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"Can Businessmen Enrich Public Life"?

S. V. RAJU

(A report of a workshop on "How Businessmen Can Enrich Public Life" organised by the Freedom First Foundation in Bombay, on April 24, 1984.)

THE PRIMARY aim of businessmen the world over is, to use the rather crude but expressive phrase, to make money. But talking about making money, at least in India today, is like talking about sex; in hushed tones with a hasty look behind the shoulder. There's so much needless guilt attached to the profit motive. Who doesn't want to make money? Perhaps a couple of generations ago someone would have replied that sadhus and saints don't. But today?

The workshop was not however concerned with businessmen enriching themselves but playing their role as citizens. Enriching themselves without having to bother with other less enjoyable chores would have been, frankly speaking, ideal. But alas, we do not live in a vacuum. To live in society implies participation for the common good. And this is what the April 24 discussion was all about.

Make money by all means, the four discussion leaders said. Good luck to you in our controlled economy! But don't forget that you are also a citizen. And if you choose to forget this, you do so at your own peril. Businessmen have special talents. Otherwise they could not have become successful. Why not use these talents to make your neighbourhood, your community, your society and your country a better place to live in? By doing so, you will be contributing to the enrichment of public life and, in the process, giving a lie to the widespread belief of the pot-bellied, blood-sucking, lecher image propagated, for instance, by our film industry which incidentally is in the private sector, as one of the speakers recalled.

And so, over seventy businessmen, industrialists, professionals and executives took time off from their

busy money-making schedules and considered whether they could enrich public life and, if so, how. To help them along were four distinguished panel members, Mr. N. A. Paikhivala, Mr. Viren Shah, Mr. M. R. Pai and Mr. Minoo Masani.

OBLIGATIONS TO SOCIETY

Inaugurating the discussion, Mr. Paikhivala stressed that businessmen indeed have obligations to themselves and to society. He listed three: preserving the environment; obligations to the community; and participation in public life.

Pointing out that the world was "almost half way through the destruction of nature," Mr. Paikhivala called on businessmen to pay greater attention to preserving the environment. "You can be engaged in commerce without being commercialised" was his next point. If capitalism had an "unacceptable face", it had an acceptable face too. Public attention could be drawn to this face by contributing to what he called "gross national happiness" even while contributing to the "gross national product". It is amazing, if each one of us tries to put his own house in order, say within a distance of a hundred square miles, how much can be done by the community as a whole."

Finally, the one obligation where businessmen were most at default—their obligation in public life. A businessman was first a citizen and then a businessman. Referring to the politician-businessman connection, Mr. Paikhivala regretted the fact that in India businessmen ran after politicians instead of it being the other way around, as in Japan for instance. This was because businessmen were not doing their duty as citizens. He attributed this to timidity and observed it is "our lack of character. There is such a flaw in our national character that people are most unwilling and reluctant to say what they believe to be right. This fear has to be shed. People have to

realise that it is not only their right but their duty to act as active citizens."

Concluding, Mr. Palkhivala affirmed that "politics would never be in such a mess as it is today and people of third rate character, of unscrupulous means and motives would never be in the saddle, if only businessmen with their power of organisation, their power of money, their power to spread ideas amongst hundreds and hundreds of thousands would have done their duty."

BUSINESSMEN AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

As a businessman active in public life, former Member of Parliament, Mr. Viren Shah was eminently suited to tackle the topic on "Parliament and Parties". He began by making the not so popular but very valid point that it was the basic aim of a businessman to make a profit. By introducing his subject in such a forthright manner, Mr. Viren Shah put the discussion in proper perspective, lest the not so friendly accuse the workshop as an exercise in hypocrisy! At the same time, he observed wryly that most businessmen considered their participation in public life ended when they contributed to the public life of other people!

The main thrust of his speech was that there was need for businessmen to be informed; to understand the evolving social context, and to be involved in the

political process.

Why is it that, even while playing such an important role in the growth of Indian industry which called for intelligence and expertise of a very high order, did our businessmen make little or no effort to keep themselves informed on public affairs? This indifference, said Mr. Shah, was due to the "compulsions of the system" where they had to depend for their "day to day existence and survival on the tender mercies of the government." But giving a reason did not mean that it was an excuse for inaction.

Then there was the question of credibility. "The public image of businessmen everywhere and at all times has been that of mere self-seekers," pointed out Mr. Shah. This image could not be changed "without substantial adjustment of the reality behind it", even with "smart public relations work". In other words, cosmetic changes would not help in changing the image of the businessman. Without a better image he could not contribute to the enrichment of public life. What was needed therefore was for businessmen to "develop a much broader concept of self interest than we now have and, when occasion demands, demonstrate a willingness to transcend it".

An area where businessmen were not making any appreciable impact on government and political parties was in the field of modernising industry, by taking

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advantage of progress in technology. Businessmen had to make government and the political parties understand what President Mitterand of France, "an orthodox socialist", said on his return from a visit to the United States: "The future of France is inseparably linked to modernisation. Either France is capable of facing up to competition, insuring its independence and prosperity, or it will be pulled under and collapse into decline. I know my duty and I must fulfil it."

BUSINESSMEN AND THE MEDIA

Profit is the reward for serving the consumer, said Mr. M. R. Pai, Vice-President of the Forum of Free Enterprise in his address to the group on how businessmen should use the press and other media of communication. The speech, punctuated with stories and anecdotes, was in itself an excellent example of effective communication.

Businessmen are not aware of the increasingly important role of the press in spearheading the mobilisation of public opinion. If today public opinion is so vocal as to secure the removal of a Chief Minister for gross misuse of power or of another minister for gross misbehaviour, thanks are mainly due to the press.

Mr. Pai drew attention to a fact which he described as a "great structural change in the press which . . . has taken place *pari passu* with a structural change in the demography of the country." India, said Mr. Pai, was demographically young. The 1981 census had revealed that 55% of the people of India were less than 20 years of age and 60% under 25. This change was reflected in journalism. The many journals that had come up were manned by young editors and a number of investigative reporters who were all in the age group of 25 to 35. They, said Mr. Pai, are the technocrats who are transforming the face of journalism.

Business had not adequately understood the impact of the press on Parliament and government. He pointed out that there was a separate government department to monitor press reports which were forwarded to the Ministry or department concerned. "The government is very sensitive at two points. One is Parliament and the other is what appears as public opinion in the press," said Mr. Pai and complained that businessmen "did not make use of these two powerful weapons by building up a lobby in Parliament or by making use of the press to educate the public". This can be done through articles in the press and letters to the editor.

Movies and Video were other useful media. "Today we see the image of a businessman in every movie as a man of fortune with a big tummy who always

drinks and who has wads of black money; who exploits labour and who indulges in all sorts of undesirable things." The reason for this bad image? No representative organisation had ever sought to make use of the movie medium to project the achievements, the technological breakthrough or the philanthropic activities, the positive side of Indian business and industry. And this in spite of the fact that the movie industry is mostly in the hands of the private sector.

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

"Active Citizenship" was the topic Mr. Minoo Masani dealt with.

The root causes of India's troubles were "excessive taxation, excessive controls and the concentration of economic and political power in a few political hands", reasoned Mr. Masani in order to point out why India had been stagnating economically.

The result? Shortages led to controls and controls led to corruption. "India," said Mr. Masani, was "the only country where, if you produce more than your quota, it's a crime, an anti-social act."

Gandhiji, observed Mr. Masani with some sadness, made man out of dust, but we are back to dust again. He was referring to the all pervasive cynicism in India's public life arising from the behaviour of men in public office. "The front runners in our public life today who occupy more space than anyone else, are Adik and Antulay." The solution is limited government in order to ensure clean government. What the country needs, said Mr. Masani, is a political and economic revolution. Business should co-operate in bringing this about.

How? Mr. Masani suggested a two-pronged approach. A bold and aggressive policy for business to follow, and a counter-offensive against the politicians. The image of business was bad. On the one hand, business had shown vitality in surviving all attempts by the State to kill it. This magnificent story of survival had to be told. Public relations had failed to tell the story. But public relations could only be as good as the product being promoted. "It is not so much his other activities but the way a man lives, the way a man comforts himself in his own office and on the way to his office. I do believe," said Mr. Masani, "that our moral superiority over the politician is eroded when we behave like him."

Referring to the 1965 Delhi Declaration on the Social Responsibilities of Business, Mr. Masani recalled that the consensus was that business must perform its obligations to shareholders, employers, consumers and society. Had businessmen in adequate numbers responded to the Delhi Declaration of Social

Obligations we wouldn't be in this state.

A statement in that morning's *Indian Express* (April 24) by the Union Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee challenging businessmen to face competition brought the comment by Mr. Masani that if "people who are destroying enterprise in India can throw jibes at those who are trying to fight these tendencies, it shows how, in spite of the very good things it is doing, business is vulnerable."

Concluding his remarks, Mr. Masani observed that "any progress that India makes from now on will have to be in spite of the government and in spite of the politicians. What India can do is through the common people of India, including its businessmen and professional people."

FREEDOM FIRST FOUNDATION

AN APPEAL

There is urgent need to promote the acceptance of the values of freedom and dignity of the individual among our people and specially among the young.

These considerations, and the desire to make efforts in that direction, have prompted the establishment of the **Freedom First Foundation** as a non-partisan, educational, charitable Trust for the promotion of these values and ideals. The Foundation will organise lectures, seminars, study classes, and other educative and cultural activities, and will publish and/or subsidise the publication of periodicals, books and pamphlets, for the promotion of these aims and objectives.

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WHITHER JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE ?

K. S. VENKATESWARAN

LEFT TO itself, it is doubtful whether the Government of India would have displayed the same enthusiasm in filling up the 70-odd vacancies for the post of High Court judges as it appears to be doing following the Supreme Court's intervention in the matter. It may be recalled that, pursuant to a *pro bono publico* petition filed before it last year, the Supreme Court laid down a firm deadline for these appointments to be made; and, reportedly, the Union Law Ministry has already finalised the names in respect of nearly half the total number of existing vacancies.

Whether, of course, the incumbents constitute, in Lord Denning's phrase, "the finest characters and the best legal brains", remains a moot question. Judicial appointments have, in recent times, been the subject-matter of much controversy, and it should, therefore, occasion no surprise if the latest appointments are also greeted with murmurs of disapproval.

The reasons for this unfortunate state of affairs are not far to seek. Mr. Justice V. D. Tulzapurkar, one of the finest judges adorning the Supreme Court bench today, has rendered a signal service by highlighting these reasons in the course of a speech delivered at Rajahmundry recently. It would be interesting as well as instructive to recall some of the main points made by the learned judge whose abiding concern for the future of our judiciary is matched only by his unswerving commitment to the rule of law.

"The first and foremost disincentive that has stifled the growth of a sturdy and independent judiciary," according to Justice Tulzapurkar, "has been the ridiculously low emoluments that are being paid to the members of the higher judiciary." Not only were the salaries of High Court and Supreme Court judges actually *reduced* when the Constitution was brought into force, but, worse still, they have remained frozen at the 1950 levels till today. Shocking as it may seem, it is an incontrovertible fact that, in real terms, the total emoluments of the Chief Justice of India work out to Rs. 1381.50 per month, while those of puisne judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts work out to Rs. 1165.50 and Rs. 1021.50 respectively. "No wonder quite a number among us have to depend upon overdraft facility to make deposits under the CDS in March every year," quipped Justice Tulzapurkar.

In luminous contrast stand the levels of judicial emoluments in other countries. In England, for instance, the Lord Chief Justice earns a salary of

£60,000 a year while Judges of the Court of Appeal get £55,000 each. Nearer home, in Singapore, the Chief Justice is paid \$22,300 and other Judges \$16,000, inclusive allowances, per month. "No one suggests that 100 per cent neutralisation of the fall in rupee value could be made," concedes Justice Tulzapurkar, "but surely substantial upward revision is long overdue."

Another ill that threatens to strike at the very root of judicial independence is the infamous concept of a "committed judiciary" which was first articulated by the late Mohan Kumaramangalam in 1973 and which, not surprisingly, has found ready acceptance among the leading lights of the present ruling party ever since. Justice Tulzapurkar has rightly drawn attention to the sad fact that, far from being thrown into the limbo of exploded fallacies, this theory "is (being) followed with a vengeance; otherwise, elevation to the Bench of persons who had publicly admired the last Emergency and had eulogized its so-called benefits or of those who displayed extra-loyalty/affinity in (the) face of other equally good and persons, cannot be explained," says the learned judge.

An equally, if not more, ominous threat to the survival of our independent judiciary is the recent policy adopted by the Government of transferring Judges *en masse* from one High Court to another, ostensibly in the public interest. However, the actual manner in which, and the real purpose for which, this power has been exercised in recent weeks leave little doubt as to the Government's intentions. Justice Tulzapurkar gives the example of a Chief Justice who was "criticized and received disapprobation from the Supreme Court for not having discharged his constitutional functions properly and against whom a litigation is pending in his High Court" but who still continues to occupy his post, while "Judges holding No. 3 or No. 5 positions in seniority in their own High Courts have been transferred as Chief Justices to other High Courts, without their immediate seniors being consulted in the matter."

Sordid as these facts are, the dangerous implications underlying them have seldom been realised, much less appreciated, by the Indian public. Should a time come when — God forbid — whatever survives of our resplendent judicial heritage finally disappears in the face of the repeated assaults of misguided politicians, we will, alas, have only ourselves to blame.

Freedom was won long before 1947. By people who could think for themselves and shed the shackles of dependence; by men of foresight and determination, like Ardeshir and Pirojsha Godrej, who had confidence in the country's capabilities and shared the same ideals with Tilak, Tagore, Gandhi, Nehru.

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Self-reliance is both a means and an end. For Godrej it is the essence of independence.



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AS I SEE IT

MINOO MASANI

MANY years ago Mr. Ted Heath, the then Prime Minister of Britain, described Mr. Tiny Rowland, the boss of Lohro, as "the unacceptable face of capitalism". Mr. Rowland has done nothing since to weaken the accuracy of that description. On the contrary, he has recently proved it to the hilt.

As is well-known, Mr. Rowland operates in many countries of Africa, including Rhodesia, now called Zimbabwe. He was supposed to be a friend and supporter of Mr. Nkomo, but as soon as the former communist guerilla Mugabe became Prime Minister of Zimbabwe and started humiliating Mr. Nkomo and killing his tribal supporters in Matabeleland, Mr. Rowland turned his back on Nkomo and jumped on the Mugabe bandwagon. So far so good for Tiny Rowland.

Unfortunately, during the last few weeks the well-known London Sunday paper, the *Observer*, in which Mr. Rowland has now obtained a large interest, has started denouncing the acts of genocide performed by Mugabe's goons in Mr. Nkomo's homeland. Not unpredictably, Mr. Tiny Rowland, who is Chairman of the Board of the *Observer*, took exception to this and wrote a servile letter of apology to Prime Minister Mugabe dissociating himself from the story which he described as "sensational" and "unsubstantiated". Not only this, but he wrote an offensive letter to the Editor, Mr. Donald Treford, taking exception to his telling the readers about what had been going on in Zimbabwe. Wrote Mr. Rowland in high dudgeon: "I hear you are trying to destroy my business in Zimbabwe. . . . If you damage my Zimbabwean interests, I may have to sell my newspapers because I won't be able to afford to keep them. You should think about the consequences." Mr. Treford, like a good journalist, stuck to his guns. Mr. Rowland thereupon withdrew Lohro advertisements in the paper. Fortunately, he later backed down and gave up his attempt at smothering the paper.

It is encouraging to note that five independent Directors of the *Observer* censured Mr. Tiny Rowland for interfering with the paper's editorial policies. The Directors expressed the view that Mr. Rowland's conduct was in breach of the memorandum of agreement entered into in 1981 by which Mr. Rowland acquired a controlling interest in the newspaper.

I am not one of those who believe that the editor should be supreme in the running of a newspaper and that the owners have no function to perform. On the contrary, I believe in private ownership of the press

and the good old adage that "he who pays the piper calls the tune". Obviously, however, there have to be certain limits to this principle. Any businessman who allows his own government, as in India, or somebody else's government as in Zimbabwe, to interfere with honest journalism in the paper he controls is misusing his power and it is much better that people who are vulnerable to government pressure should not own newspapers.

Mr. Rowland's actions have wider implications for us in India and "Third World" countries in general. The *Indian Express* has aptly commented: "What has escaped attention is that Mr. Rowland is doing precisely what the Third World has long demanded, that a foreign company must fall in line with local policies and values. It is pressure and outrage on the part of the Mugabe regime that has prompted Mr. Rowland's reactions. The directors who rallied behind the editor are upholding British values and not those of Zimbabwe. The Third World is littered with regimes to whom a free press and editorial independence are anathema. This attitude is not restricted to dictatorships. . . . The moral is that values do not become good because they happen to be held by a Third World country or bad because they are held by a former colonial power. There are many odious values in countries falling in both categories and morality cannot be demarcated on a North-South basis. The ultimate villain in the *Observer* affair is not Mr. Rowland alone but also Mr. Mugabe and the many persons in the world sharing his values."

* * *

I was delighted to see that all three readers of the *Statesman* were perceptive enough in their letters to the editor in the issue of April 22 to agree on the view that E.M.S. Namboodiripad "has made himself a sorry figure" by his long and dreary article in the *Statesman* of April 16.

It was a performance typical of the man and his Party. Nobody had invited Mr. Namboodiripad's views on the "Advance and Retreat from Congress Socialism" about which he wrote. While on that subject I might as well, however, quote what my good friend Jayaprakash Narayan had to say on the subject in his book *Socialist Unity and the Congress Socialist Party* which he published in April 1941. "He (Masani) was the first to see through their game of disruption and capture, played under the cover of unity. He was therefore early to demand the wholesale expulsion of the communists from the Party, not

as an anti-communist measure, but as a counter-measure to their anti-Congress Socialist Party and capture tactics. Experience has completely vindicated Masani's stand."

What was alleged by Shourie and myself quite concretely was that the Communist Party, of Mr. Namboodiripad which was an ornament, took a somersault in 1941 from calling World War II an "Imperialist War" to calling it a "People's War" for the sole reason that their masters in Moscow had themselves made a *volte face* and that Stalin was at war with Hitler who had been his buddy till that time. Is the charge of

treachery against Indian nationalism which I had made in my *History of the Communist Party*, and which Arun Shourie has now documented in detail in four long articles in the *Illustrated Weekly of India* justified or not? On that point all that Mr. Namboodiripad has to say is: "It is not my purpose to go into the contents of Arun Shourie's four articles in the *Illustrated Weekly of India*." Why not? The reason is that Mr. Namboodiripad is not prepared to justify the treachery to India nor to apologise for it.

(Courtesy: *The Statesman*)

BOOK REVIEWS

MATTERS FOR JUDGEMENT: An Autobiography by Sir John Kerr, 1978; Macmillan, Pp. 468; £8.95.

Misinterpretation is a problem which dogs written Constitutions the world over. This is especially the case when the Constitution makes a distinction between a nominal and a real executive. *Matters For Judgement* by Sir John Kerr, former Governor-General of Australia, gives a first hand account of one such crisis which left a deep impact on Australian politics.

The crisis and the debate it sparked off was regarding a matter which, even in India, is much debated on: whether the nominal head of state is a mere figurehead or whether the discretionary powers granted to him are real.

Under the Australian Constitution, the Senate (where the States are represented), though it cannot amend fiscal legislation proposed by the government, can reject the government's request for supply. The duty of a Prime Minister in such situation is to either resign or advise a dissolution. He can also ask for double dissolution i.e. of both the Houses.

Whitlam, the Labour Prime Minister in 1975, did neither when the Senate rejected his government's request for supply. Instead, he embarked on a course of confrontation, attempting to govern without supply.

Throughout the crisis Whitlam never denied that the Senate had a clear legal power to block supply, but he went on to argue that "the convention has been clearly established that the Senate . . . shall not block or reject" money Bills.

Quite apart from the fact that there was no such convention—and Kerr has quoted a number of constitutional experts on this—this stand of Whitlam was

in contradiction with those taken by him earlier. In 1970, when his party had been in the Opposition he had asserted that the Senate had every right to reject financial measures and had made it quite plain that he would use the powers of the Senate to defeat the Government. Later, in 1974, Whitlam, who then headed the government, had faced a threatened denial of supply. In keeping with constitutional propriety, he had at that time accepted dissolution and election as the proper solution to the crisis.

1975 thus saw him do a complete *volte face*. He took a very intransigent attitude towards the whole issue—doing just as he pleased, going ahead with his efforts to govern without supply, meeting with banks, not informing the Governor-General about the financial position of the country or Parliament about how he would govern without supply. Malcolm Fraser, the leader of the Opposition, tried to reach a com-

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promise but Whitlam's attitude put this out of the question.

The Governor-General now had only two options: to let the country lumber through several months of political uncertainty and economic chaos; or to appoint a caretaker Prime Minister who could secure the supply of money to the Government and was prepared to put the matter to a general election. He did the latter.

On 11 November 1975, Kerr used his reserve powers to withdraw Whitlam's commission and appoint Malcolm Fraser as Prime Minister of a caretaker government. Fraser obtained immediate supply on the blocked Bills and dissolved Parliament, an election to which followed a month later.

Whitlam never intended that the Governor-General should exercise such vigilance. He wanted a rubber-stamp Governor-General. In a television interview he had quite clearly said that the Governor-General should accept the advice of the Prime Minister and had on another occasion spoken of Kerr as "my" viceroy.

Kerr was, however, made of sterner stuff. From the beginning, he had been committed to upholding the importance and, more importantly, the independence of the Governor-General's office. Not once during the months of the crisis did he feel that he should take a decision which would be favourable to Whitlam just because the latter had appointed him.

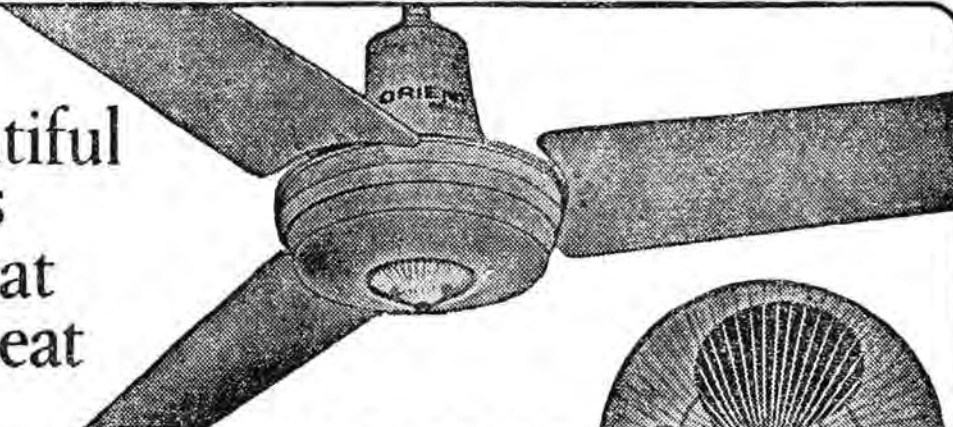
Kerr's decision came as a surprise to Whitlam himself.

Kerr's was not a hasty, rash decision. On the contrary, it was a very well thought out one, which took into consideration all implications. Besides his own conviction that what he did was right (which comes out clearly in the book), he also quotes eminent constitutional experts to vindicate his stand. He knew in advance the consequences of this decision—the snide insinuations, the boycotts, the demonstrations which not only he but also his family would be—and were—subjected to. But that did not deter him.

Consider a similar situation in India. Which Indian President would have acted as Kerr did? In 1975, India too faced a similar crisis—Mrs. Gandhi using President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed as a rubber-stamp to get a spurious constitutional sanction for the Emergency.

Ironically enough, it is the Australian Governor-General who is more liable to become a puppet of the government because he can be dismissed by the Prime Minister unlike the Indian President who can be removed only through impeachment. And yet it is the Indian Presidents who have willingly become rubber-stamps. Another proof of the fact that the form of systems do not matter; it is the people in charge that do.

—Komala Sarathy



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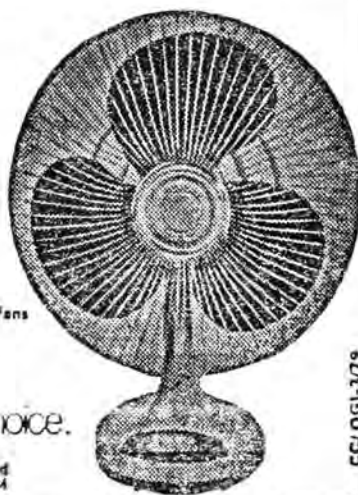
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(Book Reviews Contd.)

WE, THE PEOPLE by Nani A. Palkhivala; 1984; Strand Book Stall; Pp. 355; Price not stated.

YOU HAVE to hand it to Nani Palkhivala. For over three decades now he has been running, with unflagging zeal, a one-man campaign of public education on issues that are, by any reckoning, vital to the very survival of our polity. If the actual impact of his efforts on public thinking has unfortunately been only marginal, the fault lies not as much with him as with his audience, viz. the educated citizenry of this country whose indifference to public duty and discipline is matched only by their insensitivity to repeated assaults on freedom and the rule of law.

The volume under review bears eloquent testimony to Palkhivala's tireless exertions in the cause of those values, the erosion of which, he feels, has blighted India with increasing intensity over the years. "The picture that emerges is that of a great country in a state of moral decay," says an obviously disappointed Palkhivala. "The immediate future seems to belong to the doomsayers rather than to the cheermongers. We suffer from a fatty degeneration of the conscience, and the malady seems to be not only persistent but prone to aggravation."

The book, which is a selected anthology of the author's important writings and speeches spread over

three decades, has been divided into four major sections: Education, Democracy and Socialism; Taxation; Constitutional Issues; and Personalities, Diplomacy and the Law. Each of the essays included bears those characteristics of Palkhivala's style that have now passed into a byword: the cultivated gracefulness of language, the elegant turn of phrase, the insistence on the *mot juste*, the mordant wit, and the studied moderation of tone, which, combined with the robust reasoning, refreshing candour and incisive analytical skills of Palkhivala, make absolutely compelling reading.

Although the question of selection presents obvious difficulties for the editor of anthologies like the present one, the lay reader may be forgiven for feeling disappointed over at least one significant omission in the volume, viz. Palkhivala's explanatory article on why he accepted Mrs. Gandhi's brief in her Appeal before the Supreme Court soon after she was unseated by the Allahabad High Court in 1975. Admirers and detractors alike still recall the promise Palkhivala made in the *Illustrated Weekly of India* during the Emergency of coming out with a full account of the factors that weighed with him in holding Mrs. Gandhi's brief at that momentous period in our recent history. An excellent opportunity to keep that promise, however belatedly, has, alas, been missed.

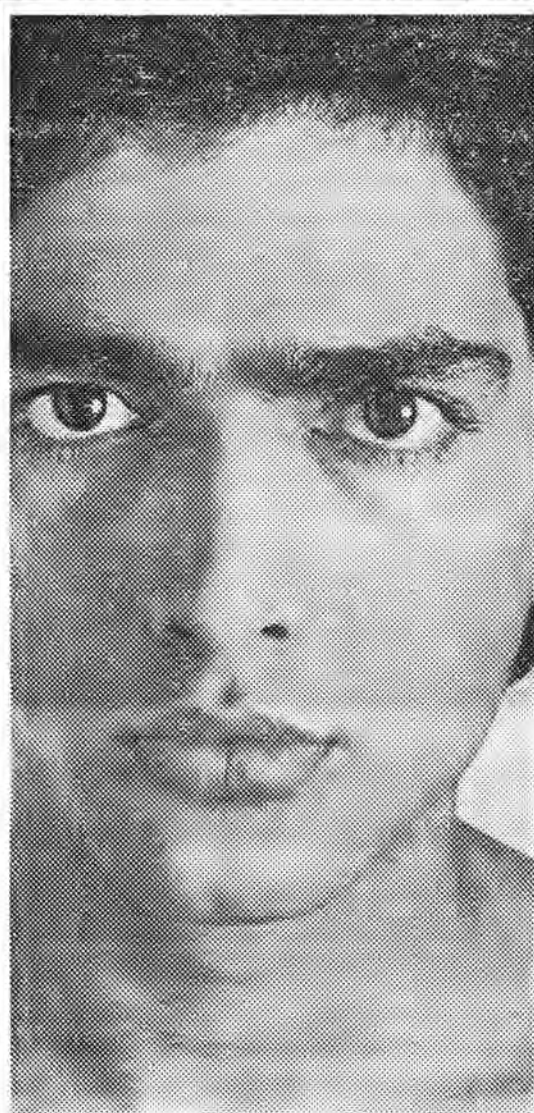
— K. S. Venkateswaran



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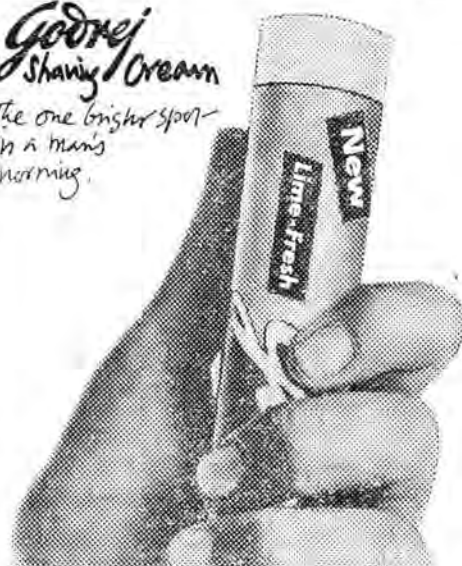
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IN BRIEF . . .

DELHI: A PORTRAIT by Khushwant Singh and Raghu Rai; Delhi Tourism Development Corpn. and Oxford University Press; 1983; Pp. 51 + plates; Rs. 190.

SELDOM, if at all, does one come across a state agency-sponsored book in India that is tastefully produced. *Delhi: A Portrait*, which is the product of a collaborative effort between DTDC and OUP, stands out as a striking exception. It is, as the blurb says, a "celebration of Delhi by two distinguished and perceptive inhabitants of the city." Khushwant Singh's lively and highly evocative prose is complemented by nearly a hundred brilliant photographs (several of them in colour) by Raghu Rai. Being rather stiffly priced, however, the book is bound to have a limited circulation. A great pity, indeed.

READINGS IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF INDIA 1757-1947 Ed. by S. V. Desika Char; 1983; Oxford; Pp. 789; Rs. 250.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA by Durga Das Basu; 10th edn.; 1983; Prentice-Hall of India Pvt. Ltd. Pp. 436; Rs. 29.

AN archivist by profession, Desika Char has done an excellent job of collating and piecing together some 400 fascinating documents pertaining to the establishment and consolidation of the British empire in India. Covering a period of nearly two centuries, the selection includes letters, charters, agreements, treaties,

firmans, policy statements, speeches and legislative enactments which provide an insight into "the techniques adopted by the British in governing their distant possession so ably and efficiently." As a source-book for the serious constitutional historian, the volume is indispensable.

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In contrast, Basu's work on the Indian Constitution, now in its tenth edition, is singularly disappointing. The sketchy, and often pedestrian commentary is matched only by the author's exaggerated notions about the utility and worth of the volume. "The credentials of this book," says Basu in his Preface, "are that no less than 80,000 people have already read it and that it has been prescribed as a text-book by the various Universities of India, for undergraduate as well as postgraduate courses in Political Science, Comparative Government and Law." That, alas, is only a measure of the depths to which standards of education have sunk in this country.

SECOND CHAMBER OF INDIAN PARLIAMENT
By N. K. Trikha; 1984; Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; Pp. 226; Rs. 75.

BICAMERALISM has always been a hotly debated issue. Opinions on the need for a second chamber of Parliament have ranged from W.E.H. Lecky's confident assertion that "of all the forms of government, I do not know of any which is likely to be worse than the government of a single, omnipotent democratic chamber" to Abbe Sieyes' trenchant observation that "if the second chamber dissents from the first, it is mischievous; if it agrees, it is superfluous". Dr. Trikha, who was the parliamentary correspondent of the *Navbharat Times* for many years, undertook a study of the Rajya Sabha, its functions, composition and utility over the last three decades, for his doctoral thesis at the Meerut University, and the present book is the result of that effort. The broad conclusion of the work

is that, despite some shortcomings, the Rajya Sabha has played a useful role in the political life of India and, given a few changes in its composition, powers and Rules of Procedure, it can become even more effective.

LAW OF THE PRESS IN INDIA by Durga Das Basu; 1980; Prentice-Hall of India Pvt Ltd.; Pp. 568; Rs. 30.

IT HAS always been a matter of considerable regret to lawyers and journalists alike that no systematic attempt has been made in this country to bring out a comprehensive text-book of acceptable standards on Press Law in India. Though Basu's work on the subject can lay no claim to filling that void, it is nevertheless a useful aid, at least to the lay journalist. Apart from giving an outline of the general legal principles affecting the Press, the book lists (in an Appendix which forms the greater part of the volume) all the relevant legislation on the subject such as the Indian Penal Code, the Press and Registration of Books Act, the Official Secrets Act, the Copyright Act, the Contempt of Courts Act, the Press Council Act, etc.

BOOKS RECEIVED

TOTAL REVOLUTION By K. Gupta; 1983; Published by the Indian Voters' Council, 448 Kalbadevi Road, Bombay 2; Pp. 44; Rs. 15.

ISRAEL AS SEEN BY AN INDIAN By Prem D. Swami Doss; Published by the author, Kamala Vilas, Kanjiramkulam P.O., Kerala 695 524; Pp. 248; Rs. 20.

FREEDOM FIRST

CULTURAL ROUNDABOUT

LAST MONTH saw a spate of good plays in Marathi, Gujarati, Hindi and English. There was Vijay Tendulkar's "Ghashiram Kotwal" presented by Theatre Academy, Pune, at Tata Theatre under the aegis of the National Centre for the Performing Arts. This twelve year-old play strikingly reflects the debauchery and the corruption amongst our so-called leaders and the *nouveau riche*. It is based on the immortality prevalent in the regime of Nana Phadnavis. It exploits the folk dance, music and theatre of Maharashtra and thus acquires a lasting value. Jabbar Patel is the director, Bhaskar Chandavarkar, the music director and Krishnadev Mulgund the choreographer of this play in which Ramesh Tilekar plays the role of Ghashiram and Mohan Agashe that of Nana Phadnavis.

"Channas", the new INT production in Gujarati is inspired by "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest". It centres round a mental asylum and vividly exposes the inhuman, almost sadistic, treatment meted out to the patients by the hospital staff, nurses and doctors. The patients in their sane moments realize their cases to be hopeless and that their only escape from the asylum is death. Electric shock and lobotomy are resorted to on the slightest excuse. Paresh Rawal in the lead role and the others in the cast bring out all this quite dramatically.

Hum Unit's latest Hindi play "Aada" staged at the Tata Theatre under the aegis of the NCPA is a delightful, breezy affair. It is about Lalbai, the mistress of Sir Amarnath Lalkunwar, a millionaire whom she tricks into marriage. Bhakti Barve is outstanding in a cast which includes Shafi Inamdar among others. The play is adapted by Dr. Sitanshu Yashashchandra from the Italian original, "Filumina".

And that brings us to Bernard Shaw's "Arms and the Man" (the first of his four Pleasant Plays written in 1894) presented by the Motley Theatre Unit at the Tata Theatre under the aegis of the NCPA. It offers a delightful theatre evening full of characteristic wit plus comedy and romance. The play is set in Bulgaria in 1885/1886 against the background of a battle between the Bulgarians and the Serbs. It is about young Raina, her mother Catherine, her fiance Sergie, her father Major Petkoff. The Man, the maid Louka and the male servant Nicola. The cast is led by Naseeruddin Shah as The Man and Sony Razdan as Raina.

— S. I. Clerk

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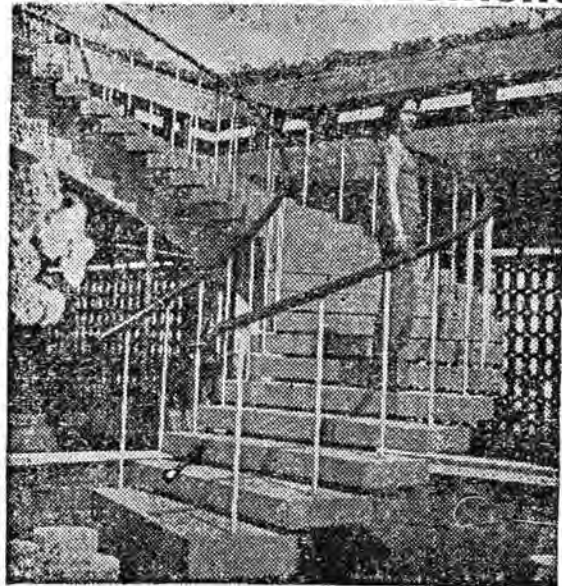
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WITH MANY VOICES

In spite of India's treaty of friendship with Moscow, Delhi is by no means unhappy at having Pakistan as a buffer between India and the Russians in Afghanistan.

—*Herald Tribune*, March 28.

Indians (that means you, me and Giani Zail Singh) find it difficult to resist phoren gifts.

—Madhu Valluri in *Society*, July 1983.

I am the only Head of State in the Middle East who feels secure enough to stroll freely through the streets of a city with a large Arab population.

—President Chaim Herzog of Israel quoted in *The Observer*, April 1.

Let us say for a start that the British are not exactly hypocritical, but that they are very good at believing two things which are diametrically opposite to each other.

—Miles Kington in *The Times*, April 13.

Soap and education are not so sudden as a massacre, but they are more deadly in the long run.

—Mark Twain quoted in *The Observer*, April 22.

He who tells a lie is not sensible of how great a task he undertakes; for he must be forced to invent twenty more lies to maintain that one.

—Alexander Pope quoted in *The Sunday Observer*, April 29.

President Reagan won't accomplish anything with mainland China. In fact, no one will ever accomplish anything with Communist China.

—Senator Barry Goldwater quoted in *The Free China Journal*, April 22.

There is a Russian joke which has a man going up to a news-stand and asking for the party newspaper, *Pravda* (Truth). "Sorry, we have no Truth." "Give me Soviet Culture then." "No, there is no Soviet Culture." "Well, what do you have?" "All that's left is Work (Trud)!"

—*The Guardian*, May 5.

I've had eight children—one boy and seven mistakes.

—Mohammed Ali on BBC-TV in *The Guardian*, May 8.