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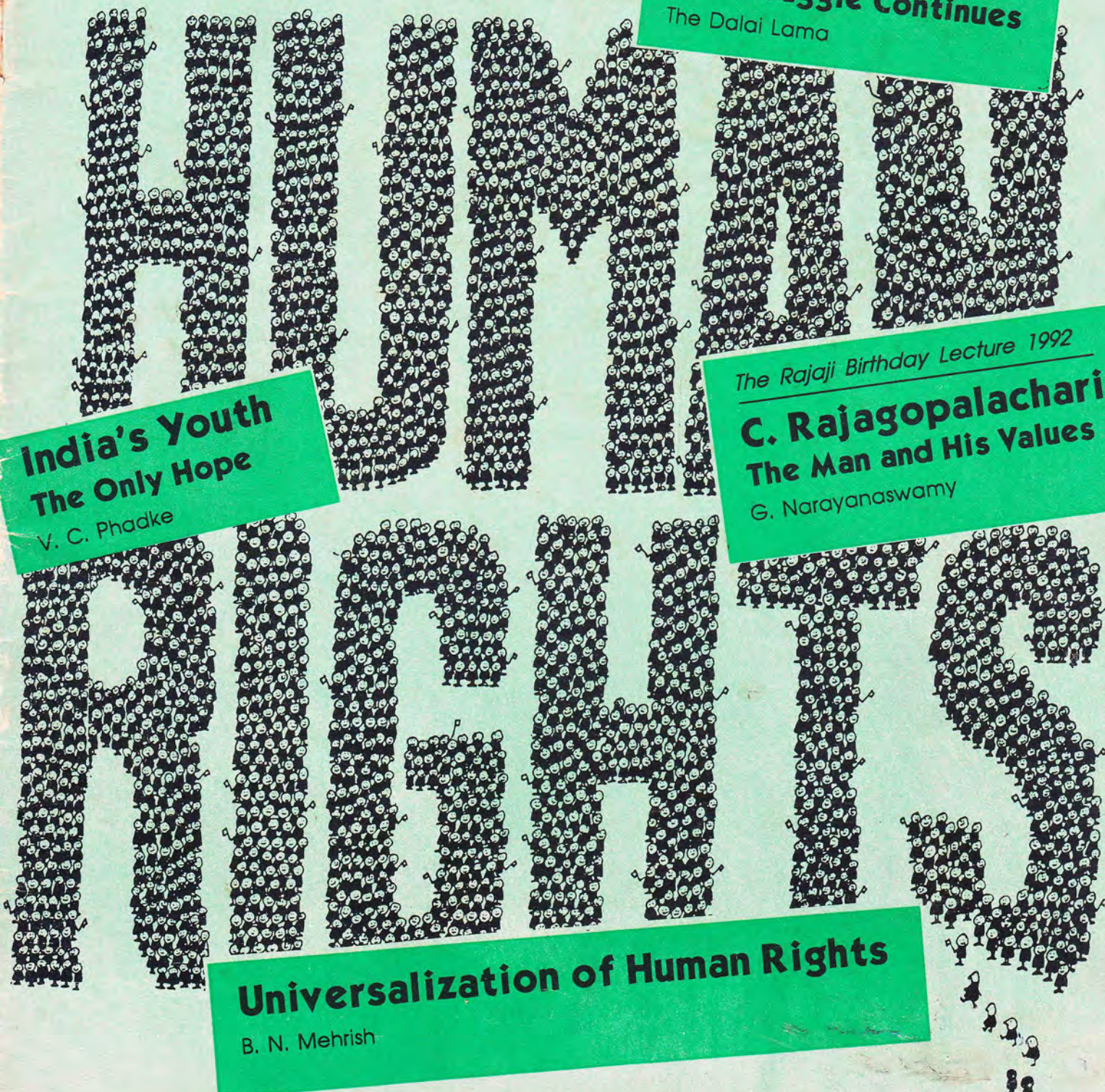
For a Free Tibet
The Struggle Continues
The Dalai Lama

India's Youth
The Only Hope
V. C. Phadke

The Rajaji Birthday Lecture 1992
C. Rajagopalachari
The Man and His Values
G. Narayanaswamy

Universalization of Human Rights

B. N. Mehrish



AN APPEAL TO PRESIDENT OF INDIA FOR SUPPORT FOR TIBET AS A PEACEFUL AND TRULY DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY DEDICATED TO DEMILITARISATION AND NON-VIOLENCE

We have read the statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama issued on March 10, 1993, and take this opportunity to appeal to the President of India, to use his good offices to strengthen the international consensus in favour of the rights of the Tibetan people and in particular to focus attention on freedom and democracy in a country which has the closest historical and cultural ties with India.

We urge the Government of India to make every effort to support the measures for achieving a regime of demilitarisation and non-violence in Tibet.

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BETWEEN OURSELVES

We are indebted to Prof. V.C. Phadke of Bhiwandi for sharing with readers of this journal what the educated youth of Bhiwandi thought of the riots that followed the demolition of the mosque at Ayodhya. Their secular attitudes give us hope and hence occupies the pride of place in this issue.

Prof. Adi Doctor of Goa University has in his review article "Rethinking Government" drawn attention to new thinking on the role of the State and familiarises us with a new concept - "entrepreneurial government". We invite readers to share their views with us in the context of the current trend worldwide for governments to shed their stake in owning significant chunks of the economy.

India has been in the news in recent months for a not very flattering reason - violation of human rights. We are being charged by various world bodies, not to mention our own civil rights movements, of violating human rights across a wide spectrum - from Kashmiris to child abuse. It is in this context we need to understand what position we took at the Vienna Convention on Human Rights. Prof. Mehrish takes a look.

Closely allied is the massive violation of the rights of the Tibetan people. The statement of the Dalai Lama on the occasion of the anniversary of the Tibetan uprising makes compelling reading.

Extensive extracts from the Rajaji Birthday Lecture on December 5 last year is another significant part of this issue's contents. We have all but forgotten what makes for an upright and honest public figure or politician. Mr. G. Narayanaswamy who was closely associated with Rajaji in the last decade of his life reminds us what it was to be an honest public figure by giving us glimpses of Rajaji's values.

And finally what has become a monotonous feature of this column - our apology for yet again delaying publication. Please bear with us. The October issue will be out by the third week of November. Our new year resolution for 1994 will be to ensure that *Freedom First* reaches you not later than the last day of the first month of each quarter. Figure that one out!

Seriously, the one unexpected, though welcome fallout of our laxity in bringing out the issues on time has been the many enquiries about why copies were being delayed. It is good to know *Freedom First* is missed!

S.V. Raju, R. Srinivasan

Contents

July-September 1993
No.418

Many Voices	2
Cabbages & Kings	3
The d'Avoines of Bombay	4
India's Youth - The Only Hope	V. C. Phadke 5
Rethinking Government	Adi Doctor 7
Universalization of Human Rights	B. N. Mehrish 11
For A Free Tibet - The Continuing Struggle	The Dalai Lama 13
Masani Viewpoint	Minoo Masani 15
An Interview with Mr. Suitcase	S. S. Bankeshwar 16
C. Rajagopalachari - The Man and His Values	G. Narayanaswamy 17
The British Political Scene	Ian Tickle 25
What Progress India's Economic Reforms	31
Debate	35
Book Reviews	41

Plus Poet's Corner (6); Tributes to Adam Adil (29) and Field Marshal K. M. Cariappa (39)

WITH MANY VOICES

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

If 800 million people in India want to have a theocracy, how does it concern you ?

Shekar Tiwari, VHP Conference organiser in Washington, *The Times of India*, August 12

Indians have two great passions: one is making money; the other is nursing a grievance. Today in India they can do neither, so they come to England. And they complain of ill-treatment but not one son of bitch will go back.

Nirad Chaudhuri, *The Times of India*, July 10

Corruption may be a worldwide reality, but the tragedy is that while in other countries the culprits are brought to book, in India they are deified.

Rear Admiral(Retd.) M.K.Heble, *Indian Express* April 28

MTV, *Santa Barbara* and *Baba Sehgal* are probably the most effective answers to the rising tide of religious fanaticism.

Iqbal Masud, *The Pioneer* May 17

India became a colony not just because of Robert Clive and Warren Hastings, but because of Isaac Newton and James Watt.

Prof. R.Narasimha, *The Times of India* August 1

President Mubarak gives out limited doses — limited liberalisation, limited islamisation, limited oppressions.

Mona Makram-Ebert, member of the Egyptian parliament, *The Economist*, May 15

This country is fast becoming a maha-dustbin. Muck, dirt and rubbish abound in urban and rural areas.

A.M.Khusro, Editor, *Indian Express*, May 19

It is not something we think much about, what with our obsession with temples and mosques, but do you realise that India does not have a minister for education ?

Tavleen Singh, *Indian Express* August 22

India's bureaucracy has an archaic understanding of a market economy. What's worse, its mind is jaundiced by years of socialist scorn.

Raghav Bahl, *MID-DAY*, July 28

Adam Smith once said that capitalists are an odious lot, but capitalism is a good system. The converse is also true.

Marxism may also be odious, but Karl Marx was a great man.

Swaminathan S.A.Alyar, *The Times of India* July 11

Our politicians have a trade union of their own. They will gladly lie, cheat, and stab each other in the back for the sake of that all important chair in Delhi. Yet let a single outsider attack their powers and prerogatives, and the whole clan defends the sinner.

TVR Shenoy, *The Week*, August 1

No great harm has so far come to India because Pranab Mukherjee is not a minister.

K.Govindan Kutty, *Indian Express*, July 25

If Kamal Ataturk could modernize Islam in Turkey many decades ago, there is no plausible reason why both Hinduism and Islam cannot be reformed...

Subrata Mukherjee, *The Statesman*, July 2

Question: What is the minimum educational qualification needed to become an MP or MLA ?

Answer: The minimum educational qualifications of an MP or MLA, as it has come to be generally acceptable, are his ability to tell lies.

The answer is from reader Mohammed Shahid Kamal, in the "Open Space" column of *The Times of India* of July 12

You should remember one thing, always — never to get up from your chair for any reason. Because in India, there are always half-a-dozen people waiting for a chance to snatch your chair out from under you.

Bihar Chief Minister, Laloo Prasad Yadav, at a public meeting in Patna *The Sunday Observer*, July 18

India is not aware of its strength. Democracy is the greatest source of strength for any country. Being the largest democracy of the world, India is capable of taking on any power on the earth. It just needs the courage to act.

His Holiness The Dalai Lama, *The Times of India* June 5

Indian democracy, in a nutshell, is this: A citizen has the right to vote. Having done that, he has no further say in the governance of the country, or his state or his municipality or village. It is only after five long years that he will get the chance to speak again.

Sumir Lal, *The Pioneer*, May 19

OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

Two Cheers for Cycle-Rickshaws

A couple of decades earlier, Rupa & Co reprinted a book by Ivan Illich, *Energy and Equity* which needs to be reprinted. In it he argued the case for emphasizing the enormous potential that a culture based on bicycles can offer to the average individual. If all the cars were out, cyclists will be on a basis of equality with each other. This of course is a caricature of the central argument of Illich. Recently, we read of the women in the Tamilnadu district of Pudducottai taking to cycling, thus conquering long distances, and gaining a new freedom - something that Archbishop Trench summed up in a favourite poem, now of course deservedly forgotten. The women of Pudducottai find the cycle a wonderful machine for releasing them from depending upon men, they can fetch water from long distances, and go to work independently.

However, the average Indian is yet to find the virtue of the cycle-rickshaw, one of the popular means of transport in very small towns. A scholar, Rob Gallagher has a whole book on the cycle rickshaws of Bangladesh which unfortunately did not merit the attention that it deserves. He argues that cycle-rickshaws account for more than half of Dhaka's vehicles, 70% of its passengers and 43% of the total passenger mileage. Everyday about 7 million passenger trips are made in Dhaka by rickshaw over a distance of 11 million passenger miles. This is nearly double the output of the London Underground. Nor does it include goods transported by rickshaw. There are nearly 700,000 cycle-rickshaws in Bangladesh and 1,250,000 people in the country benefit either by plying

rickshaws or in the sectors servicing the vehicles. Yet the government has done nothing to modernize them, nor improved the roadways for them nor provided them with cheap rickshaws or spare parts which, incidentally are smuggled from India.

While the taxes on motorcars and diesel are cheap compared to western countries, taxes and duties on rickshaw manufacturers are very high. Pulling of these is hardwork, but they do not slow down traffic in the city, neither do they contribute to pollution. The work is hard, the drivers get a very poor wage, the middle men grab all the profits. It is not a dirty job, it could be improved. The government needs to encourage the popularity of these. Above all they should abandon their love for motor vehicles and give all types of encouragement for their promotion.

The Unknown Story of the Dragons

Friends of liberalisation never tire of citing the economic advance of the little dragons whose record is without a parallel in history. But at what cost? Some of the worn off paint behind the facade was made public earlier in *Freedom First* (April, 1988 p.4)

Now for Taiwan. The cost of environment pollution for promoting exports is that it has the dubious reputation of being the "dirtiest place in Asia". All the 44 rivers in the estuaries are lethal thanks to continuous dumping of wastes both human and

industrial. The two major rivers are dead streams, fish die of starvation. One fifth of the farmland (on official admission) is polluted by industrial waste and a third of the crops grown inland is contaminated. The capital chokes with sulphur dioxide and cancer is one of the leading causes for death - the island has the highest concentration of this chemical. Within a decade from 1980, cases of asthma among children increased fourfold. The water in the pipes are unfit for human consumption. "The surreptitious dumping of 325 tonnes of waste phenol, a highly toxic, cancer-causing chemical by a subsidiary of Doosan, the Korean conglomerate, has contaminated the river, polluting the tap water used by the people." The government deliberately kept down the income of the peasants to induce them to turn to industries for employment. The government's subsidy of the import of agriculture has "crippled important agricultural sectors like wheat, soyabean and tobacco in both Taiwan and South Korea; growing US pressure to open up the once sacrosanct rice market may also lead to the obliteration of rice farmers in both countries".

In spite of a quarter century of heavy industrialisation, both South Korea and Taiwan still assemble Japanese components. The computer industry of Korea is "in fact a low tech, labour intensive mass cloning of easy to copy IBM models". In South Korea in the television sets produced, 85% of the components are Japanese.

RS

The d'Avoines of Bombay

Irene d'Avoine daughter of the late Dr. Charles d'Avoine died in Bombay, on July 28 '93. Irene was a regular reader of *Freedom First* and a worthy d'Avoine. Abe Solomon, a member of the *Freedom First* editorial board and President of the Indian Secular Society, was a close friend of the d'Avoines and we owe the following account to him.

Irene d'Avoine was, for a number of years headmistress of the prestigious Walsingham High School in Bombay and generations of students remember her for her deep commitment to teaching. She taught English literature and instilled in her students sensibilities that lasted a lifetime. She and the school were synonymous.

Irene was a remarkable person who devoted herself ungrudgingly to nursing her ailing father Dr. Charles d'Avoine during the last years of his life, and, after his demise, she looked after her mother.

The d'Avoines were naturalised Indians. They came from Mauritius. Their decision to settle down in India and their deep commitment to their adopted country needs to be known to a larger public for, their contribution, though modest, was significant.

The d'Avoines were well-known rationalists. Dr. Charles d'Avoine was born in Mauritius on 4, December 1875 and received his education in France and Belgium where he took his M.D. Although brought up a Roman Catholic his education and study of comparative religions led him to acquire a scientific and rational outlook on life.

For family reasons it was decided that he should emigrate to Australia, but, en route he had to stop over in Calcutta. There was a plague raging in the city at that time. Abandoning his plans to proceed to Australia he plunged into the task of caring for the plague patients. He personally carried plague victims for cremation when even the relatives of victims refused to come near the bodies.



Dr. d'Avoine did not know a word of English. A French-speaking friend advised Dr. d'Avoine to settle in Bombay where he was told there was a dearth of doctors. Australia was forgotten. He settled down in Bombay married a Bombay girl who taught him English so well that he acquired a polished incisive style in his writings.

Though an M.D. who could have acquired a lucrative practice and become very rich, he made his services available to the poor in a crowded locality in Bombay. He was later joined by his eldest son Dr. Claude d'Avoine. Of his other sons, Avi d'Avoine was an architect, Ivan was editor of the *The Sporting Times*, Max, a doctor, and Eugene a sports reporter.

The Rationalist Association of India (RAI) was founded in 1930 by a number of eminent persons most of whom were members of the Rationalist Press Association (RPA) and the National Secular Society (NSS) of London. The primary objective of RAI was "to combat all religious and social beliefs and customs which" did not stand the test of reason and to promote a scientific and tolerant outlook among the people." Dr. Charles d'Avoine became one of RAI's Vice-Presidents and editor of its mouthpiece *Reason*.

RAI's roster of members was a veritable who's who of distinguished personalities like Sir Raghunath (Wrangler) Paranjpye, Dr. G. V. Deshmukh,

Prof. D.K. Karve, Dr. D.D. Karve, Prof. R.D. Karve who succeeded Dr. d'Avoine in 1937 as editor of *Reason*, Prof. H.V. Hampton, Principal of the Secondary Training College, Dr. Geo Coelho, a well-known paediatrician who was the first secretary of RAI, Mr. D.R.D. Wadia its treasurer, Mr. J.B.H. Wadia, Dr. A.S. Erulkar, Mr. S.A. Brelvi editor of the *Bombay Chronicle*, Mr. B. G. Horniman, editor of *The Bombay Sentinel*, L.R. Tairsee, and Purshot-tamdas Tricumdas.

In December 1933 Dr. d'Avoine was arrested under Section 295 of the Indian Penal Code charged with "outraging the religious feelings of... His Majesty's subjects" for his article on "Religion and Morality" in the issue of *Reason* of September 1933. When Dr. d'Avoine was acquitted the judgement was considered a victory for freedom of expression.

Dr. Charles d'Avoine died on April 4, 1945. He was buried in his family grave on unconsecrated ground in Bombay's Sewree Cemetery without any religious ceremony. The then honorary secretary of RAI, Mr. Abe Solomon delivered the funeral address. Miss Irene d'Avoine too is now buried in the same ground. Her burial too was without any religious rites.

It speaks poorly of people who profess to be religious that the d'Avoines were during their lifetime greatly maligned by orthodox Catholics. In fact some religious fanatics even vandalised Dr. d'Avoine's grave.

For over 35 years Dr. d'Avoine was the local corresponding secretary of the Rationalist Press Association of London. He participated in a series of broadcasts entitled: "Four Pastors and an Unbeliever." Naturally the Unbeliever was Dr. d'Avoine.

While paying our respects to the memory of Irene d'Avoine we take this opportunity to honour a great Indian family - the d'Avoines - for such indeed are the salt of this earth.

S. V. Raju

India's Hope - Its Youth

V. C. Phadke

Just as two cocks are made to fight for prize money, our crafty politicians first make people fight among themselves and then they visit the disturbed areas in air-conditioned cars and shed crocodile tears!

It is a popular belief that university and college teachers live in ivory towers; that they lack social awareness. That this belief is at best a half truth, was proved by Prof. Chandrashekhar Raje, Head of the Marathi Department, Bhiwandi Nizampur Nagarpalika College. He came up with the novel idea of ascertaining what the young students thought of the recent communal carnage in Bombay. He asked First Year B.A. students appearing for the compulsory Marathi language paper at the annual examination to write an essay on any one of the following subjects:

- a) Visit to a Book Exhibition,
- b) Riots, Riots, Riots,
- c) An Unforgettable person or,
- d) My Own Budget.

Of the 300 students (both sexes) in the age group 18 to 20, as many as 200 chose to write on the riots. This by itself was hardly surprising as Bhiwandi went through two major communal riots in the recent past and citizens apprehended a third round. If they had been asked to write on the same subject in an essay competition, their views would have been tailored, measured and even doctored! But since they expressed their views in their answer-books, their views were spontaneous, free and frank.

The Bhiwandi College, established in 1966, caters to the needs of both urban and rural students. The essay writers were Marathi speaking boys and girls belonging to different classes and castes and from different socio-

economic backgrounds. In short, they represented a true cross-section of society and, as such, their views on the communal riots are worth noting.

Many of these students blamed religion for inciting hatred among Hindus & Muslims. They pointed out that the present-day Indians had forgotten their glorious tradition of religious tolerance. Hindu and Muslim fanatics had erected walls of mutual distrust. The demolition of the Babri Masjid was the main cause for hurting the religious feelings of Muslims. And yet, the riots were started by a few fanatics. One student turned philosophical and asked: Is religion essential for human beings? Cannot people survive without religion? Are not religions and caste system the creation of man. Another student was emphatic that god is one whether you call him *Ram* or *Rahim*, *Bhagwan* or *Khuda*. But people go on creating different gods and fight among themselves in the name of their own god! And when god looks at his own children behaving like Satan what must he be thinking of them! If we want peace, let us discard ill-feeling, hatred and enmity for each other. Let us strive for complete unity among Hindus and Muslims. Let us try to imbibe the spirit of universal brotherhood taught by Gandhiji.

After religion, the next target of the students was politics. Selfish and power hungry politicians (of all political parties) instigate communal riots. Just as two cocks are made to fight for prize money, our crafty politicians first make people fight among themselves and then they visit the dis-

turbed areas in air-conditioned cars and shed crocodile tears! Some students blamed the British rulers for fomenting enmity between Hindus and Muslims by their policy of divide and rule. It is of interest to note that only a few students held Muslims solely responsible for the Bombay riots. One student wondered how Bhiwandi, often described as mini-Pakistan remained peaceful despite the provocation of the Babri Masjid demolition. Another student wrote that the people had learnt their lesson during the 1984 riots. If hatred for each other breeds riots, the self same citizens of Bhiwandi now hate the riots themselves.

Some students thought that large scale unemployment was at the root of all social evils including the riots. Communal riots hampered economic progress, and it is the poor who suffer or die, not the rich. Workers, are wounded or killed, not employers. The dingy hutments are gutted, not the concrete buildings. Nowadays, a new tribe of neo-rich builders helped by politicians gangsters and policemen mastermind riots so that they can raise skyscrapers on vacant plots replacing demolished huts. A few students blamed the government for its failure to take strong action against rioters and to provide quick relief to riot victims. The riots take place because the government is bad, weak and soft. The police force is never adequate to deal with the frequent riots that break out and, as such, the police who are on duty round-the-clock for days together are required to work under too much stress and strain.

Our young essay-writers, also indulged in rhetoric like: 'Are riots a blemish on society', 'a stigma on humanity', 'a shame on our nation and a disgrace to our great tradition and culture'. Further, violence is a disease, nay, an epidemic. It makes man a demon. The riots which kill hundreds and render thousands homeless have brought nothing but ignominy to India. If it is not checked in time, our nation is doomed to die.

One highly emotional student stated that small children are innocent and lovable. They have yet to learn what life is. But even they are mercilessly killed. Some students blamed science for creating the destructive weapons used in the riots.

Amidst such dismal pictures, one or two students strike an optimistic note. They assert that youth with a clear conscience are the real wealth

of our nation. They have the ability to face the challenge of creating a brotherly feeling and a climate of mutual trust and understanding among all communities in India. The youth alone can change the destiny of our battered nation.

PROF. V.C. PHADKE is retired professor of political science, B.N.N. College, Bhiwandi.

Poets' Corner

In The Waiting Room Of Life

In the waiting room of life we sit
For the next connection.
We have come from one destination, have to reach another.
With the people sitting next to us
We develop such intimate relationships
That on getting the connection, we cannot leave them.

We get entrapped in the cycle of lofty desires
To become more prosperous
Than the person whom we are never going to meet again,
And we feel proud by appearing different from them.
We have not understood the waiting room of life
As our destination, have we?

Mountains of Possibilities

God is sitting above
With a sieve.
Sifting possibilities.
Lofty mountains, he has with him, of possibilities,
And for each person, he has a separate sieve.
With keen interest, from a mountain of possibilities
He fills the sieve and sifts with skill.
Inappropriate possibilities fall down from the sieve,
Only the most suitable remains on top.
He selects that and with a lot of love
Gives it in the hands of man.
The possibilities falling down are not pebbles,
They are only inappropriate for that person.

One day being unhappy with the possibility I had got,
I went to him,
And told him that, "you do not sift properly" -
With a smile dripping with love and affection

He put the sieve in my hands.
From the infinite number of sieves, selecting the best one
And from a mountain of possibilities
Taking a heap of them in the sieve,
I started sifting.
All the possibilities fell down through the sieve.
Sifted again, taking a lot of care
Even then, the possibilities continued slipping down -
Giving up, I handed back the sieve to God.

Since then he is sitting again
Cross legged
Near the mountains of possibilities
And with a lot of interest
Sifts with different sieves,
And keeps on giving infinite possibilities
To the whole world.

Ms. Sanskritirani Desai has written poems in Gujarati since the '60s. The English translations of a few have been published in *Indian Literature*, *New Quest* and *The Indian PEN*.

Rethinking Government

Adi H. Doctor

The times demand that we restructure government to make it "entrepreneurial". An entrepreneurial government does exactly what any entrepreneur does. It shifts resources out of areas of lower productivity and yield into areas of higher productivity and yield.

Governments today are universally condemned for inefficiency, waste, red-tape and unresponsiveness. Here is a book that tries to find out why this is so and what can be done to make things different.*

Over a century ago, the German sociologist, Max Weber had advocated bureaucratic government as a great advance over the previous autocratic, arbitrary and personal rule of kings and aristocracy. Unfortunately, while bureaucratic government did solve one set of problems, it created many others. For instance, in attempting to make it difficult to steal public money, it made so many rules and regulations that it became virtually impossible to manage the public's money efficiently. Secondly, since bureaucratic government enjoyed a monopoly of power, it became slothful, unresponsive, incompetent and even corrupt. Today, we have reached a stage, when dissatisfaction with the inability of bureaucratic government to deliver efficiently and effectively, has either led to the collapse of the system as in the erstwhile USSR or to citizens revolting against paying more taxes for deteriorating services as happened in the USA in the 1980s.

For the evils of waste, unresponsiveness and corruption, with which modern government has become synonymous, it is not government officials who are to blame, but the system. Rather than berate the public officials, we need to change the system in which they work. The

times demand that we restructure government to make it (what the authors call) "entrepreneurial". An entrepreneurial government does exactly what any entrepreneur does. It shifts resources out of areas of lower productivity and yield into areas of higher productivity and yield.

Ten Principles

With a view to transforming bureaucratic government into entrepreneurial government, the authors propose ten principles. Taken together the ten principles constitute a powerful conceptual tool for restructuring government. Of the ten principles, two, namely entrepreneurial governments promote competition and entrepreneurial governments believe in empowering the community, aim at reducing government, or the area of operation of the public sector. The remaining principles, such as, entrepreneurial governments are mission driven, customer friendly, decentralized, focus on outputs or performance rather than inputs etc., suggest ways by which the public sector can be transformed, or, infused with the entrepreneurial spirit.

The first and perhaps the most important principle of entrepreneurial government is that this government seeks to serve the community by promoting competition among service-providers, rather than by providing the service itself as a monopoly agency. In the colourful words of the authors, entrepreneurial government steers and lets others do the rowing. When a government opts to steer, that is ensures that the community is served by promoting

competition among the service-providers available in society, rather than to row, that is undertake to serve the people itself through a monopoly agency, many advantages accrue.

In the first place, government does not get entangled in the implementation or actual rendering of the service. Secondly, when the government sets up a monopoly to provide the service, it tends, in the absence of competition to become inefficient and unresponsive. This is a near universal experience. In the US a study conducted, found that it cost private operators or contractors \$ 17 per ton to collect garbage, whereas it cost the municipal agency \$ 49 a ton, three times as much. The reason was found to be the fact that the municipal agency worked only fifty percent of the time. The other fifty percent was consumed in various, needless breaks like work-break, warm-up break, coffee break fuelling break, lunch break, and wash-up break. The authors give another even more telling example of the wonders that competition works. New Zealand, like India, for long had a monopoly domestic airline service and New Zealanders had to pay the price. They waited upto 20/30 minutes for their luggage. They had to trudge through the rain from the terminal to the aircraft. Then, one day, the government decided to allow a private airline to compete. Suddenly things changed. Passengers found they had a near zero wait for luggage, they were provided covered access to planes, better food and friendlier in-flight services.

*REINVENTING GOVERNMENT by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, Prentice-Hall of India, New Delhi, 1992. Rs. 110.

Advantages of Competition

Competition has other advantages too. It compels service-providers to be customer friendly. More importantly, competition provides customers with a choice. Finally, competition rewards innovation, unlike monopoly which stifles it. Take for instance our public sector electricity boards. If only they could improve efficiency, by a few percentage points, we would all have surplus power. But innovation is lacking precisely because we have staffed our electricity boards with either the nephews of politicians or the politically powerful, who have no commitment to economy and innovation.

How does the entrepreneurial government promote competition. In many ways. It can let the private sector compete with the public sector as we are now doing by allowing private airlines. It can ensure competition among private firms, by making them bid for providing some public service. Sometimes governments may stimulate competition among their own organizations. The authors give an example from Yugoslavia, of all places. When the municipality of Ljubljana wanted some city planning work to be done, it solicited bids not only from its own Planning Office but also from the Planning Office at Zagreb. This fact, we are told, worked wonders and the Ljubljana's Planning Office worked over-time and over-hard, because they wanted desperately to avoid the humiliation of having their own city's work contracted to an outside agency.

Pitfalls of Competition

However, it will not do to indulge in escapism by painting an idealized picture of competition. It is to the credit of the authors that they do not turn a blind eye to the pitfalls of competition. Thus, they remind us that the entrepreneurial state may stop rowing, in the sense of itself providing the service, but it cannot abandon the function of steering. Steering that the government ensures

that competition among service-providers benefits the community. We don't want a destructive competition that makes competitors skimp on the services provided. Nor can the entrepreneurial state be a mute witness to market distortions like the emergence of monopolistic and oligopolistic trends in the market. An entrepreneurial government cannot be inactive if a few private firms form a cartel to provide poor and shoddy service. Steering, as the authors observe, means re-structuring the market to achieve a public purpose.

Empowering the Community

The second major characteristic of an entrepreneurial government is that it believes in empowering the community rather than just serving it. A welfare state that believes in serving creates a class of clients, people who look to others to help them overcome their deficiencies. The entrepreneurial state, on the other hand, considers people as citizens who need to be empowered and organized for self-help, rather than made dependent on others or on bureaucracy for service. In a typical welfare or bureaucratic state, the government runs public schools. Principals were government servants, appointed from outside, on basis of seniority. Such school managements rarely identified with the community and parents and students were served rather than involved in problem solving and management. But in Chicago, USA, a silent revolution has now taken place. According to the authors, most public schools there are now run by a Council made up of six parents (elected from among parents), two community members (elected by the community residents), two teachers (elected by the school staff) and the Principal. This Council acts as a Board of Directors. The Council hires the principal on a four year performance-based contract. It also prepares the school improvement plan and the budget. Principals are now hired and fired on the basis of their performance.

In short the authors want governments to push ownership and

control into the community. However, with regard to this principle of entrepreneurial government too, we must guard against becoming excessively romantic. We must realize that governments cannot force people to take control of their schools. If a community cannot organize itself for providing schools to its children, the state may have to step in. After all enterprise, initiative and management are not things that can be forced from top down. What governments can and must do, is structure things such that people can take control if they want to.

These two aspects of entrepreneurial government viz. promoting competition and empowering the community effectively reduce government or the area of operation of the public sector. In the rest of the book, the authors discuss, various other principles which aim at transforming the public sector by infusing it with the entrepreneurial spirit. The more important among these principles deserve a brief mention here.

Driven by Goals and Mission

Firstly, if the public sector wants to be infused with the entrepreneurial spirit, it must be driven by goals and mission rather than by rules and regulations. For example, the mission or goal of a Housing Board is to provide housing to citizens. It makes no sense for the Housing Board to drown itself in so many rules and regulations that it loses sight of its mission which is to provide housing to the community.

A typical example, the authors give, is the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Housing and Urban Development Agency had houses at Louisville; but these could not be inhabited because they had a dangerous lead paint. The Agency could not get the lead paint removed from the buildings because they had not budgeted for it. In order to get the sanction and clearance for the removal of the lead paint from the buildings, the Agency had to move a file through the Regional Office all the way upto Washington

and back down again. Meanwhile, the buildings lay vacant. A classic example of an Agency lacking or forgetting its mission!

Secondly, if the public sector units want to imbibe the entrepreneurial spirit they must learn to be customer friendly. A customer friendly government agency will look upon citizens as customers who matter because they pay for the services by volunteering to pay taxes. The book informs us how this is already happening in the US in a big way. For example, the California Department of Motor Vehicles (the equivalent of our RTO) is setting up computerized terminals at which drivers can renew their licences as easily as they can get cash from a bank card machine.

Thirdly, if we want our public sector units to be infused with the entrepreneurial spirit, we must make them measure, performance, focusing on outputs and not on inputs. A traditional bureaucratic government focuses on inputs. Thus a school is funded on the basis of how many students enroll, or, a police department is funded on the basis of estimates of man-power needed to fight crime. No

one bothers about how many children pass out from school or whether crime rates are actually coming down (that is about output). But things are now changing. In the US today, the Federal Job Training Agency pays training institutes according to how many people they place in jobs and not according to how many people they succeed in enrolling for training.

Fourthly, we will not be able to transform bureaucratic government into entrepreneurial government unless we decentralize, or, de-emphasize hierarchy. Traditional bureaucratic governments that insist on decisions travelling up and down the hierarchy are unable to make a quick response to rapidly changing situations today. The authors tell us the story of a principal who discovers that her students are wearing "beepers" to stay in contact with drug peddlers. Now obviously the principal has to act quickly. But in the traditional bureaucratic set-up the principal has to get the School Board to promulgate a regulation banning "beepers". By the time the decision goes up and down the hierarchy, it is six months past and the students have switched

over from beepers to mobile phones.

Focus on Prevention

Finally, entrepreneurial government, unlike the bureaucratic government, anticipates problems and seeks to prevent their emergence rather than undertake a fire-fighting operation. Thus, in an entrepreneurial state, the Health Department will focus on preventing disease rather than just treating it. It will opt to spend more on better nutrition, discouraging smoking and environmental control than on hospitals and medicare. Likewise the Police Department will spend as much, if not more, time and money devising measures to prevent crime rather than just fight crime; while departments in charge of environment, will spend more money in preventing pollution than on simply managing pollution.

Peter Drucker once used the phrase "the post capitalist world". This eminently readable book by Osborne and Gaebler, in fact, helps us get acquainted with this post-capitalist world.

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Universalization of Human Rights

B. N. Meherish

From 1948 to the present day, a dynamic process has been under way comprising on the one hand the continuous updating of human rights in the light of the evolution of the social partnership, the political community and technology in all its aspects and on the other hand providing for an organized, but potentially perfectible, UN mechanism to supervise genuine respect for inalienable human rights in the various States. Human rights constitute the very heart of the United Nations endeavour for peace, freedom and justice.

ibility of human rights. It stressed that democracy, development and respect for human rights are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. It reaffirmed the rights of minorities and called for the elimination of gender-based violence and all forms of sexual harassment and exploitation. It called for the punishment of perpetrators of such "abhorrent practices" as genocide, "ethnic cleansing" and systematic rape of women in war situations. It also affirmed that States are "duty bound" to ensure that education is aimed at strengthening respect for human rights.

* Taking further steps within the U.N. Secretariat to appoint and promote women staff members.

The more important issues which were the subjects of intense discussion included the establishment of the Office of a High Commissioner of Human Rights, who would have emergency powers similar to those of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and the establishment of an International Human Rights Court.

The universal character of human rights transcending national borders

An important theme in the speeches of the fifteen leaders gathered for the first ever Security Council summit was the need to protect human rights everywhere. Human rights are considered a common global value and some world leaders have suggested that this value could be superior to national sovereignty. Boris Yeltsin, for instance, said that human rights "are not an internal matter of states, but rather obligations under the U.N. Charter"

A new global human rights agenda was forged in Vienna last month when some 180 countries met at the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights between 14-25 June, 1993. This World Conference was attended by some 5,000 delegates from Member States, representatives from inter-governmental bodies and hundreds of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Conference was held amid an alarming increase in human rights violations world-wide. This year, the UN Centre for Human Rights has already received more than 125,000 complaints about violations, nearly triple the complaints received in 1992.

Issues in the Final Document

The Final Document of the Conference outlined a wide range of human rights issues of concern to the international community. It reaffirmed the universality and indivis-

The Action Programme

The programme of action includes the following concrete steps that States are required to take to improve the climate of human rights in which their citizens live:

- * Action to eliminate racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance;
- * urging the international community to promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to minorities;
- * Stepping up action against torture;
- * According priority to the full and equal enjoyment by women of all human rights;
- * Encouraging the universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women by the year 2000;

and common to all mankind had brought the representatives of the world community together at the World Conference of Human Rights in Vienna. The President of the Conference Mr. Alois Mock said that the universality of human rights as well as the rejection of dual standards must form the basis of the work of the Conference.

UN Secretary-General Dr. Boutros-Ghali told the conference, "This is no time to seek cautious compromise or approximate solutions." According to Dr. Ghali, "human rights could only be achieved if there was a conscious effort to find a common essence beyond the apparent divisions, differences and ideological and cultural barriers". He further said: "Human rights are not the lowest common denominator among all nations, but 'irreducible human elements' - the quintessential values through which we affirm together

that we are a single human community". The Secretary-General called on the Conference to be guided by the three imperatives of Vienna - universality, guarantees and democratization. The United Nations "was obligated to help States along the road to democratization and to set up a civics workshop on a global scale".

The Vienna Declaration : India's Position

The Vienna Declaration adopted at the concluding session of the Conference urged the United Nations and its relevant organizations to proclaim a "U.N. Decade for Human Rights" for promoting and protecting these rights. It also recommended that the General Assembly expedite the proposal to establish the post of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Vienna Declaration calls upon the international community to take necessary steps to enhance co-operation and to prevent and combat terrorism while noting that terrorism and its linkage in some countries to drug trafficking were activities aimed at the destruction of human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy.

Besides terrorism, the other reference in the Vienna Declaration of interest to India pertains to the right to self-determination. Dr. L.M. Singhvi, the deputy leader of the Indian delegation, described the Vienna Declaration as a kind of Second Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The concerns of India on terrorism have been accommodated fully in the Vienna Declaration. Responding to Pakistan's demand for 'effective self-determination' in Kashmir, Dr. Singhvi said that 'secessionist conspiracies and terrorism' could not masquerade as "liberation struggles". India had suffered at the hands of unscrupulous terrorism unleashed upon it, an example being the recent Bombay bomb blasts.

India averted a situation wherein Pakistan wanted to move a resolu-

tion urging that the human rights situation in Kashmir be referred to the U.N. Security Council for consideration and action. The resolution was to be patterned on the lines of the one adopted unanimously on Bosnia. Dr. Manmohan Singh, leader of the Indian delegation endorsed the Bosnian foreign minister's stand for early action by the U.N. Security Council.

The Vienna Conference stressed the need for creating an atmosphere wherein people throughout the world can enjoy human rights. In spite of the widespread activities of the UN in promoting human rights, the goals set forth in the Charter have not yet been fully realized. The main difficulties in the international protection of human rights arise from cultural and historical diversities among the States and the assertion of the prerogative of national sovereignty. This fact raises the question: are governments genuinely interested in the matter of human rights? For instance, a delegation of Amnesty International comprising Mr. Rod Morgan, the Dean of the Faculty of Law (Bristol University) and a Dutch lawyer from The Amnesty International Secretariat were refused permission by the Indian Government to visit Bombay from July 18 to 24, 1993 to discuss matters relating to police behaviour during recent riots of December 1992-January 1993 and also to discuss the allegations of ill-treatment of Muslims in detention.

Evidently the recommendations of the World Conference on Human Rights cannot be implemented without the active support of member States. For the enjoyment of human rights an effective implementation machinery is an indispensable prerequisite. The proposed establishment of an office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights can be regarded as the major achievement of the Vienna Conference. The idea of a U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights was first advocated by Costa Rica at the twenty-first session of the Commission on Human Rights in 1965. He was to act as "spokesman

for the conscience of the world" and was to be "a global Ombudsman". The erstwhile Soviet bloc rejected the proposal of a High Commissioner on the ground that such an office would impair the sovereignty of States and violate the domestic jurisdiction clause.

A Common Global Value

Today we see the gradual emergence of a doctrine of humanitarian intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign states and the U.N.'s role has expanded. An important theme in the speeches of the fifteen leaders gathered for the first ever Security Council summit was the need to protect human rights everywhere. Human rights are considered a common global value and some world leaders have suggested that this value could be superior to national sovereignty. Boris Yeltsin, for instance, said that human rights "are not an internal matter of states, but rather obligations under the U.N. Charter", and maintained that the Security Council has a "collective responsibility for the protection of human rights and freedoms".

DR. B.N. MEHRISH is Reader in International Law, Department of Civics and Politics, Bombay University.

THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

"In any civilised nation, sending children out to beg is a criminal offence. But in India, the reverse is true."

"I think Indian society is largely to blame for this. Here, children are more or less brought into this world for the benefit of the parents. They are not treated as individuals."

"The government has to use physical force. The only way to effect any difference is to make sure that any child found begging is taken off the streets immediately. Maybe they could be lodged in institutions/tostler homes. Something has to be done, otherwise we will have a generation of emotional cripples."

SHAKUNTALA DEVI

From Human Rights Worldwide.

For a Free Tibet - The Continuing Struggle

H.H. The Dalai Lama

Throughout human history, dictators and totalitarian governments have learnt that there is nothing more powerful than a people's yearning for freedom and dignity. While bodies may be enslaved or imprisoned, the human spirit can never be subjugated or defeated.

Text of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's statement on the 34th Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day, 10th March 1993

Today, as we commemorate the 34th anniversary of the Tibetan people's national uprising of 1959, we find the world around us in a uniquely promising moment of change. I believe that many of the recent changes work in favour of the aspirations of the Tibetans and of oppressed people elsewhere in the world. Millions who live under the repressive yoke of Communism and other forms of dictatorship are now free and democratic aspirations are on the rise in all the continents.

The Tibetan people continue to resist subjugation and colonisation with courage and determination. No amount of repression and propaganda has lessened their yearning for a life of freedom, peace and dignity.

On this anniversary, I pay homage to the brave men and women of Tibet, who laid down their lives for the freedom of our country, and I call upon every Tibetan to renew our dedication until we have regained our rights and freedom.

As we adjust to the changing global scene, we need to focus our efforts on four fronts. Firstly, we must continue to engage the Chinese Government in a dialogue that is mutually beneficial and will eventually lead to earnest negotiations to peacefully resolve the question of Tibet. Secondly, we need to intensify our efforts to further educate the world community of the problems of Tibet. International concern and pressure are conducive to bringing about a change in the Chinese

Government's position on negotiations and respect for human rights. Thirdly, because the new economic policies in Tibet will have a profound impact on the very survival of the cultural identity of the Tibetan nation, we must carefully study and monitor these developments. Fourthly, the democratisation of the Tibetan Administration-in-Exile and the implementation of democracy at the grass-roots level must be further encouraged.

Last June, direct contact with Beijing was again established. The Chinese ambassador in New Delhi informed us that in the past, the Chinese attitude towards the Tibetans had been "conservative" and that if Tibetans were to adopt a "realistic" stand, the Chinese Government could be "flexible". Responding positively to this rapprochement and an invitation for a Tibetan representative to visit Beijing, Kalon Gyalo Thondup was sent to Beijing. The Chinese Government conveyed to Kalon Gyalo Thondup their inflexible, hard-line position with strong pre-conditions for negotiations.

I have responded to the Chinese Government expressing my disappointment with their position. Nevertheless, I stated my wish to send three representatives to deliver a detailed note from me, explaining my views and efforts through the years to promote negotiations for the mutual benefit of the Tibetan and Chinese people. I believe it is now time for the Chinese Government to make a genuinely meaningful proposal on how they wish to see Tibet and China live in peace. We, on our part, have gone to the fullest extent to facilitate a sincere, meaningful and substantial dialogue.

For centuries Tibet and China have lived as neighbours, and I am convinced that we can find a way to live in peace and friendship in the future too. I have always believed that this is possible and worthy of our efforts. In this spirit I have, over the years, personally met with Chinese brothers and sisters throughout the world. I have encouraged my fellow Tibetans to engage in friendly discussions with members of the Chinese communities abroad. I am also greatly pleased with the increasing contacts and friendly dialogue between the exiled Tibetans and the members of the Chinese democracy movement. As a result, there is a growing understanding of the just aspirations of the Tibetan people and, therefore, sympathy and support for Tibet among our Chinese brothers and sisters.

Last year, we have also been able to establish direct official contact with Taiwan. In the past, there had been considerable misunderstanding between Dharamsala and Taipei which have resulted in mistrust and an absence of a formal relation. Today, with Taiwan on its way to becoming a genuine democracy, it is my hope that the establishment of direct ties will pave the way for a mutually beneficial relationship.

Recently, there has been a number of international conferences discussing not only the violation of human rights in Tibet, but also the question of the legal status of Tibet and the right to self-determination of the Tibetan people. Furthermore, a number of governments and parliaments have sent fact-finding delegations to Tibet; have adopted resolutions expressing grave concern about the continuing human rights abuses in Tibet; and have urged for

direct negotiations between the Chinese and Tibetans. These are clear indications that the issue of Tibet has moved from the political fringe and is gaining greater international attention. Many people throughout the world who believe in compassion, justice, non-violence and in the ultimate triumph of freedom and democracy support our cause. On behalf of my suffering people, I express our deep gratitude for this support and solidarity. We are especially indebted to the government and people of India for their continuing hospitality and kindness.

Despite these encouraging and hopeful developments, the situation in Tibet continues to remain bleak. Merciless repression of the slightest political dissent is the order. The demographic aggression of Tibet through a policy of population transfer continues unabated, escalating the marginalisation of the Tibetan people and the assimilation of the Tibetan way of life into the Chinese mainstream. Cultural genocide is being committed, intentionally or unintentionally. Tibet, an ancient country on the roof of the world, is fast becoming a Chinese colony.

China's recent announcement of turning the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region into a special economic zone is, in principle, welcome. However, there are reasons to fear the long term impact of the new Chinese policy on the survival of the cultural identity of the Tibetan people and on the environment of Tibet. If the best interests of the Tibetan people are not kept in the forefront, there is a real danger that this policy will only promote and intensify the transfer of more Chinese into Tibet. This will further reduce the Tibetans into an insignificant minority in their own country, thus completing the thorough colonisation of Tibet which will have serious consequences to its fragile environment.

It is against such a background that I appeal to Tibetans and friends of Tibet everywhere, and to international agencies eager to undertake projects in Tibet, to always bear in

mind the need to protect and safeguard the well-being of the Tibetan people and our unique culture and identity.

To those of you who intend to involve yourselves in the development of Tibet, I must emphasise the special attention needed in the fields of education, health and development in rural areas. You must also discourage the indiscriminate exploitation of Tibet's natural resources and, above all, ensure the full involvement of the Tibetan people if your efforts are meant to benefit the Tibetans.

Since the dramatic events of 1959, we in exile have always aspired for freedom and democracy. In spite of our limitations, we have made significant progress in the practice of democracy. I am very keen and committed to the idea that genuine democracy must prevail in a free Tibet.

I have publicly declared that in the future, I will not hold any official position in the government of a free Tibet. I have made such a decision in order to facilitate the development of a healthy democracy. The promulgation of my "Guidelines For Future Tibet's Polity And The Basic Features Of Its Constitution" is a reaffirmation of my vision of a free Tibet as a peaceful and truly democratic country, dedicated to demilitarisation and non-violence.

Throughout human history, dictators and totalitarian governments have learnt that there is nothing more powerful than a people's yearning for freedom and dignity. While bodies may be enslaved or imprisoned, the human spirit can never be subjugated or defeated. As long as we uphold this human spirit and determination, our aspirations and beliefs have the power to ultimately prevail. The sweeping global changes in recent years reaffirm my beliefs and I am more optimistic than ever before that freedom and peace for the Tibetan people is now within our reach.

With my prayers for the well being of all sentient beings.

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RELIABILITY
STRENGTH
AND
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The Masani Viewpoint

My Sister Mehra



Of the four Masani children—three boys and a girl—my sister Mehra and I, despite a gap of eight years in our ages, were the most congenial and sympathetic.

When in the mid-thirties, Mr. Lionel Fielden, the Director General of All India Radio, invited me to join his organisation, I told him this was not possible when I was engaged in support of Mahatma Gandhi's struggle for national independence.

I, however, introduced my sister Mehra to him on her return from her studies in England, highly educated with a Masters degree from the London School of Economics. He promptly appointed her and she became useful and an official member of the organisation. She was so efficient that the male officers who were superseded by her, readily conceded her superiority.

How was it that Mehra 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 co-workers 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. Later, however, one of Prime Minister Nehru's nominees, denied her rightful position as Director General of All India Radio. At this, Mehra put in her resignation and could not be persuaded to withdraw it.

After staying some years in Delhi, she moved to Bombay and somewhere around this point of time, she contracted that horrible disease, rheumatoid arthritis. That started a long ding-dong fight between my sister and her physician over the drug, cortisone, which would restrain the disease but also endanger her life. She spent several months in an ashram in Coimbatore but it did not work.

I was happy to be able to arrange for her appointment as Director of the Leslie Sawhney Centre in Deolali. This task she performed with great efficiency and flair. But all these years her struggle for survival went on.

At last in 1990 she succumbed to her disease and to cortisone. It was the end of a beautiful relationship of shared values and a great personal loss to me.

PAC Chairman

It was as far back as 1967 when the Speaker of the Lok Sabha accepted the plea that as in the British House of Commons, the Chairman of the prestigious Public Accounts Committee (PAC), should be filled by the leader of the Opposition. After a successful two year term as Chairman of the Indian PAC, I retired to make way for Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, the then leader of the Jan Sangh.

This is a sound practice and the Speaker should be supported in his efforts to maintain it and not give in to the plea for rotation between members of different Parties.

What Price Education?

A suicide committed by a boy of 18 because of his inability to pay the necessary donation, despite his getting 53% of the marks, shows the sad state of our education and the way in which the government is failing to pursue its duty and provide education under the Constitution.

The decision of the Supreme Court prescribing reservation of seats for some and not for others who cannot pay the money, is itself undesirable.

An Interview with Mr. Suitcase

S.S. Bankeshwar

I interviewed my suitcase this morning at the request of my boss. This suitcase, which is normally quiet and sullen, sleeping in a corner of my room, was in a very jubilant mood indeed.

I asked the suitcase why it was in such a jubilant mood. The suitcase replied: All these years, suitcases were just non-entities which never hit headlines in any newspaper. They have suddenly received great prominence after Harshad Mehta's revelation that he delivered a suitcase containing Rs. 67 lakhs to the Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao, as a first installment, for his political blessing and patronage, which ultimately led to a great boom in the Stock Exchange Market, thereby proving the success of Narasimha Rao's liberalisation policies. Who could have imagined six months ago that suitcases would receive such prominence in newspapers.

Secondly, I am very happy that when the defeat of the ruling party was a certainty over the no confidence motion in our Lok Sabha, a miracle was performed by our suitcases (incidentally, members of my family) by defeating it and saving our tottering Narasimha Rao's government, and thus strengthening the unity and integrity of country, which was in danger. Never in human history was such a miracle performed by hitherto non-entities like suitcases. I am very proud of the vital role played by the members of my family in saving our country from total disaster, converting a certain defeat of the ruling party into comfortable victory.

The miraculous performance by Kapil Dev with his bat against Zimbabwe in the World Cup Cricket Series is nothing compared to this miracle brought about by our suitcases.

You should thank your stars that you bought me so cheap six months ago. The prices of suitcases today

have shot up in direct proportion to the rise in the price for political blessing and patronage.

I said: No, you are mistaken. The prices of only those suitcases, which can accommodate currency notes amounting to Rs. 1 crore or Rs. 67 lakhs, have gone up, and not the price of smaller suitcases like you.

The suitcase replied: No, you are wrong. The suitcases you are talking about are meant only for the VVIPs and not for ordinary VIPs like M.P.s, Police, Customs, Octroi and University officials.

As you know, for buying a first class degree in B.A., B.Sc. or B.Com. from the Bombay University, you need only a very small suitcase, which can accommodate Rs. 9,000 (Shiv Sena leader, Pramod Navalkar, will vouch for me). In fact, suitcases of my size are in permanent demand, while the demand for VVIP suitcases arises only during an emergency, for instance, during general elections or bye-elections.

I asked: Any export prospects for our suitcases in the international market.

The suitcase replied: Unfortunately, our government has not realised the export potentialities of our suitcases in the international market. Corruption, as you know, is an international phenomenon, and suitcase-politics has got international ramifications today.

I asked: who was the man of the match in the latest battle of wits in our Lok Sabha.

The suitcase replied: Of course, Mr. Suitcase.

You are just wasting your time by interviewing me. By the way, which paper is going to publish this interview with a suitcase, unless you present a suitcase to that paper.

I retorted: Don't think that our newspapers have descended to the level of our M.P.s, Police, Customs, Octroi and University officials.

S.S. BANKESHWAR is a journalist, and chairman of the Telephone Subscribers' Association.

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C. Rajagopalachari - The Man and His Values

G. Narayanaswamy



On this occasion, I would like to openly acknowledge my debt of gratitude to my mentor and friend the late Sri. R.M. Seshadri, I.C.S., who had introduced me to Rajaji, but for which I would not have been here today.

Though the width of the subject is not large, the personality concerned, his qualities and his philosophy are so wide that no single person can do justice in one sitting. Therefore, I shall confine myself to certain basic aspects of Rajaji with which I think I became familiar during my association with him for over 12 years.

Even though I consented to speak on this occasion, I had done it without realising the implications. Later, when I thought over the subject and the occasion, I felt I had made a mistake and the subject was beyond me. Like Dasaratha, I thought I had promised in haste and repenting at leisure.

In my opinion, no single individual however close he might have been to Rajaji can adequately comprehend his qualities or the content of his personality.

Rajaji occupied several positions in his full span of years, first as a successful mofussil advocate from Salem, later, a revolutionary Chairman of the Salem Municipality, a freedom fighter, political leader, chief

Ostentatious living and a show of authority are considered pre-requisites for stature. The law makers and administrators have no respect for the law but believe in achieving results by agitation or by personal violence or through some surreptitious method. If Rajaji's economic policies are accepted today by the party in power, it is not out of conviction, but from the need to get more money from the World Bank.

minister of Madras, minister in the central government, governor and governor-general of India. He occupied all of them with fine distinction and left a lasting mark in each of the positions he held.

It is not possible for me to traverse his entire eventful life, but, shall confine myself to such qualities of head and heart, which made him a model citizen. In my opinion, he has shown us how a responsible citizen of this country - whether in power or out of it - should conduct himself. Heeding his advice will help us lead a better life ourselves and leave a better country behind us.

I have, for the purpose of this talk, confined myself to five aspects of his life:

- (1) Attitude to life
- (2) Personal Qualities
- (3) Concern for the poor & down-trodden
- (4) Respect for law, and
- (5) Economic philosophy

Rajaji's Attitude to Life:

He firmly held the view that God had a purpose in creating every living being, especially a human being, and therefore every one must perform his duties consistent with his talents and capabilities. The following pas-

sages from his writings give an indication of his philosophy :

"When a man performs his proper duty, he worships Him from whom the world issued and by whom all that we see is pervaded. It is better for one to do imperfectly the duties that fall to his lot than to do those of others perfectly. One should not abandon one's natural duty even if evils seem to adhere thereto. Every human activity involves some evil as fire carries smoke. He who works with mind detached and free from selfish longings is the real *sanyasi*".

"The ideal citizen should perform his tasks and duties with detachment. His activities should be in the general interest, not for selfish gain. This is the great teaching of the Gita that has justly made it as famous in modern times as it is a classic in the Vedantic tradition. Out of the Upanishad teaching and its doctrine of the ultimate reality, the modern citizen can derive a fearlessness of spirit which, added to the detachment and rigorous execution of duties preached by the Gita, could make of every citizen a veritable giant in the service of society".

"Yoga is not tricks done with our muscles or our breath or exhibitions of physical skill and practice. Yoga is the effort to purify our character.

Yoga is the general name given to those mental operations which we should practice in order to make the mind clean and remain pure without difficulty."

"What are these efforts?

- 1) Do your allotted duties properly and unselfishly. Duties come to you by reason of your fitness, by your place in society or by accident. Do always what is good for others. Hesitate when what you do is for your own good, and consider whether it is good for others around you.
- 2) Do not be disturbed by success or defeat. Think of God who decides and orders everything and who alone knows what is ultimately good. Remember that others are as much children of the Universal Mother as you are.
- 3) Keep your senses of pleasure under control. Regulate your daily routine so that the purity of your mind is not disturbed.
- 4) Always remember that the mind is the chief fortress. If you let it go, you lose the battle. Impure or selfish thoughts hand over the mind-fort to the enemy.
- 5) Periodically meditate on God and surrender yourself to the Father-Mother.

"You may often fail in these efforts. But every effort adds strength to your soul. These efforts are to the soul what physical exercise is to the body. You may not see immediate results, but they strengthen the soul".

To my knowledge, he conducted himself in his private and public life exactly in the manner he preached. He had a keen intellect and a keener memory and the wisdom to distinguish between good and evil. He used these qualities for the benefit of the country.

As a lawyer, he was extremely successful. He became Chairman of

the Salem Municipality at an early age and as Chairman, introduced some radical social reforms. He joined the freedom movement, became a conscious follower of Mahatma Gandhi giving up his legal practice and never looked back. Even while actively involved in the freedom movement, he continued to be a prolific reader, writer, social reformer and intellectual.

Personal Qualities

Once during a visit to Madras as the Governor-General, many distinguished persons including ministers and old friends called on him at the Raj Bhavan. Among them was his old friend M.P. Sivagnanam, popularly known as Ma Po Si. Rajaji came out and hugged him. Ma Po Si discreetly reminded him that he was the Governor-General and other VIPs were waiting. At this, Rajaji replied that the waiting VIPs were there to welcome whoever was the Governor-General but Ma Po Si was there only because of Rajaji!

After completing his term as Governor-General and later Chief Minister, Rajaji was residing in Madras when a fake posing himself as a doctor was prosecuted for cheating people, falsely claiming that he had treated Rajaji, when the latter was Governor of West Bengal. Rajaji was called upon as a prosecution witness. He neither stood on formality nor did he ask for exemption from appearing in the witness box. The defence advocate who cross-examined him was sure that Rajaji would be outwitted. The advocate asked him "Sir, you have testified that Mr. X did not call on you while you were Governor. Obviously, in view of your busy schedule, I presume, you would be saying this only from memory. Is that not? Rajaji replied "Young man, your leading suggestion should be normally correct, but I had anticipated your question and have brought my diary which I maintained as the Governor and it contains the names of all my visitors but not that of your client". The fake doctor was convicted.

Concern for the Down-trodden

His concern for the poor and the down-trodden was deep and abiding. Right through his life, he was concerned with uplifting the lot of the poor. In 1937, as chief minister, he introduced reforms which opened temples to Harijans. The Meenakshi Temple at Madurai was the first to be thrown open. V.P. Singh has been claiming that the 27% reservations was intended to bring the backward classes in the mainstream of society. Rajaji did this nearly 50 years ago - long before Mandal - a reform that brought the harijans into the mainstream. He brought about an economic revolution with his Debt Relief Act whereby debts of agriculturists who had paid off a substantial portion were statutorily written off. This was again aimed to provide relief to the down-trodden.

His obsessive championing of prohibition is well known and was intended to improve the lives of the poor. Rajaji knew that the consumption of liquor and arrack by poor people denied them and their family members a normal life and the basic necessities of life. He was the first to conceive of prohibition as a social and economic measure, as early as 1937.

In 1938, Harvey Mills, an English owned company in Ambasamudram, had declared a lock-out because of a labour dispute. The then Labour Minister in Rajaji's ministry, V. V. Giri was unable to help in resolving the dispute and the management arranged for reopening the mills with loyal workers. Rajaji issued orders prohibiting the reopening despite opposition from the English Governor.

As Chief Minister, he brought in the Pannayar Act, whereby agricultural workers got a substantial share of the produce.

Two youngsters, Kasirajan and Rajagopalan, were sentenced to death in 1942 - which conviction had been confirmed by the Federal Court - accused of committing murder during

the "Quit India Movement" in 1942.

All political leaders of some significance - except Rajaji - were in prison and the British Government was very hostile to those involved in the movement. Therefore, these two youngsters had little chance of escaping the sentence.

Rajaji was not in prison then because he had left the Congress over ideological differences with Gandhi and Nehru on the issue of Pakistan. Rajaji also opposed the "Quit India Movement" in principle. Notwithstanding these ideological differences, Rajaji personally presented a clemency petition to the then British Governor-General and had the death sentences commuted. And he did this *without* launching any agitation or calling for a *bandh*. Rajaji's faith in the Rule of Law was immense as was his ability to distinguish between political differences and a moral obligation.

The last, but not least, was my own personal experience. The Swatantra Party had inherited a two ground plot of land at Egmore, Madras, which Rajaji wanted sold. As the administrator of the estate, I arranged for the sale of the plot of land which also involved the eviction of nearly 100 scavenger workers' families who had encroached on the land. I informed Rajaji of my proposal. Rajaji wanted to know how I proposed to resettle the scavengers. I replied that it was not our problem. But Rajaji's response was typical of his concern for the poor. "It is a human problem. First arrange for their alternate accommodation, meet their expenses for shifting to alternative sites and then sell", he said. Tears swelled in my eyes and I wondered how such a thought had occurred to him who was charged with being a capitalist and a friend of princes and rajas.

Respect for Law

Rajaji's respect for the law, both in letter and spirit was unique - whether he was in office or out of it. This contradicted his role as a *satyagrahi* during the freedom struggle. Prob-

ably he would have justified it by saying that he was a mere soldier in the army of the freedom movement and the laws he contravened, deserved to be opposed, as they did not have the sanction of the moral law. It is equally possible that he may have, in retrospect, seeing the blatant misuse of *satyagraha* (the instrument that Gandhiji fashioned to defy British laws in colonial India) in post-independent India, decided that *satyagraha* was one of the causes for the people's disrespect for the law. Be that as it may, his adherence to the Rule of Law as a citizen of free India was unflinching. Let me recall a few instances.

When he was chief minister of Madras in 1952-53, a sub-inspector of police from Madras had - while chasing a criminal - crossed over to neighbouring Mysore and accidentally shot the criminal who died. The Mysore State Police remanded the police officer into custody. Rajaji took personal interest in the matter and requested Mr. V.L. Ethiraj a highly respected but very expensive barrister at that time, to personally argue the bail petition in the Mysore High Court. Mr. Ethiraj acceded to the request of Rajaji and had the sub-inspector released on bail.

At about the same time, the constables of Madras city police had gone on strike but Rajaji dealt with the strike very severely and the strike was practically broken within a day. When he was congratulated the next day by members of the Madras State Assembly - which was then in session - he requested members not to discuss the matter as it related to the police, hence too delicate to be discussed and to treat the matter as closed.

These two instances clearly indicate that as an administrator he would go all out to defend an officer who was in trouble while he was discharging his duties and, at the same time, would not tolerate the slightest degree of indiscipline, particularly, in a force where discipline was most cru-

cial. He was also aware that any excessive public criticism of civil servants would demoralise the services as a whole. Hence, his plea to the Madras legislators not to discuss the strike.

Compare this with the present-day situation. How many ministers would go all out to defend their officers in the discharge of their duties? On the contrary, we are witnessing the sorry spectacle of ministers joining other members in publicly criticising officers. This is one of the reasons for the steep demoralisation that has set in in the civil services.

Integrity of Legislators

Rajaji always held the view that if one wished to enter politics or public life, he should have an independent income of his own, as otherwise, he would be forced to make money out of his public office or cling to it at all costs. To highlight this point, he once observed at a public meeting, (it was, I think in Chandigarh), that as most of our politicians did not have any ostensible source of income of their own they could be apprehended by the police under the criminal procedure code to explain their source of income.

Members of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly took umbrage and initiated contempt proceedings against Rajaji. He could have easily ignored the proceedings or sought a stay order in law or done something else to express his displeasure. No Assembly would dare touch him. But he did none of these things. He submitted to the jurisdiction of the Speaker of the Andhra Pradesh Assembly and made written representations, explaining the circumstances under which he had made the observations and that he did not mean any disrespect to the legislature or its members. He also deputed a leading constitutional lawyer from Madras to Hyderabad on his behalf to make a personal representation.

I recall his pointing out in his

representation that the conduct of legislators themselves is a better protector of their privileges and authority and the more they sought protection by punitive action, the worse it would be for their image and credibility.

In fact, this came up in Parliament too but at the suggestion of Pandit Nehru, the matter was dropped. Nehru, it is reported, jocularly remarked, "If you press too hard, Rajaji may justify his statement and prove his charges with cogent arguments!"

An Honest Tax-payer

The second instance was within my personal knowledge. Every assessee has -- under then income tax laws -- to pay advance tax on the basis of a demand from the income tax department. Though he did receive the demand, he did not pay but replied that "being old, there was no guarantee that he would live or earn and, therefore, he was unable to pay advance tax.

I explained to him his legal requirement either to pay or file a "nil" estimate. He justified his stand stating that he had been doing this for a number of years and that it was being accepted by the officers, concerned. I distinctly remember replying: "Sir, their acceptance does not mean that you were right but only showed their respect for you. I do not want the former Governor-General of India and the former chief minister of Madras Presidency to be a law breaker". He did not at all get offended. On the contrary, he paid the advance tax till the year of his death (1972) in one instalment. To use his own words, "I shall get rid of this nuisance in one instalment".

In fact, when he was ill and laid up in Government Hospital in December, 1972, (he died on 26th December), he is reported to have jocularly remarked in the first week of December, "G. Narayanaswamy will not allow me to die before 15th December, as I have to pay advance tax"!

A third instance that comes to my

mind is again when he was the chief minister of Madras. A good friend of his Dr. Varadarajulu Naidu whom he had successfully defended in a sedition case in pre-independence days, was found to have contravened the provisions of the Iron and Steel Control Order in 1953. As chief minister, he ordered Dr. Naidu's prosecution as he wanted his friend to be cleared in a court of law. Dr. Naidu was found not guilty and acquitted.

Concern for the Poor

About seven or eight months before he died -- that was the last occasion he called me -- he made certain dispositions which had attracted a tax liability of less than Rs. 15,000. I knew -- he also knew -- that this was a large financial burden on him, and, in fact, beyond his means, though he had been a Governor-General, a Union Minister and the state's chief minister. As I did not want him to be burdened with this financial liability, I suggested a simple and lawful alternative. He did appreciate my legal approach and paid me tributes which naturally made me happy. But to my surprise, he added:

"You have made yourself perfectly clear, but this is not my intention. My intention is to do it here and now. Here is the cheque for the tax. Please pay it off. A businessman can do what you have suggested; not you or I".

These words still ring in my ears. In his opinion, a person in public life or a professional should maintain standards of ethics higher than that of others and should be prepared to bear the consequent additional burden.

While his compliance with the law was unhesitating and absolute, his resistance to inequity -- either legislative or administrative -- was equally absolute. But he did not take his resistance to the streets. He was confident of his intellect and persuasive powers and always tried to rectify the position through constitutional means.

For example, the government of Tamil Nadu had levied a profession tax on pension. He represented to the government that a pensioner can by no stretch of imagination be considered to be carrying on a profession. In fact, he does the reverse and hence cannot be taxed. His representation and writ petition in the Madras High Court failed. But he took it to the Supreme Court and obtained a verdict in favour of the pensioners. The sum involved, in his case, was less than Rs. 100. But the fight was for a cause.

There was in the 1960s, a scheme -- as a saving or an anti-inflationary measure -- in the Income Tax Act called the "Annuity Deposit Scheme", according to which every assessee was requested compulsorily to deposit with the government a percentage of his income which would be returned in 10 equal instalments. Rajaji saw the absurdity of this scheme and wrote in his characteristic and satirical style to the then Finance Minister to clarify as to how he Rajaji at over 80 had to save. The result was that persons over 70 years were exempted from the scheme.

According to him, he was not a professional author and his income from his writings in *Swarajya*, *Kalki* and other journals were of a casual and non-recurring nature and therefore, exempt from income tax. His claim was rejected by all authorities including the High Court, though a leading lawyer argued Rajaji's case. Yet, Rajaji's intuition would not permit him to accept this. It was at this stage I came into contact with him through my mentor and good friend Sri. R.M.Seshadri.

I was sure that Rajaji was wrong, but I did not have the courage to tell him this fact. Nor was he inclined to listen to me. My meetings with him were in the nature of his instructions to me on how I should reply. Later I wrote a detailed three-page letter explaining the correct legal position more or less as follows:

(i) Even assuming it is agreed that

they were casual and non-recurring in nature, the receipts - in order to be exempted - should not also be in the course of exercise of business, profession or vocation. Equally, even if it was not his business or profession to write articles, he has to prove that this is not his vocation.

- (2) Courts have held that any organised human activity involving the application of mind or time would come within the definition of "vocation". It is not Rajaji's case that he did not spend time or mind in writing these articles and, therefore, this would come within the definition of vocation and therefore, even if we win on all points, we would lose on this point.
- (3) Still if he felt that these series of decisions were not correct, the matter could to be taken up before the larger Bench of the Supreme Court for a reversal of its earlier decisions.
- (4) In view of the above, I requested for instructions as to how I should proceed.

I received a two line postcard: "I see your point. Please concede all the objections and get the assessments updated".

A Matter of Principle

This incident indicates Rajaji's determination to fight for a cause and exhibits equally his willingness to reverse his stand if he was so convinced. In fact, it was only after this incident that he showered his affection on me.

The Income Tax Appellate Tribunal, however, had held that the sums received by him for the sale of his copyright in his publications like the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, were exempt from tax because they were in the nature of capital receipts. Taking the reasoning out of this order, he claimed that a sum of Rs.100 he had received from All India Radio for his

broadcast was exempt because the copyright of such talks vest with the government. In fact, I argued with him that the amount involved was so small and that we need not embarrass the department. He did not agree. On the contrary he wrote to the department: "The argument that relief prayed for is small and that any relief given to me will result in a similar relief being given to a large number of citizens is no justification for denying me this relief". The then Commissioner, after consulting the Central Board of Direct Taxes, exempted the income.

Compare this with the present-day men in public life :

- * How many former Governor-Generals/Presidents and former chief ministers would find a sum of Rs. 15,000 an unbearable financial burden.
- * The Speaker of a State Assembly refuses to receive notices from the Supreme Court to obey its directive.
- * A state government faces contempt proceedings from the Supreme Court for not obeying its orders.
- * A state government refuses to implement the award of a River Waters Tribunal despite directions from the Supreme Court.
- * Processions are taken out by the ruling party with the support of the police and the chief minister to condemn/appreciate Supreme Court decisions.
- * The Governor of the Reserve Bank admits that the chiefs of nationalised banks had not followed the guidelines laid down by the Central Bank and disbursed crores of rupees.
- * Account payee cheques of crores of rupees are credited to the accounts of persons other than the payees and justified as a commercial practice.
- * The ruling party orders a *bandh*

against the orders of the Court.

- * The Speaker of a State assembly assumes that he has absolute powers, even to order the hanging of a person.
- * The exchange of physical blows by legislators inside the Assembly is now a common phenomenon.
- * There are more walk outs and legislators rushing to the well of the House than well argued debates.
- * The question whether a legislator can claim immunity in respect of criminal acts, is actually being debated!

Such illustrations can be multiplied but I remember the famous words of Acharya Kripalani: "If you want to break a government, break its laws first". Fortunately our law makers and enforcement authorities have not left the job to us. They are doing it themselves and doing it extremely well.

The Path of Dharma

Rajaji's philosophy on all matters (including matters relating to economics) was the same, i.e. one should lead a life of *Dharma* and he should be enabled to do so and anything that comes in that way of doing his duty should be demolished. All his thoughts on economic matters were on these lines. For example, the abolition of foodgrains rationing by him in 1952 when he was chief minister of Tamil Nadu and his campaign against the permit, licence, quota raj are instances of this thought. Food rationing was in force in 1952 when he became the chief minister of Tamil Nadu. He was aware that though rice was available in plenty in the black market, politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen had developed a vested interest in the black market and they would not permit dismantling this system corrupt as it was.

Therefore, he abolished rationing overnight - against the advice of civil

THE RAJAJI FOUNDATION

"When I see the spreading abuse, the hypocrisies, and the general fall in moral sense at the highest levels down to the unfortunate poor, I do not feel inclined to run away from the struggle for improving things old, weak and incapacitated though I am".

This was Rajaji on his 93rd birthday. A year later on Christmas Day, December 25, 1972, he passed away.

A giant among intellectuals and one of the world's clearest thinkers, Rajaji was the champion par excellence of the rights and duties of man. Throughout his life, he advocated the rule of *Dharma* in the life of the individual and of the State.

An educated and enlightened citizenry was the sine qua non of Rajaji's concept of a truly democratic system. He advised the Swatantra Party which he founded "to work to educate the electorate rather than run after the immediate pleasures of transient political power". He strongly believed that "the foundation of our independence and self respect has to be improved" through "sound education of all our population and nothing less".

Individual initiative, enterprise and energy maximising individual freedom and minimising interference by the State; fostering a sense of moral obligation in respect of legislative or other forms of compulsion; maintaining and preserving spiritual values

and what is good in our culture and tradition; strict adherence by authority to the Fundamental Rights and guarantees in the Constitution as originally enacted in 1950 including the freedom of property, trade and occupation; reducing considerably the cost of public administration and giving the farmer his rightful place in the Indian sun were among the principal tenets of his political and social philosophy. Rajaji was a philosopher among politicians and a politician among philosophers.

The Rajaji Foundation has been formed to promote his ideas. The Foundation firmly believes that his views on man, State and society have a continuing relevance today, as they did when he first propounded them. The Foundation is also convinced that the best memorial would be one, not of brick and mortar, but in the spreading of his message of *Dharma* and the norms for a free, liberal society.

To this end, the Foundation proposes to organise public meetings, study circles, seminars and discussions; publish pamphlets and material of relevance to developing

situations from time to time and at all times to keep his memory free in the hearts and minds of the people;

The Foundation is registered as a public charitable Trust (Registration No.E-6748). Among the aims and objects of the Rajaji Foundation are the following:

- (i) The advancement and propagation of education and learning in India with special reference to the philosophy and teachings of C. Rajagopalachari and the spreading of an awareness of the principles which he espoused.
- (ii) The advancement of any other object of general public utility, including amelioration of poverty in India and uplift of living and educational standards of people in India.

The Trustees of the Foundation are Mr. M.R. Masani, Mr. Madhu Mehta, Mr. M.R. Pai, Mr. K.H. Subramaniam, Mr. J. Venkiteswaran and Mr. S.V. Raju.

The Office of the Foundation is at 143, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 400 023. Phone No. 274453.

servants. The result was rice was available in plenty and the black market collapsed.

Similarly, he felt that the permit, licence raj was the fountain of dishonesty and corruption and people had to bribe or be bribed to do their normal duty. He went to the extent of starting a political party, The Swatantra Party, at his advanced age to oppose this monster of corruption and to encourage the rule of *Dharma*.

Rajaji was dubbed a pro-capitalist reactionary. Now the history of the permit, licence raj has become a part of history. This system of permits, licences and quotas which was based on Nehru's theoretical political philosophy of social justice may have been well conceived but, over a period of years, it made the government all powerful and a centre for the grant of patronage.

In the beginning, licences were issued on the basis of competence as judged by government officials and ministers. Later, they became instruments of those in authority to favour their near and dear ones. Later, it was used to secure political donations, ostensibly for political parties but actually paid to ministers and politicians, the destination of which the people are not sure. Now it has become a permanent source of patronage, a tool in the hands of ministers, politicians and civil servants for self-aggrandizement. People no longer consider it evil, but a fixed cost which is added to price of the products.

To sum up, the four aspects of Rajaji's life viz. :

- (i) simple and noble thoughts,
- (ii) a genuine concern for the poor and the down-trodden,
- (iii) respect for Law and
- (iv) an economic philosophy based on *Dharma*

are absolutely necessary for the maintenance and development of an orderly lawful society. It is for you to

decide to what extent present day political leaders conform to these standards. Ostentatious living and a show of authority are considered pre-requisites for stature. The law makers and administrators have no respect for the law but believe in achieving results by agitation or by personal violence or through some surreptitious method. If Rajaji's economic policies are accepted today by the party in power, it is not out of conviction, but from the need to get more money from the World Bank.

The effect of all these is visible in our public life. People have lost both confidence in and respect for political leaders and their promises. They feel justice cannot be obtained from the Government or the judiciary unless pressure is brought to bear in the form of public protest or private bargain. This is reflected in growing violence and defiance of authority. Let us look at history as to what was responsible for the French, Russian and Chinese revolutions or the Tamil-Sri Lanka problem and try to learn from it.

There are two kinds of men: men of success and men of values. Men of success are those who take more out of society than what they give to them. Men of values are those who give to society more than what they take out of it. Undoubtedly Rajaji belonged to the latter category.

Mr. G. Narayanaswamy is a well-known Chartered Accountant based in Madras. Mr. Narayanaswamy was actively associated with the Swatantra Party and is currently President of the Swatantra Study Circle in Madras. He is a member of the Council of Management of the Forum of Free Enterprise and on the governing body of the Young Men's Indian Association. Mr. Narayanaswamy is on the Board of a number of companies in South India.

This article is based on the Rajaji Birthday Lecture 1992 which Mr. G. Narayanaswamy delivered in Bombay on December 5, 1992.

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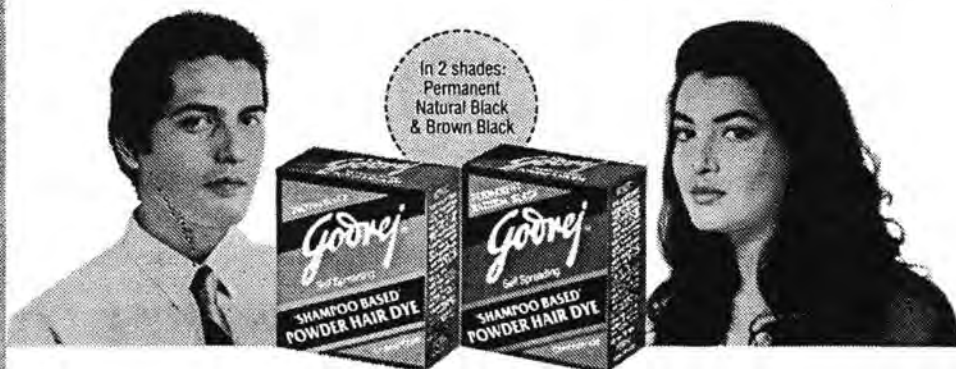
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The British Political Scene

Ian Tickle

If John Major's government seems particularly accident-prone just over a year after its election, it is because of the wear and tear, not so much of Mr. Major himself, but of the Conservatives as a whole.

In 1940 Churchill rightly described his nation as a bastion of democracy in the fight against nazi tyranny. Against Hitler's rantings about the supremacy of the Teutonic race, the British prime minister pointed out with some degree of understatement - always appreciated as typically English - that his countrymen had "played a leading role in the development of parliamentary institutions". It may be argued that the world is now just as plagued with the scourge of dictatorship as it was then, although the danger comes from a different quarter. In Europe, people cannot sleep easily while the abominable spectre of Serb nationalism is wreaking havoc in the Balkans. Democratic institutions are a treasure, and their use must be studied where they are strongest.

Different Voting Systems

The British political scene is dominated, now as for hundreds of years, by what is called the first-past-the-post system. This is rooted in history. When absolute kingship was first brought under limitation, every place in the country was asked to send representatives to the House of Commons at Westminster. This was the basis of representative government.

The reflection of this today is that the country is divided up into constituencies, each of which sends a member to parliament. Since British history has been uninterrupted by revolution, the system has never changed. Today those who call for proportional representation are faced with this serious historical problem: it does not fit into the age-old representative picture.

Most other European countries have experimented with various forms of proportional representation. And the reasons for this are valid to some extent at least. It allows all groups of opinion to be represented at the centre. But proportional representation is an animal of infinite variety, and no approach to perfection has ever been found. The British system may indeed over-represent the main parties; but the proportional system often under-represents them. It is like a chameleon, in that it may do this after one election and not after another. Seen historically, the proportional system has often meant that so many parties are represented in national parliaments that it becomes impossible to form long-lasting governments. This is an element which can wear down the political process.

This happened in the French Fourth Republic. Before 1958, France was so paralysed by the fact that no government could maintain a majority in the National Assembly that it was unable to come to grips with the huge problems with which it was faced, notably Algeria and Vietnam. By good fortune an elder statesman was standing in the wings in the person of General de Gaulle, who was able to remedy the situation by instituting the presidential system of the Fifth Republic.

The first-past-the-post system on the British model has not had a good press. It has been proved that almost all post-war governments in London have been elected by a minority of the population. This means that if you take the trouble to add up all the votes cast in all the constituencies it is possible to have a vast majority of

members sent to Westminster by one party without that party having a majority of the total votes.

It is a system which works to the detriment of smaller parties, and in fact any third party in a mainly two-party system. This is why the British Liberals have been so insistent that proportional representation will have to be introduced and that this is a *sine qua non* for entering into a coalition with one of the other two parties. For years the Liberals have been hoping to find themselves in a position after a general election of holding the balance in parliament - so that they will be able to push this through. They were almost certain that this would happen after the last election, and John Major's absolute victory came as a dreadful and disappointing surprise to them. But democracy "in mysterious ways its marvels doth perform". There is no logical reason why it should have never happened that the Liberals held the balance in successive British parliaments, but that is the way things have turned out.

For years, the first-past-the-post system has been considered on the continent as a splendid example of the much mocked British lack of logical thinking. Like with the metric system, it was just another splendid example of the British refusing to accept the obvious. Now, however, continental critics are faced with the fact that the Italians, being finally forced to come to grips with the deep-rooted faultlines in their political system, are turning their backs on proportional representation. Many of them have reached the conclusion that the British system presents a

guarantee of stable government, indeed the only possible guarantee. They are intending to introduce substantial constitutional reforms leading in this direction.

The Swing of the Pendulum

There is another important component of the British constitutional system, and that is the swing of the pendulum - from one main party to the other. This again is consecrated in no law, either constitutional or customary. Things have just happened that way. It is another mystery of democracy. Since the great voting reform laws of the nineteenth century, culminating in votes for women after the First World War, there have been very few occasions when one of the main parties has been in power for much more than a decade. Until the 1920s the two main parties were the Conservatives and the Liberals, but at that time the Liberals were replaced by Labour; and it has been so ever since. It goes without saying that during the century or so during which the Liberals were one of the main parties they never asked for proportional representation.

I have dwelt on the questions of first-past-the-post and the swing of the pendulum because they underly the present state of the British political scene. I do not think it is possible for anyone outside Britain to realise fully the present eccentricities of Westminster politics without taking them into account. There is always a tendency to personalise politics. John Major won in Britain, Felipe Gonzalez won in Spain; but in reality each time we see the successful conclusion of a democratic election it is the people who win, it is democracy itself that wins. And this factor appears particularly pointed when democracy wins in spite of complete different forecasts from the public opinion polls. Recent evidence show that these should not be taken into account as much as was thought necessary in the past. It is what happens on polling day alone that counts; this and absolutely nothing else.

It is with these elements in mind that I come to the intricacies of the present British political scene. The first important element is that the Conservatives have now been in power since 1979, which makes 14 years. They are still at the helm in defiance of the swing of the pendulum rule. Judging from the past it is unlikely that they will remain in power after the next general election, although this is not due for almost four years. It was already an anomaly that they should have won the last election, and it makes it unsurprising that they should have become wildly unpopular just a few months after that unexpected win. I would go so far as to say that it has very little indeed to do with the personality of Prime Minister John Major, although this is being persistently analysed in the popular press.

Problems of the Labour Party

When the Conservatives came to office in 1979, Labour had been in power for longer than was good for it. Harold Wilson had seen succeeded by Jim Callaghan, a much less important political figure. (This succession may be seen as a mirror image of Margaret Thatcher and John Major, although both the characters and the circumstances were different). The party accordingly retired to lick its wounds. Exactly this is going to happen to the Conservatives sooner rather than later. But to understand the British political scene today, it is the development of Labour during the last decade which must be studied - because the swing of the pendulum indicates that it will be back in power before long. The press tends to prefer analysis of the actions of those in power, rather than those out of it. But in the present British constellation, with the atmosphere of the end of an era, astute political observers should consider the alternative.

Since the 1950s, when Winston Churchill returned to power after the first post-war Labour government, the Labour movement has been torn apart by a permanent rupture be-

tween right and left. This had already broken out during Labour's period in office and had resulted in the resignation of a senior member, Aneurin Bevan, and a junior member, Harold Wilson.

Those on the right wanted a retreat from traditional socialism. The controversy centered on whether Clause 4 of the party constitution should be eliminated. This stated that one of Labour's main aims was government control over the means of production, distribution and exchange. It was the great issue of nationalisation - remarkably prescient in its way, since this was an overwhelming obsession of Labour long before the Thatcherite ideal of privatisation spread throughout the industrialised world, sweeping this old socialist principle before it.

Harold Wilson was an ex-left-winger, but he was succeeded by a right-winger (in party terms) in the person of Jim Callaghan. This meant that the left-wingers were able to claim that it was because of the right-wingers (and not the swing of the pendulum) that they were thrown out in 1979. Labour drew the wrong conclusion immediately after the election, and it is because of this more than for any other reason - i.e. by default - that the Conservatives have been in power for so long at this moment.

Labour elected veteran left-winger Michael Foot as head of the party. He was a committed but romantic left-winger; the party might have done better if had taken hard-as-nails left-winger Tony Benn, who has never been known to compromise on anything. Michael Foot kept Labour in the wilderness because he could not be taken seriously as a potential prime minister, and he did not even succeed in unifying the party by providing a compromise between right and left, as Harold Wilson had done. He was eventually succeeded by another ex-left-winger, meant to be a carbon copy of Harold Wilson, in the person of Neil Kinnock.

Kinnock did a lot to knock the party into shape. During his tenure of office it became clear on the international scene that socialism had changed. Even traditionally socialist governments, like those of Helmut Schmidt in Germany and Felipe Gonzalez in Spain, departed from socialist doctrines and left nothing at all of the grand old word except the name. Socialists were engaging in privatisation by the end of the 1980s, and in the 1990s even communists are doing it in China.

In Britain's Labour Party, nationalisation was no longer an issue; ironically Clause 4 still remains in the constitution but it is now considered as folklore. Neil Kinnock brought Labour up to the end of the twentieth century. He succeeded in carrying out the much needed reform, but this was done at the expense of his own reputation. Both within his own party and in Britain as a whole, he was seen as an opportunist, a politician who would sacrifice principle for power. And it was this perception that enabled John Major to win the Conservatives' fourth election victory in a row. Labour proceeded to elect a new

leader in the person of John Smith, who has been a right winger since the outset of his political career and who has been in favour of ditching traditional left wing policies all along. He too - after a year at the helm of his party - is having ups-and-down comparable to those of John Major, but they should not be taken seriously. This does not seem to be an age in which exciting politicians are required.

Maastricht

Which enables us finally to catch up with the gossip columns. If John Major's government seems particularly accident-prone just over a year after its election, it is because of the wear and tear, not so much of Mr. Major himself, but of the Conservatives as a whole. And the issue which has come to sum up everything that seems to be wrong is Maastricht. I persist in thinking that if Maastricht had not happened to be around, another issue just as potentially fatal would have been found.

Fading governments are very often given the "coup de grace" from within. Stabbing in the back is what it

is called in the delicate language of politics, and this is more or less what they did to Margaret Thatcher - just as of course she did it to Edward Heath before her, although he was not prime minister at the time but the leader of a defeated and dispirited party. Today the people who are acting out this age-old political gambit are the Maastricht rebels, led not surprisingly by "We want our money" Thatcher.

This was the war-cry with which the former prime minister went to her first Community summit in 1979. And she never stopped calling for Britain's money until she finally got it some four years later. She was not a committed supporter of European union, and she did not believe that further integration was the best objective for a Community which had Britain as a member. She glorified in the idea that Britain, more than any Community member other than France, had peripheral interests. And these were beyond the ocean; they were the interests which made Britain a world power.

A world power, not a great power: the difference is important. It meant

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simply that the country had interests outside Europe. The Gulf war came to show that she had a point, and John Major - new to office - was at that time sufficiently Thatcherite to have taken the same attitude as she would have done. This has not been the case on Bosnia.

In signing the Treaty of Maastricht, against the devout wishes of many within his own party, John Major thought he could drag the British electorate towards European integration. But he used a method which the public did not really like. He told people that by accepting integration the British could stop it going too fast. This was the same argument which was used for joining the Community in the first place, but things had changed in the meantime. People had voted Yes in the 1970s because they thought that Europe was the centre of a "white-hot" technical revolution, of which they had to be a part.

Maastricht was hardly an issue in the 1992 general election. But no sooner had the Conservatives won for the fourth successive time than the whole European nexus began to unravel. It started with the totally unexpected (although there is no reason why it should have been) Danish rejection of the treaty. This was followed by President Mitterrand's decision to call a referendum on the subject - which he thought would make the Danes look silly. He needed a victory at the polls to salvage the reputation of France's Socialist government. But when the referendum finally took place more than 49% of the French people voted against Maastricht: they made their own president look silly and the Danes like heroes. And just four days before the French vote Britain was forced to withdraw from the European Exchange Rate Mechanism, which was the central instrument of the convergence towards monetary union - one of the main issues in the Maastricht Treaty.

This brought the potential Conservative Eurorebels out of the closet. They created havoc in the country by

making anti-Community speeches, and they campaigned for a referendum on the subject. Opinion polls gave the impression that most citizens would like to vote on the matter, just as they had on Community entry in the 1970s. The same polls were not so definite about what the result would be if a referendum were held, but there was no doubt that one was desired. In this case public opinion polls were the only thing that gave an inkling about what the people did want.

John Major was a convinced integrationist and thought that Maastricht was the summit of his career. He had put his name to the document at the Maastricht summit, and he was going to push it through to ratification, even if he brought his government and his party down with him. This was perhaps a reasonable intention, provided he shared the opinion of this writer that if it had not been Maastricht which produced the nadir of Conservative fortunes it would have been some other issue. By this time the most prestigious opponents of Maastricht were all in the House of Lords. These were Margaret Thatcher, and the loyal allies of her first years in power, Norman Tebbit and Cecil Parkinson; these highly qualified and in British terms charismatic personalities will be directing the anti-Maastricht campaign.

It is one of the peculiarities of British politics that the second house - the House of Lords - can only delay bills and not cancel them out altogether. But delay at this point is precisely what the Conservative government may not be able to stand. Maastricht has taken up so much of the government's time that public opinion has started to think that the prime minister is obsessed. This perception was increased by what looked like a blatant attempt on the part of the foreign secretary to influence Danish voters in the second referendum in which Denmark finally ratified the treaty.

Maastricht is not yet through the

parliamentary process, although the government is now expected to win on the issue. If this is the case, however, it is possible that the treaty will be referred to the courts. All in all, it is more than likely that the issue will dominate British politics for many more months to come.¹

Government Majority Erodes

And in the meantime it is doing the government's reputation a lot of damage. In the year since John Major romped to victory with a majority of 20 over all other parties combined, he has lost popularity - again according to public opinion polls - in an unprecedented degree. It seems likely that if an election were held now Labour would come in with one of the biggest majorities ever. In normal circumstances, however, an election would not have to be held for almost four years.

Here, however, we have to consider the small Conservative majority. If a Member of Parliament dies, a by-election has to be held. This happens from time to time. Each time a government-held constituency is lost, the majority goes down by two. It lost one recently, and the majority dropped to 18; another is to be held in a few weeks' time, and if the government loses the majority will be down to 162. It seems that the reputation of the government and the prime minister are at present so low that not even the safest seats in the country can be held.²

Party Unrest

To this must be added unrest in the party. This is a typical symptom of a government in decline. There may be an unspoken feeling even amongst Conservatives that their government has been in office too long. The threatened rebellion on Maastricht has been headed off by extremely astute government maneuvering in the House of Commons. But there are other issues on which Conservative members feel so strongly that they might well abstain or vote against the government in

such numbers as to bring it down. These cover almost the whole political spectrum and include such issues as railway privatisation, education, the health service, etc. One way of carrying on might be to ditch the prime minister, but there is no evidence that the latter is less popular than this party. A palace revolution might keep things going for a few months, but there would still be the possibility that a steady erosion of the Conservative majority would lead

to a general election some time in the next year or so. There is a sentiment in the country that a change is due. Many people who have always voted Conservative feel this. There is a gut feeling amongst public opinion that it is not good for the political process for one party to be in power for so long. This is not the fault of John Major, who has been an adequate prime minister in troubled times, it is simply a mark of democracy.

¹Maastricht was subsequently ratified by the British House of Commons in July (this article was written in June '93) and the case against it in court, withdrawn by the Conservative MP who had sought judicial aid.

²The author's guess proved right. The Conservatives lost the Christchurch seat to the Liberal Democrats, who won by a majority of over 16,000 votes. Christchurch has been considered one of the safest seats for the Conservatives.

MR. IAN TICKLE is the editor of the *Swiss Press Review and News Report*, where this article first appeared.

Adam Adil

A Symbol of Secularism

As reported in the July '93 issue of *Freedom First*, Mr. Adam Adil, a former editor of *Freedom First* and member of the editorial board passed away on May 13, 1993.

Mahatma Gandhi equated Truth with consistency between preaching and practice, between word and deed. Judged by this standard, Adambhai (as we used to call him), was a truthful man, a thorough gentleman. He was a scholar of many languages including Hindi, Urdu, English, Arabic and of many religions including Islam, Hinduism, Christianity and others. He was a fiery orator who could stir the masses. He was a journalist of repute who wielded a powerful pen. He was one who was wedded to the freedom of thought and expression, so much so that several times, I heard him shouting the slogan "*Freedom Today, Freedom Tomorrow, Freedom Always*" along with Congress volunteers during the Quit India struggle of 1942. This is why he joined the ardent lover of freedom, M. R. Masani, in starting the *Freedom First*, a journal that has fearlessly championed freedom, even under the most adverse circumstances and worked as its fearless editor during the sixties.

Adambhai was very humble and human. He was ever-smiling and ever-obliging. He had nothing but goodwill

for one and all, including the lowliest and the lost. He was a great harmoniser and adept in the art of conflict-resolution, whether the conflict be between two warring groups of Congress workers or between two religious communities or between two countries. He was sober and self-effacing and acted as a friend and guide to many an individual in need of help, and a number of organisations like Freedom Fighters' Sabha, Indo-Arab Society, People's Union for Civil Liberties and others. He was one who had the courage of his conviction. I was a witness to the tremendous pressure that was brought on him by some of his Muslim friends to join the Muslim League. He stood firm like a rock and made it very clear that he was a committed Congressman who could not think of joining a communal party like the Muslim League.

Once, he had an argument with Shri S. K. Patil, the then President of the BPCC in connection with the selection of candidates for the impending general election. Patil said, "I want to have candidates who will be able to catch votes and fetch funds". Without a moment's hesitation,



Adambhai, striking a note of dissent, said, "I think these are not the right criteria for the selection of candidates. Instead, we must have loyalty to the Congress and integrity as the main criteria".

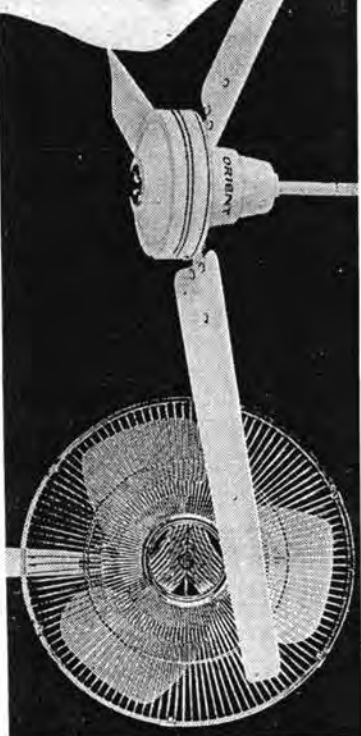
In Adambhai, there was a combination of thought and action. He was a scholar who was active in the trade union and youth movements. He was elected to the Bombay Municipal Corporation and the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly in both of which he relentlessly championed the cause of the workers and the youth and the minorities. As a member of the Indian delegation to ILO at Geneva, in 1947, he made a powerful plea for protecting the rights of the labourers.

We salute Adambhai, the valiant freedom-fighter, a champion of human rights, and a genuine secularist who are very much needed in today's India.

Usha Mehta.



ठंडी-मस्त
हवाएं
रुश्शियों के
झरने बहायें



ओरिएण्ट पंखे क्वालिटी में बेजोड़,
खूबसूरत पंखे।
सीलिंग, टेबल, पेंडस्टल और एक्जॉस्ट—
क्रिस-क्रिस की डिजाइनों में बेशुमार
पंखे। जो गर्मी के मौसम में,
सालोसाल लारें ठंडी-ठंडी हवाएं,
आपके कमरे में।

ये ताज़ी हवाएं, जीवनभर आपकी हो जाएं

ORIENT FANS

What Progress India's Economic Reforms

A Seminar held in Bombay on May 28, 29 and 30, 1993 sponsored by the Project for Economic Education and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation sought to review the progress with the economic reforms so far, their impact on the economy and the future outlook. The participants included economists, academicians, retired civil servants, journalists, chartered accountants, lawyers, civil rights activists and public workers.

The New Economic Policy

In a keynote presentation, eminent economist Mr. D. R. Pendse set the tone for the discussions with a comprehensive review of the reforms so far, the current situation and the future outlook. There was general agreement that the reforms had more to do with compulsion than conviction - the compulsion being the desperate economic situation facing the country. Whatever be the reason, the unanimous view was that the reforms had become necessary.

With reference to the international environment, it was pointed out that many countries were clamouring for external aid at a time when the quantum of aid available is shrinking. Moreover raw materials which are the main assets of third world countries had lost considerable value as a result of man-made substitutes that were now available thanks to modern technology. Sophisticated machinery had reduced the need for cheap labour. Strategic location in geo-politics was no longer considered to be of much importance in the light of modern communications and transportation technologies on the one hand and new international power alignments arising from the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the many independent states in east Europe and Asia, on the other.

Was it too early to assess the impact of the reforms? Most participants did not think so. It was pointed out that in countries like Poland and

Hungary the results of the reforms were visible within two years. In China where the reform process had started at last 10 years ahead of India the results were dramatically visible. China's record in implementing the reforms was much better than that of India.

Turning to the political dimensions of the economic reforms it was pointed out that India-watchers appeared to be more concerned with India's political record and the ability of the system to deliver than with economic issues. These concerns included the issue of civil stability and the people's involvement in the reforms process. While the middle classes were interested, the other strata of society did not appear to be concerned, preoccupied as they were with ensuring their basic needs.

There was also opposition to certain aspects of the reforms from those who were directly affected. For instance the absence of a rational and coherent exit policy was due to opposition from organised labour i.e. the trade unions. Then there was the gap between policies announced by the Finance Minister and their implementation or lack of it, in the states.

Were the reforms being pushed through because of IMF conditionalities? There was agreement that the IMF might have accelerated the drive towards reforms but the reforms themselves were inescapable.

If the reforms succeeded, India

would be a dominant economic power by 2020. But if the reforms failed India would not be able to save the economy for many years to come.

Globalisation and India - Threat or Opportunity

In his presentation Dr. Prakash Hebalkar expressed the view that India should concentrate on certain key areas, adopt suitable strategies; utilise the enormous talent available and, most importantly better serve the consumer. The discussion revealed a broad agreement on the following:

- * Although Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is vital for our economy, care must be taken to see that it did not further aggravate the dualism already existing in the economy by actively encouraging FDI in areas of economic significance as well as in the services sector and infrastructural areas to ensure employment generation.
- * The nexus between the 'devaluation' of the currency and 'export growth' needs to be carefully studied, especially identifying which is the cause, and which the effect. The non-price aspects of exports such as quality, reliability of supply, aggressive marketing etc. need to be given urgent and sustained attention, especially marketing.
- * The possibilities of trading off all or a significant part of external debt with certain non-economic

issues such as the non-proliferation treaty (NPT) and/or IPR should be given serious thought.

The Public Sector - Live or Let Die.

Prof. P. R. Brahmananda initiated the discussion on the role of the Public Sector in the context of the new economic policy.

While participants generally agreed that there were areas where state initiative was imperative or inescapable there had to be limits to the extension of state ownership. In India the state had gone too far in involving itself in industry and trade. Hence in the light of experience gained and, in the context of current international developments it was time to accept the fact that our policies needed change.

Government, with its limited financial resources must first concentrate on its primary responsibility of poverty eradication; expanding employment opportunities; promoting universal literacy; providing drinking water; ensuring basic medical care, health, sanitation and basic infrastructural facilities. To be able to do all these, the state must first disentangle itself from loss making public sector units (PSUs); create a competitive environment where monopoly conditions exist and enable managements of PSUs to perform efficiently by not interfering in their day to day management.

In so far as privatising PSUs was concerned it is to be deplored that we have not even defined or debated what constitutes privatisation. On the contrary the government is following *ad hoc* policies including the poorly planned sale of its shares in PSUs and then using the proceeds to fund revenue expenditure.

A detailed study by experts on how to go about privatisation and a national debate on this subject are a necessary pre-condition to the success of this aspect of the new economic policy.

Apart from eliminating revenue deficit we need to be sure of the rationale and mechanism of the process of divestment. Most of all what is needed is an exit policy with labour's cooperation and the political will to enforce the policy.

Among the weaknesses in our privatisation policy are: An *ad hoc* approach; a lack of capacity by the investing public and industry in the private sector to absorb the shares being divested by PSUs.

There were also serious apprehensions about the privatisation of public sector banks. There will be no growth if overall savings do not go up or if large scale foreign investment fails to materialise.

Participants felt that aggressive privatisation was necessary to end the stranglehold of public sector banks and financial institutions on the nation's savings. A political consensus and the will to discipline PSU employees was needed. The fact had to be publicized that their interests did not necessarily coincide with the public interest.

Unless we educate public opinion, adopt the policy of privatisation out of conviction and not out of temporary economic compulsion and unless private industry and trade unions abide by their social obligations to the consumer, the nation's progress in the desired direction will not only be slow but may lead to a loss of faith in the reforms and to social unrest.

The Infrastructure - Keeping Pace with the Reforms

The discussion on this subject was initiated by economist Mr. J. K. Mukhopadhyay who drew attention to the pre-Budget Economic Survey published by the government of India which stated that the rate of growth of the infrastructure ought to be 8% p.a. if the economic growth rate of 5% to 6% (as envisaged) is to be sustained or even nurtured.

Clarifying what he meant by infrastructure, Mr. Mukhopadhyaya ex-

plained that infrastructure was of three broad types:

- a. Physical eg. Energy including power, petroleum etc. roads, railways and communications including transport and telecommunications.
- b. Financial - those which are commonly known as the financial sector eg. banks, financial institutions etc.
- c. Social - eg. education, health and housing etc.

The focus of the presentation, however, was on the physical infrastructure like power, petroleum and railways. The infrastructure sectors have been opened to private industries (including foreign investment) because of the massive liberalisation of the industrial policy announced in July 1991 as well as shortage of resources.

In fact the main problem was one of finding resources to sustain and develop the infrastructure. This was because investments in the infrastructure were capital intensive; yielded poor returns on investment and that too after long gestation periods. Besides the government's fiscal situation was severely constrained. Thanks to the penury of the government, and the growing paucity of resources evidenced by budgetary constraints, budgetary support for central government projects for energy, transport and communications in the Eighth Plan (1992-97) has shrunk to as low as 17% of the total allocations necessary. Therefore as much as 83% of the funds needed for the projects in these sectors will have to be generated through "internal and extra budgetary resources (IEBR)". These will indeed be difficult. But the point is that unless massive amounts are generated from IEBR it will be impossible to achieve the Eighth Plan targets.

The focus ought therefore to be laid on:

- * Seeking private, including foreign

participation;

- * evolving a competitive marketing strategy, including a pricing strategy to increase the generation of IEBR generation;
- * using modern technology;
- * breaking the State's monopoly on infrastructural projects as in other areas;
- * managing and/or enhancing levels of productivity eg. in the case electric power, improving the plant load factor, and cutting down transmission losses;

clearly demarcating the role and responsibility of the public and private sectors in infrastructural activities;

- * encouraging black money to flow into infrastructural activities.

Economic Reforms in the Present Political Climate

Prof. P. G. Mavalankar initiated a discussion on the relevance of the political climate to the process of economic reforms.

Prof. Mavalankar emphasised that there was nothing fundamentally wrong with our political system but with those who were operating the system. Our Constitution is workable and its basic structure must be kept intact. However a few amendments were needed. Among these were: Restoring the Preamble to its original form by dropping the words 'socialist and secular'; ensuring genuine autonomy for the State by restoring to the State List subjects that had over the years, been transferred to the central or concurrent Lists; and enhancing parliament's independence and authority.

The following issues were highlighted during the discussions:

- * Our political practices were not quite in consonance with the political system envisaged by our Constitution. Hence to describe

India as a practising Liberal Democratic State was not an appropriate description.

- * The right to property must be made a fundamental right as it is central not only to the success of the economic reforms but also to guaranteeing personal rights.
- * Public life in India had a much wider canvas and it would be wrong to restrict it to political life. That this was being so restricted was indicative of the politicisation of public life in this country.
- * The blame for the current situation in India cannot rest with politicians alone. Elite groups are equally to blame. Politicians reflect the general state of our society. To say that the politicians are bad but the people are good is closing our eyes to reality.
- * The nexus between criminals and politicians has eroded the legitimacy of the electoral system.
- * Distortions such as lack of accountability and excessive centralisation need to be rectified.
- * There is need to reform the electoral system. One of these should be the introduction of negative voting so as to ensure that every voter exercises his right even to reject all candidates.
- * Ministers ought to have a working knowledge of their portfolio as a pre-requisite to their appointment.
- * The submission of audited statement of accounts by political parties should be made compulsory.
- * The Constitution should be amended to change the structure and composition of the Rajya Sabha to bring in functional representation.
- * For the economic reforms to succeed centre-state relations need to be redefined.
- * The bureaucracy, which has a vested interest in perpetuating its

stranglehold on the country and hence could be a stumbling block to the progress of the economic reforms, needed to be kept under control.

- * Economic reforms in India must be implemented in the context of democracy. We need a high growth rate but with a democratic and not authoritarian leadership.

Economic Growth with Political Stability

Initiating the discussion on this topic, economist Dr. Jay Dubashi emphasised the need to separate the two concepts: the political system and stability and the economic system and stability. In any country there are bound to be changes that need to be absorbed by the economic system which ought to be flexible and resilient enough to withstand changes.

In the absence of such a flexible economic system the burden of absorbing the changes is passed on to the political system. If the political system is not flexible enough then the country is in for a period of political instability which might even lead to the breakdown of the state.

India's performance in the background of a semi-centralised and socialistic economic model was admittedly slow but the rate of growth was positive. This was in contrast to the negative rate of growth in countries which were either highly centralised or were dictatorships or both. India's slow but positive rate of growth must be attributed to the fact that India is a democracy.

When Marx Proved Right !

One last Eastern European joke: Every prophecy of Karl Marx - the increasing misery of the workers, the concentration of power in the ruling class, the inability of the economic structure to exploit new technology, repression - came true. Under Communism.

-National Review (USA)

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remained exactly
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DEBATE

Religion, Science & Philosophy

G.G. Agarkar was born on 14th July, 1856 and died on 17th June, 1895. Due to his differences with Lokmanya B.G. Tilak on child marriage, he left the *Kesari* and *Mahratta* Institute on 25th October, 1887 and started his own weekly, *Sudhark* on 15th October, 1888. Your article entitled "Religion, Science and Philosophy" published in the April-June 1993 issue begins with the sentence

J. V. Naik's response:

Mr. Dharap is absolutely right that the debate took place on 10th May, 1885 and not "10th May, 1895". That it is clearly a printing mistake in the article (p29), and also, unfortunately in the editorial explanation (p1) can be easily seen from the first two references in the footnotes. I am sure the editors will make the necessary

"A historic debate on Religion, Science and Philosophy took place on 10th May 1895 at Deccan College (Pune) presided over by R.G. Bhandarkar." Prior to his death on 17th June 1895, Agarkar's health had much deteriorated and he was lying in bed for a number of days. How could he take part in the debate on 10th May 1895? I think it should be 10th May 1885.

amends in the next issue of the magazine.

While expressing my sincere regret for the typographical error, not once but twice, I am impressed by Mr. Dharap's deep study of "Gopal Ganesh Agarkar" whom I regard as a "Saint of Rationalism"; and I do appre-

I am a follower of Agarkar. I agree with Mr. J.V. Naik that the debate is more relevant today than it was in the fog end of the 19th century, because today more and more youth are becoming religious minded. On the whole *Freedom First* propagates liberal ideas which is commendable.

G.Y. Dharap,
Jalgaon, Maharashtra.

ciate his comment that "the debate is more relevant today than it was in the fog end of the 19th century ..."

Editor's Note: Shows how the printers devil can ensnare even a very careful proof reader! We apologise.

What is Secularism?

This piece is in response to the phrase 'The word is not the thing' which made a great impression on Mr. Raju after reading Prof. Chase's book 'The Tyranny of Words'. I was similarly deeply impressed by J Krishnamurthy when he said 'The word is not the Truth'. He would repeatedly ask his audience whether they can imagine a word without an image. He would pause for a while and answer 'The word is the image'. We live on words and the sensations they produce afford us an escape from reality.

The participants to the debate on secularism* have offered their vari-

ous view points and one can argue endlessly with no solution in sight. The word 'secularism' conjures up as many images as there are people and in the Indian context it is not enough if one is secular but also has to appear to be so to others. We have often been asked to emulate two great secular personalities, Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. What image did the Mahatma create. He was a very religious man with great spiritual attainments and finally gave his life for the cause of the Muslims. In his obituary tribute Jinnah could not imagine Gandhiji as other than a great Hindu leader, which was also naturally the opinion of his followers. Many of his own countrymen

have accused him of mixing religion with politics and appeasing the Muslims. His life was a tragedy and he is remembered only in name. Pandit Nehru however, managed to create a better image of himself as a secular person. Malcolm Muggeridge described him as the "Last English Prime Minister of India", and Nirad Chaudhari has observed that he (Nehru) liked those people in particular who spoke English with an Oxford accent. Men like Rajen Babu and Rajaji did not quite fit the bill for they were *dhotiwallahs*. He objected to the visit of Rajen Babu to the opening of the Somnath Temple. When death was, however, drawing near he wrote eloquently of the 'Ganga' and desired

**Freedom First*, Jan-Mar '93

that his ashes be immersed in the holy rivers of India. Such sentiments can come forth only from a Hindu mind which gives all rivers a divine importance.

It is not easy to give up one's roots. There is an interesting incident I had read long ago Pandit Nehru was having his lunch with Shrimathi Bandarnaike when she was Prime Minister of Ceylon. There were a number of people watching them from the windows and Nehru was naturally

annoyed at the intrusion of his privacy. He therefore exclaimed 'can I not have my lunch in privacy'. Immediately, Bandarnaike observed the 'Brahmin' in him which only reflects her prejudice. In my own case a longtime Christian friend suddenly discovered the 'Brahmin' in me because I drank water from a *lota* (tumbler) without sipping it. Apart from these prejudices, one problem with secularism is that the majority community has to prove its credentials every moment of their lives

while the communalism of other communities is taken for granted. Vande Matharam evokes memories of the freedom struggle, but to Muslims it means idol worship. Even an innocent act as lighting the lamp at an inaugural function by a Muslim minister was considered an un-Islamic act. In the prevailing situation it would be better to come to terms with communalism in a spirit of give and take.

R.V. SASTRY, Pune

The Masani Viewpoint

It seems to me that either old age is playing strange tricks on Masani's memory or he is translating historical facts according to his prejudice. In any case, we cannot accept Hollywood's version of Indian history. It is true that Gandhi had made the offer of Prime Ministership to Jinnah. This was not taken seriously by Mountbatten and he dismissed it as a gimmick, and rightly so. Whatever one may say of Jinnah, his integrity was never in doubt. The creation of Pakistan was almost a certainty and by accepting the Prime Ministership of undivided India, he would not only

be compromising on his integrity, but would be cutting a sorry figure before his Muslim followers for whom he had promised Pakistan for so long. I am not sure that Gandhi wept when Nehru denounced the Cabinet Mission proposal. In fact, Gandhi had much to do with the rejection of the Cabinet Mission proposals. On the grouping of states, particularly Assam. We would have two Pakistans instead of one under the Cabinet Mission proposals. It is by now a well-known fact that Maulana Azad as the Congress President sent a secret letter accepting the Cabinet propos-

als without consulting the Congress working committee. Sir Staffords Cripps called an urgent meeting with Gandhi which was held in secret in the garden of the Viceregal lodge and the letter of Azad was handed over to him. On being questioned, the Maulana denied the letter and Gandhi tore it off. The details are available in Pyarelal's 'Last Phase' which is definitely more authentic than Attenborough's story.

R.V. SASTRY, Pune

Hinduism and Secularism

One of the canards which is being persistently spread widely and unabashedly is that Hinduism, by definition, is secular. The fact that Hinduism is not an organized religion with a church, that it does not have one single authoritative Book, that it does not possess a universally recognized clergy or priesthood, has been advanced as an argument in its favour as an eclectic system of beliefs and rituals which tolerates wide diversities and differences. The self pro-

claimed 'tolerance' of Hinduism is identified with secularism.

It needs to be recognized, at first, that tolerance of Hinduism is at best a half truth. Hinduism is a motley of hundreds of sects; each sect is jealous of preserving its own beliefs and rituals, any deviation from which could lead to social ostracism. A person does not cease to be a Hindu if he does not follow any particular system of beliefs but he could lose 'face' or social standing within his own sect or

little community. Hinduism has been tolerant towards dissenting, even heretical beliefs but does not countenance any "deviant" behaviour. As long as one acts according to the sectarian-laid down norms of behaviour, one is accepted irrespective of whatever beliefs he may hold. It matters little what one thinks as long as one acts appropriately!

Further, recorded history presents a rather mixed picture of Hindu

tolerance. The manner in which Buddhists were hounded lends little credence to Hindu claims of tolerance. But one does not have to go back to distant past to expose the Hindu claims to be tolerant. The communal violence which has scarred the history of free India since 1947 has undoubtedly revealed the hollowness of the claims of Hindus to be tolerant. By and large, the Hindu-Muslim communal riots have taken greater toll of Muslim lives and property. Hindu militancy, what with the rise of various Dals and Senas, has become more menacing and intolerant. Increasingly, we witness electioneering by some parties and leaders based blatantly on communal appeal. Never in the past have there been so many complaints filed in the courts of law against candidates who used the "communal card" to get themselves elected.

However, even if it were to be granted that Hinduism is a religion of tolerance, it would not necessarily imply that it is also secular. A theocratic state can also "tolerate" the existence of other religions. Tolerance by itself does not ensure that the state would be secular. A secular state is not one which "tolerates" all religions. It may be that it is not its principal characteristic. A secular state is one which disassociates itself from any religion. It neither favours any religion nor does it discriminate against any. A secular state implies a limited role assigned to religion. Reli-

gion must not be permitted to enter areas of social life or practices which fall clearly within the domain of the state. In particular, it should not act as an inhibiting factor to prevent the citizens from exercising their human rights which are guaranteed by their constitution. In our own country, equality - social, economic and political - has been enshrined in the preamble of the constitution and assured in its chapter on Fundamental Rights. Yet in several ways, the social rights of Muslim women are narrower than those of Hindu women.

Secularism evolved gradually in the west, partly as a consequence of understanding reached between the state and the church. The church which regulated almost all areas of social life, not even excluding the economic, in the medieval period, was forced to shed many of its powers to the emergent modern state in the sixteenth century. The Reformation further weakened the church and made it more vulnerable to the aggrandizing designs of princely states. In any case, the role of the church has steadily diminished in the west in the course of the last four centuries.

In India, the dominant religion - Hinduism - has no church; it has no Pope or perhaps one could say, it has several, and they do not speak in unison. If, on the one hand, the state in India is not faced with an "organized" church, it is also, on the other hand,

put into a peculiar quandary. The Indian state cannot identify any recognized and authoritative spokesmen for Hinduism with whom it can "negotiate" terms of relation between the state and religion. With whom does the Government of India negotiate, say, the issue of Ayodhya? No Hindu leader, priest or "pontiff" has the authority or the legitimacy to speak for the Hindus. It is also a moot point whether all Hindus are equally concerned about the Ayodhya issue. It is often argued that the absence of organized and institutionalized Hinduism makes it easier for the Indian state to pursue secular goals. On the contrary, it can also be argued that the very amorphous, pervasive presence of Hinduism makes it very difficult to secularize Hindu society. Hinduism with its capacious quality to tolerate all beliefs is not hostile to secularism. It can just accord it a status of another sectarian body of beliefs whose votaries nevertheless remain Hindus! A Hindu remains a Hindu whatever beliefs he may hold as long as he does not actually embrace another faith. Even the supreme court of India has upheld this view. In this sense, the greatest challenge to secularism in India comes not from the faith of the minorities but from Hinduism itself, particularly when it turns militant.

V. K. SINHA

Courtesy: *THE SECULARIST*.

Ayodhya - The Real Issue

Sociologists have analysed the Ayodhya incident and tried to find its roots in social and economic tensions. What they failed to explain, however, is why an issue arising out of an incident that is reported to have occurred over five centuries ago, should suddenly become urgent, push-

ing into the background, such problems as population control, poverty alleviation, containing insurgency and pursuing economic reforms. Specious explanations such as 'boiling over of the pent-up resentment' and 'appeasement of minorities' have been advanced; but they cut no real ice. The

real reason behind the incident, one must admit, is the ambition of the BJP for power.

As long as successive central governments continued to follow the socialistic path, the BJP relied on its 'rightist' policies to return to power.

**THE GLOBE NEEDS
FREEDOM FROM US**



**The Lakshmi Mills
Company Limited**
Coimbatore

Sooner or later, the welfare policies pursued by the Congress would land it into a quagmire from which it would find it difficult to extricate and the BJP, as a champion of a free economy, would get its chance. Its avowed support to practical economics had won over a large number of intellectuals inspite of its communal label which the party hotly denied.

However, V.P. Singh challenged the BJP's monopoly on free-market economy, first from the Rajiv Gandhi government and later from the Janata Government. It is at this time that the BJP decided to give top priority to the Ram Jannabhooni issue, at the expense of other, more immediate problems as its only hope of wresting power from the Congress. *Sheelanyas*, *Rathayatra* and *Karaseva* followed in succession to raise public awareness about the issue and to threaten the government in power. Rajiv Gandhi met the threat by joining the *Sheelanyas*; V.P. Singh succumbed when he foresaw the communal violence that could arise out of it and tried to stop the *Rathayatra*; while Rao took shelter behind procedural finesse and reneged on his duty. The call for mid-term elections is irresponsible, but highly persuasive and, hence, difficult to counter successfully.

Y. D. ALTEKAR, Pune.

No more corruption !

I have come across a joke which I would like to share with readers.

An adviser rushes excitedly into the President's office and exclaims, "Sir, there is no more corruption in the government!"

"What good news! Have they done away with all the corrupt people?"

"No. It's just that there's no more money."

As no stringent measures appear to have been taken by the Government to eradicate corruption, it seems as if it is waiting for a similar situation to arise in our country!

L.V. RAO
Bombay.

Field Marshal K.M. Cariappa

A Legend in his life time



"Sleep dear child, sleep. May you blossom forth as the light of the family, a trusted servant of the country and mould yourself a life of nobility and fame acceptable to God. Mother Cauvery will always protect you bestowing all that is good, so that you could live for the good of the noble land Coorg.

"Live a life tempered with love, a life of fame resounding everywhere, dauntless against the foe and friend of all. Howsomuch longer one may live, death cannot be escaped. Hence live on the righteous path - a life acceptable to God.

"Live a life befitting the noble name of your mother-land and mother Cauvery and always wear out your life for the cause of good. Earn a good name to your father. Be a cool shelter to your mother, be good and benevolent to your brothers, sisters and the family."

Every Kodava child used to be lulled to sleep with this song. And the life of Cariappa, one of the noblest of the Kodavas, fulfilled all the ideals of the song.

In his death, India has lost not only a great soldier, but also a patriot who loved his country and its people, and especially *his jawans* and the youth.

After retirement, he devoted himself to the welfare of *the jawans*, and guiding the youth in developing leadership skills to serve the country. In youth training camps, he used to expound his well-known formula (ITAFICH) as follows:

- I - for Individual skills
- T - for toughness - mental, moral and spiritual
- A - for adaptability
- F - for flexibility of approach, plans, etc.
- I - for initiative, inquisitiveness, intelligence
- C - for courage, commonsense, calmness, character, cheerfulness and consideration for others
- H - for humour, humility and honesty.

While travelling by car, if he noticed a pile of garbage or filth on a village road, he would get down from the car, identify himself, collect villagers and get shovels and baskets, and lead them in a campaign of clearing the garbage. After an exhortation to them on the value of cleanliness, he would leave the place with the villagers cheering this great man.

Though he retired from the Army many years ago, the Field Marshal never really retired from the Battle of Life. Practically till the end, he was active, and always thought of the country and his fellow men.

M.R.Pai

THE
COMPLETE
MAN:



He's a myth.
He's real.

He's a winner.
No, not always.

He commands.
He rebels.

He's unchanging.
He's impulsive.

Demanding.
Daring.
Discreet.

A devil.
A dilemma.
A dream.

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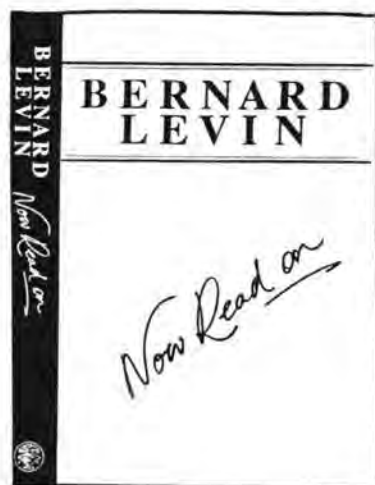
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BOOK REVIEWS

NOW READ ON by Bernard Levin; Jonathan Cape, Ltd. London; 1990; pp.268; £12.99.



Reviewed by
Homi J. Vakeel

Now Read On. We certainly must. Bernard Levin, the author, has given an appropriate title to this further collection of articles culled from *The Times*, London. To use an old *cliche*, once you have started reading the articles, it is difficult to set them aside, and the intelligent reader is indeed compelled to read on. But not only the articles. No reader should miss the Introduction which is a resume of many of Levin's articles that do not appear in the book. These are the political articles which the author feels are too ephemeral to appear in book form.

Ephemeral? Is the winding up of communism in Europe ephemeral? Is it not a subject about which historians in the future will ponder, and be duly amazed? At least two or three of these articles would have been most welcome - welcome as a contemporary assessment of what actually happened, and how it happened. Every reader of the book should read

the Introduction with the attention it so richly deserves.

Not that politics and political themes are entirely omitted. 'Visionary position' gives us a most amusing insight concerning assorted politicians, to wit sex and the Nazis, South African Kaffirbashers, Stalin amidst thirteen year old girls, and other similar articles. The successful prophecy concerning the end of Soviet rule both in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, particularly in the old, united Czechoslovakia, is dealt with in 'Spark to furnace'. But perhaps the finest and most pathetic political article concerns the African dictator President Houphouet-Boigny ('oomph') of the Ivory Coast. As is usual with such men he suffers from colossal delusions of grandeur, but to assert his faith both in God and in his entirely peaceful instincts, he builds a huge cathedral aptly named 'Our Lady of Peace'. This gem appears in the article aptly named 'Very white elephant'.

It is the extraordinary diversity of the author's interests that holds our attention. There is no point in listing these subjects as the articles tell their own story. And there are very few that are not upto the author's high standards - grave or amusing and frequently a mixture of both.

Royalty being a very high form of non-political politics, in 'Uneasy lies the head', we have an excellent article on royalty bashing, starting with 'Fergie' Duchess of York. The article was written in 1989 before all the royal bust ups began, specially those of Diana and Charles. The author excels when he suggests that we might achieve an adult attitude towards the Royal Family: "...instead of the unwavering imbecility that is the only product of our present view of them as partly divine, partly film stars, partly football hooligans and

partly chocolate boxes". Can anyone better this?

It is difficult to pick and choose from a book that is both instructive and entertaining. All the articles, bar some, either make us think or laugh. If the reader, specially the younger reader, wishes to be reminded of the great films of the thirties, he or she can't do better than to turn to '*Les neiges d'antan*'. All the films mentioned here have become classics. Young readers should try and see them.

From films to music. And what could be more wonderful than listening to the incomparable resonances of Sviatoslav Richter? The way Levin writes about this incomparable pianist it's almost as if the reader is actually listening to Richter playing Mozart and Chopin, and not merely reading about him. In the article he also inserts a moving tribute to the excellent pianist Dinu Lipatti who, alas, died young.

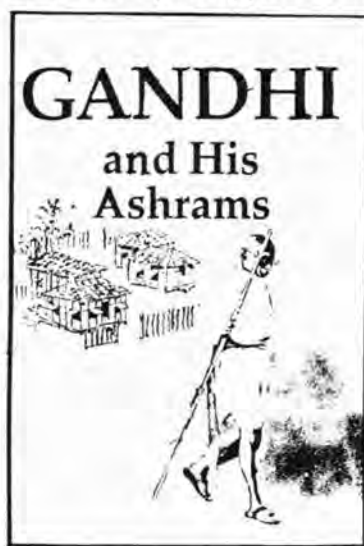
A personal note is not out of place here. Many years ago, when the world had not yet succumbed to the genius of Sviatoslav Richter, a talented young English pianist visited India. This reviewer happened to meet him, and being then young and innocent asked him the stupid and inevitable question concerning who, in his opinion, was the world's greatest pianist. He thought for a while and gave the very sensible answer that there were so many at the top who were equal in merit. He then paused, and said that if he absolutely had to give an answer he would name Sviatoslav Richter, the Russian. I am convinced that thanks to the young pianist this was the first time that many people over here had heard the great pianist's name. "At full stretch?" Yes, "Richter could span two and a half octaves just as easily if he felt like it". Altogether a musician's delight.

In this collection the perennial racial question is not forgotten. The fifth quartet is centred round T.S. Eliot and those who harbour anti-semitic feelings; at least Eliot is the starting point. Undoubtedly it is a fine and sensitive article but shows how even some of the finest and most enlightened Jews - Levin is amongst them can, on occasion, be extremely parochial. The article is concerned only with the molestation both physical and mental - suffered by Jews in Europe. In this context it is interesting to speculate how many white Jews throughout the world have joined their Christian brethren in speaking in a very derogatory manner of black Americans, Indians and Pakistanis, and West Indians. Had Levin also condemned severely these appalling racial outbursts indulged in by his own kith and kin and yes, such Jews undoubtedly exist - then this would most certainly have been the saddest, most sensitive and depressing article in the whole collection, indicative of 'man's inhumanity to man'. As it is, it is best to remember the article as also dealing with the raising of funds for that admirable institution, the London Library.

Either in a serious or humorous vein the author deals with so many interesting subjects that it is impossible to do justice to them all in a short review. But the reader would do well to read 'Island Story' the strange and still undiscovered story of who planted the incredible statues on Easter Island. The dramatic profession is not forgotten. 'Good night sweet prince'; is a noble tribute to Laurence Olivier, specially his amazing versatility. And to end with, one must draw the readers attention, specially in India, to 'Epic proportions' Peter Brook's 'Mahabharata', a fine analysis of a great epic poem. There is so much to savour so just read on.

MR. HOMI J. VAKEEL is a Publishing Consultant and Editor.

GANDHI AND HIS ASHRAMS by MARK THOMSON; Popular Prakashan, Bombay; 1993; pp.304; Rs 300.



Reviewed by
G. N. Sarma

Gandhi's life and thought have not lent themselves to the reduction to a system. They abound in riddles and paradoxes. He was at once a visionary and realist, a votary of the inner voice and an unceasing experimentalist, a saint and politician. He never considered himself as having arrived at the final Truth but was groping towards it through his experiments in testing and putting into practice his own perception of the Truth derived from his own conscience or intimations from sources beyond Reason.

Gandhi has been studied from a religious, spiritual point of view; his political activity has also been examined and assessed from various angles; attempts have been made to present a Gandhian political philosophy - Gandhism as an alternate to other political doctrines. Gandhi himself would no doubt disown the distinction of being the founder of a cult, be it religious, philosophical or political in the usual accepted sense.

Mark Thomson's study adopts a distinctive approach to the subject. It starts with a concise account of Gandhi's philosophy of life and action

and relates it to the Ashrams that Gandhi founded as the training ground for his followers in his discipline, aims and ideals. The Ashrams studied in detail are the Phoenix Ashram and Tolstoy Farm in Africa and Sabarmati and Sevagram Ashrams in India. This work, in the words of the author, "tests the strength of Gandhi's claim that the Ashrams were his finest achievements, and that the successes and failures of these communities were merely reflections of his own strengths and weaknesses. It is an attempt to understand the dynamics of his nonviolent philosophy of action, firstly, as the foundation of his 'experiments with truth' in the ashrams he shared with his followers, and, secondly, as the guiding principle underpinning his revolutionary programmes to realise a new individual and a new society."

Gandhi visualised the Ashram as an experiment in community living in the widest sense of the term. Its success could ensure self-imposed discipline, self-government, co-operation and self-sufficiency in the largest possible degree. If such communities could be multiplied, self-government would not only be widespread but would become deep rooted in the mind and heart of each individual in society. Society would then become the idealised joint family serving the ideals of self-denial and asceticism as the basis of 'simple living' for the individual and the commonweal of the enlarged household.

An essential element of Ashram life and discipline was self-denial and the conquest of the sexual urge. Gandhi believed that this would release sexual energy now limited to procreation and animality, for nobler and more constructive ends.

In this matter there is undoubtedly a great deal of ambivalence. Is the sexual urge, the lure of the senses or the vagrancy of mind to be brought under control by physical, external methods? Sometimes the answer would seem to be 'yes'. Gandhi was driven to abstinence in Africa owing to prolonged periods of singleness or

the heavy demands of public work and service. Later he tried the more determined method of trying to exorcise the devil by living with women, but unmoved by the attraction of flesh. As the author has shown, on the basis of Gandhi's own confessions, this sort of experiment in celibacy was a failure. Yet the stress on *brahmacharya* persisted and Gandhi exercised puritan and authoritarian discipline on his close followers. Gandhi was no doubt aware that *brahmacharya* meant more than exercising a rein or curb over the senses.

"*Brahmacharya* must be observed in thought, word and deed. It may be harmful to suppress the body, if the mind is at the same time allowed to go astray."

"It is better to enjoy through the body than to be enjoying the thought of it. It is good to disapprove of sensual desires as soon as they arrive in the mind and try to keep them down; but if, for want of physical enjoyment, the mind wallows in the thought of enjoyment, then it is legitimate to satisfy the hunger of the body. About this I have no doubt."

Mental control alone will not avail to secure total freedom from the attraction of the flesh. One must rise higher than the mind in order to withstand the storm of the senses. As the Gita said, they are a part of nature and disturb the human being as the tides deflect and toss a boat on troubled waters. Perfect control is attained only when an integrated human being is firmly fixed in the divine through Yoga. As Thomson points out, Gandhi's excessive emphasis on *Brahmacharya* and his misconceived experiments in celibacy led to his ultimate disappointment and confession of failure and, what is more, to the disruption of the institution of the Ashram and to the frustration of its main purpose of village uplift and healthy communal living. The attempt to suppress natural sexual energy or to overcome it in a struggle against self-created temptations and morally dubious

situations is foredoomed to failure. It was an error to extend a personal and unrealised ideal of sexual conduct to a community of individuals as we know them. Transformation of sex energy is indeed a great gain and achievement but to look upon it as *sin per se* would be an error of the moral enthusiast.

Another important point, briefly mentioned but not, one would feel, sufficiently elaborated, is in connection with Thoreau's influence on Gandhi. The Ashram, according to Thoreau as well as Gandhi, could be regarded as a resort for spiritual withdrawal and replenishment, far from the demoralising influences of society, materialism and enslaving industrialism which pass for modern civilisation. This would be something like the *Vanaprasthasrama* - the penultimate stage in one's earthly sojourn. It was the only way of escape from the stifling atmosphere of a fallen and oppressive society. But withdrawal was not all. It was not to be followed by a total renunciation and cessation from active life, but by spiritual and moral recovery, of the enrichment of one's inner strength and resources so that one could resume active life with confidence and optimism.

In the light of such a philosophy, the naming of the African settlement after the legendary Phoenix has a significant meaning. Failure and disappointment are not out of place as experiments must go on in spite of all reverses; they are rather the spur and inspiration for further effort, "Phoenix", as Gandhi wrote, "is a very good word which has come to us without any effort on our part. Its significance, as the legend goes, is that the bird Phoenix comes back to life again from its own ashes, i.e. it never dies. The name Phoenix serves quite well for we believe that the aims of Phoenix will not vanish even when we are turned to dust."

But here too was a contradiction. What was the primary purpose of the Ashram? It was not just political. It was primarily moral and spiritual, an

experiment in cooperative life intended to promote joint living and self-sufficiency and to mould life according to the principle of self-help, non-violence and village development. Political ambition was out of place in such a scheme but what developed in fact, was a muddled situation. Life in the Ashram lacked excitement. It was dull and tedious; especially the duty of scavenging could never be accepted joyfully by the inmates. Hand spinning too, though not odious, was mechanical. How long could the inmates continue in the Gandhian style, when Gandhi himself used to be away from the Ashram for long periods of political activity? It is not surprising that the Ashram came to be valued as a springboard for attaining power and wider popularity and as a source of moral certification for those who aspired for public prominence and self-aggrandisement.

The disappointing experience with the Ashrams was, as the author notes, due in no small measure, to their origin in Gandhi's charisma; charisma as long as it is powerful and bright, can attract and bind followers under its spell. It cannot, however, endure long and as it weakens in the course of time; the followers fall apart either out of disillusionment or as a reaction to excessive and dictatorial discipline. No less is the disillusionment of the leader himself - the moral limitations of the followers become evident when it is too late, or when he finds himself powerless to correct them.

The result, as the author states in Arun Gandhi's words was, that "the Ashrams where Bapu lived, worked and from where he gave inspiration to 400 million people have been turned into showpieces; there is nothing Gandhian about them."

In such a careful work as Thomson's, it is surprising to find a pronouncement on the *Bhagavad Gita* which might well have been avoided; "... in distant South Africa a *Karmayogi* was born who transformed the *Bhagavad Gita*

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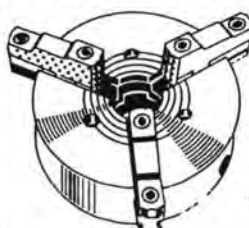


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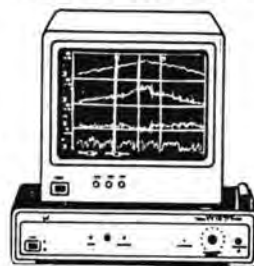
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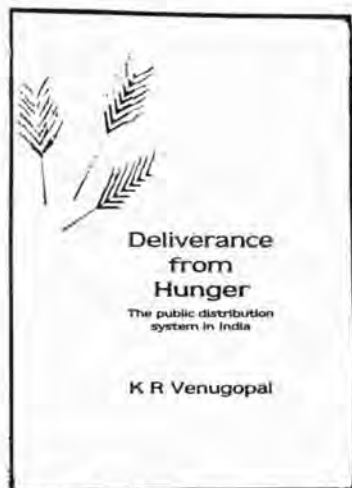
gospel of selfless action into a powerful force for social, political and religious reform." *Karma Yoga* is selfless action, directed towards any concrete aim, provided it is dedicated to the Divine. In this sense it is selfless. No transformation of the Gita gospel was involved.

Here is an interesting error: "R.D. Mookerji in her study of ancient Indian education," (p.41) Mr. Mookerji is elsewhere correctly referred to as R.K. It is the Radha, may also be the Kumud, which has led to the author's confusion.

One more error: "A ceaseless flow of people from all walks of life came to meet him (Gandhi), including poor villagers and the Viceroy of India, Lord Lothian." When was he the Viceroy of India?

PROFESSOR G.N. SARMA, retired as Head of the Department of Political Science, Marathwada University). He has written extensively on political philosophy and on Indian political thought.

DELIVERANCE FROM HUNGER, THE PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IN INDIA by K.R. Venugopal; Sage Publications; New Delhi; 1992; pp.223; Rs.225.



**Reviewed by
S. D. Sawant**

There has been renewed interest in the debate on the performance of

the Public Distribution System (PDS) in India as the PDS is now looked upon as one of the policy instruments to insulate the poor from the adverse impact of the current structural adjustment programme. The book under review, therefore, represents a most timely and valuable addition to the literature on the role of PDS in the task of the 'deliverance from hunger' of a large part of the population and the restructuring required to achieve it.

The elimination of chronic poverty and hunger has been the most challenging task of development planning in India. The hope that the 'growth' of the economy would gradually lift the poor above the poverty line through a 'trickle down' effect was belied. Then, in the early seventies, a number of special programmes aimed at poverty alleviation through a direct attack on poverty followed. The rapid spread of new technology, around this time, enabled the central government to accumulate food stocks, expand the public distribution system and implement several rural employment programmes including the food for work programme during the scarcity years.

There was, therefore, a need to identify the changes in the number and proportion of poor households in the different regions of the country. A Planning Commission study concluded that the incidence of rural poverty had declined from 51.4 per cent in 1977-78 to 40.2 per cent in 1983, and projected a further decline as the anti-poverty programmes would continue with renewed emphasis in the Seventh Plan as well. The author of the book, had, as Food Secretary in Andhra Pradesh, observed the presence of hunger among the people even in the State's prosperous agricultural belt. Hence he was far from convinced with the Commission's conclusion of declining rural poverty. He contended that implementation of the asset based IRDP and wage employment programmes (NREP & RLEGP) during the Sixth Plan must have been seriously defective. Believing that poverty and hunger

must have persisted in the rural areas the author decided to go in 1986, beyond statistical estimates of the number of poor at the macro level and probe the micro-level situation by undertaking a study of fourteen villages (selected from the five states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh) to assess the magnitude and intensity of hunger among the rural labour households, document its causes and further to examine the percolation of benefits of the anti-poverty programmes to them.

The author's field investigations revealed that with the exception of two prosperous irrigated villages in Andhra Pradesh hunger prevailed in all other labour households co-existing with other dimensions of poverty such as high infant and maternal mortality, the denial of elementary education to child labour and a high degree of under-nutrition among the girls and women. Yet another distressing fact was the widespread corruption. "There is no village or programme or person that has remained untouched or unaffected by corruption" states the author. It is no surprise, therefore, that "a serious shortcoming perceived by the poor was the lack of an appropriate delivery system to ensure that the benefits provided did indeed reach them.... The organisation of an appropriate delivery system involving the people themselves is, therefore the first step required since almost 80 per cent of the benefits meant for the people are diverted *en route*".

This makes the author not only sceptical about the success of the government's anti-poverty programmes but he appears to be positively convinced of the crippling effect of hunger on the poor. His conclusion is that, without a direct support base to eliminate hunger at the household level any planning for self-employment through asset distribution or for education, health etc. has little chance of success. The message is very clear. Availability of food within a village at an affordable cost to the poor is a major prerequisite for any

anti-poverty programme to succeed.

As the programme of PDS has the potential to ensure food 'entitlement' to the poor, an assessment of its performance was the next important issue in the study. For this purpose the author analysed in great detail the central government's management of food stocks including central pool allocations and the data on foodgrain production, procurement and distribution from 1980 to 1987. Once again, his conclusions reveal disappointing results. He observes a gross mismatch between the state's share in the central pool allocation and the incidence of poverty in the state concerned. For example, the four poorest states in India viz. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa which account for 47 per cent of India's population below the poverty line, had a mere 12.75 per cent share of the grain distributed from fair price shops in the country even in 1987 which was a drought year.

Secondly, over the years, the total offtake from fair price shops in the

country bears no relation to the needs of the rural poor which vary inversely with the performance of the food-grains sector. This was evident from the fact that between 1980 and 1987 but more so in the relative scarcity years of 1986 and 1987, when the needs of the rural poor were substantially higher, a sizeable quantity of grain had been diverted to the roller flour mills and the private trade through open market sales and thus ultimately to the urban areas.

The fact is that there is no explicit policy directive from the central government to focus PDS on the targeted poor, though subsidised food distribution under the PDS is supposed to improve the consumption levels of the poor. Obviously, neither the central government linked the central pool allocations to the incidence of poverty in states nor did the states feel obliged to distribute the allotted foodgrains to the identified poor. So the PDS has ultimately been reduced to an anti-inflationary and an interventionist tool. The Food Corporation of India stockpile food-

grains in a good harvest year thereby supporting surplus producers and release the stocks in scarcity years to contain excessive price rises in the open market. This protected urban consumers but not so much the rural poor.

It is clear there is no alternative to revamping the PDS. How to do it is the third issue discussed by the author on the basis of field investigations he undertook while evaluating the Andhra Pradesh rice scheme.

At this point it might be worth mentioning the fact that research studies published in 1991 and 1992 based on the National Sample Survey (NSS) 42nd Round (1986-87 and data on utilisation of the PDS NSS, 1990) support unambiguously the author's conclusion that the PDS had neglected the poor. However, NSS could not prove its (PDS's) pro-urban bias as the rural sector's share in total estimated PDS purchases of foodgrains at the national level was found to be nearly 67 per cent for the year 1986-87. We may, therefore, have to wait

Glaxo

How you can safeguard yourself against AIDS

People of all communities, age and sex can be affected by the AIDS virus (HIV). A person who is once infected, will remain infected for life. AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is caused by a virus called HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). The virus attacks and destroys the cells of the body's immune system, and the body is unable to fight diseases, which ultimately leads to death. Until a drug or vaccine is found to fight the AIDS virus **prevention is the only cure.**

Symptoms

During the earlier stages of HIV infection, the symptoms are vague and often similar to those of common ailments. Some of the symptoms are: **fever** (more than 3 weeks duration), **loss of weight** (more than 10% of original weight), **skin rash and diarrhoea** (more than 3 weeks duration). **AIDS is the end-stage of the HIV infection. It can take many years to reach this stage. The infection at any stage can be passed on to others.**

Prevention

The AIDS virus (HIV) can be spread in three ways.

1. Sexual intercourse (homosexual or heterosexual)

- Avoid sexual intercourse with multiple partners, infected partners and prostitutes. The proper use of condoms is necessary.

2. Blood or blood products

- Blood should be tested for HIV antibodies before being used for transfusions.
- Needles and other skin-piercing instruments should be sterilised before use. It is best to insist on disposable needles and syringes.
- An HIV carrier should not donate blood or share toothbrushes, razor blades and needles.

3. From infected mother to baby, either before, during or after birth.

The AIDS virus does NOT spread through casual contact like shaking hands, touching and hugging. Neither does it spread through food, water, sneezing, coughing, insects, toilets, swimming pools and sharing cups.

There is no need to fear and shun persons who are infected with the AIDS virus. They need a lot of Tender Loving Care (TLC) to help them live out their life with courage and dignity.

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for additional empirical evidence to confirm the pro-urban bias of the PDS (EPW, October 12, 1991).

The author finds that the Andhra Pradesh rice scheme helped rural labour households a great deal by weakening the hold of landlords and traders on the poor by enhancing their bargaining power. Two major recommendations emerge from this assessment. One, the PDS must be sharply targeted by eliminating all non-poor beneficiaries. Secondly, in order to eliminate corruption and malpractices the local beneficiaries, particularly the youth and women, must be involved increasingly in the distribution system by the states providing them with adequate credit support to run village fair price shops.

The author is aware that a restructured PDS alone is not enough. In fact, it should supplement the other anti-poverty programmes and make them work better. A modified network for the PDS should be redesigned to ensure that the PDS achieves its objective with the wages of the rural poor being paid partly in kind. A major constraint in this regard as the author points out, would not so much be foodgrains availability but the funds required to support such a programme covering all the poor.

Finally, the author must be commended for successfully translating his convictions into the logical conclusion that the gap between India's food surpluses and the hunger in rural areas must be bridged through an appropriately reoriented PDS. Field investigations carried out by the author represent a welcome departure from the usual abstract analyses of poverty and add realistic dimensions to his study. Besides, the present study offers an excellent, though provocative, anatomy of India's food management in the 1980s. The study should therefore be of interest to policymakers, development administrators and researchers.

DR. (MRS) S.D. SAWANT is Professor of Agricultural Economics at the Department of Economics, Bombay University.

ANTI-DEFECTION LAW AND PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGES by Dr. Subhash C. Kashyap; N.M. Tripathi Private Limited, Bombay; 1993; pp.442; Rs.250.



Reviewed by
Atul M. Sefalvad

Dr. Kashyap has done all of us a service by making available a wealth of original material and his comments on the important subject of defection in his *Anti-Defection Law and Parliamentary Privileges*.

Beginning with 1967, Indians have been stunned and dismayed at their representatives joining, leaving and rejoining parties and groups not on any issue of principle but simply to gain posts. Posts as ministers, chairmen of government corporations, and so on. The universal disgust led to a unanimous resolution of the *Lok Sabha* on December 8, 1967, that a high-level committee be set up

to consider the problem of legislators changing their allegiance from one party to another and their frequent crossing of the floor in all its aspects and make recommendations in this regard.

The committee set up as a result found that there had been 542 defections between the 1st and 4th General

Elections of which 438 had occurred in twelve months. Of the 210 defecting legislators in seven states, as many as 116 became ministers.

The committee agreed on one measure, viz., that a defector should be barred from becoming a minister, on being appointed to public office for one year; it was unable to agree on whether members should cease to be members.

In 1973, a constitutional amendment was proposed to deal with the problem. It lapsed. Another amendment, however, became law in 1985.

The scheme of the anti-defection provisions contained in the 10th Schedule is simple. No individual member can deviate from his party, i.e. the party on whose 'ticket' he was elected, nor can an independent join a party. If he does, he would cease to be a member, unless the party has permitted him or condoned his lapse. There is, however, no disqualification from holding office.

What, however, if a sizeable number of members want to deviate, perhaps on an issue of principle? The 10th Schedule recognises this and permits it, if they number at least one-third the membership of the party.

The justification for this, condemning defections, but permitting splits, is put by Venkatachalliah, J. (as he then was) in *Kohito Hollohan* in these words

That a particular course of conduct commended itself to a number of elected representative might, in itself, lend credence and reassurance to a presumption of bona fides.

Under the Schedule the decision was to be made by the presiding officer of the House. This was upheld by the Supreme Court because of the high office the Speaker holds.

In the seven years since the 10th Schedule came into force, it has perhaps been more abused than used. The infamous defection by Chandrashekhar was permitted as he persuaded more than a third of his party to

join him : he became Prime Minister and several of his colleagues, ministers.

Thereafter, incidents and decisions particularly in the State Assemblies have shown that whilst individual acts of defection may have been curbed, the problem has not been solved; and gross acts of impropriety have been committed by Speakers to achieve political ends.

For all those interested in this subject, Dr Kashyap's book will be invaluable. It is excellently produced, though perhaps a little expensive. The buyer will, however, get value for his money. Dr Kashyap sets out the history of the law, analyses its constitutionality and describes the defection cases that have taken place since 1985. He discusses the problem of reconciling the rights and privileges of members and the party whip and the anti-defection provisions. He reproduces in full the text of the 10th Schedule and the Disqualification Rules. What most readers will particularly welcome will be the text of the Supreme Court judgement in *Kihoto Hollohan* and of the numerous rulings given by Speakers. Whilst the Supreme Court judgement is easily available the rulings given in individual petitions are very difficult for the average reader to have access to.

It would be unfair to describe Dr. Kashyap's book as merely a compilation of valuable and difficult-to-obtain material. His book puts the whole issue in its historical and legal perspective and in chapter 6 he makes valuable suggestions for amending the law to plug loopholes.

There are lacunae and loopholes which require to be plugged. What has brought the whole law into disrepute is, however, the partisan way many Speakers have acted. Dr Kashyap rightly suggests that the power of decisions be conferred on some judicial non-political body.

MR. ATUL M. SETALVAD is a lawyer practicing in the Bombay High Court.

Ancient Indian Clerihews*

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And so he started
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Shiva drank poison and to cool his
system
Placed a quarter-moon on his head
That's why Woman has no head on
her shoulders
But the Full Moon, instead.

In the Royal Chariot Race
How did Karna receive a dirty deal?
The Kurukshetra Telephone Co.
trench
Swallowed up his front wheel.

Dusshasana was an expert salesman
In Mohan Sari Store
He once unfolded for Ms Draupadi
Ten thousand saris and more.

Said teacher Drona
to Ekalavya, 'I see
Only one way to make you literate
Cut off your right thumb for me'

*Clerihew - A form of four-line doggerel about various people and characters invented by Edmund Clerihew Bentley (author of the classic detective novel *Trent's Last Case*)

EMKEN (pen-name of Prof. M.K.Naik) is a distinguished teacher, scholar, critic and editor. Among his light verse collections:

Indian Clerihews (1989), *Indian Limericks* (1992), and *More Indian Clerihews* (1992).

COURTESY: BEAM Bombay English Association Magazine, Bi-Annual, July 1993.

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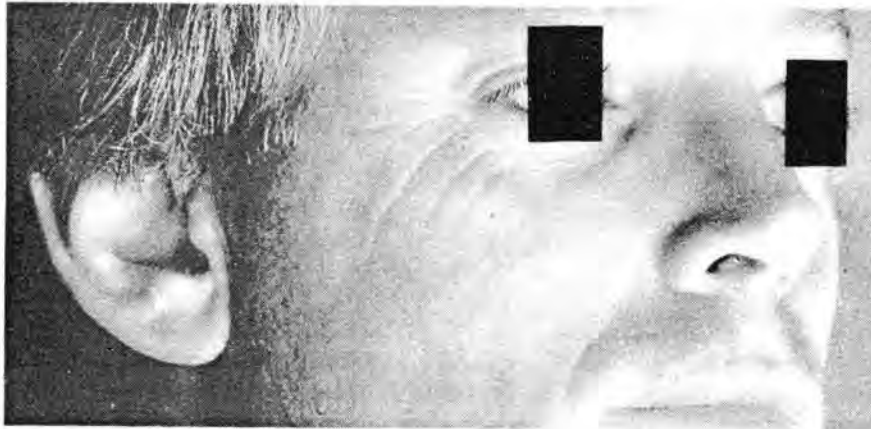
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Kudos to Freedom First

I do not normally express my appreciation about the work done by the editors of *Freedom First*, the magazine I established many years ago but I must say how much I appreciate reading the April-June 1993 issue, which has just come into my hands. Entitled THE DESCENT OF INDIA, it is really an excellent summary of the way in which this country has gone down in the years since Dadabhai Naoroji, who represented India in the British Parliament.

It is a sad story but one that needs telling.

MINOO MASANI

It is good to receive my copy of *Freedom Fir*. Thank goodness there is some sanity still left in India. I would like to become a life subscriber and am taking the liberty to enclose the necessary form and cheque. Is the life subscription or Rs.400/- or am I making a mistake?

P. C. CHATTER
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