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Urban Teenage Violence — The Fallout of a Crumbling Educational Structure

R. Srinivasan, Louella Lobo Prabhu, P. L. Olatikar,
R. S. Morkhandikar, J. V. Deshpande, Will Durant

The Role of English

— K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar

Why So Much Corruption?

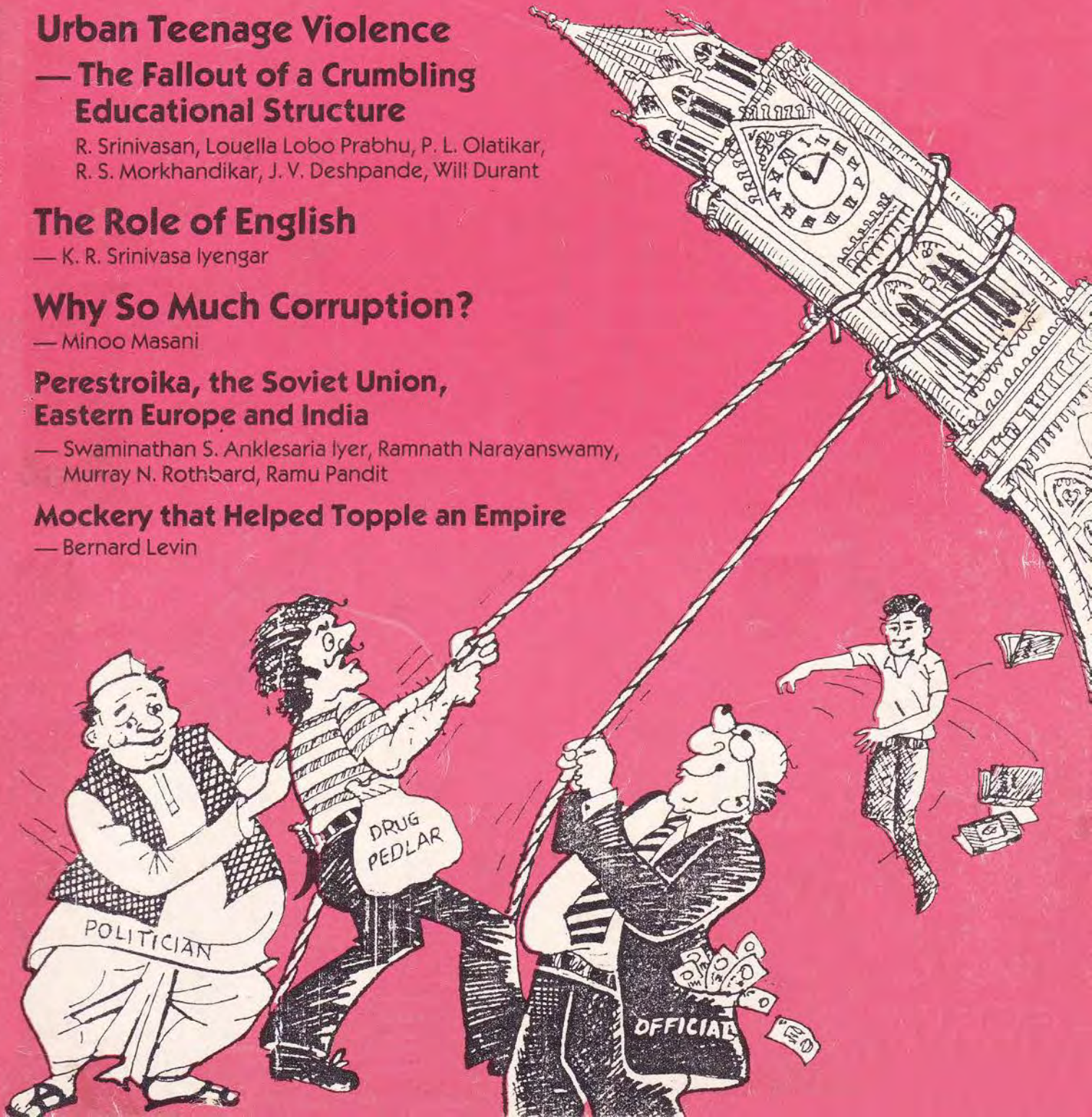
— Minoo Masani

Perestroika, the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and India

— Swaminathan S. Anklesaria Iyer, Ramnath Narayanswamy,
Murray N. Rothbard, Ramu Pandit

Mockery that Helped Topple an Empire

— Bernard Levin



Mehra Masani: A Personal Tribute

P.C. Chatterji

For those of us who joined ALL INDIA RADIO (AIR) in the days before independence, the passing away of Mehra Masani means the end of an epoch. A new medium of expression geared to all that is best in the intellectual and artistic world, Mehra Masani seemed to symbolize what radio stood for.

Highly educated with a masters degree from the London School of Economics, Mehra joined AIR as a Programme Assistant in Bombay in the late thirties. I came to know of her existence shortly after AIR occupied Broadcasting House on Parliament Street, New Delhi in August 1943. She used to stay at the Marina Hotel in Connaught Circus and in the winter months would walk down to office. I was a youngster of twentytwo in the news department, and cycling back home after the morning shift would stop for a minute or two to watch her walking briskly on the other side of the street. She was tall and elegant with a mop of thick black hair. And that is how she remained till the last ten years when arthritis started crippling her.

But I came to know Mehra Masani only after 1960. She had been selected as a Station Director in mid-1949 and a few months later as Director External Services where she stayed for well over a decade. Meanwhile I was out of Delhi till 1961 and it was then we started working together and I got to know her.

From her work in AIR I shall pick out a few of her most significant contributions.

Mehra was the first Director of the External Services Division which previously was a part of the News Services Division. While news and current affairs

programmes continued to be provided by the News Services Division, the remaining programmes were planned and presented by the new Division, in something like 25 languages. It was she who was responsible for working out the staff structure and programme content, which has remained largely constant ever since. It was she who laid the foundation of what is the backbone of the External Services, — The General Overseas Services in English — which is on the air for some 12 hours a day. Later, it was under her aegis that, through the work of Iqbal Malik, the Urdu Service, of equal length came into being. Ever since its operation it has commanded a massive audience both in Pakistan and in India. It is a strange and interesting fact that writers in Pakistan want to have their books, of prose and poetry, reviewed on AIR's Urdu Service. They find ingenious ways of getting their books across to AIR.

In 1965, when Indira Gandhi joined the Cabinet as Minister for Information and Broadcasting, there were hopes of change in AIR. We were overjoyed at Mehra's appointment as Member — Secretary of the Chanda Committee. It is not possible to single out the contribution of individual members to the joint report of a committee. But in the practical character of the report in pinning down problems, one can perceive her touch. Only an insider could have known where the shoe really pinches.

There is a document known as the Masani Committee Report, but even some ex-AIR persons who have mentioned it in recent newspaper articles do not know what it is about. It is a work study on AIR programme staff requirements, based on output. What, for example, are the number of programme executives/producers required to manage a given number of hours of music, drama etc. Prior to this report there were no criteria on which such matters were decided. The report attempted to provide standardized criteria. There was a lot of controversy within the department and with the Ministry of Finance, on the theoretical feasibility of working out such norms in respect of activity said to be *creative*. Nevertheless there is no doubt that some criteria are better than sheer *ad hocism*. Mehra's report has provided AIR's man-power requirements with a solid foundation, which few are aware of.

Mehra Masani then Deputy Director-General (DDG), was the first AIR official to be a Member of the Indian delegation to the UNESCO General Assembly in Paris in 1968. She served on several delegations to the ABU and Commonwealth Broadcasting conferences before she retired around 1970. Since then, her most notable contribution to broadcasting was her book entitled "Broadcasting and the People", published by the National Book Trust (NBT), during the period of the 'emergency'. The book reflects her interest in broadcasting as a tool for education, both general education and education for democracy. It was a courageous act to write such a book at that period and Dr. S. Gopal who was Chairman of the NBT deserves credit for publishing it. In his preface he strongly supported Masani's plea for an autonomous broadcasting set-up and for freedom of information. I am sorry that Gopal's preface was not included in the revised edition which appeared in 1984.

How was it that Mehra Masani did not make it to the top and sought early retirement as a DDG about a year before her time? When the first selection of Station Directors under the UPSC took place in 1949, she was placed first on the merit list. A few months later she was selected as Director of the External Services which was in a higher grade. Those who were third and fourth in the merit list below her, became DG in their turn but she went no further than DDG. With her colleagues and subordinates she had a great reputation for being clear headed and decisive. Her kindness and consideration for those who worked under her were proverbial. Only male chauvinism and intrigue can explain why she did not get further. But the wonder is that she never complained. I consider her one of the most generous and forgiving of persons I have ever known.

I saw her last in Devlali some six months ago. It was distressing to see how wasted she was. I recalled my picture of her fifty years ago. We grieve but it is better this way. She suffered greatly yet her courage was manifest in the manner in which she bore it — as in everything she ever did.

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COVER, ILLUSTRATIONS AND LAYOUT

M.G. Talwadekar

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An innocent girl who is writing her examination is torched to death by her disappointed 'lover' aided by a gang of thugs. Boys get together and gangrape a girl in the college premises and in spite of continuous public outcry the villain of the piece is yet to be brought to book. College boys plan a careful murder and get away with it for almost a year and the careful planning that went into the murder reads like a thriller. College canteens are not infrequently places where students are murdered in public view, and now increasing evidence emerges that most colleges have a sprinkling of criminal elements masquerading as students, thugs who are intimate with political leaders and who can do anything with impunity.

This is a development that has taken place during the last twenty-five years. Our institutions of higher education are no longer places that we generally associate as centres where young people besides studying have innocent fun too.

Those who have studied the problems of youth have argued that in adolescence it is natural for a sense of revolt to exhibit itself.

Great social movements such as the revolutions in France, Germany, in the Russia of the late 19th century found a number of young students 'acting irresponsibly' but carrying a mission across to the people. Similar has been the experience of students' movements in China, Japan, Burma, India and several other countries. They were the harbingers and heralds of a sense of social and political freedom.

But the present developments are far different and have nothing whatever to do with idealism or even youthful exuberance. They are criminal and anti-social.

We felt that amidst the deafening controversies and the violence in the Punjab or Kashmir or Assam, the dangerous implications of India's younger generation now in their teens or early twenties turning anti-social or being manipulated by anti-social elements and politicians, needed to be highlighted.

We present you with some views on what is and what ought to be done to tackle the problem.

We attach great importance to what is happening in the erstwhile communist empire. They seem to have learnt the right lessons while our 'leaders' are either too timid to publicly admit that India too needs to change direction or are too dense — continuing to mouth outdated beliefs that have been so unequivocally debunked in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

We bring you the views of experts who are competent to comment on this subject.

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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*

I have the habit of slapping people, but only those whom I consider my own.

Orissa Chief Minister Biju Patnaik, *India Week*, May 11

All modern Indians have two supreme enjoyments in life, which may be regarded as their only ones. These are earning money and nursing endless grievances.

Nirad Chaudhari, *Illustrated Weekly of India*, May 13

When the country voted for a change what they were hoping for (was) not some watered down version of the Congress (I).

Tavleen Singh, *Indian Express*, April 24

Whereas Marx once described the tsarist Russian empire as a prison of nations, and Stalin turned it into the graveyard of nations, under Gorbachev the Soviet empire is rapidly becoming the volcano of nations.

Zbigniew Brezezinski, *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1989-90

There is no point in building hydel projects, excavating dams or establishing industries if the country is going to be desertified.

RGK, *The Week*, June 24

Mrs. Thatcher's government looks today to be moving perilously close to that psephological bourn from which no government returns.

The Guardian, March 18

(Finance Minister) Dandavate should stop talking about a ceiling on debt and start talking about a ceiling on socialism beginning with public sector investment.

Jay Dubashi, *Sunday Observer*, June 16

Paying Rs. 20 a mango — or even Rs. 7 — is an index of the economy. It is a better index than what the officials in Delhi can cook up.

RGK, *The Week*, June 17

All over the world, 'enemies' are sitting down together across the negotiating table... Only India and Pakistan live in a world where John Foster Dulles and Joseph Stalin seem to be still alive.

Vinod Mehta, *Sunday*, June 24

If we can open up everything tomorrow, we'll go bankrupt overnight.

Commerce Minister Arun Nehru, *Sunday*, June 24

... over four decades of populism combined with half-baked socialism have created a hydra-headed infrastructure manned by an army of underemployed public servants — servants only in name — whose sole aim is to perpetuate controls.

Business World, June 20

It is time for both governments (in India and Pakistan) to give up the rhetoric of national honour and consider whether their nations can afford the wages of war.

Kingshuk Nag and Rajiv Shirali, *Business India*, May 14

When revolutions take place nowadays, like the one recently in Rumania, the first objective of the revolutionaries is not the presidential palace but the television or broadcasting station.

Rahul Singh, *Debonair*, June 1990

Though reports of communism's death may be exaggerated, nobody need doubt that the beast is dying.

The Economist, May 19

In Hong Kong, when people ask you where you are going to have your baby, they don't mean which hospital, they mean which country.

Frank Ching, *Newsweek*, May 28

The Epitome of Humility

And this snippet, though it dates back to a quarter century ago, is worth narrating as a proof of changing times. In the mid-60's when the present deputy minister for finance, Anil Shastri, entered college — on his own merit, it may be added — it was without mentioning any connections. A few months later, a clerk who was going through the applications discovered that the boy had put his address down as '10 Janpath'. Unable to contain his curiosity, he pulled out the form and perused it at length to see if the student did indeed reside at the prime ministerial quarters. And this was what had been entered on the form: Father's name: L B Shastri. Occupation: government service. The privileged progeny of today's so-called big men could take a lesson or two from the Shastris.

Illustrated Weekly of India, June 3

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



Three Cheers for Mrs. Gandhi

Of course I mean Maneka not Indira Gandhi. If anyone had, even a few months ago, suggested that *Freedom First* write in support of Maneka Gandhi I would have considered the very idea preposterous. But not any longer. Not after her visit to Bombay in May when she all but declared open war on those polluting the environment and destroying our ecology. True she is brash and needs to give up, or at least temper, the imperiousness of the Nehru clan — she was accused of publicly humiliating officials which was denied by Mr. Shyam Chainani an active Bombay environmentalist who was present at a meeting when the reported humiliation was administered.

The fact is her devotion to the cause of environmental pollution and her opposition to the Narmada and Tehri dams (by all accounts invitations to ecological disaster) have angered the politician-business nexus. After all large sums of money are involved — in crores of rupees. How can the beneficiaries of the permit-lucence Raj stand idly by when so much boodle is at stake!

So Maneka Gandhi had to be stopped. And she was — by the simple expedient of giving her a new boss who redefined her job parameters. She is now concerned only with the things like the Delhi Zoo and administering Water and Air Pollution Acts!

I am not for one moment suggesting that Mrs. Maneka Gandhi and her environmentalist supporters are a hundred percent right and those who oppose her a hundred percent wrong. Like all passionate believers in a cause she and her supporters may be exaggerating — up to a point. But what she was able to

achieve was to get those who couldn't care less for the social consequences of polluting the atmosphere or despoiling the ecology, to sit up and take notice that they no longer can get away with it.

Freedom First stands for a market economy. It stands for competition and minimum government. But it also stands for a strong government that enforces laws which protect the people's quality of life and their right to breathe clean air. Ultimately this is what the fight is all about.

A report in *Sunday* (June 17) noted she was cut down to size because she stepped on the toes of "many influential people she rubbed the wrong way to prove her point. She spared no effort to give her defunct ministry a definite shape sending terse summons to senior ministers".

Sin of sins, this last bit is just not done in a country where traditions have changed little since independence and wisdom is equated with old age.

Shame on you Mr. Prime Minister

SVR

Prof. Srinivasa Iyengar

We felicitate Professor K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar on being presented with the Kalidas Nag Memorial medallion in silver and gold at a function recently held in Madras. The Kalidas Nag Memorial Committee honoured itself when it decided to award Professor Iyengar the medallion named after the great savant the late Professor Kalidas Nag. It is characteristic of Professor Iyengar that the award of the honour should have been a private celebration with only friends and well-wishers being present. This is in striking contrast to the pres-

ent culture of a degenerate state where every minor event is disgraced by the presence of undeserving politicians. We join friends of Professor Iyengar in wishing him decades of quiet dedicated service to the cause of Indian tradition and culture and more books like the *Sitayana*. Also years and years of good health.

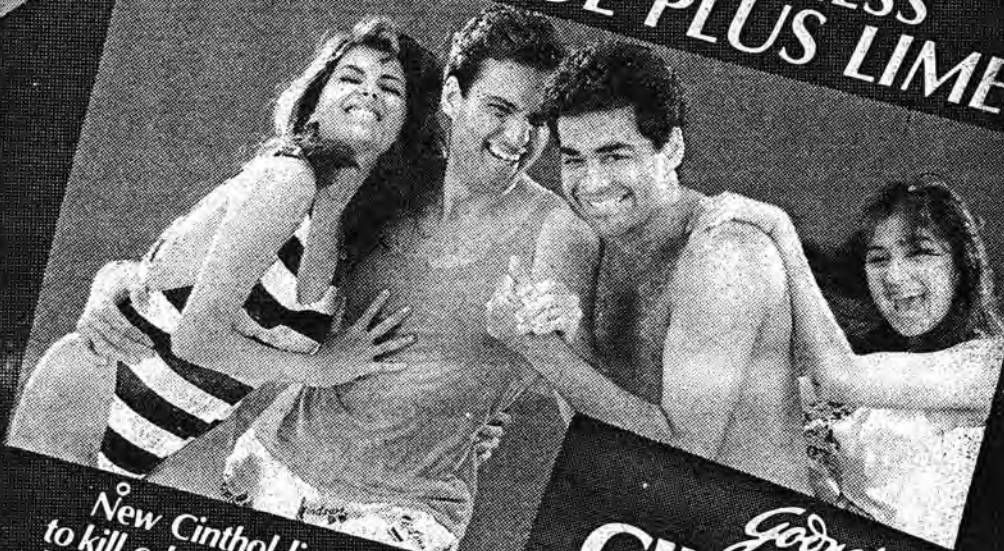
Bruno Bettelheim

With the passing away of Bruno Bettelheim we have been rendered poorer intellectually. His books were read eagerly and whether it be on the world-view of children; the importance of fairy tales for the growth of the mind; the savagery of the concentration camps; or of growing up in Kibbutzes, he always wrote with great insight. His life-style was a testament to the triumph of the spirit over the barbarism he experienced in the nightmarish days of the 1930s. He was something of a guru to the countless who knew him only through his books. Unlike E. Fromm who lighted up many a mind Bettelheim offered no ideological solutions. However one could always turn to his writings and never be disappointed by what he offered. He would have thoroughly disapproved of the observation made in these pages regarding the dark influence of TV. In fact, his last book of recollections does have some heartening things to say about the impact of the media. But the experiences he underwent during the days of that raging madman Hitler were to leave a permanent scar — once again testifying how fragile human intelligence and reason are against the impact of organised barbarism.

RS

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Degeneration of Higher Education

— The Roots of Student Unrest

R. Srinivasan

An earlier generation of college-going students came from family backgrounds that stressed the importance of discipline, hard work and the need to keep to the narrow and strait path. But now we have a situation where the desire to send children to college is universal whether they are fit to be in college or not.

*The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned.*

Is there a connection between urban teenage violence and college education? Do we tend to see more inter-connections than are warranted by facts?

In analysing the spread of violence among teenagers in urban India it would be useful to view the social dimensions of violence in general and the violence in colleges and institutions of higher learning in particular.

We live in an age where violence is part of national and international politics. Whether it is Iraq, Iran, China, the Latin American nations or Africa, what we are witnessing is mindless violence. We have seen political leaders get away with murder.

Within India too, violence has become a way of life with little or no effort at controlling the scourge. Reports in newspapers of communal and caste violence, violence in public places, at party meetings, among Youth Congress members and among youth delegations that go abroad have become so commonplace that we are no longer driven to anger let alone anguish.

Our media, particularly commercial cinema and TV play upon violence and sex in highly suggestive detail leaving their impression on the viewers. Outside the cinema hall or the small screen they are again exposed to excesses of sex and violence in the real world which reflect TV or movie violence. It does not take much to transform our young people from spectators to actors.

The people's indifference to violent happenings has dangerous implications. Watched on TV and on video screens in most urban homes, often by the entire family seated together, vio-

lence appears to have acquired legitimacy. Symbolic violence has entered into our lives and consciousness. If all parents were to consciously switch off their sets (an almost impossible thing) there would be a definite improvement in attitudes towards violence.

Decline of the Family

The media should therefore be regarded as villain number one. An equally important factor is the total demoralisation of family discipline. Most parents have lost the capacity to instil in their children basic moral values. All of us have apparently become soft not only towards our children but also to ourselves. A family means several things and discipline is one among the values that a family ought to inculcate. Along with the decline of religion, the decline of a sense of discipline (I am not talking of mindless, stern, paternal authoritarianism) has been an important factor in corroding the sense of values among our youth.

Also, we do not stress enough the need to work hard, discipline oneself and deny oneself small pleasures in order to reach important goals. All of us want of our children to succeed; it does not matter if they don't have it within them to succeed. We want them to do brilliantly at the examination, even if it means greasing the palms of those concerned or get them entry into prestigious courses even if it means resorting to questionable means. And our children learn the lessons eagerly, quickly and to devastating ends. Parents and elders have totally failed to foster moral values, first, by not living the moral life (since most of them engage in fiddles big and small); in thoughtlessly advocating and advancing material

success by whatever means; and by not taking seriously lapses in the moral behaviour of their wards.

An earlier generation of college-going students came from family backgrounds that stressed the importance of discipline, hard work and the need to keep to the narrow and strait path. But now we have a situation where the desire to send children to college is universal whether they are fit to be in college or not. Coming from environments that are far from conducive to study, they crowd the classrooms and find the atmosphere congenial, not for study and discipline but to seek quick ways to "succeed" academically. They are not used to reading books, they have no privacy at home to study, their parents think that they have done well if they somehow manage to send their children to college. These are among several factors that have contributed to a sense of academic unsettlement and to a collapse of educational values. Other developments have acted as catalysts.

Two Novels

Two novels dealing with educational institutions are very revealing about the sociology of Indian higher education. In the early sixties a novel was published in Kannada called *College Ranga*. In this hilarious piece, Dr B.G.L. Swamy, the Principal of a government college in Tamil Nadu wrote from immediate experience of how a premier educational institution of Asia was transformed to the level of a zilla parishad high school. It was the work of party zealots and an administration that connived at corruption and promoted a xenophobic attitude among the students, faculty and the administration. The novel however ends on an optimistic note with a deter-

mined Principal able to reduce everyone to submission and repentance. Academic excellence, integrity and grit ultimately win over skullduggery, scam and dirty politics involving students.

A quarter of a century later, another novel in Marathi, *Bonsai* by Subhas Bhende traverses similar ground. This time it is a university in Maharashtra. Here, politics, corruption, nepotism, the looting of public money and a network of intriguing academic buccaneers from the Vice-Chancellor down to the

college authorities packing all institutions with their nominees, twist every rule and corrupt every act, bye-law and regulation of the university. But the optimism of the earlier novel is missing. Instead, academic excellence, integrity and grit ultimately find their Waterloo — with the most determined lecturer compelled to become a henchman-Registrar of the crooked establishment.

This tragic transformation so unforgettably described in the novel is also

an elegy on higher education in India. The lesson: Students in the context of a corrupt academic administration will turn crooks and if some continue to be decent it is indeed a miracle.

Educational Degeneration

Both novels describe the transformation of educational institutions into something very different from what they were a few decades ago. Started by educational idealists who wanted social transformation through education today, most of them are controlled by unscrupulous politicians with high connections who see in them yet another means of patronage and raking in money. Institutions of higher learning have become nests of corruption. In fact not a leaf in a college will stir unless the patron nods.

It has been reported that the groups of colleges of education started in Marathwada by relatives of an ex-chief minister made the same quantum of money as was tucked away by the Indira Gandhi Pratibha Pratishthan — reportedly around Rs. 3.5 crores. The various colleges of technology started by politicians are shameful monuments to their venality — those who turn a cowshed or a stable into a college of engineering and feather their nests in the bargain. Not to be outdone, Principals of colleges are eager to sell college lands and make a fast rupee. Heads of departments of universities spirit away Universities' scientific instruments to their own premises to promote their businesses and vice-chancellors have been caught authorising false expense accounts by faculty. One vice-chancellor, in a reminiscent mood, talked at a meeting open to the public that he lived a virtuous life during his travel in the United States because he was with his wife! Degeneration of education has never sunk so low.

Enter the Politician

Even if politicians do not directly control colleges, local political influentials (very often a euphemism for thugs) seek to exercise control over admissions. They sponsor a candidate — usually a political aide or one who is totally incapable of making an entry to a college — and insist upon his being admitted. They can visit violence upon the person of the Principal or can create an extremely unpleasant situation. They can foment and instigate trouble. Very often 'students' who have failed in col-

The Character of the Young

Aristotle

Young men have strong passions, and tend to gratify them indiscriminately. Of the bodily desires, it is the sexual by which they are most swayed and in which they show absence of self-control. They are changeable and fickle in their desires, which are violent while they last, but quickly over: their impulses are keen but not deep-rooted, and are like sick people's attacks of hunger and thirst. They are hot-tempered and quick-tempered, and apt to give way to their anger; bad temper often gets the better of them, for owing to their love of honour they cannot bear being slighted, and are indignant if they imagine themselves unfairly treated. While they love honour, they love victory still more; for youth is eager for superiority over others, and victory is one form of this. They love both more than they love money, which indeed they love very little, not having yet learnt what it means to be without it — this is the point of Pittacus' remark about Amphiarus. They look at the good side rather than the bad, not having yet witnessed many instances of wickedness. They trust others readily, because they have not yet often been cheated. They are sanguine; nature warms their blood as though with excess of wine; and besides that, they have as yet met with few disappointments. Their lives are mainly spent not in memory but in expectation; for expectation refers to the future, memory to the past, and youth has a long future before it and a short past behind it: on the first day of one's life one has nothing at all to remember, and can only look forward. They are easily cheated, owing to the sanguine disposition just mentioned. Their hot tempers and hopeful dispositions make them more courageous than older men are; the hot temper prevents fear, and the hopeful disposition creates

confidence; we cannot feel fear so long as we are feeling angry, and any expectation of good makes us confident. They are shy, accepting the rules of society in which they have been trained, and not yet believing in any other standard of honour. They have exalted notions, because they have not yet been humbled by life or learnt its necessary limitations; moreover, their hopeful disposition makes them think themselves equal to great things — and that means having exalted notions. They would always rather do noble deeds than useful ones; their lives are regulated more by moral feeling than by reasoning; and whereas reasoning leads us to choose what is useful, moral goodness leads us to choose what is noble. They are fonder of their friends, intimates, and companions than older men are, because they like spending their days in the company of others, and have not yet come to value either their friends or anything else by their usefulness to themselves. All their mistakes are in the direction of doing things excessively and vehemently. They disobey Chilon's precept by overdoing everything; they love too much and hate too much, and the same with everything else. They think they know everything, and are always quite sure about it; this, in fact, is why they overdo everything. If they do wrong to others, it is because they mean to insult them, not to do them actual harm. They are ready to pity others, because they think everyone an honest man, or anyhow better than he is: they judge their neighbour by their own harmless natures, and so cannot think he deserves to be treated in that way. They are fond of fun and therefore witty, wit being well-bred insolence.

Aristotle — Selections: edited by W.D. Ross

lege examinations use these toughs to get their answer papers marked up and instances have not been wanting when responsible members of the college have been beaten up in full public view.

These are bad enough, but direct politicization of colleges where party goons penetrate into the unions has done much to debase college elections. In Tamil Nadu the extent of penetration is to be seen to be believed. Both the wings of the DMK and the AIADMK seek to control college students' bodies and elections to these resemble a mini-state election with lavish spending. For votes the candidates would do anything by way of bribes, including screening of hard porno videos in college hostels. Processions, banners, guzzling of liquor are all in the game. Is it surprising that colleges in Tamil Nadu have not produced even a single student who has achieved scholastic excellence during the last three decades?

In such an atmosphere it is natural that violence should be widespread in colleges. What is surprising is that it is still so restricted.

Conditions in Colleges

The administration of most of our colleges leads to situations conducive to the outbreak of violence. First, the problem of space. There are too many people congested in too small an area which necessarily will lead to conflicts and quarrels. Colleges designed for a thousand students now have more than three thousand. Facilities such as sports grounds, large common rooms, open spaces for students to get together are almost non-existent.

Another factor that is unique about our colleges is that the very openness of the institutions has allowed outside lumpen elements to enter the premises of the college and create disturbance. Local thugs-in-the-making who have nothing to do with a college are often to be found in or around colleges getting away with teasing girls, itching for a fight and terrorizing watchmen. Almost every college has its quota of these elements. Interestingly these types are not difficult to deal with if one had the will. There are instances of determined Principals who took courage in their hands and successfully drove these pests away for good — at least during their tenure in office.

Election Expenses in a College Election

What exactly do candidates spend money on? The following is a break-up of a candidate's (contesting the chairman's post) expenses:

Stationery and postal charges:	Rs. 5,000
Gifts:	Rs. 12,000
Visiting cards, pamphlets, posters:	Rs. 5,000
For buying up two rival candidates:	Rs. 6,000
Liquor and Blue Films:	Rs. 4,000
Travelling, celebratory fireworks etc:	Rs. 4,000
Refreshments, food:	Rs. 8,000
Parties after winning:	Rs. 5,000
Total:	Rs. 45,000

Aside, September 1990

With such large numbers of students, examinations and invigilation have turned into one big farce. Copying and cheating at examinations on a colossal scale is almost the norm. The determination and careful planning with which this is done is often baffling and surprising. Supervision is not as strict as it ought to be and threats are enough to drive away the invigilator. In quite a few colleges, the Principals are known to have let off the guilty and the dutiful invigilator made to look foolish.

The best lack all conviction, while the worst

Are full of passionate intensity.

With such elements in educational institutions, it is only natural that violence should have become a part of college establishments. With a dedicated team of professors in colleges, it could at least be rendered shame-faced. But with the faculty in most colleges totally devoid of interest in teaching, let alone conviction, it is hardly surprising that the rotten elements have become brazen in their contempt for the 'egg heads'.

The Faculty and Extra Curricular Activities

In inverse proportion to the explosion in the numbers of students is the sad depletion in the number of dedicated teachers entering the profession. The recent hike in salaries has not attracted the best but the second-best. Often the worst elements have flocked to the por-

tals. The cleverest among them make the college a base for extra income by moonlighting, thus cutting into the time and attention that is legitimately due to the institution employing them.

Teachers staffing the colleges has been one of the persistent problems of higher education in our country. But a mix of the bad and the good compensated the negative elements that might have otherwise dominated the system. Even the indifferent teacher earlier was not publicly cynical of educational excellence. However with some exceptions, the position today is exactly the reverse.

Lack of interest in things intellectual and academic, an obfuscatory and myopic attitude towards educational matters, totally inadequate class room preparation, a paranoia regarding the reading of books and a reluctance to meet students has made our universities and colleges what Oxford was in the 18th century. Gibbon described the fourteen months spent at Magdalen College "the most idle and unprofitable (months) of my whole life". An unworthy faculty has rendered the classroom a farce. The student can easily miss all the lectures and acquit himself excellently in the examinations.

College "Annuals" were once occasions when students put forward items combining both enthusiasm and horse play and at the same time rowdy elements were kept under control. This was decades ago. Now these are events that are dreaded by the college staff and demonstrate the total breakdown of corporate college values with goon-daim invariably taking over.

While there have been no educational experiments, a number of inanities have gathered strength. Every college has days like Rose Day — where girls are presented with roses; ethnic day — where everyone comes to the college attired in any way he fancies; saree day — where all the girls put on sarees etc. These pre-occupations which should perhaps have been in the lower classes in schools are indulged in with seriousness by college-going youth. And the faculty is helpless to stop these idiocies.

Solutions

Can the situation be saved? Can we bring back to the colleges the old days when violence in the campuses was unknown? Not for the next fifteen to twenty years, till the faculties now on

their rolls retire; not until we ensure that admissions are restricted and numbers in colleges are reduced to one-third of their present enrolment; not until we introduce disincentives for sending children to college, for instance, by a very steep hike in fee which would make a parent think twice before sending his child to college. This should however be accompanied by generous scholarships to the deserving. The benefits of

college education are available too easily. Once a parent pays a packet for his child's education he will demand quality education, but not with the chicken feed that he pays at present as fees. Colleges should discourage the less deserving and encourage them to opt for distance education.

Parents also cannot absolve themselves of their responsibilities. The

reform should begin at home. The child should be brought up with a sense of discipline and, in an ethos that respects hard work, not one where the craving is for material comforts, sensual indulgence and mindless consumerism.

Dr. R. SRINIVASAN, Editor, *Freedom First* is retired Professor of Politics, Bombay University

Teen Violence and Juvenile Delinquency

Louella Lobo Prabhu

A young girl burnt alive while taking her school-leaving examination; an invigilator stabbed to death for penalising a student caught cheating; a rape in the hallowed premises of an ancient college; the murder, by a youth gang, of a friend's mother — and the theft of her valuables — sound like instances of "phoren" teen violence. They all took place in India, over the past few months!

Chapter II, Page 386 of James Coleman's tome on abnormal behaviour opens thus: "Delinquency refers to behaviour by youths under 18 years of age, which is not acceptable to society, and is generally regarded as calling for some kind of punishment, admonition or corrective action. Thus delinquency may range from truancy, incorrigibility, and the use of illegal drugs, to homicide and other serious offences." Whereas a physiologist, or an anatomist would dwell on the physical and hormonal changes of puberty, creating an "endogamous" state of unrest, Coleman traces the psychopathology of delinquency. Brain damage and mental retardation is a minimal causative factor (though in the Indian context, one can imagine the simpleton being put to nefarious uses by the mafia of the underworld!). Neuroses and psychoses account for individual acts of delinquency, in varying degrees — the former leading to mildly deviant behaviour, the latter to severe outbursts of erratic behaviour, which eventually, and almost invariably, bring the person into conflict with the law. These two, according to Coleman, are climaxed by the psychopathic personality, (who, since he lacks the elementary conscience with which most human beings are born), is most

difficult to correct. There is little hope of redemption for such a person. He hurts himself, fatally, and society too. Coleman also explores pathogenic family patterns; parental rejection and faulty discipline; undesirable peer relationships, and general socio-cultural factors. Although his definitive text-book is based largely on American models, much of what he says is applicable with some differences to India as well.

An Urban Preponderance in India

Judging from Indian newspaper reports, it is an urban rather than a rural phenomenon in the psychopathological sense. Two causative factors prominent in cities, may be absent in rural areas. The first, is the relative lack of big and small screen incitement to violence; second, the likelihood that in rural households (except where the *paterfamilias* works in a neighbouring or distant town), families may be more closely knit, having a strong community life, as a further emotional support. However, the fact of a family being intact, does not necessarily guarantee that interpersonal relationships are good. Sans overmuch education, the father would be a very dominant male, and if he is absent from the scene, the mother would be a similarly formidable

matriarch. However, one may hazard a guess that rural teen violence, where it occurs, is more likely to have an economic or caste basis, probably over land or women, when youths of the upper caste clash with *dalits* over either of the above emotive issues.

Indian Women: Victims Not Instigators

One finding of Coleman, not borne out by the Indian experience, is that women in India are generally the objects of violence, juvenile or adult, the latter not excluding bride-burning mothers-in-law. In the United States, Coleman opined that increasing numbers of girls were involved in delinquency. Generally, theirs is a drift into prostitution, as an adjunct in support of a drug habit. In India, however, while the out-of-town girl may come to a city in search of work, or the glamour of a film job, few girls take the initiative to run away from home. Either from rural or urban areas, they are usually victims of the fate that overtakes them, rarely active initiators in delinquent aberrations. The upper class girl may be an exception, as the very rich, everywhere, tend to be above the norms of middle class morality, just as the very poor, may be below it!

No Economic Parameters!

One may concur with his finding that juvenile delinquency is not confined to a particular economic group. Delinquent behaviour may have different causes: but it cuts across all economic strata. The street urchin, of the sort portrayed by Meera Nair, in "Salaam Bombay", consumes or peddles drugs, to relieve the pangs of poverty, which only allow escape into a dream world. The rich do it, mainly for "kicks", when the gratification of every wish — without having to work for it — induces *ennui* which can only be satisfied by more and more bizarre behaviour.

Effect of the Media

The socio-cultural factors mentioned by Coleman are as applicable to India, as to the U.S.A. On-screen violence, to which even the very young are exposed, de-sensitizes them to the value of human life. In India, Amitabh Bachchan, "Sholay", and the cult of the anti-hero, sanctioned aberrant behaviour as an approved mode of conduct. The *Mahabharata* has led to various young people hurting their eyes with arrows. From another point of view, even government media in India devalues human life, as daily reports of terrorist killings in the Punjab or Kashmir reduce individual human beings to mere statistics, which naturally fail to register.

Perverted Role Models

Coleman does mention "peer pressure", to which he gives a bald paragraph. Street gangs with territories of their own may not be unknown to India's metropolitan cities. Their patterns of behaviour in the U.S. are brilliantly illuminated by the musical "West Side Story". They do however exist very markedly, at college and university levels. Though Soviet Russia has the Komsomol, and Britain, the Young Conservatives wing of the Conservative Party, India is unique at least among democratic countries. All political parties infiltrate the campus of major colleges and universities, funding their candidates standing for election. They turn, what should be an election wholly on issues before the student body, to a political verdict on the dominant political parties in the area.

While no political party can claim absolutely clean hands in this regard, the National Students Union of India

(NSUI) or the Youth Congress has a record of sorts in the matter of unruly behaviour. The incidents at the Nagpur session and in North Korea, exhibit the youth "culture" fostered by our national parties. When a national party also happens to be a ruling party either at the Centre, or in a state, its members tend to think they are above the law. Their offences are handled with kid gloves by the police. (It was alleged but never proved that the late Sanjay Gandhi was involved in a car stealing spree, along with the sons of senior government secretaries). But it is from these cadres, that our future leaders are made. (Had he lived, Sanjay Gandhi would undoubtedly have been a Prime Minister!) The damage done by the politics-teen-violence nexus, is, that politics is perceived by people as the high point of success, and membership, possibly, even of a Municipal Corporation, as a more desirable objective than even the winning of the Nobel Prize! When politicians are sanctified, despite their known anti-social origins, the role models of the young are thoroughly perverted.

The Media

It is easier to analyse a problem than to devise solutions. Nothing can be done for the psychopath. But something can be done for teens with personality neuroses, psychoses, or drug addiction, if parents, at least of the affluent sort, are watchful. Drug-taking in particular, leaves symptoms which the parent should know and act upon, seeking professional counselling, if necessary.

T.V. has recently been used to propagate birth control, and to better the status of the female child (the latter an excellent and imaginative public education campaign). It could be used to familiarise parents with the tell-tale signs of drug addiction, for which they need to watch.

Inculcating Values

Educators at all levels, especially in snob schools and colleges, should not merely teach academic curriculae but values. In the Mangalore University an excellent moral science course, carefully worked out on non-denominational lines, was shot down by the then Academic Council. It is desirable that colleges have such classes, or counselling. Of course, only the more elite schools and colleges can afford this luxury. But

where they can, they should. Moral science is also taught vicariously, when these institutions and universities choose their Chief Guests for college functions and their recipients of *Honoris Causa*. In this area of selection, in India, it is well known that many ambitious politicians buy their Doctorates and, in some cases, their *Honoris Causa*. However, even so revered an institution as Oxford, or Cambridge, is not above the politicisation of *Honoris Causa* in which even Indira Gandhi figured, though she could not make it past the Oxbridge passing standard as a student. The "Yes Prime Minister" series, throws further light on the cynicism with which even the Oxbridge establishment tailors its academic honours to win reciprocal favours from politicians or high officials, like Sir Humphrey. The difference may be that this tribe in the West may at least feel honour bound, to keep commitments made.

The damage done by the politics-teen violence nexus is that politics is perceived by people as the high point of success and membership even of a Municipal Corporation as a more desirable objective than even the winning of the Nobel Prize.

If it seems that this article has gone off track on the author's hobby horse, it is because educational institutions are our crucibles for a better tomorrow, and it is saddening that educators set an example of crassly commercial values. For the College Day of any noted college, the Principal and governing body meeting to decide on a Chief Guest, will almost invariably choose a politician irrespective of his reputation, in the fond hope that "those in brief authority", can get something done for the institution. Under our conditions, it is unlikely that they will remain in office for long. It is seldom that politicians keep their promises, anyway! Why do not educational institutions leave this tribe alone, and honour outstanding scholars, scientists, and artists, putting before their

*"WE MUST REBUILD
OUR LOST ARISTOCRACY,
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CHARACTER"*

Rajaji



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students, a sense of values not based entirely on material success?

A Role for the State

The State needs to fund child and juvenile welfare much more generously than it has done. It also needs to change the implementation of its laws. Sheila Barse, found, for example, that many children under trial, were held in detention for longer than they would have been had they been tried and convicted! An undertrial in a common gaol; a child sent to a badly-run delinquent home, is criminal-material in the making. As funds are obviously limited, the emphasis should be on parole. Where there is a delinquent home, and its facilities are inadequate, officials could enlist the help of townfolk in helping to rehabilitate a child. There are many, lonely older people, who would be glad to visit a child; have it home once or twice a week, and do other little acts of guidance — short of adoption. As the experiment of "Boys Town" showed, given a chance there is no child who cannot be rehabilitated.

As the manifestations of anti-social behaviour take various specific forms, like the use of drugs, these known areas of activity should be the focus of State

funding. It has already been mentioned that TV can be enlisted for upper class parents to recognise the symptoms. But this deals with a small segment of society. The campaign can reach lower income groups if health workers address the senior classes in schools and colleges on the evils of drug-taking. Such programmes can be carried out enlisting a private organisation (as government and the Hind Kusht Nivaran Sangh combine to spread awareness about leprosy) for maximum efficacy. The State needs to run many more rehabilitation programmes, or to assist organisations which are already in the field of rehabilitating alcoholics; drug-abusers, and the mentally ill, with a stipulation that such funds should be targeted towards the young, if the funds come from the Ministry of Youth Welfare.

Psychiatric Facilities

Unlike the U.S. where having a personal psychiatrist is a symbol of having "arrived", India is still in the dark ages as far as mental health is concerned. Our big cities boast of numerous super-specialities, but have inadequate psychiatric facilities — The psychiatric departments of public hospitals, and

even national institutions like Niemhans are overcrowded and under-equipped. ECT is the easiest mode of dealing with the mentally ill, many of whom rot, because no one comes to take them away. Psychiatric residencies; psychiatric nursing specialisation, better equipment and drugs for mental institutions and hospital departments need a high priority in the health-budgeting of the Centre and the states, with co-ordination between the Departments of Health and Youth Welfare.

The task of guidance (prevention) and rehabilitation (cure) are both mind-boggling. But if public and private effort could go hand in hand, we can still save our most precious national asset: the youth!

MRS. LOUELLA LOBO PRABHU is Associate Editor, *Insight* and a regular contributor to *Freedom First*.

Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life by James B. Coleman is perhaps the most widely read text book used by students of the subject as a formal discipline, as also by interested lay persons. Its chapter on delinquency thus provided a useful skeleton structure for the fleshing-out of this article. LLP.

Turmoil in the Campus

P. L. Olatikar

We must keep in mind the fact that the student community is very much a part of society. As such it cannot be entirely free from the virtues and vices affecting that society which are reflected in the student community so well. Hence howsoever disgusting or disturbing the behaviour of these youngsters might appear to us, we should not shut our eyes to the fact that the stage has already been set for them by the elders.

We are passing through a critical situation. Hundreds of innocent and helpless citizens are becoming victims of unprecedented violence in different parts of the country as in the Punjab, Kashmir and Assam. This organised and prolonged violence has posed a serious challenge to the unity and integrity of our nation.

One more type of violence has raised its ugly head in recent years. This violence is not organised. It has not posed any problem to the unity and integrity of our nation. But it certainly has become

a serious threat to the health and well-being of our society. This violence is perpetrated by the misguided or rather unguided youngsters. Sometimes a solitary teenager passionately commits violence, unmindful of its consequences. Sometimes a few teenagers jointly perpetrate this violence in search of their objective. At times a Rinku Patil from Ulhasnagar or a Mangala Tikode from Ichalkaranji becomes the victim of such teenage violence. Occasionally teachers from schools and colleges preventing students from resorting to

unfair means are made the targets. Students throttling the necks of each other in college elections is not uncommon. They do not even hesitate to damage school and college property. Normally, it may be a challenge to authority and law enforcement agencies. But it is a matter of grave concern for those involved with education as many of these teenagers are students studying in Junior and Degree colleges.

We must keep in mind the fact that the student community is very much a part and parcel of the rest of society. As

such it cannot be entirely free from the virtues and vices affecting that society which are reflected in the student community so well. In addition, these teenagers are emotional, sentimental and have the tendency to imitate the elders who often chart their paths in advance and youngsters tread on them. Hence, howsoever disgusting or disturbing the behaviour of these youngsters might appear to us, we should not shut our eyes to the fact that the stage has already been set for them by the elders. We are shocked because we do not want to see the young ruined. But their behaviour is only an outward symptom of a disease which has already found a shelter in the body of our society. The disease shows its presence in different forms and at different levels. If we wish to cure the disease we must carefully try to understand its real nature, its causes and then try to lay down certain prescriptions. *Ad hoc*, superficial and patchwork measures will not be of much help.

A Determined Minority

Let us not, at the same time, magnify the problem. The number of students resorting to violence is still a microscopic minority. The large majority of students do not subscribe to violence. Nevertheless it would be foolish if we do not pay serious attention to this problem merely because only a small section of the student community is involved. This microscopic minority has the strength to shake the very foundations of our society. It has the potential to intimidate the innocent and even, one day, seduce peace-loving students and citizens if not checked in time.

Contributing Factors

What could be the reasons behind this phenomenon? Some reasons like uncertainty about the future and its resultant frustration, fear of unemployment, the effect of entertainment media like Cinema and T.V., the absence of high ideals could be mentioned. The violence depicted in the Cinema has almost reached optimum level. A movie without its component of violence has become a rarity. To our film producers violence and sex are the ingredients that ensure success at the box-office. The grip of this media over Indian society can hardly be overestimated. Thoughtful and proper use of this media can go a long way in moulding and shaping the social mind. Unfortu-

nately this has not received the serious attention it deserves. We should not be surprised and shocked if impressionable young minds, taking a clue from this powerful media, accept those methods to settle accounts. After the gruesome murder of Rinku Patil in Ulhasnagar, I recall a police officer quoting a cinema picture in which a similar type of murder was shown.

Ideals of character have become very rare these days. Practically all aspects of our social life have come under the shadow of politicians who capture political power and try to maintain it adopting unscrupulous means. Unfortunately our political leadership has gained tremendous importance in our social life out of all proportion to their contribution to society. The lure of political power and its attendant benefits dazzle the vision of our younger generation. The tendency is to regard all means as honourable in achieving one's goal. In this background the compensating presence of high ideals of character is absolutely essential for youngsters and teenagers who could shape their lives taking inspiration from them. Its absence creates a vacuum in the life of the young and which is filled by unhealthy tendencies.

The Importance of the Home

One more phenomenon responsible for the derailment of our youngsters is the decline of the institution known as the "Home". This institution "Home" was the cornerstone of our society for many centuries. At all stages of human development the "Home" shaped and trained the life and thinking of people. It made a person a useful and contributing member of society. All those virtues essential for building up a good and healthy social life were inculcated in him by this institution. Unfortunately, it is crumbling today. There could be many reasons for its decline in the context of our fast changing social life. But the leaders of society and the intelligentsia as a whole have missed the significance and totally neglected the permanent utility of the Home or Family. A major cause behind its decline is the wrong and self-destructive ideas about the concept of individual liberty. The very idea of the individual as a useful factor of society has collapsed. Is real individual liberty sacrificed by an individual if he becomes a socially useful entity?

The Politician-Student Nexus

The nexus between politicians and students is ancient and well known. Youth seem to be naturally attracted to the excitement of politics, and political parties use this to mould opinion in their favour and to gather volunteers in their ranks — a phenomenon that is as common in China as it is in Paraguay and as applicable to the times of Socrates as it is now. In Tamil Nadu itself, thousands of hot-blooded young adults joined the Quit India movement, the excitement and danger of those times only fuelling their enthusiasm, and later, after Independence, an equal number joined the Dravidian movement. Politicians and students seem to complement each other perfectly, when you come to think of it. Each supplies a need which the other fulfils. The student craves idealism, the charisma of a leader and the fireworks of political activism. For the politician or the political movement he belongs to, the young adult, the flower of society, symbolises everything desirable in a follower: energy, enthusiasm, blind devotion and the sheer power of youth. "But young people do not set a political trend, they merely follow it," commented a senior political writer. That is the problem with student politics in our country today. I don't think we can compare the students of today with those who took part in the Independence struggle or the early Dravidian movement. Consider the giants who led them in those days have we anyone comparable now? As are the leaders so the followers. Politics has become a mockery of idealism today, a professional exercise in self-promotion and power mongering. The degeneration of our political system is invariably reflected in the political behaviour of our youth. Politics is a natural activity for youth. The problem is, what kind of politics? The brand that our students follow today is that of corruption, ignorance and violence. *That is the real problem.*

Aside, September 1989

One other widespread phenomenon is the tendency to shirk off our primary duties and responsibilities. No wonder it affects the immature minds of the student community. They also start neglecting their duty of concentrating on studies. They resort to unfair means to get through the examination and towards this end some of them do not hesitate even to adopt violent means.

Collapse of Confidence

Uncertainty about the future, fear of unemployment and the resultant frustration are making our younger generation feel very insecure. They have lost faith in the system. This is the crisis of faith or trust, that our student community is facing today. It is high time that we take our student community out of this whirlpool of distrust. We must try to create in our youth a sense of trust and confidence in the future and this will need continuous and consistent efforts on the part of those concerned and more so the parents and teachers with whom the students have constant interaction.

This interaction is important. Proper and healthy interaction will help to generate trust and confidence in their wards. Most parents are under the impression that once they provide for their fees, books, pocket money etc. their job is over. This attitude is suicidal. Parents should try to discuss with their wards in a friendly and affectionate manner their problems. An atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence needs to be created, so that their wards will have the confidence to share their problems with them.

Insofar as, the student-teacher relationship is concerned the picture is very dismal. The student does not attend college for months together nor does he appear for college tests or examinations. Parents are generally in the dark about what their children are doing or not doing. This has been the experience of students coming from well-to-do families. I know the case of a student from a middle class family who forged his marksheet and came for admission with his parents. They did not know anything about it. In fact they had not even bothered to see the marksheet of their ward! When students admitted to colleges are neglected to this extent, no wonder education and knowledge are debarred from their lives.



A Sense of Duty

A good and healthy interaction between teachers and students will also go a long way in arresting this vicious trend. Too much emphasis on class room teaching has blurred our vision and perspective. We do not seem to believe that the teacher has a role to play in shaping and moulding the life and character of the student community. The teacher's unflinching loyalty towards his profession, his passion for knowledge, the efforts he makes to carry that knowledge to the students, his thinking, his behaviour and his dealings with students, all these deeply influence the student's mind and intellect. It has been the age-old objective of educational institutions to see that along with education in a particular discipline, the student is also shaped to be a useful member of society. Unfortunately this objective is sidetracked and success in the examination has remained the only objective for students, teachers and educational institutions as a whole. The student community seems to be totally cut off from their teachers. This is a big gap but certainly not an unbridgeable one. Even today teachers with competence, calibre and adopting the right

approach can influence the behaviour of the student community to a great extent. Towards this end the teaching community will do well to seriously re-think the place of agitations like mass leave of absence and strikes in the field of education for the fulfilment of their demands even if some of their demands are genuine. Ours is still a society in which the teaching community continues to command some respect and teachers can contribute their bit to re-establish their credibility and rapport with students.

The Scourge of College Elections

Another area that needs attention is the practice of college elections. There is no gainsaying the fact that college elections have become an important cause of rowdiness and bloody conflicts in college campuses. The linkage between students' unions and political parties is the main cause behind the trouble. This linkage must be snapped. We have lowered the voting age in the country's electoral system to 18 years. This will open, even wider, the gates of colleges to politicians and political parties. Was this necessary at all? The political leadership has taken a populist decision which is going to affect social life adversely in the long run. The damage could be irreparable.

We should not follow the West blindly, and must learn to take decisions keeping in mind the conditions prevailing in our society. It is not my intention to deny the glory of the democratic system and elections as part of that system. But their implementation calls for extra vigilance and care. Let us not forget that political education must precede political franchise. We went ahead with political franchise and left the process of political education to take care of itself. This is self-defeating. It will not only defeat the democratic process itself but will also totally vitiate the educational atmosphere.

One more aspect of this problem needs thoughtful consideration. The principle that all those who desire to have higher education should get the opportunity to prosecute it is no doubt a lofty one, but need all be admitted in colleges? Students with merit should be given admissions in colleges and the less merited could take recourse to the open education system. The present system of admitting all who seek admissions irrespective of their merit

has not yielded good results.

A Right to Higher Education?

The rush for admission to colleges arises from a sense of confusion and anxiety on the part of the both parents and their wards. These relate to the future course of studies after SSC and HSC. How many of them are genuinely interested in higher education? Very few. For many of them college life is fun time. They have absolutely nothing to do with attendance at lectures, appearing for college tests and examinations; using the library and reading room or seeking excellence in a particular academic discipline. They are neither checked by parents nor teachers. They assert their presence in the college campus by a variety of means all unacademic, and nothing to do with education. This encourages indiscipline, rowdiness and, at times, violence. What else can one expect from these so-called students who are forced by circumstances to join college for higher education perhaps, much against their wishes. Who is to blame?

There is yet another dimension to this problem. By admitting large numbers of students into colleges, the government and ultimately society is spending crores of rupees on them. To what end? It is time we devise a system to save this colossal waste of money and direct the latent youth energy in fruitful directions. Vocationalisation of education on a mass scale after the 10th standard may perhaps be the right solution to this vexed problem.

PROF. P.L. OLATIKAR is the Principal of VPM's KG Joshi College of Arts and NG Bedekar College of Commerce in Thane, Maharashtra.

"Children break windows and pull chairs to pieces when their nurses are not present. Soldiers fire the camp they quit, in spite of the general's orders; they love to trample under foot the promise of the harvest, and ruin proud buildings. What prompts them to leave everywhere such enduring evidence of their savagery? Is it mere delight in mischief? Or is it not rather that feeble spirits find in wantonness some notion of audacity and power?"

Vauvenarges
French aphorist.

Urban Teenage Violence — The Danger Signals

A Teacher

It is no longer possible to ignore or treat lightly the phenomenon of increasing urban teenage violence. The danger signals have become all too obvious: crises within the academic portals; recurring students' strikes; the problem of drugs; the politicisation of the campus; the shocking Rinku Patil incident; and assaults on teachers to mention just a few that readily come to mind. To the average Indian the image of a modern urban teenager is that of one 'lacking in ideals, ill-mannered, rowdyish and a drifter'. From the extensive publicity given to the symptoms, it is clear that the problems are 'discussed and disapproved of'. But has it really been explained? Moral judgments can wait, what is imperative is to stall and reverse the trend.

Society and its goals.

One wonders if society, and more so those in the academic world do not have to share part of the responsibility for the problem. Clearly, teenage violence is not an isolated phenomenon to be discussed in a vacuum. Apart from setting goals, we have not tried to understand the young teenager, the adolescent student, we are yet to get close to his attitudes, his frustrations, grievances and a variety of hidden tensions.

The continuous and mindless expansion of the system of education without any imaginative attempt to transform it has resulted in the 'system' becoming the scapegoat for any problem. 'The archaic and rigid educational system' is blamed equally by those within it and those without.

The teachers, and the heads of educational institutions, if they are honest, will admit that very little effort is made to interest and engross the young in their educational tasks. In fact, the teachers themselves are responsible for diluting standards.

The rapid increase in the number of educational institutions has resulted in a large number of fresh products of our universities being employed as lecturers. Most of them took to teaching only because it was a readily available job.

Some are teaching the very groups of which they were, until recently, senior members. The students also know that a number of these young teachers are only marking time until more lucrative employment comes their way.

'Senior' teachers too have their priorities. And, in their scheme of things such basic qualities as providing inspiration to their students or counselling them, do not generally find a place. An increasing number of teachers do not think beyond the classroom. Often they teach from outdated notes prepared many months, if not years, earlier. They show a marked reluctance to try and make the course of study more relevant and meaningful.

The test of a 'successful teacher' in urban centres where competition is stiff, is the number of students he accepts for that 'extra help' to achieve high marks. Indeed teaching in reputed 'coaching classes', and engaging in tuitions is today's indicator of the success of a teacher. This, despite university regulations which prohibit such activities. The young are not blind to these happenings; in such circumstances to ask them to value intellectual pursuits is to ask for the impossible.

If the system does not hold much promise for college students, it holds out little hope for the teachers too. The result is that the stereotype image of the modern-day teacher is that of a demoralised person who does not receive much sympathy or respect either from his students or from the community at large.

Thanks to a system of heavily subsidised higher education, our colleges and universities today have far too many students with little interest in the curriculum but with abundant animal energy. Teachers, who are generally uninterested and overworked, are not able to function as effective channelisers of this energy. At a personal level, there exists a wide gap between the student and the teacher. Most often, the only contact a student has with his teachers, is in the classroom where he finds himself drowned in vast numbers.

Not only is the principle of 'individual attention' reduced to a myth, the student remains a face, a roll number to the teacher.

Student Activities

Activities which are an integral part of modern campus life like debates, sports, drama etc. are conducted in a lackadaisical manner at best and not encouraged adequately. Debates and discussions, whenever organised, are poorly attended and are generally of poor quality.

However, the activity which occupies pride of place in our campus life is elections to Students' Unions or Students' Councils. These elections arouse a great deal of excitement among a small circle who are in the fray. The fact that a majority of students keep away from active participation is significant. These elections in recent years have tended to get increasingly violent and involve threats and intimidation by specially hired persons and encouraged by a free flow of money.

The 'candidates' who manage to remain in the fray are 'professional' or 'eternal' students who act as self-

appointed guides to the younger students and are willing tools in the hands of interested parties outside educational institutions ranging from drug peddlars to politicians across the political spectrum. These elements are tolerated by the authorities concerned because any disciplinary action against these so-called student-representatives would invite instant reprisal and media attention.

It is high time that decision-makers in the field of education muster the will and the courage required to abolish the present system of elections to Students' Unions because what goes on in the name of democratic representation is, by and large, unworthy leadership. Democratic elections cannot be held under police vigilance, as at present.

The Search for Solutions

The magnitude of the crises should not deter us from searching for workable solutions, however difficult they may be. We have also to accept the fact that education in India is still the only means to achieve upward social mobility. Thus, while it continues to raise expectations on the one hand, social conditions around remind the teenager

of the difficulties ahead. Hence the temptation to resort to short-cuts. What the urban teenager lacks today is an ideal which gives life a purpose, an inspiration for hard work. As he looks around, he grows shaky and confused.

We have to accept the fact that the problems of the young "cannot be solved for them but only *with* them". To achieve this, teenagers, parents, teachers, educational administrators and political decision-makers have to come together.

It is necessary to explore avenues for fostering greater cooperation between parents and teachers at the college level as it is at the school level. It is necessary that they get to know each other well because what they have is a shared responsibility. The young need someone to listen to them, to share their anxieties, some one to look up to. Teachers as well as parents owe a greater responsibility than they are willing to accept today.

The writer who wishes to remain anonymous is a teacher in a local college

The Decline of Education

R.S. Morkhandikar

An early 19th century social reformer in Maharashtra, Jyotiba Phule, regarded education as the key to social change. He remarked, "Lack of education led to loss of intelligence which, in turn, resulted in social stagnation". Hence, he was the first to establish a school for women and the untouchables in Maharashtra. It is remarkable that most of the social and political leaders in the pre-Independence period shared this faith in education and, therefore, were instrumental in founding and running educational institutions. Among them were Tilak, Gokhale, Agarkar, Dr. Ambedkar, Shahu Maharaj, D.K. Karve, Bhaurao Patil, Swami Ramanand Tirth and Punjabrao Deshmukh. No wonder Maharashtra today ranks third (after Kerala 70.4% and Goa 56.6%) in literacy (47.18%) in

the country. Yet, today the educational scene in the State is in a sorry state.

Low Priority for Education

Since Independence, education in the State has been accorded a lower priority than subjects like agriculture, industry, or even the P.W.D. Except for B G Kher and Madhukar Rao Chaudhari there has been hardly any Minister who has applied his mind to the problem and reform the system. For instance the amount spent on education as a proportion to total governmental expenditure has steadily declined — from 26.4% in 1980-81 to a low of 23.89% in 1983-84 and 24.04% in 1984-85. *Ad hocism* and indecision have become the general policy. More recently, expediency and political gain have been the guiding

factors in initiating a number of practices causing a steep decline in the quality and standard of education. The end result is that the education system in Maharashtra (as in the country) suffers from a number of contradictions: between primary and higher education; between rural and urban areas; between education for the elite and for the common man; between English medium and vernacular medium instruction; between general education and professional education. Each of these has only added to the complexity of the problem leading to a policy of drift and to a general disinclination to tackle it.

Primary vs. Higher Education

While both have their place in a developing country the question of pri-

ority has to be faced. While on the one hand India (and Maharashtra) has one of the largest number of illiterate people in the Third World, on the other it has some of the best institutes of higher education — the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), the University Department of Technology (UDCT), the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), and the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) (all in Bombay), the Gokhale School of Economics and Politics, the Deccan College (in Pune) and a University for women, the SNDT. How should the State allocate its resources? Generally, the government seems to have given high priority to higher education than to primary education. Free compulsory primary education still remains a distant goal. This is also reflected in the resources allocated to these two sectors. From the first to the seventh plan, allocation to primary education has gone down from 56% to 22% while that for university education has gone up from 9% to 16%. Elementary education is dominated by the public sector and by the government's own admission a large number of these schools are poorly equipped and staffed. Many do not even have blackboards and there are schools with teachers only on paper. No wonder the drop-out rate at this stage is very high. Of every 100 children enrolled in Class I only about 40 reach Class V and only about 25 reach class VIII. As for adult education, the less said the better. The programme has not made any dent in functional literacy except in statistics cited in government reports.

When Principals engage in criminal activities, and the faculty in gross acts of moral turpitude, and when colleges become the stalking grounds for criminal and goonda elements, the community itself loses faith in these institutions which were once venerated.

Education in Rural Vs Urban Areas

Though a majority of the population in the state lives in the rural areas, a majority of its secondary schools and colleges are located in urban areas catering to the needs of the urban middle class. If one is to judge by the passing percentage of students in the SSC examinations the standards of schools in rural areas are very low. 30% of the primary schools in rural areas are single-teacher schools. Beyond the 3 R's the knowledge or skills imparted to a school-going student is not of much use to him in rural life. The texts are most unimaginatively written and taught in the most disinterested fashion. To use the metaphor of Sharad Joshi they are oriented more to India than to Bharat.

Education for the Elite Vs the Masses

A more crucial question to ask is for whom is the education meant — for the elite or the masses? And secondly does it at least help sections of the masses achieve social mobility and bridge the gap that separates them from the established elite? That is what Phule and Ambedkar had in mind when they fervently advocated the cause of education among the downtrodden. Actually, like the economy, we have a dual system of education. A vast gulf separates the institutions — the convent schools, public schools, elite private schools and colleges, (the latest addition being the *Navodaya Vidyalayas*) — where the children of the elite seek to shape their careers, from those (Municipal/Government/Z.P. District Board Schools) where children of the ordinary can get admitted. Admissions to the former are at a premium and one has to have the right connection or afford to pay a fat amount as capitation fee (in various forms, euphemistically called donations, building fund etc.) to succeed. Even among the colleges a vast gulf separates the best, located in metropolitan cities, from those in the mofussil areas. Naturally, it is the students of the former who go on to get the best of education, build a career and enter professions highly regarded. Those fortunate few to be educated at the IITs and UDCT go abroad and settle down in the United States. The vast majority has to be content with the education that they get. The highest that they can hope for is to become clerks in bank or lecturers in colleges.

Liberal and Professional Education

If the emphasis before Independence was on liberal and legal education, the pendulum has swung the other way after Independence. The number of institutions imparting education in science and technology have sharply increased, and rightly so, to provide the skilled human resources needed for industrialisation and modernisation. And yet the number of colleges imparting liberal education and number of students enrolled in these institutions has also increased. The reason: these institutions imparting liberal education are necessary for nurturing democratic and secular values. Inevitably, while the number of those who opted for a liberal education increased the quality of such education deteriorated.

Until 1982, government monopolised the spheres of technical and science education and followed a policy of limited admissions for only those with high merit. This policy changed in 1982-83. Technical and medical education was thrown open to the private sector provided no government aid was sought. This led to a mushroom growth of self-financing private technical institutions. Where there were only 17 technical degree colleges with an enrolment capacity of 2406 for the first year of the degree course in 1982-83, the number rose to 73 with an enrolment capacity of 13,580 in 1987-88. Five private medical colleges have also been sanctioned. There is a similar spurt of private B.Ed colleges.

The disastrous consequences for standards can well be imagined. Most of these colleges have little by way of staff or equipment. Their establishment is not, so much, the result of love for technology as because of their potential for making a fast buck. Admissions are at a premium ranging from a few thousand Rupees (for B.Ed/D.Ed colleges) to a few lakhs (for medical colleges). They also provide patronage to the 'politician-educationists'.

Since the 1980s one of the glories of Maharashtra has been the higher educational institutions in the region. The most famous among them was the Fergusson College. Generations of Indians from Western India have learnt their values and civic responsibilities under its portals. Gokhale's "Farewell to Fergusson College", a noble piece of writing encapsulates their finely honed

idealism. Thus education was put to the service of social regeneration.

A different type of idealism motivated a new generation of politician-educationists. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Bhaurao Patil and Panjabrao Deshmukh established educational institutions like the Peoples' Education Society and the *Rayat Shikshan Sanstha* (farmers education organisation) to enable backward communities gain access to higher education and achieve social mobility.

Beginning with the 1960s a further change occurred. The potential of these institutions for making easy money, providing a source of patronage and a resource for political success was realised. In the new set-up, very little private funds needed to be mobilised to establish and run these institutions. They are privately administered at the cost of public funds provided by the University Grants Commission (UGC), state/Central governments or by Trusts under the aegis of sugar cooperatives. Running these

institutions meant power to give contracts for buildings; the purchase and (misuse) of equipment; appointment of staff and, of course, the most lucrative of them all, the admission of students. If the institution concerned controlled highly sought courses like MBA, engineering, medicine or B.Ed this power to admit could become a source for vast funds (generally under the table). The scandals relating to B.Ed and engineering colleges in Marathwada in recent years are still fresh in one's memory.

Secondly, control of these institutions provided access to power in the university administration. In the present 'democratic' structure of universities, most decision-making bodies like the syndicates, committees drawing up the syllabus, the appointment examiners or considering affiliation of colleges are 'elected' thus opening vast areas for control by educational entrepreneurs. The result — what is euphemistically called university politics. No wonder that every minister, or legislator worth

his name in Maharashtra has institutions of higher education under his control.

Publicity given to these in the press had made the educational institutions the shame of Maharashtra even as they were once the glory of the land. When Principals engage in criminal activities, and the faculty in gross acts of moral turpitude, and when colleges become the stalking grounds for criminal and goonda elements, the community itself loses faith in these institutions which were once venerated.

Where do we go from here? Nowhere, unless it is realised that education is too serious a matter to be left to the politicians.

PROF R.S. MORKHANDIKAR is Head of the Department of Political Science, Marathwada University

BONSAI — A Novel on University 'Politics'

It is no secret that something is rotten in the state of higher education in India and that it has been so for many years now. A student, after spending three or more years in one of our colleges and universities, rarely emerges any better off — either intellectually or culturally — for his stay there. There is general agreement that, by and large, the colleges and universities in India have fallen far short of their primary responsibility of imparting higher education to their wards and guiding them to the frontiers of knowledge and current research in their field.

More distressing is the fact that our colleges and universities have been found to be grossly wanting even in rudimentary administrative talents. By and large, they have shown themselves incapable of organising examinations properly, and declaring their results on time. Recently, in Nagpur over 75,000 answer-books had to be reassessed, on complaints from students. It is only rarely that a university makes even a routine appointment in less than 2 or 3 years. There are many instances when handbooks for courses are available only a year or two after the courses have started. Not a fortnight passes without fresh instances of malpractices in col-

leges and universities being revealed.

The public seems to be resigned to such malpractices and non-performance in our institutions of higher learning. By and large, even a concerned layman is unaware of the ways of these institutions and the individuals who rule over them or of how deep the rot is. A fair idea of the actual working of these institutions of higher learning may be had by reading a recently published novel in Marathi titled *Bonsai* by Subhash Bhende.

Persons familiar with the functioning of colleges and universities will get a feeling of *deja vu* while reading *Bonsai*. This will be hardly surprising because most of the events described in it have actually taken place not so very long ago in some place or the other in Maharashtra. Besides, many characters in Bhende's books bear an uncanny resemblance to the power-brokers at these places. After reading through this fictionalised account of the intrigues and behind-the-scene manoeuvrings that Bhende presents in his book — more in a journalistic style than literary — one need not wonder any more why the academics of this country do not have time for the pursuit of knowledge.

Some twenty years ago, the entire

Executive Council of the University of Pune was dissolved, the Vice-Chancellor resigned and an *ad hoc* committee appointed for what would be considered, in today's free wheeling atmosphere, some minor misdemeanours. That action has not led to any improvement in the working of any university in the state. Despite far graver events since then, it is noteworthy that no one concerned is taking any steps either to right the more blatant irregularities or to carry out basic administrative reforms in the sphere of higher education.

Plainly, like so many organs of public life in India, institutes of higher learning have also shown a total incapacity to reform themselves. More disheartening is the fact that the public and the taxpayer also seem to be utterly indifferent to the state of health of these institutes. Drastic administrative and academic reforms in the workings of colleges and universities are long overdue. If a novel such as Subhash Bhende's *Bonsai* helps to bring this home to the public, his book would have more than served its purpose.

Reviewed by J.V. Deshpande, Professor of Mathematics, Department of Mathematics, University of Bombay.

Will Durant's Advice to Youth

The following convocation address delivered by Will Durant, the well-known philosopher is as valid today as when it was delivered in 1959.

A task has been assigned to me, and I propose to go through with it as modestly as its inherent immodesty will permit. If now I dare to address you, it is not as one white with wisdom or practised in the ways of the world, but as a fellow student handicapped with senility, yet as eager as ever to learn something between every rising and setting of the sun. You must season my platitudes with a grain of doubt and grant me the tolerant allowances that youth must always make for age.

My first request to you is — be healthy. It is mostly within your will. In many cases sickness is a crime. You have done something physiologically foolish, and nature is being hard put to repair your mistake. The pain is the tuition you pay for your instruction in living. Care of the health should be a required course, for at least an hour each week, in every year from kindergarten to Ph.D. Such a course would include thorough instruction in diet. Our bodies are what we eat, plus what our ancestors ate. Don't let restaurants tempt you: they are the vampires of the stomach: they will burden your flesh in proportion as they lighten your purse.

One of the cardinal errors of our time is to continue in a warm and sedentary life the diet that once served to provide necessary muscle and heat. Let us keep our inners clean. The hospitals are littered with people who have put too great a strain on their digestive organs and have allowed an excess of imports over exports to disturb their internal economy.

Do some physical work every day. Nature intended thought to be a guide to action, not a substitute for it. Thought unbalanced by action is a disease. Cut the lawn, clean the car, paint the house rather than the town, help with the dishes after the evening meal. Help your wife with her work, and let her help you with yours. Husband and wife should be helpmates. Marriage disintegrates when it is only a partnership in sex, play and conspicuous expense.

After hunger, sex is our strongest instinct and greatest problem. Nature is infatuated with continuance and dolls up the woman with beauty and the man with money to lure them into propagation; and so it gives to us males such sensitivity to the charms of women that we can go quite mad in their pursuit. Sex then becomes a fire and flame in the blood and burns up the whole personality — which should be a hierarchy and harmony of desires.

Our civilization has unwisely stimulated this sexual impulse. Our ancestors played it down, knowing that it was strong enough without prodding. We have blown it up with a thousand forms of incitation — advertisements, emphasis and display — and have armed it with the doctrine that inhibition is a mistake — whereas inhibition

— the control of the impulse — is the first principle of civilization. Don't let indoctrination determine your desires.

Marriage was probably developed not only for the better care of children and property, but to save us from the tyranny of sex. In marriage that instinct is given abundant freedom, but it is channelled within limits consistent with social order. By submitting to marriage we can take our minds off sex and become adults.

Marry as soon as you can keep the wolf from the door: you will be too young to choose wisely, but you won't be much wiser in these matters at 40. There's no fool like an old fool in love. We parents should help you to get started in wholesome married life; help you with money, and — if you will permit us — with counsel.

The difficulties of marriage are far less than its rewards. One touch of a woman's hand can be a paradise, if the touch is not far too much. Napoleon said that the only happiness he had ever known was in loving his children; and I hope you won't have children without marriage.

Character comes on a par with health; intellect may come third. The greatest task assumed by such schools as this is to transform egos into gentlemen. A gentleman, as my wife once defined it, is a person continually considerate. Kind words cost so little and are worth so much! Speak no evil of anyone; every unkind word will sooner or later fly back into your face, and make you stumble in the race of life. *De vivis*, rather than *de mortuis, nil nisi bonum*. To speak ill of others is a dishonest way of praising ourselves; let us be above such transparent egotism. If you can't say good and encouraging things, say nothing. Nothing is often a good thing to do, and always a clever thing to say.

Religion has been along with the family and the teacher, a tutor of character. For 50,000 years or more man lived as a hunter before he took to tilling the soil. Probably man's native character as it is today was formed in that hunting life. He had to be greedy because the food supply was precarious and irregular; he had to be pugnacious to fight for food and mates; he had to be easily stimulated to reproductive ecstasy, because a high birthrate seemed desirable.

What are now, through excess our major vices, were then virtues — qualities making for survival of the individual or the group. When agriculture developed, and social organization became the chief tool for survival, these powerful impulses had to be restrained. They were restrained by a moral code transmitted through parental authority, family discipline and religious instruction. The moral code, though against the grain of the flesh, was

accepted partly through fear of parents and very much through belief that the code came from an all-seeing God who would reward every virtue and punish every vice. I am not sure that civilization could have come without such religious sanctions of the moral code.

Those of you who specialize in science will find it hard to understand religion, unless you feel, as Newton and Voltaire did that the harmony of the spheres reveals a cosmic mind, and unless you realize, as Pascal and Rousseau did, that man does not live by intellect alone. We are such microscopic particles in so vast a universe that none of us is in a position to understand the world, much less to dogmatize about it. Pascal trembled at the thought of man's bewildered minuteness between the two infinities — the immensity of the whole and complexity of each part. "These infinite spaces," he said, "frighten me!" Let us be careful how we pit our pitiful generalizations against the infinite scope, variety and subtlety of the world.

Money builds an economic basis under your life, but don't get caught in the rat trap of money making as a profession: that, too, like sex, can be a consuming fever and brings only fitful pleasures, not healthy happiness. Your wife will have the responsibility of stimulating you to develop all your creative capacities, but I hope she will not insist on your keeping up with all the Joneses in town. If you become an employer, your relation with your employees will count far more in your happiness than adding a zero to your wealth. Give every employee the full equivalent of his share in the product. Don't live in boastful and selfish luxury based on taking more from the world than you give.

Don't take politics too seriously. Expect to reform the government only after you have reformed human nature and your own. Corruption is natural in government because it is natural in man. Don't be frightened by the international situation; it is normal, man is a competitive animal, individually and in groups. Peace is war by other means. I believe that intelligent fear will keep us from international suicide. Evils usually beget their cure through their excess; so now the balance of terror is making for peace.

How good it is that the military competition is changing to economic competition! Let the better system win or a combination.

I take intellect for granted in your case; indeed, our schools have put too much stress on intellect, too little on character, we have sharpened our wits even while weakening our restraints. In my youth I used to talk about the bondage of tradition; now as befits old age, I distrust the fetishism of novelty. We exaggerate the value of newness in ideas and things. It is so much easier to be original and foolish than to be original and wise. For every truth there are a thousand possible errors. Let us not try to exhaust the possibilities.

Most of you now will go to college, and the sharpened competition among individuals and nations will force you



Will Durant

into intellectual specialities. The stress on science today is so strong that college, if I may pun a bit, will give you only a passing acquaintance with literature, history, philosophy, music and art. But don't let yourselves be fragmented. When your formal education is complete give at least two hours a week to rounding yourselves out with these flowers of civilization.

Make friends with great poets. Acquaint yourselves with the world's supreme art — Egyptian, Indian, Greek and Roman architecture and sculpture, Arabic mosques and decoration, the Gothic cathedrals and the renaissance paintings. Study the great statesmen from Hammurabi and Moses to Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt and Nehru. Sit for a while at the feet of great thinkers — Confucius, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Marcus Aurelius, Francis Bacon, Spinoza, Newton, Kant, Schopenhauer, Darwin, Nietzsche, Einstein. Enjoy great prose writers — Isaiah, Jeremiah, the authors of the Proverbs and the Psalms, Demosthenes and Cicero, Rabelais and Montaigne, Milton and Swift, Voltaire and Rousseau, Hugo and Balzac, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, Emerson and Anatole France. Follow man's odyssey with great historians — Herodotus, Thucydides, Tacitus, Gibbon, Froude and Taine. Walk humbly with the great saints — Buddha, Jesus, Augustine, Francis of Assisi, Gandhi. I shall not hold you educated unless you make many of these geniuses your friends. Cultivate them, and you will be moulded by the company you keep.

Good health to you, good work, good fortune, good character, good children, good grandchildren: Drink the brimming cup of life to the full and to the end; and thank God and nature for its bracing trials and challenges, its educative punishments and rewards, its priceless gifts and inexhaustible treasure of beauty, wisdom, labour and love.

In Calcutta, when people discuss
people, events and news
an important point of reference is
“What did The Statesman say?”



The Role of English in Free India

K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar

According to Mulayamji English-medium people have "proved to be more corrupt". Having come to power mainly on the Janata Dal's diatribes against 'corruption' what can be more logical than this attack on the roots of corruption, the English language.

"I am convinced that the attempt to replace English by Hindi at the Union level, be it now or on a future date, will once again bring into being a disintegrated India. Whatever unification has been brought about as a result of history will be disrupted ... With English will go all the all-India feeling we have now got. Nuts, walls and countries easily crack where there is a natural or innate breaking demarcation. I utter this grave warning. It is the warning of one who loves India and loves unity."

Thus Rajaji, with no equivocation at all, in the late 1950's. Since the belated Dawn of Independence on 15 August 1947, from time to time the anti-English heresy has been raising its head, provoking predictable reactions in the non-Hindi areas, till out of sheer exhaustion all is quiet once more and the *status quo* — albeit with some incidental damage — is permitted to continue as before. First, in the Constituent Assembly, Hindi was sought to be named the 'national' language of India. Good sense prevailing, Hindi under the Constitution gained the status of 'official language' of India, with English as associate official language for a grace period of fifteen years. A subsequent Parliamentary enactment extended the period indefinitely, and Jawaharlal Nehru as Prime Minister gave the solemn assurance that English would continue as associate official language for as long as the non-Hindi states wanted it that way.

Mulayamji's Missiles

All quiet on the language front? More or less, till we turned the new year. And now he has done it, in two brisk hot-step-jumps, and raced ahead of the rest of our new elite class, the politicians in power. First: Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav raised the stentorian battle

cry *Angrezi hatao!* on 22 January at Lucknow, which unleashed unruly mobs to rampage about, their target being English-medium schools like Loretto Convent, St. Anne's and Children's Academy. With 650 Christian missionary schools in Uttar Pradesh, no wonder there was a prompt Bishops' Protest to the Chief Minister.

Second: the arrest of Sri Sankaracharya of Dwaraka to prevent the threatened ceremony at the site of the Ramajayanti Bhoomi at Ayodhya. As if to prove that the Chief Minister was neither anti-Christian nor pro-Muslim, he has explained that he was only trying to live in the nationalist-patriotic-secularist Light of his Guru, the late Ram Manohar Lohia.

A Chief Minister with a 'mandate' keeping him afloat is under no compulsion to explain his actions to all and sundry. But Mulayamji is an honourable democrat, a believer in 'value-based politics' like all of the Janata Dal tribe, and is accordingly ready with concessions, reasonings and elucidations. What neither Muslim Ruler nor British Commissar had ever done, the arrest of a venerable Sankaracharya, has happened under the Mulayamji dispensation; but it meant no disrespect to His Holiness at all. Just a law and order situation. And as for English, it is no doubt true his own son is in an English medium Sainik School. Rules alas have their exceptions in this imperfect world, and it is not always possible to practice what one preaches. In his interview to the *Illustrated Weekly* (April 15-21), Mulayamji explained that the needed double strategy was that all Indian languages must come to the forefront and "official work in English come to a stop." No, no, Mulayamji is not "suggesting that the English language be completely wiped out — only that it

should not be a compulsory medium of education and of official work."

The Objections to English

It may be asked: Why this elemental animus against English? The usual objections are: English is a foreign language, the language of our former rulers, and hence the symbol of our past slavery. It is also, being an 'alien' language, a very difficult language to learn. Actually, English was by no means arbitrarily 'imposed' on unwilling Indians. In the peculiar circumstances of the time, not the British rulers, but "the earnest desire and repeated representations of Indians" were responsible for the introduction of English and Western culture

Opposition to English

Tirades against the English language have been a regular part of our national life ever since India became free. In fact speaking and writing bad English has become a sign of patriotism.

Most people think that opposition to English arises out of a love for the regional or local language or out of a desire to promote the growth of these languages. What is not appreciated is the fact that our regional languages got their impetus and recognition through translations into English.

The real motive behind the opposition to English is very different. It is through the English language that ideas of freedom, equality, democracy, secularism and accountability came to India.

These ideas when spread among the people through the English language pose a threat to the vested interests and the power of our *netas* and their feudal, hierarchical and dictatorial ideas. Hence the antagonism to English and the recurring attempts to ban it.

Abe Solomon

The Place of English

To substitute English as a link language by Hindi would be to discriminate in favour of those whose mother tongue is some other Indian language. Any talk of equality in these circumstances does not cut much ice.

The Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav, has declared war against English in his state. His government is considering scrapping the compulsory English paper in the Provincial Civil Service examination and closing down the public schools. He has banned the use of English for all government work. All departmental manuals, hand books, rule books, and other essential office material will immediately be translated into Hindi and copies distributed to all government offices. English will thus cease to be used for official, educational and other purposes.

Soon after Mr. Yadav declared his new policy, rowdy crowds reportedly belonging to the Shiv Sena broke into English-medium mission schools and demanded that they be closed down. Those who entered the Children's Academy told the Principal that no action could be taken against them "since they were merely trying to put into practice what the Chief Minister had said a few days ago."

Christian missionaries of course are not running only English-medium schools. Of over 650 schools run by them 60 per cent are Hindi medium catering to the rural masses. Christian schools, even though a majority of them are unaided, have produced men and women of calibre. Such is the rush for admission into English-medium schools that many other so-called "convent" schools have sprung up using Christian names and claiming that they are recognised by the government.

Tougher days seem to lie ahead for English and English-medium schools. The Chief Minister has refused to accept invitations to functions unless written in Hindi. The state Health Minister has asked why doctors prescriptions are not written in Hindi which is such a rich language.

The issue has been aired in some of the national papers. Mr. Yadav's main grouse against English and English-medium schools seems to be that they

are elitist. He told *The Illustrated Weekly* that though he had never advocated the closure of missionary schools, he would, as a true Lohia socialist, like to diminish socio-economic disparities. To achieve this the dominance of English and of English-medium education has to end. English medium schools produce an elitist culture. The English language is the dividing line between the haves and the have-nots as a result of which the former exploit the latter.

That there is much truth in Mr. Yadav's contention will easily be granted. The English speaking elite do form some sort of upper crust of society. Though only 2 per cent of the country's population they corner a disproportionately large share of the country's resources and income. Also they exercise a disproportionately large influence over the country's affairs in many fields. However it would be wrong to make English the scapegoat for all the country's social ills. English has little to do with the caste and class structures of our society and the unjust distribution of property and wealth whereby a minority of 30 per cent dominates over the rest. The question is far more complex than Mr. Yadav makes it out to be. English may be a part, but it is only a very tiny part of the unjust structures of society which cannot be demolished overnight by legislative fiat...

True again that the medium of instruction in schools should be the mother tongue. A child can never grow to its full potential and stature in an alien language. It can never express itself with ease and comfort except in the language it has learnt as it is said with its mother's milk. Hence there can be no doubt of the importance of the regional language in the different states. But here again between the ideal and the practical falls the shadow. If people find that going to non-English medium schools places them at a disadvantage not only in the competitive world in their own state but more so beyond its borders, no amount of legislation is going to make them cling

to their mother tongue as a medium of instruction. More so when the education imparted through the mother tongue is of a lower standard than that in the English-medium schools.

True again that a country cannot go on using a foreign language as its national language. A self respecting nation must have a language of its own. But the trouble is that in spite of forty years of independence, many states of the Indian Union have not reconciled themselves to the use of Hindi as a link or national language. It was not long ago when there was the danger of Tamil Nadu seceding from the Indian Union because of what it regarded as an unjustified imposition of Hindi on them. They took pride in their own language, Tamil, but for interstate communication they preferred English. As a result of the anti-Hindi agitation in Tamil Nadu, non-Hindi speakers were statutorily assured that English would remain the associate official language as long as they wanted it. At the national level therefore Mr. Yadav's move against English may take a serious turn as the Tamil Nadu government is reported to have said that it will not receive any communication in Hindi nor send any communication in Hindi to the Hindi speaking states especially Uttar Pradesh. What has also to be remembered is that English is the official language in some north-eastern states like Nagaland. To substitute English as a link language by Hindi would be to discriminate in favour of those whose mother tongue is Hindi and against those whose mother tongue is some other Indian language. Any talk of equality in these circumstances does not cut much ice.

Finally it must be remembered that English is the mother tongue of an Indian community and therefore an Indian language. Any move to abolish English-medium schools would fall foul of the Constitutional provisions guaranteeing minorities the freedom to run their institutions.

Extracted from an editorial in *The Examiner* (The Catholic News Review), May 19, 1990.

into India (M.M. Bhattacharje, *Bengal: Past and Present*, No. 134, 1953). A School for imparting English education was started in Cuddalore near Madras as early as 1718. English in India is now nearly 300 years old. And English has been studied, not simply as a convenient tool, but even more 'significantly as a means to modern knowledge, and as a powerful instrument of expression in prose and verse alike. Our 'journalists' like Rammohun Roy, Keshub Chunder Sen, H.C. Mukherji, Ranade, Malabari, Tilak, Sri Aurobindo, Subramania Aiyar, and a host of others combined to good purpose journalism and public affairs, and often law and teaching as well. We cannot today list Rammohun and Ranade, Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo, Gokhale and Gandhiji, Tagore and Sarojini, Nehru and Radhakrishnan, these and many others, in the calendar of our nation-builders, poets and philosophers, yet cultivate a purblind antipathy towards the language they used as the forceful means of communicating their meaning and message to India and the world. In a word, English is no longer an alien language; it is one of our own opulent and cherished languages. Nehru, Azad and Radhakrishnan listed English as one of the national languages coming within the purview of our Sahitya Akademi, the National Academy of Letters. English, then, is now one of our own national languages, and Indian literature in English too is one of our rich national literatures. At one end, this Indo-English literature has its close affiliations with the growing body of literature in India's many regional languages which we compositely call 'Indian Literature'; and at the other end, Indian writing in English has its affiliations with the literatures in English that flourish in Britain and the Commonwealth, in Africa, and of course in America. It is no mean advantage for an Indian to know English, and to be able to write and talk in English, because it as good as confers a global citizenship, for without question English is the most favoured international language today.

Thus far the traditional objections to English, and our answer too in the light of history and practical wisdom. But Mulayamji has other caveats against English as well, for according to him, English-medium people have "proved to be more corrupt"; "and the Public School educated people have proved to

be greater thieves than others"!!!! Having come to power mainly on the Janata Dal's diatribes against 'corruption' (Bofors, and so forth), what can be more logical than this attack on the roots of corruption, the English medium? There is, then, the cost factor. According to Mulayamji, in a Public School as much as Rs. 1000 to 5000 per month is spent on the education of a child. In a neighbourhood Government school, on the contrary, the cost can be as low as Rs. 8-10 per month. This could be gross exaggeration, "politically motivated" as the cant phrase goes; but were 'cost' the only consideration, there would be a case for abolishing all ministers' and chief ministers' posts and running the administration with the Hindi-knowing efficient clerks alone.

A truce to triviality and *reductio ad absurdum*! And for a change, let Rajaji have his say once more. Rajaji too was an ardent Hindi-enthusiast in 1937-39 when he headed the Congress Government in undivided Madras, but the changed situation twenty years after made him (along with other stalwarts like Sir C.P. Ramaswami Iyer and Sir Mirza Ismail) plead for the retention of English both as associate official language and as the medium of higher education, law courts and of the learned journals. After chasing away what he called the many *mayas* or illusions with regard to the 'official language', he concluded with this magnificent peroration:

"Let English continue.

The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner...

Not some one of our own languages, but this strange one will keep the arch firm and all the languages together. It is the Lord's doing and marvellous in our eyes."

The Importance of English

The message, the warning, the benediction is clear. Without English continuing as associate official language, the language of the Union, and of the higher judiciary, and the means of communication between the States of the Union, the unity of India would be in serious jeopardy, and all talk of national integration a vocal exercise in futility. Again, without English continuing as the key medium of instruction and

examination in college and university, and in all tertiary educational institutions, our Higher Education would merely enact a sort of cacophony, and would in fact cease to be Higher Education. Addressing the State Education Ministers on 2 September 1956, Prime Minister Nehru said:

"It is absolutely clear to me, and it is not an arguable matter that scientific and technological training has to be given in English. I am talking about now, and not about 10 or 15 years hence. It does not, therefore, become a question of choice. It is an absolute necessity ... English has been the unifying force in the country so long ..."

Scientific knowledge and technological know-how have grown 16 times since Nehru spoke, and more than ever before there is the need to keep pace with it all through the English language. The medium of instruction and examination is what holds the higher educational world together. And with English as the medium, the intellectual world of India gets properly linked with that of the Western world — no small advantage in the competitive global situation.

The World Bank projections (made in 1984) in respect of possible students between the ages of 15 and 24 show an increase from about 148 million in 1985 to 202 million in 2000 A.D. Changing the medium would mean, not just from English to Hindi, but English to a dozen other regional languages at least. The resulting confusion and waste would prove utterly disastrous and put the clock of progress back by half a century or more.

English in India was like the Menaka-Visvamitra liaison or romance. The issue has filiations with Sakuntala's sad and unique history. But like Sakuntala giving birth to Bharata, the future King of Bharat, English in India too can help to give new life to Indian literature and a new power and personality to the new India rising before us.

PROFESSOR K.R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR an eminent authority on English literature, is the author of several books and was Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University.

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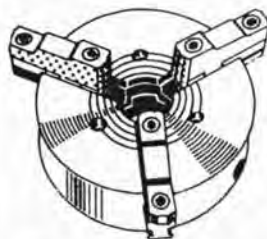


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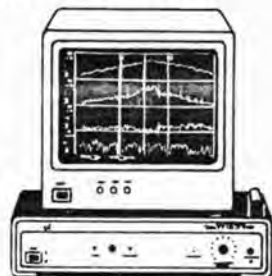
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Why So Much Corruption?

Minoo Masani

It is very difficult for the rich man not to offer an incentive to the poor man and even more difficult for the poor man to refuse to accept the bribe offered. There is a whole class of politicians and officials in Delhi who pocket the profits of a corrupt socialist system.

Corruption in social life has many causes. A certain amount of corruption is unfortunately part of human nature and has existed through the ages. A human being is a mixture of good and bad instincts. As a poet has said:

"There is so much good in the worst of us

And so much bad in the best of us
That it ill-behoves any of us to look down upon the rest of us".

The level of corruption in a country at any given stage varies, however, from case to case. Many factors influence the existence or the absence of corruption.

Force of Example

The force of example of course is very important. If one's father is honest and honourable, if the head of a country's government is honest and honourable, it is likely that this will influence others, particularly the younger people.

An instance of the force of example came to my notice as far back as 1949, when a very senior and respected member of the Indian Civil Service, who was one of the Secretaries of the Government of India, said to me (I was then a Member of Parliament): "Mr. Masani, you Members of Parliament expect us officials to be honest, but how can we be honest and honourable when the Prime Minister of India (who was then Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru) sets such a bad example?" He then proceeded to give me details of an incident which certainly did not show up Pandit Nehru in a good light. Later on of course, the example set by the Prime Ministers of India further deteriorated with the rare exception of Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri. By the time Rajiv Gandhi was defeated in the elections last year, he was generally well known for lying repeatedly to Parliament and his financial integrity was certainly not above suspicion. His

failure to resign or to sue his detractors for libel was not an example to commend. It is, therefore, possible to argue that it is difficult to expect the ordinary citizen of India to obey the law and eschew corruption when such a bad example is set by the people at the top.

Home education too is very weak in this country. Parents do not always set a good example of courtesy, consideration and good manners. Most Indian parents shout at each other at home. Is it any wonder then that their children shout at any provocation? Any attempt to teach the golden rule "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you" is of course out of the question because the golden rule is not even known to most people in this country, much less practised. What is badly needed therefore is training in moral principles and good citizenship.

Social Corruption

Leaving aside venal forms of corruption like bribing the policeman on traffic duty or the railway booking clerk, the position is further aggravated by government's economic policies. If these policies make for hard work, enterprise, the taking of risk and fair dealing, a society is likely to be relatively free from corruption. If government policies are such that they encourage too much security, laziness, sloth and unpunctuality and do not encourage or reward enterprise, that society is likely to be more corrupt. Countries of Eastern Europe, which have groaned silently under socialist corruption for the last 45 years have, with a sigh of relief, elected conservative and anti-socialist governments in recent elections.

The Yugoslav communist leader Milovan Djilas had written about the selfishness and corruption of the communist bosses in Moscow many years

ago in his excellent little book *The New Class*.

We in this country have now learnt to say "corruption is a way of life in India". Unfortunately, this is true but we are by no means the worst in the world. When Andropov became the boss in the Kremlin, Prof. Edward Crankshaw, a British expert on Soviet affairs observed that the Soviet Union had the biggest black market in the world. A friend of mine who exports garments to the Soviet Union said, before Gorbachov came to power: "Minoo, you talk about corruption in India, but this is peanuts. You come with me to Moscow and I shall show you the real thing. At every single step an official has to be bribed before you can move a step forward". To this my comment was "I am sure you are right because the Soviet Union is even more socialist than India".

How exactly do socialist policies encourage corruption? First of all, there is the silly talk of equality. People are not born equals. So, although there should be equality of opportunity before the law, there can be no absolute economic equality without disastrous consequences. To reward a stupid man equally with an intelligent man, or a lazy man with a hard working man is unfair and unjust. When it is practised, there is every incentive for the intelligent or hard working man to become lazy and stupid because he is not rewarded for showing the right qualities. In India there is too much security for government servants. They do not do an honest day's work. Some of them say, "Our salaries are for attending office; for doing anything more we need further incentive", by which they mean a bribe! Among the worst of these are the clerks of nationalised banks who report for work as late as 11 a.m. and often refuse to work for another half hour because *Their Majes-*

ties are having tea or coffee on working time.

Some Other Causes

Similarly, excessive taxation makes for tax evasion. Even the honest citizen is driven to consider whether he should pay the full tax. Prof. Northcote Parkinson, the well-known writer, has said in his book "The Law and Profits" that where a government imposes income tax of more than 25% of a man's income, the average man is likely to spend more time on evading taxation than on producing more. In India the level of taxation has of course gone well beyond 25% and that is why many rich people in India never pay any tax at all, while the middle class with fixed incomes is grossly overtaxed.

A direct cause of corruption is of course controls of all kinds. Under the present so-called socialist system, people in business have to approach government for a permit or licence or some sanction the other to start a company, raise capital and so on. Now it is well known that government servants are not too well paid. On the other hand, business people enjoy a higher standard of life. So a rich man has to go to a poor man to get his rubber stamp. The farmer goes to the *mamlatdar* for a sanction and the Bombay or Calcutta industrialist has to fly up to Delhi for a government official's sanction. In both cases, the situation is readymade for corruption. It is very difficult for the rich man not to offer an incentive to the poor man and even more difficult for the poor man to refuse to accept the bribe offered. That is why corruption has become endemic in India. There is a whole class of politicians and officials in Delhi who pocket the profits of a corrupt socialist system. This is the New Class described by Djilas in his book. Is it any surprise that the politicians and officials in Delhi should resist any change – over to the system of competitive free enterprise on which the countries of Eastern Europe have already embarked? No mere change of government will suffice. What India needs is a social revolution.

The causes of corruption are not hard to ascertain. It is a pity that absence of moral education and training at home and in school alongside of government policies since 1955 have been definitely contributing to corruption in our society.

Getting Rid of Corruption

We need not, however, despair. Other countries also have a similar record of corruption. Britain is a country which is today relatively free from corruption. But only two centuries back, in the days when Walpole was Prime Minister, things were different. Many seats in the British Parliament, which were described as "pocket boroughs" could actually be bought. A poem of that time had a jingle:

"Every man and woman has a price,
Nobody's virtue is over nice".

If we want to undo the situation, we shall not only have to improve the level of moral education at home and in schools in our country, but scrap all laws of the Stalinist pattern of socialism which our first Prime Minister was ill-advised enough to impose on this country. No tinkering will suffice.

Rajaji summed this up very well when he wrote:

"Unless we minimise official intervention and ministerial power, making or marring the fortunes of businessmen and industrialists, unless we reduce controls up to the level called for by international trade and exchange pressures and bravely decide to knock out the rest and try out the consequences, we are bound to suffer this newly introduced and widespread malady of corruption at the ministerial and secretariat levels".

Based on a speech delivered over All India Radio on May 29, 1990

LOOK DOWN O LORD!

*On this august day of August fifteenth
I pray Thee Lord to look beneath
To sacred India's earth
where lie today mountains of dirt
Where brother doth his brother kill
Unscrupled with great skill
Is this what hath Thou designed?
Shall we to this remain resigned?
Where tongues talk too much in vain
Where fatty folks have no brain
Where Neros fiddle while bodies burn
Looking around with no concern.
Where people go on killing spree
From stings of conscience feeling free
Murder here and a rape there
Nation drowned in rare scare.
Look down O Lord! to my Motherland
Save it from gangsters' hand
Ere we our freedom lose
That is not what Thou would choose.*

D.H. RAJANI

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'Bofors' in general and Generals in 'Bofors'

N.S. Siva

What is disturbing is that, while one is used to all kinds of aberrations and puerile performances from politicians of all categories and shades, one cannot be astonished at the cavalier utterances at this stage of Gen. Sundarji

We go on talking endlessly about Bofors. The average reader is sick and tired of it. In chasing the destination of the mysterious and elusive Rs. 64-crore kickback, we are denuding ourselves of all our energy which should be directed towards solving the nation's urgent problems. If and when we trace the culprits, we shall certainly lynch them, without compunction, but until then let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that we are doing any public service by making the task our exclusive pre-occupation and spending hundreds of crores over it. In trying to trace the source of one transient leak, we should not be rocking our boat by puncturing large and permanent holes in it. Let us reorient our priorities before it is too late or we shall sink. The country expects all its time and attention to be paid to more worthwhile pursuits relevant to its development and growth, to the relief of poverty and illiteracy, and, more urgently, to contain the galloping cost of living and runaway prices of essential commodities.

Among the more notable ones to join the fray was, surprisingly, no less a person than Gen. K. Sundarji, our former Chief of Army Staff. "ably" supplemented by Lt. Gen. H. Kaul, a former DCOAS. Notwithstanding the sensational headlines which some sections of the Press so generously devoted to the Sundarji 'revelations' and the Kaul 'exposures', the unbiased and dispassionate observer will find nothing startling or revealing in the report of the interview. If the interview reveals anything at all, it is the chinks in the General's own armour, the inadequacy of the security system in the COAS's *sanctum sanctorum* and the ineptness of some of the gentry parading in uniforms and others in the top echelons of the bureaucracy.

Beginning with Gen. Sundarji himself, his interview sounds more like the outpourings of a lacerated ego than the moans of a nagging conscience. What is the object sought to be achieved by the 'revelation' and what could possibly be the motive behind the timing of the disclosure, and what has been gained by all this effort? None, so far as the public interest is concerned!

If the General wished to hit the headlines, one would have expected him to come out in defence of himself on the strictures and insinuations contained in the CAG's Report. The discrediting references to him and the professional methodology adopted by him and his Staff in evaluating the comparative merits of the guns in the Indian context, to his change of course/choice mid-stream and the technical suitability of the gun, implying that the country's interests may have been mortgaged, are all matters well within his purview as COAS of the day. His silence may be construed as acquiescence, and it is gratifying that he has, albeit as a post script, now made it clear that the gun technically was and is the best for the Indian Army.

It will be admitted on all hands that the ultimate responsibility for deciding whether there is a risk to national security such as can be tolerated or accepted in a given situation lies squarely and entirely with the Government of the day. It is a political decision based on many factors including, importantly, the military appreciation of the scene. Such a military appreciation or analysis cannot consist of merely a perfunctory pronouncement of whether the risk can be accepted or not. It has to be fully explanatory, with a detailed reading of possibilities and potentialities, and a comparative study of the depth and

dimensions of the risks involved in following a particular course of action. Gen. Sundarji's note was nowhere near such a document, and to that extent the disclosure of its contents involves no great violation of the security code!

But what is disturbing is that, while one is used to all kinds of aberrations and puerile performance from politicians of all categories and shades, one cannot but be astonished at the cavalier utterances at this stage of Gen. Sundarji. If he had felt so strongly about his 'note' and desired its acceptance in the interests of the country, the time to make an issue of it and, if necessary, offer to resign his office was then. One is reminded of what General Thimayya did when faced with a situation in which he had a strong difference of opinion with the then Defence Minister, many years ago.

It is also strange that the COAS and the Deputy should have been content to deal with and accept oral and vague instructions from the Secretary/Additional Secretary in the Ministry in a matter of such vital import, when they had direct and admittedly easy access to the bold and dynamic Minister of State for Defence, Mr. Arun Singh.

Next, we have Lt. Gen. H. Kaul (a former DY. COAS) telling us that he successfully repulsed the offer of a tempting bribe of as large an amount as Rs. 2.5 crores by one of the gun-trading companies for just moving their position up in the list of acceptable tenders! The 'offer' became possible because the company had no difficulty in getting to know the contents of the TOP SECRET document containing the recommendations of the Negotiation Committee, although we are assured that every precaution was taken to ensure the security of the information.

The attempt of this unscrupulous company to gain an unfair and dishonest advantage was thus foiled. But no one involved in this episode felt outraged enough to raise a hue and cry about it and ram it down to a logical end. Indeed, apart from mentioning it to the 'Chief' and the Defence Secretary, nothing more was done and the miscreants are still at large. Why the company or, more particularly, its offending representative, cannot be named even now and appropriate action taken is beyond the comprehension of the public for whose benefit the present wave of 'reveals' is let loose. All those responsible for this state of affairs, whether belonging to the Army or the bureaucracy are guilty of gross remissness, to put it mildly.

Then there is the story of the MA (Military Assistant, usually an officer of rank not lower than a Lt. Col.), who is reported to have tucked away the original of a TOP SECRET document, together with its 'office copy', apparently for some future 'use', in utter disregard of the

specific orders of his Chief to destroy them!

We are thus becoming objects of ridicule, by our utterances and actions, some of which are reminiscent of cutting one's nose to spite one's face. What would the country, and the world at large, think of a national Defence HQ. set-up which is so lax and inert as to allow such serious security lapses in its own inner domain, and which are now 'revealed' by those precisely responsible for safe-guarding all classified information. Would it be too much to expect these Generals and others, retired or current, to display better discipline and restraint, an awareness of the supremacy of the national interest and genuine concern for the morale of the Defence Services?

The somewhat lackadaisical, and some might even say irresponsible, manner in which, in this instance at any rate, matters of great significance to the security of the country, have been handled by the top brass of the Army and high level bureaucrats of the Ministry,

do no credit to anybody, and are deeply disappointing. What is needed is an unqualified commitment and dedication to sound and sensible objectives, in the pursuit of which honest means should not become a casualty.

The extent of institutional damage caused to well-ordered and well-nurtured government machinery in strategic segments by the thoughtless words and deeds of these persons, among others, will unfold (reveal?) itself as time passes.

Major (Retd) N.S. Siva served in the British Army and later the Indian Army, saw active service in the Second World War. On release from the Army he was in Civil employment retiring as an Additional Secretary to the Government of India.

India Today, September 15, 1989. An extract was published in Freedom First, October 1990.

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Benjamin Franklin

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India — Learning Some Lessons from Eastern Europe

Swaminathan S. Anklesaria Aiyar

The Government of India has retreated from its fundamental task of ensuring justice and legal rights. Meanwhile it has advanced and captured the commanding heights of the production structure. It now needs to retreat on the production front, as in Eastern Europe. But it needs to advance on the front of social justice and welfare, as also in Europe

An incredible revolution has overtaken the Communist world, (perhaps we should say the formerly-Communist world). When Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev made perestroika (structural change) a central part of Soviet policy in 1986, many thought he was merely tinkering at the margin with the oppressive Soviet system, and using military cuts to strengthen the Soviet economy. It is now clear that we are witnessing a massive rejection in the whole of Eastern Europe of the economic and political systems created by Lenin and Stalin, an acknowledgement that it is wiser to move in the direction of the OECD countries, which are market-driven welfare states with multi-party democracy.

Winds of Change and Experimentation

Although the Soviet Union initiated perestroika, other East European countries have gone much faster in structural change, leaving Mr. Gorbachev a laggard who is now hurrying frantically to catch up. It is a time of delirious excitement and fertile experimentation.

Although East Europe has emphatically cast aside its past, it is still hazy about its future. There is still talk about a third way between capitalism and communism. After decades of a marxist diet, many East Europeans still cannot get away from the notion that hiring labour amounts to exploitation, that the state must be responsible for everything and the people themselves for nothing. Worker-owned enterprises and co-ops have been tried in Yugoslavia and proved so dismal a failure that they are not even being contemplated in most of East Europe. Poland has gone for total market freedom in one go, but that experiment too could fail. The Czechs have warned that freeing markets is of

little use when State monopolies exist everywhere, when the culture of private risk-taking enterprises is yet to be established, and when the only firms that are likely to be viable are foreign ones. There are others who point out, especially in the Soviet Union, that free markets will be a recipe for runaway inflation unless monetary reform is first instituted to mop up the huge amount of excess cash in the economy. The world has no experience in transforming a communist economy into a capitalist one, and so the East European countries can only theorise and experiment. Nevertheless, some things are clear.

Many East European Prime Ministers and Finance Ministers attended the recent Davos symposium, and unanimously expressed the view that:

- The command economy is a failure and cannot be made to work efficiently.
- The market is a better instrument for producing goods needed by the people than a centrally planned system.
- Foreign investment and technology are vital for rejuvenating the flagging economies of East Europe.
- The transition to a market-driven system is compatible with the positive social aspects of the old regime, such as public housing, health and education.

Some of these ideas have been elucidated in a recent article in the *Financial Times* co-authored by Mr. Vaclav Klaus, the new Finance Minister of Czechoslovakia. It is worth quoting the following passage:

"We start with the assumption that the efficiency-stifling behaviour of economic agents (in the communist system) is deeply ingrained and can only gradually recede. We should proceed on a parallel path in several directions.

"(1) *Deregulation and administrative simplification to the slow retreat of the Government from its present role to the more limited role envisaged by mainstream economics.*

"(2) *The careful nurturing of the market, because it is not true (as is often *a priori* assumed that as soon as public sector institutions are dismantled or weakened, the private sector will rush in to take over these activities. Our markets are, and will in the foreseeable future be, very imperfect. Efficient entry to the market is therefore crucial and cannot be achieved without opening the market to foreign competitors and investors.*

"(3) *Also important is the liquidation of various economic activities. Exit has more significance than entry and is more difficult to administer.*

"(4) *The implementation of a sound macro-economic policy, based on a very restrictive monetary and fiscal policy, is the backbone of the whole manoeuvre, and the precondition for the elimination of monetary latitude. As true liberals, we should start with a very heavy dose of monetarist medicine, with economic policy*

measures, not with formal institutional reforms — because with easy money no real changes in economic behaviour of any agents can be achieved”.

This is only a sample of the new ideas from East Europe, an indication of the way the wind is blowing there. The shift towards what Mr. Vaclav Klaus calls “mainstream economics” is sometimes confused with undiluted capitalism, but that is a serious mistake. No country possesses or even wants to possess a pure capitalist framework. All the supposed citadels of capitalism have a huge government sector. Inclusive of spending by state government and local bodies, public expenditure is over half of GNP in Mrs. Thatcher's Britain and almost 45 per cent of GNP in Mr. Bush's USA. The Swedish model, with public expenditure at 60 per cent of GNP, is not really an alternative to mainstream capitalism but a variation of it. The welfare state is here to stay. Nobody wants *laissez faire*, and it is silly for Indian leftists to keep warning against it. The alternative to a command economy is not *laissez faire* but a welfare state where production is left largely to private enterprise and social welfare to the government. East Europe has realised this. It is time our planners did too.

The Indian Backdrop

Much of India's economic history can be explained by the fact that it became independent in 1947. Indian intellectuals like Jawaharlal Nehru who had seen the horrors of the Great Depression and World War II concluded that capitalism and fascism were both undesirable and unworkable. On the other hand they saw that the Soviet Union under Stalin had managed to ensure basic needs for the bulk of its population (despite appalling slaughter and political oppression) and built up industrial muscle that enabled it to withstand the military might of Hitler. So it was natural for many Indian intellectuals in 1947 to regard capitalism as a historical anachronism, and to see the command economy of the socialist state as the wave of the future. In 1947 it was far from apparent that reformed capitalism, donning the garb of the welfare state, would soon produce an economic miracle untroubled in all history. Nor was it obvious that, after its initial gains, the command economy of socialism would

degenerate into unproductive stagnation. In retrospect the decision of Nehru to convert India into a planned socialist economy seems inevitable.

Laying the Colonial Ghost

The legacy of colonialism buttressed this. British rule was ushered in by the East India Company. This made Indians instinctively suspicious of both foreigners and capitalism. Political and economic power were intimately woven together as instruments of white supremacy in the British Raj. The Gandhian emphasis on self-sufficiency stemmed from the perception that political independence meant cutting India off from foreign capitalism and trade. The ghost of the East India Company still haunts our economic policies today, long after Britain has ceased to be a major world power.

But it is now 1990. It is time we stopped fighting the ghosts of the East India Company and the Great Depression. History has moved on, and it is time we learned its latest lessons instead of remaining mired in the past. Much of our economic ideology, relating to the supposed virtues of command socialism and supposed evils of capitalism and multinationals, was derived from the Soviet Union. But the Soviet Union itself has now declared it has been worshipping false gods. Tragically, there is hardly any echo of this change in India. The ideological language of politicians in both the ruling party and opposition parties has changed very little. Most of them are reluctant to acknowledge, as Gorbachev has, that they have been talking rubbish for most of their lives. This is a tragedy. We need dramatic structural change in India too.

Instead we have the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Mr. Ramakrishna Hegde, wanting to go back to what he perceives as the glories of the Nehruvian era of planning, and to enshrine the Planning Commission in the Constitution. It is hard to see what this will achieve except waste valuable legislative time. Both the Nehruvian and Soviet models sought to elevate planning to super Cabinet status and help capture the commanding heights of the economy (by creating public sector monopolies and, in India's case, a licence-permit raj). This has been disastrous in both countries, and there is nothing glorious about it. Besides, it is now clear that the Nehruvian and Soviet

ideas of planning were based on an unstated premise — that there would be a monopoly of political power for the ruling party. Without such a monopoly of power there can be no continuity in planning and hence planning cannot occupy a high seat. Mr. Hegde should know this better than anyone else since he has just thrown out the previous regime's 'Approach to the Eighth Plan' and drafted his own. Given the uncertainties on the political front, we cannot rule out a change of government within a few years, in which case the next government may come out with yet another 'planning approach'. In short, if we take away the assumption of continuity of political power — as we must — we destroy the foundations of Soviet-style or Nehru-style planning. It can't work in a democracy where power keeps passing from one party to another.

Apart from being decried by the communist countries that have tried it and know it best, yet, there is scarcely any echo of that criticism from the new members of the Planning Commission. One of them, Mr. Rajni Kothari, warned in a recent article in *The Indian Post* against “recolonisation” by multinationals, the World Bank and IMF, the supposed agents of imperial capitalism. Apparently he has learned nothing from the fact that the centrally planned countries of East Europe which pioneered this line of thinking have now forsaken it. They want multinationals to set up shop in their countries, and want to join institutions like the World Bank, IMF and GATT. We need to get away from obsolete slogans of the past and acquire the sort of respect for markets and contempt for *neta-babu* rule that is evident in the communist world.

Jettison the “Commanding Heights” Concept

There is one sense in which our planners can argue, with justice, that we are very different from Eastern Europe and need to learn from its successes as well as its failures. Basic needs have already been met there and poverty no longer exists in the Indian sense. Oppression based on caste and sheer muscle is not in evidence in East Europe. The police, administration and courts are supposed to deliver justice to all in India but have become part of the oppressive structure. Things are worse than they were during the British Raj in this respect.

This then is the irony. The Government in India has retreated from its fundamental task of ensuring justice and legal rights. Meanwhile it has advanced and captured the commanding heights of the production structure, through direct ownership and a multitude of controls. It now needs to retreat on the production front, as in East Europe. But it needs to advance on the front of social justice and welfare, as also in Europe. Note that this is not merely a question of Plan allocations or priorities. If the law and order apparatus has broken down in Bihar, if private caste-based armies have taken over the functions of the state, this cannot be changed by Plan directives.

The Real Tasks

The problem is that in vast parts of India, Government directives and allocations are almost meaningless, and rights decreed by Parliament unimplementable. Funds allocated for anti-poverty plans are siphoned away by the *neta-babu* class, and increasing these allocations in the name of social justice may simply fatten the *netas* and *babus* further. When the courts take a decade to decide anything, when no police station takes notice of common injustice, when the rich and powerful break laws with impunity, then all talk of raising planning to its earlier heights of glory is meaningless. Drastic reform is needed of the delivery system in the countryside, and we need much more governance rather than less in this crucial respect. This is where the state must advance first.

There is something to be said for the Planning Commission's new emphasis on rural development. The Nehruvian emphasis on heavy industry and commanding heights misdirected the focus of the government from areas where it was most needed — the countryside — to where it was least needed. Nehru argued that in the initial years only a strong government presence could ensure enough infrastructure, and he was right. But today the private sector can take up a greatly expanded role in industry and infrastructure. On the other hand, only the government can energise rural areas. As we have already noted, the rural focus will have little meaning if it is confined to Plan allocations. The really important issues are administration and justice, and these are outside the ambit of Yojana Bhavan

(Headquarters of the Planning Commission). When the state has withered away in the countryside, planning has few panaceas to offer. The first task must be to re-establish the state.

There is no incompatibility between an advance on the social justice front and a retreat from the organised industrial sector by the Government. Indeed, the two should go together, as both East and West Europe are showing. If public resources in India are shifted towards rural areas, the gap that arises in infrastructure and organised industry must be plugged by the private sector and foreign investors. Some of our veterans are still battling the East India

Company and equate foreign investment with imperialism. East Europe has shown the folly of tilting against these windmills under the mistaken notion that they are evil giants. Instead of acting like Sancho Panzas, our leftist intellectuals need to wake up to the realities and stop imagining demons which do not exist. East Europe has cast aside decades of sterile thinking. Our planners need to do the same.

Extract from a background paper by Swaminathan S. Anklesaria Aiyar, Editor, *Financial Express*, Bombay presented at a seminar on 'Perestroika for India' organised by the Project for Economic Education.

Perestroika — Test For The Future of Soviet Socialism

Ramnath Narayanswamy

It is the purpose of this article to outline a summary of problems and prospects of the Gorbachev reform in the Soviet economy and society considered as a whole. It is a little more than five years since Mikhail Gorbachev openly declared his ambitious resolve to carry out a comprehensive restructuring of Soviet society by introducing a package of reforms embracing virtually every major aspect of Soviet economic, political and social life. This package of fundamental reform which has come to be described as 'perestroika' was preceded by an equally radical policy of 'glasnost' or openness, the essential idea behind which lay in inviting the Soviet people to come to terms with their history with a view towards contemplating newer perspectives for the future.

At the risk of pointing out the obvious, it must be emphasised that the entire Gorbachev project remains an extremely bold precedent in the communist world, fraught as it is with consequences that could result in several contradictory directions: it could for example, lead to a greater democratisation of Soviet life or, on the other hand,

it could equally result in a mess of such gigantic proportions that could easily leave Gorbachev's successors several decades to untangle. Five years under perestroika still finds Soviet Russia in a period of transition. While the battle for perestroika is still far from won, it is yet far from being a lost cause.

Little Improvement

A visit to Moscow does more than merely confirm this impression. It is perhaps Gorbachev's enduring misfortune that as perestroika begins to make its way felt into the many layers of Soviet society, the very problems it is intended to tackle begin to get progressively worse. This is particularly true of the economic domain, where prices and recurrent shortages in consumer goods and essential food items increase rather than decrease in the wake of the reforms. Thus, while popular support for perestroika is indeed strong, it is by no means assured. This is because for most Soviet citizens, the situation for all practical purposes is no better than that which obtained in the Brezhnev period, now officially described as the years of

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'stagnation'.

From the point of view of the consumer therefore, there is little improvement. On the contrary, items such as washing powder, soap, toothpaste, razor blades and refrigerators are only some of the many commodities that have all but disappeared from the market in the course of the last few years. Meat is now rationed in several parts of the country, while money is just about the only commodity in abundant supply. Despite the fact that enterprises are now expected to pay their way and the fact that the first stage of the reform has led to an improvement in the fulfilment of contracts, reduced production costs and ensured a faster growth in the rate of labour productivity, there has still been no dramatic breakthrough. This is because two essential conditions necessary for the successful operation of the reform continue to be absent: the dismantling of the centralised system of material-technical supplies and reforming the price system.

Difficult Transition

Under the circumstances, while economic reform under Gorbachev is proceeding step by step, the newer problems that the reforms have helped to surface are symptomatic of the difficult transition period between the old traditional administrative system and a new model of restructured socialism. If this transition period is proving to be so difficult, then this is because the country is today paying the price for having neglected the role of the market and financial relations under conditions of a planned socialist economy. The problem is compounded by the fact that the price of this neglect is particularly heavy: inflationary pressures have grown to an extent where they threaten the success of the reform. Last but certainly not the least is the budget deficit, officially acknowledged for the first time last autumn. While this is officially estimated to be about 35 billion roubles for 1989, Soviet economists unofficially claim a real magnitude of about 100 billion roubles, roughly equivalent to about 11% of GNP. Yet the question whether the budget deficit has been growing since Gorbachev came to power is still not clear. What is clear is that urgent and decisive measures are needed to bring the economy back into balance.

The entire Gorbachev project remains an extremely bold precedent in the communist world, fraught as it is with consequences that could result in several contradictory directions. It could lead to a greater democratisation of Soviet life or result in a mess of gigantic proportions

The major problem in the economic domain is the absence of an appropriate institutional framework for the pursuit of a coherent economic policy in which an attempt is made to integrate current economic management with the strategic requirements of the reform. Apart from policy errors, it is essential that changes in the economic domain be complemented by changes in the political domain in which a meaningful attempt is made to pave the way for political representation of conflicting interest groups in Soviet society to articulate their problems and contribute to enlarging the public discussion on future alternatives in the USSR. The formation of the Supreme Soviet, the rejection of the leading role of the communist party and the transition to an executive presidency under Gorbachev are useful policy initiatives that essentially point in the right direction. Yet, recent disturbances in Azerbaijan, the real threat of secession from the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia and the worsening of the economic situation have unfortunately narrowed Gorbachev's options. The recent move to hasten the pace of privatisation under direct pressure from the radicals — clearly reinforces this impression.

Lessons for India

From a larger point of view, the Gorbachev reforms have helped to establish a wide range of refreshing precedents in the political and economic domain in the USSR and Eastern Europe. The time is perhaps propitious when developing countries like our own begin to make a concerted attempt to

isolate the valuable lessons of the socialist experience for our own economies. While such a move is perhaps on the agenda it has however yet to translate itself into reality. If the varying degrees of hostility and indifference that the Indian Left has displayed towards glasnost, perestroika and current developments in Eastern Europe are any pointer, the case for an Indian version of glasnost and perestroika cannot be better timed in this specific sense that it is perhaps time we ask ourselves whether the forty odd years of the Nehruvian legacy of mixed economy is in need of a change of course as a prelude towards exploring ways and means for a specifically Indian way ahead.

In the economic domain, the essential ingredients of a new course should include policies that confront the problem of agricultural backwardness and a fresh look at improving the performance of the public sector. In the political domain, important questions that need to be addressed include such issues as decentralisation, effective regional autonomy and the reorganisation of states. In the ideological domain could be included such initiatives that are able to spell out the kind of objectives the country can realistically pursue instead of the rhetoric that we have traditionally become accustomed to. While it will doubtless be sometime before such an agenda can be confronted, it is perhaps an opportune moment that such questions are posed.

DR. RAMNATH NARAYANSWAMY is Reader in Soviet Studies, University of Bombay.



'We interrupt this bulletin from Bulgaria — which interrupted the bulletin from East Berlin — which interrupted the bulletins from Moscow, Poland and Hungary — to bring you this just in from Prague ...'

A Radical Prescription

Murray N. Rothbard

It is generally agreed, both inside and outside Eastern Europe, that the only cure for their intensifying and grinding poverty is to abandon socialism and central planning, and to adopt private property rights and a free-market economy. But a critical problem is that Western conventional wisdom counsels going slowly, "phasing-in" freedom, rather than taking the always-reviled path of radical and comprehensive social change.

Gradualism, and piecemeal change, is always held up as the sober, practical, responsible, and compassionate path of reform, avoiding the sudden shocks, painful dislocations, and unemployment brought on by radical change.

In this, as in so many areas, however, the conventional wisdom is wrong. It is becoming ever clearer to East Europeans that the only practical and realistic path, the only path toward reform that truly works and works quickly, is the total abolition of socialism and statism across-the-board.

For one thing, as we have seen in the Soviet Union, gradual reform provides a convenient excuse to the vested interests, monopolists, and inefficient sluggards who are the beneficiaries of socialism, to change nothing at all. Combine this resistance with the standard bureaucratic inertia endemic under socialism, and meaningful change is reduced to mere rhetoric and lip service.

But more fundamentally, since the market economy is an intricate, interconnected latticework, a seamless web, keeping some controls and not others creates more dislocations, and perpetuates them indefinitely.

A striking case is the Soviet Union. The reformers wish to abolish all price controls, but they worry that this course, amidst an already inflationary environment, would greatly aggravate inflation. Unfortunately, the East Europeans, in their eagerness to absorb pro-capitalist literature, have imbibed Western economic fallacies that focus on price increases as "inflation" rather than on the monetary expansion which causes the increased prices.

It is becoming ever clearer to East Europeans that the only practical and realistic path, the only path towards reform that truly works and works quickly is the total abolition of socialism and statism across-the-board.

In Soviet Russia and in Poland, the government has been pouring an enormous number of roubles and zlotys into circulation, which has increased price levels. In both countries, severe price controls have disguised the price inflation, and have also created massive shortages of goods. As in most other examples of price control, the authorities then tried to assuage consumers by imposing especially severe price controls on consumer necessities, such as soap, meat, citrus fruit, or fuel. As an inevitable result, these valued items end up in particularly short supply.

If the governments went cold turkey and abolished all the controls, there would indeed be a large one-shot rise in most prices, particularly in consumer goods suffering most from the scarcity imposed by controls. But this would only be a one-shot increase, and not of the continuing and accelerating kind characteristic of monetary expansion. And, furthermore, what consolation is it for a consumer to have the price of an item be cheap if he or she can't find it? Better to have a bar of soap cost ten roubles and be available than to cost two roubles and never appear. And, of course, the market price — say of ten roubles — is not at all arbitrary, but is determined by the demands of the consumers themselves.

Total decontrol eliminates dislocations and restrictions at one fell swoop, and gives the free market the scope to release people's energies, increase production enormously, and direct resources away from misallocations and toward the satisfaction of consum-

ers. It should never be forgotten that the "miracle" of West German recovery from the economic depths after World War II occurred because Ludwig Erhard and the West Germans dismantled the entire structure of price and wage controls at once and overnight, on the glorious day of July 7, 1949.

In addition, the East European countries are starved for capital to develop their economy, and capital will only be supplied, whether by domestic savers or by foreign investors, when: 1) there is a genuine stock market, a market in shares of ownership titles to assets; and 2) the currency is genuinely convertible into hard currencies. Part of the immediate West German reform was to make the mark convertible into hard currencies.

Encourage Liberalisation

... deblocking the Indian economy to achieve greater efficiency will not be an easy job. The key is to provide people with more competition and more choice. I believe that Indian Airlines is always criticised for its poor service. My response would be to allow international airlines to operate on a few domestic routes. That would make Indian Airlines more competitive. Alternatively, you can hand over management of public sector companies to the private sector. Or at least try. Privatisation is perceived to have negative characteristics. But there is nothing wrong in being open towards the private sector as well as foreign know-how and foreign investment.

Liberalisation has become a much misunderstood expression. It is interpreted to mean liberalisation of imports only. But actually liberalisation would involve dismantling the industrial licensing system, education and registration of trade unions among many areas that deserve attention. Again for industry, imports of technology and capital goods are not a crime. How can Indian industry compete without that benefits of new technology?

Dr. I.G. PATEL former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India. India Today, May 31 1990

Keeping Perestroika Going

— Whatever the Pace

May 1, 1990, marked another climactic in modern Soviet history. President Gorbachov and his colleagues were jeered by the crowds as they stood on the Lenin Mausoleum. As they left this famous tribune, they looked a huddle of irritated and disillusioned men. But if they live to fight another day — and President Gorbachov, at any rate, has shown himself to be an amazingly astute politician — this day may go down in history as one of the most important of his career.

For this was freedom at work. People in Moscow feel free to express themselves. It was a triumph of glasnost — even if it was also a kick in the pants to perestroika.

In no Western country would it be considered offensive for politicians to be treated in that way. All we have to do is to think of what President Mitterrand or President Bush have to put up with when they go on tour. Not to speak of Mrs. Thatcher at Question Time in the House of Commons — now that this very famous institution is televised live to millions.

As the Soviet Union teeters on the edge of civil war, as President Gorbachov continues along his tightrope with the end looking farther and farther distant with every new development — we must be aware of the fact that without him there is no hope of success. He — and a few of his elite — have always known that things would have to get worse before they get better, and they must also have been well aware that they would never be able to explain this adequately to the people.

Perestroika remains a promise of better days. But this is something which the long-suffering Soviet people find it very difficult to take. At the same time as Gor-

bachov was turning away from the angry faces in Red Square, he was being criticised in the West for instituting perestroika too slowly. But, given his knowledge that for the present faster perestroika would mean faster economic deterioration — though temporary — we ought to understand that we must leave it up to him and his colleagues to decide how fast it is best to go.

He is facing a crisis situation of considerable proportions — but it has been faced before by many other national leaders. Always before, the Soviet Union — in its totalitarian, expansionist days — has sided with those whom it seemed appropriate to designate the underdogs. Government after government in the Third World have had to go through excruciating negotiations with the International Monetary Fund in order to obtain sufficient money to put their economies on their feet. The IMF representatives — as is their function — have always told them that they must institute market economies if they want loans, because otherwise the loans will be lost. Desperate leaders have replied: "Yes, but if we do that, things will go so much worse before they get better that we will be thrown out by the fury of the people, to whom we can explain nothing." After arduous negotiations, compromises between these two points of view have been reached on many occasions.

This is the dilemma which President Gorbachov is now facing. Who are we to say that perestroika should be going faster? Our interest is to see that it keeps going — at whatever pace. For without perestroika, nothing will ever get better — or at least progress may be put back by half a century.

COURTESY: *Swiss Press Review*

If all price controls should be removed immediately, and currencies made convertible and a full-fledged stock market established, what then should be done about the massive state-owned sector in the socialist bloc? A vital question since the overwhelming bulk of capital assets in the socialist countries are state-owned.

Many East Europeans now realize that it is hopeless to try to induce state

enterprises to be efficient, or to pay attention to prices, costs, or profits. It is becoming clearer to everyone that Ludwig von Mises was right: only genuinely private firms, private owners of the means of production, can be truly responsive to profit-and-loss incentives. And moreover, the only genuine price system reflecting costs and profit opportunities, arises from actual markets — from buying and selling by pri-

vate owners of property.

Obviously, then, all state firms and operations should be privatized immediately — the sooner the better. But, unfortunately, many East Europeans committed to privatization are reluctant to push for this remedy because they complain that people don't have the money to purchase the mountain of capital assets, and that it seems almost impossible for the state to price such assets correctly.

Unfortunately, these free-marketeers are not thinking radically enough. Not only may private citizens under socialism not have the money to buy state assets, but there is a serious question about what the state is supposed to do with all the money, as well as the moral question of why the state deserves to amass this money from its long-suffering subjects.

The proper way to privatize is, once again, a radical one: allowing their present users to "homestead" these assets, for example, by granting pro-rata negotiable shares of ownership to workers in the various firms. After this one mighty stroke of universal privatization, prices of ownership shares on the market will fluctuate in accordance with the productivity and the success of the assets and the firms in question.

Critics of homesteading typically denounce such an idea as a "giveaway" of "windfall gains" to the recipients. But in fact, the homesteaders have already created or taken these resources and lifted them into production, and any ensuing gains (or losses) will be the result of their own productive and entrepreneurial actions.

PROF. MURRAY N. ROTHBARD is the H.J. Hall distinguished professor of economics at the University of Nevada and academic Vice-President of the Ludwig von Mises Institute

COURTESY: *The Free Market* published by the Ludwig von Mises Institute, 851 Burlingame Road, Burlingame, California 94010, USA.

Who Invented Chaos?

A journalist, a priest and a politician were asked to use the Bible to prove whose was the oldest profession. The journalist cited: "In the beginning was the word." The priest insisted: "The Word was God." But the politician had the final say: "God created order out of chaos. And who do you think invented chaos?"

Encounter, November 1969

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Lamington Road,
Bombay - 400 008
Tel: 890801.

Accelerating the Pace of Liberalisation

Rānu Pandit

In a shortage-ridden economy every sector or commodity should be totally free from any control on increased production. The delicensing of industries and the removal of production controls would undoubtedly work to the advantage of consumers. In the process, the need for political manoeuvring would go down raising, in turn, the standards of public morality.

Winds of political and economic change are blowing the world over. India, the largest democracy, cannot afford to alienate itself from these reforms, particularly when the Indian economy is being opened up to the world. Ever since the process of economic liberalisation started in India in 1985, the Government has initiated a series of measures to strengthen the efficiency and competitiveness of Indian industry. The main thrust of this policy has been towards achieving optimum utilisation of installed capacity, achieving maximum production and higher productivity, improving quality, reducing cost, correcting regional imbalances and promoting economic federalism through the equitable spread of investment. At a time when the centrally planned economies the Soviet Union and of Eastern Europe are switching over to a free market economy and the unification of the EEC countries by 1992 is going to offer a vast market potential to be tapped, competitiveness has to be our watchword for growth and the rapid expansion of exports. Without ensuring greater competitiveness of Indian products in the world market, the rapid growth in our exports witnessed in recent years, cannot be sustained.

As a logical corollary to the liberalisation process, the role of the private corporate sector has been gradually expanding to areas which were not open to it so far, such as power generation, steel, defence production, telecommunications, road and port operations and railway equipment.

The National Front government which came to power six months ago, is committed to allocating 50% of the

country's investible resources for agriculture and rural development. This has led to genuine doubts whether this means the neglect of the industrial sector and a slowing down of the liberalisation process started by its predecessor government. This, despite the fact that the Prime Minister and his senior Cabinet colleagues repeatedly gave reassurances again that the development of rural areas will not be at the cost of industrial development and that the process of liberalisation would continue. One has to wait till the government issues a statement on industrial policy which is in the offing.

Rate of Industrial Growth.

Before I touch upon some of the important liberalisation measures taken by the government during the Seventh Five Year Plan, a word about the rate of industrial growth during this Plan period may be in order. Whether it is the direct result of the liberalisation policy adopted in the immediate past or something else, the fact remains that the rate of industrial growth which was decelerating decade after decade has now accelerated from 4.4 per cent per annum in the seventies to 7.5% in the eighties (upto 1989-90). If we take the more recent period, the performance on the industrial front presents a still better picture. During Seventh Five Year Plan this growth rate is likely to be of the order of a little over eight per cent per annum — though during 1989-90, the rate of industrial growth again suffered a setback and, at 6.5% it was the lowest during the Seventh Plan period.

As announced in June 1988, no non-MRTP (Monopoly and Restrictive Trade Practices Act) or non-FERA (Foreign Exchange Regulation Act) company is now required to obtain an industrial licence for setting up units involving

investments upto a limit of Rs.50 crores if they are located in any of the centrally backward areas and up to a limit of Rs.15 crores if they are located in non-backward areas, provided in both the cases such location does not fall within the specified distance limits from boundaries of the standard urban area or municipal limits of other cities or towns.

In order to promote technological upgradation and modernisation, the ceiling for imports under the Technical Development Fund (TDF) scheme has been raised to a foreign exchange equivalent of Rs. 3 crores from Rs. 2 crores per unit per financial year, which is relaxable in deserving cases. The earlier limit of 40% on capacity expansion arising out of the implementation of TDF approvals has been relaxed for non-MRTP and non-FERA companies.

Better Capacity Utilisation

Yet another measure to facilitate capacity creation is the policy of prescribing minimum capacity levels for selected industries with a view to preventing fragmentation of capacity at uneconomic levels and improving cost efficiency in the long run. Under this policy, existing manufacturing units are automatically allowed to expand their capacities upto the prescribed minimum economic levels. As of now, there are 108 industries for which minimum economic capacity has been prescribed.

The limit for fixed assets for MRTP companies was raised from Rs.20 crores to Rs.100 crores and for 'dominant' companies under the MRTP Act from one crore to Rs.100 crores in 1985.

In order to facilitate output expansion and ensure better capacity utilisation of

installed industrial capacities government introduced the facility of broad-banding to enable manufacturing enterprises to adjust their product-mix in line with changing market conditions. As many as 45 items have been brought under the purview of broad-banding including glass fibre, man-made fibre, hot and cold-rolled steel

With a view to improving infrastructure facilities in the backward areas, government has introduced a scheme of growth-centres and decided to set up 100 such centres over the next five years. This is a better scheme for industrialisation of backward areas as compared to the Central Investment Subsidy Scheme available to small-scale units in rural and backward areas.

Unlike in the past, foreign companies are now allowed to submit applications for industrial licences or foreign collaborations in their own names.

Attracting the Foreign Investor

Welcome as these measures are, I would like to make some suggestions in order to carry forward the process of industrial liberalisation.

On foreign investment the thinking of the present government does not appear to be positive. The 40% limit on foreign equity participation should not be considered as something sacrosanct. Unless this limit is raised to 51% a foreign investor may not feel confident about his investment. At present, there is a tussle going on between the Industry Ministry and the Finance Ministry about relaxations in FERA rules. It appears the Industry Ministry wants to go all out and welcome foreign investment in any field, except a few select areas. For this purpose, it is in favour of drawing up a negative list where such investment may not be allowed. On the other hand, the approach of the Finance Ministry appears to be conservative in that it wants to draw a limited positive list of areas in which foreign investment may be allowed.

While delivering the IDBI Silver Jubilee Commemoration Lecture in Bombay recently, Dr. I.G. Patel made a very pertinent observation as regards foreign private investment:

There are many regulations such as those governing foreign investment which have little if anything to do with balance of payments difficul-

ties. Our exchange control system and the Foreign Exchange Regulations Act (FERA) have remained now in force virtually unchanged for so many years that many of its provisions survive without any relevance or apparent significance.

Reducing Dependence on Foreign Aid or Loans

Attracting more foreign investment would also be tantamount to reducing, if not eliminating altogether, our requirements of foreign aid. Foreign private investment in the form of equity participation would mean no increase in the liability of the Indian party on account of the fluctuating value of the rupee vis-a-vis major currencies of the world. On the other hand, foreign private investment in the form of loans would mean that with every successive depreciation of the rupee, the liability of the Indian party would go up. Servicing of foreign equity is cheaper than servicing a foreign loan borrowed on commercial terms. The debt has to be serviced irrespective of the fact whether the project for which it was contracted makes profit or not. As against this, the question of servicing equity would arise only if the project makes profits. Restrictions on royalty payments too need to be eased in order to be able to import really high technology.

Simplifying Procedures

As of today, there are too many discretionary powers with the bureaucrats. There is an urgent need to simplify procedures, rules and regulations governing such investment so as to avoid inordinate delays in the approval of foreign investment proposals. All these measures may help attract the immense potential of foreign private investment, particularly from non-resident Indians. At present, direct foreign investment in India does not amount to more than Rs.300 crores per year while China is able to attract foreign investment of the order of USD 1000 million (Rs.1700 crores) per annum. Removal of restrictions on foreign private investment does not pose any danger of take-overs by multinationals, for India has not put all its eggs in one basket. Our foreign collaboration agreements involve scores of countries and hundreds of parties in the world.

Redefining 'Monopoly' and Delicensing

The MRTP Act should be re-defined in terms of the market share of the company instead of the value of assets. The threshold limit of Rs.100 crores for a company to be identified as an MRTP company should be totally abolished as inflation makes a mockery of such limits.

Except some key areas, all other industries and sectors should be delicensed. Today, out of 1000 applications for licences that are received every year, over 700 relate to projects where the investment involved is less than Rs.5 crores. There is a strong case for freeing all investments below a certain floor, including for MRTP/FERA companies. Such a step would reduce paper work and delays and enable private industry to concentrate on major projects.

Competition in all Sectors

All sectors of the economy should be open to competition. This is possible only if the private sector is allowed to operate in all areas of the economy. Fortunately, the present government does not think that the public sector is the panacea for all our economic ills. On the other hand pronouncements indicate its belief that a public sector which neither provides infrastructure facilities nor fulfils social responsibility has any role to play in the economy.

Except in some select areas such as oil, civil aviation, etc. where it has a monopoly, in most other cases, public sector units are making losses. It is interesting to note that for the first time during the '80s all the non-petroleum enterprises taken together made net profits of Rs.417 crores during 1988-89. All these years, non-oil enterprises used to incur heavy losses year after year. This imposes a heavy financial burden on the government's budgetary resources. If fiscal imbalances which lead to balance of payments crises are to be avoided, the operations of public sector should strictly be confined to core sector activities.

Disposal of Non-viable Public Sector Units

Those public sector units which are incurring losses year after year and are found non-viable, should be scrapped completely. Those units which are making losses at present but are found eco-

nomically viable should be auctioned. In such units, government may not offer equity participation to the public but should hand over the management of such units to professionals. In the case of units which are running at a profit, government should reduce its equity holding by at least 40%. This could be achieved either by disposing of its own equity holding in the market or by issuing fresh capital to the public at large without receiving any share in it for itself. If the government desires to dispose of some of its equity holding in loss-making public sector units sufficient incentives should be provided to ensure that the private sector comes forward to buy that equity holding. This could also be in the form of allowing the private sector to set off its profits against the losses incurred by public sector units which it takes over. This may induce people to buy shares in the public sector enterprises as also help reduce the budgetary deficit and, in turn, the public debt.

Reward Efficiency

If the government is serious about improving the standard of living of the people, which could be achieved by attaining higher growth rates of the economy, a steady increase in production is the only remedy. In other words, in a shortage-ridden economy every sector or commodity should be totally free from any control on increased production. The government at the same time should give incentives for higher capacity utilisation. When a company is able to produce more from the same installed capacity, automatically the unit cost of production would come down. We would also be able to obviate the need for new investment. All in all, the delicensing of industries and the removal of production controls would undoubtedly work to the advantage of consumers. In the process, the need for political manoeuvring would go down raising, in turn, the standards of public morality.

The greatest need of the hour is to get out of ideological cobwebs and give full thrust to the process of liberalisation.

MR. RAMU PANDIT is Secretary — General Indian Merchants Chamber, Bombay

Democracy and Character

B. Lentin

It is idle to pretend that democracy is the epitome of perfection. When too many people deliberate, where deliberations are interminable, often muddled, where laws are complex and justice slow and cumbersome, democracy is impeded. The beneficiaries are then the black-marketeers, food and drugs adulterators and the mafia, who reap the benefits of democracy.

In our country, adulteration of life saving drugs and even essential foods, has become industrialised. Pray, how many have paid the penalty except the innocent victims. Our laws have failed us, our judicial system is far too slow.

Desperate ills needs desperate remedies. Summary trials, and sentence carried out within 24 hours. But that cannot be. Because we are a democracy.

Why is the fear of the devil not put into them (one or two periodical examples would suffice). Because we are a democracy.

Booth capturing has become a periodical political exercise. If any one has ever been caught, I do not recall a single instance of punishment having been meted out. Booth capturing has made our democracy the laughing stock of the world.

The list is long and depressing.

This is the price, we, as a nation, pay for democracy. It is a dreary price.

Yet, all said and done, how is that all other forms of government which have been tried by different nations at different times have failed, and the people have returned to the democratic way of life. Because they have character.

Aristotle said: When some people are very wealthy and others have nothing, the result will be either extreme democracy or absolute oligarchy; or despotism will come from either of these two excesses.

The nearest would be a balance between the two absolutes; freedom with reasonable restraint, and if the restraint can be self-imposed, so much the better. For that a nation needs character.

There are several obtuse definitions of character in the dictionary; moral strength, mental or moral qualities, are some of them.

To be perhaps less obtuse, let me put it differently — The willow will bend to the wind, and will even touch the ground; the oak will stand upright in a gale. The gale may break the oak but not bend it.

The oak has character, the willow has not.

A nation is a mixture of the oak and the willow. If the willow outnumbers the oak, the nation has no character and democracy will not for long survive.

Character is not so much measured by the success one has achieved in life, as by the obstacles one has overcome while trying to succeed.

There was a man.

1831 ...failed in his vocation.

1832 ...defeated for legislature

1833 ...second failure in his vocation

1836 ...suffered a nervous breakdown

1838 ...defeated for Speaker

1840 ...defeated for Election

1843 ...defeated for Congress

1848 ...again defeated for Congress

1855 ...defeated for Senate

1856 ...defeated for Vice-President

1858 ...defeated for Senate

1860 ...elected President of the United States of America

That man overcame. He had character. Someone said: We need many Lincoln-hearted men.

It is not what he has or what he does which directly expresses the worth of a man, but what he essentially is.

Faithfully faithful to every trust/
Honestly honest in every deed/
Righteously righteous and justly just.
That is character.

An unassuming little man in a loin cloth, derisively dismissed as "the naked fakir" had it. He went on regardless, to become the Father of our Nation.

Extract from a speech by Justice B. Lentin (Retd.) at the annual meeting of the Leslie Sawhny Programme on May 16, 1990.

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Labour Participation in Management

— Much Ado about a Non-Issue

S. Nair

"An excellent plumber is infinitely more admirable than an incompetent philosopher. The Society which scorns excellence in plumbing because plumbing is a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because it is an exalted activity will neither have good plumbing nor good philosophy. Neither its pipes nor its theories will hold water".

(Excellence by J.W. Gardner).

What is true for societies, holds good for governments too. A government that seeks to improve industrial relations and enhance productivity, but is unwilling to grapple with the totally confusing maze of labour laws is surely engaging itself in a futile exercise. So too a government that advocates labour participation in management, without ensuring that labour participates in trade unionism itself, is surely a case of putting the cart before the horse. It might not be out of place to mention that if priorities are not to be distorted, government would be better advised to let managers first participate in management, before labour is accorded that status.

Major Constraints

There are many more serious issues that ought to engage the attention of the National Front government. Since there is growing evidence that this government lays greater stress on populist postures than on matters of substance this subject of labour participation in management has apparently got precedence over more vital and immediate issues crying for attention. Assuming, therefore, that in the eyes of the current rulers labour's participation in management is a matter of serious national concern, how do we approach it. There are major constraints and pitfalls that need to be taken note of. In this context there are at least two preliminary questions that must be answered. Firstly,

A government that advocates labour participation in management, without ensuring that labour participates in trade unionism itself is surely a case of putting the cart before the horse. Government would be better advised to let managers participate in management before labour is accorded that status

there is the question of who constitutes "Labour". Judicial pronouncements have conferred the title of "workmen" on government servants, bank employees sitting in air conditioned comfort and airline pilots whose life style is the envy of senior managers in industry. Do these gentlemen need a legislative forum for participation? Do they *want* to 'participate' in the first place? Ask an Air-India commander.

The second question to be asked is: Does labour aspire to participate or is government keen that labour should have a say in management. The city of Bombay, witnesses mammoth rallies by various trade unions on almost every major issue. But we have never had one so far to press for labour's participation in management. Evidently, at least in so far as 'Labour' is concerned, this is not a priority issue. Why then this great concern with a non-issue? The only logical conclusion one can draw is that in the name of labour's participation it is really a ploy for politicians to muscle into industry in the garb of trade unionists.

Derelict Schemes

Let us look at some of the more sub-

stantive issues involved. Labour participation in management has been an obsession with every successive government in free India, and like inflation will always be with us. It attracts a perverse variant of the law of diminishing returns: the more the government talks about it, the less will it do anything about it (except of course, the mandatory meetings of labour ministers of the states and the secretaries concerned, to be followed by the inevitable setting up of committees). This is hardly surprising because popular slogans and hard decisions have an inverse relationship. Is the government at all aware that there is a mechanism which provides a forum for labour to participate with management on issues that directly affect the former — the Works Committee. What has been the fate of these Works Committees. There are numerous enterprises where these Committees have not been formed and no complaints have been received from labour. In many organisations worker candidates are not even forthcoming and the employer has to virtually plead with the workmen to nominate their representatives! Similarly a grandiose scheme of workers participation in industry, on a three tier basis, was recommended in the early '70s. The scheme never took off. It is against this backdrop that the issue of participation must be viewed.

Critical to good industrial relations is the regulation of multiple trade unions in an enterprise. If the government, after applying itself to this problem for almost four decades, has not been able to arrive at a methodology to determine which union is representative, how is it ever going to decide on who will participate in management on behalf of labour. Then again, if participation is to be restricted only to those who come within the definition of "workmen" under the Industrial Disputes Act, large chunks of employees would have no

say in management. Unfortunately in this category would fall the middle and junior managers, who already are managing the day-to-day affairs of the organisation. Even today, particularly in government and state-owned undertakings, communications within the managerial hierarchy is so pathetic that information flow to the middle and lower management levels is actually *via* the union! Estrangement of the managerial class will only aggravate the situation.

'Professional' Union Leaders

This is not to suggest that there is an effective role for workmen where participation exists in whatever form. The individual worker is reduced to being a pawn in the hands of 'professional' unionists. What voice can labour have, when leaders are known to have kept strikes going because it suited them to do so; and have resisted the introduction of any change from computerisation to deployment of workmen on the shop floor with total disregard to organisational compulsions. An individual worker, even if he wants to, dare not violate union-dictated norms. What can such a worker contribute by participating in management?

What does all this boil down to? It simply means that in effect there will be participation by the 'leaders', not by the 'workmen'. The implications are ominous. There is a *cliche* in management called the 'open door' policy. This means that anyone can walk into the boss's room and be heard. The fact, however, is that only a handful actually walk through that door, and they are people who have access to the boss anyway. The vast majority are too timid to face the boss and he in turn is not too keen to encourage such a practice. Labour participation will face a similar situation. The outsider 'leaders' will 'participate' in the name of the vast majority of the employees.

Effective Participation

At what level can labour participation be effective if at all? Any genuine worker-relevant participation can only be at the unit level. At this level there already are the Works Committees. Will workers participation in management supplant the Works Committees? If not the agenda would have to be distinct from welfare-oriented issues that Works Committees discuss. If participation in management is individual based rather than union based, it could result in rather

awkward situations being created. Consider for example a worker expressing a point of view that may be acceptable to the majority but is not in tune with the views of the union leaders and consequently not endorsed by the union representing the workmen. In such a situation can the union then take up the matter in bilateral negotiations and annul the views of the workers' representative on the Board?

If participation is meant to be at the industry level, it would have little relevance for the workmen. The issues involved would be macro-level which hardly touch the workers in a direct way. Nevertheless, the government would help create an enabling situation for politicians to take decisions that have long term implications for the working class, without those affected having any effective voice. And what kind of participation there can be at that level can be gauged from the farce being enacted at the national level. The Tripartite Committee (Government, employers and trade unions) does not meet for years. Even when it does it is unable to arrive at a consensus even on matters that have been discussed *ad nauseum* for several years. Look at the fate of the report of the National Commission on Labour. A participative effort at its very best, the report gathers dust in the Ministry of Labour. Till today we have no explanation as to why the Report has not been accepted — much less implemented. And we are now told that even the pending Industrial Relations Bill is being withdrawn. In the last few months that it has been in power, this government has proved a point: irrespective of party colours, when it comes to political expediency, all governments are the same.

A point I would like to stress because it does not figure in any discussion on labour participation in management, is the need for managers to make the most effective use of time. In fact in our country it can safely be said that only business managers and professionals understand the value of time. This is something incomprehensible to the government sector where what can be discussed tomorrow need not be done today. The secret of using time judiciously is taking prompt decisions — and that means collecting facts, analysing information and arriving at informed decisions. In management,

decisions need to be made quickly in areas like market strategies, investment proposals, growth and diversification plans etc. A labour representative will find himself totally out of his depth. If he needs to seek his leader's opinion or holds rallies to elicit the opinion of employees on such complicated matters it is easy to imagine how chaotic will become the matter of running a business! Any one who seeks to represent labour must have adequate exposure to various aspects of running a business. How does one ensure this? This is a question that those who zealously advocate participation must answer. In fact government has a responsibility to ensure that in their pursuit of an electoral gimmick, management boards are not converted into bureaucratic committees where decisions are kept on hold while the labour representative is out seeking the views of his constituency!

Let Managers Manage

Given this situation what should government address itself to? A great deal. For instance, government can ensure that managers *manage our public* enterprises, without having to contend with political interference. It can ensure that workers participate in trade unions without having to kowtow to the political leadership. And finally it can assure the country that ministers will fully participate in the governance of the country without dabbling in areas that are the preserve of professionals. C-DoT being a good case in point.

So far as the private sector is concerned, no amount of government edicts is going to ensure participation. It would depend on the degree of professionalism, the maturity of industrial relations in the unit concerned and the stability of the enterprise. Let the government direct its energies to creating a climate in which each constituency can discharge its primary responsibilities to the best of its ability. Let managers manage industry, labour run trade unions and ministers restrict themselves to their legislative duties.

Mr. S. NAIR, currently General Manager in a Bombay enterprise, has had considerable experience in personnel management and industrial relations in both public and private sector companies.

Mockery that Helped Topple an Empire

Bernard Levin

It must be splendid to be a citizen of Czechoslovakia today, despite the difficulties, hardships and dangers that have inevitably accompanied the Eastern Revolution. But one form of rejoicing must particularly warm the heart of every free spirit there; the glorious work of pulling down and smashing the statues and portraits of the tyrants who set their persecutors as viceroys over them. But I hope somebody — President Havel will surely see the point — is at this moment commissioning a bust of The Good Soldier Svejk. If you do not know who the Good Soldier Svejk is (you may know him as Schweik), you have a jolly time coming; if you do know, you are having a jolly time already.

Jaroslav Hasek was literally as well as metaphorically a Bohemian; but it was the metaphorical side which led to his countless adventures in his various roles as drunkard, fraud, rioter, anarchist, practical joker, blackmailer, journalist, pauper, lunatic, would-be suicide, soldier, malingerer, deserter, linguist, Bolshevik and genius. The book he wrote chronicled the adventures in the First World War of his magnificently unheroic hero, Svejk (much of Svejk's character and escapades is based on Hasek's own life), and the work is deeply, passionately, wittily and devastatingly subversive. Subversive, that is, of order, religion, authority, respectability and propriety; I would not be surprised to learn that it was banned throughout the years of Czechoslovakia's *via crucis*.

If it wasn't, it should have been: Svejk sums up his political philosophy by saying "An empire as idiotic as this one doesn't deserve to exist." He meant, of course, the Austro-Hungarian, but it was even more apt to the Soviet hegemony, and the ribaldry with which the book is filled should have put the Soviet satraps on their guard.

This flawed but immortal masterpiece was translated into English during the Second World War, which was when I, as a schoolboy, discovered and

revelled in it. It figured, by a bizarre trick of fate, in the *Lady Chatterley* trial. The wonderful booby Mervyn Griffith-Jones suggested that Penguin could have published *Chatterley* without the rude bits (what he called "the bouts"). Allen Lane gently pointed out that Penguin's rule was never to expurgate or cut the books they published, but Griffith-Jones said that *Schweik* (the German spelling, used in the Penguin version) had been abridged, whereupon Lane, even more gently, explained that government regulations controlling paper (very scarce in the war) had made it impossible to publish it in its entirety. Mind you, if Griffith-Jones had actually read it, he would have been tempted to sling it into the dock alongside Lawrence, for there are some of his "bouts" in it, to say nothing of the most appalling blasphemy.

In the early Seventies, a retired diplomat, Sir Cecil Parrott, set himself to put Hasek's masterpiece on its proper plane, which is where Rabelais stands, beside *Tristram Shandy* and *Penguin Island*. His labours in this work are beyond praise; first he translated the entire book, which must amount to some 350,000 words; next, he wrote a biography of Hasek, under the title *The Bad Bohemian*; finally, he produced a comprehensive critical study of Hasek's work.

It was always unlikely that *Svejk* (the Czech spelling, which Parrott preferred) would ever be forgotten, but with the monument that Parrott built him, it is quite certain that he will not. Hasek was fortunate in having an artist friend, Josef Lada who (after Hasek's death) drew the pictures with which the book is adorned, and it is impossible for anyone who has read it, and seen Lada's drawings, ever to imagine Svejk looking like anything else. (Alas, Parrott died in 1984, or we should surely have had still more Svejkiana.)

Svejk's technique for keeping out of trouble — or, more exactly, for getting out of trouble — is to assume the guise of an imbecile, though in truth he is

Why do you suppose that humour, in oppressive societies, is invariably watched with suspicion and put down without compunction? Ask the termites; if you can laugh at the wicked their fate is sealed.

stuffed with cunning, the cunning of the shrewd and wily poor, which has through the centuries defeated any number of bureaucrats, policemen, employers, officers and dictators. The book, indeed, starts at exactly that point: Svejk is arrested for speaking disrespectfully about the emperor, and in no time has persuaded the psychiatrists that he is an idiot, fit for the lunatic asylum rather than prison. His description of his time there gives an immediate flavour of the book:

I really don't know why those loonies get so angry when they're kept there. You can crawl naked on the floor, howl like a jackal, rage and bite... A chap can pass himself off as God Almighty, the Virgin Mary, the Pope, the King of England, His Imperial Majesty or St Wenceslas... One chap even pretended to be St Cyril and St Methodius just to get a double portion... The wildest of them all was a gentleman who pretended to be the sixteenth volume of *Otto's Encyclopedia* and asked everybody to open him and find the entry: "Cardboard box stapling machine"... It really was like living in paradise there. You could kick up a row, fight, sing, cry, bleat, yell, jump, say your prayers, turn somersaults, crawl on all fours, hop, run about, dance, skip, squat all day on your haunches and climb up the wall.

The Rabelais comparison is inescapable, but Hasek's imagination was more realistic; the whole book consists of the appalling scrapes Svejek gets into, and gets others into as well. One of my favourites is the drunken chaplain, Otto Katz, who is given Svejek as a batman, later to gamble him away at cards. The very mildest item in Katz's catalogue of defrockabilities is his attempt to administer extreme unction, which ends with the chaplain telling Svejek to polish his boots with the holy liquid and Svejek using it to oil the lock.

Not only is *The Good Soldier Svejek* a picaresque novel so vividly funny as to be quite unforgettable. It is something more, much more; an anarchical yell of triumph, proclaiming yet another victory over all those who have power and abuse it. That victory, as we all know, is hard won; you cannot really laugh an

empire into disintegration, though you can make its servants wish they had never been born. That is what Hasek and Svejek between them do, and I cannot but believe that in the long night of oppression, the Czechoslovaks treasured the book as a gospel.

It is hardly a gospel that a bishop could approve of, though it does insist that the meek shall inherit the earth. The bishop would jib, however, when it comes to the methods the meek are to use in order to gain their inheritance. Skiving, lying, thieving, cheating — all's fair for the underdog, who has no hope other than the hope he can make for himself, by worming his way into ordered society and releasing a bag of termites, confident that in time they can be left to bring down the structure.

Why do you suppose that humour, in oppressive societies, is invariably

watched with suspicion and put down without compunction? Ask the termites; if you can laugh at the wicked, their fate is sealed. Jaroslav Hasek and his great creation laughed at every kind of obedience, respect, deference and law; they laughed because what they were laughing at deserved to be pulled down and burnt to ashes. In the annals of Czechoslovakia the good soldier Svejek should have a hallowed form and place. I ask President Havel: can you think of a more hallowed form and place for him than Wenceslas Square? Forward, the sculptors of Bohemia!

Sir Cecil Parrot's translation of Svejek is published by Heinemann, The Bad Bohemian by Bodley Head.

COURTESY: *The Times* and Mr. Bernard Levin

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Malavanthangal's Damien

Prema Nandakumar

Jagadisan's life is an inspiration to all people be they healthy or sick, rich or poor, educated or unlettered. His story is literally a saga of human endurance yoked to immitigable hard work and sterling sincerity. Referred to as the Father Damien of South India he has spread the message of leprosy cure. Jagadisan's real happiness has been watching burnt-out cases leading a perfectly normal life in our society

Fulfilment through leprosy? Of all sicknesses in this harsh world, leprosy? That dreaded disease which has held mankind in terror since it appeared as a dull white patch for the first time on some unfortunate's skin grown insensitive? The one malady which draws even mother and child apart and kills pity in a ruthless manner? But if Arjuna's sorrow could be a *yoga* and lead to the *Bhagavad Gita*, dire leprosy also could be accepted as a *yoga* that leads to fulfilment. For that is exactly what happened to T.N. Jagadisan, a young confidant of the Rt. Hon. V.S. Srinivasa Sastri who edited the latter's correspondence and thus performed an enriching service to the world of letters. Jagadisan's life is an inspiration to all people be they healthy or sick, rich or poor, educated or unlettered. His story is literally the saga of human endurance yoked to immitigable hard work and sterling sincerity.

Jagadisan was born on October 2, 1909 (the Mahatma's birthday) in a family of Vedic scholars of Thachakkadu village near Chidambaram. The family was not well-to-do and Jagadisan lost his beloved father at a very early age. He was good at academic studies and his eldest maternal uncle encouraged him to complete graduation. Married to this uncle's daughter, Asanambal, Jagadisan passed his English Honours in 1930 and prepared to take up a teaching career.

But already the shadows of leprosy had fallen on Jagadisan's youthful and imposing figure. His paternal uncle and the uncle's two sons fell victims to infective leprosy with nasal lesions. He himself had a leprosy patch as a school boy the knowledge of which he kept to himself. Not even his widowed mother or little sister knew about it. He tried some remedies and even *Ayurveda*

was of but moderate help.

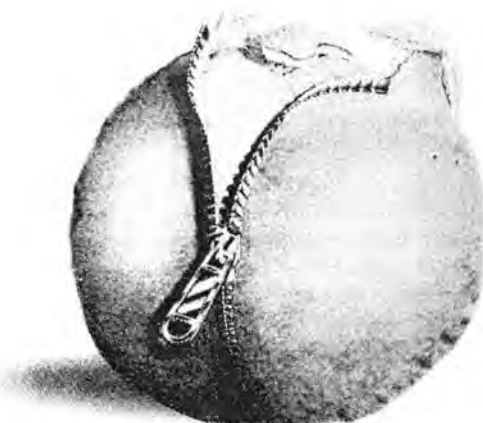
The joy of becoming a graduate was obliterated by the spread of the disorder as well as the spectre of unemployment. Battling with his own fears and inadequacies, Jagadisan left for distant Karachi to take up an editorial job with a publishing company. The very first winter brought a nasty ulcer and the local doctor advised him to return to his people. The journey back was hellish. He was almost unconscious with fever, lost his purse to a train robber and landed penniless in Bombay. But for the timely help from his mother-in-law's sister, it would have been the disastrous end of a promising life. From 1932 onwards Jagadisan taught in colleges in Madurai and Alwaye and in 1937 became a lecturer in English at Annamalai University.

At Annamalai University at that time was V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, the University's Vice-Chancellor. Jagadisan found his Krishna in Sastriar. Be it politics, administration, English grammar or pronunciation, Sastriar led his earnest disciple onwards gently and firmly. Jagadisan, in his turn, became a Boswell. So passionate was this Boswell's admiration that when Sastriar resigned his position and went to Madras, Jagadisan too bid good-bye to his University job and followed him! For he had realised the literary value of even the casual correspondence of Sastriar and made it his self-imposed task to collect and publish the great orator's letters.

Collecting letters is an onerous (and often thankless) job and Sastriar's acquaintances belonged to a very wide spectrum in national life. Sastriar also kept in touch with his family members



T.N. Jagadisan



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through writing whenever he happened to be away from Madras. The names of the correspondents listed by Jagadisan read like a roll call of honour, bringing back to us the rare intellectually heroic age that had such *Maharathis* like Mahatma Gandhi, T.R. Venkatarama Sastri, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, P.S. Sivaswami Iyer, and D.V. Gundappa. Probably editing these letters of Sastriar saved Jagadisan for his future work. These years were marked by financial insecurity, the serious illness of his daughter Mina, the death of his promising son Natarajan and his own constant battle to contain and render inactive the disease that held him in thrall. And yet, as he says, "collecting and editing Sastri's letters became for me a noble cause which lifted me above outward circumstances into the pure joy and radiance of the life of the mind and spirit."

Jagadisan himself was the recipient of scores of letters from Sastriar. The letters were never heavy but what rainbow-hued brilliance and creative splendour in phraseology, and how deep the compassion!

"Politics, books, personalities, grammar points, reminiscences, friendly admonitions, pedagogic severities, deeply self-revealing touches, elevated thought, far-sighted wisdom, delightful humour, flamboyant pessimism, Cassandra-like prophecy, and above all, the sweet voice of affection, the solace of genuine friendship — filled these letters. But what made me a slave to them was the glow of style — the felicities of unstudied perfection, the delightful turns of unpremeditated art. And the beautiful letters were in his beautiful hand always."

Drawing so close to Sastriar (Jagadisan's edition of the letters is now a classic), Jagadisan came into contact with Mahatma Gandhi as well. He once heard Sastriar describe Gandhi's compassion for a leprosy patient with admiration and wonder:

"He told us that he saw with feelings of awe and reverence Gandhiji wipe the sores of a sufferer from leprosy with the ends of his own garment, the sufferer himself being one of our honoured patriots of a previous generation. I have heard subsequently from Sastriar and from others of how Gandhiji, like Father Damien in his love of the sufferers, of how, near his *Ashram* he lodged

a patient and nursed him and how among his many chosen services he considers this high above others."

Thus was the seed for selfless service to eradicate leprosy buried deep in the heart of Jagadisan. Failure to get employment in the St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirapalli, despite a medical certificate from Dr. R.G. Cochrane (CMO, Lady Willingdon Leprosy Sanatorium, Chingleput) now spurred him to action. He must initiate a struggle against this superstitious dread that clutched the hearts of even intellectuals when confronted with leprosy. He wrote to Sastriar of his wish to become a leprosy worker. Prompt came the reply from the great man: "Go forward bravely following the light. Only remember the family are helpless without you." A stipend from Sir Dorabji Tata Trust took care of the family and Jagadisan plunged into work as Honorary Publicity Officer of the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association that is now known as *Hind Kusht Nivaran Sangh*.

Jagadisan's very first interview with Gandhi in 1945 at Sevagram opened the way for a work base in Madras that would help the afflicted poor in rural India. The Mahatma's compassion helped the setting up of the *Kasturba Kusht Nivaran Nilayam* by the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust at Malavanthangal near Kandachipuram in 1946. It was in nurturing this "tiny centre" into a massive complex spread over fifty-two acres for the prevention, control and relief of leprosy through all these decades of despairs and triumphs and steady advancement that Jagadisan has found his life's fulfilment. His autobiography that sets out in detail the superhuman labour of not only himself but a host of dedicated colleagues is appropriately titled *Fulfilment Through Leprosy*. It is Arjuna's *vishada yoga* transformed into *navajeevana* in this *dharma-kshetra* of Malavanthangal infested with cheetahs and cobras, a daunting area away from civilised habitation.

Not to succumb to a feeling of helplessness and suicidal rage when watching one's fingers grow stiff; when the 'anaesthetic' feet erupt in ulcers just because of some extra walking; when one's mother contracts leprosy at an advanced age and dies; to witness one's promising daughter suffer irreparable

brain damage. Jagadisan's ability not to allow himself to be victimised by circumstances has been his triumph. Thanks to the hundreds of workers (including doctors) some of whom are named in *Fulfilment Through Leprosy* but many must remain unknown warriors, today leprosy does not evoke supernatural horror in us. In fact, we can happily say that the spread of the disease has been arrested; and that we can hope to eradicate it in the near future.

Referred to as the Father Damien of South India, Jagadisan has traveled widely all over the world. He has spread the message of leprosy cure through several conferences and seminars. Recognition has come to him in the form of a Padma Shri and the Gandhi International Award. But the centre of his life has been leprosy work and in this he has been blessed with the help of his unfailing wife and companion, Asanam-bal, his daughter Sulochana and son-in-law Raja Ram. And though he has been praised in superlative terms by well-known personalities (R. Venkataraman, the President of India, called him a *sthithaprajna*), Jagadisan's real happiness has been watching burnt-out cases leading a perfectly normal life in our society.

Yes. Only those who have trodden the Dolorous Way can remember the encircling gloom and light a candle for humanity. Jagadisan has all the humility of Bunyan's Christian but he has also something more: a confident cheerfulness. He radiates confidence as his birthright. No wonder the intuitive Sastriar exclaimed in disbelief when he first heard from Jagadisan of his soul-destroying affliction: "You look as if you do not have a care in the world. You might have been a South Sea Islander." Indeed, Jagadisan has gone further than *navajeevana*. He has learnt the secret of *divyajeevana*.

Fulfilment through Leprosy the autobiography of Mr. T.N. Jagadisan published by the Kasturba Kusht Nivaran Nilayam, Malavanthangal P.O., Kandachipuram — S.O. South Arcot District, Tamil Nadu 605701. Price Rs.250.

The sale proceeds from this book go to the Nilayam.

DR. PREMA NANDAKUMAR is a free-lance journalist.

Kashmir: The Case For Self-Determination

— Another Point of View

R.V. Sastri

Mr. Mirco Masani has strongly advocated the right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir to decide their future as a solution to the Kashmir problem (*Freedom First* April-June 1990). He has also endorsed the Ayub Plan under which Jammu and Ladakh would join India and the Kashmir valley would be independent with its territorial integrity guaranteed by both Pakistan and India. It is perhaps possible that if the above plan is implemented, it could solve the problem as between India and the people of the Kashmir valley but it seems doubtful if this, in turn, would solve the deep-rooted conflict between India and Pakistan. It seems to the writer that these are two different problems and Kashmir, for the moment, is a ready issue to fight about.

Consequences of the Ayub Plan

Let us examine the repercussions that would follow the plebiscite and implementation of the Ayub Plan. As far as Jammu is concerned, there would be no problem as it has geographical continuity with India and has a major Hindu population. Mr. Masani is optimistic that if a plebiscite is held, the people of the Kashmir valley would choose to be independent. If the people of the Valley wish to secede it is of little consequence to India whether they would like to remain independent or join Pakistan. If they wish to be independent, they should be able to defend their borders. There are any number of States on the borders of India who have not asked India to guarantee their independence and moreover, after the experience of 1947 when India responded to the Valley's call for protection and its aftermath, it will have to think twice before agreeing to underwrite an independent Kashmir's integrity.

The next problem would be how to deal with Ladakh. It is a land-locked country having its borders with China. There is no way of defending Ladakh except through Kashmir and will Kashmir provide the right of passage or a corridor in case Ladakh is threatened? In all respects defending Ladakh would be a hopeless task. In the Indo-China War, India put up a very stout defence in Ladakh against Chinese attack. It is important strategically not only as a border state but provides easy range for the aerial bombing of India should it fall into the hands of the enemy. If isolated from India, Ladakh would become unstable and perhaps converted into another Tibet with China in actual control of Aksai-Chin. Pakistan

with the connivance of China could easily raise communal tensions and another exodus of the Buddhist population could take place as is happening to the Hindus in Kashmir.

Why Single Out Kashmir?

Like other princely states the state of Jammu and Kashmir was never a part of British India. It is therefore misleading to single out Kashmir alone and it must be accepted on all counts that India played fair on the accession issue. After 40 years, the genesis of the problem has lost its importance and what stands out prominently is only the offer of plebiscite by India.

It may be recalled that in dealing with the princely states, it was held, both by Mr. Jinnah and the British Government, that paramountcy lapsed with the transfer of power and that India and Pakistan should negotiate separate treaties of accession with the *princes* and not the *people* of princely states with the provision that the negotiating states should be contiguous to either India or Pakistan. Mr. Jinnah went to the extent of accepting the accession of Junagadh which is in Gujarat and encouraged both Travancore and Hyderabad in their ambition to be independent and lent diplomatic recognition by sending his emissaries.

In the case of Kashmir, he was hoisted on his own petard and in any case the legality of accession of Kashmir state was not questioned either by Britain or the United Nations. There was no clause in the Treaty of Accession providing for a plebiscite but it was an act of faith. Article 370 was intended to protect the simple people of Kashmir against immigration and purchase of property by outsiders. This does not bestow any special status nor abrogate the accession treaty. The story of Assam would have been different if Article 370 had been in force there. The reference to the United Nations was in good faith. It reflected India's inexperience in the working of the UNO and the problem soon got mixed up with the Cold War. With the Cold War ending the United States has chosen to remain neutral in the current revival of the Kashmir dispute. But other sinister forces are raising their heads in the international scene especially among our Muslim neighbours.

The wounds of Partition have not healed and Pakistan is... happy with what it got: to use Jinnah's words "a moth-eaten, truncated Pakistan". Despite its

size and resources. It wishes to be on par with India.

India's Islamic Neighbours

It was foreseen by Mahatma Gandhi and mentioned by Pyarelal in his 'Last Phase' that the objective of the British in encouraging partition was that Pakistan would break ties with India and turn towards its Islamic neighbours and eventually form a block against Russia. The prophecy did come true. In the first instance, Pakistan joined the SEATO, has now come closer to Iran and is forming trouble in Afghanistan. A combination of Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan could be a formidable threat to India. The attitude of the present regime in Iran is revealing. In an interview the Iranian Foreign Minister Mr. Ali Akhtar Velayate was asked if Iran supported the Kashmiris' demand for self-determination. Mr. Velayate said that Iran supported the cause of all Muslims in the world regardless of their nationalities. "This is our principle and when we support Islamic causes all over the world that does not mean that we want to interfere in their internal affairs." The contradiction in this statement is too obvious for comment.

On the same principle, Iran could also support the Babri Masjid issue and other grievances of the Muslims to further the Islamic cause. Such noble sentiments were not, however, in evidence in their dealings with the Kurds who were seeking separation from Iran. For almost 50 years Iran has been at war with the Kurdish people. The war has intensified in the last ten years. More Kurdish men, women and children have been butchered and tortured under Khomeini than ever before. So much for the hypocrisy of the Iranian Minister. Any comment by India of Iran's treatment of the Kurds would be construed as an intervention in Iran's internal affairs. Despite India's support to Iran in the Iran-Iraq War, she has been hostile to India. It has been reported in the foreign press that Afghan guerillas are training Kashmiri youth in terrorism and would join Pakistan in case of a war with India.

The Islamic countries do fight amongst themselves and cannot unite against Israel but when it comes to India, they readily join Pakistan in giving both moral and material support. Saudi money is freely used to open schools where Mullahs are recruited by the Jamaat-e-Islami from Uttar Pradesh to give lessons in Islamic fundamentalism to the youth of Kashmir.

With the hostile attitude of our Islamic neighbours and an unsettled border with China, a strategic area like the Kashmir valley cannot be viewed purely from the point of view of self-determination for its people. It is true that the people of Kashmir dissatisfied with their progress and with their government are agitating for separation. There

has undoubtedly been rigging of elections in Kashmir. So has there been rigging on a massive scale in Bihar; and successive governments in this state have been known to be notoriously corrupt. Does it then follow that the solution lies in conceding to the people of Bihar the right to secede as a solution? In an imperfect world, there can be no

perfect or permanent solutions. The government can only act according to the exigencies of the situation and at the same time endeavour to meet the aspirations of the people of Kashmir.

MR. R.V. SASTRI, was active in the national movement during his student days.

Democracy — What is It?

Col. Oberoi's comment (*Freedom First* April-June '90) is appreciated and I have no great differences to discuss. But let me comment briefly on the issues he raised:

1) If moral principles are taught to the upcoming generation, the foundation for education has been established. The next requirements are reading, writing and arithmetic. As I have tried to make clear, moral principles are of the same order of reality as Newton's Laws — you either work within these constraints or you (or your offspring) will perish. Universal literacy is not a necessary requirement for democratic organization, adherence to moral principles is.

2) The one-man one-vote issue is thorny. I tried to show that historically there is no absolute requirement for one-man one-vote in order that a democratic organization be

established. There is also the practical aspect that a moral, but incompetent, citizenry may be destroyed by more competent adversaries. The way out is to enfranchise a large, most competent, fraction of the voting population (say 60 percent). In a state having 10 million potential voters, this would mean that 6 million would have the vote. It is difficult to visualize a conspiracy involving so large a number of people. In any event, the elected officials would be constrained in their actions by moral principles, as Toqueville pointed out when discussing the early years of the United States when the franchise was severely restricted to people who owned property. Just how the voter selection process is to take place at present must be decided by local people who take into account local traditions and the current situ-

ation. I have had to devote an entire chapter in my book to this question and, admittedly, I don't have a definite answer. Yet the competence problem is formidable and remains to be dealt with properly.

There has been a remarkable change in the world's political situation since the article was published. Yet the ideas set forth still stand. And the teaching of moral behavior is one of the necessities for those newly liberated from the communist dictatorships (and those still laboring under quasi-marxist regimes).

Raphael G. Kazmann

231 Duplantier Blvd.
Baton Rouge, LA 70808
USA

Violent Politics

Mr. V. Venkatesan's article on violent politics (*Freedom First* April-Jan '90) is illuminating. But it appears that the author has failed to examine a possible cause for the criminal-political nexus. Unless this issue is analysed, it is unlikely that we will be able to take proper measures to tackle the problem.

To belong to the ruling party as an elected representative or even as a 'loyal' worker, almost amounts to getting a licence to acquire money by any means without fear of investigation or prosecution. The fact that almost all influential political leaders, belonging to ruling parties, have amassed wealth, and not a single man has been prosecuted and convicted proves the point. No other profession or business provides such unprecedented benefits of money, authority, *izzat* (prestige) and immunity without the need for accountability or any particular ability, as membership of a ruling party does, particularly as an elected member. It is but natural for political parties to take recourse to all measures, including violence, to safeguard their interests.

A question arises as to why politics became openly violent only in the mid seventies, though there are reports that the Congress was ruthless in certain states particularly in the rural areas as early as the late fifties. The main reason for this change

appears to be that after Independence, the Congress Party was too popular and powerful to need violence in elections. It was only when the opposition became strong, did the party resort to strong arm methods to safeguard its interests. The opposition ruled states were equally guilty of political violence, particularly when the Congress and communists clashed. The virus of violence has spread so much that political parties believing in value based politics will be forced to use violence to survive politically. This observation is based purely on present conditions in the country. However, if in some future elections, a popularity wave loads the dice heavily in favour of a particular party, then violence may, temporarily take a back seat.

Mr. Venkatesan has stressed the role of citizens in containing violence in politics. The success of such a movement will be limited to the extent to which the people assert themselves and their ability to completely isolate undesirable elements. The main problem in India is that the neglect of education, and the hold of caste, creed, regional bias and hero worship makes the isolation of defaulting politicians almost impossible as most well established politicians have a sizeable base irrespective of

their credibility. In addition, the party leadership often approves of violence to ensure its victory. Hence to single out the real culprits will be difficult and to proceed against them even more frustrating.

It is felt that the only way the politician-criminal nexus can be made ineffective is by making political offices financially less lucrative. This is possible either by electing leaders of very good character, who would voluntarily control temptations to acquire easy money or by changing the powers of the elected leaders from an executive level to an advisory one. While the former proposal is impractical (*Freedom First*, April-June 90 'Leadership Crisis in India'), the latter involves major changes in our system of government. Half measures will only frustrate the efforts of well-meaning citizens.

Satish Oberoi

5, Waman Smriti
Deccan College Road
Pune 411006

Don't Miss the Little Pleasures of Connaught Place

Y.R. Mehta

Connaught Place is the beauty spot of Delhi and no one who comes as a visitor can afford not to see Connaught Place, with its very well built structures, well placed cinema houses etc. Connaught Place has been like this ever since it was made a visitors' paradise. Nehru Place conceived much later was made with great sound and noise and still continues to be a "Ghosts' Paradise," a den for the poor people to sit in the large courtyards or the open verandas. But Connaught Place is very different and it always attracts people very much like Chandni Chowk and its various *gullies*.

You can get anything in Connaught Place, particularly after the small groups of shops that were built by the government on the Janpath and Shankar Markets. But there is also something nicer that the normal human being misses noticing in Connaught Place. He is so busy with his shopping that he very likely misses a great deal of what is now an integral part of Connaught Place. For instance, when you get down near the Handicrafts Emporium, you have to park your car in the car-park with the gear released and leave it in the charge of a deaf and dumb group of boys. These boys will look after the car and see that it is not damaged and, if necessary,

change its position though the car is locked from the outside. It is a great pleasure to see this human effort, obviously for a small tip, but the sense of responsibility shown by these boys and the smile they give at the time of departure is more than compensation for the small change you part with. These deaf and dumb boys take a little money from each car owner, but what they give in return is much more than is measurable.

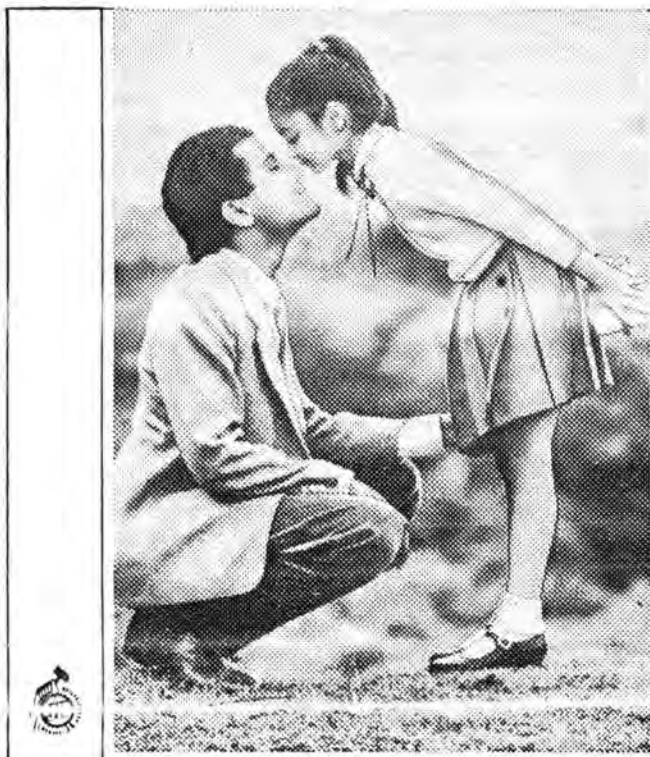
Adjacent to this car stand, is a very tiny shop where a man called Yog Raj makes tea for hundreds of people who come to visit this area. He prepares tea on a petroleum stove. Every minute tea glasses pass out of his hands for workers in the nearby shops and the strollers. He is such an amiable human being that apart from the tea that he gives you, he gives you a *namaskar* or talks about your health. The visitor pays him for the tea and gets back not only tea but also a sense of pleasure. This man hailing from the far-off District of Gonda in Uttar Pradesh plies his trade in a manner that not only keeps his clients satisfied, with his cup of tea but also with his good humour. A sight to warm one's heart.

There is, alas, another part to his profession not so cheering and that is when

his stove is taken away by the Municipal Committee Inspectors for encroaching on a public place where unauthorised shops or vendors are not permitted. Should the Municipal Committee men remove his utensils and stove every fifteen to twenty days? If action is to be taken against unauthorised vendors should not similar action be taken against large shops which spill their wares on to the verandahs, which are equally unauthorised? What is worse, these Committee men extract money from all the small traders who sit on the pavement in Delhi and New Delhi.

A short distance from the tea vendor, you see a number of shoe-polish boys sitting near the Janpath waiting to shine your shoes with polish, which may or may not be properly manufactured. But they try to attract your attention and let you go with a smile on their face (and yours also) and probably a tip in their pocket.

Alas, most visitors to Delhi will miss the world of these small men, interested as they are in seeing only large shops and the beautifully displayed shop windows. Probably our *tea-wallah* to them is not a part of Connaught Place. But is he not part of the culture of Connaught Place?



Never say no to life
Raymond's

Of Hearts and Brains

I was amused to read in the *Times of India* a reprint of a debate on AIR which took place on May 19, 1938 between Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, then a leader of the Indian Liberal Party and myself who was the Secretary of the Congress Socialist Party. The title of the debate was "Any Liberal to Any Socialist". The *Times of India* has republished Sir Chimanlal's broadcast. I find what he has said extremely apt and I quite agree with him that my advocacy of equality and the State capitalist kind of socialism were both pernicious and impracticable.

That reminds me of a conversation that I had with Mr. John Wardlaw Milne, a British conservative MP, in my student days in London. When Mr. Milne asked me what my politics were, I told him I was an ardent socialist and a Labour Party man. He patted me on the shoulder and said "Very good, young man, very good. If at your age you are not a socialist, it would mean you had no heart. But mark my words, young man, if at 41 you are still a socialist, it means that you have no brains". How right he was! At the age of 39 I wrote "Socialism Reconsidered" and turned from Marx to Mahatma Gandhi. It is no wonder therefore that I now find myself in hearty agreement with Sir Chimanlal's reply to me in 1938.

Replacing Tweedledum by Tweedledee

If anyone thought that the removal of Mr. Jagmohan from the scene as Governor of Jammu & Kashmir was going to be the end of the reign of terror, he will be sadly dismayed. Not only has Mr. George Fernandes who has doubts about the policy of repression, being moved from the scene, but Mr. Jagmohan's successor is a policeman with very bad antecedents. For all I know, Mr. Saxena is a good man, but he comes from the disreputable organization called RAW. Secondly, he was responsible for the implementation of Mrs. Gandhi's bogus "Emergen-

cy" and thirdly, worst of all he aided Mrs. Gandhi in the annexation of Sikkim by force and fraud, so well described by Sunanda Datta-Ray in his book "Smash and Grab". With these antecedents, one would have thought he was the worst man to send out to Jammu & Kashmir. One tyrant in place of another is all that the people of Kashmir have to face. Surely, with a little imagination, men like Mr. Rajmohan Gandhi or Mr. K. F. Rustomji could have been sent to Kashmir if there was any intention to bring about a more liberal policy which is grossly overdue.

A Sensible Solution

Mr. L. K. Advani, leader of the BJP is reported in the *Indian Express* of 18th March to have made a very sensible suggestion for an Indo-Pakistan Confederation. Such a solution would automatically end the problems of the Valley of Kashmir and of the Punjab because by its very nature the Confederation will be a loose federation like that suggested by the Cabinet Mission in 1946. Once real autonomy is conceded, I am sure the people of Kashmir and the Sikhs in the Punjab will be satisfied. It is therefore to be hoped that Mr. Advani's solution will be implemented in the not too distant future.

Mr. Advani, however, has also made another suggestion that there should be a referendum on Article 370 of the Constitution. Mr. Advani of course has advocated a referendum for the whole of India. That is nonsense. Such a referendum can only be held legitimately in the Valley of Kashmir and the result of that referendum cannot be in any doubt. Surely we don't want black marketeers from Bombay and Calcutta to take black money to Kashmir and deprive the poor people of the Valley of their land? And why should these gentlemen from Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta be allowed to decide what is to happen with the people of Kashmir? Article 370 is a highly legitimate and necessary safeguard for the poor farmers against the black marke-

teers. This particular suggestion need not, however, be taken seriously.

A Stupid Attempt at Censorship

It is good news that the courts of law have defeated the stupid attempt of the Union government and its officials to ban the April edition of *Newstrack*. The reason is that it showed the Delhi police in an unfavourable light. That is exactly how they should be shown.

It is good that the cassette will now be shown as the May edition of *Newstrack*. Thank God for the judiciary.

What, however, is one to think of the Union government which talks of autonomy and behaves as badly as its predecessor?

B.T. Ranadive

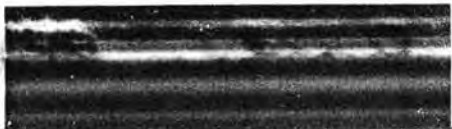
The communist CPM leader, B.T. Ranadive, who died recently, is reported to have pleaded for euthanasia and the end of his agony. Whether or not those around him listened to his plea is not reported. I hope it was.

I knew B.T. Ranadive in my Congress Socialist Party days in the 30s. He was the Robespierre of the Communist Party and its "sea green incorruptible". He died as an unreconstructed Stalinist.

Among those who attended his funeral, it is reported, was Mr. S.A. Dange who was in every way a contrast to Mr. Ranadive, what is more, the two were not on speaking terms for many years and hated each other. A member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party once told me that he doubted my charge that Stalin had murdered many innocent people like Bukharin and Zinoviev until he saw how Dange and Ranadive hated each other and one would shoot the other if a gun was placed in his hand. He then began to understand how Stalin killed or tried to destroy those he disliked. That was the only one way by which my communist friend could arrive at the truth!



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The Masani Viewpoint

A Bad Budget

Some time in January a stockbroker friend of mine said "See what your friend Mr. Madhu Dandavate has done. His statements have knocked the bottom out of the Stock Exchange. I suppose he will bring in a budget that will send the market down further". My reply was somewhat reassuring. "I think the Stock Exchange of Bombay has already discounted the budget. The budget of course will be bad, but it will be not as bad as you think. If I know your Stock Exchange, the market will go up." That is exactly what has happened.

Why do I say it is a bad budget, or as Mr. Jay Dubashi has called it a "cowardly budget"? I do so, although Mr. Madhu Dandavate is an old friend of mine and he is one of God's good men. What I write below is therefore more in sorrow than in anger.

What is wrong with the budget are the following things:

1. It will undoubtedly cause a further rise in prices;
2. There is not one rupee of cut in expenditure;
3. The reduction in deficit finance is a piddling one leaving a uncovered budgetary deficit of Rs. 7206 crores;
4. Black money will increase;
5. As Mr. Palkhiwala has shown, there will be an addition of Rs. 110 crores every day in our national debt;
6. The only good thing about the budget is the abolition of Gold Control, but the equally obnoxious FERA remains untouched.

The cut in deficit finance is a piddling Rs. 2000 crores compared to last year. On the other hand, there is a vicious additional levy on petroleum which will inevitably send up all prices. The taxi fares in Bombay have already shot up and the prices of commodities have gone up because of the rise in expenditure on transportation. What is worse is that not one rupee out of this money extracted from road transport will be ploughed back into the roads. It will

go to meet the entirely uncalled for rise in military expenditure and other wasteful expenditure on a top heavy administration.

I note that the Secretary of the Finance Ministry, a "leftist" name Bimal Jalan has made a statement that this is a counter-inflationary budget. Either the man is a nitwit or he is lying. There is nothing new about this because after every budget for the last few years, the officials of the Ministry of Finance have lied blue in the face saying that prices will not rise. Ever single year prices have in fact gone up. Mr. Jalan lying about the budget is only carrying out the unhealthy tradition of the Finance Ministry officials. Why Mr. Madhu Dandavate has chosen such an advisor is beyond me except that he is a simple and gullible man.

Why the additional taxes and why the inability to cut down deficit finance? Why is it that this Government and its predecessor have not been able to cut down expenditure? The reason is simple — lack of courage. Cutting down expenditure means retrenching people and there is a large army of under-employed government servants who should be retrenched but then it will need guts to do so. Unfortunately, neither Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, nor Mr. V. P. Singh, nor Mr. Madhu Dandavate is a Margaret Thatcher.

Mr. Vasant Sathe was therefore perfectly right in calling it an inflationary budget. Where he went wrong was in saying it was not a socialist budget. Of course, it is.

The only man who said so on television was Mr. Jaswant Singh, MP, who quite rightly said that there was nothing innovative about the budget. It was the same old mixture as before due to socialist pre-occupations, which Delhi has not yet shed in spite of the gale blowing through Eastern Europe. The people of East Germany have found out what a waste of time and burden socialism was and have now voted for a conservative government. Has this no lesson for the new government in Delhi?

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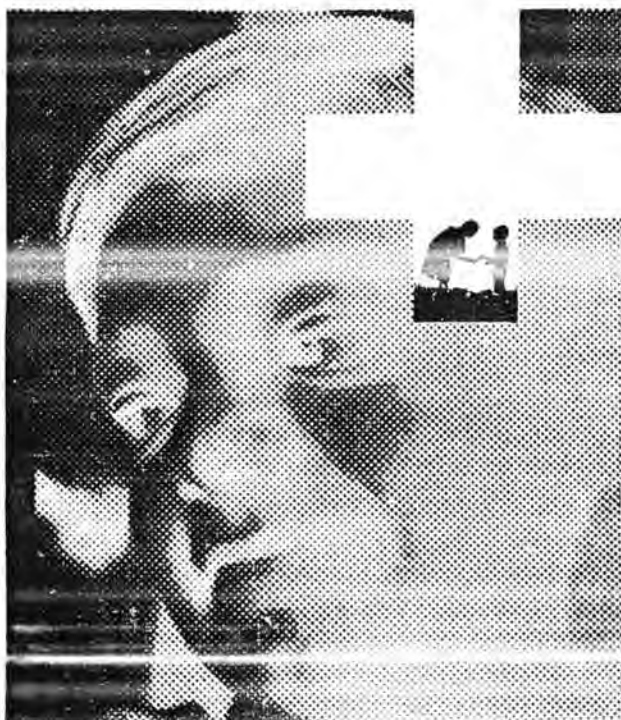
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TATA ENTERPRISES



BOOK REVIEWS

IN THESE TIMES by Bernard Levin;
Jonathan Cape Ltd. 32 Bedford
Square, London; 1986; PP.298;
£10.95.

Iran, euthanasia, politics, miners, communist hypocrisy, and christianity and rape, to cite some of the subjects considered. A somewhat intriguing feature of the book is that the author has chosen not to separate book reviews from the general articles — they simply follow the articles in various places in the contents.

Rather appropriately, the author opens the work by emphasizing the great quality of loyalty, with an article on New York entitled 'The Odd Copper'. It is a heartwarming story of how a policeman kept his promise by giving his friend, the waitress in a restaurant that he patronised regularly, three million dollars he won in a lottery, this sum being exactly half of the six million dollars he actually won. Indeed, such loyalty is rare these days.

Not that the author confines himself to such moral and uplifting qualities as loyalty. The book is replete with humour. A delightful example is a humorous skit on speaking English on Dutch television. Bernard Levin was quite amazed at discovering that the studio audience seemed to understand English perfectly, which fact was confirmed when the audience not only laughed, but laughed with exactly the same reaction/interval as the British would. Appropriately, the article is called 'Or I'm a Dutchman'.

Quite understandably the stupidities of the law also come in for acute comment. Too many judges tend to pontificate in court on public controversies instead of restricting themselves to their proper task of passing judgment — and as we know, this vice is by no means confined to England. If Judges were encouraged to proceed along these garrulous lines, then 'It would start with speeches at public events. Here, Mr. Justice Bun will advocate the return of capital punishment; there Judge Curran will denounce the idea of a Channel Tunnel... next Judge Teapot will insist upon a complete reshaping of the educational system...' Understandably, the article is called 'Silence in Court'.

Mercifully, life is frequently enhanced by the healing touch of literature and

art, and the culture of humane persons. In 'A Room Without a View,' Bernard Levin reviews E.M. Forster's *Commonplace Book* edited by Philip Gardner. Levin, a dedicated Forsterian, is nevertheless disappointed with many of Forster's entries, and writes '... I am tempted to wish that his literary executors had burnt the thing... he totters from these pages like a querulous old woman, worn out before his time...' Happily, however, Levin showers praise on the notes and thoughts that finally appeared as 'Aspects of the Novel', and also on several of Forster's insights, specially those concerning Sterne and Shelley.

It is not always possible to agree with the reviewer's assessment of the several books he reviews, but all his reviews are short, clear and to the point.

Bernard Levin's range of interests is overwhelming. He is appalled by the hugeness of American newspapers and gives us a detailed survey of the Sunday edition of the *New York Times*. Rather appropriately the article is called 'Weighing their Words'. In 'Bad Dogs and Englishmen' he has a forceful dig at all those crackpots in England who sympathize with a vicious dog rather than with its victim, in this case an innocent boy whom the dog has badly bitten. 'With Nobody in the Sky' is a lovely outburst against the inane remarks pilots and air hostesses mutter to passengers. An example: "Trust you had a pleasant flight" — *ad nauseam*. In many articles Levin strikes hard at any form of cruelty, hypocrisy, or racial vulgarity, but does so always with restraint and dignity — which, of course, make the attacks all the more sharp and effective.

Many of the articles give one the impression that if all of us were living in even a half decent world, the essayist would certainly have confined himself to matters and occasions concerned with love, irony, humour, and occasional cynicism. But his conscience rebels, there is far too much horror and cruelty in the world. He is compelled to speak out, specially at the many injustices perpetrated by various species of vulgarities against his own distinguished race

In These
Times

The title of this book suggests both the nature of these articles as well as the well-known newspaper, *The Times*, London, in which they first appeared. Whether one sympathises with Bernard Levin's point of view or feels he is sometimes too astringent in his criticism, every article is written in clear, effective and straightforward prose, often tinged with wit and sarcasm. But a writer of his calibre suffers from rather a strange fault. He is too fond of using brackets. These are unavoidable in mathematics, but are to be avoided in prose. The author should learn to eschew them!

There are altogether 43 articles relevant to the human condition of our times and 16 reviews of books that appeared in *The Observer* on various subjects. The articles cover such varied subjects as loyalty, the law, humour, politics, racial problems, political cruelty, the press, insane animal lovers, airline jargon, intolerance, magnanimity, freedom of the artist, race and fascism and are also, the condition of the police, the art of indexing, feminism, Mozart, pop, language, adventure in

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— the Jews.

Serious matters require serious consideration, and the author considers it his bounden duty to oblige. Inevitably therefore many of the articles are political, or have a political tinge. He will not tolerate any form of injustice or tyranny. This comes out forcefully in several articles.

In 'Anyone for Tennis', 'From the House of the Dead' and 'Crime and Punishment' Bernard Levin shows in their awful clarity the cruelties inherent in both communism and fascism.

Consider also 'A View from the Lager' which is a strong frontal attack on racial fascism — South African apartheid. In this article Levin reveals himself as being against both forms of tyranny — fascist/racial and communist.

But Levin, a humanist, occasionally feels compelled to release himself from such horrors and get back to all the normal whims and fancies of our globe.

He is appalled — in a perfectly witty manner — at the outcry over the National History Museum charging a small entrance fee to ensure the proper upkeep of the museum. He is equally — and rightly — appalled at the extremes to which over-enthusiastic feminists go to proclaim their equality with male chauvinist pigs. Why, he wonders, should Mr. Paul Grossman's name not be suitably changed to Mr. Paul Grossperson? And should any reader, for any reason, be seriously interested in knowing how to acquire 'any document signed by any member of the staff of the Soviet Embassy' in Teheran, or anywhere else for that matter, let him, or her, read the article entitled 'Persian Roulette'. It is, quite simply, hilarious: the funniest article in the whole collection.

How does one account for the fact that an essayist of such wit and erudition displays, on occasion, a rather strange lack of perspective, let alone common sense and humour? This is precisely what Bernard Levin does in an article called '*Ars brevis, vita longa*'. Does he, in all seriousness, have to devote four whole pages, replete with much musical erudition, to convince himself and others that Mozart is miles above all pop singer 'Classics'? And is there any really compelling need to list no less than 16 composers, not to mention Gershwin, to disprove someone's

quite ludicrous and inane remark that 'the Beatles were the greatest songwriters since Schubert'? The Beatles were fun — let's leave it at that.

But when someone gives us so much that compels us to ponder over the reality and earnestness of life, it would be churlish to quibble over small lapses. The last has obviously left a lasting impression on Bernard Levin, and there are several articles dealing with it. But the war also brought out what is best and most magnanimous in him. In the most moving article in the whole collection called, aptly, 'They also Served,' we find the author making an eloquent plea that the gallant band of Germans who bravely resisted Hitler and were lucky enough to survive, should be honoured by an invitation to attend the 1985 VE day parade in London held to mark the 40th anniversary of the end of the war. Foremost amongst such heroes, who, alas, did not survive, was Claus von Stauffenberg who placed a bomb under Hitler's table but was captured and met a horrible death.

To wash away our tears there is no harm in going from the sublime to the ridiculous. Levin appreciates this, so in an excellent review of *Fair of Speech: The Uses of Euphemism* edited by D.J. Enright we come across this gem at the end of the review. 'Simple inexpensive gowns for the mature fuller figure' which, when translated, means 'Nasty cheap dresses for fat old women.' Evidently we are indebted to Margharita Laski for this gem.

One must end by drawing attention to two political articles — for a reason that quickly becomes apparent. 'Confucius He Say' is a lightly written but rather vigorous article that shows up the glaring inequalities and inadequacies of totalitarianism in both China and the Soviet Union. The article also contains a reference to Rumania's Ceausescu and his wife — '... The thieving and racketeering of Ceausescu and his wife and their families is so gigantic, shameless and uncontrollable that there is, quite literally, nothing in the world to match it.' 'Take the Money and Stay' is an equally vigorous attack on Tito's craving for luxury, and indulgence in lust and corruption. This was matched only by Mao's taste for good and high living — equalled only by that of his wife.

The first article was written in March 1985, the second in January 1986. This

was at a time when the dictator was flushed with power and the leaders of the West, for diplomatic reasons of their own, did not wish to irritate or anger him too greatly. This mattered not a bit to Bernard Levin who never hesitates to call a spade a spade. Ceausescu and his equally thieving wife were subsequently captured, tried and shot in February 1990. Could anything have been more prophetic than Levin's strictures?

Reviewed by HOMI J. VAKEL, Publishing Consultant and Editor.

GANDHI: PAN ISLAMISM, IMPERIALISM AND NATIONALISM by B.R. Nanda; Oxford University Press, Bombay; 1989; pp. 438; Rs. 250.

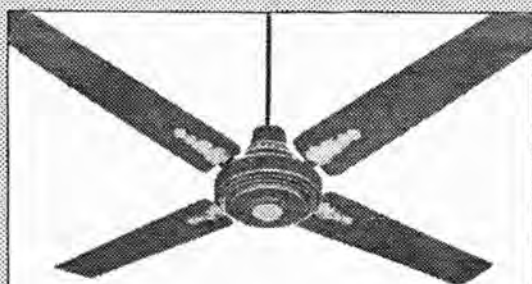


B.R. Nanda's lucid and analytical writings on Modern India based on critical research are necessary reading for both lay readers and historians. In the book under review, the growth of pan-Islamism in India is studied, with the *Khilafat* movement as the culmination. Nanda establishes that Gandhi's support for the movement was meant to harness the issue to a political cause and to promote Hindu-Muslim unity and *swaraj*.

The forces which moulded pan-Islamism are traced to the medieval heritage. The medieval Indian state was neither religious nor secular. As religious and social systems, Hinduism and Islam failed to develop links of inti-

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CALCUTTA

Salaam Calcutta : 1690—1990

mate interaction and, at best, reached a state of toleration and compromise. British policy towards Indian communities was influenced by their commercial and political interests. In Nanda's opinion, there are two myths — the Muslims leading the Revolt of 1857 and being singled out for vengeance by the British, and Muslim backwardness in education, popularised by the British, out of their anxiety over growing Islamic revivalism. Saiyyid Ahmad Khan, one of the few nineteenth century Muslim leaders to perceive that his community should rationally re-interpret religious doctrine and practice as a prelude to social regeneration, was a conservative in politics. However, his efforts in promoting Western education among the Muslims only isolated them from their counterparts in other communities.

The anti-partition agitation in Bengal did not draw many Muslims, the author maintains. To forestall the possibility of Muslim youth turning to extremist politics, the British mobilised Muslim conservative forces. At its birth, the Muslim League declared loyalty to the Government and subsequently won separate electorates (1909). This Anglo-Muslim alliance was strained by the misfortunes of Turkey and the revocation of the partition of Bengal. The emergence of younger radical Muslim politicians became an important factor in Hindu-Muslim *entente* and the consequent Lucknow Pact. There also rose to fame champions of Islam, like Azad and the Ali brothers, who had transformed from anglicised Aligarh products to proponents of pan-Islamism attacking the Government's indifference to Turkey.

Since his return in India, (1915) Gandhi had felt out of tune with political parties, figuring in popular imagination more as a religious and social reformer. His phenomenal rise to the centre of Indian politics, in Nanda's view, is to be seen in the economic and political context — the price rise, the textile workers' strike, the disillusionment of the Indian intelligentsia with existing political parties and the accidental vacuum in the national leadership created by the decline of Annie Besant and the prolonged absence of Tilak in London.

The Indian Muslim reaction to the liquidation of the Ottoman empire was a pro-Turkish pan-Islamic movement. Critics and loyalists of the Government, *Ulemas* and titled gentry, *sunnis* and

Shias were all *Khilafat* supporters. Gandhi supported the *Khilafat* cause and drew up a programme of non co-operation. While some of his closest colleagues were uneasy at his interest, Gandhi saw the issue in moral terms. His chief link with the *Khilafat* organisation was the Ali brothers. Gandhi was heard respectfully in mosques and *idgahs* but he knew the limitations of his appeal. The religious overtones of *Khilafat*, which made it susceptible to fanaticism constantly worried Gandhi.

Non-cooperation showed something new in Indian politics — the direct emotional link between Gandhi and the people. The Congress was now more broad based, the provinces being drawn into national politics. Though essentially urban, the non-cooperation movement accentuated existing agrarian discontent in the countryside. Non-cooperation was secular and Gandhi hoped that the gesture of unqualified support from Hindus would disarm Muslim fears and suspicions.

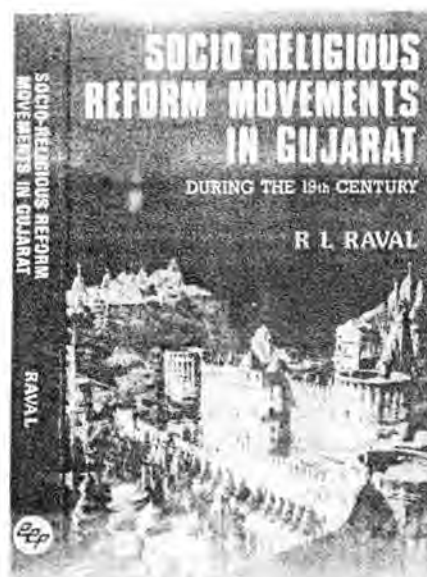
The withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience campaign, subsequent to Chauri Chaura was a blow to the *Khilafat* movement. The Indian Muslims were unaware that the issue of the Caliphate was not one of Islamic doctrine but of power politics. The balance sheet of the *Khilafat* was that it neither opened the path for the development of nationalism nor of liberalism, but, thanks to Gandhi, Muslims were in the mainstream of national politics, 1920-22. The collapse of the *Khilafat* movement resulted in the eclipse of the *ulema*, the different reactions of Indian Muslim leaders, with some becoming ardent *Raj* Supporters, others sharp Congress and Gandhi critics and still others, like Azad and Ansari, joining the mainstream of the national movement; and the break of Hindu-Muslim accord. But Gandhi was not a "spent bullet", for, though non-cooperation had failed to achieve *swaraj* in one year, the political climate of India had changed.

Reviewed by DR. MRIDULA RAMANNA, Lecturer in History, SIES College, Bombay.

One has more difficulty within parties, in living with those who are of them, than in acting against opponents.

Cardinal de Retz

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS REFORM MOVEMENTS IN GUJARAT DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY by R.L. Raval; ESS ESS Publications, New Delhi; 1987; pp. 244; Price Rs.146



The 19th century is an important landmark in modern Indian history. Exposure to the West through education and contacts opened new vistas of knowledge, ideas, norms and values of life for Indians. And the resultant changes caused by British rule provided the impetus for socio-religious reform movements in India.

The book under review is a social history of 19th Century Gujarati society. Its focus is mainly on the urban middle-class Hindu society as they "formed the largest chunk" of the population.

Dr. Raval attempts to argue that reform movements are not new to Indian society as innovations have been assimilated in the Indian culture since early times. But with British rule, a multi-dimensional transformation encompassing the entire gamut of social life was experienced. This phenomenon is studied in two phases — from 1844 to 1880 and from the 1880s onwards.

Mountstuart Elphinstone deserves an honourable place for introducing English education, the publication of books in Gujarati and preparing teachers for the job. It was this new educational policy that was to have a profound cultural impact on Gujarati

society.

The role and contributions of numerous Gujarati newspapers and periodicals and of personalities associated with them for initiating and affecting socio-religious changes are examined. Of the pioneer dailies and periodicals, *Rasta Goffar* played a very significant role in initiating the reform movement. Dadabhai Naoroji was its founder-editor and reformers Sorabji Shapurji Bangali, Dasabhai Karka and Karsandas Mulji were closely associated with it. Through *Satya Prakash* a reformist journal, Karsandas Mulji exposed the priests of the Vallabh sect which culminated in the famous Maharaja Libel case. Other important journals were *Buddhivardhak Granth* and *Stree Bodh*.

Bombay and the Elphinstone Institution occupy a central position in Gujarat's reform movements. Bombay, for generating new social, political and cultural trends and the latter for providing an intellectual background and producing reformers like Dadabhai Naoroji, Durgaram Mehtaji, Poet Narmad, Karsandas Mulji, Dr. Atmaram Pandurang and Dr. Bhau Daji. Its teachers — Professors Reid, Palton and Jambhekar — were a source of inspiration and encouragement to these reformers. *Buddhivardhak Sabha* — a student's association — became the main plank for the young Gujarati Elphinstonians to express views on burning social issues. The reformers received financial and moral support from the rich traders of Bombay and Ahmedabad.

The new Gujarati literature through its novels, prose, poetry and drama spread the new awakening throughout Gujarat and Kathiawad. Kavi Dalpatram, Ranchodhai Udayaram and others through their writings projected the evils of child-marriage, the taboo on widow re-marriage and the rigidity of the caste system. Gujarat's Durgaram Mehtaji was the first advocate of widow remarriage and he popularised this much earlier than Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar and the Government of India's Hindu Re-marriage Act of 1856. Narmad, Mahipatram Rupram, Gopal Hari Deshmukh, Bholanath Sarabhai, Becharadas Ambaidas and others worked tirelessly for the promotion of the causes through *Bal Lagnanisedhak Mandali*, *Vidhava Vivahottejak Mandali* and Gujarati Hindu Sansarik Sudhara Samaj.

Dr. Raval points out that a majority of the reformers belonged to upper castes comprising Brahmins, Banias and Brahma-Kshatriyas representing varied social and professional groups. They had imbibed Western ideas and values without having a clear or deep understanding of either Western or Indian culture. Some of them like Hargovindas Kantawala, Ambalal Sakarlal Desai, Bholanath Sarabhai, Mahipatram Rupram favoured reforms through the caste-system. Thus many castes of Brahmins, Kanbis and Jains introduced reforms in their social customs. This also led to the emergence of caste associations supplementing reform movements.

By the 1870s the first phase of the reform movement was over. However, it failed to strike deep roots. Reformers did not think about grass-roots activities, nor did they advocate improving the social conditions of the down-trodden. "They lived in the socio-cultural milieu in which such issues were quite peripheral". Similarly, the marked dichotomy between their loud proclamations and actual behaviour in life is explained by their referring to Western and Hindu cosmologies. Though they were intellectually influenced by the Western tradition, emotionally they were attached to the Hindu cultural tradition.

Conservative reformers Narmad and Manilal Dwivedi criticised this ambivalent reform behaviour in the second phase after 1880. They tried to meet the Western impact with Hindu cultural weapons. And Govardhanram Tripathi tried a synthesis between the two cultures by maintaining "continuity with the past by affecting important changes in the present...(and)... constructing an utopia for the future".

This is a well-researched book. It is the first comprehensive account in English of 19th century Gujarat which will be useful to scholars especially non-Gujaratis. Dr. Raval has diligently scanned through contemporary autobiographies, biographies, novels, poems, dramas and travel accounts of reformers. Also information not available in Gujarati literature is gathered from contemporary dailies and journals like *Buddhivardhak Granth*, *Satya Prakash*, *Buddhiprakash*, accounts of British officials and travellers to get a British preception of Gujarati society. The most important parts of the book are the footnotes at the end of each chapter and the bibliography justifying the author's scholarship and efforts. This will serve future research in the field. One wishes however that greater attention had been paid to proof reading.

Reviewed by MS. KUNJBALA MODI, Research Assistant in the Department of Politics, Bombay University.

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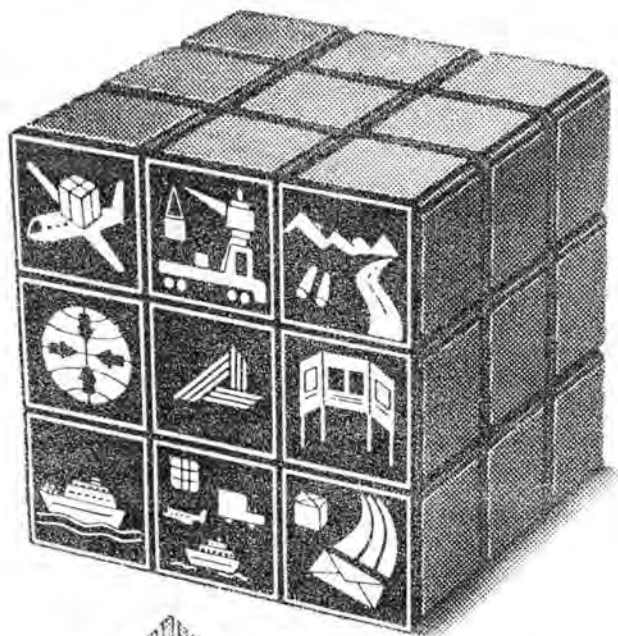
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