the almost world-wide primitive usage of immolating one or more of the wives or concubines of a prince or a rich man ... The *Atharva-veda* speaks of it as an old custom, but the *Rig-veda* indicates that in Vedic days it had been softened to the requirement that the widow should lie on her husband's pyre for a moment before his cremation. The Mahabharata shows the institution restored and unrepentant;... Manu makes no mention of the practice. The Brahmins opposed it at first, then accepted it, and finally lent it a religious sanction by interpreting it as bound up with the eternity of marriage...

Suttee became less and less popular as India developed contacts with Europe; but the Hindu widow continued to suffer many disabilities...

Will Durant, *Our Oriental Heritage*

Voltas refrigerator If you want the best.



All the other refrigerators put together cannot match the advantages of the Voltas refrigerator. A 7-year warranty on the compressor. 100% insulation with polyurethane foam. The latest powder painting. Unbreakable ABS cabinet and door liners. Adjustable bottle and cabinet shelves. Fully automatic defrosting. And more. Come, take a look at it. You'll never settle for any other refrigerator.



ULKA-VR-7-85

Forward — Towards the 21st Century

Louella Lobo Prabhu

Such a title has necessarily to be a question mark rather than a statement, when one reads of a public *sati* "being performed, with the administration having prior knowledge of it, and the pyre becoming a local shrine, indicating an overwhelming social sanction for this reversion to the Middle Ages. On the other hand, the hi-tech of the 21st century, almost seems to be here — but only for the privileged few, a shocking example being the project for installation of car telephones initially for subscribers in the Capital, while in rural India 40 years after independence, most of a woman's working day, is spent in a long trek for water and fuel.

It is easier to pinpoint the flaws in the system, than to suggest correctives which provide an alternative course of action. Like the proverbial mice trying to bell the cat, such correctives and alternative solutions, need to be carried out by a Party in power which has a vested interest in perpetuating the status quo. For this, it is impossible to blame only the Congress I. When circumstances did catapult another Party to power at the Centre, it dallied with necessary reforms, till its short hour of grace was over.

Hereditary Prime-Ministership

The main thrust of political debate must necessarily be on the form and functioning of government, which, since 1947, dominates every aspect of a citizen's life. India has led South East Asia in providing an ugly mutation of Western democracy: a hereditary Prime Ministership. As a former General writing in a national daily pointed out, this tradition did not start with the Nehru family, but with the hereditary succession of Peshwas in the kingdom founded by Shivaji. The difference was that the Peshwas did not claim to derive their legitimacy from popular election. In the deviant model created by the Nehru dynasty, succession was created first by clever manipulation of the Party process (*vide* the Kamaraj Plan) later, by the expedient of Mrs. Gandhi's bringing in each of her sons, to "aid and advise". Here this function is technically

the constitutional *raison d'être* of the Union Cabinet and the bureaucracy, the latter specifically trained to render "aid and advise" only notionally given by Ministers, in what is polite constitutional fiction. Once inducted into the position of heir-apparent, the notional nod to democratic norms by way of popular election was a mere farce. All the electoral cards were stacked in favour of first one Crown Prince, (Sanjay Gandhi) then the other. Death cut short the reign of one. Death ushered in the reign of the second, (Rajiv) whose tenure, at mid-term, has however, run into unexpected bad weather.

It is hard to predict what will happen even within a week from now, let alone the next century. However, it is a healthy development that a few Congressmen have begun to leave the Party and openly challenge its leadership. While those who quit are not knights "*sans peur et sans reproche*", such a development would have been unthinkable in Mrs. Gandhi's time. Had Mr. Gandhi not suffered some erosion of popularity, it would not have been beyond the bounds of probability, to imagine that in the event of his exit from

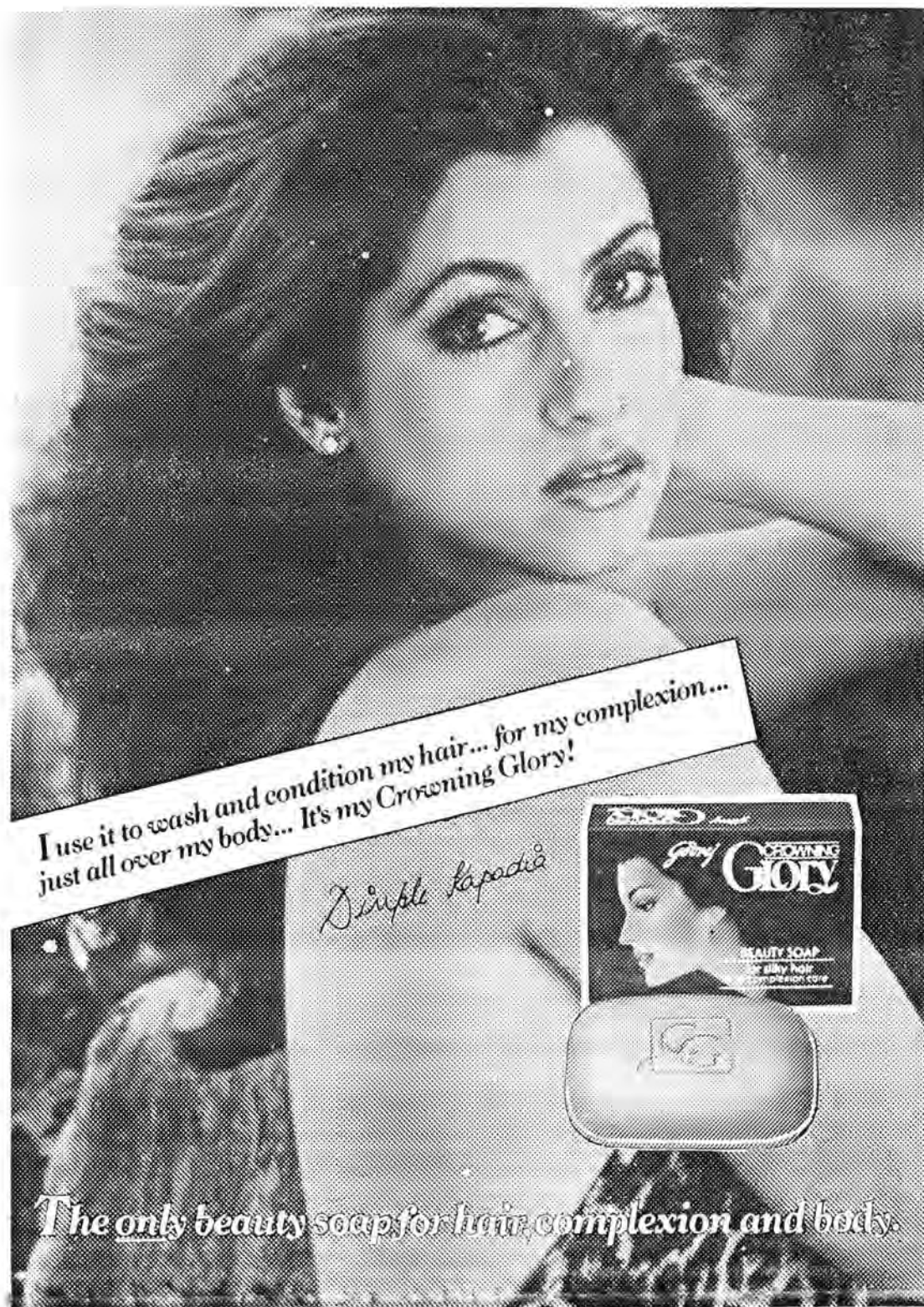
Things to come can be shaped by the individual, who has the courage and perception to stand up for good things, and to dissent from bad ones, without reckoning the effect of a lone voice. It is enough if one just man stands up as a witness, testifying to what he believes is right or wrong. Out of lone voices speaking out in a seeming wilderness has come whatever is good in history and society today.

the political stage, for any reason whatever, sycophants would pass the mantle of leadership to his foreign-born wife, or either of his children. At present, the Party lacks the sagacity to even theoretically consider an alternative leader in a doomsday scenario. Much will depend on whether the dissidents will be able to effect a split in the Congress Party.

It seems, on present indications, that they have not been able to take their opportunities at "the flood". As of now, Mr. V.P. Singh, the messiah of the dissidents, (and even the opposition parties), is beginning to show himself as the man of straw he is: recanting on policies he himself formulated; allying once with the left, another time with the right, and extorting the obscurantist title of "Rajrishi" to win over the Brahmin lobby. He is no J.P. And as of now, Rajiv Gandhi appears to have survived the crisis though somewhat shorn of his halo — the *Probe* poll showed he would win hands down, in his constituency, while an *India Today* poll still placed him way ahead of every other politician in India. Barring a violent exit from the scene, chances are that he would come back in a mid-term or scheduled election, though certainly with an appreciably reduced majority.

Systemic Change Not the Answer

The more important question is whether a systemic change is needed or feasible. The debate on the Presidential versus the Parliamentary system, is old hat, and almost any reader would know the arguments for and against either. The Presidential system no doubt frees the Chief Executive from dependence on the legislature. But the Chief Executive in a presidential system can be no less populist in his pre-election promises than political parties in a parliamentary one. Moreover, while the presidency gives him freedom to appoint his advisers for their expertise, these could well turn out to be party hacks illustrating the worst excesses of the spoils system. The fact, is that any constitutional system can be perverted — if the Executive is so minded. In India



I use it to wash and condition my hair... for my complexion...
just all over my body... It's my Crown of Glory!

Shirley Kapadia



The only beauty soap for hair, complexion and body.

caste, money power, and the emotive power or "waves" have pitchforked strange candidates into Parliament and State legislatures. Cabinets chosen from elected representatives, offer little by way of expertise. However, since the time of Mrs. Gandhi, it has been customary for the Prime Minister to bypass elected representatives, and form a new power centre, of which at one time, the main prophets were two ex-stenographers (Yash Kapoor and R.K. Dhavan). The new cabal is also largely one of cronies, whose changing positions *vis-a-vis* the Prime Minister, seem better suited to a decadent court, than a functioning democracy.

A change of system from parliamentary to presidential, may effect peripheral change for the better, but not perhaps any substantial betterment, when the system must be worked by the same poor human material. Remedies have been sought by suggesting various measures for cleansing elections, and introducing proportional representation, so that the character of the legislature more genuinely reflects the results of an election (today a party with a bare minority of votes can win an overwhelming plurality of votes, in the first-past-the-post principle at present followed). As already pointed out, the difficulty is, that the ruling Congress would certainly not initiate a change which destroys its electoral advantages. Nor, to be fair did the Janata Party when it became the government. It would also be safe to predict that no other party, once returned to power, would be enthusiastic about jeopardising it, for the long term good of the people. What all parties can do, is to induct the best men as candidates, instead of each party competing with the next one, to choose candidates whose principal qualifications are extraneous to the only one which matters: moral and intellectual integrity.

Judging from the infighting plaguing all political parties, leaders want to oust all brothers near the throne, and hang on to office even in the splinter group of a party, possibly till death parts man and office. Parties may be compelled to seek reasonably competent candidates with a minor constitutional change. It would not be possible now, to go back on adult franchise. Indeed the electorate has often acted with surprising maturity and good judgement despite

widespread illiteracy. The reform could take the form of minimum qualifications (not for voters) but for candidates. It is not too much to expect from those who make the laws by which a whole nation has to live. Should they not have at least the capacity to understand the often highly technical legislation they pass? It requires only a minor amendment of the Constitution, prescribing the requisite minimum educational qualification for a candidate, where the law now lays down only the statutory requirements of citizenship, age, and absence of a criminal record (the last is frequently breached). Even if such an amendment is not passed, it can be made a reality, if parties are highly selective in their choice of candidates. The opposition parties should set an example in this direction.

Problems Politicised

In respect of the main political problem facing the country: fissiparous tendencies which threaten the integrity and unity of India, it is easier to pinpoint what went wrong, than to suggest how they can be put right at this point of time. In both cases, the Congress cynically manipulated separatist movements and their leaders, till both became Frankenstein monsters. Subsequent "accords" promisingly begun, were again made the victims of electoral politics (the Chandigarh and river-waters issue "filibustered", when the Haryana election was due). The futility of such tactics showed up when the electorate threw out the Congress with a resounding slap in West Bengal and Haryana. While it cannot be said in all honesty, that the Sikhs and Punjab suffered more neglect than any other State, prior to the emergence of the movement, the Sikh psyche was undoubtedly mauled by Operation Blue Star, and the riots which swept Delhi when Mrs. Gandhi died. The half hearted inquiries which followed, and punishment of the guilty – which did not follow – seems to have turned even moderate Sikhs bitter. President's Rule, and stiffening of anti-terrorist laws have not relieved a situation, in which soft measures are now too late, but harsh ones breed further violence. Perhaps nothing that the Congress (I) can do, would now, carry credibility. But as of now, a change of party or of leadership at the Centre seems to be out. In looking back it seems like a bad joke that the opposition was branded as traitor-

ous, for advocating adoption of some parts of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution – before the elections – which became the basis of the accord subsequently achieved by the Prime Minister and Sardar Longowal.

Mercifully, the Gorkhaland movement has not yet attained the same shrill separatist pitch. But it has the potential to do so, if the same game is played out because another party happens to rule the state. There are other compelling political issues which remain unresolved, for instance communalism, of which the supreme example is the backflip on the Muslim Women's Bill to pacify the fundamentalist lobby of that community. It is one more example of backward to the 15th century, under the present leadership, without much hope that the entire opposition as currently constituted, is truly secular and progressive. It remains a curious feature of our political scene, that parties of the so-called-right are repositories of Hindu orthodoxy, while those of the left appear to have established secular credentials (the CPM in Kerala).

Rajiv's Retreat

It remains to take a bird's eye view of likely economic developments in the next thirteen years. This again, depends on the emerging political patterns at that time. As of now non-ideological pragmatism the one plus point scored by the Prime Minister in his early days, seems to be following a well worn route. His instincts are those of a technocrat, but his political weakness led to early retreat from his position, by incorporating "socialism" at the Bombay session of his Party. Following V.P. Singh's ouster, both the P.M. and Mr. Singh are playing to the left gallery, repudiating the faintest burgeoning of pragmatic thinking with which they started. Assuming Rajiv does stay in power, it would seem he is hurtling back to his mother's brand of "politiconomic tricks", (if one may coin such a word!) It is meant to exemplify gimmick-laden policies cynically pursued for economic gain. The abolition of Privy Purses saved the exchequer less than the loss on a single public sector unit, or the internal and external travel of Union Ministers. Banks have virtually become the agents of the Ruling Party, to subsidise party workers under the pretext of helping the poor. "Socialism" of this

variety should by now be a dirty word. But it seems that no party thinks it can make a bid for power without at least a rhetorical genuflection before this "God that failed".

It is particularly surprising that these shibboleths are being revived, when both the U.S.S.R. and China are themselves moving towards some form of market economy. The mixed economy which is the Nehruvian contribution to India (?) offers neither the incentives of one system, nor the discipline of the other. Asia nearer home, shows that the relatively unregimented economics of Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore have shown the best progress, without a tenth of India's natural resources. It is not easily understood by our politicians, that socialism is a very variable hat, whose most successful model is the Federal Republic of West Germany, where individual incentives to produce are matched by a high degree of social security. It seems likely that the Fabian Socialist model will be followed by any government in power. It enables the government to cheat the masses with the slogan that it is levelling down the heights of economic power. This, while actually administering the apparatus of controls to favour the selected few for a hefty consideration! Note the success story of Reliance, for whose benefit policies were tailored to a 'T'. *L'affaire* Swraj Paul is another (earlier) example of how socialism equated with controls can be manipulated for the benefit of a single person.

The award of commercial or Defence contracts, be it for the H.B.J. pipe line; German submarines or Swedish guns, have opened up vast areas of subterranean election finance, making the traditional mulction of "deshi" industrialists look like petty change. Corruption is no longer kept decently secret, when election funds arrive by plane, in boxes personally claimed by a state party President, for the purpose of fighting elections! Is it any wonder that elections, financed by underhand national and international dealings, poison the body politic from the very moment when a candidate accepts a 'ticket'? And that the "kickback" is claimed when the recipient — be it an individual or foreign government — must pay his financier interest on the investment: one which may not represent the best possible deal for the country? The scope for this

article obviously cannot cover the gamut of all the problems now existing, and the path of their future development. Whatever be the things that ail the State, one comes back to the fact that the ruling Party, (which is the State at any given moment of time) will not be a willing participant in its own liquidation. Change, improvement, progress, must come from Man, mainly through his formation by two important instruments for change: Education, and the Media.

Importance of Education

Like most things Indian, education offers a great paradox: a country with an abysmal illiteracy rate, has more graduates and post-graduates than some of the most advanced countries in the world. Whereas the privilege of a college education is generally to be earned by some demonstration of aptitude, both in the Communist and Capitalist countries of Europe, urban Indians today, think of college as a matter of course. We now have an army of potential clerks and typists, who apply in thousands for a single job vacancy. Like Eliza Doolittle when she returns from her triumph at the ball, most of these semi-literate graduates, are not fit for the professions they seek, and are too proud to go back to a parental avocation, which involves working with their hands.

The New Education Policy has not come to terms with this phenomenon. At the upper end of the ladder are institutions of higher learning like I.I.T.s and schools of management which get the best students, and turn out alumni who would be the pride of any university. At the bottom of the ladder, we have government schools in villages, often minus roof, books, playground or teacher. Yet, if any strategy must be evolved towards fashioning better citizens, it is here that the main thrust of education must start. Fortunately, the private sector in education — particularly Christian institutions — have made up at least partially, for the lacunae in government's efforts. They not only provide a superior academic background but value education which is even more important. Since secularism is an arm of State policy, its only visible manifestation has been the absence of religious instruction in institutions run by the State. The thinking probably is, that in a well rounded curriculum, values would be inherent in the course-content itself.

In fact, this does not happen, and young people today emerge from their education, knowing neither their religion, nor any values which guide them as a code of conduct for life. The primary school is the logical place to start, with the re-shaping of the generation that is to come. Yet, at any stage of education today the sacred relationship of "guru-shishya" has been lost. It seems hard to think of it now, in the context of teachers striking for higher wages. Teaching is a job, certainly. But Teaching, Medicine, Media, are three areas of activity, which by tradition, are perceived by the public not just as jobs, but as vocations which involve the public good, not just the earning of a livelihood by the practitioner. Few match up to the ideal in the teaching line. But some do, particularly those, who belong to Religious Orders, and are motivated to teach not only book-learning but learning for life.

The Role of the Press

The Press is another quarter from which the cleansing of public life must come — the more so, in the present context, when there is such an imbalance in the representation of the people. For many writers, as for many teachers, writing is just a job. But for the dedicated journalist, writer, film-maker (for this too is a powerful medium) putting out the truth without fear or favour, makes Media perhaps the last bastion of a free society. The Press often fails — in speedy buildup of tin-Gods and an equally speedy rejection of them. This was so with Mrs. Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, and now V.P. Singh, who seems to be undergoing a deification process with some of the gloss beginning to wear off, in less than three months! The Press needs to see people and issues "steadily, and as a whole". It must be as wary of blandishments, as of brickbats by the Ruling Establishment.

And finally, things to come can be shaped by the individual, who has the courage and perception to stand up for good things, and to dissent from bad ones, without reckoning the effect of a lone voice. It is enough if one just man stands up as a witness, testifying to what he believes is right or wrong. Out of lone voices speaking out in a seeming wilderness, has come whatever is good in history and society today.

MS. LOUELLA LOBO PRABHU is
Associate Editor of *Insight*

FROM THE FOREIGN PRESS

e Succession in Tunisia

Ian Tickle

The change of presidents in Tunisia may not have affected world events. Nevertheless it holds out as an example the dangers of how even a revered leader in the third world could consider himself indispensable once in office. While we may pride ourselves on being a democracy events in recent months should shake us out of our complacency. It is very easy for Bourguibas to develop in our midst. — Eds.

is not often that one is glad to see a *chef d'état*, especially one by a military. Yet there is no doubt that the removal of President Bourguiba of Tunisia is to be welcomed. Many times in the last five years he has appeared to be acted irrationally, and it is thought by many Tunisians that he is in fact much older than the 84 years that he claimed.

Habib Bourguiba is one of the heroes of the Third World independence movement, and he will be revered as such both during the rest of his life and afterwards. Although he has always been seen as a dictator in Tunisia since independence, and although he made himself president-for-life some years ago, his rule was relatively moderate and benign, and Tunisia has made great progress towards prosperity under it. He is one of the few independence leaders who has never tried to gain political support by threatening to apply for help from the Soviet Union. He has been a friend of the West and a solid ally.

Tunisia is not a very important country on the world's map, but the thought arises in the wake of President Bourguiba's removal what would happen in the case of senility or madness in the case of a state whose leader had massive armed forces at his disposal. It is the first time in modern history that such considerations have arisen, and there is no doubt that the institution of president-for-life which exists in several countries is one which is quite undemocratic and should not exist. It is a perfect example of the cult of the personality, which has been generally condemned in recent times, and it is likely to lead to situations such as that which has existed for the last few years in Tunisia. It is important that one of the first things which the new president, Mr. Ben Ali, has done is to take measures to get rid of this unfortunate institution. It may be pertinent to remind readers of a convention which exists in Switzerland by which not even a street is named after a

person still living, however celebrated he may be or however much the nation owes him.

There is another reason why we should welcome the removal of President Bourguiba. These are troubled times, especially in the Arab world, and Tunisia needs a strong leader. As in all moderate Arab countries, Tunisia has been threatened by the tide of Muslim fundamentalism; and it was indeed on this matter that President Bourguiba's final departure from rational behaviour seems to have occurred.

Many Muslims find much that is attractive in fundamentalism. They do not see that many of its extreme manifestations are contrary to the precepts of the Koran, but they are aware that there is much in modern life which is contrary to the word of the Prophet and are thus in favour of a religious renewal. The need to find a compromise between this need for moral resurgence and the fanatical fundamentalism being propagated in many quarters is a real one, and it is a matter which needs to be treated with wisdom and understanding by the leaders of Arab countries.

It is precisely this that President Bourguiba was not able to do. Muslim fundamentalists had been found to be responsible for a number of bomb attacks which took place in Tunisia. Their apparent aim was to scare off tourists and therefore harm the Tunisian economy. They were not very effective, and the perpetrators did not find much echo in Tunisian society. The latter were caught and brought to justice. It is thanks to President Bourguiba no doubt that the Tunisian judiciary has retained a relative independence, even in political matters, although this might be disputed by some of the former president's opponents exiled in France, and the verdicts handed down in the case of the Sousse bombings

were exemplary in this respect. The leaders were condemned to death, and those whom the judges felt had been simply led astray were given prison sentences of varying lengths.

President Bourguiba had been aghast at the bombings, but he was equally aghast at what he considered to be the lightness of the sentences. He thought that all the conspirators should have been condemned to death, and the last straw which brought about his removal was an attempt which he made to pervert the course of justice by ordering that death sentences should be prepared in advance of their trial in the case of another group of Muslim fundamentalists who were to be brought before the courts.

Disapproval of such behaviour does not mean that President Ben Ali approves of Muslim extremists, although it does indicate that he is prepared to respect his political adversaries, which will be encouraging for Tunisia's friends, and also for many exiled personalities who may now feel that they can return to their country and take part in its political life.

But what Tunisia undoubtedly needs is political progress which will match its economic advance in recent years — and for which the Tunisians have their former leader to thank. Governing élites in many countries have been recently coming to the conclusion that there comes a point in a country's economic development where a free market economy — which is widely seen as the only road to prosperity — must be accompanied by free political institutions. Marxist economics — which for many of the first generation of independence leaders seemed a panacea for economic advancement — have been shown to represent a chimera. It is now up to President Ben Ali to steer a middle course between strong government and legality.

COURTESY: *Swiss Press Review*

'Welcome to the world-class!'



New *Godrej* Electronic Typewriter A new chapter in corporate communications.

The new Godrej Electronic Typewriter is an advanced machine that bestows a distinguished new look to all your letters and documents. It spotlessly erases errors. Offers a choice of attractive types. Positions text. Self-types 'originals'. Underlines, tabulates, spaces — at the press of a button. And generally reflects your management style.

Typing artistry

The Godrej ET's array of touch-key electronic features will dramatically improve your secretary's performance. And boost her pride in her output.

Heightened efficiency

By speeding typing operations and taking over repetitive tasks, the Godrej ET will free your personnel for other productive work.

Dependable Godrej service

Every machine confirms Godrej's long-established reputation for manufacturing excellence. Backed by an efficient and extensive service network.

The Godrej Electronic Typewriter
No modern office should be without one.

Godrej

No. 1 proves it again

For more information, write to:
Godrej & Boyce Mfg. Co. Pvt. Ltd.,
Pirojsha Nagar, Vikhroli,
Bombay 400 079.

BOOK REVIEWS

QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT – BRITISH SECRET DOCUMENTS by Dr. P.N. Chopra; Interprint, 16 A, Naraina II, New Delhi, 110028; 1986; Pp 418; Rs. 195



It is 45 years since the Quit India Movement burst on the Indian scene. Much has been written about it by historians, political scientists, above all by several participants. The volume under review is the first of the Intelligence Reports of the British Government to be released after nearly 44 years. It contains 210 documents and 18 appendices and covers the years 1942 and 1943.

It is a strange assortment of documents – several are drawn from police files; some reproduce Congress leaders' instructions about the conduct of the movement from time to time and in various parts of the country; a few reproduce newspaper comments on the progress of the movement; others retail underground activities, sabotage and other acts of violence. One fact prominently emerges – Congress leaders looked askance at violence to property but prohibited attack on persons.

Document 96 (18 September 1948) categorically states that "there is no evidence, to prove directly controlled enemy activity in India – despite continuous and very numerous enquiries in every possible direction, we have not been able to establish that there are agents in U.P. working under direct inspiration from the enemy or financed directly by the Axis Powers". So this was one ghost laid to rest!

Industrialists had their sympathy with the movement in several provinces – stoppage of work in mills, mines and factories, the documents reveal, was financed and helped by them – the more prominent being, Tata, Birla, Walchand Hirachand, G.L. Mehta then Chairman of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce. A little tidbit states that G.D. Birla telephonically informed Gandhiji on the night of 8 August 1942 of his impending arrest a few hours later. He is also credited with keeping the Congress active in Rajputana by giving handsome gifts to Sir Mirza Ismail.

The Congress Socialist Party, specially Jayaprakash Narayan, Ram Manohar Lohia, Achyut Patwardhan, Aruna Asaf Ali get their activities, specially underground, recognised. J.P.'s escape from jail and his open letter to American soldiers are highlighted.

The appendices are extensive and cover such varied subjects as "Instructions of A.I.C.C. to all P.C.C.S regarding movement," "Jayaprakash Narayan's appeal to Freedom Fighters" and his plan to occupy Delhi "Secret Note on Revolutionary Activities." The attitudes of Communists (Appendix VII) unfold the uncertainty and want of communication between the leadership and other levels within the party; while the latter, singly or in groups, organised labour and students for participation in the movement, specially in Bengal, they were ordered by the Bengal Committee "to keep out of Gandhi's movement." The leadership also wavered in its attitudes – P.C. Joshi commented on the arrest of Congress leaders stating that "the insolent imperialists have struck the first blow" even when the Congress was ready for negotiations. And yet in the very next sentence he revealed that "we communists firmly believe that the lead for struggle given by the Working Committee was not the path of national struggle but of national suicide."

One reaches out to the volume with hope and expectations at getting inside information on events and incidents of the penultimate struggle for freedom. The enthusiasm gets somewhat restrained as one goes through it. Several documents and a few appendices cover events and incidents known over the

years – they are hardly secret documents.

One wishes that Dr. Chopra and his colleagues had not taken the easy way out by publishing the documents chronologically. For the reader this detracts from coherence. Another flaw is that documents pertaining to particular provinces are widely scattered and hardly project a comprehensive view of events. North India – U.P. and Bihar – get adequate exposure; the rest of the country, one may aver, suffers by neglect. A glaring omission is the total neglect of happenings in Bombay Province and mainly Bombay City. There is no mention anywhere about the Congress Radio which was broadcast on its special wavelength daily from Bombay.

It is now 45 years to the events and incidents the Documents refer to. The participants as also observers of the movement are now a generation that is passing away. For the young readers, specially those born in freedom, 'Quit India' is "history", not a movement. Disparate, disjointed documents carry neither information nor enlightenment. A brief introductory note about the particular incident referred to in each document would have added great value to the volume and made it comprehensible to the lay reader. But we must be grateful for small mercies – at last now we are beginning to lay our hands on secret documents.

Aloo J. Dastur

TRUSTEESHIP by J.D. Sethi; Gandhi Peace Foundation, 221/223 Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg, New Delhi; 1986; Pp238; Rs.100/-

Trusteeship is the least elaborated and, as a result, the least understood, aspect of Gandhism. Although he traced it to the *Isavasuopanishad* and the *Bhagavad Gita* and knew that scriptures of other traditions too sanctioned it, what initially opened his eyes to it was Anglo-Saxon equity. Gandhi himself was in no doubt about the tenets of the doctrine or its implications,



the means to its attainment or the mode of its operation. Perhaps, it was partly because he was most clear and certain about it himself that he did not articulate it at length. Trusteeship is a clear pointer to *Aparigraha* (non-possession), an ideal enjoined by the earliest Indian texts and reiterated by Gandhi. If *Aparigraha* goes with *Nish-kartva* (non-doership), trusteeship would approximate to *Karmaphalatya-ga*, enjoined by the Bhagavad-Gita.

Many a volume has been published on Gandhian trusteeship. Gandhi's pronouncements on it were ably put together by the ace cricketer of yester years, the late Vijay Merchant, in 1969, and also by Anand Hingorani who sorted out Gandhi's ideas under comprehensive rubrics. There have also been treatises on Gandhian economics, notably in its Vinobite phase, and on the Bhoodan movement and its ramifications. Gandhi passed away and towering Gandhians like Satish Chandra Dasgupta, J.C. Kumarappa and J.B. Kripalani came to be discounted when the movement, destined to be led by the epigone, was shepherded by Vinoba. Gandhism seemed to recede from active engagement in the struggle for social justice, even sport a certain ersatz religiosity that could practise callous remoteness from social concern. Appropriately enough, about this time it became ideal grist to the academic mills and recondite interpretations and expositions have kept pouring to instruct us how correctly to conceive Gandhism.

Gandhi did not rule out state intervention or government control in the practical evolution of trusteeship but few can plead that he would have

countenanced the manifestly pro-establishmentarian proclivity of the Vinobite philosophy. In his attempt to improve on Gandhism, Vinoba declared Gandhian satyagraha quite crude and to clinch his statement he chose to invoke Rabindranath Tagore's criticism of the Gandhian boycott of foreign goods in the twenties. Gandhi's *ahimsa* insisted on social justice but Vinoba, in effect seemed progressively to stress order itself as the ultimate value of social life. It is a far cry from the *Isopani-shad* to the *Leviathan*; but, maybe, *Anusasanaparva* can play the expedient sandwich between the two and glue them together! No wonder the saint came to be known as the 'Sarkari Sadhu' and Bhoodan, which was launched with establishmentarian endorsement and official fanfare, to counter communist terrorism in Telengana in the fifties, ended up as a tame exercise in augmenting Gandhian terminology. Vinoba fondly believed that Bhoodan could be the one subsuming sovereign principle and to that end discounted time-tested Gandhian institutions, including the impeccable Constructive Programme. Trusteeship tended to be reduced to Bhoodan and, as though a *niche* had been earmarked for it has since subsisted by waiting on heavy official doles.

Vishwanath Tandon's paper on 'Vinoba and the Theory of Trusteeship' in this volume fails to spell out what precisely is Vinoba's contribution to the substance of the theory, apart from terminological innovations such as '*vishvasta-vritti*'. No doubt Kamala Gadre is not right in hailing Ram Manohar Lohia's attempt to introduce a Draft Trusteeship Bill in the Lok Sabha as a 'vigorous thrust' for trusteeship, but it is difficult to dissent from her characterization of Vinoba's Bhoodan-Gramdan efforts for trusteeship as a 'feeble fight'.

The papers in this volume are of varying quality, some very good and many indifferent. The most thoughtful contribution is Ravindra Varma's "Gandhi's Theory of Trusteeship: an Essay in Understanding" which explores, examines and clarifies many tenets and issues of the doctrine, bringing keen insight in the attempt. Devdatta Dabholkar's "Trusteeship — a Blind Alley or Breakthrough" is as authentic as it is fresh in reiterating the moral and spir-

itual implications of trusteeship. Dada Dharmadhikari's "Gandhi and Trusteeship" is as brief as it is testamentary. Acharya Ramamurthy's "Trusteeship in Agriculture" is a timely explication of Trusteeship as an essential part of Gramdan and Gram Swaraj.

Kahlil Gibran's 'Work is Love made Visible', as well as Shann Turnbull's "Trusteeship as a Technique for Sustainable Industrialization", chiefly detail the origin and development of the experiment in the Basque village of Mondragon in Spain pioneered by Father Jose Maria Arizmendi.

Among the academic papers the best are Raghavan Iyer's "Gandhian Trusteeship in Theory and Practice" which explores the moral qualities that go to make the ideal trustee; M.L. Dantwala's "Trusteeship : its Value Implications" and Editor J.D. Sethi own "Trusteeship and the Crisis in Economic Theory", which exposes the basic hollowness of modern economic man. J.D. Sethi in his second essay "Economic Task and Trusteeship" ably pleads for workers participation as well as social accountability in industry. Susheela Gidwani's "Gandhian Trusteeship : a Corporate Management Strategy for Economic Justice" is a solid contribution that lucidly sets forth the distinctive principles of Gandhism and evaluates the imperatives and possibilities of transforming mammoth corporate outfits into Gandhian Trusteeship comprising not only stockholders but employees, consumer and government. But can the modern economy ever become Gandhian and can such economic gigantism accord with the vision of trusteeship?

There is a valuable collection of documents at the end of the volume, which includes Gandhi's famous six-point formula of Trusteeship (repeated in not a few of the preceding papers) but omits Ram Manohar Lohia's Draft Trusteeship Bill.

Pragya Kaivalya

INDIA THE PERPETUAL PARADOX
by Sasthi Brata; Rupa & Co., Bombay;
Pp 318; Rs.30/-

The book under review is not a scholarly study of India in its myriad facets. Nor is there an attempt at being scholarly. It is an irreverent and facile account attempting to see post-



there is a candid admission by the author to this effect.

In his foreword the author has set himself some modest goals and is barely able to achieve them in the following pages. In his attempt to show our social and economic backwardness the author has waxed eloquent in one instance describing a child birth in Calcutta over approximately five pages of turgid prose. We wish the author frees himself from the shackles that seem to bind many authors to a predictable course of vituperative criticism. But disappointment looms large as Brata fails to break the mould. For Sasthi Brata is no different from the other India-baiters when it comes to good old muckraking. It does not automatically mean or follow that Sasthi Brata goes the whole hog. There are refreshing passages where he has cast a benevolent eye at India's travails and traumas. Particularly gratifying is his grudging praise for India's democratic superstructure. He has clearly brought to bear the fact that Indian democracy is a shining jewel amidst the dictatorial darkness of the subcontinent.

The trenchant criticism that the fruits

of democracy and development has not percolated to the masses is just frothy outpouring without understanding the class structure in India. Repeating parrot like that there is no percolation is to fly in the face of reality. In this respect Selbourne's book about India is a much more perceptive analysis.

While dealing with the palpable and pervasive poverty in India Sasthi Brata falls into a time tested trap. The immediacy of the open sores and the huddled form of the urban poor sufficiently diverts his quest to understand poverty in all its degradation. This diversion turns him from an enquirer into a narrator of sight, sounds and odours.

There has been no real attempt to understand how the income pattern is skewed heavily in favour of the "Haves". The plight of the rural poor still labouring under the yoke of feudal conditions has not caught his imagination. The resultant migration to the cities to live in the sewers as squatters eking out a rat like existence and dying a despondent and degrading death as a destitute, would perhaps require the descriptive power of George Orwell. Sasthi Brata is no Orwell. The deep set feeling of com-

You can never switch off an Orient from your life.

Your Orient fan is there with you. Always. When your hair is softly ruffled. When you enjoy the cool comfort on a summer evening. Then you look up and notice your Orient fan. Working silently.

Orient's in-built excellence starts with every component. The sturdily built motor that works tirelessly under exacting conditions. The precision-made double bearings that ensure smooth operation. The die-cast aluminium body and blades with electrostatic paintwork that guarantee greater durability. They all go to make your Orient fan so perfect.

Orient comes in a wide range of models sweeps, colours and designs. Seven table fans. Six ceiling fans. A pedestal and a bracket model. All perfected through 30 years of experience from one of India's leading fanmakers. No wonder Orient fans are acclaimed in 25 countries around the world. Because your Orient fan is an investment for a lifetime.

ORIENT

Built to last

C/O GFI 14/85

passion that Orwell had for the English working class, so admirably evidenced in his writings especially in the "Road to Wigan Pier" or "Down and Out in Paris And London" is pointedly absent in Brata's writing of the rural and urban poor of India. It will perhaps be argued that there was never any commitment to write feelingly about the deprived class of people.

Some very seriously challengeable statements are made about the sexual mores of the Indian male. In one line memorable for its sheer prejudice it is insinuated that all Indians who go abroad evaluate the success of their sojourn by the sexual conquest that they have made. The famous cages of Bombay and the Love lanes of Sonagachi are written about to excite the thinly buried prurience in the reader's mind.

The economic and political structures are most cavalierly treated. Apart from making some predictable caricatures of India's parliamentary process and the politicians, Brata has never really understood the real power structure. His frequent absence from the land of his birth has perhaps muddled his perceptions of the nexus between power and money in India.

There are welcome paragraphs in which Brata pricks the balloons of pomposity. He excoriates the urban new rich whose world is but a faithful, tailwagging dog-like loyalty to their Western cultural gurus. The instant fads and affections deservedly get the treatment from Brata's colourful pen. In trying to paint too large a canvas Brata is not sufficiently incisive. Had he restricted himself to more achievable goals he could have given a better account of himself. There are no words of commiseration for the common man in his book. Instead there is a ceaseless outpouring of scorn and an all pervasive mocking of India's achievements. Piti- less things are said simply for the shock value and for consumption by a prejudiced Western reader. There are the predictable scenarios that are invasively painted like the burning ghats of Benaras; the half burnt corpses floating in the pure "Ganges"; the brothels of Bombay and Phoolan Devi.

One sometimes wistfully yearns for some encouraging words. There are none. Even in rationing some grudging praise, Brata is unable to free himself from the fake liberal mould of the Western press. Democracy, free institutions,

good transport systems, are all made out to be Britain's gifts to India. The steel frame of the civil service is made out to be another British largesse. Galbraith is ritually quoted and India is stamped as a functioning anarchy.

It is a shockingly naive book. Written perhaps in fond hopes and panting expectation of finding acceptance and approbation of the Western media.

M.R. Sundareswaran

GANDHI - THE TRADITIONAL ROOTS OF CHARISMA by Susan and Lloyd Rudolph; 1987; Orient Longman Ltd; Pp 95; Rs. 20



It is perhaps a measure of Gandhi's greatness, that no one has fully mined the rich treasures of his personality and philosophy. Decades after his death, Indian and foreign scholars (like the joint authors of this slim volume) can come up with new insights into both. Although this book is extracted from a bigger work entitled "The Modernity of Tradition", it is complete in itself.

The authors, both senior academicians at the University of Chicago, try to illustrate the thesis that social and political change in India must adapt but not annihilate the social ethos and fabric of the past. They reach the conclusion that "Gandhi realised in his daily life and public actions cultural ideals that many Indians honoured in their own lives but could not themselves enact". The authors go on to point out that even the constitution of the word "Swaraj" has a double meaning! "swa" meaning "self" and "raj" meaning rule. Though this is identified chiefly as the clarion call to

freedom, it also suggested how this was to eventuate: by moral ascendancy over self. Gandhi, they believe "propagated an ethical universalism" which attracted and still attracts a large number of people, proving that non-violent resistance is not mere passive quietism, but a dynamic force improving both physical and moral courage. They also note, however, as other commentators have, that these tactics worked, first, because the currents of history were also flowing in the proper direction, and because the adversaries at whom these tactics were directed, were not utterly without conscience and humanity. These thoughts are developed in six chapters which sum up their contents appropriately: "The Fear of Cowardice"; "Gandhi and the New Courage"; "Self control and Political Potency"; "This-Worldly Asceticism and Political Modernisation"; "The Private Origins of Public Obligation"; "The New Meaning of Old Paths."

The thesis is well developed, but it is not so much the arguments, as the anecdotes which make the book so readable. For those who have not read "My Experiments With Truth" in the original, this book picks up the most vivid and telling illustrations, to highlight their thesis. (They also make the interesting observation that Nehru's "Discovery of India" comes closer to the Western idea of a political treatise, whereas Gandhi's "Experiments With Truth" reads more like Rousseau's "Confessions"!)

However, while Nehru was an intensely private man, Gandhi saw no distinction between the public and the private man. His ideas on diet, sex, sanitation, and the like, all had their place, in what was not just a political philosophy, but a gospel for life.

The concept of a public life left open to public scrutiny even in intimate matters like sex, raises painful contrasts with public life and public men today. Personal morality today lies in not being found out. Public morality no longer provides any distinction between Party and Government. Gandhi made his wife's relatives pay for their stay in the Ashram, and disowned his son for helping his brother with Ashram funds. Today, the whole panoply of the State is pressed into service, even for making an impressive show at a Party meeting! "Eheu fugaces Posthus, Posthume";

alas for the days that are dead to me.

This little book is perhaps for the scholar rather than the general reader. But for the thoughtful reader it makes for provocative reading at a moderate price.

Louella Lobo Prabhu

CONCEPTS OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY IN THE INDIAN TRADITION by M.P. Rege (R.R. Memorial Lecture, 1984) – Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune 411004 – Orient Longman Ltd. Bombay; Pp 27; Rs 15.

This is an important contribution to the theme of equality and justice in the Indian tradition. It is very much to be hoped that Prof. Rege will develop the ideas into a full-length book.

Prof. Rege points that justice and equality are important concepts and the relations between them continue to be complex. According to him justice means adjusting claims and counter-claims advanced by different self-interested persons in a fair manner implying the principle that all men are equal. They should not suffer any disability due to caste, class or religion and should have equality of opportunity. He makes it clear that equality is essentially "a modern concept".

Prof. Rege holds that 'Nyayya' or a just society in ancient India was constituted according to 'dharma'. In the Vedic tradition, such a society was based on 'Chaturvarnya' with certain distinctive functions allotted to each. The Vedic concept of the 'Varna' system is part of a cosmic order represented by 'Purusha'. But the subsequent discussion in *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* makes it clear that four *Var-nas* emerged through the process of differentiation. Now this *Varna* system is a just society because it is based on *dharma* which makes for the prosperity of all. A person by performing his *varna* duties contributes to the maintenance of ordered society and justice to all its members. But in this scheme of justice, the idea of human equality is not present.

The Vedic dogma of divine creation was questioned by two traditions in ancient India – the Buddhists and the social contractualists.

According to Prof. Rege, the Buddha replaced a magical-ritualistic cosmic

order with a belief in a morally ordered universe. For the Buddha, the social role of an individual was contingent though men and women had to discharge their respective social roles for individual and social sustenance. He held that just as men share the same human essence, they also share a universal morality. If men are to be graded, it could be done only on the basis of the moral elevation. Mortality is universal not only in the sense that it is the same for all, but also in the sense that it is to be practiced with reference to all.

Prof. Rege maintains that due to Buddhist influence, the Vedic social philosophy was modified and the concept of 'Sadharana dharma' was added. 'Sadharana dharma' came along with 'moksha' hence, it wielded greater authority. Subsequently, in different dialogues of the *Mahabharata* the Vedic dogma of divine creation was rejected because it failed to provide rationale to a class divided *Varna* society. Bhrgu in the great epic claims that the *Var-nas* should be based on merit and occupations.

But according to Rege this notion of equality does not give rise to the concept of justice which demands fairness to be embodied in social arrangements. It locates individuals beyond society so that it is not any specific social relation between individuals which determines what is due from one to another. He points out that it falls short of justice because it is not a claim advanced, but only recognised. To be just to a man is to render him what is due to him. To render less is unjust and to render more is charitable. 'Moksha-dharma' requires that virtues be cultivated beyond any limit.

The second strand of Hindu social philosophy, according to Rege, regards society to be based on implicit social contract. This view is of course opposed to the dominant view in the Vedic tradition that the *Varna* system is of divine creation, hence, is a part of the natural order of things. For that purpose, he quotes a passage from the great epic. In this extract, Bhishma makes it clear that while everyone wants to pursue his interests without any constraint, he realises that he cannot do so in isolation, hence he has to enter into an agreement acceptable to all. The principle underlying the agreement is that an individual ought not to do unto

others what he would not like others to do unto him. They remain equal after society is formed because they all accept restraints on each individual's pursuit of this interest.

Now, the major problem was the reconciliation of this view of the nature of society with the *Varna* system. In this the affairs of the different autonomous communities were managed by their *Varna* conventions. But the extent of legitimate spheres of functions of state and individual are not properly discussed; perhaps due to the visible class of *Kshatriyas* and the living experience of the functioning of small autonomous communities. But as pointed out by Prof. Rege the entire mechanism was operated within a climate of belief in the *Varna* system. The support of the king is sought to see that these ascribed conventions and agreements are not broken and a recalcitrant member is punished. He points out that it is the protection of the autonomy of a community within the framework of *Chatur-varnya* that is seen as a requirement of justice but not the autonomy of the individual.

Rege holds that according to ancient Indian thinkers, what is 'deya' to an individual is what is proportionate to his contribution to the common pool or in accordance with an agreement voluntarily made. Once the concept of the self-interested individual emerges, the concept of justice also crystallises according to which justice consists in fairly rewarding individual contribution to the common good. Thus the concept of 'dharma' which is based on contract has great potentiality of developing into a concept of egalitarian justice which recognises the claims of an individual based on his performance, achievements and needs. But this did not happen because of the hierarchical *Varna* system and the system could not be overthrown because the people believed in the need for rituals and their efficiency in harnessing magical energy. Also, in the post-Vedic period the help of *Samkhya* philosophy was sought to rationalise the *Varna* system.

Rege maintains that in this scheme social contract does not replace the revealed *dharma*, but is used to provide an additional reason for observance of *Varna-dharma*. The social contract gives the individual freedom but it is circumscribed by the principle of *dharma*

which enjoins the individual to pursue his interests within the scheme of *Varna-dharma* and this is what all parties to the contract commit themselves to.

He holds that there is obvious tension in both the stands, they cannot mix well because Vedic dogma is based on revealed wisdom and hence faith. The contract is subordinated to the *Varna-dharma*. The Indian tradition opted for Nature against convention. He concludes "the allure of security which lies in conformity to tradition triumphed over the spirit of adventure which is necessary for the creation of a free society." Thus there is no worthwhile concept of justice in ancient India that is based on the concept of equality.

At the very outset, we must commend Prof. Rege for bringing out the problems of justice in such a stimulating manner. It appears that he has tried to analyse the problem through Nature (*Physis*) and convention (*Nomos*) controversy central to ancient Greek social philosophy. But it is very doubtful whether we can apply Greek concepts to Indian situations because both the concepts in ancient India were not properly developed. Indian understanding of *physis* was totally metaphysical and not scientific.

It is true that the Vedic dogma of divine creation was increasingly losing its legitimacy. Quite appropriately, Prof. Rege has quoted some dialogues from the great Epic, but one wishes he had quoted them more completely. In two separate dialogues, (*The Mbh.* 12. 181-84 and 12-282.85) Bharadvaja and Janaka convincingly challenged the validity of divine creation and Bhṛigu and Parashara defended the *Varna* system on the basis of *gunas* and occupations. Thus, Vedic dogma was replaced by *Samkhya* philosophy.

The Indian tradition of social contract also originated in Buddhist philosophy because in the '*Book of Genesis*' '*Digha Nikay*' the Buddha challenges the Vedic dogma of divine creation and points out that *Varna* and the state emerged out of social contract (Vol. III, pp 84-95). For the Buddha, due to the division of labour the voluntary choosing of occupation under the influence of respective norms of *dharma* are the bases of social order. But ultimately, in this theory universal morality took precedence over social contract. The republics that practiced democratic prin-

ciples disappeared, therefore, no meaningful development of this theory could take place. The Buddhist idea of social contract was adopted in the *Mahabharata* (12.59 and 12.67) to legitimise the authority of the king. In both the theories, the state emerged to protect social order. But the Hindu belief in social contract was not complete and was subordinated to legitimise social order.

One could argue that Prof. Rege's discussion on this subject is not based on substantial evidence excessively relying as he does upon one extract from the *Shantiparva*, which opens a famous Tuladhar Jajali dialogue (12.250-60) on the nature of *dharma*. By any reckoning, the passage quoted by Prof. Rege is unique in Hindu social philosophy, but it is the only passage of that type. Thus, the second strand of thought stressed by Prof. Rege requires some more evidence.

The Social contract implicit in Buddhist philosophy was borrowed by Hindu thinkers to legitimise the *Varna* theory. Therefore, it is not completely an autonomous second strand. Another is represented by the *Arthashastra* thinkers whose ideas can be found in the *Shantiparva* (12.110, 129, 138, 139 and 140) which too needs to be stressed. These thinkers say that *dharma* or *adharma* is determined by time,

place and object and the ends are more important than the means. As we know the *Arthashastra* teachers were influenced by the *Charvaka* philosophy and the *Arthashastra* teachers believed in *Karma yoga*, *Vijnyan bala* and *Yoga-kshema*. One wishes that Professor Rege had considered this school which initially opposed *Brahmanism* and the caste system.

Swadharma has two aspects – *Vishesha-dharma* and *Sadharana-dharma* and Prof. Rege at one place says that the latter is more important but in the Indian tradition *Vishesha-dharma* was considered more important. For example, in the *Gita* Krishna asked Arjuna to perform his caste functions. Also, individualism postulated in the concept of '*moksha*' is other-worldly and metaphysical.

Prof. Rege holds that due to the belief in supernatural consequences and dread of anarchy, the *varna* system got consolidated in India. But the most important cause of consolidation was economic in the sense that it was based on the economic system of feudalism that developed a unique method of expropriation. The economic foundations of the *varna* system were so strong that even the Muslims could not destroy them.

Ashok S. Chousalkar

FREEDOM FIRST
4th floor, Maneckji Wadia Building
127, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Bombay 400 001

I wish to subscribe to *Freedom First* ☐

I wish to enter a gift subscription to *Freedom First* ☐
(Please type or write in block letters)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PIN _____

Enclosed please find Rs. 20/USD 10*/£ 6* annual subscription by

Money Order ☐

Postal Order ☐

Demand Draft ☐

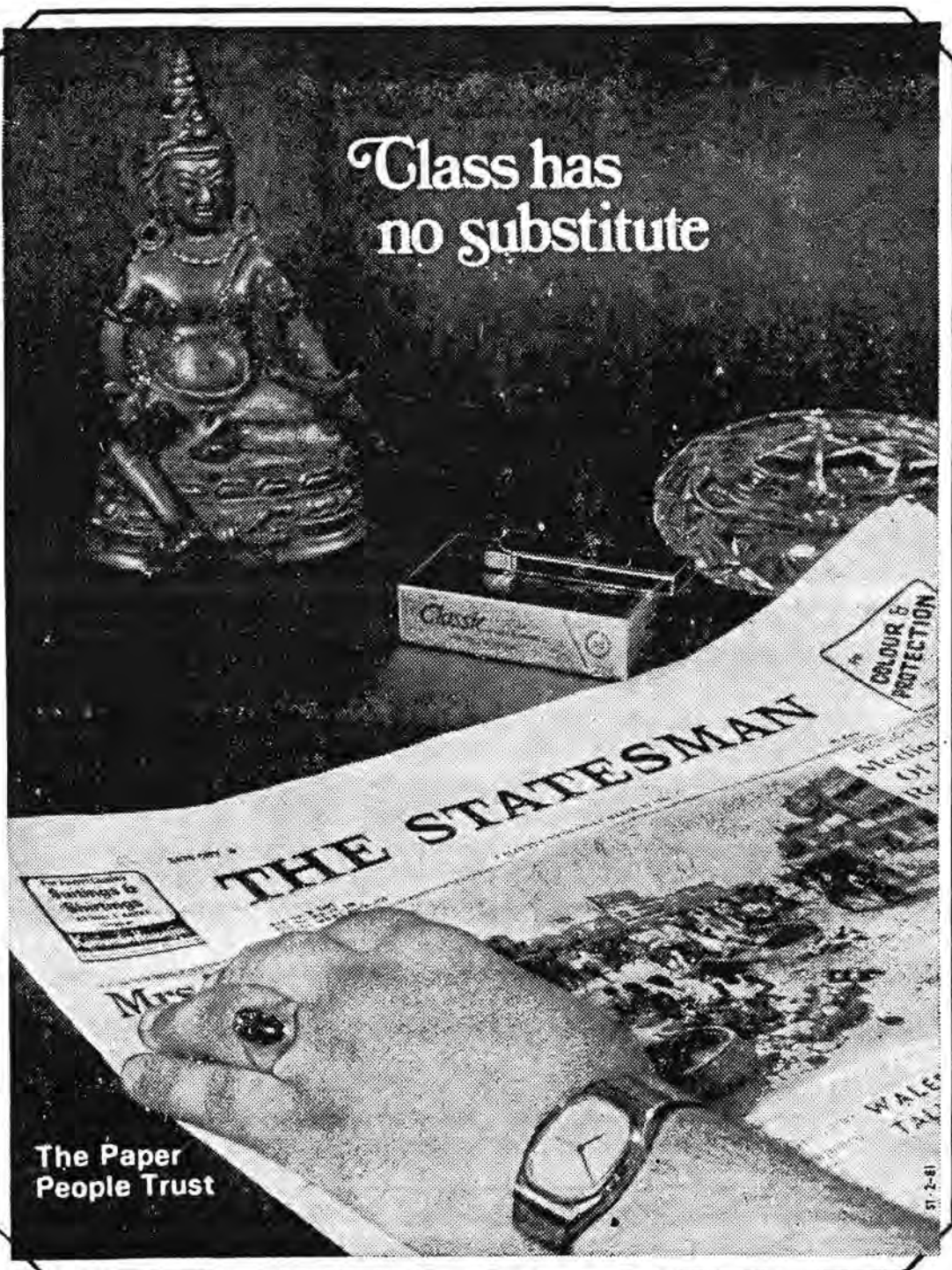
Cheque** ☐

International Money Order ☐

(* for overseas subscribers)

(** for outstation cheques please add Rs. 5)

Class has
no substitute



The Paper
People Trust



Continued from inside front cover

tion and examine themselves. It is our view that as a whole the mistakes of this movement are mainly with the government. Marches, hunger strikes and actions of that kind are democratic methods. They are entirely legitimate and reasonable and do in no way constitute unrest.

But the government has ignored the basic rights endowed to every citizen by the constitution and has declared this movement to be a form of unrest. This stems from their thinking in terms of dictatorial politics and has led to a series of mistaken decisions and to confrontation.

Therefore the real creator of the unrest is the government's error. The seriousness of its mistakes is no less than of those taken during the Cultural Revolution. It was only due to the self-restraint of students and citizens and due to the strong appeals of society, including the wise people in the Party, the government and the army that massive bloodshed was then avoided. The government must admit its mistakes. A correction now would not be too late.

The government should draw the painful lessons from this massive movement to democracy. It should learn to listen to the voice of people.

We think the true realisation of democratic politics is the democratisation of the procedures, the methods and the operation. So we appeal to the Chinese: Get rid of the tradition of pure ideology-making, of sloganising, of objectifying. These are empty democracy. They must start the process of turning a democracy movement centred on the enlightenment of thought into that of an actual operation.

F) The major errors by the government in decision-making are shown in the phrase they used to describe the movement: they have called us 'the very, very few'. Through our hunger strike we want to show public opinion in China and abroad that the so-called 'very, very few' are people who are not merely students. Those who actively took part in this nationwide movement of democracy, led by students, are citizens with a sense of political responsibility.

It must be acknowledged that to govern a country democratically is a strange concept for every Chinese citizen. So all citizens of China must learn from the very beginning — and in this way we must include the top leaders of the party and the state. In the process mistakes by the government and by the people are inevitable. The key lies in acknowledging

their mistakes when they occur, in learning from mistakes so that they can be turned into a positive asset and, in the process of correcting mistakes, to learn to govern our country democratically.

Our main slogans:

- * We have no enemy. Don't poison our wisdom and the democratisation of China with hatred and violence.
- * We all need introspection. Everyone is responsible for the fact that China has been left behind by many other countries.
- * We are first and foremost citizens.
- * We are not in search of death — we are looking for real life.

The rules of the hunger strike

- A) Location: under the monument to the People's Heroes in Tiananmen Square.
- B) Duration: 72 hours, from 1400 hrs 2 June to 1400 hrs 5 June.
- C) Rules: boiled water only, no food, no nutritious drinks (such as sugar, glucose, fat or protein).

Liu Xiaobo, Zhou Duo, Hou Dejian, Gao Xin.

COURTESY: Index on Censorship