

Communal Riots

Adam Adil

COMMUNAL riots have become as common to-day as they were during the British regime. The nationalist freedom fighter at that time complacently imagined that since the policy of the foreign rulers was "divide and rule" such occurrences were natural. Once the foreign rulers were out and India was free, cordial relationship would develop between Indian communities and peace and tranquillity would reign in the country. These fond dreams were dashed to the ground almost at the very moment India was free. The freedom was followed by a holocaust the like of which Indian history had never seen. Hindus and Muslims on both sides of the border killed one another with unprecedented fury and ruthlessness with the result that thousands of Hindu families in Pakistan and Muslim families in India were uprooted and nearly half a million people were dead. When Gandhiji laid down his life at the hands of an assassin, there was a general repentance at what had happened in India. Once again Hindus and Muslims began to fraternise with one another, and the incidents of communal frenzy were considered to have been consigned to the limbo of the past.

But the communal harmony which had emerged as a result of Gandhiji's assassination was not to last long. Pakistan from the beginning with its hate India and hate Hindus attitude had become a constant source of communal tension in this country. Its treatment of the Hindu minority in its Eastern wing (not many Hindus were left in its Western wing), which resulted in the exodus of thousands of East Pakistani Hindus in West Bengal slowly, yet irresistibly, began to create riotous situation in India. This happened inspite of the fact that, Indian leaders, unlike those in Pakistan, were vigilant and resolutely determined to put down riots with an iron hand. Since then communal riots—321 since freedom—have broken out in one part of the country or another and interrupted the peaceful tenor of the life of the people.

The recent riots in Ahmedabad were probably the worst. It was a wonder how these could happen with so much of barbarism in the home State and the home

town of Mahatma Gandhi and that too in the Gandhi Centenary Year!

The riots in Bhiwandi and Jalgaon and other places in Maharashtra were a sudden flare-up due to certain local incidents. The suspicion that Bhiwandi riots were pre-planned may not be without foundation. A week before, there were thick rumours that the Shiv Jayanti day would be marred by communal riots. It was also known that certain organisations in Bhiwandi were preparing for riots. I had personally drawn the attention of the Minister of State for Home, Mr. K. P. Patil to these fears. Mr. Patil assured me and some of my colleagues, who had approached him similarly, that full measures would be taken to ensure peace on that day. But nothing happened. Riots did break out, taking a heavy toll of human lives and resulting in destruction and arson of property worth several hundred thousand.

The question is why riots occur inspite of best of intentions on the part of authorities to maintain law and order and of the people to live in peace and amity.

Often the responsibility for the incidence of riots is pinned on anti-social elements, who, it is said, exploit small incidents such as cow slaughter by a member of a minority, or music before mosque or love affair between young people belonging to two different communities, to instigate a riot. I do not suggest that anti-social elements have no hand in riots but to pin the entire responsibility on them is to evade the issue. Actually, anti-social elements step in when a riot is already instigated and a general flare-up has already taken place. Anti-social elements, for their lack of respectability in the society, are not in a position to provoke riots.

A careful study of the communal riots in the country will show that these are instigated by communalist elements in the society who generally enjoy respectability. These elements are among both Hindus and Muslims. Appeals against communal riots and exhortations to the people to live in peace and harmony have become routine affairs and do not rouse the emotions of the people. When riots occur, the people lose all sense of responsibility and most atrocious acts of barbarism such as the burning of women and children alive are committed.

It is the general tendency in the country to blame the authorities for their failure to deal with the symptoms of communal riots and deal with them before they break out. No one realises that it is also the basic responsibility of the people, especially of the thinking and educated people, to discountenance communal

elements in the society. No Government can function successfully unless it has the cooperation of the people. Therefore, in order to curb communal elements in our midst, it is imperative that the people must cooperate in the effective implementation of secularist policies.

The communal elements in our midst generally assume a variety of political colours and operate in various political parties. They become obvious by their actions, professions and public statements. It is necessary that these elements are pinpointed and condemned, whether they are Hindus or Muslims.

It is often suggested that a ban on communal parties, such as RSS and Muslim League, will go a long way in rooting out communalism. I do not think that a ban on communal parties will really help. For, in the case of a ban, it will not be difficult for communal elements to operate from secular parties. As it is, even now, some ostensibly secular parties give scope to marked communal elements in their leadership and rank and file.

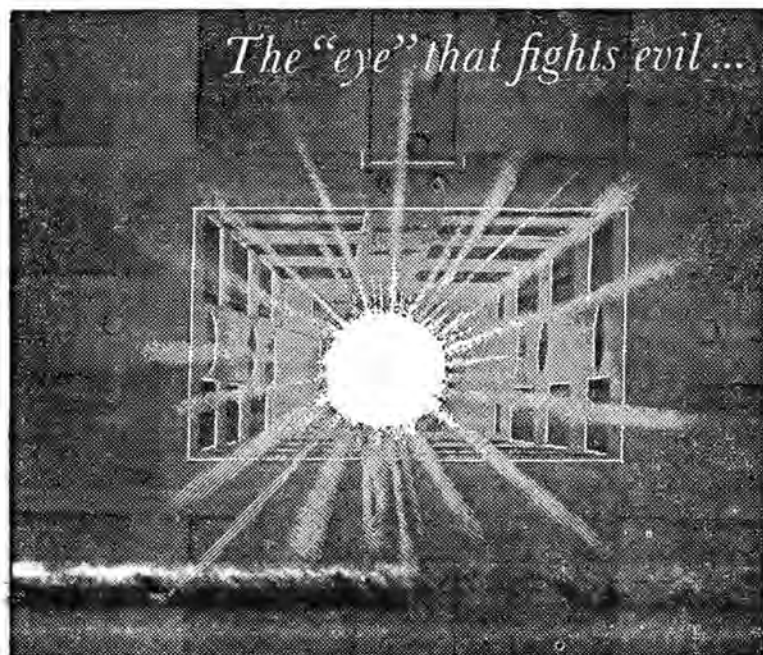
The National Integration Council, which meets only when riots take place, has not been able to deal with the problem of communalism at its roots. It is clear that in view of its composition the Council is not in a position to solve the communal problem. The very fact, that representatives of parties, which are obviously communal in their outlook and aim, and only give lip sympathy to the idea of secularism and communal harmony, find place in the Council makes it ineffective. It is for this reason that the Council has not made any impact on the nation, although the top leadership of

the country, comprising of all political parties, are its members.

Therefore, the solution of the communal problem lies not in the routine exhortation by leaders for communal peace but in the determined effort by enlightened and educated elite amongst Hindus and Muslims to modernise their respective communities. The trouble with the educated elite is that they have not developed a genuine revolutionary spirit to make radical departure from the old ways of thought and behaviour, although they profess their allegiance to socialism and secularism. With many of them, the talk is only a subterfuge to place themselves in advantageous political positions. Unless our educated elite give up this kind of opportunism and devote themselves genuinely to the ideals of modernism and show determination to bring about cultural and social change in society in keeping with those ideals, there is no hope for the country in respect of the communal canker.

In this process, the Government can lend a major helping hand. By an adoption of appropriate administrative policies they can create a climate in the country which would be conducive to the emergence of a modern outlook among the people in the place of present obscurantism, which is the real source of communal spirit in the country. Both Hindu and Muslim (and in the North, Sikh) obscurantism has to be defeated.

It is, however, admitted that this process is slow. It may take one generation or even two. But an effort in that direction, both by the educated elite and the Government is essential.



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Nath Pai's Bill

R. N. Karnik

IN (1) Golak Nath I.C. & others Vs. State of Punjab and another (2) N. Krishna Bhatta Vs. State of Mysore and another, and (3) P. Ramakrishna Mally Vs. State of Mysore and another, being three writ petitions filed under Article 32 of the Constitution for enforcement of fundamental rights, the Supreme Court has ruled that Parliament will have no power from the date of the decision in this case (i.e. 27-2-1967) to amend any of the provisions of Part III of the Constitution so as to take away or abridge any of the fundamental rights enshrined therein.

Public utterances of the ruling Congress bosses and press report of the meeting of the executive committee of the ruling Congress Parliamentary Party held in New Delhi on 19th February unmistakably indicate that the Prime Minister wants Shri Nath Pai's Constitution (Amendment) Bill to be passed soon. It is further apparent that the Government will try to push through Parliament Shri Nath Pai's Bill seeking to restore to Parliament the right to amend any part of the Constitution including the fundamental rights.

After the decision of the Supreme Court in Golak Nath's case, Shri Nath Pai hurriedly introduced in Lok Sabha the Constitution (Amendment) Bill with the avowed object of nullifying the effect of that decision. Late Shri P. Govind Menon, Minister of Law, moved a motion for the reference of the Bill to a Joint Committee. The Lok Sabha adopted the motion after having discussed it for four days. Rajya Sabha discussed and concurred in the said motion. From 7-9-1967 to 13-7-1968 the Joint Committee held 15 sittings, and on 22-7-1968 it presented its report to the Lok Sabha.

It is very significant that after having kept the Bill in cold storage for over twenty-two months, the Treasury Benches are now endeavouring to revitalize it. The reasons are not far to seek. The Congress of the time when the Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha is no more. The ruling Congress has made professions of socialism. According to some leading ruling Congressmen the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution and in particular the right to property are coming in the way of progressive measures and economic reforms which the Government proposes to usher in. Striking down of the Bank Nationalisation Act by the Supreme Court gave a jolt to the ruling party. The Communist Party of India and the Communist Party Marxists are vociferous in supporting the Bill. The Praja Socialist Party which supports it, is already engaged in a meaningful dialogue with the ruling Congress. The piloting of the Bill by the Prime Minister at this juncture is a stroke of opportunism which

will help the Government in placating their supporters in Parliament for a long time to come. The opposition to the Bill by the Organisation Congress, the Swatantra, Jana Sangh, and the Samyukta Socialist Party does not matter a bit to the Government. It seems that the Government is prepared to go ahead with the controversial Bill—come what may! Some members of the executive committee of the ruling Congress Parliamentary Party are reported to have expressed the apprehension (according to me rightly) that any such amendment might also be struck down by the Supreme Court as in the case of the Bank Nationalisation Act.

In order to give social and economic justice to the tillers of the soil and to validate the acquisition of Zamindaries or the abolition of Zamindari rights without interference from the Courts, the Constitution (First Amendment) Act, 1951 was passed by which Articles 31(A) and 31(B) were inserted in the Constitution. These articles provided that the law affecting Zamindari rights shall not be void for contravention of any of the fundamental rights included in Part III of the Constitution.

Prior to the decision in Golak Nath's case, the question of amendability of the fundamental rights was considered by the Supreme Court in two decisions. In *Sri Sankari Prasad Singh Deo Vs. Union of India and State of Bihar*—(1952) S.C.R. 89—the validity of the Constitution (First Amendment) Act, 1951, which inserted Articles 31(A) and 31(B) in the Constitution was questioned. That amendment was made under Article 368 of the Constitution. The Supreme Court held that Parliament has power to amend Part III of the Constitution. The Court came to that conclusion on the assumption that the expression "law" in Article 13(2) does not include constitutional law. Article 13(2) of the Constitution reads as follows:

"The State shall not make any law which takes away or abridges the rights conferred by this part and any law made in contravention of this clause shall, to the extent of the contravention, be void." One of the two questions which arose before the Supreme Court in a later decision, namely, *Sajjan Singh Vs. State of Rajasthan*—(1965) S.C.R. 933—was 'whether the Constitution (Seventeenth Amendment) Act, 1964, in so far it purported to take away or abridge the rights conferred by Part III of the Constitution fell within the prohibition of Article 13(2).' The aforesaid contention, however, was not raised before the Court and the Counsels appearing for both the parties accepted the correctness of the decision in *Sankari Prasad's case*. *Gajendragadkar C.J., Wanchoo and Raghubar Dayal*

JJ. agreed with the reasons given in Sankari Prasad's case on the aforesaid question. Hidayatullah and Mudholkar JJ. expressed their dissent from that view. Hidayatullah J., speaking for himself observed: "But I make it clear that I must not be understood to have subscribed to the view that the word 'law' in Article 13(2) does not control Constitutional amendments. I reserve my opinion on that case for I apprehend that it depends on how wide is the word 'law' in that Article." The Judge further observed, "The Constitution gives so many assurances in Part III that it will be difficult to think that they were the playthings of a special majority."

The majority and minority judgments and the great importance of the question raised in Sajjan Singh's case led to the constitution of the larger bench of eleven Judges in Golak Nath's case. Chief Justice Subba Rao and Judges Hidayatullah, Shah, Sikri, Shelat and Vaidialingam held in Golak Nath's case, (i) that an amendment of the Constitution under Article 368 is law within Article 13(2) and would be void if it contravened the provisions of that article. All those Judges except Judge Hidayatullah held (ii) that the Constitution (First Amendment) Act, 1951, the Constitution (Fourth Amendment) Act, 1955 and the Constitution (Seventeenth Amendment) Act, 1964, which contravene the fundamental rights enshrined in Part III of the Constitution and would have been void according to the principle formulated above would nevertheless continue to be valid on the principle of prospective overruling. Judge Hidayatullah held (iii) that the Constitution (First Amendment) Act, 1951, the Constitution (Fourth Amendment) Act 1955, and the Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act being part of the Constitution by acquiescence for a long time cannot now be challenged and they contain authority for the Constitution (Seventeenth Amendment) Act, 1964. And all of them held (iv) Parliament will have no power from the date of the decision in this case, to amend any of the provisions of Part III of the Constitution so as to take away or abridge any of the fundamental rights enshrined therein. The remaining five Judges gave a dissenting judgment.

In the Statement of Objects and Reasons of his Bill, Shri Nath Pai says that he has introduced the Bill in order to establish the supremacy of Parliament and to restore to Parliament the right and authority to amend even the fundamental rights. By enacting the Bill, Parliament does not become supreme. After all, Parliament, Supreme Court, President, State Legislatures and a number of other institutions are creatures of the Constitution. As has been observed by Chief Justice Subba Rao, "No authority created under the Constitution is supreme; the Constitution is supreme and all the authorities function under the supreme law of the land." It is no use, therefore, trying to assert the supremacy of Parliament when under the Constitution

Parliament is not supreme. In India supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law prevail. Shri H. M. Seervai, Advocate General of Maharashtra, stated recently: "Whereas in England, Parliament was supreme, in India the Constitution was supreme over the legislature, the executive and the judiciary." Further, as regards the supremacy of Parliament as contemplated by the mover of the Bill, it will be interesting to note that the Joint Committee's report on the Bill has laid down that all Constitutional Amendments relating to Part III would also have to be ratified by the legislatures of not less than one-half of the States, which only goes to show that Parliament will not be the supreme authority when amendment to any of the fundamental rights is to be considered.

Both the Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi and the Home Minister, Shri Y. B. Chavan have strongly expressed themselves in favour of the Bill, which is necessary, according to them, to implement progressive measures. The best answer to this can be found in the Minute of Dissent by Shri S. M. Joshi and Kameshwar Singh appended to the report of the Joint Committee. They state therein, "It is often said that the object behind this Bill is to facilitate economic reforms and social change, the more likely result may be a further abridgment of citizens' democratic freedoms and civil liberties. We are, therefore, constrained to oppose this Bill."

Our Prime Minister should not exert herself to get Shri Nath Pai's controversial Bill passed in Parliament. The reasons are—firstly, PM has no moral authority to pilot this Bill as her party is in minority at the centre; secondly, there is political instability in the country—some States are having unstable Governments and even the Union Ministry may be thrown out of office any moment; thirdly, whittling away fundamental rights will considerably add to the already existing political instability which may ultimately lead to chaos in the country; fourthly, neither the undivided Congress, nor in fact any political party nor independents who fought last general elections to Parliament took electoral mandate to amend the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution; fifthly, the Supreme Court has ruled in Golak Nath's case that 'Parliament will have no power from the date of the decision in this case to amend any of the provisions of Part III of the Constitution so as to take away or abridge any of the fundamental rights enshrined therein'; sixthly, Parliament cannot by getting Shri Nath Pai's Bill passed assume to itself authority to amend Part III of the constitution when the Constitution denies it; seventhly, the Bill, if passed, would create a perennial conflict between the Parliament and the Supreme Court; and lastly, not by passing Nath Pai's Bill, but by convening a Constituent Assembly under residuary legislative power of Parliament will the Assembly be able to take away or abridge the fundamental rights, if so desired.

Waiting For 1972 Elections

Analyst

THE Advisors of the Governor have settled down to business after the initial delay in their selection and allotment of portfolios. The Governor now also seems to have grasped his real function vis-a-vis the Advisors on the one hand and the Home Ministry at the Centre on the other. Much of his trouble was due to inexperience and to his leftist predilections. But the CPM leaders are now abusing him followed by petitions not to deal with the CPM workers too harshly.

The Administrative and Police Officers are being transferred, some of them outside the State. The Land Reform policy is in the offing. A serious effort is being made to persuade the investors in industries to be active again. Greater-allocation of funds for Calcutta's development by the Centre is expected. The departments in the State Secretariat are recovering their sense of direction. The deployment of the Central Reserve Police is a continuing process. It now appears that the Presidential Rule has come to stay till 1972. Mr. V. V. Giri having won in the Supreme Court Case, there is now hardly any point in keeping alive the Assembly, when chances of a popular ministry taking over are practically nil. The visit of Mr. L. P. Singh, Secretary, Union Home Ministry provided an occasion to review the entire spectrum of administrative policies, and the States services also had a rare opportunity to read the mind of the Centre. The Centre now appears determined to make the best of this opportunity to cleanse the stables at least at the administrative level. Emphasis was correctly placed on police reorganisation and an effective intelligence unit. But it appears some Constitutional mechanism is needed to assure that officers are not again manipulated by future State Ministers for partisan ends.

The difference between the Naxalites and other Marxists is whether violence is to be of the terroristic type to precipitate decision-making on the part of the masses or a part and parcel of "mass action" and "mass-struggle" in a rising crescendo. The Naxalites precipitated the issue by starting their terror campaign in Calcutta and some other urban areas, after having been considerably weakened in rural areas like Debra and Gopiballabhpur. This helped the police to regroup and strengthen its forces and launch an attack on them. As a result, a lot of Naxalites have been arrested and more arrests are in the offing. It appears as a consequence that the Naxalite activity will soon recede, thus proving the CPM charge that Naxalites will not be

effective; on the contrary their action will strengthen the arms of the "enemy". In this context it is significant to record that in a rural area three Naxalites were beaten to death by villagers when they went to the village to kill a jotedar.

The CPM, as pointed out in the last report, has taken a step back and is slowly warming up the front organisations with economic issues. The trade unions are increasing their pressure cautiously. In the rural areas also the fear of land now forcibly occupied being taken back by the State is being worked up. The impossible demands of the teachers for more pay and for free primary education under the given financial situation of the State are being exploited. It is some time in October-November that the various streams of agitations will be converging into a more outspokenly political platform demanding mid-term elections. Jyoti Basu has already hinted at this time-table.

The pro-Soviet Dange proposal to renew the 14-party UF seems to have failed. The State CPI was



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opposed to this move but as Moscow was keen to attempt a reconciliation with the CPM, the smaller fry had to keep quiet. Now the CPI has offered the CPM some terms for such a united front. The two conditions are (a) Acceptance of the leadership of Ajoy Mukherjee and (b) CPM should give up its claim to Home Ministry. These seem to be impossible demands. Thus, the 8-party group is veering again towards demanding mid-term elections—a position close to CPM. This implies that from now on the sights will be set on preparations in constituencies, complementary agitations on local issues and developing multi-party election alliances to avoid multi-cornered contests. Thus we may soon come back to the 1967 position of two united fronts—PULF led by CPM, and ULF led by CPI and possibly joined by the Bangla Congress. The Cong. (R) has yet to take its position but it is not unlikely that it may work out an arrangement with Bangla Congress and the CPI-led ULF.

But the position of the Cong. (R) will soon become awkward. The Advisors would be operating some positive policies which will be opposed by leftist parties. Cong. (R) will have to support the Advisors. This may tarnish its already poor image. On the other hand, it may also try to work out an alliance with the CPI and the Bangla Congress but the latter will be cautious to do so publicly, as the Cong. (R) would be politically responsible for what the Advisors do.

Thus the crucial issue is, whether in the next one year or more the Advisors can show effective results which the public will applaud. Only then the Cong. (R) can get political credit for the same. But this is rather a difficult target to achieve by an unelected Administration with a machinery which is deeply undermined particularly at the lower echelons. Further, the sense of confidence will not return to smaller and bigger investors and managerial personnel before the election results of 1972 are known. It is thus a vicious circle.

This vicious circle can be broken by only one thing—filling up the ideological vacuum by bold strokes by a very competent political leadership. The Congress (R) is in a strategic position to play that significant role. But one cannot be optimistic on that sector. The Cong. (R) leadership lacks stature. Secondly, Cong. (R) is far too committed to leftism of sorts, while what Bengal needs today is the bold assertion of pragmatism and a clear declaration that economic endeavour must be based not on naive "Socialism" but on production and productivity with cooperation (not class conflict) of all concerned, inviting capital from all quarters in massive doses. This is a "non-revolutionary" but constructive programme which no political party of local standing has the guts to project.

INCOMPETENCE OR VENALITY?

In the course of his speech on "Social Change in India" at the Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs, Bangalore, Dr. C. D. Deshmukh said:

"At a rough guess, about a quarter to one-third of the funds employed by the State in India in bringing about the social transformation of the country, towards the establishment of a democratic welfare state, are sterile because of incompetence or venality, or both, in formation or implementation of plans or projects not to speak of the harm caused by lack of a clearly enunciated policy in important fields like Social Policy or Population Policy. An outstanding instance (that I believe to be true on reliable authority) is the following. In a construction contract in one of the Public Sector Steel Plants tenders were invited, the lowest tender being Rs. 12 lakhs. When a decision was being taken the Management drew attention to standing Government orders that where there was a bid by the National Construction Corporation it must be accepted, no matter how much higher. This happened to be Rs. 30 lakhs, but was nevertheless accepted. The National Construction Corporation sub-contracted the work to a private contractor for Rs. 28 lakhs, retaining Rs. 2 lakhs as its profit without tears. Thus a private contractor carried out for Rs. 28 lakhs work which would have cost only Rs. 12 lakhs had the lower bid been accepted. I have no doubt that about a year or two later this case would be detected and adversely commented on by the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament."

BOOKS RECEIVED

1. *National Views on Neutralism and East-West Detente*, International Documentation and Information Centre, Hague, Holland.
2. *Indian Labour Scene*, S. R. Mohandas, 2A Prospect Chambers, P. M. Road, Bombay 1. Pp. 160. Price: Rs. 10/-.
3. *Objectives of Planning in India*, Murarji J. Vaidya, Popular Prakashan, 35C, Tardeo Road, Bombay. Price: Rs. 15.
4. *Agriculture: East and West*, M. B. Desai, National Academy, 9 Ansari Market, Daryaganj, Delhi 6. Price: Rs. 3/-.
5. *Mechanisation of Soviet Agriculture: The Economic Effect*, S. Tolpekin, Progress Publishers, Moscow.
6. *Soviet Union — 50 years*, Statistical Returns Progress Publishers, Moscow. Compiled by the Central Statistical Board of the U.S.S.R.
7. *Labour U.S.A. Today*, Lester Velie, Harper & Row, 49, East 33rd Street, New York 16.

Freedom Of The Press

(Contributed)

A SEMINAR on Freedom of the Press was organised in Srinagar from May 8 to 11, by the Leslie Sawhny Programme of Training for Democracy in collaboration with the Friedrich Naumann Stiftung of West Germany. Participants and discussion leaders included Dr. B. C. Witte, Mr. M. R. Masani, M.P., Mr. S. Kandappan, M.P., Mr. A. D. Mani, M.P., Mr. Piloo Mody, M.P., Mr. Frank Moraes, Mr. S. Mulgaokar, Mr. C. R. Irani, Mr. A. D. Gorwala, Mr. Kuldip Nayar, Mr. Khushwant Singh, Mr. Chanchal Sarkar, Mr. Balraj Puri, Mr. S. A. Shamim, M.L.A., Mr. Ajit Bhattacharjee and Mr. A. G. Noorani. The Seminar also had the benefit of a talk by and discussion with Mr. I. K. Gujral, Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting.

There was unanimous agreement that without Freedom of the Press there could be no true Democracy. In this context the Seminar welcomed the acceptance of the freedom of the Press by the people and Government in India as total and unqualified, but expressed concern at certain recent trends which showed that this freedom cannot be always taken for granted.

At the outset the seminar considered the constitutional aspect of the freedom of the press and noted that it is included in the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression guaranteed by the constitution against, both legislative and executive encroachment. Its scope and enforcement are determined by the Law Courts. The Supreme Court has held that the Freedom of the Press is included in the fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression. General concern was expressed over the inhibiting impact that fear of engaging the privileges of Parliament and State Legislatures could have on reportage and comment on current trends. It was suggested that the codification of these privileges would dispel the present uncertainty, but a second view that emerged was that in present political circumstances it would be inexpedient to raise this matter at this stage.

The Seminar considered the role of the Press as an educative factor and the extent to which it fulfilled the role of 'King over all the children of Pride'. It was felt that the Press has not adequately succeeded in mobilising public opinion against corruption, communalism and in pressing the cause of the weaker sections of the community and in support of social programmes such as family planning. Many reasons were advanced: shortage of trained journalists capable of undertaking such assignments; lack of adequate research and reference facilities and the pressures imposed by the Government agencies, advertisers and organised labour.

On the question of monopoly of organs of mass communications it was the consensus of the participants that the impact of newspapers was restricted to a bare seven million readers. A.I.R. which alone reached 70 per cent of the population of the country did in fact enjoy an unquestioned monopoly. The non-acceptance by the Government of the Chanda Committee report recommending the setting up of an autonomous corporation to control radio and television was therefore unfortunate. In regard to the Press, the view that monopoly or near-monopoly conditions existed was rebutted by pointing to the wide choice available to the readers. At the same time, the need to enable a wide spectrum of views to be expressed and a choice to be available at national and regional levels was emphasised with the safeguard that such measures should not increase the area of governmental influence over the Press. It was noted that Press is the only medium of information which is not controlled by Government.

Divergent views were expressed on the question of ownership. It was maintained that private ownership by industrialists could represent a threat to the Freedom of the Press because of the possibility that the owner might utilise a newspaper or journal to protect his personal interests. It was also suggested that the form of ownership strengthened the *status quo* and was an obstacle to socio-economic change.

This view was contested by others who maintained that in order to guarantee the free and independent functioning of the Press, newspaper must be economically viable, as this is an essential condition to resist all external pressures. As long as freedom of choice was available, the readers' preference was the most appropriate sanction against misuse of the Press to serve any interest.

The Seminar was opposed to any measure that might seem to increase, directly or indirectly, governmental influence on the Press. Several participants suggested that appropriate procedures and safeguards be evolved to prevent government utilising advertisements, newsprint quotas and other devices to influence or interfere with the freedom of the Press. Similar safeguards to prevent owners from interfering with editorial freedom were also favoured. It was suggested that some experimentation was necessary voluntarily to evolve new patterns of ownership by appropriate institutional changes.

The Seminar agreed that to report and interpret the complexities of the modern world, Indian journalists should be better equipped. Training, it was felt at three levels, pre-entry, in service and for specialisation was necessary.

Letters to the Editor

COALITION OF LIKEMINDED PARTIES

Dear Sir,

It will not be far from the truth to say that no political party is seriously applying its mind to achieving political stability. Every one talks of the wisdom of having two parties in the country for the success of democracy. Unfortunately no party is working in that direction. Probably, they are afraid of losing their identity which may ultimately cost them their leadership. The present leadership is most self-centred and is always striving for retaining its power by dubious methods. Political sincerity has lost its value, more so, when the top leader of the major political party raised the issue of conscience. It is high time that political leaders start thinking seriously about evolving a code of conduct for political stability. Allegations about money playing a major role in the recent biennial elections to Rajya Sabha appear to be not far from true.

The split in Congress was at one time hailed all over the country as the first step towards polarisation of likeminded groups. The resultant picture is quite disheartening and full of disillusionment. Personal prejudices and gamble for power have become the order of the day. Even now it is not too late to set right the things. With the fast approaching General Election all likeminded political parties should think of aligning themselves with adjustments, wherever necessary. It is almost written on the wall that no single party can rule the country. If that is the reality, why not face it with open mind? If coalition government is inevitable, it is necessary that likeminded parties should work with the intention to come closer to avoid future multi-cornered fights.

Let us analyse the existing major political parties. The Swatantra Party is the only party which is clear in its policies. It is not for extremist slogans propagated by the so-called left parties. Unfortunately, it is dubbed as a conservative party and as not being in line with progressive ideas. In fact, it is not so. Actually its policies are progressive and more conducive to the welfare of the people. However, as things stand now, the Swatantra can join hands with the Jana Sangh and the Congress (O), with certain adjustments. All the aforesaid parties have the advantage of the services of seasoned politicians. If they evolve an electoral understanding for the coming General Election, much can be said to have been achieved for the purpose of polarisation of parties. They must try to sink their narrow differences in the larger interest of the country.

The other parties are more or less left-oriented. It is very difficult to say which is more socialistic. From the recent political trends it can be said that they are making capital of the word 'Socialism'. It will not be far off when their true colours will be exposed and

they are bound to meet their Waterloo at the coming polls. Today the common man is frustrated and disillusioned and any amount of slogan-shouting will not fill his belly. He is aware of political corruption and the domination of self-centred leaders. He will not tolerate to be exploited any further. The left parties have to seriously give thought to convincing the common man of their sincerity of purpose. Otherwise, it will not be incorrect to predict that they will have to face the music at the polls.

In such a surcharged atmosphere it is high time that like-minded parties unite and lead the country out of confusion. If they lag behind, they will lose a lifetime's opportunity. Let us heed the sound advice given by the seer and the intellectual giant C. Rajagopalachari and by our timely action save the country and its freedom from the onslaught of totalitarianism and subversion.

Gulbarga, April 19.

R. J. DESAI

PEOPLE AND POLITICIANS

Dear Sir,

Politics in India is following a suicidal path. Ironically, this path of self-destruction was chosen by politicians themselves. With guidance from the top, both in word and deed, politicians of all hues and colours have jumped the bandwagon of "Socialism à la Indira." The way is free and there may be pickings worth their while at the journey's end.

A new form of progressive and youthful dynamism has set in. It comprises of legislating on issues, not on merits but on their vote-earning capacity; of creating and perpetuating class-war so that the drawbacks of the government can be laid at the doors of the "monopolists" or the "commitment-less civil service" or the recent whipping dogs "the Princes". Applause from leftist drummer-boys and their stooges has become the yardstick of economic and political intellect. The foundations of a free democratic society are being eroded by the illusive termites of "socialistic justice."

Churchill once said: "Of all known forms of government, Democracy is undoubtedly the worst. But there is none better." A democracy is established by the people for their own good. Unfortunately, what is created with difficulty by the people can be very easily destroyed by politicians.

It is true that the assent of the majority is the only sanction known to political ethics. But this is applicable when the people know all the facts of an issue, are intelligent enough to understand such facts and to endorse a course of action. In India, a gigantic state-radio-network ensures the communication of only one side of the issue to the ignorant masses. Public

(Continued on page 10)

Review

The Restless Brahmin

Samaren Roy, Allied Publishers, Rs. 12.

THE restless Brahmin dealt with in this book is the world-famous communist revolutionary, M. N. Roy. As Naren Bhattacharya he was a Brahmin by birth and he was restless because he was eager to put an end to the oppressive foreign rule which had acquired a stranglehold over the country.

The book deals with the early life of M. N. Roy when he took a prominent part in the revolutionary movement that developed in Bengal in the wake of its partition. It is based on government documents like the Sedition Committee's report and on the information painstakingly collected by the author from a number of old revolutionaries who had personal contact with Naren Bhattacharya of those days. The author has held out the promise of an early publication of the interviews that he had with them. One hopes that some enterprising publisher will undertake the work. That will be an exciting piece of oral history of a stirring and romantic part of the national struggle.

The period covered in the book is of about ten years roughly from 1905 to 1915 when a militant nationalist movement developed in Bengal. Some in the movement adopted the cult of the bomb and the revolver and of armed insurrection for the overthrow of the British rule. Interesting and not easily available information about many incidents and about many who participated in them is given in the book. M. N. Roy took a prominent part in those activities and more particularly in the Indo-German conspiracy whose object was to secure arms from the Germans and organise an armed revolt against the British rule. It was the failure of that conspiracy which set Roy on his search for other methods for the country's emancipation. The details of the conspiracy and of Roy's search for arms given in the book make very interesting reading.

The author, Mr. Samaren Roy has traced the ideological roots of the actions and policies of the revolutionaries to the teachings of Vivekanand and the writings of Bankim Chatterjee. He has also described the influence that Aurobindo Ghosh and his writings and journals like *Jugantar* and *Bande Mataram* exercised over the minds of the young revolutionaries including Roy. The *Bhagwat Gita* did not also play, according to the author, a mean part in steeling the hearts of the revolutionaries to face the consequences of their dangerous activities.

One is happy to note that the author is thinking of dealing with the later parts of Roy's life. Eventually, there may be a full-length biography, a book badly

needed by Indians born after Independence. The present book carries a foreword by one of the then co-workers of Roy, Dr. Jadugopal Mukherjee. It gives a vivid idea of the affection and respect that Roy, Naren Bhattacharya of those days, enjoyed amongst his colleagues and co-workers.

K.V.B.

Political Memoirs

Jamnadas Dwarkadas, United Asia Publications, Rs. 30.

MR. JAMNADAS DWARKADAS was at one time the idol of the people of Bombay. He was young and bold and courageous. He was vehement in his criticism of the British rulers and was an ardent advocate of Home Rule. He was an eloquent speaker and a good organiser. All India leaders like Mrs. Besant, Lokamanya Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi held him in high esteem and were assisting his rise to eminence in the public life of the country. "Fame and popularity—the twin sisters with their enchanting guile" had wooed him and, as stated by him, "I am not sure that I had kept myself completely immune to their wiles and machinations."

But the anti-climax came soon. Mr. Jamnadas Dwarkadas relates: "it came with a re-doubled vigour to such a terrific extent that from a position of an idol of the people, I started declining till at the end of 1919, I had the doubtful honour of being one of the most unpopular public figures among the people." He is candid enough to add: "It is difficult to say whether I deserved either the immense popularity or the opposite of it."

But there it was. Mr. Jamnadas lost his popularity. He lost it because he was not able to go along with Gandhiji in his campaign of mass civil disobedience. He found himself more in agreement with Mrs. Annie Besant who disapproved and regarded as dangerous the Gandhian movement of mass disobedience of laws. Mr. Jamnadas has summed up Mrs. Besant's position as follows: "Indiscriminate defiance of laws, she said, was a most dangerous advice. If people were asked to make disobedience of laws a practice, when freedom came, this habit would constitute a dangerous weapon in the hands of the people. They might not hesitate to defy inconvenient laws enacted by their own government." Many will appreciate now the position adopted by Mrs. Besant. But in those days hers was a voice in the wilderness.

The choice between Mrs. Besant and Gandhiji was not easy for Mr. Jamnadas. He has described the ordeal faced by him as follows: "What was I to do? Like the proverbial donkey starving between two bundles of hay, I hesitated in choosing between Mrs.

Besant and Gandhiji as my leader. I have a clear recollection that while both my head and heart went to Mrs. Besant, for whom I had the greatest love and adoration, my heart went also to Gandhiji." In the end the choice was made and it was in favour of Mrs. Besant. The choice cost Mr. Jamnadas his popularity, his mass following and his place in the national movement. These did not deter him. He obeyed the call of his conscience.

This and many other incidents narrated in the *Memoirs* happened over fifty years back. Many of them are forgotten, but they have a permanent place in the history of the national movement. A few of them have been told and retold. And yet there is a particular pleasure when an active participant tells about them in his own inimitable style. The *Memoirs* stop at the point when the author left for England as a member of a delegation in June 1919. There is a promise that the later period will be covered in another volume. One who has enjoyed reading the first will eagerly look forward to the second.

K.V.B.

Kushwant Singh's India

Edited by Rahul Singh, India Book House Publishing Company, Bombay, Rs. 4/-.

It has become the general practice of all political commentators, journalists, lecturers, leaders of political parties and educationists, to criticise the government and the economy of our country, without in any way trying to improve the conditions. All of them feel that their duty is done if they bring out the ills in our society and condemn the Government for them. This is particularly true of leaders of all opposition parties. Most of this educated elite complain that India's image in foreign countries, since Independence, is tarnished, but, how many of them have tried to put the picture of our economy in its proper perspective? In a vast country like ours with a large population it is natural that the economy suffers from a number of malaises. But there is another side, a picture which every Indian should be proud of, an India which is fast progressing in industrialisation and mechanisation of farming, aiming at a higher percentage of education and a higher standard of living for all. It is, therefore, most enlightening to come across a person among this educated elite who is critical of our shortcomings but at the same time very proud of our developments. Mr. Khushwant Singh in a speech at the Montreal Expo '67 rightly called our great nation an "Orient Pearl in the World Oyster". This fine study of our achievements and discussion of a number of very interesting and widely varying subjects form part of an extremely readable and thought-provoking book by Mr. Khushwant Singh. It is compiled by his son, Rahul Singh.

One is surprised on reading the articles at the amount of the author's wide knowledge and the scope of his interests. The style is lucid, simple, critical and yet without malice. Even the most painful subjects are covered with a light vein of humour and honesty, which very few writers can boast of. Yet, when necessary, Mr. Khushwant Singh has exposed with force and subtlety the true colours of our former Defence Minister, Mr. Krishna Menon.

A very objective study is made of the Hindu-Muslim problem in a Chapter, "Why Hindu and Muslim speak hate". He traces the malady to its historical background and comes to the conclusion that it was fear that was the main cause of the flight of Hindus from Pakistan and Muslims from India after Independence.

There can be nothing but praise for such a fine publication, which can be read not only by students and educationists but by everyone. For there is something in it for everybody. It not only portrays Khushwant Singh's India but the India of all Indians irrespective of caste, creed and community.

V. K. KARKARIA

(Continued from page 8)

education by well organised political parties is the only answer to this monolithic state-monopoly.

Unfortunately, in the jigsaw puzzle of Indian politics, with its confusing maze of defections, topplings and ousters, the passengers in the bandwagon have their eyes on the driver. The people who they allegedly represent are not only being ignored but are being grossly misled. The law of self-preservation stops the politicians from informing the driver that he is on the wrong track. Meanwhile the nation heads towards the inevitable collision with the inexorable forces of economic and political disaster.

Political expediency, elastic consciences and astrological forecasts (not to mention a certain "friendly" foreign power) are formulating the policies of the nation. The people are no longer consulted. They are being told what is good for them. "Theirs is not to question why; theirs is not to reason why!" Her ladyship can do no wrong.

Parliament has ceased to be the child of the people's creation (as conceived by them in the Constitution.) It has outgrown itself into a juvenile delinquent and claims for itself wisdom which its parents lack.

It is high time the Indian people asserted their supremacy over the politicians.

Victoria Road

N. J. TAVARIA

Bombay 27.

April 17

It takes 100,000 men to make an Escort tractor

Only 5,000 of them are at Escorts

And the rest?

They are part of a thousand odd companies spread all over India that supply most of the components of ESCORT tractors (each has about 4,200 individual parts!) So that's how many people outside Escorts contribute to its operations. And they are mostly small-scale manufacturers.

Escorts gives them technical, sometimes even financial, assistance. They in turn supply high quality components, made to international standards given them by Escorts.

They become highly skilled specialists—even export their products back to countries that once exported to India.

This is the kind of interdependence that has helped Escorts nearly double its tractor production every year. And this year, we celebrate the silver jubilee of this interdependence.

We believe, this is the substance of real industrial development.

**Interdependence —
for 25 years,
the Escorts concept
for growth**



HTA:ES-1969 A8

With Many Voices

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

It is not only Communism which needs a human face, our socialist-capitalism needs it just as much.
—Jo Grimmond, *The Observer*, (London) May 3.

And, the human Socialist that he was, Lenin would not have hesitated to scrap Communism and opt for Capitalism instead.
—Camilo T. Gomes in a letter to the *Times of India*, May 3.

For all practical military purposes Russia is now in the driving seat in the UAR car.
—Frank Moraes, *Indian Express*, May 4.

What are needed in Bengal simultaneously and immediately are a change of Governor, a Preventive Detention Act, and the putting into jail thereunder all subversive, violent and anti-social elements.
—*Opinion*, May 5.

While Russia could take the help of the Western countries and even negotiate with Henry Ford for a truck plant, we were still enamoured of old ideology.
—B. M. Birla, *Indian Express*, May 11.

No outsider would or could defend an Asian country if it did not want to defend itself.
—*Thought*, May 16.

India's "New Class"—the Haksars, Chandis, Kumaramangalams, Kauls and the rest — never had it so good.
—*March of the Nation*, May 16.

To the Editor,
FREEDOM FIRST,
C/o Democratic Research Service,
127, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Bombay 1.

Please enrol me as a subscriber to FREEDOM FIRST.
I remit the annual subscription of Rs. 5.00

Name:

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Signature

Taking the global picture, parliamentary democracy is still the exception, not the rule.
—*The Observer* (London), May 17.

Not only is dialogue destroyed, but so is rationality, when protesters insist upon immediate capitulation to their "non-negotiable demands". This is what infants demand — and totalitarians.
—*Time*, May 18.

In North Vietnam and Communist China there is an appetite for power which cannot be satisfied until there is nothing more to be swallowed.
—*Swiss Press Review and News Report*, May 18.

France lost the first Indo-China war in 1954 mainly because the French public would not support the war effort any longer. The North Vietnamese are convinced that the same thing is happening in the United States.
—Wendell S. Merick, *U.S. News & World Report*, May 18.

A communal riot is a failure of civilisation compounded by a failure of government.
—*Opinion*, May 19.

President Giri's personal appearance before the court reinforced the majesty of the rule of law.
—Durga Das, *Economic Times*, May 19.

If Mr. Vajpayee is not a Hindu communalist, his speech in the Lok Sabha was most unfortunate.
—D. F. Karaka, *Current*, May 23.

Naxalites are not a separate body but the violent arm of the communists as a whole.
—C. Rajagopalachari, *Swarajya*, May 23.

Moral debasement of politics is Lenin's worst gift to mankind.
—Philip Spratt, *Swarajya*, May 23

The permit-quota-licence system has done havoc to our country. I am not against social control of our economy as such but the main trouble is that it has led to corruption at every level.
—Dr. Triguna Sen, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, May 24.