

A QUARTERLY OF LIBERAL IDEAS

Freedom First

Jan-Mar. 1992
No. 412
Rupees Ten

39th YEAR OF PUBLICATION

The End of an Empire — A New Beginning for Democracy?

Vasundhara Mohan, A.G. Modak
Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Fang Lizhi

The Market Economy and the Contemporary Crisis

Amlan Datta



PETITION FOR TIBET

We, the undersigned call upon the 47th UN Commission on Human Rights at Geneva (1991) to pay urgent and serious attention to the situation in occupied-Tibet, and earnestly take immediate practical measures to improve the deplorable human rights situation there. At the same time, we call upon the Commission to urge the Communist Chinese government in Peking to immediately:

- Release all Tibetan political prisoners in the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region, Qinghai, Kansu, Sichuan and Yunan provinces of present day China (Tibetan areas have been incorporated in these four provinces);
- respect the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and halt depriving Tibetans of the rights therein outlined;
- implement the UN Convention on Torture which China ratified in 1988;
- implement the UN Convention on Elimination of Racial Discrimination which China ratified in 1981;
- grant the Tibetan people the rights outlined in the Civil, Political, Economic, Cultural and Social Covenants;
- put an end to the massive deforestation, exploitation of natural resources and the use of Tibet's sacred land for nuclear, chemical or military purposes and initiate projects of afforestation in the barren mountains of Tibet;
- stop their practices of abortion, sterilisation, infanticide and other birth control measures in Tibet;
- halt the influx of civilian Chinese to Tibet and withdraw the estimated 7.5 million civilian Chinese presently residing in Tibet which threatens the identity of the 6 million Tibetans, and
- allow human rights organisations to conduct independent investigation on the human rights situation in occupied Tibet's 2.5 million sq. kilometers area.

NAME	ADDRESS	SIGNATURE
1.		
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Petition moved by RANGWANG: Tibetan Association for Human Rights and Protection of Nature, c/o. Room # 7, Paljor Guest House, DHARAMSALA-176215 (HP) India.

Freedom First

A Quarterly of Liberal Ideas

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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
8, Kalyandas Udyog Bhavan
Near Century, Worli 400 025
Tel: 437 4368

Single Copy: Rs. 10
Annual: Rs. 30
Life: Rs. 400
(add Rs. 10 for outstation cheques)

Overseas (II Class Air Mail)
Annual: USD 20 or £ 12
Life: USD 120 or £ 70

Cheques to be drawn in favour of
Freedom First and mailed to publishers
at address listed above

BETWEEN OURSELVES...

In the October 1988 issue of *Freedom First* we had dealt with in some detail with the development in the Soviet Union. The concern then was one of credibility. To what extent could Gorbachev be trusted? Was he genuinely interested in opening up Soviet society: in reducing considerably, if not eliminating altogether the CPSU's monopoly of power, its total control over the lives of the people in the Soviet Union; in allowing the satellites in eastern Europe greater autonomy even if not complete national freedom?

These were very relevant questions at that time – Gorbachev had assumed office as General Secretary of the CPSU in 1985, and (it is now evident in retrospect) mid-way through his years of power.

Today the Soviet Union is dead. Gorbachev has *perestroikad* himself out of office and the CPSU has been thrown into the dustbin of history.

The doubts we raised in October 1988 have been answered. Gorbachev, despite faltering in the last year of office (which, again is retrospect, was to prove fatal to his career) was an honest man whose policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* were genuine and not ploys to attract Western assistance in extricating the Soviet Union from the economic chaos brought on by seven decades of communist rule.

Freedom First salutes a brave man who easily qualifies to be among the 'greats' of the twentieth century. We dedicate this issue of *Freedom First* to Mikhail Gorbachev.

Within our own country economic reforms have got off to a start but not as fast as one would expect due to (not unexpected) resistance from curs yelping at being deprived of easy pickings and the power of patronage.

We thank the Rajaji Foundation and the Project for Economic Education for permission to publish extracts from the Rajaji Birthday Lecture delivered by Prof. Amlan Datta and from a seminar on agriculture, respectively.

We wish readers a happy, peaceful and constructive New Year.

Editors

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WITH MANY VOICES

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

If politicians, businessmen and dacoits can get away with loot and murder, it is neither possible nor just to impose discipline on trade unions alone.

Swaminathan S.A. Aiyar,
The Times of India, November 7

History may credit him with many things, but Gorbachev will never go down as the master of consummate statecraft.

Alex Nichols, *The Week*, December 22

The best job prospect for our unemployed young men in the Punjab was that of becoming a 'militant' since that ensured an income of several lakhs a year.

Amarinder Singh, *Seminar*, December 1991

Just as the people of the Baltic States have been successful in regaining their freedom, I am confident that we Tibetans will soon regain ours.

The Dalai Lama, *Tibetan Bulletin*, Nov-Dec. 1991

Must we think only of beggars? Something needs to be done for the rich also.

Jyoti Basu, *Gentleman*, December 1991

The great paradox of American politics is that 66% of people think congressmen are venal and incompetent, yet 64% voted to re-elect their own congressman at the last election.

The Economist, November 2

These new actresses negotiate how much they will expose according to how much you are willing to pay them.

Film director Shashilal Nair, *India Today*, November 15

...the Chinese and the Vietnamese are not against the free market. They are calling themselves socialist with Chinese characteristics or Vietnamese characteristics — but they are adopting free-market practices to get the economy going.

Lee Kuan Yew, *Time*, November 4

Governments are of the view that the public has no right to know anything about the arms trade.

Sam Cummings, Chairman of Interarms,
a leading private arms company
Index on Censorship, Nov-Dec. 1991

Moscow, I am told, is full of abandoned dogs.

Peter Kenez, *The New Leader*, September 9-23

Here, for a change, is some good news. The government of India has discovered, at last, that there is a serious population problem.

Tavleen Singh, *Indian Express*, November 24

The butcher of Tiananmen Square is getting a royal welcome in India, while Tibetans are being clubbed by the Delhi police. Shame on India.

A Tibetan exile, *The Pioneer*, December 14

OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

"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



How Tibetans are forced to 'Donate' Blood

If there were to be an international prize awarded to states for calculated cruelty to its citizens, China would have qualified for its brutal record at Tienanmen Square. Recent reports from Tibet reinforce the claim. Apart from its record of suppression of legitimate protest movements carried on peacefully in Lhasa, its treatment of Tibetan prisoners makes for chilling reading.

Tibetan prisoners are forcibly compelled to donate blood. Blood is extracted from them by force, for no consent is taken. This 'favour' is shown exclusively to Tibetan prisoners for the Chinese are "automatically exempt" from this. Tibetans fear that this is an attempt practised "in order to give them a slow and apparently natural death". One does not understand the purpose of this extraction - for normally 350 ml which constitutes one unit is extracted but with the Tibetan it is 30 to 50 ml at a time!

Blood in China is in extremely short supply and one has to pay dearly for this in the absence of free blood banks. It is alleged that the Tibetans form a continuous conduit of free blood for the Chinese army. Earlier too, during the Indo-China border war of 1962, Tibetans between the ages of 15 and 35 were compelled to donate one and half times the amount normally taken from individuals - here again the Chinese were exempt.

The Tibetans are told that they are being taken for a medical check up and blood is extracted. Those who protest are beaten and tortured. An entry in the U.S. Congressional Records in 1990 by

Congressman Chuck Douglas states:

"This practice, combined with near-starvation conditions in the prisons, condemns these innocent captives to a gradual, tortuous yet apparently natural death. These brave men and women are literally having their life slowly siphoned out of them."

While blood in China is in acute short supply a branch of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is seeking to organize foreign collaboration to export products of blood to the U.S.A. and Europe! The Xiaing Medicine and Medical Science and Development General, the largest commercial unit of the PLA, had received interested replies from the U.S.A., Hong Kong and Taiwan about the blood products venture."

While the Chinese authorities are generous in drawing out blood from the Tibetan prisoners, they do not give food, drink or rest to the "donors". The food in the prisons is extremely meagre and of such poor quality as to produce diarrhoea or dysentery. The extremely debilitated state of health of the prisoners and their mental anguish makes even the loss of small quantities of blood have extremely serious consequences.

There has to be an international protest against this practice. Or will commercial interests once again score over humanitarian considerations?

RS

Rewarding Tax Violators

Various amnesty schemes have become operational now. It is a good thing that the Government wants solutions to three problems, namely, black money, resources crunch and the Foreign Exchange (FE) shortage, in one go.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, depends on how one looks at it, some of the schemes are actually rewards for violating the law. Let me explain. Suppose you have a large income this year and declare this as your income for 91-92. You, as an honest man would pay 56% tax. The price of honesty, they say. But if you do not declare your income in full and instead put the money in the National Housing Bank, you need to pay only 40%. And if you buy Bearer Bonds by paying in black you would get paid in sparkling white money by the Government itself later this year and, at current rates you stand to lose only about 33%. Cheap, isn't it?

There is a reward for violating the IT Act. Let us take this a little further. If you are the enterprising kind, you can take the money out of India at a small cost and risk, and bring it back under yet another scheme. And a surprise awaits you in India. Your money after the specially designed overseas tour to reward the law-breaker has become so pure that you do not have to pay any tax on it at all! Yes, no Income-Tax, no Gift-Tax, no prosecutions. So we come to the conclusion: The Government has great respect for FERA and it violators and rewards tax offenders with enthusiasm.

Paresh Vasa

The Bolshevik Seizure of Power

Lenin's Successful Coup of October 1917

Unrest was steadily growing in the countryside. Organized bands of peasants raided the mansions of local landlords, burning their records, confiscating their grain and carrying off their farm implements, while the unfortunate owners could only stand by helplessly.

In St. Petersburg and Moscow a growing army of workers, attracted from the farms by the first surge of Russian industrialization, was stirring restlessly. The first big break came in 1905. An extraordinarily vital and able priest, Father Georgy Gapon, had organized a society of industrial workers in St. Petersburg. Gapon advocated reform through mass appeal to the czar himself, Nicholas II. On a cold January Sunday, Gapon's followers formed a giant procession and marched to the Winter Palace, singing "God Save the Czar," to present a peaceful petition for relief from their oppressive conditions.

A panicky officer ordered the czar's troops to fire and a sheet of bullets poured into the solid mass of humans. Hundreds were mowed down, their portraits of the czar and crosses falling with them. "Bloody Sunday" was the last organized attempt to win reforms by appeal.

In the autumn of 1905 factory workers staged a general strike in St. Petersburg and organized themselves into *soviets* or councils. This was the high point of the "1905 Revolution" and it so frightened Nicholas that he acceded to the formation of a legislative body by election. But the Duma, as the resulting parliament was called, was strictly limited in power and dominated by a restricted electorate. While moderate political parties continued to operate in the open, the more revolutionary organizations flourished underground, fanning the smouldering resentment of all but a tiny section of aristocrats and landlords. Finally the reverses of the first World War ignited the inflammable substructure and set the entire ramshackle system in flames.

Discontent among workers, soldiers, generals and politicians reached the breaking point in February (March by the Western calendar) 1917. Organizing themselves into a *soviet*, the industrial workers of Petrograd (as St. Petersburg had been renamed during the war) were shouting for reform. In a few days they were joined by soldiers. In the Duma political leaders demanded the formation of a responsible Cabinet to end the governmental chaos.

The provisional government ushered in by the so-called February Revolution was a moderate one and included representatives of the Duma and the Petrograd Soviet. It was headed by a somewhat colourless liberal, Prince Lvov, and its chief link with the more radical Soviet was Alexander Kerensky, by far the most energetic member of the Cabinet.

The provisional government soon found itself facing incredibly difficult problems. On the military front

resistance was dwindling. Behind the front there were severe shortages. The manufacture of war supplies had dropped off, and there was growing unrest among peasants and workers. Morale was a low ebb and the cry for peace and bread was growing.

When the moderate February revolution ended czarism in 1917, its leaders announced their determination to continue the war against Germany. The Bolsheviks on the other hand had denounced all "imperialist wars" and demanded peace. Soon after the German government, suspecting that Lenin's presence in Petrograd might accelerate the popular agitation to take Russia out of the war, offered him safe conduct in a sealed train across Germany, whence he made his way to Petrograd.

There he immediately took charge of the Bolsheviks, who had been vacillating between co-operating with the provisional government and fighting it. Stepping up the party's propaganda activities and agitation among the troops of the city's garrison, he manoeuvred to get his men in control of the Petrograd Soviet.

As the provisional government sought in vain to win the loyalty of the army, Lenin saw the moment approaching for a strike. "To delay is a crime!" he shouted at his supporters, insisting that the Bolsheviks should seize power at once. Convinced by his driving energy and self-assurance, they redoubled their efforts to win over the troops in Petrograd. Little by little the regiments of the city's garrison were persuaded either to come over to the Bolsheviks or at least to remain neutral.

Finally Lenin decided to strike on October 25. "October 24 was too early," he told his uncertain followers. "October 26 will be too late." Early that morning from his headquarters in a girls' school he proclaimed the slogan "All power to the soviets" – the councils of workers and soldiers which he now calculated he could dominate. Then he ordered his Bolshevik bands and army supporters to take over all government buildings, including the Winter Palace, where Kerensky, the head of the provisional government since Lvov's resignation in August, and his Cabinet were desperately trying to rally loyal troops to defend themselves.

Faced by mounting mutiny, Kerensky slipped out of the city, hoping to rally troops at the front to march on the capital and throw out the Bolsheviks. But even the High Command was deaf to his pleas. Before he could return to the capital Petrograd had fallen into Lenin's hands. Within a few days the disciplined Communist conspirators posted in Russia's principal cities took over the local governments. The October Revolution, to the amazement of the world – including many Communists – was an accomplished fact.

It was a bloodless revolution; few lives had been lost.

From *Russia – The World Library*

The Coup in the USSR

Vasundhara Mohan

Gorbachev succeeded in getting Article 6 of the USSR Constitution, which provided for special privileges for the CPSU, repealed. That was the last straw. The Party conservatives had to act before they were totally eliminated.

August 1991 will be remembered not so much for the coup that failed to throw Gorbachev out of power, but for the manner in which the Russian people stood up to the plotters even as the latter betrayed their organisational ineptitude.

The coup was an effort by the hard core conservative faction of the CPSU to restore the communist monopoly of power. The anti-perestroika forces were restive ever since Gorbachev took over as the General Secretary of the CPSU in March 1985 and propounded his twin policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. To consolidate his position and implement his policies, Gorbachev had to contain, if not get rid of the remnants in the Party leadership belonging to the command-administration and stagnation periods. But this was no easy task.

Gorbachev's weapon was consensus building — a weapon most unusual in Russian and Soviet history. Gorbachev tried to win over the conservatives through consensus fashioned after his foreign policy. Once he was asked whether the Soviet Union was talking too softly with foreign countries. Gorbachev did not give an emphatic 'no' for an answer. He said: "Our principle is this: to pursue a firm policy, but to do that constructively: one must show restraint, but restraint is not softness. But restraint is also not aggressiveness." After the coup an Indian journalist described Gorbachev as a 'shallow leader'. Others had criticised him for not showing enough firmness in his policies; for not pushing the reforms harder. It is all right for those outside the ring to pass comments but Gorbachev was on the mat. The question is where did he fail most? Politically, economically or socially?

Gorbachev the Reformer

Gorbachev's coming into power was, in itself, astonishing. He was the youngest

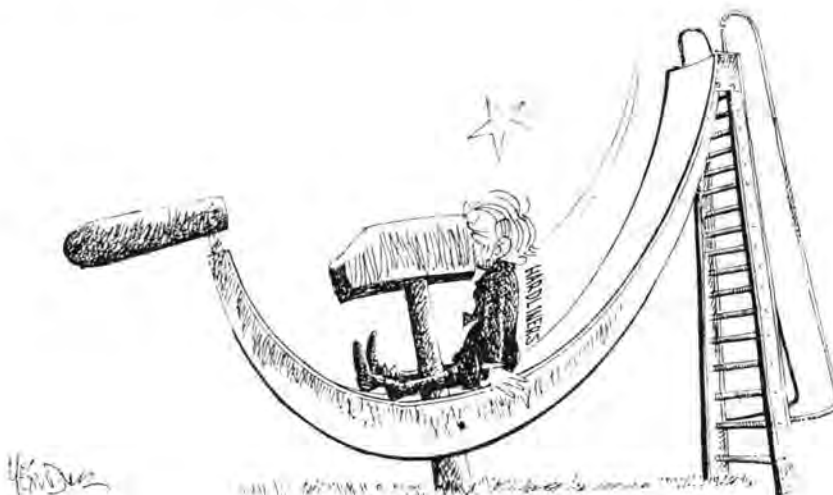
Soviet leader to become the General Secretary of the CPSU, since Stalin. Immediately thereafter, his main thrust was to stop the arms race, reduce the stockpile of nuclear weapons and ultimately eliminate them. In the domestic scene, his aim was to restructure Soviet economy, modernise the Soviet Union. While not surprisingly Western leaders dismissed Gorbachev's foreign policy statement as propaganda, even Soviet citizens did not really believe that Gorbachev intended to democratise Soviet society and politics. When Gorbachev replaced Andrei Gromyko, Shevardnadze and other septugenarian leaders with younger ones, no serious objections were raised by the Party. He was warned, though, by Yegor Legachev, to remember that he owed his job to Gromyko, Viktor Chebrikov, the then KGB chief, and himself (Legachev). The protest was feeble and Gorbachev had taken the all important first step — and got away with it.

Realising that huge defence budgets were sapping the country's energy Gorbachev vigorously pursued the arms control talks and signed the INF Treaty with Reagan. Reviving his country's ail-

ing economy was the reason behind Gorbachev's decision to pull out of Afghanistan, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and he proposed a phased programme for the reduction of Soviet conventional forces in Europe. To improve the domestic economy he needed to reduce the defence budget and attract technical collaboration from the developed countries. His economic agenda included promoting individual effort, greater autonomy for enterprises, production of better quality goods, linking wages and prices to productivity and a rationalisation of the price structure. As part of his policy of openness and democratisation the Press was given more freedom so as to make it more responsive to the needs and aspirations of the citizens instead of being the mouthpiece of the administration. A large number of political prisoners were released and rehabilitated. Immigration laws were liberalised to permit Jews to leave the country. Dissident activity was no longer frowned upon nor practising religion a taboo.

Conservative Fears

Naturally, all these were not to the liking of the conservatives who thought



COURTESY: The Week

glasnost was being misused by the media and *perestroika* was dismantling the established Marxist-Leninist institutions. The bureaucracy used to the command-administration methods did not like it when they were made responsible and accountable for results. The Army was equally worried. Akhromyev gave expression to the Army's feeling of discontent: "The armed forces today are weaker than they were five or six years ago. Where does this weakness come from? From society's attitude towards the armed forces. If society – well, not the whole society, but certain forces in society – abuses the armed forces, insults them with impunity, calls them occupiers and refuses to let the army recruit, will the armed forces gain in strength? But where did all this come from? It is a manifestation of political struggle between different forces. The army cannot get away from society."

Thus, the conservatives in the Party, in the bureaucracy and in the armed forces tried to apply the brakes to Gorbachev's reforms at every opportunity. On the eve of the 19th All Union Party Conference held in June-July 1988, the conservatives estimated that only about 30 to 40 per cent of the delegates would support Gorbachev's proposals. Even when the newly created Congress of the Peoples' Deputies was selecting candidates to the Supreme Soviet, the conservatives voted down known supporters of Gorbachev's reforms. By allowing the delegates at the Party Conference express themselves freely and by conceding some points to the conservatives, Gorbachev succeeded in securing unanimous approval to a number of far-reaching resolutions in the direction of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. Contrary to what he would do later, Gorbachev, at the 19th Party Conference opposed the idea of a multi-party system for the Soviet Union. But he insisted on democratisation of the CPSU and making it subordinate to the Soviet of Peoples' Deputies. Nobody could argue with that. The conservatives, thus, could not stop Gorbachev proceeding with his reforms though they managed to water down some of the proposals. Gorbachev, walking a tight rope, approached his reforms through consensus, giving the distinct impression that he was leaning more towards the conservatives. This kept the conservatives at bay as they felt that their hold was still strong, despite

their giving in on economic reforms which did not affect them.

The Armed Forces Alienated

Gorbachev also created for himself enemies in the ranks of the Defence Forces and the KGB. The troop reductions affected over 100,000 officers and 400,000 soldiers. While a majority of them were proposed to be retired on pension, only a few with technical qualifications would be absorbed in other civilian jobs. This situation was further complicated by the fact that the officers and their families returning from East Europe and Mongolia had no ready living accommodation waiting for them. The armed forces thus felt that they had lost their importance in a changing Soviet society. They also experienced an attitudinal change towards them from the Soviet population. Under conditions of *glasnost*, a section of the armed forces voiced its frustration, anger and dissatisfaction with the predicament of the forces. This led to speculation in the media, in the latter half of 1990, outside USSR, of a possible coup in the Soviet Union involving the army. Such speculation was strengthened by the sudden appearance of two air-borne regiments in Moscow in late 1990. However, Marshal D. Yazov, the Defence Minister of the USSR (and later, one of the coup leaders) tried to dispel such speculation by stating: "I officially declare once again. All this talk and conjecture absolutely does not tally with the truth – they were ordinary exercises, the plan of which was approved in the General Staff as long ago as August 25." He further stated: "Our army is part of the people, leads the same life as them and is historically endowed with peoples' trust... So, against whom, one wonders, does the army 'intend' to march by 'contemplating' a coup?" He attributed such rumours to those "who themselves go against the people, gambling with their fate, for the sake of power, for the sake of overthrowing the existing system." With the 19th Party Conference, the primacy of the CPSU started crumbling. Apart from a number of pro-democracy groups and alliances even democratic-minded communists started forming groups within and outside the frame work of the CPSU. The conservatives noted with anxiety that whenever seats were contested to the Congress of the Peoples' Deputies, their candidates



were defeated. The membership of the Party started dwindling and the Party was being ridiculed by the public. While professing faith in the Party, Gorbachev warned that "many Party leaders, including both local officials and members of the Central Committee, do not always manage to keep up with the reality." In a television broadcast on September 8, 1989 he criticised those who were "ready to give up *perestroika* and return to the past" yet, he could not completely ignore the conservatives, who, he knew, were present at all levels of the Soviet system. He therefore had to bide his time. Thus, while maintaining a centrist position between the conservatives and the radicals (or 'leftists' as those who wanted the pace of reforms to increase are called in the Soviet Union) and amidst vacillations and denials, Gorbachev succeeded in getting Article 6 of the USSR Constitution, which provided for special privileges for the CPSU, repealed. That was the last straw. The Party conservatives had to act before they were totally eliminated.

CPSU Threatened

At the 28th Party Congress in June-July 1990 the conservatives bitterly criticised Gorbachev and others, who, in their view, were responsible for the crisis that the country was facing at the economic and social levels. The Congress was dominated by Party officials (over 40%) while the workers and peasants constituted only 11.6 and 5.4 percent respectively. Commenting on the composition of the Congress, Ginletto Cheisa observed: "The *apparatchiki* quite aware that there would be a bitter struggle at the Congress they thought it expedient not to delegate to anyone the

task of representing them " These party officials," continued Chiesa, "had come to understand that Gorbachev's program would put an end to the kind of society in which they – and only they – flourished. They had no real alternative programme, but they had singled out the main enemy, the author of their defeat, Gorbachev himself." But they needed Gorbachev, as a dummy figure, with the Party controlling him and his reforms. In attempting to placate the conservatives, Gorbachev had to criticise the reformists. Thus, while proposing that the CPSU should try to earn its vanguard position through active struggle for the interests of the workers and function as a parliamentary party by winning elections, he rejected the de-partisation of government bodies proposed by the leftists. He said it was the natural right of all parties registered by law to have representatives in work places, including the KGB, the Ministry of Interior, the Judiciary, etc. At the same time he rejected the conservative demand that he renounce perestroika, Gorbachev emphatically said that as long as he was in command, the political line would not change. But it was Yeltsin's address to the Congress that finally alarmed the conservatives: "There are only two alternatives. Either there will be a party of the apparatus that inevitably will break up and sooner or later leave the only group of political forces that amount to anything. Or a renewed party will be transformed into a union of democratic forces with some hope of keeping an active role in perestroika."

Seeds for the Coup

Despite their defeat at the Party Congress, the conservatives did not give up. For instance, when the privatisation law was put up before the Supreme Soviet in June 1991, one of the members observed: "Attempts are being made to torpedo the adoption of this law in order to make Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev's position in London more difficult." Another member disclosed a letter received by him threatening retribution if he voted in favour of the Bill, which was proof enough of some political forces interested in disrupting or making difficult Gorbachev's meeting with G-7 heads of State in London.

For the conservatives even an increased US-Soviet cooperation in sorting out the economic problems of the Soviet Union was treason. Accord-

ing to them criticising Gorbachev's proposal to make the rouble a convertible currency they said: "If the President, totally ignoring the existing Constitution, keeps the Congress and the Supreme Soviet away from power and, in collusion with the Republican authorities, abolishes the State, it would be interesting to know who can decide which is more lawful: these actions on his part or some kind of coup in defense of the Constitution, the country's Fundamental Law". Thus, the conservatives thought it was their legitimate duty to stage a coup and dethrone Gorbachev. That is what they called for at the 2nd Congress of the All-Union Movement of Communist Initiative held in June 1991. Posters declared Gorbachev, Yakovlev and Shevardnadze as 'anti-communist' and demanded that they be thrown out of the Party; and therefore out of power. Aleksey A. Sergeyev, Member of the Central Committee of the CPSU observed: "Our country is swiftly proceeding towards national disaster. The party too is proceeding towards disaster, while the Party, the CPSU, is today the only force which is able to prevent this disaster."

The secessionist movements in the republics and ethnic riots would have been suppressed through use of force if they had occurred in the pre-Gorbachev era. The conservatives refused to accept the separation of the Baltic republics and Gorbachev's move to enter into a new Union treaty with the other republics so as to save the Union from disintegration and the disaster towards which the CPSU was heading. Similarly, Gorbachev's attending the G-7 meeting seeking aid and returning empty handed was considered an insult heaped on the Soviet Union. N.A. Polovodov, Chairman of the Communist Initiative declared: "The CPSU leadership headed by M.S. Gorbachev initially perceived renewal and perestroika as a means for improving Socialism and a condition for improving working peoples' lives. But it soon digressed from the solution of vitally important problems inside the country and we started hearing about "new thinking for our own country and for the whole world". As a result of endless transformations, the country has become a humiliated beggar" It was hard-core communists like Polovodov and Sergeyev who stoked the fires of hatred against Gorbachev and his team.



The coup leaders, headed by Gennady Yel'tsin, were all known conservatives, whom Gorbachev had chosen to please the conservative faction. As to why he did so, Chiesa offers an explanation: "The Soviet leader is both part and parcel of their own (the party apparatchiki) history and a 'mutant', a product of the crisis history created, who has miraculously risen to the top of the Party-State hierarchy".

Gorbachev is Indispensable

With all their hatred for Gorbachev, the conservatives destroyed themselves by staging an un-planned coup. As the experts on the subject have commented, the timing was not correct, the planning was bad, the desired simultaneous follow-up action was not quite according to the book and there was lack of coordination. Yel'tsin was also no match in stature to Gorbachev and he had not satisfied himself whether the Army would back the coup to the hilt. Similarly, the electronic media was not completely controlled making it possible for the world to know the whole story as it was unfolding in Moscow. And the coup leaders had not reckoned with Yeltsin's capacity to stir up public protest. The masses who had got used

**For 116 years
we have
remained exactly
where we started
AT THE TOP[★]**

The Secret ?
Simply, the truth well told

The Statesman
The paper people trust

★ National Readership Survey IV

to enjoying freedom, responded quickly as they were afraid of a slide back to the Stalin days. Under the circumstances the coup leaders lost their nerve resulting in Gorbachev staging a come back. It took some time for Gorbachev to overcome the shock which made 'analysts' decide that he was no longer the same again. True that Yeltsin, in his new found role as the saviour of democracy in the Soviet Union and liberator of Gorbachev, basked in his popularity for some time even after Gorbachev

resumed his Presidency. But, Yeltsin knew his place. The West, which had no inkling of the coup or refused to believe intelligence information of an impending coup in the Soviet Union, had also written off Gorbachev as the post-coup Soviet leader in favour of Yeltsin. But the stringent measures that Gorbachev has taken immediately after he regained his equilibrium, have shown that it is Gorbachev who still holds the reins. There is no doubt that only Gorbachev can ensure the continuance of

the Soviet Union, or what is left of it, as a federated State and who can ensure the permanent burial of the cold war and elimination of the threat of war. Not only the West but the Soviet republics too have had a glimpse of a dark scenario which might become a reality if they do not strengthen the hands of Gorbachev. And that realisation is enough.

The articles by Dr. Mohan and Dr. Modak were written for the Oct-Dec. '91 issue but had to be held over due to lack of space. This will explain why neither article refers to the disappearance of the Soviet Union from the political map of the world. Ed.

Why the Coup Failed?

A.G. Modak

When Yanayev and his friends staged a coup, they spoke in the name of the Union. Actually they pleaded for an entity which had lost ideological justification and had no national spirit on which to base itself.

Leonid Brezhnev was Gennady Yanayev's model in the coup that flopped. Brezhnev had organised the conservatives of the 1960s to oust Khrushchev in October 1964. In fact Yanayev tried to carry to fruition the conspiracy against Gorbachev, the seeds for which were laid by Legachev in 1988.

On March 13, 1988 one Mrs. Nina Andreyevna wrote an article in *Sovetskaya Russia* attacking Gorbachev for his 'crimes' such as encouraging non-CPSU forces in general and intellectuals in particular. To save himself Gorbachev adopted a policy of appeasement of the conservatives. A number of conservatives like Yanayev, Pugo, Yazov and Pavlov were included in the Presidential Council. Gorbachev enhanced the powers of the Home Ministry with a view to crushing popular upsurges. He applied the brakes on reforms and shelved the Shatalin Plan. Reformers like Shevardnadze, Shatalin, Yakovlev and Petrakhov left the Council. Finally, Gorbachev consented to the military intervention in Lithuania in January in which 14 innocent people were killed. The conservatives assumed they had successfully asserted themselves and cut Gorbachev down to size. In the process

he alienated the reformers and the Russian people on the one hand, while the conservatives never considered him as a member of their group on the other.

Yanayev and his conspirators concluded that the empty shops, the lengthening queues and the conditions of near anarchy in the republics of the Union had, in the eyes of the people, discredited Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika. They assumed that with Gorbachev's popularity at its nadir, his dismissal would not provoke the people perhaps it might even be welcomed. Moreover Gorbachev failures had lost him goodwill in Washington and London. The rise of

Russia would be seen as a revival of the attempt to re-impose Slavic domination.

All these assumptions collapsed on August 21 and 22.

Implementation of the Treaty and the People's Reaction

August 19 was selected as the day for the coup, because Gorbachev was scheduled to sign a treaty with the republics on August 20. The conservatives viewed with alarm the consequences of such a treaty which involved dispersal of power, decentralisation, de-ideologisation, marketization, etc. Gorbachev had to be stopped. Hence the coup. But the coup failed. The expected support for the coup or, at least, indifference among the people to Gorbachev's ouster, did not materialise. There is no denying that the people were unhappy with Gorbachev. But they were not prepared to surrender their freedom and a return to Stalinism or Brezhnevism which the conspirators represented. Moreover the conspirators failed to rally all the conservatives on their side. Thus Ligachev, a well known opponent of liberalism was conspicuous by his absence during the whole drama. Anatoly Lukyanov, former



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speaker of the Supreme Soviet, and the alleged brain behind the anti-Gorbachev plan suddenly backed out and Boris Pugo, one of the leading actors in this drama committed suicide. It was this inbuilt weakness that transformed what would have been a tragedy into a farce.

The Outcome

The People demanded Gorbachev's release and his reinstatement as President of the USSR. It was again popular pressure that compelled Yanayev and other conspirators to go before Gorbachev like shamefaced school boys asking to be excused for their misadventure. The Gorbachev who returned to Moscow a freeman was a transformed and a much chastened man.

If the Gorbachev of the pre-conspiracy period took pride in playing the role of a centrist leader, in the post-coup days he emerged as an enthusiastic protagonist of reform. If in the past Gorbachev projected himself as a devotee of Marxism-Leninism, the post-coup Gorbachev decided to consign Marxism-Leninism into the dustbin of history. The pre-coup Gorbachev was very much the leader of his people. Now he was led by them. Under popular pressure he dissolved the organisation of the CPSU; dissolved recently formed bodies like the Congress of People's Deputies and the so-called inner parliament – the Supreme Soviet. The post of the President of the USSR he holds relies very heavily on the mood of the people. The people need him because of his international stature and the belief that he alone can hold the various republics together even if it be in a much looser federation. At present Gorbachev and Yeltsin seem to be working in tandem. But Yeltsin is more than an equal. He proved his mettle during the three-day drama and acquired a unique place for himself. He had indeed become a hero to his people. In such circumstances Gorbachev can hardly afford to ignore Yeltsin's wishes. Previously it was possible for Gorbachev to show up Yeltsin. Now it is Yeltsin who is calling the shots.

The CPSU and the Federation

Lenin's dreams of a Party, free from the blandishments of intellectuals, trade unions, and the peasantry has become a thing of the past. Apart from the coup plotters the biggest casualty has, ironi-

cally, been the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The history of the CPSU is indeed replete with instances of reformers being crushed brutally at the hands of the conservatives. This time, the reformers won and the CPSU is on the run. The aborted coup staged by CPSU hardliners has damaged the Party to such an extent that the revival of this erstwhile 'vanguard of the proletariat' at least in its present form, is very unlikely.

The unsuccessful coup has accelerated the disintegration of the USSR. It was not so long ago that the communists of the world in general and those in India in particular used to present the USSR as a worthy model of a wonderfully managed multi-national state. They claimed that whereas all states of previous periods guarded the interests of exploiters, the revolutionary bolshevik state did justice to the oppressed of the world. They boasted that the socialist state in the Soviet Union was a grand alchemy where people belonging to different races and creeds spontaneously merged themselves into a unique type of society. Thanks to glasnost recent events demolished these claims when the fissiparous forces within the Soviet State came into full public view. For instance when Gorbachev lifted censorship of news people became aware that "Nagorno-Karabakh" was a major bone of contention between Armenia and Azerbaijan. "Abkazia" exposed the myth of the unity in Russia and "South Osetia" began to complain against the atrocities by the Georgians. If the Baltic states declared their intention to be free of the USSR, a part of Azerbaijan expressed its desire to join Iran, and republics located in Asia were in favour of Pan-Islam. It is obvious that the much publicised "New Man" with a Soviet identity is a myth. The world indeed noticed that citizens of the various republics in the USSR were zealously aware of their ethnic origins and prepared to fight for it even if it meant the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Leninism Devalued

The devaluation of Leninism is of course the most significant outcome of recent happenings in the USSR. It was Lenin who carved out the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. It was Lenin who fashioned the tactics and helped the CPSU find solutions to problems. It was Lenin who offered an ideological veneer for all manner of policies. For

seventy four years, communists in the Soviet Union treated Lenin as god. Students of all faculties in Soviet universities were asked to refer to Lenin's works to arrive at right interpretations and meanings in their studies. Lenin was a source of inspiration, an article of faith, a silken bond within the multi-national state of the USSR.

It was pointed out time and again that Lenin's interpretation of the theory and practice of Marxism should be accepted as the most valid packet of guidelines. Now however there is growing antipathy towards Lenin and his ideology. Thus one writer stated that Lenin was an ordinary leader interested in self-glorification. Another argued that Lenin was least bothered with the ethos of the people and imposed his dogmatic views on the common masses.

Researches undertaken in recent months in the Soviet Union have exposed the myth of Leninism. The concept of "de-ideologisation" popularised by Gorbachev and Shevardnadze was aimed only at devaluing Stalinism. But as the campaign proceeded, Leninism itself came under attack deprived of their moorings in the past and in the absence of new articles of faith, there has emerged a wretched permissivism in Soviet society. The people have become worshippers of permissivism, hooliganism, nihilism, alcoholism and philistinism. A cruel joke doing the rounds says that in the 1930s and '40s at least ideology was



available in abundance. Now, everything, including ideology, is conspicuous by its absence.

Causes for Communism's Decline

Dogmatism

There appear to be four causes for the tragic debacle that is the USSR. Dogmatism is of course the first cause. Until recently Stalin was the prime villain. But now Lenin too is held responsible for the spread of dogmatism in the Soviet Union. It was Lenin's dogmatic approach which widened the gulf between him and leading intellectuals of those years. The intellectuals estranged by Lenin and later condemned as 'reformist' deviations' and so on are now being honoured. Lenin opposed populism because, in his opinion, the peasants (whom they supported) were superstitious and credulous worshippers of the establishment. In fact he accused everybody who differed with him even on minor issues. He relied on the elites in the CPSU, because of his conviction that only they were capable of reading the writing on the wall. He thus advocated a type of oligarchy, under the garb of proletarian dictatorship. Rosa Luxemburg, a contemporary of Lenin and a leading Marxist at the beginning of the present century had predicted that only the Leninist theory of Party and Revolution would finally lend credence to the dictatorship over the proletariat. The Leninist advocacy of war communism, his justification of the secret police and insistence on passing a law against factions in the party, degenerated in subsequent years into the violent suppression of dissenters, excessive reliance on the KGB and the enforcing of totalitarian measures to control all walks of life. Such post-mortems of Leninism currently being undertaken by journalists and writers in the USSR is indicative of the extent of de-ideologisation initiated by Gorbachev.

Statism

The massive anger against communists and communism is the result of the cruel suppression of popular urges – a suppression which was philosophised and rationalised rather shamelessly over seven decades. The second cause is statism. The Bolsheviks relied heavily on the institution of the State because they wanted to overtake capitalism in the shortest possible time.

Gorbachev — to the Brink, and Back!

*The Soviet State, where iron curtains loomed,
Under Glasnost and Perestroika bloomed.
A monolithic and one-party State,
New pluralism could accommodate.
Media... the Arts... Religion... which were chained,
A new vitality quickly regained.
But an economy, too long controlled,
Could not at once escape its rigid mould –
Moreover, in a scene where they were new,
When winds of change, in the Republics blew,
Secession threatened where autonomy,
Would have preserved the "Union's" entity.
"Hardliner" that he was too far right-thought;
Reformists like Yeltsin, market forces sought:
Not giving "Gorby" credit that was due:
Even for starting things that he did do.
But fortunately people-power was strong –
Coups leaders and their tanks did not last long –
And contrary to every one's belief,
But to the whole world's joy and great relief,
Yeltsin and his resistance rallied all
Who saw the "coup" as "Perestroika's" pall.
"Gorby" is back again, but all should learn,
So that a black chapter will not return –
Yeltsin... the Republics and the West must play,
TOGETHER ushering the new Soviet "Way"*

Louella Lobo Prabhu

Lenin expected the socialist state to convert every citizen into an agent in the march towards communism. It is true that in the evening of his life, Lenin advocated the New Economic Policy (NEP) as a result of which certain brakes were applied on the State. But Lenin viewed the NEP as a temporary tactical manoeuvre to tide over a transitional period. The subsequent reversal of NEP and the revival of statism in the Stalin era were thus considered legitimate. Stalin strengthened the state and thereby his own control over the Soviet people. During the Stalin years the entire Soviet Union became a "Gulag". The common people became faceless creatures, soulless pawns. Gorbachev admitted time and again that the Soviet Union failed in putting a stop to the alienation of the common masses from the State. No wonder the people took to the streets against the conspirators in August this year. Twenty generations of the Russian people have suffered the yoke of statism, initially under the Romanovs who ruled Russia for 300 years and for the next 74 years under the Bolsheviks. For the first time the

Russian people have tasted freedom from state control. They are not about to give it up so easily.

The Truth about the West

A third cause for the current catastrophe is the realisation of the truth about the West in general and capitalism in particular. The Soviet information media were employed to glorify even minor achievements of the Soviet Union and belittle the remarkable successes of capitalist countries. Every Soviet policy was presented as a unique measure, not only different from, but superior to anything comparable in a capitalist country. Thus measures like nationalisation of the means of production, in contrast to the institution of the market or the single party system, were projected as Alladin's lamps offering universal solutions to basic problems.

It was pointed out that the government in a capitalist country guarded the interests of exploiters, whereas a socialist state projected justice and humanity. Hence the powers of the government under capitalism needed to be curbed, whereas any limitation on the powers of

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government in a communist state was a crime against humanity. Curbs over the information media, single candidate constituencies in elections and the repression of dissent were hailed as epoch-making acts. No effort was indeed spared to impress the people that socialist democracy was superior to bourgeois democracy in every respect.

Curiously, it was pointed out in the same vein that the Soviet Union should try to match and in fact, overtake the United States. There is an interesting joke in this connection. A teacher asks her students: "Boys how would you describe the USA?" A student replies: "Madam, the U.S.A. is a country of hooligans, drunkards and bastards". The teacher is satisfied, as she has elicited the right answer. Now she puts another question: "What are our aims and objectives?" And promptly comes the unanimous response: "To overtake the USA". Roger Garaudy, a leading communist intellectual from France made a scathing attack on this type of Soviet transposition of aims and objectives in his book *The Turning Point of Socialism*:

"The goal of socialism cannot be that of capitalism with a simple quantitative difference. The achievements of socialism are not to be measured simply in terms of refrigerators and television sets. Its supe-

riority must manifest itself in the satisfaction and creation of different needs that will permit the fullest development of man. A new model of civilization must be created".

Militant Materialism

The fourth and final cause for the downfall of the Soviet Union, is the philosophy of materialism. Soviet citizens were asked by Lenin and Trotsky to worship militant materialism. Like capitalism, socialism too sought material achievements as the highest goal. In capitalism it is the invisible hand of price determination in the free market which promotes materialist gains. Though this does discriminate in favour of the well-to-do and widens the gap between the "haves" and the "have nots" at least there is some rationale behind whatever transpires in that model. But government in a welfare state with a market economy acts as an umpire in economic matters. It can curb the power of the "haves" through fiscal controls. In a socialist state on the other hand, the government is omnipotent. The Market is replaced by central planning which in turn is controlled by the government. What emerges therefore in socialism is inequality based on party affiliation. And it can now be stated without fear of contradiction that this type of inequality is worse than that based on money power under capitalism.

Yesenin-Volpin, the great philosopher of post-Stalin times in Russia has attacked certain concepts trying to crush the basic conviction of individuals. It would appear that currently individuals in the USSR are in revolt precisely against these aspects. They want the complete demolition of Marxist-Leninist philosophy.

Incidentally, in July this year Lazar Kaganovich, the 97 year old revolutionary and a close collaborator of Stalin in the brutal massacre of thousands of innocents, died. This led people to recall a prophecy that the death of Stalin's friend would coincide with some apocalyptic event.

When Yanayev and his friends staged a coup, they spoke in the name of the Union. Actually they pleaded for an entity which had lost ideological justification and had no national spirit on which to base itself. That was why people dared to defy and the coup collapsed. If the coup succeeded in anything it was in dismantling the whole legacy of the October revolution of 1917.

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Can Democracy Grow in Russia?

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

Democracy can grow in Russia, but it must have local roots, and a people willing to tend it.

There is no escaping the fact that our country has cruelly forfeited the entire twentieth century: all our much-vaunted achievements have turned out to be illusory. From a flourishing condition we have been hurled back to a state of semi-barbarity, and we are lying amid the wreckage.

We hold passionate discussions about the kind of government system

that would suit us from now on, and the kind that would not, since this, we claim, is the key to everything. Yet recovery is today not a matter of simply identifying the most convenient system of government and then hastily churning out a marvelous constitution, paragraph by paragraph. We must demonstrate better foresight than did our luckless fathers and grandfathers in 1917 so that we might not repeat the chaos of that February by putting ourselves at the mercy of tempting slogans and breathless orators, or otherwise reproducing the self-chosen path to a shameful conclusion. There is

no guarantee whatever that the new leaders now coming to the fore will immediately prove to be farsighted and sober-minded.

After a cannibalistic period lasting three-quarters of a century, after the exorbitant price we have already paid, and given the fact that in terms of the political spectrum we happen to have ended up on the side with a tradition of strong central authority, it behooves us not to make rash moves toward chaos. For as 1917 taught us, anarchy is the ultimate peril.

Unless one craves revolution, a state must possess the qualities of continuity

and stability. Some elements of the current structure will have to serve for the time being for the simple reason that they already exist.

It goes without saying that we shall gradually reshape the entire state organism. This undertaking must begin at the margin somewhere; it should not be tackled all at once. What is clear is that the process should start at the local level, with grassroots issues. While preserving a strong central authority, we must patiently and persistently expand the rights of local communities.

With time we shall of course adopt some particular type of political structure, but in view of our total inexperience in such matters this may not be a felicitous choice at first, not something suited to the specific needs of our country. We must resolutely seek our own path here. We have lately been assuring ourselves that there is no need of any quest or reflection on our part, that it is simply a matter of adopting "the way it is done in the West" as quickly as possible. But in the West it is done in oh so many different ways, with every country following its own

tradition. One might think that we are the only people who need neither look back nor pay heed to the wise things said in our country before we were born.

The strength or weakness of a society depends more on the level of its spiritual life than on its level of industrialization. Neither a market economy nor even general abundance constitutes the crowning achievement of human life. If a nation's spiritual energies have been exhausted, it will not be saved from collapse by the most perfect government structure or by any industrial development: a tree with a rotten core cannot stand. This is so because of all the possible freedoms the one that will inevitably come to the fore will be the freedom to be unscrupulous; that is the freedom that can be neither prevented nor anticipated by any law. It is an unfortunate fact that a pure social atmosphere cannot be legislated into being.

And that is why the destruction of our souls over three-quarters of a century is the most terrifying thing of all.

It is terrible to see that the corrupt ruling class — the multimillion-strong appointed bureaucracy (*nomenklatura*) which serves Party and state — was incapable of voluntarily giving up any of the privileges it had appropriated to itself. For decades this class has lived at the expense of the people, and it would have liked to continue doing so.

And what about those glorious forces of *glasnost* and *perestroika*? Among these fashionable words we look in vain for the concept of purification. What we saw was a stampede toward *glasnost* of all those tainted voices which had given decades of loyal service to totalitarianism. Of every four troubadours of *glasnost*, three were former toadies of Brezhnevism, and who among them uttered a word of *personal* repentance instead of cursing the faceless "period of stagnation"? And the same individuals who for decades have befuddled the minds of university students continue to hold forth self-confidently from the rostrums of our humanities departments. Tens of thousands of smatterers in our country

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are tarnished by their hypocrisy and weather-vane mentality; must we really drag along these festering moral sores into our future?

West Germany was suffused with the feeling of repentance before the arrival of its economic boom. But in our country no one has even begun to repent. And all that *glasnost* is bedecked, festooned with the same old plump and heavy clusters of lies. Only we seem not to notice. That is a recipe for warped development.

Time to Think

It won't do to hope that our current "time of troubles" will be followed by some kind of tranquil period with ample opportunity "to sit down and think over" our plans for the future. History is a continuum, and no one will grant us the favor of any breathing spell, just as the Russian Constituent Assembly, in February 1917, was never given the chance "to sit down and think things over." So that no matter how painfully the burning issues of today weigh down upon us, it behooves us to give advance thought to the shape of our future arrangement.

Before the 1917 Revolution the bulk of our people had no experience with political concepts, and the ideas that were pounded into our heads by propaganda in the subsequent seventy years served only to cloud our minds. But now that our country has begun moving in the direction of real political life, and when the forms of the government-to-be are already being discussed, it is useful to focus on the precise meaning of some terms in order to prevent possible mistakes.

Plato, and Aristotle after him, identified three types of state. In the usual sequence these are: monarchy, or the rule of one; aristocracy, or the rule of the best or for the best purpose; and polity, or the rule of the people in a small city-state for the common good (we now term this democracy). It would appear that since that time no one has created any structure that could not be subsumed under these categories; the only additions were various types of constitutions. So we cannot be said to have much of a choice: the whole flow of modern history will unquestionably predispose us to choose democracy.

But in opting for democracy we must understand clearly just what we are choosing, what price we shall have

to pay, and that we are choosing it as a means, not as an end in itself. The contemporary philosopher Karl Popper has said that one chooses democracy not because it abounds in virtues, but only in order to avoid tyranny. We choose it in full awareness of its faults and with the intention of seeking ways to overcome them.

Many new countries have in recent years suffered a fiasco just after introducing democracy, yet despite such evidence this same period has seen an elevation of democracy from a particular state structure into a sort of universal principle of human existence, almost a cult.

Following the bitter experience of 1917, when we plunged headlong into what we had thought was democracy, Vasily Maklakov, a prominent leader of the Constitutional Democrats, reminded us all of a simple truth by the following admission: "In order to function, democracy needs a certain level of political discipline among the populace." But this is precisely what we lacked in 1917, and one fears that there is even less of it today.

The aim of universal suffrage is to permit the Popular Will to be manifested: that genuine Will which is supposed to guide everything in a direction most advantageous to the people. Yet no one has been able to say whether such a single Will exists at all or to define its qualities. And it is remarkable that different systems of counting votes will produce different or even diametrically opposed readings of this Popular Will.

One should add that election campaigns involving large numbers of voters and conducted among an electorate with no direct knowledge of the candidates can be so frivolous and shrill that, given the frequent bias of the media, a large proportion of the voters may turn away in disgust. And television, though it can bring out a candidate's appearance as well as his public demeanor, does nothing to reveal his abilities as a statesman. Campaigns of this sort invariably entail the degradation of political thought. The very system does not inspire political figures to rise above their political interests; quite the reverse: a campaign based on moral principles can become a recipe for defeat.

In any case it is not feasible for the

people to give their representatives precise instructions concerning all future contingencies. Nor does there exist a stimulus that will impel those deputies holding office to rise above their future electoral interests and above party machinations so as to serve only the clearly perceived interests of the country. As a result, the actions that are taken are those having immediate appeal to the voters, even though the long view might suggest that these actions will bring them harm. And in a country as large as ours, the possibility of keeping tabs on elected representatives is correspondingly reduced, while the chance of abuses on their part increases.

These critical comments about contemporary democracy are not meant to suggest that the future Russian Union will have no need for democracy. *It will need it very much.* But given our people's total lack of

The denationalization process does not necessarily imply that everything must be privatized as a matter of rigid dogma. State-owned companies can coexist with a market economy, as the experience of Western Europe shows. The extent of state intervention is a contentious issue between movements with a more or less social democratic leaning and the die-hard Hayekians. It is certainly arguable that market forces themselves do not automatically solve all social problems.

The communist heritage survives not only in the economy and in political institutions, but in minds as well. The workers want to have shares in their companies' profits and to remove restrictions on profits, but they would also like to have guarantees against unemployment. The peasants want to have freedom of trade for their products, but demand that the state fix minimum prices for agricultural commodities and protect them from imports by high tariffs. The intelligentsia enjoys the regained freedom of speech and print, but also wants lavish state patronage of cultural goods.

All these conflicts can be solved only by more or less awkward compromises. One cannot have the best of both worlds.

Leszek Kolakowski

preparation for the intricacies of democratic life, democracy must be built from the bottom up, gradually, patiently, and in a way designed to last rather than being proclaimed thunderously from above in its full-fledged form.

All the failings noted earlier would rarely apply to democracies of small areas — mid-sized towns, small settlements (*poselki*), groups of villages (*volosti stanitsy*), or areas up to the size of a country (*uyezd, rayon*). Only in areas of this size can voters have confidence in their choice of candidates, since they will be familiar with them both in terms of their

effectiveness in practical matters and in terms of their moral qualities. At this level phony reputations do not hold up, nor would a candidate be helped by empty rhetoric or party sponsorship.

These are precisely the dimensions within which the new Russian democracy can begin to grow, gain strength, and acquire self-awareness. It also represents a level that is most certain to take root because it will involve the vital concerns of each locality: ensuring unpolluted water and air, overseeing housing, hospitals, nurseries, schools, shops, and the local distribution of goods, while also giving vigorous support to the growth of

untrammelled local economic initiatives.

Without properly constituted local self-government there can be no stable or prosperous life, and the very concept of civic freedom loses all meaning.

This article was adapted from Mr. Solzhenitsyn's Rebuilding Russia: Reflections and Tentative Proposals, translated by Alexis Klimoff, to be published in November. Copyright © 1991 by Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc. All rights reserved.

Rebuilding Russia was written before the coup.

COURTESY: NATIONAL REVIEW.
September 23, 1991

SOVIET COMMUNISM

• (1917-1991)

BY ROBERT CONQUEST

Soviet Communism was pronounced dead on September 5, 1991. Born on November 7, 1917, its parentage was obscure. Its father, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, maintained that its mother was Clio, History in person. But she rejected the claim, and in fact the child seems to have been a changeling. Its reputed grandfather, Karl Marx, told of its descent from German Philosophy—often represented in neo-classical sculpture as a magnificent figure of a woman, yet thought by most observers not to match Clio in either beauty or intelligence. Marx identified the line's original progenitor on the male side as a rather clumsy and unpleasing character called English Economics.

Whatever the case, Soviet Communism, in infancy, maturity and old age, was chiefly known as an example of various psychological and physical disorders. It came into a large agricultural and industrial heritage, which, over the decades, it frittered away in crackpot schemes, leading eventually to bankruptcy.

There are many descriptions of its early years. In some of them it is seen as a beautiful baby, admired by all, except for a few curmudgeons. More recent biographers have demonstrated that it suffered from destructive tantrums even in infancy, though calming down for a while from the age of four, under a temporarily effective treatment called NEP.

The effects of this new economic policy wore off by 1929, and for several years it suffered from convulsions of a particularly unattractive sort. As it reached adulthood, it increasingly succeeded in concealing these from the world. Indeed, it was now in a stage of such advanced paranoia that it began itself to believe that it was healthy and flourishing.

By 1939 the neighborhood had deteriorated, and the subject of this obituary formed an association with a fellow psychopath—actually a distant cousin—named Nazism. For a time their friendship seemed to make its condition worse, in a sort of *folie à deux*. But, as is usual with such characters, they soon fell out. In the ensuing confrontation, it appeared that Soviet Communism was enjoying better mental health. At least it briefly managed once again to impress a variety of experts that this was truly the reality. Nevertheless, it is clear that by the age of 30, in the late 1940s, the paranoia was intractable. Although initially this took a less manic and more gloomy form, a violent attack of anti-Semitic obsession ensued.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, it developed some signs of insight into its unfortunate condition, and a full recovery seemed possible. However, in the mid-'60s, it sank into a long period of ever-increasing apathy and senility. By the early 1970s it was unquestionably wasting away. Attempts to restore its health by a variety of new techniques of shock treatment led to occasional hopeful signs. But by 1990 the case was obviously hopeless.

In August 1991 it rallied enough to go into a final tantrum, then expired miserably.

Funeral Friday, at the Smolny, St. Petersburg. In view of the deceased's antipathy to hymns, the following will be sung (to the air of "Bye Bye Love"):

*Bye bye Karl,
Bye bye Vladimir,
USSR disappear
To the land above the sky*

The Unfinished Revolution

China's Time Will Come

Fang Lizhi

So long as there exists anywhere in the world a government that can be proud of something like the Tiananmen massacre, or a dictatorship that refuses to apply universally recognized principles to control its own behavior, it will remain hard to imagine the possibility of genuine world understanding.

All who care about democracy must be concerned about whether China can become a democratic country. In 1989, movements for democracy were successful in Eastern Europe but failed in China, thus giving rise to the question: Is it impossible for China to achieve democracy?

I am not an astrologer who makes predictions, but only an astrophysicist who has no way of foretelling most of China's future. But there is one point that I can predict with confidence: China will not be able to avoid moving toward democracy.

My reasons for this prediction are very simple. A democratic China fills the needs of both the Chinese people and the world. Some people say that China is a big country and a poor country, and that the most urgent need of the Chinese people is economic development – not democracy. This seems hard to deny. The facts show that modernization has been the goal of the Chinese people for a long time.

Time and again, however, Chinese efforts at modernization have ended in failure. The most recent example has been the economic reform movement that began in the late 1970s. This movement enjoyed some successes during the first part of the 1980s, but after 1987 it began gradually to slide toward failure.

Why the Chinese Need Democracy

Why do Chinese efforts at modernization fail? Why do reforms

fail? Why has the Chinese economy remained largely unsuccessful? Obviously, it is not because the Chinese people are not good at working or doing business. The economic success of overseas Chinese around the world belies such a conclusion. The problem has to do with the authoritarian political system in China. Therefore, without reform of China's political system, it will be impossible to bring about modernization. This is a basic reason why the Chinese people need democracy.

Of course, the Chinese people's need for democracy arises not only from the economic failures of the communist system, but also from its extreme inhumanity. It has trampled upon the dignity and the most basic rights and freedoms of its own citizens. This explains why the movements that have arisen to oppose communist regimes have always been movements dedicated to democracy and human rights. The pattern has been the same whether it appears in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, or China.

The true record concerning human rights in China has been hidden, because the Chinese authorities have thoroughly blocked communication about it. Some people have even been misled into believing that China has been free of human rights violations. Yet no record at all can be the worst of all. The Tiananmen massacre of 1989 shocked many people. It marked the first time that the outside world was able to see for itself how cruel and violent the behavior of the Chinese authorities can be. But the Tiananmen incident is only the tip of an iceberg. I cannot describe here the rest of that iceberg in its terrible entirety, but will mention just one item: there are according to incomplete statistics, at least 876 labour camps in China. It is hard to say exactly how many people are in them, but we do know that the inmates of certain camps in Xinjiang Province number between 50,000 and 80,000. How many of these are political

prisoners? Again we do not know, but one informed researcher has estimated 10 per cent to be political prisoners.

Modernization Requires Democracy

Recently, the Chinese leaders used the distraction of the war in the Persian Gulf to intensify repression of those fighting for democracy and freedom in China. They have resumed the trials of students who took part in the peaceful demonstrations at Tiananmen. This is a new desecration by the Chinese authorities of the universal principles of human rights. It is clear that basic human rights cannot be guaranteed without a democratic government.

In sum, Chinese history teaches us that modernization requires democracy, and that human rights require democracy. This is why we Chinese must pursue a democratic China.

The world at large also needs a democratic China. Today, the human race lives within a common civilization, united by the mutual exchange of news, knowledge, and culture. It is no longer possible to keep China's affairs separate from those of the rest of the world.

A democratic China would contribute greatly to stability in East Asia and the entire Pacific region. Recently, the Cold War has ended. Eastern Europe has embarked upon a new road, and even the two Koreas have begun talking to each other. China, however, is still divided – as it has been since 1949 – and remains formally in a state of civil war.

The Significance of Tiananmen Massacre

In our small global village, more and more worldwide problems have been forced upon our agenda: population, energy, the environment, global warming, and deforestation. Obviously, with respect to relations within our global village, we must also ask where the problem lies. So long as there exists anywhere in the world a government

that can be proud of something like the Tiananmen massacre, or a dictatorship that refuses to apply universally recognized principles to control its own behavior, it will remain hard to imagine the possibility of genuine world understanding. History teaches us that to indulge a government that is proud of murder at home eventually brings major dilemmas before the rest of humankind. The human rights issue is another very important global problem, and thus the denial of democracy and human rights in China is a matter of international concern. The Tiananmen massacre not only caused China to suffer; it polluted the world environment as well. Without a gradual improvement of the world's human rights environment, solutions to the problems of our global village cannot be guaranteed.

It is clear that the struggle for freedom and democracy in China is far from over. The road has already been long and difficult, and is likely to remain so for many years to come. It may take

a decade, a generation, or even longer. But whatever the case, there can be no denying that a trend toward democracy, freedom, and human rights has been set in motion, and will be very hard to turn completely around. The historic demonstrations in Tiananmen Square revealed the enduring truth that the time for freedom and democracy in China eventually will come.

China's twentieth-century history has closely paralleled world trends. At the beginning of the century, when communism was on the rise worldwide, it also gained rapidly in China. At mid-century, when many countries were one after another becoming "proletarian" dictatorships, China became one too. Today, with the communist system everywhere in decline, communism in China is losing its reputation as well. Thus we can predict with confidence that China, as part of a worldwide historical trend, will eventually move away from authoritarian rule and toward more democratic government.

The world will never forget the men and women of Tiananmen Square in 1989 who paid with their lives for freedom and democracy in China. This is why, despite the many frustrations and disappointments in today's China, I still look with hope to the future of my country.

Fang Lizhi, a Chinese astrophysicist who has emerged in the last decade as China's most eloquent advocate of democracy and academic freedom, has been called "China's Andre Sakharov." In the wake of the Tiananmen Square massacre in June 1989, he sought asylum at the American Embassy in Beijing, where he remained for 386 days. He is currently affiliated with the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University.

Reprinted from: *The Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Summer 1991) pp. 50-53, © the National Endowment for Democracy.

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Gorbachev Failed to Follow own Maxim

Just two years ago, as Communist regimes were falling throughout Europe, a supremely confident Mikhail Gorbachev gave some advice to his beleaguered colleagues: In order to survive, improvise, abandon your cherished principles, but never, never let yourself be overrun by the momentum for change.

For a time, the Soviet president successfully made that maxim his political philosophy, ducking, weaving and improvising his way into history with an astonishing series of political moves that helped change the world – and keep himself in power.

Now that period is rapidly drawing to a close. In a Shakespearean twist of fate, the 60-year-old Mr. Gorbachev has become the latest victim of his own maxim, overtaken and overrun by the political momentum that he himself unleashed in the former Soviet Union.

"Gorbachev has done his job, and we can say thank you," said Sergei Tsypilyayev, a parliamentary deputy from St. Petersburg. "Now it's high time for him to resign, so that he can stay in our memory as one of the great men of this century."

Mr. Gorbachev himself, while still harboring distant hopes of salvaging some future role for himself, all but conceded defeat... Without a Soviet Union, he admitted, there can be no Soviet president. He bitterly attacked the idea of a commonwealth, and, in what sounded suspiciously like a swan song, sought to defend his record.

"The major task of my life has been accomplished," he said. "If others were in my place, they would have given up long ago. However, I managed to push through the main ideas of *perestroika*, although not without mistakes."

Mr. Gorbachev's demise marks the end of an extraordinary six-year period in which the Soviet Union shifted from proud, totalitarian superpower to a fledgling democracy that no longer hid the truth about its rotten economy and shameful past. Along the way, a sharp change in Soviet foreign policy from confrontation to cooperation helped end the Cold War and brought about the collapse of communism around the world, with the exception of a handful of die-hard holdovers. The popular uprising that reversed the hard-liners' coup last August showed that *perestroika*, as the Soviet leader labeled his reform movement, had put down deep roots.

The men who are poised to take over from him, principally Russia's Mr. Yeltsin and Leonid Kravchuk, the Ukraine president, have promised to go much farther than Mr. Gorbachev in transforming their republics into liberal, free-market democracies. But Mr. Gorbachev's passage should serve as a sobering reminder for them, as well as for other world leaders.

In the end, both his supporters and detractors say, he was crippled by his inability to improve the everyday life of his people. While gaining an immense popular following abroad, culminating in the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize, his standing at home deteriorated rapidly as inflation was unleashed and already-depleted stores became ever emptier.

The final blow to his position was largely the result of back-room politicking by Mr. Yeltsin, an erstwhile rival, and Mr. Kravchuk, the Ukrainian president who is seeking to prove himself as a committed nationalist. But above all, Mr. Gorbachev's worst enemy turned out to be himself.

After setting in motion the wholesale destruction of the system that had nurtured him, and that he had deemed to be rotten, he suddenly paused in midstream, abandoning his brilliant political improvisation to defend the status quo that he had been so determined to change. Pushed to the wall, he refused to give up his belief in a great socialist future – an idea that is now openly mocked here – and set about trying to salvage what remained of his former empire.

"He was a great man with great promise that was never fulfilled," says Oleg Kalugin, a former KGB general who publicly turned on his former employers and became an outspoken proponent of change.

Mr. Tsypilyayev, the deputy from St. Petersburg, says Mr. Gorbachev's greatest error can be summed up in one phrase: "Too late."

It is a mark of the change that he brought to Soviet society that none of this as well as the other public criticism that has been heaped on him in recent weeks and months, would have been thinkable when he became general secretary of the Soviet Communist Party in March 1985. Working then in the closed-door secrecy of the times, he hatched his plans for *perestroika*, a word taken from socialist propaganda that means restructuring or rebuilding.

In fact, destruction would have been a better description for the policies of the first years. Determined to transform the Soviet Union into an efficient and more democratic place, he whittled away at the communist system, its repressive reflexes and its old-guard leadership.

The economy was quickly identified as the major priority. His colleagues of the time, including his rival Yegor Ligachev, have since recalled how the Kremlin leadership was alarmed by the growing lag with the West, particularly in science and technology. Its tradition-bound central planners missed out on the computer revolution of the 1970s, and Mr. Gorbachev was determined not to fall further behind.

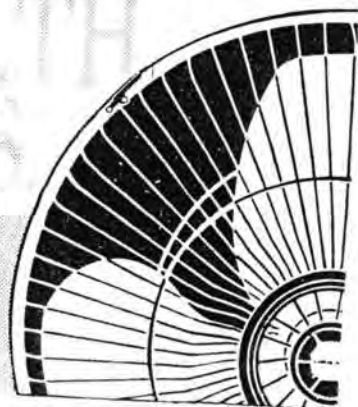
But the Kremlin's remedies, largely relying on huge increases in government spending and grandiose industrial schemes that never left the drawing board, proved disastrous. Instead of greater flexibility, the changes wrought industrial chaos, a growing budget deficit and the onset of inflation. Nikolai Ryzhkov, Mr. Gorbachev's right-hand man for much of the 1985-90 period, admitted recently in a Soviet newspaper that "we didn't understand a lot at that time."

A report from Moscow by Peter Cumbel, Staff Reporter.

COURTESY Asia Wall Street Journal, December 1991.

BREEZY DAYS BLOW IN
ON THE THREE WINGS. WHEN YOU SWITCH
ON YOUR ORIENT FAN,
EYE CATCHING COLOURS,
SUBTLE SHADES. DAZZLING
RANGE OF SLEEK DESIGNS.
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A QUARTERLY OF LIBERAL IDEAS

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by MINOO MASANI

OUR MISSION

Freedom First speaks for the silent majority — the majority that wants to be left in peace to pursue its goal of improving its quality of life but has been suffering in silence the indignities heaped on it by insensitive governments who have arrogated to themselves the right to decide what is good for the people. In the process, the whole country has been turned into a cesspool of corruption. Public morality and character have reached an all-time low.

Freedom First affirms that much of the unrest and ferment in our society is a direct result of excessive State intervention in the day-to-day lives of our people. While the people's initiative has been stifled the economy is in shambles. The Journal believes that while India needs a strong government that ensures the rule of law what India does not need is a meddling government — the system so far that has led to impoverishment, insecurity and instability.

Freedom First therefore stands for minimum government and maximum freedom, tempered by a sense of individual responsibility, in which the people's genius has a fair opportunity to develop and grow.

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Freedom First has all the qualities one expects from a journal committed to Liberalism and stimulated by such a stalwart of Indian Liberalism as Minoo Masani. It is clear in its commitment to pluralism, democracy and tolerance, making its position known even if it is unpopular or dangerous to do so.

It is secondly, a journal providing a platform for enlightened debate, spawning new ideas in a society which tends to overemphasise conformism and often stale traditions. Thirdly, *Freedom First* gives a lot of space to the reporting and debate of international events and trends, making the point that a true liberal is international in his/her outlook.

Urs Schoettli, Secretary General, Liberal International, London

I really love *Freedom First* and Minoo Masani's commonsense. Please permit me to send you herewith a small cheque to help the Journal keep alive real Freedom. I am not rich in wealth but I would soon become poor in digestion if I did not share or help in time.

Prof. P.N. Driver, Pune

I subscribed to *Freedom First* very recently and now painfully realise for how long I did not really exercise my freedom to read the really thought-provoking and intellectual material.

May your quarterly dedicated totally to the dissemination of liberal ideas make more and more people conscious of their duties towards freedom first.

Suhas Patwardhan, Badlapur

I re-discovered *Freedom First* after 30 years, courtesy Minoo Masani, and was pleasantly surprised to see that you maintain a uniformly high standard of articles.

Freedom first — by all means. But as we have discovered to our utter dismay after 40 years of "Free India" — Freedom does not mean better Government; Freedom does not mean Quality; as Nani Palkhivala said somewhere recently: Freedom does not mean independence of thought or concern for democracy — or for values and character, which India needs so desperately.

Freedom only means loot and licence in 'Our India' of today! But all is not lost. Men of faith still believe that India will somehow muddle through.

Dinshah K. Malegamvala, Bombay

Over the past two years I have been impressed with *Freedom First*. The issues you discuss are those that concern us, but the flavour of the discussions and the examples are different. The issues are reflected as if by an imaginary, prismatic looking glass. We recognise ourselves but the colours are strange.

Raphael G. Kazmann, Baton Rouge, U.S.A.

I congratulate you for the excellent issue of *Freedom First* No. 407. It, indeed, offered delightful reading. Especially, the report on the proceedings of the seminar on Kashmir is enlightening.

Lakshmana P. Bhandarkar, Amtady

I am happy to say that I find *Freedom First* excellent reading.

B. Massar, Shillong

I just received a copy of *Freedom First*. I found it fascinating — fearless and a beacon for freedom. Congratulations to the Founder.

Ladislav Rice, London

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The Masani Viewpoint

Our External Affairs Ministry

The action of the Indian Prime Minister in felicitating Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi on the Nobel Peace Prize being awarded to her need to be lauded. But does the Prime Minister know what his wretched External Affairs Ministry is up to? Let me enlighten.

According to a despatch in *The Statesman* of October 9 from Delhi, which I have no reason to disbelieve, because it fits in with the other antics of the Ministry of External Affairs in Delhi, AIR have banned further broadcasts by Ms. U Nu, daughter of the former Prime Minister of Burma, on the ground that they are advised that the Burmese Generals who have illegally usurped power in Burma find her despatches inconvenient!

To quote *The Statesman* despatch, "The Indian Government has readily complied with the major demands of the Rangoon military regime that the AIR's Burmese broadcasts should be totally devoid of political content and that some of its popular Burmese programmes including the one on current affairs should be immediately discontinued. ...What made the AIR broadcasts a prized attraction to the Burmese listeners was the voice of U Nu's daughter, which lent the service a peculiar urgency and hypnotic quality. She participated in the three most popular and widely heard programmes: Current Affairs, Voice of the People and Listeners' Letters...."

The Indian Embassy in Rangoon, according to this despatch, has to its disgrace, been destroying letters of appreciation addressed to AIR and not forwarding them as it should.

Will the Prime Minister kindly investigate the accuracy of these horrible allegations which are not as shocking to me as they should be because in recent times, Indian foreign policy has uniformly supported the enemies of freedom like the conspirators in Moscow, Saddam Hussein, the Serbians trying to occupy Croatia and now the Burmese military tyrants.

There should be a reversion of policy but the real point of these developments is that the autonomy supposed to be enjoyed by AIR is merely a myth and the Government of India still interferes with the freedom of the audio visual media to suit its own cowardly convenience. Autonomy my foot!

What a contrast to the magnificent record of the BBC which has espoused the cause of freedom the world over and has not hesitated to tell even Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to mind her own business when she tried to suggest a modification of the BBC policy.

Why AIR is Punctual but TV is Not

Has any reader stopped to consider why AIR is punctual and starts its various programmes on time while Doordarshan is generally late because its programmes do not finish on time and the next item is kept waiting as a result? But so it is.

I have no doubt about the reason for this contrast. AIR was established under the British and have developed a standard of punctuality and dependability which has still survived. TV, on the other hand, came to India after Independence and shares the national weakness for unpunctuality. It is probably as simple as that.

Remembering Dr. Ambedkar

Recently Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's 35th death anniversary was celebrated in Bombay with great éclat.

My path crossed Dr. Ambedkar's at two stages of my life. One was when I was a student of economics at Elphinstone College and I read Dr. Ambedkar's excellent book, "The Problem of the Rupee". The book was both readable and sound. The common Indian point of view based on the businessman's interests was that the rupee should be pegged at 1 sh 4 d. I happened to agree with Dr. Ambedkar who took the other view espoused by the British Government that the rupee should be pegged at 1 sh 6 d.

A Return to Liberalism

If the Left parties (in India) are at the end of the political road, the Left intellectuals are at the end of the Marxist tether. They know no other political theory well enough, and they have never bothered to develop a political vision of their own. It is a strange historical paradox that the elites of Third World countries are Left radicals. And what has sustained political discourse in these countries is Marxist polemics. The polemics never gained indigenous riots, and therefore has to wither away as the communist states sink into political oblivion. It has bleak implications for this country because suddenly we are left with no theoretical framework to carry on the political dialogue.

Unlike in the Western democracies the Indian intelligentsia has not evolved the liberal argument against political tyranny and economic inequity. Not that we have never known the liberal arguments in this country. As a matter of fact, the earliest political impulse was that of liberalism, and had such luminaries as Dadabhai Naoroji and Gopal Krishna Gokhale as its proponents. Under the Gandhian magic of mass politics liberalism vanished from the Indian scene.

After Gandhi's anarchism it was the turn of Nehru's socialism. Liberalism never made a come-back to Indian politics. And perhaps the country's need for the sane arguments of liberalism is never more than it is now. The Marxist has failed to stem the rising tide of right-wing fanatics in the political arena. The Marxist arguments for secularism lack strength of conviction.

Though many failed to perceive it, the Marxists could never have outflanked the religious fanatics. One totalitarian idea cannot really counter other totalitarian ideas except by force. It is reason alone that can hold at bay the fanatics. And liberalism is one doctrine that is imbued with the spirit of rationality. The death of Marxism provides a fresh opportunity for the intelligentsia in this country to restore the political discourse to its pluralistic rational base.

Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr.
Indian Express, Nov. 15

When I appeared for the B.A. examination, my economics paper contained a question on this issue. I naturally wrote in favour of Dr. Ambedkar's view on the subject. I did not know then that he would be the examiner. The result of this accident was that my paper was very well marked by him!

It was not till 1947 when I was a Member of the Constituent Assembly of India that I came across Dr. Ambedkar in person. He was a very active member of the Constituent Assembly and our Constitution owes a lot to his labours.

He and I were both members of the Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights. There were several issues of a progressive nature when Dr. Ambedkar and I did not have our way. In the company of Mrs. Hansa Mehta, we therefore signed Minutes of Dissent to the official line. As far as I can recall two of the issues were a Common Civil Code and making free and compulsory primary education a fundamental right enforceable by law and not merely a Directive Principle as was the majority view.

Dr. K.M. Munshi refers to this in his book on the subject and describes us as the three idealists which I suppose we were. I am very proud that I was in the distinguished company of Mrs. Hansa Mehta and Dr. Ambedkar.

Ukraine's Independence

So the Ukraine has at last become independent. It could have attained independence in World War II but for the stupidity of Hitler.

General Vlasov who commanded the Ukrainian Army made an offer to the German Government he was fighting.

The Ukrainians were sick of Stalin and his tyranny and of collective farming. General Vlasov informed Hitler that the Ukrainian forces would come over to the German side if Germany agreed to Ukrainian independence and the abolition of

collective farming in the Ukraine. Unfortunately, Hitler's reply was negative. He said Germany was fighting a war for *Lebensraum* and the abolition of collective farming would mean that the farmer would benefit while the German Government would not. The result was that the Ukrainians continued to fight on the Russian side as much as they disliked Stalin and his works.

A Rare Politician

Jaswant Singh, the Deputy Leader of the BJP in the Lok Sabha, is a rare politician. In my view, he is one of the half dozen honest and competent members of Parliament that we have in this country. I have always admired this quiet Liberal who is such a rarity in Indian politics.

During a recent visit to Bombay, Mr. Jaswant Singh illustrated the truth of my belief that he actually puts his own views ahead of what the rabble in his Party want.

During his visit to Bombay, Mr. Jaswant Singh expressed his personal disapproval of his party's local electoral alliance with the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, referred to Kashmir in an open-minded manner and called for a review of India's so-called foreign policy.

He recently drew flak from some members of the BJP in Parliament for actually commending the performance of the present Prime Minister and Finance Minister. Actually his party is to blame for not giving whole-hearted support to Mr. Manmohan Singh's courageous attempt to discard State capitalism of the Jawaharlal Nehru-Stalin pattern and replace it with competitive free enterprise following the examples of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries. Of all existing political parties, the BJP is the only one not committed to socialism but this is an issue which for various reasons, is subordinated to the Hindu aspect of the party.

It is to be hoped that people like Mr. Jaswant Singh and Mr. Viren Shah win their fight for the soul of the BJP.

The Public Right To Know

When public opinion is alarmed, it should show its alarm. Governments are modern dinosaurs - they move slowly. They tend to ignore realities, so they don't need to move at all. When intelligence agencies provide unwelcome news, governments try to persuade them that it isn't true.

It happens relatively often that individual civil servants, suddenly confronted with horrifying tidings during the course of their daily work, report to their superiors - only to find that they face sanction or dismissal. Bad news is not welcome, and the worst thing that can happen is for the public to be informed. But we cannot go along with this: we are the public, and we have a right to be informed. We believe it is a crime for bad news to be concealed from us. For if it is political we will be the first to suffer if things go badly wrong. Concealing bad news from the public ought to be a crime - and in fact is in most democratic countries.

The process has been revealed most often in the United States. Relation between the Central Intelligence Agency and successive administrations have been marked by many instances of such behaviour. Not necessarily because it happens more often in the United States but because American society is the most open of them all.

Why do governments conceal bad news from the public? Again the answer fits the dinosaur metaphor. Because when the public knows, the government will be forced to do something about it. But governments have preordained programmes. They don't like these to be disturbed. When excursions and alarms happen abroad, they have to react - in the information age they cannot be concealed. But when they happen at home, in areas where the government claims control, government is faced with an all-to-irresistible temptation to conceal the truth. This is why it often happens that public scandals unveil webs of secrecy.

COURTESY: Swiss Press Review

The Market Economy and the Contemporary Crisis

Amlan Datta

These are excerpts from the two-day Rajaji Birthday Lecture delivered by Prof. Amlan Datta in Bombay on December 12 and 13, 1991. The full text of the Lectures is being published by the Project for Economic Education. Copies of this publication will be mailed to Freedom First subscribers by arrangement with the Project.

Criticism of capitalism is as old as the industrial revolution itself. However, the nature and thrust of that criticism has changed with time. At first, it was articulated chiefly by visionaries and utopian socialists, an expression of an outraged conscience rather than a firm indication of what was to be done. A determined attempt to achieve industrialisation by an alternative route came much later.

An alternative to Capitalism

Towards the end of the 1920s, a system of central planning was introduced in one of the largest countries of the world, comparatively less developed by European standards, under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, with the avowed aim of "catching up with" and then "surpassing" the capitalist economies of the West. What followed in that country came to be commonly regarded as the socialist path of economic development, an alternative to the capitalist path. From being a mere vision, a utopia, socialism found a terrestrial home and became an unfolding reality.

...Generations to come will be at a loss to explain how that mood of unbounded faith and high optimism in the socialist camp survived the monstrous atrocities perpetrated by the Stalinist regime in those same years.

As the Soviet Union emerged victorious from World War II, socialist hopes got a fresh lease of life. But it was a lease that did not last long. Victory in war had given the Stalinist leadership a kind of unquestionable glory. But the new generation that grew up after the war was soon disenchanted. A contradiction developed between the promises made by the central planned economy and its actual performance. Far from surpassing the advanced

The world has to move in the direction of a confederal polity, a decentralised and sustainable economy and an ethics of non-violence.

The new culture must permeate both politics and economics. It may well be born outside the market place. But as it grows its message will hopefully spread everywhere. One has to live with that hope; the alternative is a path to disaster paved with violence.

capitalist countries, the Soviet economy performed disappointingly and lagged behind and the disparity kept widening. After nearly sixty years of socialist experimentation, the competition between the rival systems ended, with the leaders of the Soviet Union and the eastern European countries accepting defeat.

The Collapse of the Command Economy

The Soviet system of central planning, or the administrative command economy, is no longer held up as a model, least of all by those who grew up under that system. It is worth noting that the Soviet model of socialism was wrecked not by an attack from outside, not by defeat in war, but by a manifest incapacity to satisfy the urgent demands of the people in terms of both material goods and social justice and freedom. Capitalism, or the market economy, has also experienced many problems, including severe periodic disturbances, but it has as yet shown greater resilience and capacity for management of crises over a much longer period of evolution.

This should set us thinking fundamentally on the role of the market

in social and economic development...

The Role of the Market

Industrialisation may take place under alternative systems, but everywhere it has certain common characteristics and requirements. In all cases, it involves rapid changes in methods of production, a technological revolution, so to speak; a process of capital-formation at a noticeably higher level than what common in pre-industrial economies; and a change in the scale and manner of mobilisation of resources and organisation of production. These formal conditions of industrial growth look much alike in all cases. Where then does the distinctive role of the market come in? In the capitalist economies of the West, there was a long period of expansion of commerce, partly preceding industrialisation and partly accompanying it. How do these things link up?

Adam Smith

For Adam Smith, the principal link between the market and economic progress is simple. It consists basically in the opportunity that an expanding market provides for increasing specialisation and division of labour. "The greatest improvement in the productive powers of labour", wrote Adam Smith, "seem to have been the effects of the division of labour", and "the division of labour is limited by the extent of the market". As the extent of the market widens, so does the division of labour. Further, with the progress of specialisation, there is now greater scope for mechanisation of production, which contributes again to an enhancement of the efficiency of labour. Mechanisation brings greater dependence on capital goods, it also

State management means bureaucratic management. A normal

market economy should function within an appropriate framework of laws, legislated by a sovereign people through its representatives and administered by a neutral, public-spirited bureaucracy. Thus the bureaucracy has its proper place and it is useful where it belongs. But there is a qualitative difference between good bureaucratic or administrative culture and good business or entrepreneurial culture. The main duty of the bureaucrat is not so much to innovate as to work according to rules and precedents and to be just and impartial in the administration of the law. The main function of the entrepreneur is to innovate and economise and get things done efficiently with as little waste of time and resources as possible. When these two cultures are mixed up, both business and administration are likely to suffer a peculiar corruption.

The point could be illustrated from India. But a more telling illustration would be from the Soviet Union. In his autobiography Boris Yeltsin presents a remarkable account of that combination of corruption and inefficiency which afflicts Soviet socialism. "Obsequiousness and obedience are rewarded (in the Party apparat) by privilege," writes Yeltsin, and he goes on to add with evident irony, "If you have climbed your way to the top of the establishment pyramid, then it is, 'full communism'! ... From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs' and so it is for those at the top of the party pyramid. ... their abilities alas are not outstanding – but their needs! Their needs are so great that so far it has only been possible to create real communism for a couple of dozen people." To blame this state of affairs on Stalin would be a mistake. It is a logical outcome of the system itself.

The Role of the State

To uphold this indictment of an overcentralised economy and policy is not, however, to deny that the state has a large and positive role to play in economic development particularly in the preparatory stages of industrial take-off. The diversified activities of private enterprise require a supporting infrastructure which the state can help erect to common advantage. It also may be expedient for the state to play a

positive role in setting up vital large-scale industries to help overcome the immediate constraints of a limited market. But appended to all such activities there must be a cautionary note. A policy which is sound and expedient at one stage of development can become a fetter on further progress at the next stage. Far too often, "socialism" has become the ideology of an overgrown bureaucracy, the "new class". Clinging to its vested interests and habitual powers, the entrenched order resists necessary change and liberalisation even when the inner dynamics of economic and social evolution demands a new orientation and a crossing of frontiers.

The Militarism Factor

One special factor which has further

complicated the situation in many countries is the growth and persistence of militarism. There is a widely accepted view that trade breeds war. There is some truth in it, but that is not the whole truth. It is not just commercial calculations, but the untamed force of a surviving feudal spirit, which has fuelled militarism and wars even in contemporary history. The major part of the trade of the developed countries is among themselves and this trade rarely gives rise to war. It is trade between developed and undeveloped countries that more usually leads to hostile confrontation. The more developed (and, therefore, the more powerful) country has been often tempted to use force to remove obstacles to trade in the less developed country. Or, two developed countries,

The Spirit of Free Enterprise

A government has the right to control law and order, the right to formulate the foreign policy of the country, it has the right to look after the nation's defence, it has the right in so many other things, even telecommunications – it is almost impossible now for any privatisation to take place there. But why airlines, why STC, why MMTC, why MRTP? What are all these controls doing, like steel control, coal control and all the rest of it? Vast numbers of people doing absolutely zero productive work, and they are eating up the money that the government lacks today. No government has shown the will-power to go against that sort of thing. There is absolutely no need for a steel control today, there is absolutely no need for a coal control today. What is the MRTP doing? What is FERA doing for that matter – although I have a certain amount of sympathy, where we have a zero balance in the foreign exchange kitty, some sort of regulation should be there. But most of these controls are absolutely futile and they totally go against the spirit of free enterprise.

Everybody in the business community who has any voice at all should stand up and say that we don't want government to run our affairs. But unfortunately even amongst ourselves there are people who want to take a personal advantage by going to government outside. Having first paid lip service here, they go to government – power of money talks often – and they get themselves the privileges that they want, with the result that the government

feels quite secure in carrying on, and the bureaucrat loves his little power and position. It is a sad scenario but if we don't get out of it now, we never will.

Look at the opposition to multinationals. There was a time when you thought that economic wealth and strength could regulate the internal policies of a government. Mexico showed that it is not true when it threw the Americans out of the oilfields – the powerful next-door neighbour – it threw them out overnight. Nothing happened to Mexico. Mexico still exists and is a separate entity. Nothing would happen to us if we threw our gates wide open to multinationals, or whoever wants to come in. This 40%, 50%, 60% is all niggling away. You go to the World Bank or International Monetary Fund and you ask for a big, enormous loan which you have to start repaying with interest almost from Day 1 and add hundreds and thousands of crores of public debt. But if somebody wants to come in with his money, come in here, he will bring in know-how, he will put up a factory, he will provide employment for your people and he will only repatriate the dividends he gets after the company has become successful – and you say "no, you can't have more than 5%, 10%, 15%, 20%". Surely we are big enough now to realise that, that sort of niggardly thinking does not do our country any good.

Russi Mody

trying to gain control over an undeveloped country, may fight with each other...

In fact, we are confronted there with a major dilemma of modern economic history. The market economy has promoted enterprise and revolutionised industry. Industrialism has brought within the grasp of man unprecedented material power. The pursuit of power has strengthened totalitarian tendencies, corrupted reason and deformed enterprise. The market economy, unaided by higher ethics, cannot cure that deformity. Also a number of other complexities, which deserve separate notice, have overtaken us.

Where do we go from here? It was not the intention of Marx to deny the importance of the economic and cultural achievements of the bourgeois civilisation. But in the Third World, Marxism-Leninism, propped up by the temporary worldly success of a particular brand of socialism, helped promote, in alliance, often with militant nationalism, a contempt and denigration of those achievements. We have, indeed, to pass beyond the legacy of the past. But we have to learn and preserve what is of real value in that legacy even as we strive to push beyond.

Among the major components of the global economic crisis, pride of place should go to the military factor. But it has been further aggravated and complicated by several other forces and factors. Let us see how.

During World War I, the German economy effectively introduced a system of central planning, which John Maynard Keynes specially commented on at that time and the Bolsheviks found worth copying after they came into power. Between militarism and the market economy there has always been a strained co-existence. This is because the militaristic perception of national priorities does not coincide with the normal tendencies of the free market economy. It is true that the state can alter the outcome of the working of the market by massive intervention on behalf of military establishments. But even so additional controls become necessary which the market economy can neither gladly accept nor lightly discard.

At this point, the experience of the Cold War deserves some brief comments. For four long decades the superpowers and, in truth, many lesser powers too, maintained levels of defence expenditure which are appropriate only to a time of war. But since it was not real hot war except very locally, it was difficult to introduce controls on consumption and make them acceptable to the people. The resulting imbalance showed itself in different ways in different countries.

In Japan, where military expenditure till recently was held at a modest level, the strain was not great. In the U.S.A. a stream of innovations, amounting to a new industrial revolution, helped raise labour productivity, and yet the combined impact of high military expenditure and a high tide of consumerism became factors which contributed to budgetary deficits and an adverse balance of payments of a disturbingly large magnitude. For the Soviet Union, the strain of massive military expenditure, unmitigated by a sufficient volume of technological innovations in consumer goods industries, and, in fact, heightened by the inherent weaknesses of an administrative command economy, became increasingly unbearable.

Third World Problems – The Indian Example

In India a high level of defence expenditure, strong import-oriented consumerist habits rampant among a rapidly expanding new middle class and low levels of efficiency in the public sector particularly have combined to generate an economy of growing deficits and chronic inflation. With present levels of defence expenditure and administrative inefficiency, deficits cannot be removed; with large fiscal deficits, inflation will continue; and with persistent inflation, the market cannot play its proper role. A reduction in the external value of the currency cannot mend the situation if the erosion of its internal value continues unabated. So the basic factors of imbalance have to be attended to. There are problems for which the remedy has to be sought outside the market economy even if the aim is to help the market perform its proper function.

For such problems the remedy lies

partly in greater mutual cooperation among members of the weaker group and partly in suitable remedial measures undertaken by, or with the assistance of, the state. There are regional and social disparities in development which the market economy alone cannot prevent. The role of the state as a provider of necessary infrastructure for development, particularly in comparatively backward regions, has been mentioned earlier. What remains to be noted now is that the underlying idea there has, in fact, a wider range of application. Disparities tend to become cumulative unless they are counteracted by measures originating outside the market. Just as the state has special duties towards backward regions so, too it has special responsibilities towards weaker sections of the population. If these duties and responsibilities are neglected, the strains which accumulate within society become destructive of social welfare.

Rapid Population Growth*

A leading Third World problem to which the market provides no automatic solution is the problem of excessively rapid growth of population. Some classical economists thought that even there the market did provide a crude and effective balancing mechanism. An excess of population lowered wages and hit against the limited means of subsistence of the common people, after which numbers declined either through positive checks or through famines and pestilence. A higher death rate restores balance, if a lower birth rate will not do the job. That line of thought has not lost all relevance, but in some ways things are very different now from what they used to be in the last century. Governments today are in a better position to control famines, and there are methods of reducing mortality, particularly among infants, even among the poor, so that the death rate has declined substantially over the last half a century in the Third World, including India, despite a widespread prevalence of poverty. Although methods of birth control are also known, these have not been adopted quite as fast in the poorer countries. In this new situation, the market alone does not provide an

effective remedy to the demographic crisis...

...In the forty years between 1951 and 1991, the population of India grew at a rate of nearly 2.5 percent per year, while in some other countries of the Third World the rate was even higher. At a comparable state of industrial development of England or France growth of population was never as fast as that. For Great Britain in the middle of the nineteenth century, for instance, the average annual rate of growth of population was below 1.5 per cent. Moreover, Europe at the early stage of development was able to get rid of its surplus population which migrated in large numbers to the New World. In the United States of America and elsewhere, with vast sparsely populated land, large numbers of immigrants could be absorbed with ease. For India today, there is no such outlet for surplus population. Some of our best brains migrate, but that is a different matter.

There is one more important difference. The advanced technology of today is much more labour-saving than was the advanced technology of the nineteenth century when the West completed its period of industrial take-off. We have to make use of modern technology in the organised sector of the Indian economy. But however fast the modern sector may be made to grow, it cannot, under the conditions mentioned above, absorb all or most of our large surplus labour force. If providing full employment is a major task, this cannot be accomplished by sole reliance on the market economy geared to industrialisation along conventional lines. This should set us thinking. We are, in fact, in the presence of a problem the like of which classical political economy or the Western economy was never called upon to face.

Limitations of the Modern Sector

The Indian economy has a modern sector and a traditional sector. There are those who say that this duality should go. But should it? And how? The modern sector has come to stay until and unless we are prepared to give up many things on which we depend today. Are we as a nation ready to disband our army and entrust our safety to non-violence? Evidently we are not. So we have to support the production

and supply of arms and defence equipment which in turn presuppose advanced technology and a large cluster of high-tech industries. There appears to exist a kind of national consensus on this subject. Differences here come to be confined to questions of a little more or a little less. There is, to be sure, no good reason why South Asia should not move towards phased disarmament through mutual agreement. But that takes time. In the meanwhile, we will remain busy keeping continuously abreast of new technology because it does not really make sense to maintain an army and then keep it insufficiently trained and poorly equipped. Beyond defence and heavy industry, the network of advanced transport and communication systems and supporting research and other essential services it generates, there are other material interests too.

We have already noted that, in view of the size of our population and the degree of capital intensity of modern technology, the so-called formal sector of the Indian economy cannot provide employment for a sufficient number of people. Supplementing this sector, there must be, therefore, another area of economic activities organised on the basis of quite different principles. These activities have to rely chiefly on local resources and produce for the domestic market, mainly for local consumption. They need sheltered markets, perhaps reserved areas of production. Such competition as they face will have to come from within their own category. They have to depend on appropriate technology designed to meet their special conditions. They will need to be sustained by a culture, a life-style, hospitable to them and other institutions of local self-help and self-government, inspired by the same culture.

The Role of the Neighbourhood Sector

It is not quite clear what name one should give to this sector. The word 'traditional' does not exactly fit as, in some ways, the underlying conception is quite radical. Appropriate technology is not the same as traditional technology; in many ways, it will have to be enriched by new science, knowledge and experiments. One may call it the

small neighbourhood sector, as it will have a strong preference for small units of production and decided orientation towards the local community or neighbourhood, without however, ceasing to be hospitable to others in a true neighbourly spirit. While the modern market economy has historically led to the disintegration of traditional communal ties, the small neighbourhood sector will help re-integration.

Environmental Degradation

While the problem of rural unemployment, in one form or another, has been a matter of concern for a long time, certain other consequences of the explosion of population have attracted attention only more recently. Chief among these are its effects on the human environment, the ecological consequences of the growing density of human habitation on the globe taken along with high industrialism. As the pressure on land increases, forests are cut down and human settlements spread relentlessly at the expense of a great variety of flora and fauna. This has been happening all over the world for a long time, but the process has assumed more menacing dimensions in recent years. In India, even the high Himalayas have not been spared. The story is much the same elsewhere. As forests attract and help retain moisture, the cutting down of trees, without a compensating programme of reforestation, may spell the extension of dry land and even desertification. Not less serious is the growing incidence of environmental pollution...

This, then, is a global problem. A radical reconstruction of the world economic order is necessary not only for poverty alleviation in the Third World, but also for ensuring the safety and sustainability of the global economy and human civilisation...

The threat to freedom from communist totalitarianism is no longer a major threat. But we still need a new world economic order. The transition cannot be achieved at a stroke. The new order has to develop within the larger frontiers of our society, coexisting with the ruling system for which it is an alternative. This is a duality we have to accept and live with for a long time to come. However, it has to be not a frozen duality but a flux and we have to gain a

clear idea of the direction of the movement.

Towards a New Culture

With the waning of imperialism, we have to seek a principle of political union that does not depend on force. It is already evident that a loose federation or a confederal polity provides that alternative principle of union. One other lesson of history deserves to be carefully noted. In each stage of evolution, the major aim should be to retain the essential gains of the earlier stage and to combine them with the new requirements of mankind. Recent experience provides eloquent testimony to this truth. An attempt to make a leap to a higher stage without due attention to consolidating earlier gains is apt to be tragically expensive in terms of both material and moral resources. The protection of the dignity of the individual, removal of poverty and social insecurity, the search for peace and the imperative need to overcome ecological imbalance combine to set new social and economic objectives for the future. It is in this context that

concepts of freedom and welfare will have to be reviewed and widened. Perhaps even more basic is a deepening of the concept of peace. To live in harmony with men and with nature must become an essential part of our post-modern conception of a sustainable society and economy. Thus, as the twentieth century draws to a close, the new perspectives for a crisis free transition become increasingly clear: The world has to move in the direction of a confederal polity, a decentralised and sustainable economy and an ethics of non-violence.

The new culture that we need must permeate both politics and economics. It may well be born outside the market place. But as it grows, its message will hopefully spread everywhere, to all human institutions, and influence human conduct even in the ordinary business of life. One has to live with that hope; the alternative is a path to disaster paved with violence. People like Rajaji reiterated the need for combining *dharma* with the pursuit of *artha* and *kama*. Some will find that language old-fashioned as people's views of *dharma* are liable to become too exclusive and

immobile. Yet one idea is becoming clearer day by day. There is no way of overcoming the contemporary crisis except with the aid of a higher ethics and an "economy of permanence." The historical sequence of stages of economic evolution will now be seen to run not from capitalism to socialism, a schema that is both ambiguous and strongly discordant with facts, but from primitive capitalism to a social democratic market economy and from there to a non-violent economy of permanence as a distant yet compelling ideal.

Prof. Amlan Datta is a well-known economist and educationist.

He started his career as an educationist in 1947 and became Head of the Department of Economics, Calcutta University in 1968. He was Pro Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University from 1972 to 1974 and Vice Chancellor of North Bengal University from 1974 to 1977. He joined the Gandhian Institute of Studies as Director in 1978 and there after was Vice Chancellor of Vishwa Bharati University, Shantiniketan from 1980 to 1984.

Prof. Amlan Datta is a prolific writer on economic, social, political and philosophical subjects, both in English and Bengali. His very first book *For Democracy* written in 1953 attracted the attention of scholars from all over the world.

A Tribute to Two Outstanding Men

In December 1991 two conscientious citizens of Bombay, Prof. V.B. Kamath and Mr. Ramu Pandit, passed away in quick succession. They were not just two individuals but institutions by themselves.

A remembrance meeting on December 20 was jointly convened by several organisations including the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, the Bombay Sarvodaya Mandal, Indian Radical Humanist Association, Citizens For Democracy (CFD), the Peoples Union For Civil Liberties (PUCL), Freedom First Foundation and the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom. The meeting was chaired by eminent jurist, Mr. H.M. Seervai.

Professor V.B. Kamath (1918-1991)

Born at Mangalore in 1918, graduating from St. Xavier's College, Bombay and the University College, London (1945-47), Prof. Kamath, a visiting Professor at Western Illinois University, USA, taught in different colleges and Universities between 1939 and 1970.

A participant in the freedom struggle, Prof. Kamath courted arrest during the Non-cooperation Movement. After independence he did not join the rat-race of power politics but chose to remain a teacher inspiring the large family of his students.

During India's second battle for freedom when Mrs. Gandhi clamped on the 'Emergency' and attempted to deprive the Indian people of their freedom, Prof. Kamath fought the Emergency as an active member of the Citizens for Democracy (CFD).

For the last three years, Prof. Kamath was afflicted by cancer. Though he knew that the end was near he carried on his activities till the end. An old associate Dr. Usha Mehta vividly described how he once came straight from the hospital to Mani Bhavan to read his paper at a seminar organised by the Gandhians. The familiar figure in spotless white khadi with a matching white beard and hair will be seen so more.

Ramu Pandit (1927-1991)

Ramu, as he was affectionately known to his large group of friends, and the Indian Merchants' Chamber of which he was Secretary General for sixteen years were synonymous. Not only did he live up to the tradition of his predecessors but added new dimensions to the Chamber's activities.

A Commerce graduate of the Bombay University, Ramu had a doctorate in Economics from the University of South California. He was a Fellow of the Royal Economic Society, London.

A rare quality that Ramu possessed was the ability to be equally at ease in the company of public and social workers as in the world of commerce and industry. He was a Rotarian and, on the Board of Trustees of several charitable and educational organisations and business and trade bodies.

He was an author who wrote on subject relating to the economy. His column in two leading Gujarati newspapers in Bombay was very popular with the readers.

For *Freedom First* his loss is irreparable. Ramu was an active member of this journal's editorial board and contributed articles on economic issues from time to time.

As in life so in death Ramu showed his sense of social purpose. He donated his body for medical research to the J.J. Hospital in Bombay.

We shall all miss him.

M.A. Rane

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Human Rights Are Not Alien to Burma

An Essay by Aung San Suu Kyi

Freedom First is both gratified and pained at developments in Burma. Our journal has been among the first to champion the cause for which Aung San Suu Kyi left the comforts of England to return to her motherland, Burma, and after leading her National League for Democracy to victory in the elections of 1989 is now in jail – held incommunicado by a bunch of tin-pot dictators who are holding an entire people in thrall through the force of arms.

It does not appear at this point of time, that civil government and public decencies will dawn in that unfortunate land (once known for its ever smiling people) in the near future. The ruthless exploitation of both irreplaceable natural and human resources goes on, fuelled by the insatiable avarice of the neighbouring states.

The following essay by the Nobel Peace Prize winner, was one of several written in honour of her father before she was placed under house arrest. It is excerpted from a volume of hers titled *Freedom from Fear and Other Writings*, published in November by Penguin. © Aung San Suu Kyi.

The people of Burma view democracy not merely as a form of government but as an integrated social and ideological system based on respect for the individual. When asked why they feel so strong a need for democracy, the least political will answer, "We just want to be able to go about our own business freely and peacefully, without anxiety and fear." In other words, they want the basic human rights which would guarantee a tranquil, dignified existence – free from want and fear. "Democracy songs" articulated such longings: "I am not among the rice-eating robots... Everyone but everyone should be entitled to human rights."

It was predictable that as soon as the issue of human rights became an integral part of the movement for democracy the official media should start ridiculing and condemning the whole concept of human rights, dubbing it a Western artifact alien to traditional values. It was also ironic: Buddhism, the foundation of traditional Burmese culture, places the greatest value on man who alone of all beings can achieve the supreme state of Buddhahood. Each man has in him the potential to realize the truth through his own will and endeavour and to help others to realize it. Human life therefore is infinitely precious.

But despotic governments do not recognize the precious human component of the state, seeing its citizens only as a faceless, mindless – and helpless – mass to be manipulated at will. It is as though people were incidental to a nation rather than its very

lifeblood. Patriotism is debased into a smoke screen of hysteria to hide the injustices of authoritarian rulers who define the interests of the state in terms of their own limited interests. The official creed is required to be accepted with an unquestioning faith more in keeping with orthodox tenets of the biblical religions which have held sway in the West than with the more liberal Buddhist attitude: "It is proper to doubt, to be uncertain ... Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing. Nor upon tradition, nor upon rumors... When you know for yourself that certain things are unwholesome and wrong, abandon them. When you know for yourself that certain things are wholesome and good, accept them."

It is a puzzlement to the Burmese how concepts which recognize the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of human beings can be inimical to indigenous values. It is also difficult for them to understand how any of the rights contained in the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights can be seen as anything but wholesome and good. That the declaration was not drawn up in Burma by the Burmese seems an inadequate reason, to say the least, for rejecting it, especially as Burma was one of the nations which had voted for its adoption in December 1948.

The proposition that the Burmese are not fit to enjoy as many rights and privileges as the citizens of democratic countries is insulting. It also makes questionable the logic of a Burmese government considering itself fit to

enjoy more rights and privileges than the governments of those same countries.

Weak logic, inconsistencies and alienation from the people are common features of authoritarianism. The relentless attempts of totalitarian regimes to prevent free thought and new ideas, and the persistent assertion of their own rightness, brings on them an intellectual stasis which they project onto the nation at large. Intimidation and propaganda work in a duet of oppression while the people, lapped in fear and distrust, learn to dissemble and to keep silent. And all the time the desire grows for a system which will lift them from the position of "rice-eating robots" to the status of human beings who can think and speak freely and hold their head high in the security of their rights.

From the beginning, Burma's struggle for democracy has been fraught with danger. A movement which seeks the just and equitable distribution of powers and prerogatives that have long been held by a small elite is likely to be prolonged and difficult. Hope and optimism are irrepressible, but there is a deep underlying premonition that the opposition to change is likely to be vicious. Often the anxious question is asked, will such an oppressive regime really give us democracy? And the answer has to be, Democracy, like liberty, justice and other social and political rights, is not "given," it is earned through courage, resolution and sacrifice.

Revolutions generally reflect the irresistible impulse for necessary

The Burmese are "no Rice-eating Robots"

changes which have been held back by official policies or retarded by social apathy. The institutions and practices of democracy provide ways and means by which such changes could be effected without recourse to violence. But change is anathema to authoritarianism, which will tolerate no deviation from rigid policies. Democracy acknowledges the right to differ as well as the duty to settle differences peacefully. Authoritarian governments see criticism of their actions and doctrines as a challenge to combat. Opposition is equated with "confrontation," which is interpreted as violent conflict. Regimented minds cannot grasp the concept of confrontation as an open exchange of major differences with a view to settlement through genuine dialogue. The insecurity of power based on coercion translates into a need to crush all dissent. Within the framework of liberal democracy, protest and dissent can exist in healthy counterpart with orthodoxy and conservatism, contained by a general recognition of the need to balance respect for individual rights with respect for law and order.

The words law and order have so frequently been misused as an excuse for oppression that the very phrase has

become suspect in countries which have known authoritarian rule. Some years ago, a prominent Burmese author wrote an article on law and order as expressed by the official term *nye-in-wut-pi-pyar*. One by one he analyzed the words, which literally mean "quiet-crouched-crushed-flattened," and concluded that the whole made for an undesirable state of affairs, one which militated against the emergence of an alert, energetic, progressive citizenry. There is no intrinsic virtue to law and order unless "law" is equated with justice and "order" with the discipline of a people satisfied that justice has been done. The Buddhist concept of law is based on *dhamma*, righteousness or virtue, not on the power to impose harsh and inflexible rules on a defenseless people. The true measure of the justice of a system is the amount of protection it guarantees to the weakest.

Where there is no justice there can be no secure peace. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes that "if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression," human rights should be

protected by the rule of law. That just laws which uphold human rights are the necessary foundation of peace and security would be denied only by closed minds which interpret peace as the silence of all opposition and security as the assurance of their own power.

In their quest for democracy the people of Burma explore not only the political theories and practices of the world outside their country but also the spiritual and intellectual values that have given shape to their own environment. There is in this movement a capacity for the sustained mental strife and physical endurance necessary to withstand the forces of negativism, bigotry and hate. Most encouraging of all, the main impetus for struggle is not an appetite for power, revenge and destruction but a genuine respect for freedom, peace and justice. The quest for democracy in Burma is the struggle of a people to live whole, meaningful lives as free and equal members of the world community. It is part of the unceasing human endeavor to prove that the spirit of man can transcend the flaws of his own nature.

U Nu's Daughter on Suu Kyi

Our families were close. Her father was the legendary Aung San, the country's founding father. My father, U Nu, was the country's first prime minister.

When her father (Suu Kyi's) was assassinated on the eve of Burma's independence, my parents felt obliged to take care of their family. As soon as my father became prime minister he made her mother ambassador to India as a mark of respect. So Suu Kyi came down to India.

She studied at the Convent of Jesus and Mary in New Delhi and then later at the Lady Sri Ram college. She then went on to Oxford, and from there to Kyoto university, Japan, continuing her studies. She had fulfilled her aspiration. She had become a scholar.

In the meantime, I had lost touch with her. My own family was going through traumatic times. My father's

democratic government was overthrown in a *coup d'etat* by General Ne Win. He was put behind bars, then exiled as a result of which we spent our lives in India and Thailand. He went back to Burma only to be put under house arrest, where he languishes to this day.

It was in 1987 I met Suu Kyi again here in New Delhi. She had come as a fellow at the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla. I was working at All India Radio.

She is a very courageous girl bearing a very proud legacy. Since her father's is a household name in Burma it was easy for the Burmese people to accept her as their leader. At first, she had no interest in politics. She was happy pursuing her scholarly work, married to an English scholar, having two children.

It was during her visits to Burma in 1988 to meet her ailing mother that

brought about the transformation. Suu Kyi saw how thousands of students were being killed. She could not bear it. That is when she decided to take the plunge.

She immediately became leader of the suppressed.

By honouring her with the Nobel Prize I think at last some recognition has been given to the fight for democracy in Burma. Until now the developed world had turned a blind eye towards our problem, towards our cry for help. We were not important for them. The international media did not find us interesting. We were behind an iron curtain.

Than Thannu, the exiled daughter of former Burmese prime minister U Nu, works in the Burmese division of All India Radio.

COURTESY: *Sunday MID-DAY*, October 20, '91.

Priority for Agriculture

A two-day seminar on 'Priority for Agriculture' was held in Bombay on November 30 and December 1, 1991.

The Seminar which discussed a paper on the subject presented by Mr. Bhanu Pratap Singh, former Union Minister of State for Agriculture (1977-79), was inaugurated by Dr. V. Kurien, Chairman of the National Dairy Development Board.

Organised by the Project for Economic Education, the seminar was attended by economists, professionals, social workers, academicians and businessmen among others.

The seminar focussed on several crucial issues relating to agriculture and rural development that need to be addressed immediately so as to set right distortions in our policies particularly in the context of the ongoing economic policy reforms.

The following report is a summary of these discussions.

70% of the people of India live in her villages. A large number of these people are poor, illiterate and unemployed. The tragedy is that this unfortunate situation is man-made. This is because the rural economy has not received the attention it deserved and India's tremendous agricultural potential has not been tapped fully.

A study conducted by the 20-nation International Commission on Peace and Food to assess the potential for accelerated development and the eradication of unemployment and absolute poverty in India by the year 2000, indicated that India can achieve a minimum of 4% growth in agriculture, generate 100 million jobs and increase agro-based exports to Rs. 40,000 crores per year by pursuing a strategy of intensive agriculture, agro-industries and agro-exports.

To realise this potential there is need for a much higher allocation of public resources to the rural economy – for rural development and for agricultural inputs.

Rural Development

Investment in rural development will lead to a growth in non-farming activities. Even today, during the monsoons, 60% of India is cut off for want of all-weather roads. Power supply is highly erratic where available.

Rural development in such areas as the provision of all-weather roads, health care and adequate medical facilities, housing, sanitation, potable drinking water, basic education, foodgrain godowns or silos easily accessible to farmers, cold storage facilities and power for irrigation pumps are only some of the areas that call for high priority.

Such a development will not only contribute to easing the pressure on land but also stem the flow of migration to cities and lead to an appreciable improvement in the quality of life of the villagers.

Investment in Agricultural Inputs

Even while admitting that some amount of attention was paid to agriculture the objective was only to ensure survival. This limited objective cannot solve the problem of rural poverty nor improve agricultural productivity.

Studies have revealed that two-thirds

of the rural poor and 70% of the ultra poor are to be found in areas with very poor agricultural development.

Hence the aim must be to achieve higher levels of productivity of a whole range of farm products (not only foodgrains but also poultry, cash crops like cotton and oil seeds, sericulture, aquaculture etc.). This calls for a much higher investment of public resources in agriculture.

Mechanisation

Another factor hampering agricultural growth is the absence of appropriate mechanisation to eliminate drudgery and introduce precision of farm operations. Such mechanisation does not mean tractors and the like but modern implements that contribute to efficiency and, at the same time, do not displace farm labour from their jobs.

Erecting Independent Structures

Industry, trade and trade unions in urban India have organised themselves so that they are heard and secure their rights. On the other hand, the farming community is largely unorganised hence not heard and lacks clout.

They have been kept that way by governments and politicians who do

not want farmers to be independent of them. Whatever organisations exist in rural areas are infiltrated and influenced by the bureaucracy and the politicians. Most often the two cooperate to reap rich benefits by exploiting the farmer.

This must change. Higher investments will fail to reach the farmers if they do not set up their own structures free of government control and interference.

Cooperatives

That such structures are possible is proved by the success of the Kaira District Cooperative more popularly known as AMUL. This co-operative is a 100% farmers' organisation which has helped in improving the standard of life of its members on the one hand and meeting the needs of the consumer on the other.

Such cooperatives need to be replicated throughout the country.

Unfortunately, the work of such cooperatives is hampered by cooperative laws that put numerous restrictions and result in bureaucratic interference.

The entire gamut of laws relating to cooperatives need to be reviewed and

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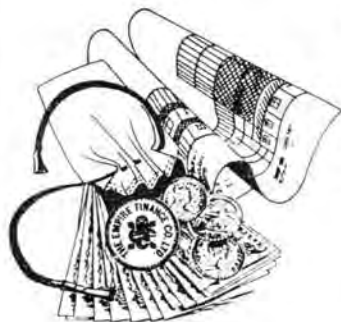
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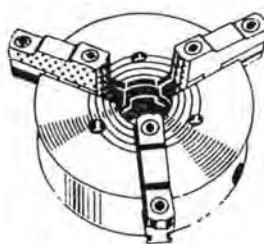


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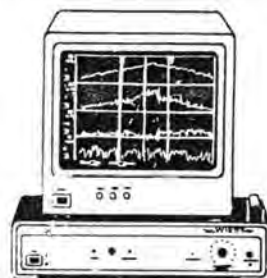
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the profile of the Registrars of Cooperative Societies must be lowered. In fact, all laws affecting farmers and agricultural products need to be reviewed.

The Amul Project's success can be attributed to efficient management and marketing.

The existing marketing system exploits both the farmer and the agriculturist. Private marketing systems without government intervention can function effectively. Co-operatives are also very much a part of the private marketing system which establish direct links between the producer and the consumer. This ought to be the pattern and all laws that prevent this including the free movement of food products throughout the country should be abolished.

The Rule of Law

The rule of law has all but disappeared in rural India. The new feudals – the mafia dons and caste-based groups – have taken over. The rural population is losing respect for the government thus reducing

considerably their capacity to rule

The absence of rural development is perhaps the single biggest reason.

Village Panchayats must be freed from government control and become genuine representatives of the villagers. They must possess adequate financial authority and be empowered to have control over their tax structures.

Panchayats must also be equipped with policing powers to enforce the rule of law.

Other Suggestions

Among the other suggestions that were discussed were the following:

- All restrictions on the movement and trade of farm products must be removed to put agriculture at par with industry.
- Village Panchayats should be recognised as Cooperatives, without having to undergo the formality of registration etc., competent to jointly process and market goods of farm origin as well as of cottage industries produced in their villages.
- The needs and capabilities of marginal and small farmers, who

constitute more than three-fourths of the total number of farmers must be kept uppermost in formulating schemes and programmes for agricultural and rural development.

- More attention must be paid to minor irrigation works, utilising ground-water by boring more wells, and surface run-off water, by impounding it in natural depressions and small reservoirs, because these being under the control of farmers themselves, have been found to be less costly and more productive.
- Development schemes must be so devised that people feel they are participants in the scheme and not merely recipients of charity from the government. To bring about such a change, it is necessary to decentralize power upto the village level, and replace the present bureaucracy-propelled development strategy with a people's participatory development strategy.

Unleashing the Constructive Power of the Farmers

V. Kurien

If we want to benefit the farmers we must erect structures they themselves command. This may not look so easy but it is not all that difficult.

It is my view that farmers have not been treated right; that people who live in the villages have not been treated right. I hold the view that industries have exploited agriculture, cities have thrived at the expense of rural workers; that industrial workers have benefited and the price has been paid by farmers. I am of the view that these imbalances can only be put right by learning from what industrial labour have done for themselves. Not only have they got a fair slice of the Indian cake, they are getting a larger slice in my opinion, of the Indian cake than they deserve. How

do they manage it? It is by organising themselves into labour unions and building up strength to paralyse the economy of the country, if need be, in order to get their demands satisfied. They have developed a clout and it is my view that we will not get anywhere, as far as farmers are concerned, unless they too develop a clout. And, in order to develop clout, they need an organisational structure.

The Kaira Cooperative

We started this Cooperative movement (the Kaira Cooperative)

under the inspiration of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, when the British were ruling here, and subsequently it took off. We had a lot of problems. Government authorities were opposed to it. There were vested interests like the private trader who were opposed it. But we managed to overcome these difficulties because we had the inspiration of Vallabhbhai Patel. He sent his deputy, Morarji Desai to organise the farmers and, they, between them selected Tribhuvandas Patel, a man of absolute integrity and decency, fully trusted by the people of Kaira district

Under such dedicated leadership, the Kaira Cooperative took off. Tribhuvandas looked for professional management because he neither knew management nor did he know dairying and, by a series of accidents he decided that I would be the Chief Executive of the Cooperative. Thereafter from 1949 for 25 years I was its Chief Executive.

Professional Management

The Kaira Cooperative started with 200 litres a day and 100 members. Today in that one district, 450,000 farmers are members of this Cooperative which really means practically every farmer family in the district is covered. Hardly anyone is left out because all of them have a cow or a buffalo. They are all members. Its sales last year would be around Rs. 250 crores – not bad for a district cooperative. Its dairy factory has a capacity to handle a million litres of milk a day. It has become a very large operation and professionally managed with an elected Board of Directors – elected by the general body composed of the Chairman of all the 900 village societies. So the structure is: 450,000 farmers in 900 village milk producers' cooperative societies, federated into one district union. Each village society is managed by an elected Managing Committee of 7 or 9 people elected from amongst the farmers. All the Chairmen of the 900 societies attend the General Body and elect their Board of Directors. The Board of Directors elects its Chairman and there is a professional Managing Director who runs the organisation on a day to day basis.

A Massive Operation

We repeated this in every district of Gujarat and today we have district unions in almost all the districts barring a few in Saurashtra comprising 1.7 million farmers. Everyone of these districts has a processing plant. The sales of the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation this year would be something like Rs. 1,100 crores – through the sale of Amul products, but excluding the milk sold in Ahmedabad, Surat and Baroda because that sale is done by the district unions not by the State Federation.

The Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation is probably one of the largest business enterprises in the State of Gujarat. You will agree that Rs.



1,100 crores is a fairly large turnover for a business enterprise and that too by selling butter and baby food as well as selling milk in all these towns.

The beauty of the structure is that every collecting centre in every village is also selling milk to those whose buffaloes are dry or who do not have buffaloes and we sell 30,000 litres of the milk from the Anand Dairy (Amul), to Anand town and to every town in Kaira district. We also supply liquid milk to Baroda and Surat districts in summer when the milk is in short supply. Everyday we send milk in liquid form to Delhi (800 km away) and even to Calcutta (2000 km) through our own insulated rail tankers. It is a massive operation.

National Milk Grid

I was required at the instance of the then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, to replicate this nationally. As a result we have now reached the stage when there are 70,000 village milk producer cooperative societies in 70,000 villages of India. We have about 190 dairy plants (like the Amul Dairy in, 22 states in India). We have State Federations like the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation in all the states, and we have also federated at the national level. So there is a massive structure and within this structure a very large quantity – 14 million litres of milk per day – is handled. We have a national milk grid linking all our metropolitan cities and 500 towns within this country which are fed from it. And this very massive business enterprise is completely commanded by farmers.

Governments Fear People

Now what are our problems? Let us

take the state of Maharashtra (by no means is Maharashtra any different from the other states). Unlike the pattern in Gujarat, where the farmers elect their own Boards, appoint their own employees, in Maharashtra the Chairman of the State Federation is the honorable minister. The Managing Director is an IAS Officer appointed by government. Thus the entire structure is dominated, controlled and warped by the interference of the State government. This is the problem in all the other States outside Gujarat and when we tell them let the farmer run his own affairs, they get worried.

Therefore the first point I want to make is that empowering the farmer is something that is not liked as government feels it weakens the government structure, it weakens the administrative structure, it empowers the poor and therefore there is something dangerous in it. As Chairman of this national federation as also of the Gujarat federation, may I honestly say our governments are, in my opinion afraid of their people. This is one of the first problems we have to consider when we want to empower our farmers. Governments do not want them to be empowered. They say, see what has happened in the state of Gujarat; there is no milk department! This fellow comes to Bombay spreading all this poison to the Maharashtra government. What will we do with our 40,000 employees if there is no milk department! What will the Secretary do, not to mention the fact that we have to lose one ministerial berth – the Ministry for milk!

Political & Bureaucratic Impediments

But there is a silver lining to all this.

There are still people in high places with some decency, some integrity, not only in the political structure, (though this breed is declining) but also in the administrative structure and we have now made model rules. What would have happened to that man called Mr. J.R.D. Tata, if the Registrar of Companies of Bihar had the same powers as the Registrar of Cooperative Societies of Bihar? The one registers companies, the other registers cooperative societies. If the Registrar of Companies had the same powers as the Registrar of Cooperative Societies in Bihar what would he have done to Mr. J.R.D. Tata? The moment even an Assistant Registrar of Cooperative Societies walks into Jamshedpur he would resent its whole industrial structure and he will tell the gentleman called Russi Mody, 'Accha, you're living in this opulence and I am getting only Rs. 2400 a month', and you see the whole picture gets vitiated. Companies have been able to establish themselves and flourish only because the profile of the Registrar of Companies is kept low. Maybe a company Managing Director's would be still lower but I am only

making the point to draw attention to the fact that Cooperatives have not succeeded because the profile of the Registrar is so high. And then there is the politician who wants to infiltrate the Cooperative. When you have 1.7 million farmers not including their families, how can a politician resist the temptation to use such structures to further his political ends.

The problem in organising farmers is the fear of the politicians, the fear of the bureaucracy that they lose something if these structures are free of their control. Yet the Government of India has asked that we should replicate the Anand pattern throughout the country. We are asked to handle vegetable oil and we have been doing so in about seven states with whatever results you have seen. I can only say that in this type of work I sometimes wish the government will tell me to take care of old ladies and young children, because there will be no conflict, nobody to criticise. Everybody will be on my side. Unfortunately I am asked by my government to do jobs that are dangerous. The vegetable oil business has resulted in five of my officers being

killed; the cooperative oil mill in Bhavnagar burnt seven times; two of my seniormost colleagues escaping death by the skin of their teeth and anyone who reads newspapers will know what they are doing to me in the press, as well as in Parliament. There is this powerful vested interest against farmers emerging.

The other point that I wish to make is that despite of these difficulties, it is my firm belief that it can be done, it must be done and we can erect structures commanded by farmers. That is the only way we can empower them.

Cooperative Law Must be Changed

Therefore, the cooperative law must be amended in order to reduce the profile of the Registrar of Cooperative Societies to that of the Registrar of Companies. In New Zealand for instance, there is not a single dairy which is not owned by farmers and they have no 'Cooperative Societies Act' nor do they have a Registrar of Cooperative Societies. How did they do it. They merely amended the Company Law. To the different types of companies defined under their Company Law, they

India's Economic Reforms – Latin America Shows the Way

Even as we go to press we read disturbing news of discontent among the upper echelons of the government regarding the new economic and fiscal policies. Congress MPs and other worthies find it difficult to face their constituents and explain to them the difficulties and privations that all of us are experiencing today. They do not have the courage to tell them that they are paying for the thoughtless policies initiated by Nehru, cynically continued by Indira Gandhi for her own ends, and later by the saints of the Janata Dal – V.P. Singh and Madhu Dandavate – who wanted to outdo Devi Lal in his own game and mortgaged the future of the country.

The parents have eaten sour grapes their children's teeth are set on edge. This Biblical statement might have been written with our present government in mind. But in these miseries we are not alone. Examples from other nations should both educate and instil in us optimism. "Owners of business devote a large proportion of their resources to infiltrating the bureaucracy and protecting their interests rather than devoting themselves to improving output." This is a statement not by an Indian critic but by a leading Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto.

Latin American countries like Peru, Mexico, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and others found themselves in the economic quagmire similar to our own and launched on the path of reform. All these countries began to deregulate and liberalise their economies; they pulled down trade barriers and sought to come to terms with public finance by trying to bring down inflation. Today international finance which had written off the entire continent as a hopeless cause now has come to the opposite stand that "Latin America could be one of the best investments of the 1990s."

Mexico showed the way by first regulating its chaotic tax system and by savage cuts in government expenditure. It negotiated foreign loans to be re-serviced on soft options. It closed down or sold most of its public enterprises, dismantled its licensing policies and liberated the economy.

What is astonishing is that Mexico has little of the economic resources that other countries have – but it has been blessed with a dedicated political leadership. Brazil whose economy was drawn to a corner and in a state of collapse has shaken off its lethargy and started reforming itself. Mr. Moreira who is in charge of the restructuring of Brazil's finances says:

"Shock plans do not work; inflation can be cured only slowly and painfully, we will keep money tight – real interest rates are running at 4% a month – and will gradually bring government spending under control by simplifying and broadening the tax system (there are more than 60 kinds of tax on basic industries, few of which anybody bothers to pay) and through constitutional changes (to reduce the amount of money flowing to the states for instance). Businessmen who disbelieve our steadfastness and try to raise prices in anticipation of a new shock plan will find themselves having to roll back the increases in a few months when they have no buyers. Eventually people will see we mean business, and that will be that."

And this has a great deal for our country too. Our soft politicians in power will have to first convince themselves that if they are not able to support the PM they will soon find themselves in a hopeless situation. The NRIs have not responded; partial privatisation of the steel plants has proved to be a damp squib; our bureaucrats still want to have the gravy.

RS

...We can have moral
rehabilitation with the help of
religion. But morality without
God is not self-sustained...
The cart must be driven by
two bullocks, *Truth* and
Religion yoked together. The
inscrutability of the Divine
rulership of the world cannot
be met by ignoring it, but
only by faith....

Rajaji



THE LAKSHMI MILLS COMPANY LIMITED
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added one more – a cooperative company and said that a cooperative company is one where only those who produce milk (in the case of milk cooperatives) can own shares. That was the first condition. The second condition was that irrespective of the number of shares held, a member would have only one vote. But as it functioned according to the cooperative principle it was called a cooperative company. Now to get that sort of amendment to the Company Law in India is easier said than done. It means getting each state to modify its Cooperative Act, because unlike the Company Law, Cooperative Law is within the purview of the states.

This is not all that happens in a cooperative or in an institution owned by farmers. By this cooperative structure we have been able to double the income of the farmers. His income from 1.5 buffaloes (which is the average) is almost equal to his income from three acres of land which is the average holding.

When Farmers Run their own Affairs...

In other words dairying is no longer a subsidiary occupation. It has become almost equal to an agricultural operation. There is another benefit arising from the fact that milking and taking care of the buffalo are the functions of a woman – this income is traditionally that of a woman and there are many implications of a woman having the same income as a man. Many widows are able to earn their livelihood with two buffaloes. Dairying has turned out to be the largest rural employment scheme in India. Nor is this all. If you go to Anand or to any of our villages, you will find that 450,000 people are delivering that milk twice a day, every day of the year at 900 milk collecting centres run by other cooperatives. The employees of the milk cooperative in the village are employees of the village cooperative – not of the district federation. There is a great deal of meaning in letting the village people employ their own staff and make the staff answerable to those they are supposed to serve.

Some Spin-off Benefits

There is another spin-off. 450,000 people delivering milk at 900 centres come and stand in 900 queues – irrespective of sex, irrespective of caste.

What does it do to a 'high caste brahmin' to stand behind an 'untouchable' because he came after him and to do so twice a day, everyday of the year. What does it do to the 'untouchable' to stand ahead of the 'high caste brahmin' because he came earlier. What does it do to both of them to see the milk go into the same can. Their caste system gets submerged in that can of milk! It is not merely an orderly milk collection. Is it not also a blow at the caste system?

Our villages are dirty. Our milk collection room is also dirty but it is cleaner than the rest of the village. Someone built a room and put some glazed tiles; another brought some clean water to wash the pots and pans; a third brought insecticides to try to keep the flies away; a fourth sprinkled water to keep the dust down. You may well find this scene in many parts of the country. What do they mean? These are the very first few steps in sanitation in that village. How can you talk of clean milk production unless you talk of sanitation.

We have a scheme for veterinary aid for our buffaloes in each district. We employ 75 graduate veterinarians and 900 first aid workers, one in each village, and they are employees of the Cooperative not of the government. We have an elaborate radio telephone communication system and we guarantee that any sick buffalo anywhere in the village, anywhere in the district, will have a veterinarian tend the sick buffalo within four hours of asking for it, day or night, thanks to the communication system.

Now what does it do to a village if a buffalo is sick, suffering from distokia, its uterus is twisted, the calf cannot come out. The buffalo will die and so will the calf. This is normal in the village. It has happened many times in the last hundreds of years. But this time they send for a veterinarian. He lies behind the buffalo, puts his hand in, twists the uterus and delivers the calf. What does this display of modern science do to the thinking of our ordinary villager. He will say "my son was sick, I sent for a doctor. For four days, no doctor came and my son died. Can't you do something about the health of our children, aren't our children at least as important as our buffaloes?"

We have the Tribhuvandas Foundation – a rural health scheme, probably the largest rural health scheme in the country, covering some 550 villages. In every village there is a first aid worker appointed by the village. We pay 50% and the village pays 50%. We have a scheme to bring women to show them their Dairy. So far a quarter of a million village women have seen the Amul Dairy. To them it is a day of picnic. They enter the Amul Dairy, they see magnificent buildings and vast green carpets, and what does it do to their thinking when they see all this – the gleaming stainless steel within these buildings – and what does it do to them when they realise they own a bit of this; that they have a say in the running of it and above all they have a share in its profits? Do they not go home that evening a little more proudly as belonging to this sort of a family of which they are equal members?

We take them to our cattle feed compounding factory. This is the largest in India – it is computerised, it is automated. Now in this factory we are putting out 17% protein. We have to explain to a quarter of a million women, what proteins are? Why we add vitamins and minerals? We have to explain why a female buffalo has to be fed even though she is dry. She is dry because she is in the last three months of her pregnancy. But the foetus is growing and the foetus needs nutrition. Can this woman not relate it to her own growing foetus. Are we only discussing animal nutrition with her? We take her to the artificial insemination centre. We have the largest insemination centre in the country – in one district we do 300,000 artificial inseminations. We take them there and we show them how the semen is collected from the bull. We explain to them the mysteries of conception and birth, we have charts for it. What is a sperm? What is an ova? We have made a quarter of a million women look through a microscope at live semen. Are we not leading them on to birth control?

So what is this farmers organisation we are discussing. We talk so much about involving our people in their own development. It means erecting structures they themselves can command. This is what we are doing. Isn't this an instrument of economic and social rural change and are these not the most effective way to mobilise

our farmers? I have always maintained that there are only good people in the villages because all the bad people have already come to Bombay in search of money or Delhi in search of power! Our villagers have no ambitions; they only want to live and let live.

India's Biggest Asset – Her People

The biggest asset of India is our people. Will India ever make any progress if we don't use the biggest asset we have, which is the power of the people? What Anand has tried to demonstrate is that if you create these structures and you learn how to unleash

the power of our people and give this power some direction and thrust by combining this power with professional management which people like me represent – then everything becomes possible. The only thing that stands against this happening is the fear of our government that our people will get to know what our leaders really are. This is what is bothering them.

I honestly believe that if we want to benefit the farmers then we must erect structures they themselves command. This may not look so easy but it is not all that difficult. What we have done in

milk and in vegetable oil, is what we are trying to extend to fruits and vegetables. What we are doing is to develop tree growers cooperative to green India. All these are methodologies that the Dairy Board of India is involved in, in order to mobilise the power of our people and to unleash this power for the good of India.

Text of the inaugural speech by Dr. V. Kurien at the seminar on 'Priority for Agriculture,' in Bombay on November 30, 1991.

Dr. V. Kurien is the Chairman of the National Dairy Development Board.

Needed – Reform of India's Agricultural Policy

Bhanu Pratap Singh

The truth is that under the garb of socialism, the vast majority of people, particularly those living in villages, have been mercilessly exploited for the benefit of the thin upper crust of society.

In the language of the politicians, the agricultural sector has been receiving 'top priority' from the very beginning. Pandit Nehru used to say: "Everything else can wait, but not agriculture". But he made agriculture wait by cutting down plan expenditure on it to enable the public sector attain "the commanding heights of the Indian economy". The consequences of this policy were disastrous for the nation. Mrs. I. Gandhi's and Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's protestations, that agriculture was being given top priority was never reflected either in their budgetary allocations, or in the price policy they pursued.

Mr. V.P. Singh promised a 'New Agricultural Policy,' which would undo the injustices done in the past. But during the 11 months he was in office, he did not find the time to present his 'New Agricultural Policy'. All he could do was to waive some of the farmers' loans, which will have no long-term impact on the farm sector.

Choudary Devi Lal, in his second incarnation as Deputy Prime Minister,



Mr. Bhanu Pratap Singh presenting his paper, Prof. P.G. Mavlinkar in the chair.

also failed to present the 'New Agricultural Policy', which he had repeatedly promised. All that he could think of to benefit the farm sector was to issue orders that farmers, clad in dhoties, be provided board and lodging in five-star hotels at half the prevailing rates!

If political rhetoric could be used as a farm-input, Indian agriculture would have been in a very flourishing condition! Contrary to the disinformation service of the Government of India, the fact is that Indian agriculture is still amongst the most backward. The Green Revolution

withered long ago. In large parts of the country, foodgrain production has not kept pace with the growth in population. None of the targets fixed for the last year of the VII Plan, relating to agricultural production and consumption of farm-inputs has been achieved. The major problems of India – poverty, unemployment, growing disparity and an adverse trade balance – remain unresolved.

Can any country attain prosperity by leaving its most valuable natural resource grossly underdeveloped? For example, could the oil-rich Middle Eastern countries have attained prosperity, if they had not developed their mineral oil resources? In India, the most valuable natural resource is our agro-climatic condition. This claim is based, not on theoretical considerations but on irrefutable facts.

In the world as a whole, the percentage of arable to total land area is only 11.0 percent; in India this percentage is 51.5 percent. Our climate being moderate, makes it possible for us to grow two crops in a year, whereas in most parts of the world, due to severe winters, only one crop is possible. Moreover, according to the latest estimates, our irrigation potential is 178 million hectares, which is nearly 1.84 times the total cultivated area of China. Yet the Chinese are producing more and eating better. Their average per capita caloric intake of food during 1986-88 was 2637 against only 2104 in India though per capita availability of arable land in India is 2.5 times that in China. They are doing much better, because they have developed their agriculture, while we have not.

The Potential of Indian Agriculture

Therefore, the first question is should our objective be to achieve the full potential of Indian agriculture, or remain content with a growth rate which merely enables us to meet domestic demand and that too at the current low level of consumption. In answering this question the following facts need to be taken into consideration:

- i. Poverty in India cannot be eradicated or even reduced, so long as agriculture, the main profession of two-thirds of our population, remains backward, both in terms of productivity per hectare and productivity per worker.

- ii. The incremental capital output ratio (ICOR) of agriculture has always been much lower than that of manufacturing. Also, on an equal investment, agriculture generates more employment. Undoubtedly, the GNP per capita in India would have been substantially higher and unemployment much less, if investment in agriculture had been in proportion to its contribution to the national income.

- iii. The benefits of additional production in agriculture accrue to the poorest in the country.

- iv. Finally the problem of a growing adverse trade balance cannot be resolved without a fuller realisation of the rich potential of agro-exports.

From whatever angle one looks at the problems of the Indian economy, the solution lies in the faster and fuller development of our agriculture.

Faster Growth Needs More Capital

The second question is, how can it be done? Faster growth in agriculture calls for more capital invested in it. The average undernourished farmer of India and his two slow-moving bullocks, cannot produce more than what they are currently doing, howsoever generously they may be fed on political rhetoric. They need modern tools of production – high yield variety seeds, fertilizers, pedigree animals, machines and water-use devices – to improve their productivity. These need capital investment.

What ultimately determines productivity in agriculture is the per hectare capital base it acquires in a particular area or state, over a period of time. Unfortunately, figures of capital investment in agriculture on a per hectare basis in different states are not available. The per hectare capital investment is the highest in Punjab, where productivity is also the highest – nearly three times the national average. On the other hand, in a state like Madhya Pradesh, both per hectare capital investment and productivity are the lowest.

New varieties of seeds and other technological innovations do help, but to utilise these, capital is needed for both off-farm and on-farm investments. These in turn, are determined by the policies pursued by the government. Capital investment in the farm sector,

as a percentage of the total, has continually been declining during the 'eighties. As a consequence the growth rate of foodgrain production in India on the basis of quinquennium averages, starting from 1970-75 has also been declining. It was 3.44% per annum during 1970-75; 3.11% during 1975-80; 2.84% per annum during 1980-85; and no more than 2.33% per annum during 1985-90. If this trend continues, the growth rate of foodgrain production during 1990-95 may turn-out to be slower than the growth in population.

The long term decline in growth rates, and that too on the basis of five yearly averages, cannot be explained on grounds of the vagaries of nature. It is, in fact, the vagaries of the state, which has hit the green revolution.

How is Capital to be Raised?

From this follows the third question. How is the capital to be raised? Can the government provide it? Yes, but only partly, for the creation of the necessary infrastructure for agricultural growth, such as link roads, rural godowns, supply of power and other farm inputs. Can the banks provide the capital? The reply is 'no', because the loans will have to be repaid with interest, and unless the profitability of agriculture improves, repayment may not be possible. If the State Farms Corporation, a Government of India undertaking looking after 36,715 hectares of government farms, had depended on bank loans, instead of the government treasury to meet its operational costs, it would also have required a huge loan waiver, having made losses like most farmers.

Here are some revealing facts about the price situation. The purchasing power of one quintal of wheat, as compared to 100 in 1970-71 declined in 1988-89 to 78.9, 38.9, 50.5, 42.0 and 53.3 in terms of fertilizers, pesticides, diesel, tractors and other commodities respectively. A simple arithmetical calculation will show that between 1970-71 and 1988-89, both years of peak production, the inflation-adjusted per capita income of agriculturists declined despite substantial growth in farm production (exceeding the growth in population) in the intervening period. Price twists effectively sucked out of the farm sector, the benefits of higher production.

What About Poor Consumers?

This leads us to the fourth question: Can the farmers' interests be protected without jeopardising the interests of poor consumers? My reply is 'yes', provided we do not attempt to supply cheap foodgrains even to the urban rich.

This can be done in three ways: First, by identifying the poor and giving them direct food aid as has been done effectively and economically in other countries.

Secondly, by improving marketing efficiency. In India the marketing system, as far as farm products are concerned, both in the public and private sectors are very inefficient. Marketing efficiency should be judged by the quantum of consumer price passed on to producers. The higher it is, the more efficient is the marketing system. Taking all farm products together, Indian producers do not get even 50 percent of the price paid by consumers. It is not an exaggeration to say, that intermediaries between farmers and consumers – in both the private and public sectors – derive more benefits than the actual producers. It has been proved beyond doubt, that marketing efficiency can be only be improved by establishing direct producer-consumer links, as has been done by the National Dairy Development Board. Instead of trying to improve marketing efficiency by promoting producer-consumer links, our decision makers have always tended to cut the producers' price.

The Third way to reduce food grain prices is to further mechanise our agriculture. Application of energy through human labour is much more expensive than when it is applied through diesel oil or electricity. It has been proved in Punjab, as well as in Japan, that as more and more farm operations are mechanised, the cost of production gets progressively reduced. Mechanisation of farming does not necessarily require the use of big machines. All over the world, except India, small machines are available at reasonable prices. The use of small machines by small farmers does not displace labour, but adds value to their working hours, which is what needs to be done to lift them above the poverty level.

The only objection to mechanization that has some substance, is that we are short of fuel oils. But the remedy for this is the production and use of ethanol on a large scale, which can be abundantly produced in the country.

Growing Disparities

The final question: "Will the rural masses be treated as equal citizens of the country? I am led to ask this question because even after four decades of freedom, the death and infant mortality rates in rural India are about 2/3rds more than in urban India; the literacy rate in villages is about half of that in cities; the average income of agricultural workers is less than a fourth of workers in urban areas; different standards and norms are adopted in dispensing social justice, and in the distribution of essential commodities.

The truth is that under the garb of socialism, the vast majority of people, particularly those living in villages, have been mercilessly exploited for the benefit of the thin upper crust of society.

Priority for agriculture means ending the exploitation of the farming community. It also implies:

- doubling agricultural production within the next 15 years, requiring an average annual growth rate of 4.7% per annum;
- doubling the rate of capital formation in the farm sector in order that the growth rate of agriculture is doubled;
- allocating at least 50% of the plan expenditure for developing the rural infrastructure, such as link roads, rural warehouses, cold stores, processing plants, power transmission lines etc.;
- removing all restrictions on the processing, movement, and trade (internal as well as external) of farm products; or in the alternative, ensuring farmers remunerative prices for their produce, which are at parity with the prices that they have to pay for their farm-inputs and other necessities of life;
- improving the quality of education in villages, because without better education, rural India will continue to be an ocean of indigence, ignorance, and ill-health?

From the paper presented by Mr. Bhanu Pratap Singh at the Seminar on "Priority For Agriculture".

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The BJP Must Not be Supported

Babu Joseph

Our comments on the BJP (BJP – The New Bogey-man of Indian Politics, *Freedom First*, July-September 1991) has upset some of our readers. They are surprised that we have 'supported' the BJP; they feel that this kind of an attitude has no place in a liberal journal like *Freedom First*; that by writing as we did we are giving support to fascist forces.

Though we invited our friends to put down in writing their criticism which we would publish *verbatim*, we have, at the time of going to press received only the following from Mr. Babu Joseph of Kottayam, Kerala which we publish in full.

R. Srinivasan, S.V. Raju

After the untimely demise of the Swatantra Party, there is no political grouping in India which could be called liberal. While that was the case, the learned editors of a truly liberal journal should not have taken sides with the BJP and hence their article lost all its objectivity.

Before offering any comments I would like to sum up your arguments.

- The BJP deserves better treatment than what it gets today. After all, it is not more communal than the Dutch Church which gives continued support and sustenance to the apartheid regime in South Africa as also the large majority of Muslims who lent their support to the *fatwah* against Rushdie.
- Tyranny of Society is much more oppressive than the tyranny of a majority community. For instance a Hindu majority rule (80%) is better than many other social oppressions which Indian Society is subjected to.
- The speeches made by Sadhvi Ritambhara and Shri L.K. Advani have to be seen in different lights.
- If the BJP had done so well in the UP elections it was solely due to the inept handling of the *Karsevaks* by Mulayam Singh and also due to his attempts at consolidating Muslim votes in his favour. If it were not so they (the BJP) would have repeated the same performance in Maharashtra and elsewhere.
- If the VHP's revivalist and blatantly religious campaign was meant to sway the Hindu vote in favour of the BJP why was not the up performance repeated in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.
- While secularists and leftists label the BJP as a communalist outfit of the

Hindus, they conveniently forgot instances like the Shah Bano judgement and the withdrawal of an ordinance to take over the disputed site in Ayodhya.

- Mandalisation and the increasing violence in Punjab, Kashmir, Assam and the survival of India as a nation made the BJP an attractive proposition to the middle class.
 - Many retired civil servants and retired top army brass joined the BJP boosting the latter's image.
 - The BJP is the only party in India except communists which has conducted party elections and has well organised cadres.
 - The BJP knows its mind on economic matters. They favour market economy except foreign investments.
 - The BJP is an alternative to the disorganised personality-based political parties and they should be given a chance.
 - There is no need to fear that an authoritarian party will stay in power forever since India is a democratic country.
 - Advani and Vajpayee have to be believed when they clarify the meaning of *Hindutva* and *Ram Rajya*. Why not give them a chance.
- My criticisms are the following:
- Are the arguments advanced in favour of the BJP tenable or not?
 - Of all the churches in the world the sectarian attitude of the Dutch Church and the fundamentalist attitude of a section of Muslims are quoted to justify the fundamentalism of the BJP. To me fundamentalism of any sort or emanating from any quarter is abhorrent.

- Can the majority Hindu community escape from its due share of social tyranny perpetrated on poor Indians in the form of Sati, casteism, zamindari landlordism, dowry deaths etc.
- The editors should have read better the article written by Minoo Masani in a previous issue of *Freedom First* under the title *Democracy is not majority rule*.
- A.B. Vajpayee and L.K. Advani, the leaders of the BJP, are not new to Indian politics including liberals. Vajpayee started his political career as a leftist student leader and ended up as a Jan Sanghi. He had, in the past, supported the non-alignment policy of Jawaharlal Nehru, described Mrs. Gandhi as a 'Durga', did all that was possible to scuttle a principled alliance with a minimum programme to kill Swatantra and its leader Minoo Masani politically. In which way was Vajpayee's performance as foreign minister different from that of Jawaharlal Nehru. Then there is L.K. Advani who as Information and Broadcasting minister lacked the guts to convert All India Radio into an autonomous entity. During his discussions on a memorandum submitted by Minoo Masani he had even refused to admit the role of the press as an adversary to the ruling party in a democratic polity.
- You say the BJP know its mind. Thank God, the Swatantrites and the communists were the only two parties who had ever known their mind in Indian politics. The BJP never had a clear economic perspective. If they would have known their mind they would never

have opposed foreign investments in India. Do you think India can grow without foreign investment and know how? In places like Kerala they ask for nationalisation of all privately run minority institutions.

- The BJP and communists have well disciplined cadres – committed to wrong causes.
- If they conduct open party elections, it is well and good. But quite often we see the same leaders are again and again elected to top positions. The elections seem to make no change.
- During the last two elections what mattered most in the Hindi heartland was the Hindu card played by the

BJP and the Mandal card played by the Janata Dal. If the same has not been repeated elsewhere the reasons are varied which I don't want to elaborate. India is too big and varied a country to make generalisations of the sort you make.

- When V.P. Singh was the prime minister the BJP and other fundamentalist organisations connected to it raised a lot of hue and cry to raise a temple in Ayodhya. Now their own government is in UP, why the delay? The answer is political expediency. V.P. Singh was sinned against by BJP than sinning.

Conclusion:

What India needs is a liberal answer. That according to me is the coming together of truly spirituals belonging to all religions and democrats who believe in:

- The fusion of spiritual and moral values in the society.
- A decentralised economy.
- A new well trained leadership from the grassroots level. The BJP, the Muslim League and other communal outfits strive for revivalism to serve their narrow political ends but what we really need is a renaissance to make a modern, progressive forward looking India.

India and Israel

– The Indian View

Nitin G. Raut

Nandini Srinivasan's view on Israel (India and Israel – The Palestinian Case, *Freedom First*, October-December 1991) stems from a bias which is inherent in our West Asian policy – that is historically incorrect, politically invalid and diplomatically unsustainable.

The author's presumption of the "basic error" that "Palestine was a land of Jews alone..." is a fallacious premise – a proposition not propagated even by Israel. Palestine belongs to Jews and Arabs and even to the Christians. In fact Palestine was ruled by Arabs only from 630-1099 B.C. and 1291-1516 B.C. – the 1900 years of the Jewish diaspora. The Jews ruled Palestine for about 1100 years in all. The Ottoman Turks' rule in Palestine cannot be Arab rule as the Turks, though Muslims are not Arabs.

The Jews were in a majority in Palestine until the fifth century and despite conquests and persecution, Jewish presence continued in Palestine.

The author while referring to the Balfour Declaration ignores the fact that it was also the League of Nations which in July, 1922 entrusted Great Britain with the Mandate for Palestine and for the creation of a Jewish National Homeland. In fact the Balfour Declaration supported by the US and European nations had then drawn support from some Arabs. Emir Faisal,

son of the undisputed Arab leader, Sherif Hussein met Zionist leader, Dr. Chaim Weizman at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference and signed an agreement to "encourage and stimulate immigration of Jews into Palestine..." Thereafter on March 3, 1919 Faisal wrote to Felix Frankfurter, a Zionist leader and noted Harvard law professor that the Arabs "... wish the Jews a hearty welcome home..." while expressing "deepest sympathy" for Zionism. The right of Jews to Palestine is as historic as the Arabs' and mere fluctuations in Jewish demographic scales is no reason to invalidate the Jewish right to the State of Israel.

Even on the U.N. Partition Plan, 1947, what the UN did was to partition the Mandated Territory of Palestine into Jewish Palestine called Israel and Arab Palestine comprising the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. While the Jewish leadership accepted the Plan the Arabs rejected it. Meeting in Cairo on December 9, 1947, the Arab Premiers declared that they would "do everything possible to bring about the collapse of the UN Partition Plan" and declared that "the war aims of the Arabs were the elimination of the Jewish State". Therefore to argue that the UN Partition Plan was unjust to the Palestinian Arabs is incorrect.

To ascribe the Arab refugee problem to Israel is also not being factual. Although the West Bank and the Gaza were allotted to the Palestinian Arabs, those lands were annexed by Egypt and Jordan in 1948 and they continued to be part of Egypt and Jordan till 1967. Why then did the Palestinian Arabs not attempt to form their State when Arab States themselves controlled the West Bank and Gaza? Even the PLO formed in 1964 never made such an attempt until the loss of these territories in the 1967 Six-day War.

While Israel absorbed its refugees the Palestinian Arabs refugee problem was kept alive like a festering sore. It is wrong therefore to conclude that the refugee problem is the creation of Israel. The majority of Palestinians Arabs are Jordanians and vice versa. When Jordan annexed the West Bank the Palestinian Arab State comprised 82.5% of the Mandate Territory while Israel constituted only 17.5% prior to the Arab Israel wars.

The justification not to have diplomatic relations with Israel is indeed straghe. Endorsement of a nation's foreign or domestic policy is not a condition precedent to diplomatic relations.

Penderell Moon

A.G. Sivaramakrishnan

It can be claimed without exaggeration that Penderell Moon can be ranked with other outstanding Britons like Sir William Jones, Sir Mortimer Wheeler, Sir Arthur Cotton, Sir John Woodroffe, to all of whom India was very much more than a spicy bit of their mighty British Empire.

Among the British ICS Officers who inspired respect and admiration from those who were privileged to work with him was Penderell Moon who chose to serve independent India for nearly two decades with exceptional competence and dedication. He was in the Indian Civil Service (ICS) Cadre of undivided Punjab prior to August 1947 and had so identified himself with the virile people of that State and their problems that when Independence came, he was invited by the Indian Government to serve this country, to which he readily agreed. His knowledge of India and its appalling economic conditions, of the level of development of industry and agriculture in every state, particularly the Punjab were pressed into greater service when he was appointed as one of the principal advisers to the Planning Commission.

The writer came to know Moon and worked with him for a short period in 1959-60 when the former was Secretary of a high-power Committee appointed by the Government of India to draft the third five-year plan for the development of small scale industries. It was a very absorbing experience. The Committee was chaired by the Development Commissioner for Small Scale Industries and had, as its member, the Directors of Industries of all state governments, the Secretaries of Industries of a few state governments besides experts like Dr. P.S. Lokanathan, then Director-General of the Council of Applied Economic Research, Mr. G.D. Bansal, Secretary-General, Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and Mr. Advani, Retired Director of Industries, Maharashtra and Industrial adviser to many Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Penderell Moon as Adviser (Industries), Planning Commission represented the Commission on this Committee.

The Committee itself was a rather

unwieldy body, consisting as it did, of more than fifty members. It could not meet as often as it had to, if it were to submit its report to the Government within the very limited period stipulated. A sub-committee comprised of Moon as Chairman and Dr. Lokanathan and Mr. Bansal as members was, therefore, formed to go into the details and prepare the framework of the report. It was during this brief period that the writer spent many hours every day with Moon. The sub-committee used to have marathon sessions daily for five to six hours and the proceedings had to be drafted and presented to the Chairman within hours of the same day. The writer had to meet Moon after dinner every night at Eastern Court, where he was residing as a bachelor and following a spartan regimen. Moon's approval of whatever draft had been prepared of the discussions held earlier during the day had to be obtained.

While it was the writer's rewarding experience that he could lean heavily on some of the more knowledgeable members of the main Committee itself, he depended more so on Moon who, as Chairman of the sub-committee, was uniformly sympathetic, helpful and almost father-like the way he treated the writer. The post-dinner session with Moon was a sheer pleasure. What Moon did not know about Indian Industry or Agriculture was not worth knowing. To discuss with this broadminded, catholic and wise Englishman not merely the day's draft but much else touching religion, philosophy, art, literature but not politics was a real education. He had an unrivalled gift of analysis of any intricate problem. His incredible skills of precise drafting and superb command of English had to be seen at close quarters to be believed.

He was known to be one of the prin-

cipal authors of the Industrial Policy Resolution, 1956, an epitome of skilful drafting, a masterpiece of clarity and elegance. Though Moon was kind enough to commend such capacity for drafting as the writer had, one must say that the corrections he made in the drafts put up to him, the T's he crossed and the I's he dotted were just the deft ones which improved the quality of the draft beyond recognition. His clear and incisive thinking was reflected in every page of the report which was over two hundred and fifty pages. He was a demon for work and would not go to bed without completing the job on hand. The dedication he brought to the work enabled the main Committee to submit its report to Government three days ahead of the due date, drawing a word of appreciation from Dr. P.C. Alexander the then Senior Officer in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (in charge of Small Scale Industries) to whom the report was submitted. Dr. Alexander, who till recently was Governor of Tamil Nadu, and who could himself be well described as the father of the small scale industries movement in India — if a bureaucrat can be so described at all — told us that this was the first time that a Government appointed Committee had submitted its report before the due date. Though the writer got more than his due share of the credit for the work put in the preparation of that well-received report, he was all gratitude to Moon, because without the latter's guiding hand, the report would not have been half as effective as it proved to be in the event — all its recommendations were accepted by the Government and Planning Commission. This association, brief as it was, led to mutual affection and regard between Moon and the writer.

Moon was an amazingly sweet-tempered person and was particularly

kind to the writer as was evident from a subsequent development. Soon after the publication of the Small Scale Industries Committee's report, the Government in appreciation of Moon's significant contribution to it appointed him as Chairman of another Committee to advise the Government on how better to run the Industrial Estates which had been set up all over the country for development of small scale industries and how to avoid the pitfalls in their functioning which had come to the notice of the Committee. The Committee was also charged with the responsibility of investigating the possibilities of establishing functional and rural Industrial Estates. Moon was gracious enough to request P.C. Alexander to loan the writer's services as Secretary for this Committee. What Moon then wrote is still fresh in the writer's grateful memory. "I want an energetic, intelligent, hard-working and resourceful Secretary for this Committee. I thought A.G. Sivaramakrishnan would fill the bill. If you can spare him, we shall make an ideal team." It was the writer's misfortune that he could not respond to this call owing to domestic

engagements which kept him tied down to the south for some months. The writer never ceased to regret this failure on his part to utilize that rare occasion to improve himself, because it is not every day that you get a chance to be closely associated with scholarly, accomplished and knowledgeable persons on whom all their massive intellectual wealth sits so lightly.

We may perhaps take leave of Moon after narrating a slightly amusing episode which throws some light on his sense of humour — the capacity to stand a joke at oneself. We were all coming out of our Sub-Committee meeting one day with other members and were in the open. Moon was wearing a bush-shirt with three pockets, all of which contained some cash. He knelt down to tie the shoe-lace and out fell some coins and currency notes from all the three pockets. While we were all helping him to recover these, he burst out "This is the result of having more pockets than you need". The writer could not help taunting "or the result of having more money than you know how to keep or what to do with". The

dart went home, but was taken good humouredly, though the person who aimed it was very junior in the hierarchy and was twenty years younger than Moon.

Moon has written quite a few books about India which reflected his deep concern for the country which he served so long with an ardour and commitment too touching for words. It can be claimed without exaggeration that he can be ranked with other outstanding Britons like Sir William Jones, Sir Mortimer Wheeler, Sir Arthur Cotton, Sir John Woodroffe, to all of whom India was very much more than a spicy bit of their mighty British Empire.

Mr. A.G. Sivaramakrishnan began his career in 1940 as a Scientific Officer in the Defence Research Laboratories at Kanpur and retired over three decades later as a senior official in the Government of India.

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BOOK REVIEWS

WHO IS A SIKH? THE PROBLEM OF SIKH IDENTITY by W.H. McLeod; Oxford University Press, Bombay; 1989; pp. 128; Rs. 65.



Prof. W.H. McLeod, who teaches history at the University of Otago, New Zealand, has written several books on Sikhism. His earlier works deal mainly with the *'Janam Sakhis'* i.e. narratives of the life of Guru Nanak, written several years after his time.

While the importance of the present work cannot be denied, the book is, on the whole, disappointing. This reviewer is not an authority on the social, political and religious history of the Sikhs, but McLeod is not an authority, either. And yet, time and again, he makes sweeping generalizations about historical and social developments, and even about the religious beliefs of the Sikhs without the barest evidence to support his interpretation.

A proper understanding of the problem of Sikh identity might help us to study the very real problem of Sikh alienation. And what may be called the 'Sikh problem' is certainly an important aspect of 'the Punjab problem.' This is not to deny that economic and political factors have also played a part in complicating the situation.

McLeod has divided his book into seven chapters: 1. What is Sikhism? 2. The Nanak-panth; 3. The Khalsa and its Rahit; 4. The The Khalsa in the Eighteenth Century; 5. The Singh Sabha Reformation; 6. Definition by Legislation, and 7. Who is a Sikh? which is both a summary and a conclusion.

Chapter 1 is a brief account of the basic principles of Sikhism. It is unsatisfactory and all too brief. McLeod's chapters on recent developments (chapters 5 & 6) and his comments on the role of institutions like the S.G.P.C. (Shiromini Gurudwara Prabhandhak Committee) are well-informed, perceptive fact-based and balanced.

However, McLeod often goes wrong while discussing the earlier period especially the period from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh. He mixes issues and discusses social, political and historical developments almost at random, and while he admits the difficulty of giving a precise answer to the question 'Who is a Sikh' he often makes unwarranted assumptions and draws conclusions which are not justified.

McLeod's study also suffers from his strange tendency to coin terms like 'Nanak-panth', 'Mon Sikh' and then use them (without explaining their need or relevance) as if they are a part of the religious vocabulary of Sikhism. It is ironical that a writer whose book is devoted to define a 'Sikh' is so careless about defining terms invented by himself.

A more serious objection is that, occasionally, McLeod seems to deny accepted facts of history. Talking of the founding of the Khalsa in 1699, McLeod states that "... a rite of baptism was introduced on that famous Baisakhi day if (sic.) indeed such a decision was implemented by Guru Gobind Singh, it marks a very significant development indeed."

Thus, McLeod seems to question an accepted historical fact and yet does

nothing to substantiate the ground for such doubt.

Again, in Chapter 4, he writes "As far as the eighteenth century Khalsa was concerned, the *Dasam Granth* was as much a part of the canon as the *Adi Granth*." The '*Dasam Granth*' is a compilation of the works of Guru Gobind Singh. The Sikhs have always accepted the historical tradition that Guru Gobind Singh directed the Sikhs to regard the '*Adi Granth*' as the "Guru" and named it the "*Shri Guru Granth Sahib*". While the *Dasam Granth* is certainly regarded with respect, it is the '*Adi Granth*' which has become the Holy Book for the Sikhs. The '*Adi Granth*' is installed in all Gurudwaras (Sikh places of worship). McLeod makes no effort and cites no evidence to prove that the present practice of regarding the *Adi Granth* alone as the 'Guru' was not followed in the eighteenth century and yet makes such an unsubstantiated assertion entirely at variance with accepted historical tradition.

Surprisingly, McLeod appears to have little first-hand acquaintance with the '*Adi Granth*' or the social and religious philosophy contained in it. The '*Adi Granth*' is a compilation of about 5000 '*Shabads*' (devotional poems). Guru Nanak began collecting compositions of saints like his predecessor Namdev of Maharashtra, the cobbler Ravidas (of so-called 'low caste') the weaver Kabir along with the verses of Muslim sufi saint like Sheikh Farid and began singing them along with his own compositions. The '*Adi Granth*'—i.e. the First Book or the Book of the First Guru—was passed on from Guru to Guru. Guru Arjun, the Fifth Guru, prepared an authoritative edition, added his own verses and gave it a position of reverence. The Tenth Guru inserted the compositions of the Ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur, excluded his own verses, and designated the '*Adi Granth*' as the "*Shri Guru Granth Sahib*".

Guru Nanak and his successors stressed the importance of simple living

and high thinking; social equality was given great importance, community service and the spirit of sharing with the less fortunate was stressed. The '*Shri Guru Granth Sahib*' may be regarded as the Scripture of the Sikhs but is probably the only Holy Book in the world which contains verses of poet-saints who believe in other religions. But it would be wrong to regard Sikhism as a synthesis of the principles of Hinduism and Islam. Scholars like Dr. Gopal Singh have pointed out that Sikhism has a religious philosophy distinct and different from that of Hinduism and Islam.

McLeod, while accepting the complexity of the cross-currents of religious, social and political history, starts by implicitly accepting the word 'Sikh' as a broad concept. For instance, he defines 'Sahajdhari' as a 'non-Khalsa Sikh'. But he ends Chapter 5 with questions like "Were they i.e. the Sahajdhari also to be regarded as Sikhs or was the Khalsa identity to be the only acceptable one? Was it possible to live with their claim that they were both Hindu and Sikh?"

The answers are obvious. All 'Sahajdhari Sikhs' are, have been, and will be regarded as 'Sikhs'. A "Sahajdhari Sikh" is any person who believes in the Sikh religion, but who does not grow a beard or keep long hair. A 'Keshdhari Sikh' is a person who believes in Sikhism and keeps his hair unshorn. He may or may not have taken 'Amrit'. If he has taken 'Amrit' he is called "Amritdhari Sikh" or "Khalsa".

A Sikh Gurudwara or place of worship is open to all and a significant number of "Sahajdhari Sikhs" (e.g. Sindhis and Punjabis) visit Gurudwaras regularly, pray there and even get their children married according to Sikh rites.

Chapter 6 contains a useful discussion of various laws which have attempted to define a 'Sikh' mainly for the purpose of elections to the managing committees of various Gurudwaras. McLeod observes that, in general, the legal provisions have tended to exclude 'Sahajdhari Sikhs', from the definition of a 'Sikh'.

Whatever the political compulsions of the Akali leaders or representatives of Gurudwara Managing Committees who probably lobbied for the enactment of such laws, such exclusion of

'Sahajdhari Sikhs' from the definition of 'a Sikh' is wrong and inconsistent with the principles of Sikhism. McLeod quotes an influential Sikh scholar, Kahn Singh Nabha who, says, "Singhs (i.e. Khalsa Sikhs) who treat Sahajdharis with contempt are ignorant of Sikh religion."

Chapter 7 contains a discussion of terms like '*quaum*', which have caused a lot of misunderstanding. He points out that '*quaum*' is an Arabic term denoting "a people who stand together" and is commonly used by the Sikhs to describe their sense of a separate ethnic identity. It is misleading and wrong to translate '*quaum*' as 'Nation'.

Conclusion: At the end of the book, McLeod offers a formal definition of a 'Sikh.' He lists the characteristics of a Sikh as follows: A Sikh is a person who believes in the Ten Gurus and the *Adi Granth*, keeps his hair unshorn, does not smoke, accepts the role of the Gurudwara and the '*langar*' in promoting an 'anti-caste' attitude, recognises the importance of '*Nam Simran*', may or may not be *amritdhari* and believes that women have a status equal to that of male Sikhs.

McLeod's definition restricts the term 'Sikh' to mean 'Keshdhari Sikh' only. McLeod has nothing to say of the social and religious philosophy of Sikhism except for the mention of '*Nam Simran*'. Sikhism gives pride of place to the compositions of the 'Gurus', and the '*Adi Granth*' is formally recognised as the '*Shri Guru Granth Sahib*' or the Eternal Guru.

When a Sikh bows before the "*Shri Guru Granth Sahib*," he shows equal reverence for all the saint-poets represented in this golden treasury of medieval Indian literature. Sikhism is a modern, practical, progressive and revolutionary faith. These saints did not praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue. Guru Nanak, in '*Babar-Vani*' raised his voice against oppression; he advised his 'Sikhs' to "be of the world, but be not worldly." He stressed the importance of "truthful living." Guru Arjun, the fifth Master, said the important thing is to "remember the Name of the Lord, and perform good deeds". The saint Kabir denounced the hypocrisy of the high-caste brahmins in the strongest language, and said that "The brave man is he who fights for the oppressed." Guru Gobind Singh called

the "Khalsa" — "the Army of the Lord" and emphasized that "Men have only one caste — the caste of humanity."

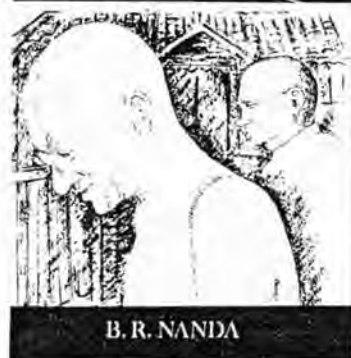
Who, then, is a Sikh? In the popular sense, 'a Sikh' is a person who keeps his hair unshorn, does not smoke, visits the Gurudwara and pay obeisance to the '*Adi Granth*.' But in the widest sense of the term, "a Sikh" is a person who practises the secular and ethical values of Sikhism. It matters little whether he is "Sahajdhari" or *amritdhari*, or whether he also believes in some other religion. He may or may not fulfil the requirements specified by the Parliament of Man, but if he accepts and lives according to the values and ideals adopted by the Parliament of Saints represented in the "*Shri Guru Granth Sahib*," that is more than enough. Such a man is "a Sikh" in the true sense of the word.

Reviewed by MR. ISHWAR SINGH, Lecturer in English, Kirti College, Bombay.

IN GANDHI'S FOOTSTEPS — THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JAMNALAL BAJAJ by B.R. Nanda; Oxford University Press, Bombay; 1990; pp. 398; Rs 225.

In Gandhi's Footsteps

The Life and Times of
Jamnalal Bajaj



"This book is a biography of Jamnalal Bajaj who worked for Gandhiji all his life so faithfully and honestly that Gandhiji looked upon him as a son. Mahadev Desai felt that Bajaj was "a living link between the outside world and Gandhiji". It has also been felt that "this link was broken with Jamnalal's sudden

death in February 1942." The reasons for the unquestioned allegiance of Jamnalalji to Gandhiji are not known but could not be other than his deep longing for the life of the spirit even before he joined Gandhiji "probably in the summer of 1915." It is almost certain he was attracted to Gandhiji not because of politics but because of social and religious reforms — the constructive work of Gandhiji.

The major political campaigns of Gandhiji were in 1920-22, 1930-33 and 1940-42. The attention of the world has been centred on these years, whilst there were long periods in which the work done was not political — hand-spinning, removal of untouchability, etc. As the author of this book tells us: "There was a division of labour. Gandhi planned and Jamnalal Bajaj executed these programmes." If Gandhi figures in this book in a big way, it is because his influence moulded the whole pattern of Jamnalal's life. Jamnalal earnestly tried to practise the Gandhian ethic in every sphere of his life. This was not an easy task: it was more difficult to be a Gandhian than to be a capitalist, a communist or a socialist. He tasted to the full "the pleasures and pains of being a disciple of the Mahatma."

Writing on the constructive work of Gandhiji during the long intervals between the major political campaigns, is more difficult than is normally imagined. It is fortunate that this work has been accomplished by B.R. Nanda who is known for his impartiality and independence. He has made this book a book with a purpose.

In a short review we can only refer to a few among the large number of institutions and the personalities involved. It is important to note that Jamnalal was interested in social reform much before he met Gandhiji. "Long before he met Gandhi, the transience of wealth, and even of life, had been almost an obsession with him... After meeting Gandhi, a dramatic change took place in him".

It is clearly wrong to believe that there was no corruption before we got our Independence. Jamnalalji was shocked about this. The formation of Congress ministries and provincial elections were not an unmixed blessing. "Holding office in Congress committees came to be viewed not as it once was, a passport to prison, but to power and patronage" (page 334). Congress

membership increased from *five lakhs* in 1935-36 to *forty-five lakhs* in 1938-39.

We get discussed in this book such important issues as the basic differences between outstanding leaders like Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das on the one side and Gandhiji on the other. These were differences of principle — such as non-violence considered in the context of Non-cooperation, Hand-spinning, removal of untouchability, and the promotion of communal unity in the way he wanted, "failed to impress the politicians"

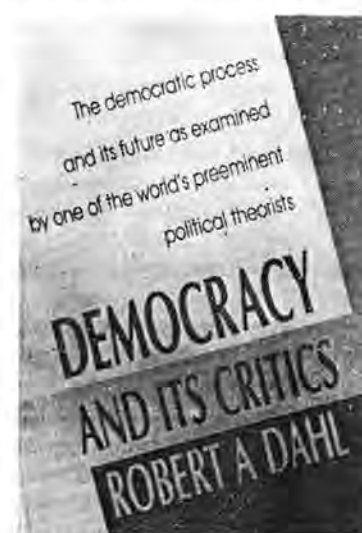
It is of some importance to note that in the years before our freedom in 1947, the use of English as a language for work and communication was accepted. Gandhiji took classes in the English language... Jamnalalji practised speaking English with Valji Desai who was "one of the scholarly inmates of the Sabarmati Ashram. Kamalnayan, the eldest son of Jamnalalji, insisted on learning English." Vinoba gave him some lessons. Mahadev Desai suggested to Jamnalal that he should write to his son only in English. Gandhi wrote to Jankidevi 'he is very eager to learn English. I am, therefore, of the opinion that we should send him to Colombo. He will get there the opportunity to satisfy to the fullest his desire to learn English.' Kamalnayan went to Colombo in June 1935 and for his higher education he went to London. Gandhiji gave him letters of Introduction to Henry Polak, C.F. Andrews, Horace Alexander and Muriel Lester. To Henry Polak he wrote,

"However we may fight Great Britain, London is increasingly becoming our Mecca or Kashi!"

Gandhiji requested Polak to put Kamalnayan in touch with Professor Laski, as he had advised Kamalnayan to take a course in the London School of Economics. About 50 years earlier Gandhiji had been to London as a student; he offered now some useful advice to Kamalnayan.

Reviewed by Prof. P.N. DRIVER, Principal (Retd.), College of Agriculture, Pune.

DEMOCRACY AND ITS CRITICS by Robert A. Dahl; Orient Longman, New Delhi; 1991; pp. 397; Rs. 110.



In this work, Dahl brings his considerable skills of both analysis and synthesis to bear on the vital theme of Democracy. At a time when various forms of authoritarianism have either crumbled or are facing relentless pressures from within and without, this book focuses on the phenomenon which goes by the name of democracy which means many things to many people. It explores in depth the various dimensions of democracy both as concept and as praxis. It traces the growth of the democratic experiment from the time of the 'first transformation' of the early political community into the participative city-state, through the centuries of political evolution that led to the 'second transformation' into the modern nation-state, and further on to the threshold of a possible 'third transformation' into the transnational state.

Using the scholastic method of normative discourse, and availing extensively of the Socratic technique employed in the dialogues of Plato, Dahl leaves no stone unturned to establish a credible case for democracy. He takes on the adversarial critics of democracy such as the advocates of anarchism and of various brands of guardianship and rebuts point with counterpoint. Though this makes for heavy reading, it serves the useful purpose of bringing to the fore fundamental issues of political debate which lie at the heart of every political

controversy and political dispensation. In the author's view, "the best possible state would be one that would minimize coercion and maximize consent, within limits set by historical conditions and the pursuit of other values, including happiness, freedom and justice. Judged by ends like these, the best state ... would be a democratic state".

Dahl sets about building his case for democracy by laying down the assumption, which he refers to as the Strong Principle of Equality, that all members of a human association "are sufficiently well qualified, taken all round, to participate in making the collective decisions binding on the association that significantly affect their good or interests. In any case none are so definitely better qualified than the others that they should be entrusted with making the collective and binding decisions". Implied in this proposition is a Presumption of Personal Autonomy, according to which, "In the absence of a compelling showing to the contrary, everyone should be assumed to be the best judge of his or her own good or interests." Thus, in any effective democratic process of making binding decisions, "citizens ought to have an adequate opportunity, and an equal opportunity, for expressing their preferences as to the final outcome." For this it is equally important that the 'demos' or people "must include all adult members of the association except transients and persons proved to be mentally defective."

For Dahl, both the substantive and the procedural aspects of democracy are important and need to be addressed in tandem. Democracy does not involve a zero sum game between process and substance. It calls for fine tuning between the rights and interests of both majorities and minorities as there can be a tyranny of both if the case for either is pressed too far. Dahl also goes into the complexities of establishing some sort of co-relationship among various factors that affect the functioning of democracy in practice, such as the size of the political unit in question, the issues to be decided by the demos or their representatives and the levels at which various powers and functions may best be exercised. The discourse is of necessity inconclusive but is nonetheless significant in highlighting areas of concern in

working out a viable and effective democratic system.

Dahl further investigates the metamorphosis of the earlier small-scale democracies into the modern macro scale 'polyarchies' of the representative democracies. He explores how and why polyarchy succeeded in some countries and failed in others and the vicissitudes that latter-day versions of polyarchic democracy must face if they are to eventually prevail. He lays stress on seven institutions that he considers vital for polyarchy, and these are: elected officials, free and fair elections, inclusive suffrage, right to run for office, freedom of expression, alternative information and associational autonomy. He is convinced that a society that is modern, dynamic and pluralist (MDP) is most likely to sustain polyarchy. But the question can be raised as to whether polyarchy is out of bounds for non-MDP societies or for societies that have one or two but not all three characteristics ascribed to a polyarchically inclined society. If that were the case, then by implication Dahl is positing Western-style politics as normative for societies the world over. But such a conclusion would at the very least lend itself to debate. Be that as it may, one cannot fault Dahl for laying down the axiom that "civilian control over the military and police is a necessary condition for polyarchy, and the failure of civilian control is sufficient to account for the existence of non-democratic regimes in many countries."

In his concluding chapter on 'Sketches for an Advanced Democratic Country', Dahl succinctly addresses himself to the heart of the democratic debate when he states that while his explicit concern is with political equality, his implicit and real concern is with freedom, human development, and human worth. We need to be reminded of this fundamental concern in order to counter the facile notion that democratic instrumentalities automatically guarantee a genuinely democratic way of life. In an age of economism and consumerism in which the market can loom over the common man much like a leviathan, and in which the principle of political inclusiveness is often at loggerheads with the exclusiveness and restrictiveness of *laissez-faire* managerial policy in economic life, we

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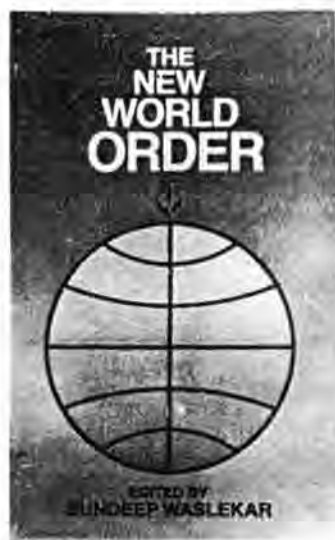
need to be cautioned against those forces that surreptitiously work against the democratic ethos and culture over the long term. Economic institutions need to be democratized no less than political structures if the citizens are to develop not merely as consumers and producers but as human beings. "For unless the Strong Principle of Equality applies among the members of an enterprise, we cannot conclude that they are entitled to govern themselves by the democratic process."

In sum, this book represents Dahl's most ambitious attempt to interpret and advocate the grand democratic enterprise as being capable of the least evil and the most good in comparison with any of its alternatives. His attempt has the merit of situating democracy in an evolutionary time-frame in which understanding is sought to be made retrospective, prospective and introspective at the same time. The discourse tends to be laboured at times and may give the impression of a hair-splitting exercise. But this perhaps cannot be avoided in a serious work on a serious theme. Withal, there is no gainsaying the fact that here we have a thoroughly researched work that underlines the importance of norms and values in political life and so commends itself to the attentive public.

Reviewed by Dr. LIONEL FERNANDES,
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THE NEW WORLD ORDER by
Sundeep Waslekar; Konark Publishers
Private Ltd., A-149, Main Vikas Marg,
New Delhi 110 092; 1991; pp 214;
Rs. 200.

The world as we have known it for over four decades is undergoing a fundamental transformation before our very eyes. To describe the current multi-layered convulsions in conventional terms as a period of transition, flux or change etc. is simply inadequate. It is too early to come up with an overarching concept that can encompass the paradigmatic shift on the global anvil. The end of the cold war and the collapse of the East or the so called Second World merely signify the beginning of a revolution in the established power/ideological relationships all over the world. How far



will the tide go? Where will it stop? What will be the future shape of the global power structure? Nobody knows or dares to speculate let alone predict. It looks as though the ideological rivalries of the past could disappear altogether, and this may happen sooner than we now imagine possible. But, sub-national ethnicity has emerged as a ferocious new force all over the globe.

As political rivalries between nations subside, economic conflicts are moving to the fore, and environmental erosion could threaten the very survival of man on the planet, Sundeep Waslekar observes. As the nuclear arms race is decelerating and nuclear weapons are being actually destroyed, the spectre of terrorism has raised its ugly head once again and the so called low level violence has become a global concern of the highest importance. Almost all nations in the world are confronted with powerful challenges to the central authority from internal disaffection and violence. In many countries a powerful and dangerous nexus has developed between the lucrative drug-trafficking and smuggling of arms and gold on the one hand and the entrenched power structures in business, government and the military, on the other.

Even as the legitimacy and capabilities of the national governments are being challenged from within, they are also being subjected to severe pressures from the outside. In this context the collapse of the Soviet Union and the near complete loss of credibility of the communist model makes the situation of the third world countries extremely precarious. The "elbow

room" they enjoyed in the cold war era has disappeared, Waslekar points out. The historic North-South divide now assumes an added significance and a new urgency.

How should we conceptualise the new world situation that is unfolding? What are the short-term and the long-term patterns one can detect, however tentatively? What *should* be the contours of the emerging new global paradigm? What *could* be achieved? What would the world most probably be like ten, twenty or fifty years from now? The spirited and optimistic editor of *The New World Order* has brought together (between the two covers so to say) a collection of responses, statements, messages and reasoned discourses from the widest possible cross-section of leaders, public figures, men of ideas and men of action from all over the world. Such a miscellany naturally, is not exactly a "book" as we normally understand it. But, nevertheless, and partly because of this very free flowing nature of the book, it can be seen as a social testament, a sort of a "period" essay on the historical evolution of international society. However, unsatisfactory it may be from the perspective of coherence and sustained analysis, the book represents the essence of the best thinking on the central concerns confronting world society today. Waslekar should be commended for his courage (nay audacity) to embark on the enterprise. As he rightly observes, his illustrious respondents were reacting to the nagging conceptual void on hand and only incidentally to the unknown interlocutor from India. That only shows the relevance and the significance of the basic idea, the theme of the book: How to conceptualise and concretise a *better* world order? It is neither possible nor necessary to comment even very briefly on the essays, responses and messages included in the book. Some of them are as brief as a page or two while some others are well crafted and structured essays of considerable length (even after drastic pruning by the editor.)

The book is divided into four sections, each with an "Introduction" of its own. Section I covers the challenges of the 1990's with very thoughtful contributions from such luminaries as Javier Perez de Cuellar, the (recently

retired) Secretary General of the UN, K. Subrahmanyam of India, Douglas Roche of Canada and Soedjatmoko of Indonesia. Section II deals with the "Role of the International Community". Section III deals with the "New Role of the State" and Section IV tells us how "The People Respond". A summary of recommendations called "Blueprint of a New World Order" is the capstone of this unique and slim volume of over 200 pages.

The UN Secretary General de Cuellar offers a very perceptive analysis of how the UN was conceived as the manager of the world in the post war era and how its functioning was stymied by the cold war from the very beginning. Even though the Security Council was paralysed, he asserts that many changes occurred in the world and consequently in the world body. He lists the disorientation caused by rapid change as the single most important generic challenge confronting the world today. Dr. Masamichi Inoki, Chairman of the Research Institute for Peace and Security, Tokyo, points out that while the cold war in Europe is over, conflicts are raging all over Asia. Outstanding issues of the past should be settled before we go on to the New World, Inoki insists. He rightly argues that too much concentration on Europe will not make the rest of the world secure.

What is it individuals like you and I can do to help in raising a sustained debate over the constant and continuing concerns of Man? Poverty, hunger, deprivation, terrorism and minorities (ethnic and religious) were always with mankind. The only thing that is *new* is that now they have become global problems. Spilling beyond the national boundaries these perennial issues have become the urgent common concern of mankind as a whole. War economies should become peace economies. Decentralisation of economic power between the nation states as well as within each of them has become a vital necessity. Attitudes of cooperation between nations and individuals need to be strengthened. In the shrinking planet of ours there is no room for nations to fight one another!

The liberal democratic political system with a mixed economy has certainly emerged as the new and

"successful" global idiom. But within its very inclusive frame of reference, the institutions of the *new world order* are yet to be visualised, conceptualised and operationalised. Man has a long way to go. Let us hope he will not get tired and give up hope.

As Buckminster Fuller rightly observed, what the World urgently needs is not *reforms*, but *new forms*. A more secure tomorrow with greater justice for all will not happen by itself. If it is to happen at all, men and their governments have to make it happen. It is in this spirit that the International Peace Initiatives, a small group of thinking men and women based in Bombay was launched a couple of years ago. These talented professionals and academics are concerned, among other things, with the promotion of an intellectual ambience that is committed

to anticipating conflicts (at local, national and international levels) and to nurture research projects and personnel capable of offering rational and consensual "solutions" that self-consciously rise above narrow and parochial considerations, be the area under scrutiny the village, the city, the State or the globe as a whole. The optimism of these youthful and well meaning men and women may seem to be unrealistic to the more seasoned (or cynical?) among us. But, their commitment is sincere and their goals are laudable. In wishing them well, we are only doing a favour to ourselves, the humankind. The enlightened business leaders who extended a helping hand to them also deserve praise.

Reviewed by Dr. B. RAMESH BABU, Head of the Dept. of Civics and Politics, University of Bombay.

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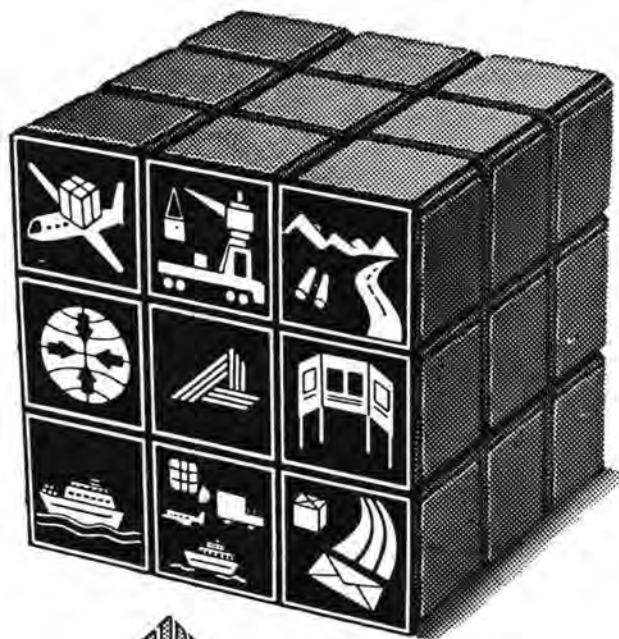
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Congratulations on another excellent issue. You have rendered a valuable service in publishing other extracts from *The Economist's* 'Survey of India'.
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P.R. Deshpande
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