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COMMUNIST DOCTRINES — Illusion and Reality

NISSIM EZEKIEL

The Soviet Union and its allies have no illusions about the rest of the world; but the rest of the world has plenty of illusions about the Soviet Union and its allies.

Whatever political language the communists speak, their aims are the same; democrats and liberals feel that their aims are and ought to be affected by their political language.

If, for instance, you talk of peace and detente, etc., you may attend to your defences but not draw up military plans for invading other countries. For a communist, that kind of talk is essentially a strategy, no more.

Civil rights in non-communist countries are conferred on communists as generously or with limitations as on others. In communist countries there are no civil rights, so the question of exercising them if you are a non-communist or an anti-communist does not arise.

Communists have the right to overthrow democratically elected governments and to do everything in their power for the purpose, as guaranteed by the Constitution. No one in a communist state has the right to advocate overthrow of its communist government.

The Soviet Union, according to its declarations, and according to its communist allies, has the right of military intervention in those countries which "belong" to its sphere of influence. No other country has a comparable right in any circumstances, not even when there is a prospect of nuclear annihilation.

In its relations with the Soviet Union and with communists, non-communist peoples and governments never utter these plain truths. They claim that the Soviet Union is a "friend", that its policies are intended to advance the cause of "world peace" and that any military action it takes has to be understood "in the right perspective" or "in the proper context". (That is India's view of the conquest of Afghanistan, and will probably be the same if Poland is subdued).

Indian official and much non-official opinion is

that nothing can and ought to be done to upset or even protest against Soviet domination of Eastern Europe or of any other part of the world where its word is the ultimate law.

Czechoslovakia, Hungary and now Poland have shown what they think of Soviet moral hegemony and political as well as military rule. Inability to prevent that rule from continuing the exercise of absolute power may be explained in terms of Great Power politics and a variety of international equations, including Third World stances, anti-Americanism, military and other weaknesses of the Western World. But there is no excuse for acceptance of the implied Soviet and communist claims. It amounts to surrender of those convictions and values to which the Soviet Union and communists all over the world are implacably opposed. Self-respect demands a more positive policy.

Is there ever likely to be a communist world system under Soviet patronage without a politically militant and militarily powerful movement? Ask the communists: they make no secret of their ideological commitment to that goal and every conceivable means to attain it. Why, then, does the non-communist world deceive itself on this score?

Consider the Spaniards. They are not, it seems, in favour of NATO. Do they, perhaps, feel safe from Soviet expansionism because West Germany, France, Italy and even England stand between them and the Soviet Empire? What would happen if those countries were no longer in a position to serve as a buffer for an independent Spain, whatever its political complexion? Would not these very same Spaniards look differently at the Red danger in Europe and at the American presence?

Resistance to the Soviet Union and to any communist government (the Cuban, for example) or even mere verbal analysis and exposure of communist intentions is considered by much non-communist opinion as futile, dangerous, illegitimate, reactionary, hawkish (all communists are, of course, peace-loving doves) and based on a false reading of history.

This is also one of the themes of communist propaganda, and some non-communist opinion is unquestionably a victim of it. But even when it is not, it tends to take the line that anti-communism is either irrelevant or a threat to the peace-making process.

Are the Communist doctrines compatible with any peace-making process, except as calculated by communists to serve their long-term interests? Those who say Yes to that question are instruments of communism, as the communists know very well.

THE RULE OF THE GUN

RAHUL SINGH

Perhaps more than any other time in history, the rule of the gun now prevails in many parts of the world. A recent example of this was the assassination of President Zia-ur-Rahman of Bangladesh, whose assassin, General Manzoor, was himself killed a few days later.

It should also not be forgotten that President Zia-ur-Rahman, too, though he did his country much good, came to power with the gun: he was army chief of staff when Sheikh Mujib and many members of his family were brutally killed by some young army officers. And there is now ample evidence to show that Zia-ur-Rahman gave his blessings to the killings, because the Sheikh's killers were all given "safe" diplomatic postings abroad. As the Bible so aptly said: "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

The events in Bangladesh are not an isolated phenomenon. Wherever one looks, assassins or terrorists are busy at work. The Iranian Parliament was blown up with a massive 30-kilo bomb, killing over 60 people, including four cabinet ministers, and the man who is next in succession to Ayatollah Khomeini.

A week earlier, the President of the country, Bani-Sadr, had been ignominiously dismissed from office. He had escaped almost certain death by going underground. It is perhaps too early to say whether there is a link between Bani-Sadr's dismissal and the bombing, but the two events seem remarkably coincidental. Violent revolutions, it has been rightly observed, invariably devour their own children, and the Iranian upheaval has been no exception to the rule.

IRRATIONAL ACTS

However, nations undergoing massive change are not the only targets of the assassin and the terrorist. Even the relatively stable countries of the West have been threatened. It seems only the other day that President Reagan was shot in the chest by a young fellow who wanted to impress his girl friend. Soon after that assassination attempt, the Pope was also shot and wounded, his assailant being a young Turk who wasn't very clear why he wanted to kill the Pope. The Pope's anguished cry, "Why did they do it?" reflects the bewilderment most sane people feel at these totally irrational acts.

The glorification of violence, especially in films and on television, the easy availability of guns, par-

ticularly in the USA, and the attraction of instant publicity in the media are some of the factors that have made wanton assassination so common these days. Deranged people like Mark Chapman, the killer of John Lennon, and James Hinckley, the assailant of President Reagan, have won a cheap immortality by their actions. What's more, so long as organisations like the American National Rifle Association — whose motto "Guns don't kill, people do" is as sickening as it is self serving — are allowed to flourish, the murders and violence in America will continue.

However, one can argue that American democracy is stable and strong enough to put up with such violence and perhaps even with the occasional shock of a presidential assassination. Other less politically stable nations, especially those ruled by a strongman, are, on the other hand, often thrown into chaos by a key assassination.

SOUTH KOREA

A case in point is South Korea, which made remarkable economic progress under the ruthless, yet in many ways progressive rule of President Park. Then, one day, an associate cut him down, and South Korea was plunged into an orgy of anarchy from which it is only slowly emerging. In such countries, the gains of many years can often be wiped out in a few days.

The lone assassin, either acting alone or in conspiracy with a small group, is what the world is familiar with. But organised terrorist groups have, in recent years, come much more into the picture. The Palestinian terrorists with their plane hijackings and the massacre of Israeli athletes at the Olympics, are probably the most prominent. The fictitious scenario in the latest Dominique Lapierre and Larry Collins book, *The Fifth Horseman*, in which Colonel Qaddafi of Libya gets some Palestinians to plant a nuclear bomb in New York, may not be as far-fetched as one would imagine.

The Palestinians, the Irish Republican Army, and the Basque nationalists in Spain at least have a cause, however misguided their means may be. The Palestinians and the Basques have no homeland, and their terrorism is meant to draw the world's attention to this fact. The IRA has centuries-old grivances against the English — remember that Ireland was once a cruelly exploited colony of England's — with religious differences to boot.

But what about terrorist groups like the Red Brigade in Italy, which succeeded in kidnapping and killing a former President, and West Germany's Baader Meinhof gang? What motivates them to try and destabilise their societies? In a few words, boredom with the capitalist system and a misplaced idealism which is probably exploited by the Communist bloc. Fortunately, with Western Europe gearing up to counter this novel terrorism, these anarchic groups are somewhat in decline.

THE INDIAN CASE

India, fortunately, has been relatively free of such violence. We have, of course, our dacoits and our communalists, who contribute a great deal of mayhem in the country. And a recent danger sign is the proliferation of unlicensed and cottage-made guns, especially in Bihar where certain areas have their own private armies. However, for a large country like ours, the violence has not got out of hand, nor yet threatened to destabilise the government.

The Naxalites are perhaps the only ideologically motivated and organised violent group, but since the Marxists came to power in West Bengal, their appeal has, paradoxically, diminished. Marxist rule in West Bengal, in fact, demonstrates how Indian democracy, despite its imperfect working, has taken the sting out of extremism: extremists in opposition usually become moderates in power. Witness also the DMK.

All this should not, however, make us unduly complacent. The danger to our system and the threat of violence comes from our miserable economic progress and the growing corruption at various levels of our society, all of which is increasingly bringing Indian democracy to disrepute. Till now, unlike most other developing countries, our military forces have kept out of politics. But if things should get worse, their patience may have its limits.

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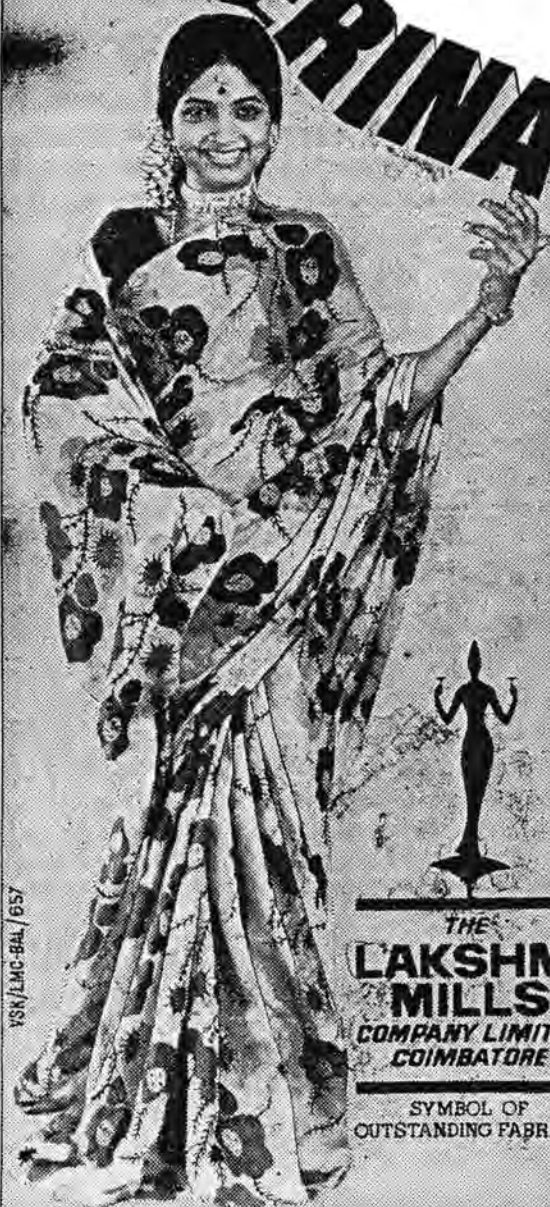
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CHAVAN: The Lost Leader

S. S. BANKESHWAR

Mr. Y. B. Chavan describes his joining the Congress (I) as Home Coming and not Desertion or Defection. He inadvertently admits that his leaving the Congress(I), after its rout in the 1977 elections, was Home Desertion. Defection or Treason!

"Even if all Congressmen were to go to Indiraji's party and I am left alone, I shall still hold aloft the Congress flag," said Mr. Chavan only four or five weeks earlier. A brave statement indeed! Within these four or five weeks, according to him, the Congress(I) has become the real Congress party, although four or five weeks ago he had considered the Congress(U) as the real Congress Party! When asked whether Indiraji's style of functioning had changed in the last four or five weeks, he replied that he does not want to go into the past, as he is concerned about the future. Whose future? Our country's or his own? This speaks for his credibility!

"The outcome of the total analysis of the political situation in our country and our country's national interests has forced me to join the Congress(I) which is in the mainstream," says Mr. Chavan. This wisdom dawned on him four or five weeks ago! What he does not say is that he has persuaded himself into believing that his selfish interests accidentally coincide with our national interests!

Mr. Chavan's total concern is about being in the *mainstream* and not the *right stream*. If tomorrow he finds that the communists or the communalists or anti-social elements or traitors are in the *mainstream*, he will be willing to join it. In other words, he only wants to be on the right side of Power irrespective of the party that represents it. This explains why he joined Charan Singh's cabinet as the Dy. Prime Minister.

Mr. Chavan will have to either apologise to Indira for making all sorts of false allegations against her or claim that her style of functioning has changed. He will have to eat all his words, and he is quite capable of it, being a veteran in the art of opportunism. In any case those who want an excuse to jump on Indira's bandwagon, can always and readily find a change in her style of functioning!

Indira has never admitted that she is a dictator and hence the question of any change in her style of functioning does not arise at all. In any case, she has not said that she has changed her style to seek merger with the Congress(U)!

Indira has a massive mandate in our parliament and is now not in need of turncoats like Mr. Chavan. She merely wants to humiliate those who deserted her in her hour of crisis, one by one. None will be surprised if Mr. Chavan is not even rewarded with a Ministership. Mr. Chavan should have taken the advice of Shri Swaran Singh before deciding to join the Congress(I) or learnt from the experience of the famous Chinese Emperor's 13th wife. Indira will now take full advantage of Mr. Chavan's recent statement that he will not be another Bahuguna.

Mr. Chavan may not even be admitted into her party, as she has clearly said that those who had deserted her in her hour of crisis and who now want to rejoin her party will be carefully screened before being admitted. There is a massive opposition to his entry into the Congress(I) from the Congress loyalists (post-1977 but pre-1980 elections).

If Mr. Chavan is not even admitted into her party, his humiliation will be complete, and worse than that of Shri Bahuguna.

Shri Bahuguna at least saved a bit of his reputation by resigning his Lok Sabha seat, and seeking re-election. Mr. Chavan cannot even dare to resign his seat, as he is not sure whether he will get the Congress (I) ticket if he were to do so.

The Congress(I) is not a cohesive party. In every state, it is riven with dissensions. There is fierce in-fighting between post-1977 Congress(I) loyalists and post-1980 ones.

The admission of neo-loyalists like Mr. Chavan will only intensify that in-fighting further, and weaken the party. It will become a veritable *Kumbhamela* like the Janata Party of 1977.

It is high time Congress(U) was given at least a decent burial so that its members may join any one of the existing political parties. What amuses the public is the angry outburst of Shri Jagjivan Ram and the not-so-angry outburst of Shri Dev Raj Urs over Mr. Chavan's decision to join the Congress(I). As Shri Zail Singh rightly said, the Congress(U) became the Congress(Q) the day it was routed in the 1980 elections.

While Mr. Jagjivan Ram stood first followed by Mr. Devraj Urs, Mr. Chavan jumped the queue. This is their real grievance against Mr. Chavan!

Mr. Chavan can be proud of being in the company of Governor Elbridge Gerry (1814-1944) and Dr. Spooner, who enriched the English language by contributing new words to it like "Gerrymanderism" and "Spoonerism" respectively. He can boast that he is the first Indian politician to have enriched the English language by contributing a new word to it: "Chavanism" meaning the practice of an opportunistic person who jumps on the fence when he is in search

of a choice between two difficult alternatives and gets down the right side when the chance comes.

Chavanism and Rajnarainism mirror our political scene today. Gone are the days of Tilak, C.R. Das, Lala Lajpat Rai, Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel, Subhas Chandra Bose, Rajaji, Savarkar, Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdey, the Chapekar brothers, Madanlal Dhingra, and others of their stature. These are the days of Rajnarains, Chavans, Bansilals, Devilals, Bhajanlals, Ayarams and Gayarams (now renamed as Aya Lals and Gaya Lals). Gone are also the days of our old electorate. The present electorate is politically conscious. No political parties and political leaders can take them for granted.

Next to dacoits, robbers, murderers, smugglers and pickpockets, our politicians are today the most discredited persons in our country. Shamelessness is their shield. You can count on your fingers politicians of character and integrity irrespective of political ideologies.

Even according to our renowned astrologers like B. V. Raman, nobody under the sun can enjoy a good *dasha* throughout his or her life. The good *dashaas* of all our old blessed leaders like Jagjivan Ram, Y. B. Chavan and Charan Singh are over. They are politically dead but 'Maya' is clouding their vision.

Our nation will heave a sigh of relief if all these oldies retire (before God sends for them) and devote themselves to constructive activities like family planning, tree-planting, road building, slum clearance, helping the poor down-trodden and handicapped people, emulating the example of Vijay Merchant, who is playing his second innings (to use his own words) magnificently.

'Live And Let Live'

S. K. Patil's Way

"Speak no good of a politician" is perhaps as widely held a view in India these days as the more conventional adage "Speak no ill of the dead"!

Nevertheless, a few thoughts may be in order on the passing away of S. K. Patil, whom I had known, fought against and worked with for nearly half a century.

Patil was a patriot but his love for Bombay was perhaps even more ardent. He dominated our civic life for several years in a manner not known since the days of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta.

Patil was a world citizen devoid of chauvinism, and what he liked about Bombay was its cosmopolitan character and atmosphere. That is why he courageously stood for a bi-lingual state and, failing that, a City State if partition could not be avoided.

Unlike most Indian politicians, 'S. K.' was not petty or intolerant. 'Live and let Live' summed up his philosophy. For this, as his domestic opponent within the Congress in pre-independent days, I was grateful. In that sense, he was a liberal — a rare breed in our country today.

M. R. MASANI

"Friends of the Soviet Union"

A Comment

Concern expressed by Mr. J. P. Mathur and Mr. H. S. Bhabhva, Bharatiya Janata Party M.P.'s in a Press statement (June 7) about a protocol to be signed between the Friends of the Soviet Union (FSU) sponsored by the Congress (I) and the Soviet India Friendship Society of the USSR is well-timed.

Until recently, similar relations existed between the CPI-dominated Indo-Soviet Cultural Society (ISCUS) and the Congress (I) which had enabled "funds to flow in", and some persons to visit Moscow frequently. The net result was that there were reports of systematic subversion of government establishments and of the Indian political system as a whole.

Professor Nurul Hasan, who will be visiting the USSR and enjoying Soviet hospitality to sign this protocol after his 15-day stay there, happens to be the Vice-President of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) — India's premier research unit. Under Central Government rules, a person holding a Government post should refrain from taking part in politically-sponsored organisations like the FSU. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that Prof. Nurul Hasan should either resign his post or be removed as demanded by the Bharatiya Janata Party M.Ps.

One cannot forget the role played by Professor Nurul Hasan at the Jawaharlal Nehru University. It was Professor Hasan, then Union Minister of State for Education, who brought Professor Moonis Raza, a CPI-cardholder, from Srinagar College of Engineering to the J.N.U. and made him Planning Officer. Professor Raza systematically infiltrated the JNU with Communist fellow travellers.

Today, there are at least 40 per cent teachers/professors who are either related to Prof. Moonis Raza or have faith in his Marxist Philosophy. Both Professor Nurul Hasan and Professor Moonis Raza are products of Aligarh Muslim University and have established extensive contacts with Moscow, both at the Government and at the Party level.

It is high time that our Prime Minister awoke to the danger of Communist subversion of our prestigious research institution, the CSIR, to save our scientists from falling a prey to Communist Propaganda.

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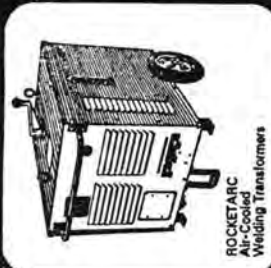
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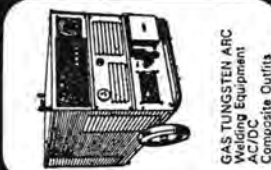
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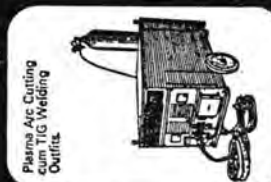
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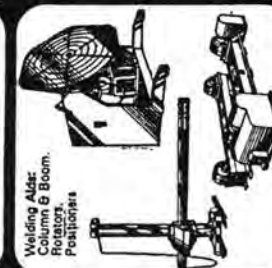
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VOICES 1

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Our organisation has been set up to enable retired people to undertake selfless social service. In exchange, we try to help retired people to solve their problems so that they can live a healthy, happy and useful life with dignity and self-respect.

It is proposed to bring out an INDIAN JOURNAL OF GERONTOLOGY in which all kinds of problems faced by aged people will be discussed, and solutions that have worked in solving these problems. Mr. C. P. GUPTA, executive director of ADITYA VAANPRASTH ASHRAM, will be the publisher and editor. He will also build up subscriptions and advertisements.

We have set up a PRE-RETIREMENT ADVISORY SERVICE, which is conducted by those who have already retired, faced various problems, and worked out solutions. The service is free, and only a nominal amount is charged to cover expenses like postage, etc.

We have also set up an EMERGENCY RELIEF SERVICE. We are setting up small local groups consisting of retired people and younger people. These groups compile detailed information about facilities available for various kinds of emergencies. Any one in serious trouble can get help.

We are also setting up groups of experts to consider human relations problems, particularly between retired people among themselves and with younger people.

INDIAN MERCHANTS CHAMBER, BOMBAY is collaborating with us in compiling detailed information on the social work being done by business houses and their employees. Businessmen are painted in a bad light by politicians and bureaucrats, but they are expected to provide resources which enable society to get goods and services. Many business houses are, on their own, doing an enormous amount of social work not connected with their business.

In order to balance the one-sided criticism they have to face, we are compiling in detail the good work they are doing. Most businessmen know that they already provide, in the shape of taxes, the resources from which government conducts social welfare programmes. They also know that a lot is wasted through inefficiency and corruption. We feel there should be more and more of social welfare work by businessmen themselves, to save the country from higher and higher taxes and inflation.

Retired people will help in such social work. Many retired people have themselves started social welfare projects, but due to lack of resources, they have not been able to do much. We shall be putting such retired people in touch with philanthropic businessmen for mutual benefit.

ADITYA VAANPRASTH ASHRAM, Association of Retired People, Hari Nivas, Swami Vivekanand Road, Khar, BOMBAY 400 052.

VOICES 2

A Theatre Triumph

Theatre Group's revival of "Death of a Salesman" by Arthur Miller brings fresh laurels to Alyque Padamsee and his cast. Its universal appeal emanates from the commonality of Willy Loman, the salesman. He is the typical man — breadwinner, husband, father and human being. Like everyone else, he tries his best to reconcile these roles into a compatible whole, but he fails. Contradictions bog him down and blur his vision. The realisation of his failure, and the extent of it, is Willy's tragedy.

But the dilemmas in Willy's mind do not seem to plague Charley, his next-door neighbour, or Uncle Ben, Willy's gold-digging brother. Both men achieve success painlessly. Willy tortures himself in an attempt to understand why. He cannot fathom the reason for his own discontent, little realising that unlike Charley and Uncle Ben, he himself was a man, but also a "private man in a world full of strangers, a world that is not home nor even an open battleground but only galaxies of high promise over a fear of failing." (Miller's Introduction to the *Collected Plays*, Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd.,)

Because Willy Loman wanted to be bigger and better than himself, because he measured human relationships, even with his own sons, in terms of worldly success, he steadily grew apart from Biff and Happy, his beloved but foundering sons. And when Willy gets fired, he has no option but to apply the same yardstick to himself.

That Biff can and does love his father through and despite his failures and infirmities fires Willy with joy as he approaches his end, and this lifts the play above despair.

Vijay Crishna, playing the role of Biff, brings out well the desperate longing to locate the love which got lost somewhere along the way to adulthood, and the anguish of being constantly thwarted in his attempts. He is usually at home in an emotionally charged role, but in this instance, he could perhaps vary the pitch by alternately relaxing and tensing up.

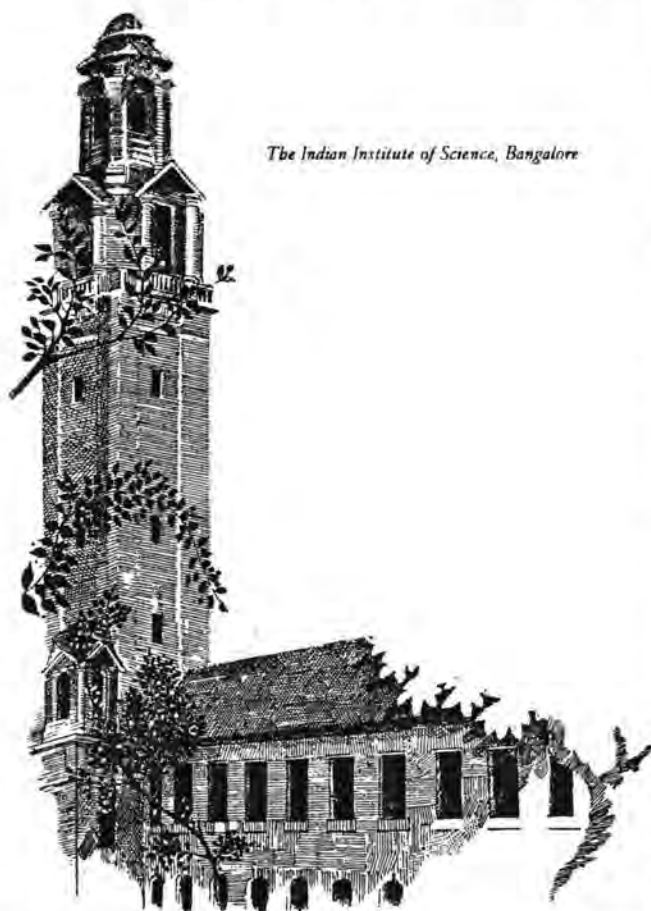
While Dolly Thakore's rendition of Linda, Willy's wife, lives up to Miller's portrayal, it falls a little short in expressing her attitude towards her sons. The compounding of love and remonstrance, faith and doubt, indulgence and discipline, must prepare us for the scene in which she angrily asks Biff and Happy to clear out of their house and their lives. Deeper shadings could perhaps make for greater poignancy.

As for Alyque Padamsee's own acting of Willy Loman's character, it can hardly be faulted. He achieves with astonishing ease the "Certain Private Conversations" in Willy's mind, which are the heart of the play.

For the rest, Charley, played by Farrokh Mehta, is a masterpiece in miniature, and Happy is played fluently by Ronnie Screwwalla. A word about the restaurant scene. It assumes a shade too much rumbustiousness in an otherwise muted orchestration.

INDU SARAIYA

THE WORLD OF BOOKS



The Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore

THE CREATION OF WEALTH by R. M. Lala;
IBH Publishing House, 1981; pp. 209; Rs. 45.

IN his excellent book entitled *In Defence of the Corporation*, Robert Hessen observed: "Combining the capital of millions of investors and talents of millions of workers, giant corporations are a testament to the ability of free men, motivated by self-interest, to engage in sustained, large-scale, peaceful co-operation for their mutual benefit and enrichment."

That conventional economic thinking in India has hardly ever accorded with this wholesome assessment is all too clear from the enormous outpouring of venom against what is derisively dubbed as "Big Business". Not surprisingly, public reaction to these growing assaults on free enterprise has, even at the best of times, wavered between apathetic indifference and whole-hearted approval.

To a large extent, the creation, by means fair or foul, of a climate of opinion which encourages the excoriation of entrepreneurs in and out of season, is responsible for the blind and naked ignorance characterising the prevalent public attitude.

No less culpable is the intellectual sloppiness writ large in the sporadic attempts of some self-styled proponents of free enterprise in India, whose chicken-

hearted, apologetic stance has done little to dispel the thick collectivist fog enveloping the sub-continent.

As James Balfour so perceptively diagnosed it, the vast majority of people prefer the continuance of a problem they cannot explain to an explanation they cannot understand.

Realising that the only effective remedy for the pervasive blindness which perpetuates the popular and destructive fallacy of redistributionism is a better understanding of the freedom philosophy, the House of Tatas decided to join the debate on the conceptual issue of the legitimacy of free enterprise in India. The result is the publication of a well-documented and compelling book, appropriately titled *The Creation of Wealth*, which seeks to demonstrate incontrovertibly the superiority and vitality of voluntary action over the coercive processes of political command.

Apart from attempting to unravel the enigmatic Tata ethos which has been as much the subject of curiosity as of suspicion in certain minds, the book convincingly explodes some pernicious myths which have gained currency in recent times. The misguided clamour, for instance, both in Parliament and outside, on the "phenomenal growth" of the Tata assets and the "enormous concentration of economic power" has been given the lie by some sobering home-truths.

How many of our puny politicians know, for example, that although according to the figures published by the Union Government the Tatas increased their assets by 66% between 1972 and 1977 as against an average growth rate of 76% of the large industrial houses in India, the actual increase in the value of the Tata assets amounted only to a bare 19% if consideration is made of the inflationary tendencies of the period?

And what about the "bigness" of the "Tata Empire" with which our interventionist brethren are so obsessed? "A comparison between General Motors and Telco indicates that the General Motors' turnover of over \$ 60 billion annually is 150 times that of Telco, the largest automobile plant in India..."

Similarly, a comparison between US Steel and Tata Steel indicates that the turnover of US Steel of about \$ 12 billion is 30 times the turnover of Tata Steel. What is more, "the turnover of India's state-owned Hindustan Steel is 3 times that of Tata Steel." So much for "bigness" and "monopolistic domination".

Perhaps more pertinent and revealing is the truth about the extent of control exercised by the Tata Group on their companies. In a rare and unprecedented move, JRD Tata, whose contribution to the development of this country has been infinitely larger than even the most charitable politician would grudgingly concede, spelt out the facts in a Memorandum to the National Executive of the ruling Janata Party in 1979:

"The management control does not rest with the Tatas but with a Board of Directors, the members of which, except for those directly appointed by the Government or Government institutions, are elected by shareholders, including the Government."

It is of no small significance to note that the ownership of TISCO, for example, is spread amongst 80,000 shareholders, with the Government financial institutions controlling as much as 45% of the voting power.

Admittedly, statistics do not tell the whole story. But what is left unsaid by the intricate skein of figures relating to the Tata Group is more heart-warming.

"It is easy for an economist or an accountant to compute the total assets or the total turnover of companies promoted by Tatas. What is more significant and perhaps relevant in the present day is the contribution which Tatas have made in the field of evolving a certain philosophy, a certain style, some basic values in Management. While it is accepted that each Tata company is presently managed as an independent entity, one cannot escape this feeling when one goes to any Tata company that they share between them a certain concern for people, a certain concern for quality which distinguishes them from other companies in Indian industry."

Can there be any gainsaying that the deep concern of the Tatas for human values has, over the years, passed into legend? One has only to turn to the immortal institutions and the numerous philanthropic trusts which the Group has so painstakingly set up and nurtured, to seek an answer.

Or, again, in an age in which it has become fashionable to feign a "progressive" outlook on labour-management relations, to cite but one example, it is a sobering reflection that as far back as a century and a half ago, Jamsetji Tata, the visionary founder of the Group, introduced such far-reaching measures of labour welfare as an eight-hour working day, free medical aid, provident fund, leave without pay, maternity benefit, profit-sharing bonus, workmen's accident compensation scheme and so on, measures that prove with resounding finality the hollowness of claims made by those who never tire singing the siren-song of statism!

As one journeys through the unfolding Tata saga, one is constantly reminded of the truism that "behind every advance of the human race is a germ of creation growing in the mind of some lone individual — an individual whose dreams awoke him in the night while others lie contentedly asleep."

The Tata story is, as the author points out at the beginning, "the story of a House that has created wealth for a Nation. It is the story of struggle, anxiety, adventure, achievement." Indeed, it is much more.

Inevitably, in embarking upon a project of this kind, Russi Lala has exposed himself to the instinctive reaction from detractors and critics — who are only too many — of being bound by the restraints of official sponsorship. Even so, the risk was worth taking, for at a time when the air is thick with ideological shibboleth, no greater service could be rendered than to expose the kakistocratic tendencies which have all but scuttled freedom of enterprise in this country.

At any rate, *The Creation of Wealth* can be hoped to help inject more reason and less prejudice into contemporary economic thinking, at least among the enlightened citizenry.

K. S. VENKATESWARAN

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Our Population Explosion

INDIA's First Plan envisaged a doubling of per capita income in 25 years. Actual performance, however, measured only half the targeted achievement, partly because unbridled population growth negated the fruits of development.

We are today around 686 million, of whom nearly one half live in abject poverty. This gravely threatens the country's stability, and renders population control a national imperative. The recent slackening in family planning efforts has reportedly resulted in an upward movement in fertility trends which were otherwise happily, if slowly, declining. The incremental burden of unwanted numbers inevitably falls on the poor and disadvantaged, especially women and children.

This need not be so, as family planning brings the choice and means to every couple to avoid an involuntary birth, and the devaluation of child and female life. However, only little over a fifth of the 113 million eligible couples is currently effectively protected by any method of family planning.

High fertility is both the consequence and the cause of destitution, and is best reduced by a package of social and economic development and well-structured health measures. Unfortunately, the thrust towards equity and basic needs has been halting, although the family welfare programme is central to national development and human rights.

Kerala's and Goa's experience demonstrate that social development is indeed among the best contraceptives. The new Sixth Plan must, therefore, combine population control and family welfare with a development strategy directed towards the poor.

The goals of overall development and fertility control are not divergent, and can and must be linked by a social infrastructure that ensures an acceptable and rising quality of life to every Indian.

As concerned citizens we urge that, like national security, the small family norm and family welfare based on the satisfaction of basic human needs must be part of a minimal national consensus, above partisan politics.

Such a framework will enable Government and people cooperatively to formulate and implement a humane, democratic and voluntary yet vigorous programme of family planning, with the political support requisite for ensuring a decisive decline in fertility within the present decade.

Signatories include:

Sheikh Mohammad
Abdullah,
Parkash Singh Badal,
M. Karunanidhi,
Vasanthrao Patil
M. G. Ramchandran
Chandra Shekhar,
Charan Singh,
D. Devraj Urs,
Atal Bihari Vajpayee,

Dr. J. D. Sethi,
Dr. Madhuri Shah,
Brig. Gyan Singh,
Soli Sorabjee,
G. S. Talwalkar,
Vijay Tendulkar,
B. G. Verghese,
S. H. Vatsyayan,
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Amjad Ali Khan,
K. C. Khanna,
Khushwant Singh,
A. J. Kidwai,
Dr. Raj Krishna,
Yamini Krishnamurthy,
and others.

R. D. Karve Birth Centenary

Prof. R. D. Karve, pioneer of family planning in India, was one of the great rationalists that Maharashtra has produced after Gopal Ganesh Agarkar. Unlike others who merely profess rationalism and at most practice it in their personal life, Karve made the propagation of rationalism the mission of his life. His writings and publications including the monthly *Samaj Swasthya*, and the family planning clinic he ran in Bombay bear testimony to his ethical and enlightened sense of mission.

The fact that Karve's name has not even once been publicly mentioned so far during the year of his birth centenary, which began on 14 January 1981, shows the extent to which we have forgotten our debt to him.

In order to pay our tribute to Karve's memory, the Indian Secular Society, the Samaj Prabodhan Sanstha, the Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh and the Indian Rationalist Association (of which Karve was a founder member and Editor of its monthly *Reason*) have formed the R. D. Karve Centenary Committee with Mr. Prabhakar Padhye as Chairman and Professor C. S. Inamdar as Secretary.

The Committee has chalked out a programme of lectures and seminars at Bombay, Pune and Aurangabad. It will also publish in English a biography of Karve and a selection of his writings, respectively written and edited by Professor Y. D. Phadke.

A biography by Professor Phadke in Marathi has already been independently commissioned by H. V. Mote Prakashan.

Professor C. S. Inamdar
Secretary, R. D. Karve Birth Centenary Committee
Indian Secular Society,
850/8A Shivajinagar
PUNE 411 004 (Tel. 55744)

National Conference On Women's Studies

SUNAINA SINGH

The Conference was held in the historic precincts of SNDT University — a pioneering institution started by Maharishi Karve. It has blossomed over the years into a full-fledged Women's University at Bombay. The Conference was national and not an All-India Women's Meet because the education of women is not the concern of women only but is a national problem.

The association of men scholars, academicians and sociologists in the deliberations was a welcome step in cooperative and collaborative planning for the development and expansion of Women's Education — which is the *sine qua non* for their overall upliftment. Anti-man stances, or a blind imitation of the women's lib movement in the West, would harm the cause of women's emancipation in the Indian context.

Mrs. Madhuri Shah, Chairman of UGC, in her key-note address urged educationists to have a new look at the women's situation in India, "shackled to positions of inequality, inferiority and virtual exclusion from the benefits of development". The Education system, she said, should "bring about healthy and positive changes in society, so that women do not continue to suffer from injustice, discrimination and indignity".

The Vice-Chancellor, Mrs. Jyoti Trivedi, pleaded forcefully for a basic change in the attitudes of men who occupy seats of power and policy making at different levels, for liberating women from age-old oppression and exploitation. She stressed the need to change the conventional curricula and provide a focus on Women's Studies.

The Conference applied itself to defining the position and role of women in the faculties of Arts, Sciences, Social Sciences and Administration. Different discussion groups took up for consideration the question of redesigning the syllabus in respective disciplines with a view to inculcating a new awareness, according equality of status and opportunity to women in the task of national reconstruction. The new courses recommended were:

1. *History*
 - (a) Women in the Russian Revolution,
 - (b) Social History of Women in India; and
 - (c) History of Women's liberation movements in the world.
2. *Political Science*: Paper on status of women in Matriarchal and Patriarchal Societies and the role of the state in the subjugation of women.
3. Legal position of women under the present constitution and amendments with a view to removing the evils of rape, dowry and discriminative property laws.
4. *Psychology*: Psychological aspects of femininity.

However, the issues to which the Conference did not address itself were:

1. the need for changes at the primary and secondary stages of Education; and

2. the question as to who will design the new syllabus.

The principle of changing the course content at the Undergraduate and Post-Graduate levels only is, to my mind, not adequate. The psychology of children requires to be properly moulded from the primary stage itself. This impressionistic and formative period in life is of basic importance. Otherwise, students at the undergraduate level have to begin first the unlearning process of the harmful and the retrograde taught to them at school.

It is important that hardened and biased attitudes against woman should be countered from the beginning by preparing the children's minds against discriminatory treatment based on sex.

The new syllabus at the University level should be carefully chosen and re-written, wherever necessary, by a team of experts consisting of men and women in the concerned disciplines. The syllabus content should be so designed as to shed light on women's deplorable situation today, and to activate a transformation in the conceptual biases and prejudices based on wrong assumptions about women's capabilities, potentialities and roles.

At the same time, efforts through other mass media should be organised to make the social climate respond favourably to changes in the position of women.

The chief recommendation of the Conference to institute courses on Women's studies as integral part of the syllabus, it is hoped, will be accepted. Earnest attempts must be made to implement it in every University.

The Editor,
FREEDOM FIRST.

Sir,

While supporting the proposal made by Mr. M. R. Masani for establishing in India a "Society for the Right to Die with Dignity", I think it is a pity that the Private Member's Bill proposed by Mr. Mulchand Daga, M. P. from Rajasthan, is entitled "Mercy Killing". Originally the Greek word "euthanasia" meant painless, happy death. Voluntary euthanasia is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as "gentle and easy death: bringing about of this, especially in cases of incurable and painful diseases."

It is generally those who oppose euthanasia who refer to it as "mercy killing", a phrase which naturally creates in people an unconscious bias against it. Unfortunately, even those who support euthanasia, unthinkingly use that phrase.

Bombay
16th May, 1981.

A. SOLOMON

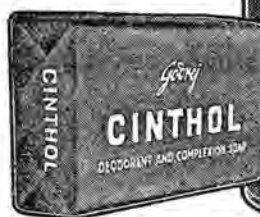
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Business Magnates Back Bhagalpur Police

The Bhagalpur policemen who allegedly blinded numerous under-trial prisoners in Bhagalpur and its outskirts are being supported by certain interested quarters, it is learnt. According to usually reliable sources the business magnates and the moneyed men have donated 5 lakhs to the Bhagalpur police for the purpose of fighting litigation and cases pending against them. What has surprised people here most is that when the Chief Minister of Bihar paid a visit to Bhagalpur recently, he patted and praised the police officials.

That the police has succeeded in getting support of business magnates came to public notice when a team of feature film makers on behalf of the Citizens' Freedom League on the blind prisoners of Bhagalpur visited Bhagalpur and contacted many a blind prisoner and various other citizens in course of gathering material for the film.

The team which accompanied Shri Tapan Basu came to know to its sorrow and surprise that the police not only blinded many innocent people but put them to death also. Shri Brahmadeo Mahato of the Belathu village in the Shahkunda sub-division, having six brothers and 50 bighas of land, was roused from sleep at his own doors by the police at five one morning and killed, while his belongings were taken away by the police. Shri Raman Bind of the same village, who was returning to his village after getting some corrections in his land papers, was blinded by the police. The unfortunate man is now undergoing treatment for his eyes at Aligarh.

It is a matter of once queer and disquieting that the more the Government of Bihar tries to cover and hush up the inhuman blinding of prisoners at Bhagalpur, the more it is coming to light and getting publicity. The Government of India has so far refused permission to British film makers to portray this harrowing tale of blindings at Bhagalpur.

Sarvodaya Press Service

Sarvodaya Press Service

Aimed at highlighting people's problems, Sarvodaya Press Service (SPS) has been launched by a group of Sarvodaya activists as a news-cum-feature agency to fill up gaps in Indian journalism and to meet the long-felt and growing need of newspapers interested to give wider coverage of rural India and the adjoining world. SPS is essentially a news, features and analyses service specialising in background and interpretative news coverage.

In addition to supplying general news from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka to the newspapers of the Sarvodaya World, with an emphasis on rural problems, Sarvodaya Press Service (SPS) issues a number

of regular features, articles of topical interest on socio-economic, political, cultural and literary activities at nominal rates.

With a network of correspondents in remote rural areas otherwise inaccessible to the newspaper world, Sarvodaya Press Service runs a feature service mailed two or three times a week on topical subjects touching practically all contours of everyday life of our rural population.

Right now the SPS has no teleprinter and it serves its clients through mailer and telegraphic services available on exclusive and non-exclusive basis, tentatively fixed at Rs. 500 annually for nonexclusive service, and Rs. 250 per dispatch for exclusive stories.

Besides this, with the help of a network of correspondents in remote rural areas, and eminent scholars, SPS intends bringing out from 1981 onwards its annual year book dealing with agrarian youth, students, workers, both industrial and rural, and women's movements in India and the neighbouring world to highlight the common man's endeavour towards People's Power.

We all know that the third world lives in remote neglected villages still inaccessible to the sophisticated urban world, not only because of the difficult terrain but also due to the communication gap that generates ignorance and misunderstanding, leading to distrust and suspicion. SPS aims at bridging this wide gulf that separates the rural world from the urban one by bringing the rural populace nearer and closer to the urban world through news items and features.

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Consumer Centre Inaugurated

A well-equipped Centre with full-fledged office and exclusive Consumer and Public Interest Law Library was inaugurated by an unknown consumer, Smt. Ashaben Targe, who was helped by Consumer Education and Research Centre, Ahmedabad, in the settlement of a repudiated death claim of Rs. 5,000 from Life Insurance Corporation of India on the policy of her deceased husband.

The Centre has an area of 1900 sq. ft. It has employed nine full-time salaried staff consisting of a qualified Manager, an M.B.A. from India Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, a consumer researcher, an M.B.A. from B.K. School of Business Management, a qualified journalist, an educational programmer, a librarian-cum-resource person, two stenographers and two messengers.

The Centre houses a projector and a duplicating machine. It is setting up a small testing laboratory for testing Milk and Edible Oil. Its library can be conveniently used for Seminars for upto 20 participants. It subscribes to 80 journals. Many of them come from U.S.A., Canada, Australia, U.K., Malaysia and other countries of the world.

Imported books purchased and to be purchased, will cost the Centre about a lakh of rupees. Recalling its humble beginning, the Centre had started with an initial corpus of Rs. 250 from the Foundation for Public Interest in 1978, collected Rs. 6.50 lacs and spent Rs. 4.25 lacs during the year 1980-81. The Gujarat Government alone contributed a sum of Rs. 1,15,000.00.

The Centre acknowledges with thanks the contributions from the Government of Gujarat, the Government of India, other Public Charitable Trusts, individuals and institutional donors for their generous contributions.

Ahmedabad, the city known for a large number of educational, scientific and cultural institutions, has another "First" to its credit. Consumer Education and Research Centre, Ahmedabad (CERC), formed as a Public Charitable Trust three years ago, operated from the offices and residence of its Trustees, had not a single full-time salaried staff member. CERC has over a period of three years, grown into a force to be reckoned with. It has effectively used the instrumentality of Law and the Courts for vindication of consumer rights. It has challenged mighty monoliths and public utilities like the Life Insurance Corporation of India, the Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation, the Gujarat State Electricity Board, Ahmedabad Telephones and Indian Airlines.

All cases are aimed at ensuring public accountability of public utilities and for providing in-built safeguards to consumers in monopolistic situations. CERC has not spared the manufacturers of textiles, edible oils and others in the matter. Its campaign against misleading marks and fraudulent stampings on textile fabrics resulted in the recent notification by the Central Government expressly providing for stamping the composition of each fibre in the descending order on blended fabrics.

The Centre is making inroads for evolution of new concepts in the country. Refund of excise duty already recovered from the consumers running into crores of rupees to the manufacturers is challenged on the grounds that the same should go to and be spent for the benefit of the consumers. Discontinuance of false misleading advertisements and enforcement of corrective advertisements to erase the impressions of earlier advertisements will increasingly become a reality in course of time.

Apart from such litigations, the Centre provides pre-litigative services to individual consumers in respect of their complaints. Complaining consumers approaching the Centre are spread all over the country in places like Madras, Rajkot, Bombay, Delhi, Rani-khet, Bhavnagar, Indore, Ahmedabad, Baroda, etc.

The complaints range from short weights and measures to repudiation of death claims by weeping widows, minor children and infirm parents. In-between are the complaints in respect of refrigerators, electrical kettles, motor cycles, gear boxes, textile fabrics, piston rings, etc.

The Centre has also intervened in the case of motor accident compensation by a young widow, Zinatibibi, supporting her that the compensation payable by the Insurance Company shall not be limited to a maximum of Rs. 50,000.00 on the death of her husband. Other intervention cases are excise refund matters in the case of metallic yarn.

In its campaign for consumer protection are covered matters like freedom of expression, the right to information and the right to reply of the consumers. A landmark is the decision of the Gujarat High Court, though under appeal before the Supreme Court, directing L.I.C. to publish Prof. Manubhai Shah's reply to one of its articles in its journal YOGAKSHEMA. Equally innovative are the inroads in the field of the right to information where comes the rejection of the Government's Privilege claim for non-production and non-inspection of the Rajkot Collector's report in the matter of the Machhu Dam disaster.

Indian Airlines has been put in the docks before the Press Council of India for not publishing the Centre's reply against a false and derogatory editorial write-up in its journal IMAGE.

True to its name, the Centre has been arranging lectures by eminent Consumer and Public Interest Law leaders from India and abroad. It held a Workshop on "Consumer and other Public Interest Groups" for three days in November 1980 and a one-week classroom training programme for consumer workers in January 1981. Participants and faculty, men and women came from all around the country.

CERC is also starting its own monthly periodicals, CONSUMER CONFRONTATION in English and GRAHAK SURAKSHA in Gujarati. The main objectives in bringing out its own periodicals are the greater need of a dialogue with the consumers and lack of any effective connecting link among consumer organisations in India.

MANUBHAI SHAH
Managing Trustee

Consumer Education and Research Centre,
Thakorebhai Desai Smarak Bhavan,
Near Law College, Ellis Bridge,
AHMEDABAD 380 006.

The Maratha Mandir, Bombay — An Introduction

The Maratha Mandir has nine organisations, each concerned with a particular social problem. Its primary function is the spread of education in order to free the country from religious and caste bigotry, blind faith, ignorance and poverty. It runs seven schools in Bombay and Sholapur for all castes and communities.

The total number of students receiving secondary education is about 5,000, most of them from lower middle class and working class categories. Inspite of this, students obtaining a high percentage at the S.S.C. examination is not unknown. Financial aid for higher education is also being given to brilliant students for continuing their education in India and abroad.

The **Abhyas Mandir** (Study Room) provides accommodation for poor and needy students to pursue their studies with the help of reference books. They are also provided with other kinds of guidance.

Progress includes the education and liberation of women from economic bondage. **Vanita Vishwa**, the women's branch of the Mandir, conducts the Home Science, Tailoring and Dancing classes for women. The **Sansar Shastra** or the Home Science unit has been in existence for 12 years and has conducted 27 courses helping 1500 women to earn Govt.-recognised certificates. This class receives an annual grant of Rs. 6,000 from the Bombay Municipal Corporation.

The **Nitya Bharati** or dancing class has trained women in the Kathak and Manipuri styles of Indian dancing. Admission is restricted as training is imparted on an individual basis.

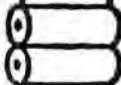
The **Kala Kendra** is the cultural and fine arts wing of the Mandir. It has been in existence for the past 15 years, promoting singers and actors on the Marathi stage. To encourage amateur talent it has held music competitions and given away cash prizes of over Rs. 20,000.00 over the past ten years.

The **Arogya Kendra** (Health Centre) is run by the Mandir with the co-operation of eminent medical specialists for consultation in gynaecology, ENT, Orthopaedic Surgery, Cardiology, etc. Related to this is the Family Planning Centre and people can take advantage of its facilities free of charge.

The **Pragati Sangh** provides training in social work. This branch also conducts seminars and lectures on topical subjects. It runs a book bank.

The **Bekari Nirodhan Sangh** is based on the assumption that it is the fundamental right of men and women to work. Unfortunately, some able-bodied men and women are starving and therefore are destitute. The Mandir has helped such people. It has also helped the needy and afflicted during times of famine and flood.

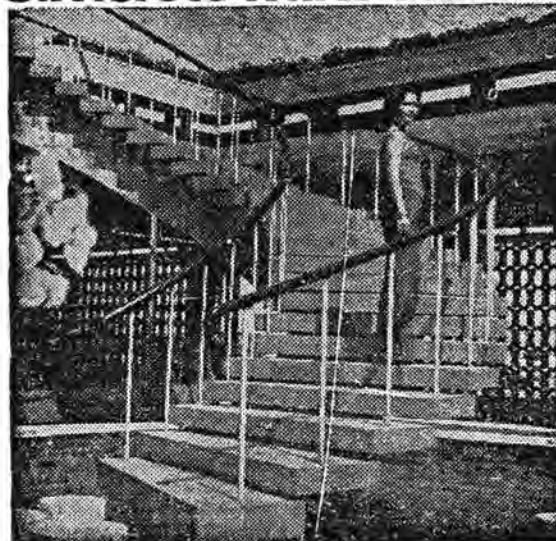
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