

PRESS FREEDOM IN PERIL

C. R. Irani

IN April 1972 the Government felt obliged to respond to the strong criticism of its highly discriminatory policy of newsprint distribution by suggesting that a Fact Finding Committee would be set up to find out exactly what damage was likely to be caused. The argument that the ten-page ceiling was necessary in order to conserve newsprint was thoroughly discredited because, at the same time, the Government announced 800 odd newspapers who carried less than ten pages. That this policy was designed to hurt the interests of the national press was proved before the Supreme Court which, in a celebrated judgement in October 1972, held that the Government had been guilty of using newsprint control to effect newspaper control. The Fact Finding Committee had, therefore, no further business to proceed with its work, but by that time, Mr. I. K. Gujral, Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting, probably felt that the Committee could be made to subserve several of his pet theories on monopoly, delinking, diffusion, control of selling prices and limits on advertising space.

Except for the Chairman of the Committee, the other members were either full-time or part-time Government officials. Dr. Bhabatosh Datta, the economist, was made Chairman, but it now appears in retrospect that poor Dr. Datta was asked to play with loaded dice. The terms of reference of the Committee required it, inter alia, to (i) evolve norms of expenditure in newspaper organisations, (ii) study the effect of the restriction on newsprint supplies and (iii) determine the fair prices of different categories of news papers.

The Committee's Report was presented to the Minister on 14th January, 1975 and has since been laid on the table of Parliament. The Committee have found that norms of expenditure are impracticable. This small mercy is welcome. For the rest, the Report goes well outside the terms of reference; reflects the Government's bias and prejudice against the national English language newspapers coupled with the need to use the small and medium newspapers politically in a continu-

ing effort to isolate the leaders of the Indian Press; recommends enormous powers to the bureaucracy and to the MRTP Commission, even to the extent of requiring the Commission to probe "monopolies" which it is admitted are not monopolies within the meaning of the Act; and generally betrays a lack of understanding as to what newspapers are all about.

Outside Terms of Reference

The Committee do not even pretend that they have functioned within the terms of reference. They confess that they have gone outside them and their excuse is that, although the matters brought within their purview in this fashion "are not directly within the terms of reference they would have serious indirect impact on revenues, costs, profits". There is no part of a news-

IN THIS ISSUE

Mr. C. R. Irani, Chairman of the Press Trust of India and Managing Director of the *Statesman*, warns of the grave dangers facing press freedom in India in the light of the Report of the Fact Finding Committee.

James Burnham, one of America's leading political analysts clears up a lot of confused thinking about different kinds of dictatorship.

In March 1975 Amnesty International held its first Regional Conference on S. E. Asia in New Delhi and revealed that 17000 'prisoners of conscience' are being detained in India without trial. George Nash tells us about the aims, organisation and problems of Amnesty.

At a time when Mr. T. A. Pai is being reviled for a rare bit of constructive thinking, Mr. Ridley, a British MP, provides sound arguments in support of Mr. Pai's line of thinking.

A. G. Noorani reviews for us a compilation of Sakharov's views and Leopold Labedz' collection of documents on Solzhenitsyn.

paper's operations that cannot be said to have an indirect impact on revenues, costs, profits. Even the quality of editorial writing and the pursuit of a particular editorial policy has an indirect impact on revenues, costs, profits. No Fact Finding Committee, and certainly no Committee which is clothed with the authority of a Commission of Enquiry under the Commissions of Enquiry Act, has any business to travel outside its terms of reference. The following examples will be of interest and show that the Committee discredited itself in this fashion simply to comply with Ministerial requirements.

1. *Monopolies.* The Committee examine briefly the factual position as regards "monopolies". They have come to the conclusion (para 2.8.2) that "provincial and local papers are successfully competing with and holding their own against the metropolitan daily papers". This conclusion is in line with the finding of the Press Commission which reported in 1954 and with all the statistical information as regards growth of the number of newspapers, their circulations and share of the market to be found in succeeding reports of the Government's own Registrar of Newspapers. Nevertheless, the Fact Finding Committee have recommended that new and extensive powers should now vest in the bureaucracy and in the MRTP Commission to investigate "monopolies" "irrespective of the fact that (it) is not a monopolistic undertaking within the meaning of the Act" (para 13.1.9).

2. *Advertisements: News Ratio.* It has long been the objective of some people in authority to make the functioning of the major newspapers impossible by suggesting absurd limits within which advertisements can be carried. The fact that is overlooked is that the Government's own Registrar of Newspapers in his annual reports has consistently shown that newspapers with the largest percentage of advertising happen to be the smallest ones. The Press Commission's views are sought to be used. The fact of the matter is that the Press Commission in its 1954 Report had hesitantly and tentatively felt that in the then prevailing circumstances a 40:60 ratio between advertisements and news might be desirable. The Fact Finding Committee raise this tentative feeling to the level of a "general principle". Without the slightest attempt at argument or analysis the Committee proceed from this "principle" to the recommendation that for as long as the present shortage of newsprint continues the ratio might be "around 50:50".

3. *Delinking and Diffusion.* The premise assumed in the Report is that delinking and diffusion should take place, and the Report limits itself to looking for advantages in the idea. There is no need to specify for our civilization (1) "if diffusion of ownership becomes reality, what it is intended to be... it may be expected to put an end to the practice of high editorial prices... to the creation of the owner

groups" (para 13.2.3), and (2) "it changes the capital structure, improves management and reduces costs" (para 13.2.2). This is almost bodily lifted from the Minister's language in his various statements in Parliament. Again there is no evidence given and no argument advanced in support of these conclusions.

Bias and Prejudice

1. *Inter-locking of Investments.* A long discussion is to be found in the Committee's Report on the subject of inter-locking of investments largely for the purpose of throwing mud at the Indian Express Group of Newspapers. If the Committee really feel that newspaper finances must not contribute to other industries nor must other industries contribute to newspaper finances, then two points must be made —

- i) There is no analysis and no argument in support of such a conclusion, and
- ii) this disregards the Press Commission's wise counsel in paragraph 700 of their Report where they say, "It would not be a practical possibility to insist that anybody who starts a newspaper should divest himself in advance of all other business or property interests and should subsequently also refrain from investing in any business or property".

Apart from the fact that the Committee's proposition is not supported by argument, their recommendations suffer from the further disadvantage of bias and prejudice. Referring at great length to the Indian Express, the Committee do not seem to be concerned about the inter-locking of finance between newspapers and rubber plantations in the case of some newspapers in South India.

2. *Government Advertising.* The Committee concede that Government advertising has been looked upon as a form of patronage and assistance to newspapers. But from this the Committee come to the astonishing conclusion that "Government aid to newspapers should be more direct than the indirect subsidy through ineffective advertisement outlay" (para 9.15.4). More direct aid is spelt out to mean assistance by the various Government and semi-Government financial institutions at the Centre and in the various States. It is questionable whether it is proper of Government officials to pronounce whether or not Government assistance to newspapers is in the public interest and consistent with a free and independent press.

3. *Newspaper Prices.* The Committee have discussed the problems created by the shortage of newsprint and high prices. They have found that one of the measures used by newspapers to meet the difficulties is to raise selling prices. The Committee have found that small newspapers are unable to raise their prices unless the larger newspapers do the same. One would have thought, therefore, that any legitimate concern for the welfare of the smaller newspapers would imply en-

couragement to the larger newspapers to raise their prices. On the contrary, without assigning any reasons and flying in the face of their own argument, the Committee go on to recommend that Government must limit the selling prices of newspapers, especially of "the leaders". It is plain that by price leaders they mean the favourite whipping boy of the Minister — the leading English language dailies. The Committee feel that all that is necessary is that the price of these newspapers be controlled and the Government is invited to re-enact for this purpose a dubious piece of legislation called the "Newspapers (Price Control) Act", which was brought into force for two years and lapsed, unlamented and unsung in May 1974. The Committee are entitled to some sympathy in their dilemma. Here is a case where excessive solicitude for the smaller newspapers, in deference to Ministerial requirements, is in conflict with the equally clear Ministerial desire to create difficulties for the leading English language newspapers.

4. *Bogus Newspapers.* It is worth taking a closer look at the small and medium newspapers because excessive and irrational concern for them runs right through the Report. It is no one's case that small newspapers have no place in the country's life. There are several fine examples among them. In many ways a well-run small newspaper with an editor-proprietor symbolises in its simplest form the constitutionally guaranteed right of freedom of speech and expression. But these fine examples are few and far between. What do the Fact Finding Committee say on the subject? They say that they started their enquiry with a list of 821 daily newspapers on the records of the Registrar of Newspapers as at 31st December, 1971. The Committee have had to admit that by elimination only 534 newspapers remained to be studied and that newspapers "numbering nearly 300 did not seem to exist at all" (para 2.13). One would be entitled to demand of the Fact Finding Committee what consideration they have given and what investigation they have carried out on the question of how these bogus newspapers came to exist on the records of the Registrar of Newspapers, how they were allotted newsprint and whether or not it was Government's motivated concern for small newspapers that encouraged them to take advantage. One would search the voluminous report of the Committee in vain for any steps that might be taken to eliminate such malpractices for the future. The Committee only allow themselves to be upset because "almost all the small newspapers defaulted in furnishing data". In particular, these papers "simply pleaded inability to produce their accounts as they said that they had not maintained any accounts at all". All that the Committee feel able to say on the subject is to express surprise that "these undertakings obtained their newsprint quotas on auditors' certifications".

The Committee do not appear to be able to make up their minds as to how the newspaper industry should be

regarded. On the one hand, it is the Committee's "opinion" (para 4.10.5) that the newspaper industry is a public service industry and should not be placed on a par with other industries like cement, jute, etc.". On the other hand, in furtherance of the objective of creating problems for the national English press, they suggest that in their case the Government should "resume efforts to control the prices of newspapers on the same lines as the prices of other essential commodities" (para 12.13.1).

"Bulwark of false freedom"

The fact is that newspapers of all shapes and sizes are in a very difficult situation, thanks largely to Government's inept handling of newsprint imports on the one hand and the state of the economy resulting in advertising budgets having to be slashed on the other. What is the Government's response? In the first place, the Committee have called for Government control on selling prices and cost of advertising space. In the second place, they have coupled this with the finding that newspapers are making large profits already. A little examination disproves this conclusion. They have simply used share capital and ignored borrowed capital altogether. When it comes to determining profits, items like cost of borrowed capital, bonus payments to staff and taxation have been ignored. Also ignored are the substantially increased prices of newsprint in the year 1974 compared even with the high levels that prevailed in 1973. The excuse is that 1974 figures are not available. And yet the terms of reference of the Committee required them to project the figures over the "next few years".

It will be recalled that *The Statesman* took the basic issue to the Calcutta High Court. The argument was that under the existing law no orders can be passed fixing selling prices or determining norms of expenditure of newspapers. The Court was invited to hold that if, in respect of certain matters, no such orders can be passed at all, an enquiry into these very matters with the declared objective of passing orders made no sense and would be infructuous. The Calcutta High Court appeared to hold that perhaps the case was premature because no actual orders had been passed in these matters. The great merit of the proceedings in the Calcutta High Court was to expose in advance the Government's intentions. It is now to be seen whether the Government by its actions will prove that *The Statesman* was fully justified in its apprehensions. There will be difficulty, however, in carrying forward these nefarious objectives as long as Article 19 is a part of the Indian Constitution. Government are even urged by the *National Herald* to deal with "that bulwark of false freedom, Article 19(1)a and (2)".

We have indeed been warned.

TWO ALTERNATIVES TO DEMOCRACY

James Burnham

MOST Americans think of governments as divided into two main types: democracy and dictatorship. Democracy—our type—is good and dictatorship is bad. Our prevailing (that is, liberal) ideology rates right wing dictatorships as worse than left wing dictatorships, but even those who might reverse that order agree that democracy, as a form of government, is better than dictatorship.

Because of its link with the moral judgement, this bipolar classification of forms of government has important political consequences. The feeling that democracy is better than dictatorship nourishes a presumption that our own (democratic) government will find its natural friends and allies among the other democracies and should beware of dictatorships, especially right wing dictatorships. Many of us go a significant step further and discover a moral imperative not merely to disapprove but to oppose dictatorships, especially right wing dictatorships, and to take action to weaken and, we hope, end them. Some of us would limit the anti-dictatorship programme to negative discriminations—diplomatic and commercial coldness, prohibition of military sales etc.—while others would add more positive intervention along the lines of what are called “dirty tricks” when practised against a left wing government.

From Plato on, there have been many different ways in which political philosophers have classified the forms of government. Using the “democracy-dictatorship” dichotomy as the basis of a systematic classification is logically permissible. However, with Brian Crozier, the British journalist and historian, now Director of the Institute for the Study of Conflict, I think it more relevant to our present situation, and more useful, to start from a triple instead of a dual primary distinction. In his latest book, *A Theory of Conflict* (just published in Britain and scheduled for publication here this winter), Crozier writes: “I conclude that in our time, the alternatives to (democratic) pluralism are the authoritarian way and the totalist.” (He uses “totalist” as a less cumbersome substitute for “totalitarian”, a term that Mussolini adopted from the Italian idealist philosopher Giovanni Gentile).

Among the three types of government defined as primary under Crozier's classification, there are of course wide variations in subtypes, and some overlapping. But the main lines of division are fairly clear.

Democratic nations, within a range that varies from nation to nation, are politically, culturally, and intellectually pluralist, and have some sort of representative political institution (parliament, assembly, congress) chosen by popular vote through an electoral

process to which opponents of the incumbent administration have access.

Distinctive Features

Both authoritarian and totalist governments are dictatorships, and in both the ruling cadre exercises a political monopoly — though in some authoritarian regimes the political monopoly has loopholes. The distinctive feature of a totalist regime is the integration of all aspects of life — economic, cultural, social, even personal — into a single power system. Under an authoritarian government, at least some aspects — and under some authoritarian governments, most aspects other than political — are exempt, or partially exempt. “Authoritarian governments”, Crozier sums up, “seek to abolish politics; totalist governments seek to involve the entire population in politics.” Thus, although political freedom is destroyed under an authoritarian regime, other freedoms — economic, intellectual, scientific, religious freedoms, the freedom to travel and to emigrate — are present in one or another mixture and degree.

This tripartite division is more relevant and useful right now because it gives top logical ranking to the distinction between authoritarian and totalist rule that is obscured when both are lumped under “dictatorship”, and that may be decisive in practice during the next decade or two. By the evidence of the two generations since the war to make the world safe for democracy, the democratic form of government is a sport—a parochial feature of advanced Western civilization. In most of the world the actual issue is not whether democracy is going to win out over dictatorship—it has already lost—but whether authoritarian regimes, in their varying degrees of despotism, are going to be swallowed up by totalism.

In the case of Western nations also, “democracy-dictatorship” is not an adequate distinction for the analysis of the actual situation. The political issue in Chile, once the Allende regime got going, was never democracy v. dictatorship, but a right wing authoritarian regime v. the totalist regime to which victory of the Left under the existing conditions in Chile must have led. Similarly, the overthrow of the Caetano regime in Portugal did not pose the issue of democracy v. dictatorship for that unfortunate country. The euphoric weeks after the April coup, as is now apparent, were only a charming intermezzo. The issue for Portugal as for Chile is between totalism brought by a Com-

(Continued on page 71)

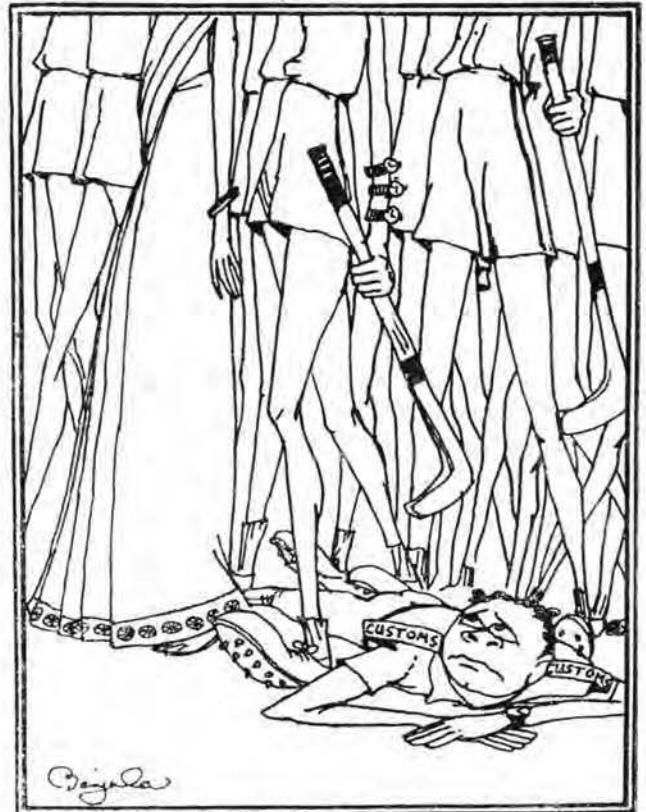
FOOLS' PARADISE

Ruzbeh Antia

INDIA, on the whole, is not a nation of sports(wo)-men. This is a bitter but true fact denied only by the blindest of nationalists. Add to it, the Indian penchant for magnifying trivial issues to elephantine proportions and the innate tendency towards hero-worship and one can understand why every success on the international sportsfield is turned into an occasion for unlimited celebration. Victories that in most other countries would be forgotten after the initial round of cheering and congratulations become "sacred memories" in India. Those responsible for them are placed on a sky-high pedestal and even crowned with wreaths of currency notes. Defeats are accompanied by public and official breast-beating and a mad rush to find scapegoats on whom to pin all the blame.

India's recent victory in the World Cup Hockey at Kuala Lumpur was a typical case. Feelings ran high that Saturday afternoon when the final with Pakistan was played, for though everybody cannot be both a patriot and a sportsman, most people are either one or the other. The final whistle which clinched the issue for India was echoed by a mass euphoria which manifested itself equally in the bursting of loud firecrackers by faceless mobs in the streets and in the wiring of eulogistic telegrams by the much publicised powers-that-be. The press, radio and television painted "India's Finest Hour" in glowing colours. The splendid victory, they claimed, had won national glory and international

prestige for India. We Indians love to delude ourselves with pipe-dreams, thus creating a fools' paradise as superficial as a mouth-watering icing on a rotten cake. The growing discontent with rising prices, unemployment, corruption and other maladies was pushed into the background and its place was taken by a shimmering mirage.



Transformation

TWO ALTERNATIVES—Continued from page 4

munist-dominated Left or an authoritarian government of one sort or another.

These questions are now arising with respect not merely to outlying and minor nations of the West but to the Heartland. The idea that democratic government may collapse in the advanced nations of Western Europe is no longer fantasy. In Italy and Britain the possibility is a topic of public debate. Even in France, many citizens saw the government's helplessness in the face of a mutiny—let us call it by its right name—as a grim warning on the wall. If the national crises, which are related to each other and to a more general crisis, intensify to the explosion point, the alternatives in those countries, as in Chile and Portugal, will no longer be, simply, democracy v. dictatorship, but, rather, what sort of dictatorship: totalist, with the destruction of the social fabric of what the West means by civilization, or authoritarianism; and if authoritarianism, what variety, in what measure limited, with what admixture of brutality and terror. And if in those countries can the rest be far behind?

The men responsible for this amazing transformation were given due credit. Young men who had spent their lives languishing in anonymity found themselves catapulted to fame. Newspapers gave greater coverage to every little detail of the triumphant journey home than they had given to the returning Indian Army after the liberation of Bangladesh. When finally the heroes arrived on Indian soil, crowds swarmed the airport and danced vigorous *bhangras*, drunk with joy. State governments vied with one another for announcing rewards, mainly cash prizes.

If I may twist the cliché, every silver lining has a cloud. The fuss made over the hockey heroes was, in a sense, a silver lining. What was the cloud? None

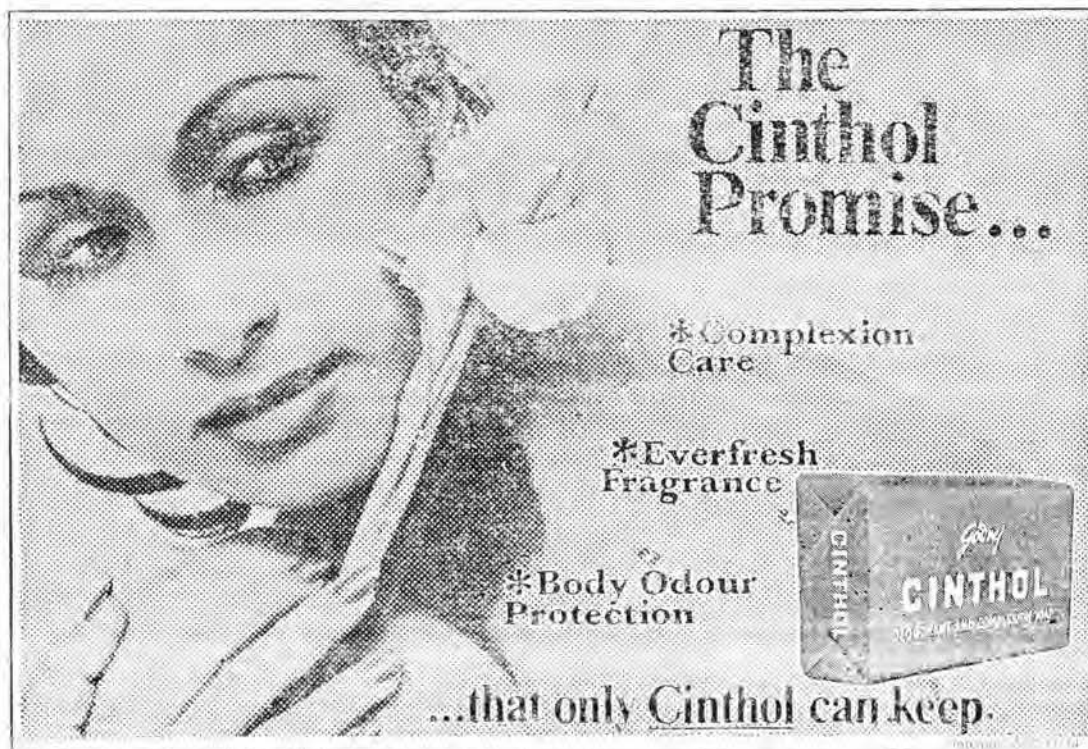
other than a part of that huge, dark, billowing canopy that threatens Indian democracy today.

'Smugglers and Thieves'

On their arrival in Madras, the Customs levied duties amounting to Rs 43,975 on the members of the hockey team. There are many in India who feel that customs' duties are the ridiculous appendages of the government's unfounded phobia about the effect of foreign goods on Indian industry. Yet even these people will agree that once a law has been laid down, its contravention, however justifiable in moralistic terms, must needs entail legal consequences. Above all, as Jean Anouilh points out in *Antigone*: "No one has a more sacred obligation to obey the law than those who make the law." However, our Prime Minister, the head of the Indian Government, ignored both these principles by asking the Madras Government to refund the duties. Her justification was that national heroes should not be treated as smugglers or thieves". Whether the hockey players could be called heroes in the first place is eminently debatable but beside our present point. The pertinent fact is that it is precisely smugglers and

thieves who do *not* pay duties. They manage to evade all those payments which every law-abiding citizen with an eye for imported objects has to make. The Prime Minister's statement either displays a colossal ignorance or a colossal implication that everyone who pays customs' duties is to be treated as a smuggler or a thief.

More important is the far-reaching significance of this move. The Indian Constitution asserts that all its citizens are equal before the law, but a government which poses as its watchdog has conclusively demonstrated that some are more equal than the others. Thus it has undermined faith in its own laws, because anyone may validly ask: "What is the use of having laws at all if they are not equally applicable to one and all?" Finally, if any democratic government can do exactly as it pleases when it pleases, with no other consideration than favourable circumstances, if the citizens of such a democracy can sit back and even applaud the action, the question eventually arises: "Where will this opportunism end?" This is a question every Indian will do well to answer before he is rudely chased out of his smug fools' paradise.



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THE ORDEAL OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

George H. Nash

ITS symbol is a candle surrounded by barbed wire. Its premise is the conviction that "no man is an island entire of itself" and that we are all our brother's keeper. Its creed is the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and its "bible," to use the words of one of its spokesmen, is *The Gulag Archipelago*. Its goal is nothing less than freedom for every "prisoner of conscience" in the world.

Amnesty International, founded in 1961, is a private, voluntary, and increasingly prestigious "worldwide human rights movement" which seeks "the release of persons imprisoned, restricted, or detained because of their political, religious, or other conscientiously held beliefs, or by reason of their ethnic origin, colour, or language, provided they have neither used nor advocated violence." After a rather slow beginning in the 1960s, Amnesty is growing rapidly; it now has nearly 40,000 members in approximately sixty countries, primarily in Western Europe and the United States.

One undoubted source of Amnesty's appeal is its distinctive organization. Its unique feature is its local "adoption" groups, which usually vary from 5 to 25 individuals. Amnesty was born with the conviction that resolutions, press releases, and occasional conferences would never alone suffice to liberate the hundreds of thousands of persons who are languishing in prisons around the world simply for their beliefs. *Pressure* is needed—citizen pressure—which enterprising groups create.

Amnesty's secretariat, located in London, conducts and supervises research on potential "prisoners of conscience" and dispatches case sheets to groups for "adoption." Amnesty currently has under adoption more than 3,500 prisoners. Upon receiving their list of prisoners, the groups swing into action. In a variety of ways—from diplomatic contacts to picketing a trade mission—Amnesty groups work to persuade governments to let their prisoners go.

A quixotic enterprise? Undoubtedly. Yet surprisingly often, Amnesty gets results. As the organization's officials explain it, governments do not enjoy harassment and adverse publicity—or the political complications that such publicity can produce. Of the more than 13,000 prisoners whom Amnesty has adopted since its founding, at least half have been freed.

The Prevailing Ideology

Evidence abounds, then, that Amnesty International is destined to become the preeminent human rights

lobby of our time, a force to reckon with in international politics. This alone would justify scrutiny of its principles and its performance. But the task acquires a special urgency for another reason. Amnesty asserts—persuasively, I think—that it is "independent of any government, political party, or religious creed." Regrettably, however, it is not free of ideology, and one ideology above all: liberalism.

For despite its efforts to be rigidly nonpolitical, Amnesty International is unmistakably an organization of the Left. Many of its members—particularly in West Germany—are youthful New Leftists; the rest are overwhelmingly liberal. The only prominent conservative on the lengthy masthead is William F. Buckley, currently a member of the National Advisory Council. Amnesty strenuously insists that it is *not* an ordinary ideological protest movement. It claims to *transcend* partisanship and speaks proudly of its "global impartiality." Precisely, in part, because of these bold assertions, Amnesty has grown in respectability and clout. Nevertheless, its membership, personnel, and appeal place it squarely on the left.

Perhaps the most obvious temptation concerns its definition of "prisoner of conscience." Since its inception, Amnesty has declined to adopt prisoners who use or advocate violence. So far this sensible position has prevailed. But Amnesty contains a vocal and apparently growing minority that annually attempts at International Council meetings to define violent revolutionaries as "prisoners of conscience." After all, the argument goes, are there not illegitimate regimes in which violent resistance is the only available option? (The favourite example, predictably enough, seems to be South Africa.) But who is to determine which regimes are illegitimate?

Although Amnesty has managed to hold the line on the issue of violence, its overall theoretical position is dangerously more elastic. According to Amnesty, no one should ever be imprisoned for his "beliefs"—provided, of course, they do not entail violence. But surely some actions that are not literally violent are still properly punishable. Whatever the prudent course of action for a government in a given circumstance may be, there is no *theoretical* reason why it must permit unconditional liberty to those who intend to destroy it.

Drawing the Line

And so we begin to wonder: can a person do *anything* short of violence and become an Amnesty "prisoner

of conscience," provided only that the person is patently sincere? Where do we draw the line? What is so disconcerting is not only Amnesty's inclusion of all manner of acts under the expansive canopy of "conscience" and "opinion." Even more disturbing is its apparent belief that non-violent acts committed in the name of conscience—no matter what their consequences—should be totally exempted from any punishment whatsoever. Professor Ivan Morris, chairman of Amnesty's American section, has stated: "The fact that someone has broken a law is totally irrelevant from our point of view. I should imagine that almost every single prisoner we've ever worked for has broken some law. Our argument would be that any law which puts people in prison as a result of expressing their opinion is an unjust law and is, in fact, in contravention of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

Amnesty's position is: I will violate the law in the name of my conscience, and you must then submit to my conscience by not punishing me at all, regardless of the consequences. The possibility that all claims of conscience may not be equally valid or even sincere and that the claims of law and equity may be eroded by an easy acquiescence in every person's invocation of "conscience" seems not to trouble Amnesty. Instead, Amnesty exhibits a disconcerting propensity to exalt the rights of conscience to the exclusion of all other legitimate considerations—such as respect for law, military order, and harmony in the community.

I am not denigrating the importance of conscience or the earnest convictions of the prisoners whom Amnesty has adopted. Yet can Amnesty reasonably expect governments—and particularly free, democratic governments which are presumably responsive to the conscience of the majority—to yield automatically to the commands of every individual's inner voice? William Rusher has made the point succinctly: "Each person is, at bottom, answerable first to his own individual conscience, and must therefore disobey a law that squarely transgresses his religion or other conscientious scruples. But it doesn't follow that the state must give way before such scruples."

The Crucial Problem

Meditation on these issues might enable Amnesty to overcome another distracting susceptibility: the temptation to confuse a prisoner's plight with a prisoner's cause. Too often, Amnesty's case sheets tend to glamorize its prisoners and to present a tendentious (and vague) account of their circumstances. Certainly Amnesty ought to be able to assist a "prisoner of conscience" without idolizing him or his political viewpoint. It might ponder the words of the liberal columnist James Wechsler two decades ago: "What is most difficult for many of us to learn is that a man may be cruelly martyred without necessarily being right."

Since Amnesty is undeniably a left of center organization, the question naturally arises: does this disposition seriously affect its actions as well as its principles? Here the crucial test is simple: does Amnesty display a greater zeal for exposing the sins of right wing regimes than those of left wing (particularly Communist) dictatorships? Is Amnesty's work as truly dispassionate, objective, and evenly distributed as it asserts?

After surveying the evidence, I do not believe that Amnesty practices a systematic double standard. To its enduring credit, Amnesty's concern appears to be genuinely universal. It adopts hundreds of prisoners in the Communist countries, and intervenes for dissenters in the USSR, but for reasons partly beyond its control, but partly well within its power, Amnesty does not always attain an ideal balance and impartiality. It is much easier for Amnesty to obtain information about repression in authoritarian rightist countries than in totalitarian leftist countries.

Amnesty should not, of course, be blamed for this continuing difficulty. It is simply a fact of world politics that right wing regimes are usually less insulated and more susceptible than Communist dictatorships to pressure from a predominantly Western, liberal, humanitarian movement. But the resulting disproportion in Amnesty's reporting and activities is vexing, for it inevitably promotes a distorted perception of the true dimensions of political repression in the world.



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SPORTSDAY REVISITED

Manjula Padmanabhan

THERE are people who thrill to the sound of small feet pattering across sports fields. They cheer as their toddler breasts the tape and record the passage of the years by the sizes of damp canvas shoes grown out of. Fondly they linger over the smell of sweaty little tee-shirts grimy with reddish dust.

Undoubtedly, it was this group of people who gathered for my nephew's Junior School Sports Day. As we approached the sports field, the first impression made was that a vast conference of Proud Parents Inc. had been convened; Indians, Americans, Europeans and other aliens, all sharing the common bond of parenthood, swarmed the area. An intoxicating blend of perfume and after-shave lotion smote one's olfactory senses within a hundred yards of the glittering congregation. Parents could be observed sitting, standing, fluffing out their children's hair, or just rushing around in nervous anticipation. An undercurrent of excitement hummed politely over all.

High-Society Parents...

In the best traditions of Sports Day, the sky was a dizzy blue and the sun incredibly brilliant. Hot perspiring children could be observed being dragged off the field in hysterics, by mothers in floating chiffon who comforted them with, "I know, darling, he pushed you down and you couldn't win," or "Yes, you'll come first next year." One father, noticeably nervous during his son's race, was overheard commenting casually after, "You know, the child who wins the race is usually the tardiest at home or in school." Those parents who knew each other socialized between events, mainly discussing their offsprings' performances on the turf. "My little boy's very shy really," said one mother patting the head of a small, rather pudgy boy. "He says he feels bad to run the race with all the others." One tall mother spent most of the morning walking briskly up and down, apparently unable to stand the strain of watching her progeny perform.

At the *pop* of the starter's gun, the audience congealed in common tension, stoically borne in silence. One Italian mother could not restrain herself from calling out encouragements to her son and received a volley of disapproving glances at her unseemly behaviour. Parents whose children had won a race lost no time in spreading the news around, while those less fortunate remarked in lowered tones, "Oh, my daughters were very disappointed this time — they had won first prizes at the last sports." A large number of foreigners being present, national sentiments ran high. During the Getting Dressed race, for instance, which required half-naked boys to be dressed by the finish-

ing line, an English boy streaked in to the finish well ahead of the rest; upon which one father standing nearby noted with a superior sneer, "These foreign children are all made to dress themselves—that's why they can do it better than our boys."

...And their Children

Possibly the best behaved members of the gathering were the children themselves. They sat in small self-contained clusters around their respective teachers, dutifully trooping off in neat files. A few twitched in nervous anticipation, others fidgeted quietly, but by and large they remained perfectly manageable and co-



operative. Their parents concern only manifested itself in their clothes. Emancipated from the one-time regime of Sports Uniforms, parents had obviously out-done themselves in attiring their children suitably for the event. There were streamlined open-knit tee-shirts, crisp nylon shorts, fluffy white playsuits rimmed with red and blue, and canvas shoes in all shapes and sizes. One boy wore faded denim Bermuda shorts with fashionably frayed hems, and a jumper emblazoned with a kangaroo. Two American girls with identical

(Continued on page 10)

HOW TO DENATIONALISE

Nicholas Ridley, M.P.

THIS may seem a forlorn moment to write about denationalisation. With the air full of threats to take over this, that, and the other industry, of National Enterprise Boards, and of every other sort of Wedgwood-Bennery, the public sector is clearly more likely to increase than to contract. Nevertheless at this same time a new and ugly defect of nationalisation is making itself clear to all: the open ended commitment to excessive wages in the nationalised industries. Those who recognise that huge wage settlements are a product of inflation, not a cause, find it difficult enough to explain how to deal with wages in the public sector. An end to overheating in the economy, and a slackening of demand in the labour market, will clearly, in time, curb private sector wage demands: but there is nothing in this that will bring immediate pressure to bear in the coal mines. It may well be that mounting unemployment and stagnant wages in the country as a whole would take a long time to moderate public sector wage demands, if indeed it ever did.

Mr. Heath, finding mining wages would not respond to market forces, resorted to central, statutory control. Without the apparatus of a Communist State to back up his dictat, the policy failed. The alternatives in the

long run are either denationalisation, or the full vigour of a Communist "incomes policy", including Factory-Police et al.

What I believe to be both possible and practical is to break the monopolies held by the N.C.B., the B.S.C., the B.A.B. and others. This monopolistic feature should be offensive even to socialists, and it is the root cause of much of the power of the wreckers. It is of course an essential element in keeping such industries nationalised at all. If the private sector may compete on fair terms, it will win such competition in the end, provided it is not hindered by subsidy or political discrimination.

The political case in favour of allowing anyone to mine coal, or make steel, or fly aeroplanes, subject to government regulation on safety and safety alone, is overwhelming. Arguments of economic freedom, increased competition, greater freedom of customer choice, all combine in a policy which is not dogmatic, to make this an attractive suggestion, which it would be very difficult to resist politically.

It is only when those who work in these industries want to be in the private sector that the policy of "reprivatisation" can succeed and prevail. The views of the British Steel Corporation in this respect are now pointing the way.

SPORTSDAY REVISITED—Continued from page 9

swathes of long blond hair in pony-tails, shimmered discreetly in sequined tee-shirts patterned with Red-Indian headdresses. Several little girls appeared bashfully daring in cut-away sun-suits, and a vast number of boys sported caps many sizes too large, with the names of their fathers' companies boldly displayed.

The Climax

Predictably, the item which stole the show was the Parents' Race. Amid vociferous protests of old-age, over-weight, and unsuitable attire, about a hundred mamas and papas were coerced onto the field. They were paired off and one partner of each pair was to stand in the middle of the field, holding a book. The rest, at the starting line were to run up to their partners, place the books on their heads, and walk arm-in-arm to the finish. In gales of delighted laughter, the children watched their parents spring forward in two or three false starts. One eager European mother, bare-foot and wearing a dress undecorously abridged, dashed half way across the field before she realized that the race had not begun. When it finally got off to a good start a non-participating male said thoughtfully, "The girls are better, it seems," and then immediately amended his statement by pointing out, that when it

came to the second half of the race, "the wives let their husbands down." The hilarity was shared all round as some parents scarcely made it to the end, convulsed with mirth. In moments of heedless abandon, they even helped along contestants in distress. Carefully coiffed hair-pieces hung rakishly askew, high-heeled sandals lay carelessly strewn on the grass and rawsilk ties were impatiently tugged loose, as couples struggled toward the touch-line all but holding their books down on their heads. They returned, flushed with the novelty of it all, breathless, disheveled, and curiously rejuvenated.

The morning ended with an uneventful Teachers' Novelty Race and ice-cream for all the children. A general up-rising, scraping back of chairs and calling out of farewells attended the conclusion of formalities. There was a preliminary confused shuffle, as parents groped among the suddenly disorganized flocks of children to pick out their own, and a great exodus surged towards either of the two exits. All the cars which had piled up in the precincts of the field like so much urban drift-wood, roared off in a body. The crowds dispersed, leaving only empty ice-cream cups, crumpled napkins and a few stray wads of towelling water to their presence. Until the next Sports Day.

Reviews

DETENTE AND LIBERTY

Sakharov Speaks edited and with a Foreword by Harrison Salisbury; (Collins and Harvill Press, London; £3.)

Solzhenitsyn: A Documentary Record Edited and with an Introduction by Leopold Labedz; (Penguin Books; 50 p.)

IN October 1973, more than twenty West European intellectuals signed and published a statement declaring that vital principles of intellectual freedom were in danger of being neglected at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe which Russia was trying to hustle through. They said "We hope for growing political detente, but so far attempts to achieve this have in fact been accompanied by a worsening in the cultural situation both within the countries of eastern Europe and in their relations with the West... Intellectual co-operation and mutual understanding will remain empty slogans unless minimum conditions of cultural freedom are observed in all countries concerned." (*The Times*, London October 12, 1973). Among the signatories were men like Raymond Aron, Denis de Rougemont, Günter Grass, and Leopold Labedz.

The hub of the matter is that while Russia accepted an agenda for the Geneva talks which includes references to human rights and "better conditions for increased cultural and educational exchanges, for broader dissemination of information, for contacts between people, and for the solution of humanitarian problems," on the other hand it has insisted that co-operation should be "carried out on the basis of respect for the sovereignty, laws and customs of each country," a euphemism for its totalitarian system.

Is the quest for detente, then, reconcilable with support for individual liberty in Russia? No more authoritative opinion on this subject can be expressed than the one Dr Andrei Sakharov, the distinguished nuclear physicist and spokesman for Russia's Human Rights Movement did in an interview he gave to Western correspondents at his Moscow flat on August 21, 1973. "Detente without democratization, a rapprochement when the West in fact accepts our rules of the game in this process of rapprochement, such a rapprochement would be very dangerous in that respect, and wouldn't solve any of the world's problems, and would mean simply a capitulation to our real or exaggerated strength. It would mean an attempt to trade, to get from us gas and oil, neglecting all other aspects of the problems. I think it's very dangerous.

"By liberating ourselves from problems we can't solve ourselves, we could concentrate on accumulating strength, and as a result, the whole world would be disarmed and facing our uncontrollable bureaucratic

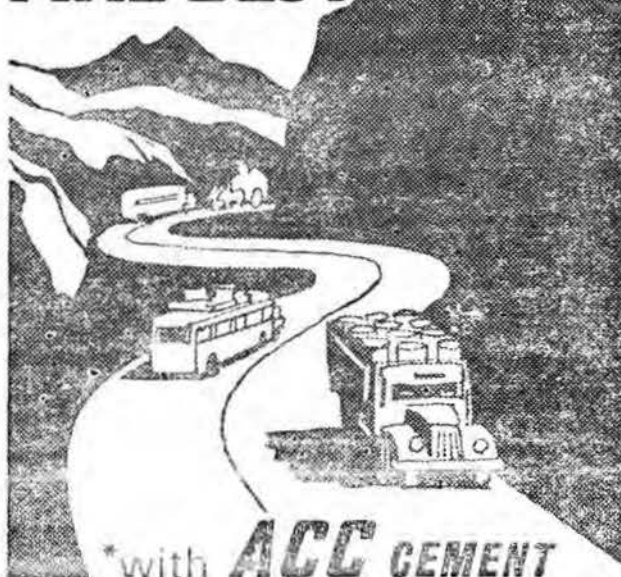
apparatus. I think that detente without any qualifications, accepting our rules of the game, would be very bad.

"That would be cultivation and encouragement of closed countries, where everything that happens goes unseen by foreign eyes behind a mask that hides its real face. No one should dream of having such a neighbour, and especially if this neighbour is armed to the teeth. I suppose most western politicians understand this and it has already been confirmed at the Helsinki conference, that detente has to take place with simultaneous liquidation of isolation." This is the Associated Press account as published in full in *The Times* of September 5, 1973.

In collecting in one volume the more important of Sakharov's writings and statements on social, legal and political subjects, including his famous essay *Progress, Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom*, Mr Harrison Salisbury has rendered a service. They cover the period from 1968 to 1974. His foreword describes how the physicist became a fighter for human rights in the most daunting of circumstances while Sakharov's own Introduction provides a useful annotation to the documents besides a detailed exposition of his own views. He writes, "The position of those who, beginning with

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the trials of Sinyavsky and Daniel Ginzburg and Galanskov, have struggled for justice as they understand it can probably be compared with the position of the world-famous apolitical organization 'Amnesty international.' In any democratic country the question of the legality of such activity could not even arise. In our country, unfortunately this is not that case. Dozens of the most famous political trials and dozens of prisoners in psychiatric hospitals of the prison type provide a graphic demonstration of this.

"In recent years I have learned a great deal about Soviet juridical practices, through attending trials and receiving information about the course of similar trials in other cities (besides Moscow). I have also learned a great deal about conditions in places of confinement: about malnutrition, pitiless formalism, and repressions against prisoners. In several statements I called the attention of world public opinion to this problem, which is vitally important for the 1,700,000 Soviet prisoners and indirectly has a deep influence on many important aspects of the moral and social life of the whole country. *I have appealed, and I again appeal, to all international organisations concerned with this problem — and especially to the international Red Cross — to abandon their policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of the socialist countries as regards defending human rights and to manifest the utmost persistence.* I have also spoken out on the institution of 'conditional release with obligatory assignment to labour,' which in a political sense represents a vestige of the Stalinist system of mass forced labour, and which is very frightening in a social sense. It is difficult even to imagine the nightmare of the barracks for the 'conditionally released persons,' with almost general drunkenness, fistfights, throat-slitting. This system has broken the lives of many people. The preservation of the camp system and forced labour is one of the reasons why extensive regions of the country are off-limits for foreigners. It would appear that the realization of any successful international co-operation in developing our very rich resources is impossible without the abolishment of this system.

"Another problem that has claimed my attention in recent years is that of the psychiatric repressions used by organs of the KGB as an important auxiliary means of stifling and frightening dissenters. There is no doubt as to the tremendous social danger of this phenomenon. The documents brought together in this collection reflect my striving to call attention to this set of problems." (italics mine)

I have set out these comments *in extenso* advisedly for they sum up Sakharov's work in Russia. One of the concluding documents in the collection is an appeal, dated January 5, 1974, with Sakharov's signature heading the rest. It is a Declaration on Solzhenitsyn and since despite our democratic set-up, book-banning and book-burning are not rare phenomena, their comments

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on the writer's right bear recalling: "The right of an author to write and publish that which is dictated by his conscience and duty as an artist is one of the most basic in civilised society. This right cannot be limited by national boundaries. A fortiori, the opportunity to set such limits cannot be given to the All-Union Agency for the Protection of Copyright, that allegedly social organization which in fact performs the functions of political censorship and currency speculation on an author's work."

"We are convinced there are no legal grounds for prosecuting Solzhenitsyn for his having published his new book *The Gulag Archipelago*, abroad, just as there are no grounds for prosecuting anyone for similar acts. We know, however, that in our state prosecutions are possible even without such grounds. *We call upon honest people throughout the world to resist this danger — to protect the pride of Russian and world culture, Alexander Solzhenitsyn.*"

Leopold Labedz, the Editor of *Survey*, is one of the most erudite scholars of the Western Communist World. His collection of documents on Solzhenitsyn alone testifies to his expertise, so carefully chosen are they. They span the period from Solzhenitsyn's rehabilitation on February 6, 1956, by the Supreme Court of the USSR, to his banishment on February 13, 1974. The volume ends with Sakharov's moving words: "Solzhenitsyn is a writer who has shone a brilliant light

on our life, our social disgrace and on the historical roots of our country's troubles. This part of Solzhenitsyn doesn't depend on where he lives and writes. Eviction from his native soil and native language is a tragedy for any human being — but especially for a writer. . .

"The pro-Soviet press would describe Solzhenitsyn as an embittered immigrant, who doesn't deserve attention. Such treacherous accusations have already begun. *But he should not see a repetition of the historical sin of the so-called progressive community of the twenties, thirties and forties who didn't understand and didn't hear the truth about what was happening in Russia during those years.*"

Mr Labedz has in effect compiled a White Book on the persecution of Solzhenitsyn. No important document is omitted, whether from a friendly or from a hostile source. His Introduction is a masterly summing up of the man and the writer: "In the Soviet context his historical as well as literary significance cannot be exaggerated. He is the first great Russian writer to emerge after the Revolution whose humanity can be compared to that of Tolstoy, his awareness of suffering to that of Dostoyevsky, his lack of sentimentality to that of Chekhov. His style may seem old-fashioned in the light of literary developments elsewhere, but not in the context of the historical development of the Russian language and literature, or indeed in the general course of European culture. And who can tell

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what effect it will have on his readability a hundred years hence?"

But, of course, Solzhenitsyn is much more than a great writer. He has been an indomitable fighter for freedom in a land where dissent is treason. This distinction he shares with Sakharov. As Labedz records, "When the long drawn out 'Case No. 24' conducted by the KGB finally led to the suppression of the Moscow 'Samizdat' publication, *Chronicle of Current Events*, there were only two dissidents who, because of their world-wide fame, could effectively pursue the struggle: Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov. Both of them have risen to the occasion magnificently; in ringing tones, they denounced the arrests, psychiatric 'treatment' and other forms of repression which have taken such a toll among their friends in the Soviet Union. They let the world know in a way which no one else could match about the other side of detente and in doing so they disregarded completely any personal risks involved in such a frontal challenge to the Soviet authorities." These are examples of lovers of liberty the world over would forget only at their peril.

A. G. NOORANI

OUTSTANDING WORK

Change Without War by Alastair Buchan (Chatto & Windus, London, £2.25)

"WAR is the continuation of politics by other means" used to be a fashionable dictum to quote at one time. And the Second World War was a demonstration of its bloody truth on a global scale. However, with the emergence of the United States and Soviet Russia as super powers in the last ten years or so, the very nature of world politics has undergone such a complete transformation that another world war could end not only in the extermination of the two super-powers but also of the rest of the world with them.

It is this fateful decade in the history of mankind that Alastair Buchan deals with in his *Change Without War*. The book consists of six half-hour Reith Lectures broadcast by him on the B.B.C. in 1973, brought up-to-date in the context of the fourth Arab-Israeli war and the subsequent crisis sparked off by the Arab embargo on supplies of oil to Europe and the United States. Modestly described by the author as "the reflections of one man upon the foreseeable problems of world politics and order", the book is a work of outstanding scholarship by no less a man than the present Professor of International Relations at Oxford University.

The emergence of the two super-powers on the world stage is not the only reason why war, even on a smaller scale, is becoming unthinkable as the continuation of politics by other means. There are a number of other causes which have effected structural changes

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in the relative power and influence of major states. Among these are, to quote Buchan, "the decline of American dominance within the Western world and of influence elsewhere; the rise of the Soviet Union to a level of equal or greater strategic power; the re-emergence of China as an independent great power; the vast increase in the Japanese economic strength; the slow coherence of the European Community...".

The structural changes have been complicated by the highly armed Sino-Soviet confrontation; the new triangular political relationship between the United States, the Soviet Union and China; the similar economic relationship between the United States, Europe and Japan; and by the Arab-Israeli war which sent the leaders of Western Europe countries, currying for favour of the oil-producing Arab world at the risk of straining their Transatlantic relation to a breaking point.

It is a measure of the complexity of international relations today that, despite all, the United States and the Soviet Union should find a co-incidence of interests leading them to a *detente* looked upon by America's European allies with suspicion.

Of special interest to India is the chapter on "Maintaining Peace in Asia". It is in this part of the book that the author makes the general thesis of his "Change Without War" look like a consummation to be devoutly wished for. Listen to the author himself spelling out the problem of peaceful co-existence among the many and varied national states in Asia: "Two big questions for the later twentieth century therefore are whether the different regions of Asia can develop and assert their own pattern of order, and whether the great powers can agree on some tacit ground rules of behaviour to govern the conflict of their interests". Frankly, the answer to both the questions is an emphatic "no". Sample the following observation made by Buchan himself in this context:

"It (Asia) is a much vaster area; it includes enormous states and small states, prosperous and poverty-stricken countries, fierce and gentle people, societies alienated from each other by generations of hostility, Arabs and Israelis, Pathans and Sikhs, Annamese and Cochinese...". So much for the prospects of different regions of Asia asserting their own pattern of order! And now what about the ground rules to control the great power interests in Asia? Listen to the author again: "Of great powers, the Soviet Union is obviously seeking to fill those vacua left by the retreat of Western power in such a way as to contain the expansion of Chinese influence and sustain her own claim to be regarded as a universal power". Then again: "China in particular, which lived for years with the nightmare of America's invasion now fears the possibility of too great a reduction of American commitment in the area by reason of the added freedom of action it would give the Soviet Union. And what goes for China goes for

many smaller countries. So the United States may remain more deeply concerned with the politics of Asia than her people would prefer or her economic interests in the area justify".

The author goes on to add: "Both in the Arab-Israel balance and in the Arab-Western balance, the external powers will be much to blame if events get beyond their control having used arms as the currency of influence". And finally: "It remains true that the prospect of change without war in Asia depends crucially on the policies of the external powers".

In the concluding chapter, the author speculates on the shape of things to come. He does not think the super power *detente* will go beyond limited understandings. As for Russia and China, the cold war between the two will freeze into a cold peace. Japan will be largely independent. And "Europe... must gradually acquire the political characteristics of a single great power." Thus there will be five great powers in the world, but only the first three will have strategic capabilities. And these three will determine the fate of the world in the last quarter of this century. For, as Buchan writes further on: "Yet staring us in the face is an inescapable fact: the mutual vulnerability of our societies. We may have become accustomed to living with the existence of weapons of mass destruction but the weapons still exist and grow in quantity; as long as this is so, nuclear war, which would make desert of the world, cannot be ruled out".

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"The deep
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'Tis not too late to seek a newer world."
—Tennyson.

You talk so much about compassion and love. Why don't you show some?

—Mrs Madalasa Narayan to Vinoba Bhave
quoted in *Times of India*, March 15.

The 'cool' of Indira Gandhi hides a great deal of panic.

—Romesh Thapar in *Economic & Political Weekly*, February 1975.

If we abandon our allies, we will be saying to all the world that war pays. Aggression will not stop, rather it will increase.

—President Ford quoted in *US News & World Report*,
March 17.

Before the split there were a few thieves, but today the entire country is being ruled by thieves.

—Morarji Desai in *Times of India*, March 8.

It was the French sociologist Raymond Aron who made the perspicacious comment that the great intellectual attraction of Marxism in the developing countries was that it enabled them to blame on others what were in fact the consequences of their own misgovernment.

—Colin Clark in *The Intercollegiate Review*,
Summer 1974.

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The best and definitely most Indian joke I have heard recently is the one about the tower that the Narangs are constructing on top of Bombay's Ambassador Hotel and which is to be named the Leaning Tower of MISA.

—Busybee in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*,
March 30.

I shut my mind when Mr Barooah (JP could not be such a bore if he could think up a name like the court jester) or Mr Rajni Patel start with 'As our dear Prime Minister has said...'

—Busybee in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*,
March 30.

Eventually, what can Mrs Gandhi say that Mr Nehru has not said before?

—Busybee in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*,
March 30.

He (Palkhivala) is a clever speaker, though I think Mr Minoo Masani is cleverer and Mr J. R. D. Tata the cleverest of all.

—Busybee in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*,
March 30.

All that really counts these days is money.

—Aristotle Onasis quoted in *Time*, March 24.

Gifts neither make people eternally dependent nor, for that matter, eternally grateful.

—Wm. F. Buckley Jr in *National Review*,
November 8, 1974.

One man's past is another man's poison.

—*The Economist*, March 8.

How much I could have done for my country had I been given just 'musical freedom'.

—Soviet Cellist Mstislav Rostropovich in
Time, March 17.

Serious politicians do not remain benevolent on the back benches for ever.

—*The Economist*, February 22.

A nation whose pet dogs and cats have a more nourishing diet than that of mankind is still some distance from economic ruin.

—James Burnham in *National Review*, November 22