

FERMENT IN ASSAM

V. B. KARNIK

North East India including Assam has been in ferment for many years. In the British regime, a large part of the territory was treated as an "excluded area", and the national movement was not allowed to spread there. It is only after Independence that serious efforts were undertaken to integrate that region politically, culturally and emotionally. They did not succeed because there was a good deal of arrogance in the efforts, and even the use of military forces was not excluded. We did not, moreover, understand and appreciate their anxiety to maintain their cultural identity and way of life, not to be inundated by outsiders who would wipe them out.

The movement that developed in Assam in the last few months is born out of the same desire to maintain cultural identity, the right to exist as a separate linguistic group. Assam has been particularly unfortunate in this respect. Its fertile land has attracted wave after wave of immigrants from neighbouring Indian States as well as from the two adjoining countries, Nepal and Pakistan. In the course of the last three decades the number of immigrants has become so huge that the Assamese are now afraid of becoming a minority in their own State. The influx took place on such a large scale because of the apathy and indifference of the Assamese, the wayward policies of the State and of the Central Governments. Also because the people who came in were generally more hard working and intelligent than the average Assamese. That is true of immigrants all over the world.

Immigrants are welcome as long as they are a few and also remain a few. They become unwelcome as soon as they become numerous. This is true in the case of immigrants from other countries as well, and in the case of immigrants from other parts of the

same country. At the moment, the Assamese are agitating against "foreigners", that is, those who are not Indian nationals. Before Independence, going to Assam was just passing from one part of the country to another. There were no restrictions on travel. People from some areas of East Bengal were in the habit of going to Assam for agricultural operations for some months, every year, and not all who went returned. Partition suddenly made them foreign nationals, but did not stop them from going to Assam. Government officers were negligent or inefficient and the inflow into Assam continued. Many of them found their names on electoral rolls. Some Assamese protested, but their voice was too weak to be heard and noticed in New Delhi.

This entry of non-nationals into the electoral rolls, went on from year to year until in the middle of the last year. The Assamese woke up to find their rolls full of names of non-nationals. Then began the movement of non-cooperation and resistance which is still going strong. It is conducted by two organisations, the All Assam Students Union (AASU) and the Gana Sangram Parishad.

The first step of the movement was the boycott of elections—no election without revision of rolls. It eminently succeeded in that objective. In most places, nobody came forward to file his nomination paper. Assam is now without a single representative in the Lok Sabha. The movement then extended its activities to picketing at Government Offices and to withholding the supply of oil. The latter has been effective. It has caused immense harm to the nation's economy.

Initially, there was the desire to ignore the movement in the hope that it would die an early death. But that did not happen, and it grew from strength to strength. Eventually, the Prime Minister opened talks with the leaders of the movement. Several rounds of talks were held in Gauhati and in New Delhi with the Prime Minister, the Home Minister and the Governor of the State. If one scrutinises the result of the talks dispassionately, one can say without hesitation that the agitation has won most of its demands. It is agreed that the names of the "foreigners" should be removed from the rolls and that they should be deported from the State. It is agreed that there should be strict checks on the borders, and that no unauthorised foreigners should be allowed entry. The only point on which no agreement was reached was the cut-off date, to ascertain if the person was a foreigner or a citizen. The agitators still hold firm to 1951, the date that they had initially suggested, while the Government of

India insists on 1971 on the basis of a consensus reached at a meeting of national political parties.

It is a pity that the latest attempt by the Prime Minister has not succeeded. The talks are not, however, closed. They may continue, but they cannot succeed unless the leaders of the movement give up their insistence on 1951 as the cut-off date. They have won a big point in securing from the Government the undertaking to remove from the electoral rolls the names of foreigners and to deport them. If the Government was guilty of negligence in allowing the entry of foreigners, the Assamese were equally guilty of indifference in not protesting against it much earlier. Nobody can give at the moment the exact figure of the persons that will be involved. But it is likely to be big, and that will give an idea of the human problem involved in the deportation. The leaders of the movement should give some consideration to it. They should also give some thought to the damage that they are inflicting on the country's economy.

The movement in Assam may be only a curtain-raiser to similar movements in other parts of the North East. The whole area is in ferment. It was badly neglected since Independence and is waking up now, disappointed and disillusioned. Economic development is essential, but it must be ensured that its fruit fall in the hands of the local people and not in those of outsiders who rush there in search of profits or jobs. There is already a feeling of resentment against "outsiders." All this poses a serious problem, and the Government needs all its resourcefulness as well as the co-operation of all Indian citizens to tackle it. *

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OLYMPICS FOR WHAT?

Washington — A translation of a Soviet Communist Party *"Handbook For Party Activists"* which outlines preparation for the 1980 Summer Olympics makes clear Moscow's highly politicized view of the Olympic Games.

The handbook published last November says the decision to hold the 1980 games "in the capital of the world's first socialist state has become a convincing testimony to the general recognition of the historical importance and the correctness of the foreign political course of our country."

The document goes on to note that the Soviet Communist Party views the hosting of the Olympic Games as part of its obligation under the final act of the Helsinki accords on security and cooperation in Europe. "We consider the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow to be one of the concrete expressions of the materialization of the Helsinki accords," the handbook states.

In that spirit, observers of the Moscow scene have noted that the Soviet Union has arrested and exiled various people whom it considers dissidents or potential dissidents in order to make the streets of Moscow safe for the 1980 Olympics. Included among those recently arrested is Dr. Andrei Sakharov, the prominent physicist.

The Communist Party handbook states that the 1980 Olympics "will serve as an important contribution not only to the development of the Olympic Movement, but also to the matter of international detente, the strengthening of peace, and the friendship of peoples."

"It is clear," the handbook states, "that international relations, the disposition of political and class forces in the world arena, and the presence in the world of two opposing systems — capitalism, which has outlived its day, and socialism, which is growing and becoming stronger with each day — leave their imprint on the Olympic Games, as a large-scale social phenomenon."

The document says the history of the Olympic Movement is characterized by "a constant struggle between the progressive and reactive forces." It claims the "forces of reaction" attempt to use the Olympic Movement and the Olympic Games for, among other things, "the distraction of youth from the political and class struggle."

"The most critical ideological struggle between the two opposing social systems," the handbook says, "has an effect in the most direct manner on the choice of cities for the Olympics, on the programme of the competitions, and on the treatment of the preparations for and conducting of the Olympic Games."

"The very fact of the recognition of Moscow as the capital of the 1980 Olympics," the document says, "provokes the most violent attacks on the part of our ideological opponents."

The handbook was published the month prior to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, after which many countries, organizations and individuals began to question publicly the choice of Moscow as the site for the 1980 Summer Olympics. *

THAT INFAMOUS LETTER!

The widely published letter of Mr. Justice Bhagwati of the Supreme Court to the Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi calling for immediate steps to bring about "drastic and radical changes" in the judicial system and urging upon her to implement the "radical proposals" made by a Committee headed by him for establishing a legal service programme, makes interesting reading and is fraught with grave dangers to judicial independence. It is presumed that release to the press of such a personal letter, was intended to be followed by a public debate.

The extracts from the letter as published in the Bombay press do not disclose any concrete suggestions about the "drastic and radical changes" proposed. The spokesmen of the Government of India have also made similar pronouncements and they have their own concept of radical changes. Does the Judge recommend drastic curtailment of approaches by the citizens to the Courts and restriction of the Court's jurisdiction? One of the causes of heavy arrears in Courts is tremendous increase in filing and institution of cases due to increasing laws and growing complexities of life. There can be no two opinions about the necessity of immediate steps for solving the grave problem of mounting arrears. If the Judge had any concrete suggestions for solving the problem, the proper course for him was to convince his colleagues and the Chief Justice of India to make necessary recommendations to the Government and Parliament and release the same for discussion by the public, for whose ultimate benefit they are intended. Such a recommendation of the highest Court of the land would have carried considerable weight. It is extraordinary that a puisne Judge should bypass his colleagues and Court and make a

private individual approach to the Prime Minister of the day.

The Judge makes a grievance that the radical proposals made by the Legal Aid Committee headed by him and appointed during the previous tenure of Mrs. Gandhi, was unfortunately not implemented by the Janata Government. Did the Judge write a similar letter to the then Prime Minister Mr. Morarji Desai, urging upon him to implement the proposals made by the Committee.

It was the grievance of a large number of citizens that, during the Emergency, the Legal Aid Committee headed by Mr. Justice Bhagwati was indulging in politics and was used as a political platform by spokesmen of the then Government.

The "drastic and radical" steps of superseding the three seniormost Judges of the Supreme Court taken by Mrs. Gandhi and her Government in April 1973, was the beginning of the end of Judicial Independence. Since then the judiciary has been in disarray. Irregular promotion of Judges of the higher courts was intended to be used as carrots dangled in front of weak Judges. The second drastic step of involuntary transfers of Judges of the High Courts was intended to browbeat independent Judges and to make them behave. A number of Judges, like the horsetrading tribe of our politicians, have been shifting grounds with changing Governments. Increasing hobnobbing by Judges of the higher courts with the Executive will bring about the total eclipse of an independent judiciary that is essential for preserving an open and free society in India.

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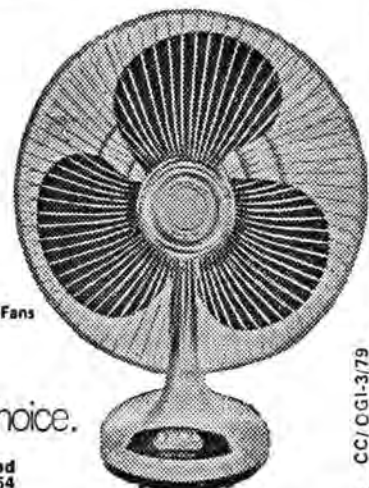
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AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY TODAY

P. M. KAMATH

Contemporary American foreign policy is formulated with four important objectives. Firstly, maintaining U.S. supremacy in the Western Hemisphere which is the foremost consideration. The Monroe Doctrine of 1823 is a good example. The doctrine was a warning to outside powers to keep their hands off the Western Hemisphere. Since then, it has been the American sphere of influence. Whenever American interests were threatened, the U.S. has freely intervened in the internal affairs of small Latin American Nations. Secondly, the U.S. has been concerned to maintain the balance of power. Until World War II, it was limited to Europe. The U.S. entered into two World Wars, initially on the weaker side led by the U.K., lest the democracies suffer under the onslaught of a dictatorship. Since World War II, the U.S. is also concerned with the maintenance of a balance of power regionally. This explains U.S. interest in Pakistan. In the 1971 Bangladesh war, the great practitioner of balance of power in modern times, Henry Kissinger, believed that the defeat of Pakistan, an ally of the U.S., at the hands of India with the help of the Soviet Union, would disturb the balance of power to an unacceptable level.

Two more objectives have become uppermost in U.S. foreign policy since World War II. Firstly, a desire to maintain the newly acquired status as the world's most powerful super power. The U.S. accepted global commitments to protect nations friendly to it. This was the essence of the Truman Doctrine. When the U.K. withdrew from its responsibilities to protect the security of Greece and Turkey, the Soviet Union was willing to fish in troubled waters. Truman warned outside powers not to interfere in European affairs and assured military aid to those who needed it. The super-power responsibility of the U.S. was stated forcefully by John F. Kennedy in his inaugural address of 1961. He said: "Let every nation know whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty." Secondly, contemporary U.S. foreign policy is based on an intense anti-communism. Communism *per se* is bad, hence the struggle against it is a normal duty of the U.S. As Fulbright put it, the fear of communism has been a "powerful prejudice".

The cumulative result of these four objectives has been a period of cold war since 1945. The two main adversaries have been the Soviet Union and Communist China. The U.S. acted as a world policeman willing to put down any communist threat anywhere in the world. In the early 1970s, the U.S. had defence agreements with 42 nations, 2200 military bases in some 33 countries and the military presence of 1.1 million men in foreign countries. Whenever the interests of the Western Hemisphere were threatened by a communist nation, U.S. reactions have been decisive. That was the case in the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. The Soviet Union stealthily introduced nuclear missiles in Cuba, a pro-Soviet country in the Western Hemisphere, only 80 miles away from American shores. This was considered an unacceptable threat to American security, and the Soviet Union was compelled to withdraw the nuclear missiles from Cuba. The U.S. also militarily intervened in the civil war in the Dominican Republic in 1965, mainly because of the fear of communist infiltration and the possibility of the Dominican Republic becoming a second Cuba. The main failure of the U.S. in this period was her inability to distinguish between genuine national aspirations and communist insurgency.

The U.S. in this period pursued foreign policy with great confidence and vigour. The Soviet Union only reacted by issuing warnings in the crisis, outside its own sphere of influence. In 1965, the U.S. also intervened in South Vietnam. This was the first direct military involvement by the U.S. in a crisis outside her sphere of influence. The justification for the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War was provided by Dean Rusk, the Secretary of State in 1967. He stated: "Within the next decade or two there will be a billion Chinese on the mainland, armed with nuclear weapons, with no certainty about what their attitude towards the rest of Asia will be." If Asian nations could, with the help of democratic nations, remain free, they would at least make China learn to live in "peaceful co-existence" and also provide security to the U.S. Rusk failed to see the strength of Vietnamese nationalism.

The Vietnam War became, by the early 1970s, a stalemate. The American people were tired of a prolonged war. President Nixon, a staunch anti-communist, realized that blind confrontation with the Communist powers did not lead the U.S. anywhere. Instead, he developed the policy of limited cooperation with the communist powers. This policy of *detente* was formalized through President Nixon's official visits to China and the Soviet Union in 1972. He also limited U.S. military protection to the nations of Western Europe and Japan. The Nixon Doctrine asked the Afro-Asian nations to practice self-help, and not to depend on direct U.S. military protection.

An important development prior to the policy of *detente* was a gradual decline of U.S. power *vis-a-vis* the Soviet Union. This decline was not in absolute terms. But the Soviet Union, during the period, was able to catch up militarily with the U.S. The American

superiority of power over the Soviet Union was levelled to parity, and that parity became acceptable to the U.S. The *detente* was also based on the U.S. grasp of the fact of intense rivalry between the two Communist powers—the Soviet Union and Communist China. So long as China considered the Soviet Union its number one enemy, in a triangular politico-military relationship, it was inevitable that U.S. and China could cooperate, if need be, against the Soviet Union.

The period of *detente* has been used by the Soviet Union to further augment its power. The American defeat in the Vietnam War made her realise the limits of power. The U.S. refused thereafter to commit her military power outside her sphere of influence. American will power was constantly probed by the Soviet Union by siding with pro-communist groups in different nations. Thus in 1975, the MPLA in Angola, with Cuba as the surrogate of the Soviet power, succeeded in moving the country under Soviet influence. The Vietnamese attack on Kampuchea, similarly, was stage-managed by the Soviet Union. The U.S. in these cases merely condemned military interventions; nothing more. The change in the U.S. attitude can be illustrated with another example. The U.S. in 1958 under Eisenhower readily intervened in the Lebanese crisis with 1500 combat troops; but in 1976, President Ford only warned outside powers to keep off when the Lebanon crisis erupted again.

Even the U.S. will to maintain its super-power status at any cost has undergone radical changes. This is evident in the current Iranian crisis. Even as late as in 1975, the U.S. was willing to commit its military power to secure the release of the crew of *Mayaguez* held by Cambodia. But great moderation has been shown by the U.S. in her efforts for the release of 50 hostages held by the radical Iranian students in the American Embassy in Teheran. This moderation is unlikely to last very long.

The developments of the early 1980s are likely to end the *detente* and see the return of the cold war. However, this new phase of the cold war will be played by reversing the roles of the U.S. and the Soviet Union. In the first phase, the U.S. had a definite superiority of power *vis-a-vis* the Soviet Union. In the new phase, the U.S. power, independently considered, has moved from the position of parity to inferiority in relation to the Soviet Union. It is now only reacting to Soviet moves. The recent military intervention by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan is a pointer in that direction. This is the first direct military intervention by the Soviet Union outside its sphere of influence.

There are many internal signs to indicate a return of the cold war. The U.S. President has raised the military budget considerably. He has already announced the creation of a Mobile Task Force to effectively intervene anywhere at short notice. The CIA, weakened by Congressional investigations in the post-Watergate period, is likely to get back its powers to conduct clandestine activities in foreign countries. The American people are already clamouring for a strong leadership from the White House—a sure sign of cold war resurgence. *

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SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

Soon after an Indian child is born starts the worrying concern for the child's education. This is followed by the parents' amorphous fears of that dreaded procedure known as "getting admission to a good school". The tale often ends with despair at a system riddled with injustices.

How does one go about "getting admission"? Idealists (who invariably have unbounded faith in the yet-unformed abilities of their tiny tot) want to use the right channel: merit. The unscrupulous firmly believe in the cogency of underhand methods: an offer of "donations" by those who can afford it, or the use of "influence" by those who usually *can* afford it but don't want to waste money! School Principals usually belong to the former category of idealists, and school managements to the latter. Since, in our administrative hierarchy, the school managements are the big brass, they pipe the tune from the background, throwing the back doors of the school wide open to the unscrupulous, while it's a tight squeeze through the front door, even though the school Principal stands there waiting to welcome the meritorious!

The people who decry this injustice are often the very ones who perpetrate it.

Recently there was an outcry against a local school which conducted a test of the parents for admission of their children. The school was trying to find some fair means of screening applicants, where the children were too young (a tender three years of age) to be formally tested, and where the number of applicants far

exceeded the number of places available. The test for parents was designed with specific criteria in view for selecting candidates from homes that would support the educational programme of the school. But the press, seeming to voice public opinion, was up in arms against this test. No doubt, if the school concerned had stuck to the traditional methods of deciding admissions, namely the quantum of "donations" or "string-pulling", it would not have made news. Both the press and the public would have shrugged their shoulders without protest, saying, "It can't be helped." Only those who were unable to have their children admitted to the school would tom-tom abroad the ugly demands that were made of them and would do all they could to defile the school's name. Even in cases where a fair testing procedure is used, the disappointed resort to defamation as a way of declaring that the grapes are sour.

I once sought admission for my servant's son in a nearby Government-aided school. No bones were made about the two thousand rupees donation conditional to admission; and no concession made despite my entreaties about the child's indigent circumstances. When I mentioned this to an Inspector of Schools, he answered without turning a hair, "How else can the school manage with the meagre aid we give and the low fees they charge?"

Is corruption in education inevitable when the demand is great and the supply small? The Government is unable to provide enough (or should I say any) good schools. Nor does it assist private agencies to build schools. Wherever it grants its meagre aid, the Government demands control; and schools controlled by government agencies fall into a quagmire of inefficiency, low morale, and educational ineffectiveness.

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On a visit to a municipal school during a research project, I found the rate of teacher absenteeism high, and student attendance low. One of the classrooms contained only four children whiling away their time. I asked them in Marathi where the others were. They replied quite cheerily that as the teacher hardly ever came to class, it was no use the pupils sitting there.

Good schools are good only because they provide responsible teachers, to whom they pay comparatively decent salaries, and have smaller numbers in each class so that each child can receive some degree of personal attention. These factors cost money. To make both ends meet, they charge higher and higher fees in order to keep up with rising costs and the felt need to revise salaries. The irony of the situation lies in the fact that these so-called high fees are a mere pittance for the goods delivered: a sound education that will equip the child for a successful and prosperous future.

Between these two alternatives of low fees—poor education, and “high” fees—good education, the rich get the best. Education is thus reduced to the status of a commodity, like mangoes—the better the quality, the higher the price.

These socio-economic injustices rule our lives from childhood. Inadequately educated, lacking in opportunities, and shunned by society, the poor and the meek cannot combat inequities; while the rich and influential become more and more protective of their prerogatives. Yet it is only we who, from our citadels of privilege, can destroy the system which we all recognise to be iniquitous: the ubiquitous practice of “protective discrimination” which pretends to offer equality of opportunity under the most unequal and unjust social circumstances.

SHOBHA DEANE

VOICES II

THE TOURIST GUIDE

Most people seem to think that being a tourist guide means shepherding busloads of unwilling and disinterested tourists together and reeling off a battery of facts in a monotonous drone. I probably subscribed to this opinion myself before I was initiated into the tribe, and needless to say the stereotype does exist. Contrary to popular opinion, the commentary that a guide gives is hardly ever a mechanical, repetitive exposition of facts. Rather, it is flexible and can range from an erudite explanation of Hindu monotheism to praise of the clockwork precision of the *dabbawallahs*!

I recently conducted a group of German tourists, on whom the colourful and chequered history of Bombay and its Gothic architecture were quite wasted. To my amazement, I was asked to relate a few “Sardarji” jokes instead. I complied, and though the jokes retained their peculiar punch in German only by the skin of their teeth, they were uproariously received!

A guide must therefore have a well-stocked repertoire up her sleeve, (“her,” because there are very few males in the profession) and may have to make exhaustive inroads into it at any moment. The specialised knowledge at a guide’s disposal is rarely static—a concerted effort is made to keep abreast of current affairs, the latest archaeological finds, etc. Although it is hardly an unpardonable crime to confess ignorance

if a tourist shoots an unexpected question, it is a situation most guides dread. A German tourist once asked me how many taxis there are in Bombay. I wavered between the strong desire to quote a convincing figure and fervently hope it was the right one, and admitting I was not sure. I opted for the latter, as nothing is worse than the tourist finding out later that it was a shot in the dark!

Shepherding a flock of tourists together is probably one of the most challenging aspects of a tour. A guide often has to step on to the road and police traffic (as foreign tourists are mortally afraid of Indian drivers), diplomatically intervene when it is obvious that a tourist is being cheated in his purchases, and what is an essential ingredient of a successful tour, ensure that a tourist returns to the car or coach punctually. Foreign tourists are generally co-operative on this count, and it is domestic tourists who pose the biggest problem, as they refuse to believe that a guide would actually leave them behind if they returned late!

Tourists can often be surprisingly difficult, particularly when they insist on having their pound of flesh. One has to be something of a diplomat when tempers are ruffled and things do not go according to plan. I was once confronted with what seemed to me an insuperable problem. Half the tourists in the coach were thoroughly disgruntled and wished to beat a hasty retreat to their hotel to escape the overpowering heat; the other, intrepid and hardy, entreated me not to give in to their demands! I tried to be as tactful as possible, but received little thanks for my pains.

After a while one can tell at a glance who the potential trouble-makers are. It has been my experience that European men are the most practised flirts and set out to make an indelible impression with assured deliberation. Putting them politely in their place, dealing with tourists who have had one too many, cantankerous old ladies and querulous men, and the ones who think they know more than you do and try to undermine your confidence are, to put it tritely, all in the day’s work. The “cultural shock” that one hears about so often in connection with India is very real, and the foreign tourist who is exposed to it for the first time, surrounded by grimy urchins and a reproachful, resentful poverty, is badly shaken. Our acceptance and indifference is as incomprehensible as it is repugnant to him.

A wrinkled little German lady burst into tears when bright-eyed children in rags touched her sleeve. Thereafter she refused to eat or drink, and insisted on returning to her hotel that very instant. When I gently remonstrated with her, she turned on me in fury, lashing out amidst sobs at our complacency and apathy. I was suddenly no longer sure of the answers so carefully rehearsed. Her trip was ruined—the brochures had lied: India was not a land of hospitable, gentle people steeped in spirituality, the cradle of philosophy and religion, it was an ugly jungle stalked by greed and oppression.

Being a tourist guide also has its lighter moments; like the time I stopped midway through my commentary to find the whole coach asleep, and standing at the head of the aisle I could see heads gently nodding to the rhythm of the engine!

SAUMYA BALSARI

REMEMBERING RAJAJI

If there was anyone who could interpret Gandhiji correctly it was Rajaji. And I am sure I won't be wrong if I say that if there is anyone today who can interpret Rajaji correctly, it is Mr. M. R. Masani. I make no apologies therefore for drawing profusely on what he has written in the Special Number of *Freedom First* devoted to Human Rights (January 1979). That Number contains Mr. Masani's splendid article on the Relevance of Gandhiji to the present times.

As I was perusing that article, out of sheer curiosity, I tried to mark out those portions where you could remove the word Gandhiji and replace it with Rajaji to see how it would read. Believe me it fitted 100 per cent. For instance, Mr. Masani has written: "So we Indians have a right to be proud of the fact that we had Gandhiji with us. We also have reason to be ashamed that we have made so little use of this wonderful leader and prophet we had amongst us." Can we not say the same thing of Rajaji? We are all proud that he was a great leader, but how many of us can say we are following Rajaji or his example?

Take another passage: "Gandhiji is relevant today. In fact he is more relevant today than he ever was, not only in India but also internationally. When I say he is relevant, what I mean is there is a great deal we can learn from him, that today particularly there are many things which he talked of which we have forgotten, and to which we must turn back again." All these are equally applicable to Rajaji.

After having been in close contact with Rajaji, there are some aspects about him which impressed me and which I feel I ought to share with you. For one thing, Rajaji had a peculiar way of teaching somebody who did not conduct himself properly. Soon after becoming Governor-General of India—the first and the only Indian to hold that high position—I believe, his ADC came without taking a shave as ADCs were required to do during the days of the British, thinking probably that Rajaji being an Indian after all, and a Brahmin to boot, wouldn't be too particular about his (the ADC's) appearance. Rajaji, however, did notice the unshaven state of this ADC. He did not make any comment immediately but, in his characteristic way, presented him with a blade! The ADC realised the mistake he had made. That was Rajaji's way of teaching anybody who deviated from the proper path of duty. It is a very effective way indeed.

Rajaji made a beginning—long before others even thought about it—of finding out vernacular equivalents of scientific expressions in English. For he wanted every Tamilian to understand the enormous progress being made in the fields of science and technology. He started a club of like-minded people for the purpose, collected difficult words in science and found Tamil equivalents for them, and he used these in simple and witty sentences in Tamil thereafter.

Although Rajaji was not a good student of Tamil in his school days, he contributed a great deal to Tamil literature. Brevity and simplicity marked all his Tamil articles. He wrote so lucidly that even a child could grasp what he wished to convey. Rajaji,

it is well-known, was a loyal follower of Gandhiji, but he was far from being a blind follower. Gandhiji and Rajaji did not always agree. Despite these occasional differences Rajaji followed Gandhiji to a greater extent than many others. He understood Gandhiji better than most others who were near him. Rajaji was the first one who practised Satyagraha in India. The Satyagraha started by him in Vedaranyam was Satyagraha in its real sense.

Rajaji was very particular about keeping things in their proper place so that they could be easily accessible to him—be they books, a pen or a shaving set. It was only his daughter Namagiri, who could cater to his meticulousness in this regard. Whenever he found his things not in their place, he used to get upset. That was perhaps the only thing about which he used to get upset, although he was well known for his righteous indignation.

Another notable trait of Rajaji was his meticulousness in regard to correspondence. Whether it was a VIP or an ordinary person, he always made it a point to reply to the letters he received. Even if it related to a small matter or was a small gesture, he was always gracious enough to acknowledge it.

On many occasions, Rajaji would write his reply on the same letter that he received; he would write his reply below that letter! He seldom wasted paper. An interesting thing about him was his frequent use of post-cards. When he was asked about this preference, even when some confidential matter was involved, his characteristic reply was: "You see, when you write on a post-card, nobody cares to read it, because he does not think it contains any secret."

On one occasion, I wanted to find out whether he remembered Kannada. Knowing that he knew the language when he was in Bangalore, I sent him an invitation in Kannada, with a covering letter also in Kannada. I thought Rajaji had forgotten Kannada, learnt as a student a long time earlier. I should have known better. He wrote his reply in clear and beautiful Kannada, to my utter discomfiture.

On yet another occasion, commenting on one of his statements as Food Minister, I wrote: "My dear Sir, I am writing this to invite your kind attention to an article I have written commenting on the observations that you have made." Incidentally, I added, "I understand from common friends that my father was also studying with you in the Central College and you may remember him". His reply was: "I had already read your article. I knew your father very well, he was a very orthodox man. I hope you have not given yourself to cheap modernism!"

This was Rajaji's way. Whenever he said something to anyone, to know what precisely he wished to convey, one had to wait till he had completed it; only then would one know what precisely Rajaji was driving at. His reaction could never be taken for granted.

Gandhiji wanted the people of India to resist all evil. He did not want us to choose only the lesser evil. It was perhaps Rajaji alone among our politicians who could live up to this Gandhian precept. This is seen in every one of his actions, in every one of his utterances. He never prevaricated, but said what he wished to freely and frankly. He had the courage of his conviction. What our country needs today are more people cast in Rajaji's mould. **R. V. MURTHY**

THE WORLD OF BOOKS

INSIDE THE HAVELI by Rama Mehta. Published by Arnold-Heinemann. Rs. 40/.

This book won the Sahitya Akademi Award for 1979. The late Rama Mehta, a sociologist, wrote the novel on the *purdah* system of Rajasthan. She builds her story round a well-to-do family of Udaipur, which has upheld the customs of its ancestors by wearing *purdah*. It is a world which is alien to many, but still an inescapable part of India today. The novel brings into focus the insular, and often claustrophobic existence of the women in *purdah* who, in many ways, live in a long-forgotten past, without ever coming to terms with the present generation. Their life-style renders absurd, in the Indian context, seminars held on "Feminism" in our cosmopolitan cities; when it is difficult for a woman even to complete her basic education, or to talk freely to men, where is the question of self-assertion, leave alone independence?

The plot is more episodic than dramatic, involving Geeta, a city-born, college-educated woman, and her gradual induction into *haveli* life. When she first gets married into a well-to-do family, and comes to Sangram Singhi's *haveli* (whose roots have, significantly, "sunk deep"), she is lost in a world of traditionalism; here, she learns that the women always keep their faces covered, and the men remain for the most part, in their own section. She, who once valued her privacy and independence, is now swamped by a cluster of curious female relatives and servants who never leave her alone, so that she is forced to become part of a cloistered community.

After the birth of her daughter Vijay, Geeta gradually settles into this way of life, partly because she has resigned herself to it and has learnt to respect her parents-in-law, and partly because she realises that her husband is "too rooted in the traditions of Udaipur." Geeta, however, *does* want to change the status-quo, not by revolt, but by slow means: she starts sewing and reading classes for the women of the *havelis* in spite of opposition, but later concedes to the general impracticality of her venture. Vijay grows up, and at the age of thirteen gets a marriage proposal; about this time, Bhagwat Singh (Geeta's father-in-law) dies, bringing to a close the end of a generation.

Interwoven with the main strand of the story are the descriptions of the servants, whose lives and values are inextricably bound up with those of the owners of the *haveli*. There is old Pari, scolding, affectionate and even more tradition-bound than the mistress; poor Lakshmi, branded a "fallen woman" by her husband, and forced to leave employment; and perhaps most important of all little Sita, Lakshmi's daughter, who is brought up by the women. It is

Sita who is the first generation of servants to go to school; true, she stops her studies at the age of thirteen to get married, but her education enables her to find a husband who is also educated, and who does not insist on a large dowry.

Such details overshadow the thin plot, but there is a rich accumulation of factual detail. In a style not at all distinctive, but direct and evocative, the author creates a tightly-woven canvas: of customs at the time of births, deaths and marriages; of Udaipur city; of a life that continues outside the *haveli*. We see the enticing balloon man, the tall, slender, vegetable sellers with their heavy skirts and thick silver anklets, the malodorous streets, the beautiful but decaying buildings that line these streets; in short, the sights and smells and customs of Udaipur that are constant.

This is, then, a readable book, densely packed with bits of conversation and social scenes that make us aware of a way of life rooted in tradition. And yet there is something about Ms. Mehta's over-all vision that leaves me uneasy. It is true the author hints that change is slowly inevitable (as represented by the death of Bhagwat Singh). But in the meantime what happens to the women of the *haveli*? Even Geeta, who is supposedly different, and tries to change the status-quo, ends up more or less accepting it. She ultimately opts for the "security" that convention and tradition ensure; a choice made by thousands of Indian women: "But Geeta no longer felt trapped in the *haveli*. She found that she too had changed. She had seen the value of kinship ties and wanted to preserve the ancestral dignity of the *haveli*." Which is all very well; but in a novel of this kind, with a strong social context, surely the author could have taken a less conventional stand, or else what is the purpose in writing a "revelatory" novel about women in a hide-bound society? One does not ask for flamboyant gestures or facile solutions; but one does wish for a more positive vision.

SHIREEN VAKIL

BHARATIYA JANA SANGH—Organisation and Ideology, Delhi: A Case Study by Geeta Puri. Sterling Publishers Private Ltd. AB/9 Safdarjang Enclave, New Delhi 110016. Price Rs. 90/- 1980, pp 292.

In this exhaustive and well-documented analysis of the Jana Sangh, and its affiliations with the R.S.S., Geeta Puri has examined the history of the Sangh from its inception to 1979. The author has concentrated on the Delhi unit which she has adopted as part of her case study. She believes that judging from the statements made by the leaders of the Sangh, including Mr. L. K. Advani and Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, "the basic philosophy of the party is moulded by the

principles and values of 'Bharatiya Sanskriti' and 'maryada' though the party is not averse to adapting to dynamic changes."

Mrs. Puri traces the factors leading to the formation of the Sangh, most notable among these being the role of the Rashtriya Swyamsevak Sangh (the R.S.S.) in its formation. She believes that the term "Right Radical" is most appropriate to describe its political ideology. The party's expansion depended very much on the "geographical circumscription" of the R.S.S. In addition, the Sangh is mainly restricted to the Hindi-speaking region and has not attracted minorities like Christians and Muslims. Therefore, according to Mrs. Puri, the "Jana Sangh, though vertically well-organised, is horizontally very weak...The leadership of the Jana Sangh therefore clearly emerged as Hindu-dominated high-caste structured, middle and upper middle-age group dominated urban based and significance represented by Punjab refugees who migrated from West Pakistan." Mrs. Puri states that in spite of the fact that the Jana Sangh fielded Muslim candidates in Muslim-dominated constituencies in Delhi, the Muslim community rejected the candidates, as the Jana Sangh had been unable to get rid of its "Hindu nationalist" image.

Ostensibly the party gives the impression of a well-knit cohesive force, but it has had its share of "rifts and splits" which is what engages our attention in Chapter 3. According to the author, "it was true that in comparison to other political parties Jana Sangh witnessed few splits. The splits which occurred in Delhi Pradesh Jana Sangh were due to interference by R.S.S. in local matters of the party." In an interview with the author, the President of the Delhi Pradesh Jana Sangh, Vaid Guru Dutt, explains the reasons for his resignation from the party; he says that he could not "tolerate the dictatorship of the R. S. S." Similarly, other leaders like Kanwar Lal Gupta (who later rejoined the party) and Balraj Madhok attribute the domination of the R. S. S. to their disenchantment with the Jana Sangh. It is Mrs. Puri's belief that, "the complete absence of 'factions' at the ideological level amounts to absence of different viewpoints in the Party."

The Jana Sangh's participation in movements and agitations has been coloured by its nationalist stance. It has argued vehemently against a separate status for Kashmir. The Chinese aggression, the demand for the ban on cow-slaughter and for Hindi as the official language as well as "Bhartiyakaran" or Indianisation has preoccupied the Jana Sangh. It has also manifested a concern with regard to the problems faced by the people of Delhi "such as transport, housing, education and law and order." However, it is Mrs. Puri's belief that "Jana Sangh did nothing, or very little, as a political party to launch any powerful struggles for the realisation of the interests of the poor, the slum-dwellers, the unemployed, the labourers, the Harijans, the low-paid employees in Government and private establishments and the landless or small farmers in the rural areas in Delhi."

The pronounced anti-Pakistanism of the party, backed by its militant and religio-cultural nationalism, were the factors responsible for the Delhi Unit of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh laying more emphasis on "national" issues involving questions of foreign policy than on economic and social issues connected with the

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real problems of the people of Delhi." According to Mrs. Puri, most of the Delhi Jana Sangh leaders, "were inspired by the leaders of the Hindu Renaissance and religio-cultural nationalists as also orthodox revivalists." While considering the electoral performance of the Jana Sangh in Delhi the author believes that the party did well in a small constituency, at the corporation level, but there is a noticeable decline at the "Parliamentary level".

The Jana Sangh's role in the administration of the Metropolitan Council when it came to power in Delhi is also carefully examined. The final chapters in the book deal with the role of the Sangh during the Emergency and its formal dissolution, when it apparently merged with the Janata Party. The last chapter views the key role of the R.S.S. in the present context. It is Mrs. Puri's thesis that the Emergency "gave a secularising and democratising experience" to the Sangh and the R.S.S. Further, Mrs. Puri believes that "it cannot be denied that R.S.S. has continued to be a 'political force' in spite of its pretension to being only a cultural organisation."

Jayaprakash Narayan's advice to the RSS to bring about "revolution" in India has still to be relevant because, as Mrs. Puri wonders, are J.P.'s ideals and those of the RSS really compatible? Therefore Mrs. Puri comments: "Unless RSS infuses into itself the ideology of 'economic transformation' not only will it belie J.P.'s expectations from it, but it will also remain as it has remained till now, a 'cultural organisation' with undefined political aims. It will then be unable to refute the charge that its cultural ideology generates a kind of politics which produces authoritarianism as well as communalism."

Geeta Puri's book is a scholarly yet very readable expose of the Jana Sangh and the RSS. The author has viewed the Sangh-RSS dilemma with objectivity, and has undoubtedly offered a most absorbing work, which is sure to be useful in the present political context.

RAMNI TANEJA

HINDUISM: A RELIGION TO LIVE by Nirad C. Chaudhuri. Chatto & Windus, London, 1979—£ 7.50 Net in U. K. only.

There is a perennial flow of books on Hinduism. The latest to try his hand at unravelling its intricacies is Nirad Chaudhuri, a well-known writer and critic now settled in the United Kingdom. He achieved fame as a writer and critic in a very short time. His first book *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* was an instant success. Since then he has published many books, including one on *Clive of India* and another on the life of Professor Max Muller. But his book *The Continent of Circe* which was intended to be an Essay on the Peoples of India had a mixed reception, since he sought to equate his compatriots, particularly Hindus, with the unfortunate creatures whom the Enchantress Circe turned into swine. So his present work on Hinduism is bound to arouse much curiosity and interest among his admirers and detractors alike.

Many persons have attempted to define "Hinduism". Pandit Nehru in his *Discovery of India* has said, "Hinduism is vague, amorphous, many-sided, all things to all men. It is hardly possible to define it, or indeed say precisely whether it is a religion or not, in the usual sense of the word." Many writers and teachers have chosen to consider Vedanta synonymous with Hinduism. For instance, Rajaji in his small but very readable book on Hinduism discusses only Vedanta. Professor D. S. Sarma goes one step further and maintains that Vedanta alone, under one form or another, is fit to become the universal religion of man: "There are rooms in the mansion of Hinduism for all classes of men, from the lowest peasant having the crudest conception of God to the highest mystic who sees God as the uncreated light in his own heart."

Thus, from the outset, the author would have been faced with the problem of how much importance he should give to Vedanta, or as we may translate it, to the philosophical side of Hinduism as against its devotional, ritualistic side. Philosophy is the theoretical side of religion, while devotion and ritualism constitute its practical aspect. It is clear that the author has chosen to concentrate on the devotional and ritualistic side, though in a prologue he has given an outline of the philosophical basis of Hinduism.

The main body of the text is divided into three parts: Historical, Descriptive and Analytical. The historical portion is obviously the result of special research conducted by the author. After sifting all the available data, he comes to the same conclusion which many of his predecessors in the field had reached: that it is impossible to be precise about any of the events which took place in India in the remote past or about the authorship of most of her ancient religious texts. So, nobody can say with any authority when the Aryans migrated to India, what their original home was, whether or where they had tarried *en route*, etc. He makes a strong plea for the view that the earliest form of Hinduism is its "Indo-European core". But once the Aryans reached India they developed in their distinctive way. They got cut off from the polytheism of the Indo-Europeans not only by the immense distances, but also by the intervening monotheism of Persia through which they had to pass. The original Indo-European religion developed in such a way as to become a strong and comprehensive way of life, covering every aspect of human existence. His main conclusion is that fully developed Hinduism does not belong to any period before the 5th Century A. D. He calls this "historic Hinduism", and whatever preceded it is pre-historic or archaic Hinduism. By the time the historic form of Hinduism had come into existence, the three main cults which were characteristic of latter-day Hinduism had also come into prominence.

The only jarring note discernible in what is otherwise a cogent exposition, is the author's effort to adduce support from a verse (*mantra*) from the Katha Upanishad which is reproduced on Page 69 (and which is emblazoned in its Sanskrit form on the dust cover of the book). He asserts that the words "it is his refulgence which makes all things shine" occurring in the last line can only be compared to the light emitted by a snow-covered country-side! (He had stumbled on this "truth" while experiencing his first

snow-storm in England). On the basis of this "discovery" he goes on to infer that the Masters who composed the famous Upanishad must have hailed from Southern Russia. Such an interpretation is bound to be refuted by many scholars. One can quote any number of authorities to show that "the Giver of the Light is none other than the Atman or the Self, the Intelligence of the intellect". Not only has the author misconstrued the real significance of the *mantra*, but traduces Shankara by describing his comment on it in his Bhashya as "pedestrian construing".

Part two of the book is factual and informative. Here too the author relies on a number of observers, mostly European, who have studied and written on Hindu manners and customs through the Ages. Of these, Alberuni (11th Century) and Abbe Dubois who wrote on the South Indian version of Hinduism are outstanding. Nirad Chaudhuri correctly observes that no account of Hinduism will be correct unless one refers to its immense diversities. These he groups under three broad categories: (a) variations in beliefs, cults and rituals; (b) differences due to geographical distribution; and (c) the attitudes and practices resulting from class affiliations. The latter two categories are dealt with in this part while the first is reserved for Part Three of the book. After outlining the practices current in the major regions of the country, the author hastens to emphasize the intrinsic unity underlying the religion, fostered by common religious texts, the system of pilgrimages, etc.

After this sober account, the next Part comes almost as an anti-climax. It was intended to describe in detail the cults of Siva, Vishnu-Krishna and the Mother Goddess (Durga) which had come to be identified with the principal deities worshipped by

Hindus as a whole. The author had given a hint he would be compelled to be "very frank" in portraying these cults and that he would not be bound by the scruples which other writers had shown in omitting unseemly details. So he goes to the other extreme and even takes delight in exposing the erotic side of the three cults. How far he is justified in doing so is for the reader to judge.

While evaluating the commentaries of foreign observers, the author examines the view expressed by both Max Muller and Monier-Williams (who published a book on Hinduism in 1877) that Hinduism of their times was on the decline and that it hadn't much of a future—"it was too dead and gone". This point of view was however challenged by no less a person than Sir Alfred Lyall, one of the most distinguished civil servants of his time, who stated most emphatically that "this religion is not dead, nor dying, nor even dangerously ill." And what is more, Max Muller himself gave wide publicity to this statement. Nirad Chaudhuri also endorses this view and asserts that a religious system which has shown such vitality and aggressiveness in the past can never be regarded as devitalized. He could have gone further and quoted chapter and verse from the writings and utterings of highly evolved personalities like Swami Vivekananda, Ramana Maharishi, Aurobindo and hosts of other teachers and reformers who have appeared on the scene in recent times almost as avatars to revitalise Hinduism. One feels that it would have enhanced the value of this book if the author had depended a little more on indigenous writers and sources instead of relying almost wholly on the opinion of outsiders.

K. V. PADMANABHAN

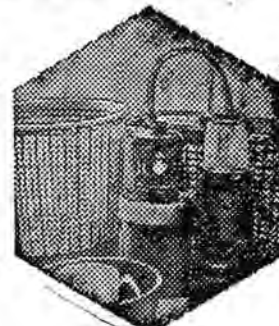


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WHERE THE MONEY IS IN INDIA AND HOW TO GET IT. by Dr. G. Vee, Ph.D. Pages 223. Price Rs. 60.00. IBH Publishing Co., Bombay.

Finance supports agriculture, just as the hangman's noose supports the hanged." This is equally true about business as a whole, and the book makes a concise list of State Finance Corporations, Major All-India Financial Institutions and Nationalised Banks which offer attractive terms of credit to woo investors to their fold.

The book by Dr. Vee has messages from International Masters of Success, Mr. Paul J Meyer and Mr. Michael Lombardi. The opening chapter is devoted to Success and its many Splendours. Writing somewhat elaborately on Motivation, the author quotes liberally in the preface from the tenets of the Success Motivation Institute, Texas, U.S.A. which defines Success as "the progressive realisation of worthwhile predetermined personal goals." The author concludes that "Success is therefore a journey—not a destination."

No entrepreneur worth his salt can think in terms of success without taking the attendant risks involved. He is one who has deliberately chosen to leap in the dark. Discussing the onerous task of raising money for business, the author dwells at length on how some of the major industrial giants, began their careers and how they financed their operations. John Rockefeller is credited with saying that he was always a great borrower in his early days, and that Money begets Money — particularly Other People's Money: OPM. In Japan, after the war, banks lent money without collateral, recalls Norishige Hasegawa, President, Sumitomo Chemicals, whose present Debt-Equity Ratio is 20 : 80, which would be ridiculed in the U.S. or Europe.

Written largely in the first person singular, the book gives intimate details of the working and modalities of various financial bodies like IDBI, ICICI and UTI among others. Tracing the history of the formation of these various non-bank financial intermediates since Independence, the book makes an incisive study of their functions and procedures. Shorn of technical jargon, the book makes easy reading for any person wanting to be gainfully self-employed. It is a helpful compendium of incentives and concessions offered by Central and State Government Finance Corporations and Institutions. It goes on to give information on the aids for Industrial Development available in the country State-wise, in the form of Financial Corporations, etc., split into Advanced and Lesser Developed States, with their attractive package deals to wean away businessmen from other prosperous states.

SICOM in Maharashtra, to whom a separate chapter is devoted, is lauded for the good work being done by it since its inception in 1966. Having dealt with the non-banking institutions, the book focuses on the role of banks with their very wide network of branches, and lending to non-traditional sectors. This has been done especially after Nationalisation of the major commercial banks, which started operating on an All-India level and brought about the radical change in their functioning. A sketchy account of the

working of the State Bank of India and six other nationalised banks follows.

Is Finance the be-all of a successful business venture? Though there are various sources of finance available to the small-scale entrepreneur, he must essentially learn to manage within the available finance to ensure a steady return on investment. Emphasising the importance of Planning, the author makes a pithy statement: "Failing to plan is planning to fail." Devoting a separate chapter to the Government's avowed objective of rapid industrialisation of the backward areas and of relieving the congestion around metropolitan cities, the author details the attractive and additional incentives offered by the Government.

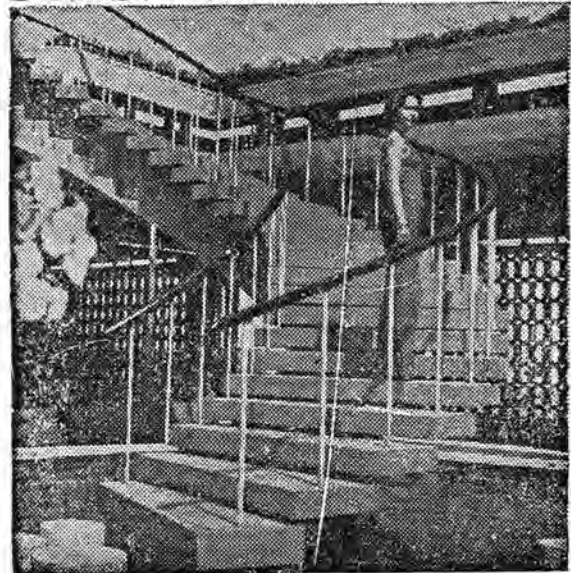
The almost indispensable nature of foreign investment is brought out, considering that capital formation in India, is not very appreciable, due to inadequate availability of domestic savings.

The concluding chapter digresses from the title of the book and has generalised essays on the role of MNCs (Multinational Corporations) and as to how the Balance of Payments position of India is strengthened by remittances of Indians resident abroad. There is a whole range of incentives which enable Non-Resident Indians to invest their earnings in Indian industries.

In the final analysis, what the book presents is a rosy picture of the financial resources available in the country for various enterprises. It fails to come to grips with the factual position, especially in respect of the working of Government and Public Sector undertakings, and the attendant bureaucracy. Corruption is a major factor to be reckoned with, since it can stall, delay and frustrate entrepreneurs seeking Institutional Finance. "Where the Money is in India" is adequately explained, but "How to get it" is not so easy as it is made out to be.

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V. D. IN MAHARASHTRA

Major M. P. VORA

It may be interesting and worthwhile to narrate briefly the history of V.D. institutions and activities in the State of Maharashtra. In March 1916, a medical conference was held in Bombay to discuss the report of the Royal Commission on V.D. As the outcome of this meeting, the League for Combating V.D. was established with Sir S. G. Curtis as the Founder President and the late Dr. J. A. Turner, the former Executive Health Officer, Bombay, as the Vice President. They started in 1918 the first model V.D. clinic in the city with public donations. In 1926, the V.D. clinic was taken over by the Bombay Municipal Corporation. It is the biggest clinic in the city. In the same year, Dr. David Lees visited India. In consultation with him, it was decided to dissolve the League and to replace it by the formation of the Bombay Social Hygiene Council. In December 1968, its Golden Jubilee was celebrated. The Jubilee Committee raised finances and secured from the Bombay Municipal Corporation substantial help to set up a free diagnostic centre for V.D. in Bombay. The laboratory is doing commendable work to help general practitioners in the city.

In 1928, the late Col. Jalal M. Shah I.M.S., was appointed as the Venereologist to the then Presidency of Bombay. He soon established a separate Chair for V.D. in the Grant Medical College and a separate V.D. Department in the J. J. Hospital, Bombay. Four specialist posts were sanctioned. In 1930, he opened a separate department for V.D. in the St. George's Hospital Bombay. Two specialist posts were sanctioned. Cama and Albless Hospital, Bombay, came next and one specialist post was sanctioned. It was his ambition to give one V.D. clinic to each district hospital in the State. When the National Government took over the administration in 1945/46, the post of the Venereologist to the Presidency was allowed to lapse, and no one was appointed in his place when he retired. In 1948, the Indian Association of Dermatologists and Venereologists was formed and its first conference was held in Bombay under his presidentship.

In 1950/51, when Shri Shantilal Shah was the Minister for Health for the State, an offer of Rupees ten lakhs was made by the W.H.O. for the establishment of a V. D. Training Centre at J. J. Hospital, Bombay, with a condition that the State would contribute 1/3 of the amount. *The Health Minister, uninformed and with little foresight, refused the offer. He felt that it amounted to an encouragement to immorality.* Subsequently the sum was given to Madras.

In 1958, Shri Kannamwar, the Chief Minister of the State who happened to be more appreciative and responsive, sanctioned the establishment of the V. D. Training Centre at the J. J. Hospital, Bombay. With the funds sanctioned, a new building was erected, necessary equipment was purchased, and even appointments of some personnel were made. With this, hope and expectations of the founding fathers soared high. One has every reason to believe that there were deliberat attempts to throttle it from its inception and create conditions that would render it ineffective. Because of non-cooperation and hostility at the local level, it soon became functionless. Posted men and equipment were distributed among other departments of the hospital ultimately. Thus the hopes of a training centre were destroyed.

In 1958, the B. S. H. C. passed a resolution requesting the State to pay greater attention to the problem of V. D., and to increase and expand facilities for diagnosis and treatment of V. D. in all hospitals. In September 1959, the Secretary, Local Self-Government and Public Health, Government of Bombay wrote (No-MCG1459/60417/2 G dated September 19, 1959): "The needs of good V. D. clinics will be taken into account while formulating proposals for new medical colleges and hospitals." In November 1959 the B. S. H. C. passed a resolution, requesting the State authorities to recognise Venereology as a separate speciality in medical colleges and hospitals. A similar resolution was passed by the V. D. Advisory Committee, Maharashtra State.

In June 1965, a Seminar on V. D. was held in Bombay. On this occasion, the Hon. Chief Minister, Shri P. V. Naik suggested creation of a co-ordinating committee consisting of the representatives of the Government of Maharashtra, the Bombay Municipal Corporation and the Health Committee of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, Bombay branch. In August 1966, a meeting of the three representatives was held in pursuance of the suggestion of the Chief Minister and the V. D. Advisory Committee, Maharashtra State was formed. It met regularly bi-monthly till 1973/74 and made various useful suggestions for the effective control of V. D. *But unfortunately none of them were implemented.* They remained on paper only. Free refresher courses in V. D. for general medical practitioners are held twice a year in the city for more than ten years under the auspices of the V. D. Advisory Committee. The Association for Social Health in India, Bombay branch has been offering free advisory-cum-consultative service to V. D. patients for some time.

In 1971, Dr. C. S. Nicol, the British Venereologist visited India. He publicly praised the work done by the separate and independent V. D. departments and criticised unsatisfactory work done by combined departments for dermatology and venereology in Bombay. Nearly the same thing had happened when Dr. Guthe, the former W.H.O. expert, had visited city hospitals a few years earlier. Their remarks had severe repercussions. The advocates of the concept of dermato-venereology, whose performance in the past

has been particularly dismal as regards V. D. felt hurt and decided to do away with separate venereology and its institutions. Being more in number and influential, they hastened the end of separate V. D. departments, which had been functioning satisfactorily for the previous four decades and had done a commendable job under great difficulties. Can such a wrongful action born out of professional jealousy and rivalry be justified?

Shri Zakaria, the Minister for Public Health, Maharashtra said on 27th March, 1968, in the Legislative Assembly that Government wanted to encourage specialisation of medical services even in district hospitals. However, there was great inconsistency between talk and practice. In 1972/73, the era of separate and independent V. D. or autonomy in the field of venereology came to an end: a new uniform policy of dermato-venereology came into existence, betraying bankruptcy of thinking and lack of perspective on the subject. V. D. institutions, which had been built up through years of hard work, were smothered and destroyed. This was the most ill-advised and unforgivable decision of the State authorities. It was an unjustified interference in sanctioned and authorised professional institutions. An unassailable fact is that the lead regarding V. D. that was gained once in India by Bombay, has been lost by the contradictory and vacillating policies of the State.

The circular of the Government of Maharashtra Urban Development and Public Health Department dated the 10th February 1976 (No. PHD-1675/2225/PH-S Sachivalaya Bombay 32) was merely a misrepresentation of facts and a distortion of the real meaning of the resolution of the 2nd Joint Meeting of the Central Council of Health and Central Family

Planning Council held at New Delhi in April 1975. But no one could question the perverse decision of the State to redesignate the V. D. clinics in the State. The State Government is under obligation to retrace its step and undo the mischief.

There has been enough experience clearly against this step. No arguments can alter the pertinent fact that venereal work, education, training and services become subordinated, their importance becomes undermined and the larger slice of the budget is cornered so as to leave precious little for the poorer venereologists. A raw deal and apparent deterioration in standards are common.

It is hoped that the State authorities will make due amends for the neglect of V. D., adopt a more reasonable and imaginative attitude, allocate adequate resources and man-power, and give top priority to the proper management and control of V. D. in the State. *The yearly incidence of V. D. in the State could not be less than 5 million.*

These facts were brought to the notice of the University of Bombay, the State health authorities, the Medical Council of India, the authorities in charge of E. S. I. C., and the Bombay Municipal Corporation many times during the last thirty years without any results. A spirit of respect and positive recognition of the opinion of venereologists seems rare in the State. Now it is for you, responsible readers, to take up the cause and get reversed the ill-conceived policies of the State health authorities and medical educationists. The vital need of the hour is to put venereology back on the rails. *

* The writer is open to correction as regards the precise chronology of the events he has mentioned.

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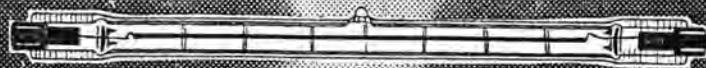
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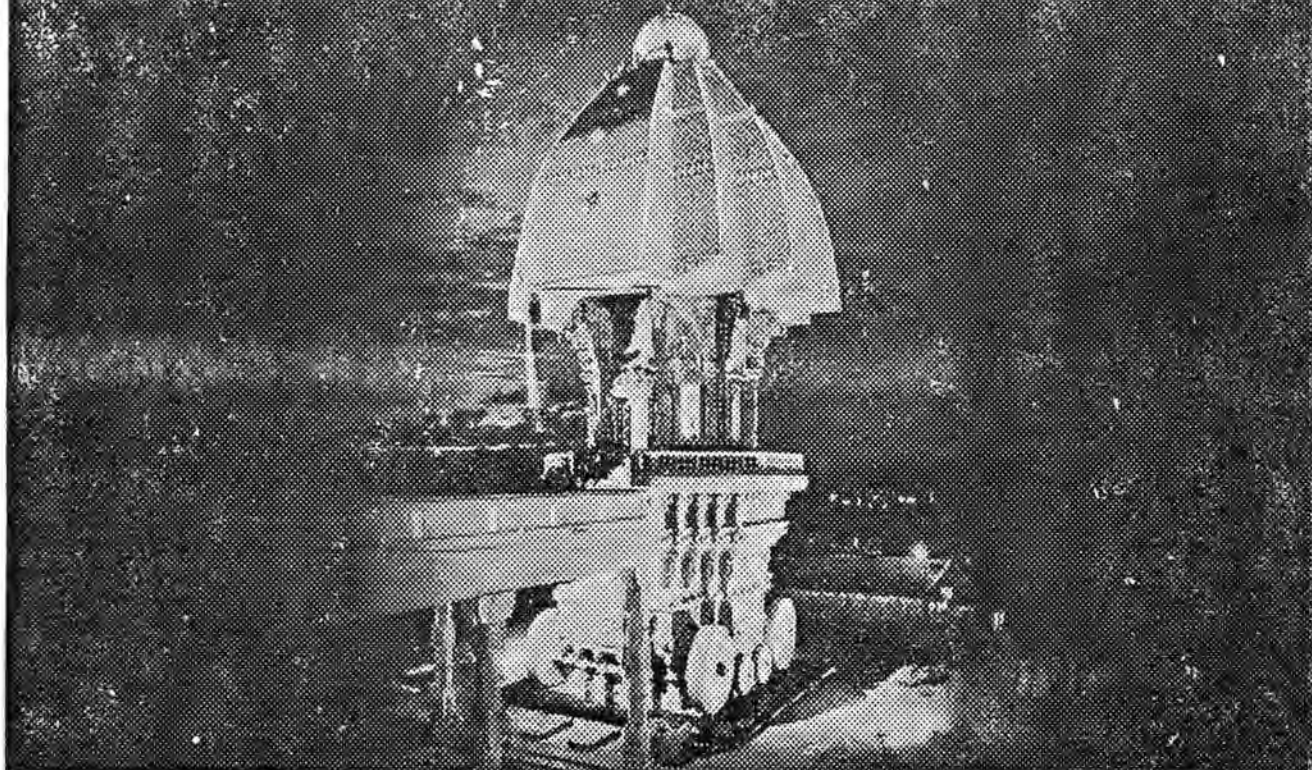
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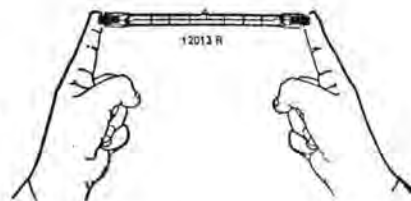
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