

freedom first

312

A JOURNAL OF LIBERAL IDEAS

NOVEMBER 1977

Price: Re 1

EDITORS : S. V. RAJU

GEETA DOCTOR

THE LOKPAL BILL, 1977

S. P. Kotwal

"Everyone, whether or not in momentary ascendancy, shares a long range interest in nurturing, even-handed effective and honest law administration; the rulers and the ruled alike benefit from devices that correct governmental mistakes and help prevent their occurring again". (Walter Gellhorn: "Ombudsmen and Others: Citizens' Protectors in Nine Countries", P. 3).

In modern democracies, the Government does not merely govern. It performs a host of ancillary functions. A welfare state like ours controls the buying and selling of essential foodstuffs; of sugar, cement, steel and cotton; it supplies its citizens with water and meat, milk and medicines; it provides social services, such as hospitals, banking, insurance and provident funds; it controls industry and labour relations; it acquires property and controls and regulates property rights, and prices — and performs a myriad other functions. This extraordinary expansion of its activity brings it into greater direct contact and inevitably into conflict, with the citizen. The citizen's grievances enlarge in the same ratio as the powers of government.

The citizen has of course, his normal remedies in court, civil, criminal and constitutional; or by way of a petition or appeal to an administrative authority. Unfortunately, the courts are very costly. Thanks to indiscriminate court fees and lawyers fees and their procedures having become extremely dilatory and complicated the average citizen cannot afford this remedy. The administrative remedy in turn, inspires little confidence. Most people regard it as an appeal from Phillip sober to Phillip drunk. As the Administrative Reforms Commission remarked "Nor have the various administrative tiers and hierarchies proved adequate for the purpose. A tendency to uphold the man on the spot, a casual approach to one's own responsibilities, and assumption of unquestionable superiority; and neglect or indifference on the part of a superior may prevent a citizen from obtaining justice even at the final stage of the administrative system". (A.R.C. Interim Report on Problems of Redress of Citizens' Grievances, Para 8).

Beyond the remedies granted by civil and constitutional law there is a vast area of possible ad-

ministrative wrongdoing against which there is no remedy. For example Administrative orders passed in the exercise of discretion either by misuse or abuse of power or because such orders are influenced by "ulterior or extraneous consideration or as a result of error, of judgement, negligence, inefficiency or even perversity". (A.R.C.) These are the matters which can be properly dealt with only before a citizens' forum, such as the Lokpal, or the Ombudsman in foreign countries. When we look at the problem of executive wrongdoing from the point of view of the citizens' grievance to be remedied, it is clear that no distinction can be drawn between the permanent services viz., the secretaries and the ministers or the political heads of the administration. That distinction was never within the contemplation of Parliament, or the A.R.C. or even the legislative draftsmen of the several Bills that came to be placed before Parliament — until the Lokpal Bill of 1977 was presented.

It was on 20th October 1966, that Shri Morarjee

(Continued on page 8)

IN THIS ISSUE

Retired Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court and former Lokayukta of Maharashtra, Mr. S. P. Kotwal takes a good look at the Lok Pal Bill, 1977 and finds it wanting. Mr. D. B. Karnik shares with us his experiences at an LSP camp in Devlali with some young and dedicated socialists. Mr. Shankar Ranganathan makes a fervent plea for the conservation of forests. "Frankly Speaking" appears in new garb as "Cabbages and Kings" which we feel is more appropriate considering the varied fare offered in the column.

"the time has come," the
walrus said,
"to talk of many things:
of shoes-and ships-
and sealing wax-
of cabbages-
and kings-"

-Lewis Carroll



Chikmagalur—A Second Miscalculation?

"Janata Panics at Indira Spectre" screams the headline of a Delhi weekly noted for its sensationalism. To listen to what many a Jana'a VIP says would give the impression that doomsday is round the corner. A rural constituency in southern India known until recently as a coffee producing area has suddenly shot into prominence as the scene of an important electoral battle.

Until recently Mrs Gandhi repeatedly affirmed that she had no intention of contesting any by-election. Why did she change her mind and what prompted her to choose Chikmagalur in the deep south rather than Fatehpur, where too a parliamentary by-election is in the offing?

Several reasons have been advanced for her decision to seek membership of Parliament. Mrs Gandhi it will be recalled has gone on public record to say that she expected Janata to last out its full term. In fact it does not suit her at all if the Janata government folded up earlier. Even she must be surprised with the unabated factionalism and squabbles among Janata's leadership portending perhaps a fall of the government sooner than she would have liked. And if this comes to pass, Mrs Gandhi, for one, would certainly like to be in the centre of things and not be left out in the cold. Another reason that has been advanced is the belief that as a member of parliament she will be better able to defend herself in the many legal battles arising from the reports of the various commissions of enquiry.

Why Chikmagalur? There was a time some years ago when on the floor of the Lok Sabha Mrs. Gandhi poured scorn and ridicule on some members who were elected to parliament from "safe" constituencies. Perhaps it never occurred to her that one day she herself might need such a "safe" constituency. And Chikmagalur is certainly "safe", safer than Fatehpur in her own State of Uttar Pradesh where she fears the memories of emergency excesses might still not have been entirely erased notwithstanding Azamgarh (where her nominee Mrs Mohsina Kidwai wrested the seat from Janata earlier this year).

The South voted differently from the North in 1977. The assembly elections that followed confirmed its non-Janata preference. The architect of Karnataka's sweeping victory was Devraj Urs and it is under his protective umbrella that Mrs Gandhi

OF CABBAGES & KINGS

has chosen to fight. The constituency has been carefully selected and much research must have gone into the electoral behaviour of the constituency before Mrs Gandhi and for that matter Devraj Urs decided to take the plunge.

This should be borne in mind by her Janata opponents. Particularly the fact that *she* has chosen the terrain for the battle. It is in such a situation that Janata might be making a tactical mistake in giving the impression that what the electorate of Chikmagalur are being called upon to do is to once again pronounce judgement on Mrs Gandhi's imposition of the emergency. This has already been done in unmistakable fashion in March 1977 when she and her party were rejected. Already some of her supporters ask whether the cases against her will be withdrawn should she win at Chikmagalur. Mrs Gandhi knows that the South was not swayed by stories of emergency excesses. And therefore it suits her if the Janata campaigners continue to harp on the theme. Already, in her campaign speeches she has taken to justifying the imposition of the Emergency playing down the charges of excesses, as opposition propaganda. She acts as the lady in distress hounded by her Janata opponents.

Those who are familiar with the motivations of the Indian voter (the March 1977 elections excepted), cannot help escape the feeling that the Chikmagalur voter will pay scant attention to issues like the emergency, the excesses and Mrs Gandhi's role as its chief perpetrator and give far more importance to local issues, caste and community factors. Whatever one might say about Mr Devraj Urs, it cannot be denied that he has made his political investments in the Harijan and Backward classes in the state pay him rich dividends twice over in the Lok Sabha and later the Assembly elections. The Janata campaigners will do well to remember this.

Another danger is the backlash of the overkill. The famous Krishna Menon-Kripalani contest in the North Bombay Constituency in 1962 comes to mind. Those who followed that campaign will recall that Kripalani had everything in his favour. But the incessant attacks on Krishna Menon actually proved counterproductive and brought him sympathy and eventual victory, not to mention the superior organisational effort of the then Congress. The public sympathised with Kripalani and voted Krishna Menon!

It might sound foolish, but the fewer the VIPs to visit Chikmagalur the better the chances of

Veerendra Patil, himself a State leader and former Chief Minister of no mean repute.

Mrs Gandhi deserves to be defeated and Mr. Veerendra Patil deserves to win. One can only hope that the combination of local factors will work against Devraj Urs. For if 1971 and 1977 were Mrs Gandhi *versus* the rest, the Chikmagalur election is Devraj Urs *versus* the rest.

And finally, one hopes that Chikmagalur will, in the interests of freedom and democracy, turn out to be Mrs. Gandhi's second big miscalculation. SVR

Two Worlds

There is a sequence in the film "Sholay" where Gabbar, the dacoit around whom the film is made, goes up to a small child, puts a gun to the child's head and blows it off. The scene is practically unparalleled in its depiction of casual violence. Yet Gabbar has now become the central figure in a campaign advertising biscuits, presumably meant for children, showing him smiling, with bullets slung over one shoulder and biscuit in another hand, saying, "Gabbar ki asli pasand." What one wonders does the message indicate, that Gabbar always gives a biscuit before blowing up a child's head?

In the wake of the Billa episode, which stirred, and continues to stir, much interest, horror and talk about the "law and order" situation, such questions no longer become irrelevant. A nation lives both at a mythic level and an ordinary level and the myths that are being built up now appear confused, violent and evil, if one must use such a strong word, or at least seem to show the triumph of evil. In the old religious myths the good always had a way of overcoming evil, in the myths of modern life the outcome is not always certain.

This at least is the impression one gets, from the handling of the Billa incident alone, if one looks beyond the obvious outpourings of horror and anguish at his deeds. Overnight he has captured the public imagination with the stories of his exploits at outwitting the Police, with his daring and his total lack of any recognisable human feelings. However monstrous his behaviour may seem to some people, it is not impossible to believe that a large section of young people, underprivileged, brutalised by the conditions in which they live, born to fail like him, will identify with him and the kind of notoriety that he has achieved. Now it only remains for some enterprising film maker to translate his experience, with technicolour frills added, on to the screen.

It is in this context that one questions the kind of detailed exposure that has followed the incident, which is not a feature of the Indian Press alone, but follows the lead set in the West, of magnifying sex and violence, till they become a cult in themselves. There was no need for instance to give a blow by blow account of the rape and murder of the Chopra children, particularly since this, being a "confession" extracted under police custody, may not be true. Nor,

one feels, is there any good reason to give such a wide coverage to Billa's tour programmes after his arrest, as he travels around the country, by air at the taxpayer's expense, as though advertising a "Kill now, Fly later" scheme. Even if for reasons of security and convenience he has to be transported by air, there is no need for him to be seen on the front page of every newspaper, giving every appearance of having a good time.

What is even more distressing is the sense of paralysis that is gripping people who live on the outside. It would seem that they are truly helpless to control the mythic forces that are dragging them in, so that they give a nightmare vision of bodies, whose upper half seem to be in control of their thoughts and action, while their lower half is slowly being sucked into the quicksand of social pressures.

A few instances come to mind when one realises how sharply these two worlds are separated. A friend who travels by train recalls how once he was sitting in front of a man whom he knew to be a bootlegger, when his umbrella was stolen at the Dadar station. His bootlegger friend on seeing his predicament immediately showed concern, "Sahib, your umbrella has gone?" he asked, "I will get it back for you. Just let me have your address." Next morning by the time he got to work, the umbrella was waiting for him at the office.

Others of course have not been so lucky. They have put up with stolen cars, unsafe roads, lack of civic amenities as a matter of routine. The Police are immediately invoked as symbols of ineptitude but in most instances even they are helpless. Hawkers have become part of the pavement and fester openly at the entrances to all public parks, encouraged by those who buy their wares, prostitutes solicit freely at all hours just off Mahatma Gandhi Road, one of the main thoroughfares of Bombay, and in the capital city, women no longer feel safe to walk about alone. The question, that each person who has knowingly or unknowingly contributed to this state of affairs, must ask, is whether this is the price of progress (New York has a higher crime rate) or is this the price of indifference. Which of the two worlds, the higher or the lower, are we going to allow to come out triumphant in the end? GD

Our Foreign Policy is Our Business

A 'progressive' organisation based in Bombay has plastered the walls of South Bombay with posters announcing a public meeting to be addressed by some prominent 'progressives'. What is interesting is the subject for the public meeting — "Return to Krishna Menon". Obviously the demand concerns India's foreign policy and the implication is that there has been a departure from the policy of Krishna Menon and his mentor Jawaharlal Nehru. In fact the "leftist" press and for that matter Mrs. Indira Gandhi have been accusing the Janata Government of adopting a pro-Western stance. What they really mean is

that the Janata rulers are not pro-Soviet enough. While undoubtedly Indo-U.S. relations have improved, largely, one suspects, due to the good work being done by Ambassador N. A. Palkhiwala, there is little evidence to support the view that the Soviet Union does not any longer play a major role in shaping our responses to external events or in determining the nature of our relations with other countries particularly in the Asian continent.

In fact these 'progressives' ought be grateful that the foreign minister is Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee. He needs no prodding to keep the country in the good books of the Russians. One need not take too seriously his denial at a recent press conference in New Delhi that he had visited the Soviet Union "to be briefed" before he went to communist China. A *Statesman* editorial (September 20) put its finger on the spot when it pointed out: "It is rather remarkable that a joint communique issued at the end of Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee's weeklong visit to the Soviet Union consisted mostly of such generalities as could have been agreed upon without a fresh round of high level negotiations... Mr. Vajpayee's visit ... was clearly intended to remove Soviet misgivings about his forthcoming visit to China."

It is revealing that there was not a word of protest from Mr. Vajpayee when at a Kremlin lunch hosted in his honour, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko launched an attack on the Chinese. As the *Indian Express* (September 14) commented in its editorial, Mr. Gromyko was guilty of grossly abusing his privilege as a host. "The Russians knew of Mr. Vajpayee's proposed visit to China and India's efforts to normalise relations with that country. But, then as the editorial observed pertinently, this "does not suit the Russian book."

What we do to mend our fences with China is our business. In recent months there has been a somewhat open and frank discussion of who was responsible for the 1962 hostilities with China. While we may leave that for historical research, the efforts to normalise relations with the Chinese is part of the Janata Government's correct and long overdue approach of building bridges of friendship with our neighbours. China, thanks to our sell-out of Tibet is now very much our neighbour. We need not and do not accept the Chinese way of life and government just as our desire for close relations with Pakistan does not mean our acceptance of military dictatorship. But national self-interests are involved and that alone should be of primary concern. While we should by all means have friendly relations with the Soviets, it is time we do not allow them a veto on our foreign policy.

Camp David Accord

Our response to the historic Camp David accord verges on the pusillanimous. While both the Prime Minister and the Minister for External Affairs maintained silence for quite some time before making

India's response known, an External Affairs spokesman came out with typical officialese. "Every effort", said the spokesman, "at a peaceful solution which would lead to a comprehensive peace in this area cannot but be commended." But the documents being "complex...merited careful study". He ended with the confident assertion that "we intend to continue to study in depth the agreements which have been reached and follow further diplomatic conversations and inter-Governmental discussions which are taking place" etc. etc. My God! Why was it not possible to simply say that the accord was one more step, a giant step as Sadat described it, towards a solution of the Middle-East tangle. But then, the Soviet Union had opposed the agreement and initial reports spoke of resistance from Jordan and Saudi Arabia though they have now shown greater interest in giving the Sadat-Begin concord a chance to work out.

Ultimately as it turned out, India decided to hedge its welcome, thanks no doubt to Mr. Vajpayee who saw three defects in the Camp David agreement. Why three, one could, if one is so inclined, find many more. The point is that a major breakthrough has been achieved and that is to be welcomed and the suggestion that Sadat and Begin deserve the Nobel Prize for Peace is well deserved. — SVR.

Mud in Your Tea

Most people may be forgiven for imagining that fine porcelain is to tea what a cup is to a saucer, that is to say inseparable. Not any more though. The honourable Minister of Industries Mr. George Fernandes, in between his busy schedule slaying dragons and annihilating captains of industry with his fiery speeches, is said to have given his revolutionary thoughts on the subject — henceforth tea shall be served in mud pots at all railway stations. This apparently will not only ensure hygienic disposable containers with the "desi" touch but will also mean employment to potters all around the country who will have to keep up supplies to more than 7000 stations everywhere. Then, since these things are catching, may be bus depots will copy the idea, followed by government offices, canteens, colleges and all those other institutions where tea in sticky glasses and colonial cups used to be the routine.

The economic benefits are obvious. Breakages won't matter and there will be no more washing to be done, but what, one wonders, will happen to all the countless young boys whose function in life it is to dip the used cups and glasses in small pails of dirty water and serve them up again with their thumbs stuck smartly in the fresh tea? No doubt they will be absorbed into the potting business, for if an ordinary passenger is presumed to drink six disposable mud pots of tea on an average during a journey, the number of pots that will be needed

at any given station will be huge. Special sheds will have to be built to house the pots, for mud pots take up space and are liable to break easily, but these are not insurmountable defects. What is more puzzling is to calculate the effect that it will have on the mentality of the train goers, who, from being in'trepid collectors of crockery stamped with "Indian Railways", will have to be trained to throw the used pots of tea away. Not that one feels that this will be much of a problem, on the contrary once the habit of flinging these objects out has caught on, one feels that the Indian public will respond with such gusto that there will be a danger that some may even throw their offspring out by accident. Throwing pots that have to be thrown will become a minor craze among passengers, particularly if the tea in it has not been so good. One imagines competitions involving long distance throwing, hitting stationary objects, hitting moving objects, hitting other trains, hitting passengers in other trains all becoming part of an exciting new trend in train travel. For after all the secondary benefit of a mud pot, that it is bio-degradable, has to be borne in mind, and people encouraged to return the pot back to the earth as soon as possible.

This leads one to wonder whether the idea will stop at tea in mud pots only or whether instead of spoons passengers can look forward to small twigs (in interesting shapes) to stir their tea and then of course one can go on to leaf plates and containers. The Thais who at one time could boast of being the only people in South East Asia untouched by the colonial system and hence by its habits had the right idea about such things and used to fashion innumerable artistic containers of plaited banana leaves, cane and bamboo stems to serve food, pre-cooked, and steamed in them. An added advantage of this was that the flavour of the containers became delicately absorbed in the food that was cooked in them. While it is possible to enjoy fish baked in banana leaves however, can the same be said of the taste of tea in mud pots? At least one person has already come up with the solution to such a problem by saying that obviously the thing to do is to blend the tea in such a manner that the muddy taste will not be noticed.

This points to an increasingly popular trend these days, which can be described as a reversal of technology or a return to the bad old days when things were really good. Enthusiasts of this school whose battle cry is "Back to the Stone Age" point out that the definition of an affluent society is one "where wants may be easily satisfied either by producing much or desiring little." In the stone age, where man lived the life of a nomadic hunter, the second set of conditions prevailed, his wants were little. The only people who are in this happy state, in these times, are to be found in some aboriginal tribes, as for instance the Bushmen of the Kalahari desert in Africa. "They lived" says a passage in a treatise called 'Stoneage Economics' "in a kind of material plenty because they adapted the tools of their living to materials which lay in abundance around them and which were free for anyone to

take (wood, reeds, bone for weapons and implements, fibres for cordage, grass for shelters) or to materials which were at least sufficient for the needs of the population". When these people were asked why they spent so much of their time sleeping rather than being up and about tilling the soil and planting food, they are said to have replied "Why should we plant when there are so many mongo mongo nuts in the world?"

The simplicity of such a philosophy is stunning. If only man could go back to his mongo mongo nut days, imply these anthropological economists, all would be well again. His desires would be limited, his wants would be satisfied, so that far from worrying about how to make tea taste like tea in mud pots he would lie back and ask "Why should I drink tea when there is so much hot water in the world." GD



YUKRAND AS I SAW AND FELT

D. B. Karnik

The training programmes conducted by the Leslie Sawhney Centre have always been an unforgettable experience. The programmes have the basic intention of training people in democracy. Different groups are invited to participate in the programme. They belong to various fields such as trade unionism, social welfare, education, politics, journalism and women's movement to mention a few. There are lectures by experts followed by discussions, in which trainees are expected to participate. The participation by trainees brings liveliness in the discussion and it adds to the flavour of the camp, where the trainees live together for the number of days the training programme is held.

A programme was recently arranged from 26th to 29th August at the LSP Centre in Devlali, for the training of members of the Yuvak Kranti Dal of Maharashtra. This is a group of revolutionary youths who have all along participated in political and social movements. They have the fervour of idealism inspired by the socialist movement. The origin of the Yuvak Kranti Dal can be traced to the days of 1962, when China invaded India. The whole country was shocked by the blatant invasion. But the youth reacted to it with a feeling of anger at the inactivity and the helplessness of the leadership of the country. They set their minds to emerge as a force with a view to forcing the leadership of the country to take active steps against aggression. Some of the youth in Maharashtra, belonging to the socialist wing took the lead in forming a separate group of active revolutionaries who would stand against compromise both in respect of fighting aggression from outside and reaction in political, social and economic fields. This group gradually emerged as the Yuvak Kranti Dal, *Yukrand* as it is known throughout Maharashtra.

Originally the workers of *Yukrand* belonged to the Socialist party and most of them were actively associated with the Rashtra Seva Dal. They are thus steeped in the cultural traditions of the socialist group of politicians. The difference between them and the socialist group is that the latter always felt the Yuvak Kranti Dal should be more restrained in adopting revolutionary programmes and in advocating the line of direct action in respect of both political and social movements.

Yukrand however does not tolerate any compromise on the issue of struggles nor would it permit any alignment with different ideologies. As it is, the group is pledged to strive for the establishment of a society based on social justice, and free from any kind of oppression. This is a group of angry young men who have no patience to suffer meekly the injustices heaped on the weaker sections of the people. They feel that weaker sections of society will have to wage a relentless war against the vested interests in order to satisfy even their minimum demands. In the course of the discussion in the camp on the strategy and tactics of carrying on the movement of the working class or the peasantry, the group leaders as well as the followers insisted that the weapon of struggle alone would enable the poorer sections to snatch some concessions from the rich.

The *Yukrand* believes in the philosophy of Marxist class struggle as almost an article of faith. They do not think that the ruling classes have changed under the pressure of circumstances. Off and on it was pointed out to them that relentless class struggle had become outdated because the capitalist class has become convinced that even for their own prosperity, the demands of the working classes will have to be accepted in some shape or form. The development of society after the second world war it was pointed out to them, had undergone a change and the changing relations between the socialist countries and capitalist countries was a pointer to the lessening of tensions not only between nations but also between classes. The only point on which they differ from marxists is that in spite of their passion for revolutionary action, they are committed to non-violence. They are indeed a group of non-violent resisters against all kinds of oppression — political, social, religious and also ideological. One day in the camp, when an entertainment programme was organised, they sang in chorus, the song of the Negro resisters led by the late Martin Luther King. The refrain of the song was "We shall overcome some day." *Yukrand* also wants to overcome all the obstacles in the way and has faith that they will be overcome. The moral fervour of the group is evident from the inspiration they seem to take from Martin Luther King.

In all the discussions that took place at the Centre, after the learned discourses, the most prominent one related to the evils of casteism. The members of the group were most agitated with the happenings at Marathwada. The Dalits and their sufferings as narrated by some of the participants in the camp drew not only sympathy but provoked righteous indignation. Some of the participants who belong to the Dalit community persistently asked if struggle against casteism should not be given preference over all other political or ideological movements. What they felt has been revealed in some of the poems they themselves have written. The poems though pathetic and heartrending offer a challenge to society. It is a challenge of the downtrodden, warning the community that it will have to face a holocaust, if tyranny and oppression continue. A poet Subash Thorat in his poem entitled "The indestructible writing of revolution" poignantly asks "How long will you see this dire destruction with open eyes? Go ahead. March towards battle ruthlessly and celebrate the Panchami of blood".

The group represented in the training camp consisted of college students, active workers in trade unions or other fields, some entrepreneurs, some wage earners and some full time workers of *Yukrand*. Most of them were dynamic who looked to the future, unmindful of the privations they had to undergo, or the opposition they have to face in different shapes and forms. They are out for struggle and yet they were sober in their expressions and humble in their demeanour. They learnt with enthusiasm. But they also contributed to the learning of the elders who coached them.

The Leslie Sawhney Programme of Training for Democracy was indeed an unforgettable experience.

GOING TO ACTON GREEN?

James Cameron

The question seems to be: do we want the tourists or do we not? Probable only in London, and there only in parts of London, are we aware of them as a pervasive and inescapable presence, locusts, monopolising the West End, jamming the public transport, disputing in absurd languages, spreading vast maps on the sidewalks; we have tourists like Los Angeles has smog.

They drift around with a purposeful aimlessness; they make life exasperating for the natives who inhabit a city that is a penance to live in anyhow. I do not especially mind them, because I keep out of their way.

The tourists are said to be an export asset. They contribute to the balance of payments, whatever they are: therefore everyone who is shoved off the pavement into the bus-routes of Oxford Street is contributing to the national exchequer. Or so they say.

The other day the playwright John Osborne, once the standard Angry Young Man and apparently fossilised in that ageing role, did a vehemently bitter and I would say rather ill-mannered piece in our local evening paper, recommending us Londoners to go out of our way to make life so disagreeable and unpleasant for the tourists that they will get fed up with us and go away. Snub them, said Mr. Osborne, insult them, misdirect them, pretend not to understand their language, overcharge them — treat the tourists, in short, the way British visitors are treated in Paris, just to teach them a lesson not to come back.

That seems to me an over-reaction. Tourists get in my hair as much as they do in Mr. Osborne's, but I have a residual conscience about them. I have spent so much of my life as a professional alien in almost every country but my own that I feel an intuitive sympathy for anyone brooding over a street map at a troublesome corner, with no proper words to ask the way.

I compensate for this by recalling that I always had to go to strange places at their least agreeable, in times of stress and bloody-minded obstruction and difficulty, whereas our tourists come here not because they like us but, because we are currency-cheap and accessible and, oddly enough fundamentally friendly.

I am fundamentally friendly. When a tourist accosts me at Euston and asks how to take the Tube to say Acton Green, I escort him (knowing nothing about it myself) to the Underground map, which is the best geographical diagram yet devised, and show them. I never ask why on earth he should want to go to Acton Green. A curious number of tourists seem to need it: a mystery. There is some arcane attraction there; one day I must investigate it.

I am not always fundamentally friendly. Only a couple of days ago in Portland Place I was tapped on the shoulder in a most peremptory way; naturally I assumed it was the CID catching up with me at last. Not so; it was a German in a tartan jacket:

"Hyde Park," he said, "Where is?"

I paused to collect my thoughts as to how you got to Hyde Park from Portland Place, and this seemed to annoy him. "Hyde Park!" he snapped, "Is here?" and pointed directly at the BBC's Broadcasting House.

"Correct," I replied, nettled. "In there, take the lift to the sixth floor, and there you will find Hyde Park." John Osborne would have been proud of me.

It will not have escaped eagle-eyed observers of the Kensington and West End scene that the Arabs abound more than ever. Every one is suspected of being enormously rich. This irritates the natives, who resent people being enormously rich, or even having that reputation, and who are tempted into snide comments. The current *New Statesman* carries an angry letter objecting to a Diary paragraph ("Foreigners, happily flogging people for distilling illicit alcohol, are still not used to Western refinement like actually paying for goods..."). That, says the writer, could not have been said about Jews or blacks.

Unhappily this is true. I feel the same irrational prejudices when passing the *kuffiehs* thronging the dorsteps of Harley Street or prowling the shops of Brompton Road. Is it the case that we dislike other people's affluence, and that the Arabs now take the place of the Jews of the '20s and '30s? I would not go so far as to say that some of my best friends are Arabs, and I am getting a bit tired of these troublesome gun-fights in Iraqi embassies, but fair is fair: there are some poor Arabs. They, unfortunately, are left at home.

I must be becoming unpleasantly insular. I grumble at rich Arabs, I also grumble at evidently non-rich and inoffensive young Scandinavians crowding the Underground, bearing vast burdens on their backs, each one occupying as much room as two working commuters. Where, I wonder, do they put up all those tents and sleeping-bags and field-kitchens that they ceaselessly manipulate round Piccadilly and Bond Street? Do they in fact ever put them up at all? Or are they just the insignia of the new European *vandervodel* forever travelling hopefully, never to arrive? Except, perhaps, at Acton Green.

Or maybe the sixth floor of Broadcasting House.

The Times, London, August, 7, 1978.

Two Delegations A Day

It is shocking to learn from the Finance Minister (July 27/28) that 401 delegations from India went abroad between August 1, 1977 and January 31, 1978, involving an expenditure of Rs. 69,78,181. This means that on an average, we sent out 67 delegations per month, that is, more than two each new day.

As a taxpayer partly responsible for bearing the expenses of these "ambassadors" I have the right to know how these jaunts abroad have helped people like me.

Sadananda Mukerjee,
Times of India, September 9.

LOKPAL BILL, 1977 —

Contd from page 1

Desai, the Chairman of the Administrative Reforms Commission (A.R.C.) sent to the Union Government its report on "Problems of Redress of Citizens' Grievances". With the report was a covering letter to the then Prime Minister in which Mr. Desai said: "The report contains recommendations for the setting up of two institutions to be designated the Lokpal and the Lokayukta. The Lokpal will look into complaints against administrative acts of Ministers and Secretaries to Government at the Centre and in the States...". Appended to the report was a draft Bill, now known as the Lokpal Bill 1966. In it, the Secretaries to the Union Government were expressly included as coming under the jurisdiction of the Lokpal and clause 2 defined Secretary as "a person appointed to be Secretary to the Government of India or a State Government". The Bill was discussed in Parliament and sent back for eliciting public opinion, despite opposition from the Home Minister.

Before that process of eliciting opinion was completed, the Union Government introduced in Parliament the Lokpal and Lokayukta's Bill 1968 on 9th May 1968. This bill contemplated creation of a Lokpal and Lokayuktas at the Centre. It purported to modify the 1966 Bill in some respects but again maintained the jurisdiction over the Ministers and Secretaries. Indeed so far as the latter category are concerned, it enlarged the jurisdiction of the Lokpal to include a Special Secretary and an Additional Secretary. The Bill (No. 51 of 1968) was referred to a Joint Select Committee in May 1968 and the Joint Select Committee submitted its report on 21st March 1969. The bill was passed by the Lok Sabha but before it could be passed by the Rajya Sabha, Parliament was dissolved and therefore the Bill lapsed. What is of importance is that neither the Joint Committee nor Parliament had anything to say regarding the inclusion of the Secretaries. On the contrary, the Lok Sabha approved of it. A third bill was put up before the Parliament in 1976 (Bill No. 111 of 1971 introduced on 11-8-1971,) but it met with a similar fate.

Two points need to be noticed regarding these early attempts to set up a Lokpal in the country:

- (1) That throughout the history of this unfortunate legislation, neither by the A.R.C. nor by Parliament, nor in the Bills of 1966, 1968 and 1971 was the exclusion of the Civil Service or the Secretaries to Government contemplated. Everyone throughout contemplated applying the law to the Secretaries.
- (2) *Vice versa*, no one ever contemplated roping in the Legislators other than the Ministers. In short, the A.R.C. recommended and Parliament contemplated applying the proposed law to the real core of the executive administration viz., the Ministers and Secretaries and to some other officials but never to officials legislators. That is what the 1968 Bill which the Lok Sabha had once accepted, also provided.

It is, therefore, rather astonishing to find in the

Lokpal Bill of 1977 that Secretaries have been completely omitted and as a sop to the gullible public "Legislators" have been substituted.

As regards the dropping of Secretaries from the purview of the Lokpal, it cannot be justified by any reason or logic. It must be remembered that under the Rules of Business, every order of Government issues through a Secretary and no one else. The Minister has no right to sign and issue an order binding the Government. He cannot endow it with legal validity. Only the Secretary can. Thus, so far as the citizen is concerned, he always gets a government order authenticated by a Secretary. If he has a grievance, arising from it, what is the use of giving him a remedy before the Lokpal when the Lokpal has no jurisdiction over the Secretary? The Secretary is the Government so far as the citizen is concerned and he deals only with him. There is good sense behind this rule, because Ministers may come and go but the Secretary alone is the permanent head of the department. Lastly, if the Secretary is not a party, it will be difficult in many cases to get at the truth of things. Where, for instance, a malafide motive is alleged or that undue preference was given, the Lokpal will not find out the wrongdoing by any amount of reading of the files. Usually, such things are not committed to paper. They are managed in an oral conversation or over the telephone and if the Secretary happens to be more pliant, by adding that he is not to divulge the conversation to anyone. Between the Minister and the absentee-Secretary, it will be difficult to find who is responsible. It is only when the Secretary knows that the Lokpal may hold him responsible as he is a party to the proceedings, that he may come out with the truth. The A.R.C. considered this point very carefully and deliberately decided to include Secretaries within the ambit of the Lokpal's jurisdiction.

The present bill goes counter to the A.R.C. report; to the draft of all the Bills that came before Parliament — one of which was (the Bill of 1968) actually passed by the Lok Sabha. It is also against the very tenor and spirit of the institution of Ombudsman the world over and almost every Ombudsman Act and to come nearer home every Lokayukta Act in the seven states which have adopted the institution. The situation is more or less akin to what Alice in Wonderland saw — the cat had disappeared but its smile was still there.

As regards the inclusion of the "Legislators", it is sufficient to say that this is the first time in the world that law-makers have been included in an Ombudsman Act. It has never happened in over a 150 years since the Ombudsman first came into being in 1809 in Sweden. One fails to see the utility of it. The average citizen is rarely aggrieved by any action of the members of Parliament in their legislative capacity — except perhaps when a mischievous question is asked or "information" elicited duly inspired by lobbying. But these are rare cases and MP's do not interfere in petty matters, and rarer still do they affect any individual citizen. In any case, how many cases of this sort are likely to arise in a year?

It is no wonder that such a provision drew the strongest ire of Shri Bhupesh Gupta, M.P. in the Joint Select Committee. "In no other country in the world", he said, "are members of a Sovereign Parliament subjected to such jurisdiction of a third party as is proposed in the present Bill... The problem of India's Parliament is not that it has become a massive rendezvous of corrupt legislators, rather the problem is that Parliament has not shown enough vigilance and fighting ardour in dealing with the corrupt ministers and high officials" (page XVI — report of the Joint Committee).

The facts stated above are unexceptionable; the reasoning unanswerable. The point was raised before the Joint Select Committee and it was unable to answer the logic of it. Instead, it took recourse to a technicality "The Committee are of the view that since the proposed Bill provided only for inquiries into allegations of misconduct against "public men" and of corruption at "higher political levels" to suggest such an amendment to the provisions of the proposed Bill would go beyond the scope of the Bill". The committee did suggest nevertheless that "in the light of the experience gained *"after its enactment"*, Government might examine if it was necessary in the interests of *the main object of the Bill* to bring forward an amending Bill *at a later stage* to cover such civil servants". That is an astounding apologia. Implicit in the statement however is the assumption that the inclusion of civil servants within the ambit of the Lokpal's jurisdiction was the main object of the Bill. And yet that is precisely what is omitted from the Lokpal Bill 1977.

With the exclusion of every member of the civil service or the permanent services, the Act will not be an Ombudsman or Lokpal Act at all. To quote Mr. Bhupesh Gupta again "To leave the public servants alone and then to claim that the present Lokpal Bill is intended to combat corruption is an affront to the common sense of our people". It does appear that once again an attempt has been made by the permanent services to lead the members of Parliament up the garden path.

The inclusion of Members of Parliament and State Legislatures — unheard of in the history of Parliamentary institutions — does not improve the matter. Counting all the members of Parliament, Legislative Assemblies and Councils of State of India and the Union territories there can be but 5217 individuals. This includes the ministers. As to the remaining persons mentioned in clause 2(1)(h), they would hardly number more than about 200 persons. Are we then going to set up this costly institution to oversee the conduct of only about 5500 people in this country? The institution was conceived because throughout it was assumed that the civil servant will be included. Without him it will be a waste of time and money. How many cases are likely to arise if only 5500 persons in the whole country are subject to his jurisdiction. The civil servant must be included.

In view of what has been said above, it is futile to examine in detail the provisions of the Bill but certain broad aspects may be emphasized. The first principle which justifies the Ombudsman's (Lokpal's)

existence at all, is that he is the guardian and caretaker of the citizen and especially of the poor citizen. He protects him from executive excess or wrongdoing. Therefore, we must strengthen his hands, by the law we make and not put obstacles in his way. The Lokpal Bill of 1977 does not achieve this object, largely because it is concerned more with theory than practice and takes little account of realities. Clause 2(3) requires the complainant to deposit Rs. 1,000 as a pre-condition to his presenting his complaint. Imagine a poor man from Trivandrum — say a head clerk or a school teacher — travelling to Delhi to file his complaint. The expense of travel, of food and boarding at Delhi and back, would itself be prohibitive and then to be asked to shell out Rs. 1,000 on the off chance that his complaint may be entertained and allowed! He would rather have what little he possesses and forget his grievance. This is not a desirable state of affairs. The deposit is a definite clog on the right to approach the Lokpal. No doubt the section gives the Lokpal a discretion to exempt but that again places the burden on the complainant to prove his poverty and entails more expenditure in doing so. The provision should be done away with, or the amount of deposit, very substantially reduced.

If the Lokpal is to act fearlessly and independently, the law must adequately safeguard him against hostile comment in and out of Parliament and from a pre-emptive "trial by the press". A powerful Minister or M.P. is not going to take kindly to him once a notice is issued against him. He can raise Cain in the Press against the Lokpal, make any number of oblique suggestions and influence the mind of Parliament itself. The Lokpal being a quasi-judicial authority, will not be in a position to reply since it has almost become a principle that judges do not enter into controversy, in regard to any matter pending before them. Of course, there can be no remedy against discussion in Parliament in view of Article 105 of the Constitution. But, as in the case of the High Court and Supreme Court judges, a healthy convention could be developed that normally there shall be no discussion of the official conduct of the Lokpal unless a very grave lapse has taken place, and only if the Speaker allows it.

So far as Press and politicians outside Parliament are concerned, no doubt, clauses 21 (2) & (3) of the 1977 Bill gives the Lokpal the right to have a complaint lodged against any person making a statement "calculated to bring the Lokpal into disrepute..." But the complaint, one presumes, will go before a Magistrate and whoever thought of an authority as high as the Lokpal going like an ordinary complainant before a Magistrate. He would be a personage of some status. The Bill of 1966 expressly gave him the status of the Chief Justice of India. (See clause 4(6)). That was dropped in the 1968 Bill and now the provision is that in fixing the Lokpal's pension and allowances etc. regard shall be had to those paid to the Chief Justice of India. Despite this progressive denigration of the office of the Lokpal, one still presumes he will be a man of high status and a responsible person. One does not see

(Contd on page 13)

A NATION FOR CARS OR PEOPLE

R. C. Cooper

It is not merely in India that the Central Budget is an annual event of considerable significance. Even in the small city state of Singapore, it evokes a great deal of interest — perhaps much more so since the percentage of taxpayers is higher.

Since 1954, the philosophy underlying the fiscal and economic system of Singapore is stated to be :

- a) to ensure a more just and equal society;
- b) to remove unjust inequalities of wealth and opportunity;
- c) establish an economic order which will give to all citizens the right to work with full economic returns for their labour and skill; and
- d) to ensure a decent living and social security to all those who through sickness, infirmity or old age can no longer work.

In the light of this, it proves an interesting exercise to analyse the budget proposals for 1978 introduced in the Parliament by Mr. Hon Sui Sen, the Finance Minister of Singapore.

The rates of personal income tax have been reduced, with immediate effect, varying from 7.8 percent to 18.8 percent — the average reduction being 14.6%. The reductions would cost the Government an estimated revenue loss of \$53.9 million out of a total tax collection last year of \$370 million from personal income tax. This reduction is stated to be aimed at rewarding effort and excellence and a fairer sharing of the tax burden, besides encouraging savings. Incidentally, the total income tax receipts, in spite of reduction in rates of personal income tax, are estimated to increase by 10.9 percent.

The most interesting part of the Budget is that dealing with taxation of private cars. For the past several years, the Singapore Government has been severely punishing private ownership of cars. In doing so, it follows a distinct philosophy. As the President of the Automobile Association of Singapore observed the other night on television, motorists are being singled out for tax increases at every budget — it is just kicking the poor motorist every year.

On the other hand, the Minister of State for Communications has pointed out that more stringent measures against car travel in Singapore may have to be introduced from time to time. These measures may be necessary to stop motorists who have changed to buses going back to cars again. The Government was worried that this year's reduction in personal income tax, which is rather substantial, may be used by many

people to buy cars. Singaporeans are asked to prepare themselves psychologically for a whole new way of life, perhaps for the majority eventually for one without a car. The minister asked, "Are we building a nation for cars or for ourselves — the people?" The answer is obvious. Those who insist on owning cars must be prepared to pay the social and environmental costs of doing so. As a recent editorial in the prestigious *Straits Times* observed : "It may be harsh, but there is no other way".

Singapore cannot afford to allow precious land space to be used for roads and car parks indiscriminately because it is a small island and a city state. All traffic management and restraint measures are being directed towards efficient movement of peoples and goods, not cars. In the Singapore context, the motor car, although convenient, is considered to be an uneconomic user of road space.

To translate this philosophy into action as has been happening in the budgets for the past several years, the Finance Minister has again come down heavily on car users. The fee for driving licences, which had remained unchanged for the past almost 15 years or more, has been doubled from \$ 10 to \$ 20 per annum. Additional registration fee on new cars will go up by 25 percent to 125 percent. All this in addition to the heavy area licensing fee, existing road licensing tariffs, parking fees and parking tax.

The objective is sought to be achieved not merely through fiscal measures. A selective combination of other means include constant improvements in public transport facilities, shift in travel demand and land use and overall transportation planning.

Some examples of non-fiscal measure are the introduction of reserved bus lanes on roads, staggering of work hours, car pooling, area license restrictions in the Central Business district and a parking policy discouraging non-essential parking. Other means employed to achieve better transport planning are mixing of commercial and residential accommodation in the Central Business Area and intensification of commercial activity north of the Singapore river, where the majority of the people reside today. All these are intended to dilute traffic concentration in the Central Business District.

It is rather interesting to note how different countries implement, in their own way, and according to their own requirements and conditions, the principle of social justice. In the case of Singapore, a distinct trend is noticeable, of late, judging by some of the fiscal measures undertaken during the last few years. There is a gradual shift in emphasis from taxation of incomes to taxation of consumption, to achieve the objectives of social justice.

Book Review

The Challenge of Poverty: The Developing Countries in the New International Order, by Nandini Joshi; Arnold Heinemann, 1978; 110 pages; Rs. 25

People who lack reliable means of livelihood in poor countries live in absolute poverty. They are without the means for assuring the basic needs of adequate food, clothing, shelter and often access to safe water. It has been estimated that there are about 800 million people in the developing world who live in absolute poverty.

But poverty is a relative term. Even among developed countries poverty is prevalent. As per the available figures 15% of the population (3 million) in Canada and about 12% (25 million) in USA live in poverty. But poverty in advanced countries does not take the same form as in developing countries. The paradox of persistent poverty amidst affluence is more puzzling when we observe that in OECD countries while expenditures on income maintenance programmes rose about 60% faster than the national income per head, the impact has been very limited mainly because a large share of cash transfers under the programme goes to people who are not poor to begin with. Out of 9% of the national product spent on these programmes only 3%, i.e. only 1/3 goes to the poor.

For the developing countries the problem of extreme poverty is multi-dimensional: (i) it is a *technological problem*, in that capital intensive technologies may be productive, but involve high social costs in reduced employment prospects; (ii) it is an *entrepreneurial and managerial problem* since shortage of these skills in most developing countries limits possibilities for adopting more labour-intensive production techniques; (iii) it is a *food problem* with the need to expand both food production and effective demand for food in order to reduce hunger and widespread nutrition deficiencies; (iv) it is an *investment problem* involving structural changes and expansion of effective markets and (v) a *population problem* not only because of the very large number entering the labour market but because it is the very condition of poverty that maintains high fertility and delays social changes which are an essential prerequisite to reducing fertility.

The world development report 1978 issued by the World Bank last month observes thus on the development experience of the last quarter century (1950-1975): "In the face of the rapidly growing populations the substantial progress of the past 25 years in accelerating growth, modernising economies and raising living standards, has neither been sufficiently fast nor sufficiently broadbased to reduce the numbers in absolute poverty."

Miss Joshi, in this little monograph, makes a fervent plea for a new world economic order, where the advanced countries and developing countries will have equal interest in the protection and progress of the world economy. She wants that the North-South dialogue instead of aiming at how the advanced countries can help the developing countries, should find a solution to economic poverty in all parts of the world.

Basing her argument on statistical information culled from World Bank records, she observes that while the developed nations have achieved remarkable

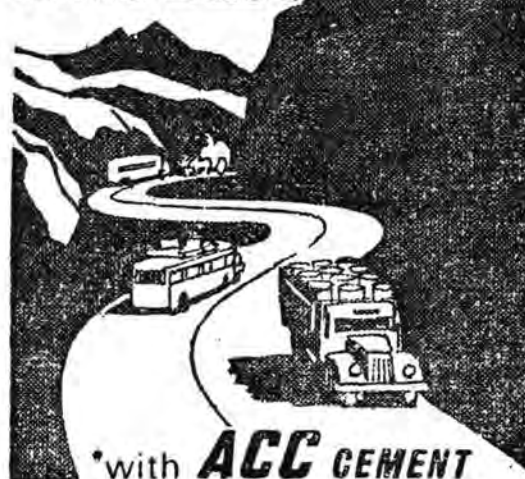
economic growth over the past 25 years though very much depending on the raw materials markets and skilled manpower of the developing countries for achieving this growth, yet the basic problem of poverty affecting a vast majority of the world community remains unsolved. Instead of piece-meal remedies, she wants "the community of nations to move towards an equilibrium of world resources, investment, production, consumption and welfare which ensures the correct balance among the nations calling for a global perspective plan which can relate the world's vast resources to human needs."

Winding up the discussion, she calls for a global strategy for a better world economic order by concerted actions of all nations in furtherance of common interest. She fixes special responsibility on the advanced nations in the fundamental restructuring of the world economic system by fashioning their economic policies for increased developmental assistance to developing nations, improvement in the terms of trade, removal of trade barriers for their raw-materials and primary commodities, dismantling of tariffs and quotas to give them greater access to world markets.

While international interdependence is recognised as a reality, the economic challenges of the present times facing the world community should unite all nations and not divide them. The world community faces the challenge of reshaping the future and improve the conditions of mankind as a whole. Miss Joshi's book is a call to economic policy makers both in the developed and developing nations to face this challenge by concerted efforts and bringing about a new world economic order. The Economic Research Division of the Birla Institute of Scientific Research deserve thanks for bringing out this monograph.

V. Krishna Moorthy

Good Roads do most to
develop the country and
**CONCRETE
ROADS*
ARE BEST**



*with **ACC CEMENT**

WORLD NEWS

THE CONTINUING OCCUPATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

This weekend it will be exactly ten years since the Soviet Union and four of her allies invaded Czechoslovakia with massive armed force, illegally, uninvited, and against the will of the government and the people of the country. The situation in Czechoslovakia had been wholly peaceful. There was no threat to internal or external security. The Communist party was in power and enjoying the new experience of popular support. It was also loyal to the Warsaw pact. Yet the Russians marched in, kidnapped the country's leaders, and gradually dismantled the democratizing reforms which Mr. Dubcek and his colleagues had been introducing. Ten years later Czechoslovakia is still under military occupation. It is important to remember this when anybody talks of accepting the *status quo* in Europe.

For Czechoslovakia the invasion was an unmitigated disaster. The reforms of 1968 grew out of many years of disillusion with the political oppression and economic inefficiency of the system imposed in 1948. Whereas in Hungary in 1956 desperation exploded into an armed uprising against the system, in Czechoslovakia the party itself initiated a reform programme promising full civil liberties, the end of censorship, and new economic and political structures. The party would step back from its dictatorial role to become a guide and arbitrator among different interest groups, opening itself to democratic discussion and trying to earn real popular support.

Intellectual life laid waste

Nothing is now left of the effervescent hopes which this programme generated. For a while Dr. Husak, the present party leader, showed signs of trying to save what he could, but he then accepted the most humiliating of all the lies which now blanket the country. He thanked the Russians for the invasion and endorsed their claim that it was necessary in order to save socialism. After that there could scarcely be any more hope. The party was purged of nearly half a million members who would not accept the lie. Trials followed. Cultural and intellectual life was laid waste, and the dead hand of centralized planning fell once again on the economy.

Almost universally hated

The invasion of Czechoslovakia has made it a more brittle place. The Soviet Union is now almost universally hated and despised throughout the area. It is in the position of a colonial power trying to control an empire that is considerably more advanced politically, economically, and culturally than it is itself. With the opening up of Western contacts, limited though these still are, the retarding effects of this control become steadily more apparent.

This is not a situation that can last. Unless a better form of evolution can be found the next de-

mand for change could be much more disruptive than the reforms of Mr. Dubcek.

From an editorial in *The Times*, London, August 19, 1978.

AFTER CAMP DAVID

SPR. T. Triumphant as President Carter has a right to be, Camp David is not an end, but a beginning. The three months to come will be more important for the future of the Middle East than the months of stalemate which preceded Camp David.

The anger of those who refuse by every possible means to recognise the right of a non-Arab state to exist in the Middle East knows no bounds. These forces, supported by the disruptive strength of the Soviet Union and its allies, will now do all they can to destroy the Camp David Agreements.

There are two principal areas in the Muslim Middle East in which the Soviet Union at this juncture has a continued capacity to create instability: Lebanon and Iran.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), armed and instructed by the Soviets but virtually powerless against Israel, can concentrate its forces against a lesser enemy, the Christian community of Lebanon. Israel, committed to defend a fellow minority in the Middle East, will fight in this cause if called upon to do so.

Soviet-inspired intrigue is threatening the pro-Western regime of the Shah of Iran. The continuation of a friendly Iran is of cardinal importance to the Western world, and a successful Soviet attempt to destabilise this country would undoubtedly lead to a serious conflict between the interests of the Soviet Union and the United States — which would wipe out the advantages of the success achieved at Camp David.

Swiss Press Review, September 25, 1978.

The measure of achievement



99 years ago, we were a single, simple dyeing unit. Today, our textile complex is one of the largest in the world. In 1977, sales crossed the Rs. 80 crore mark.

Our manufacturing facilities are very modern and highly automated. We have one of the largest loomsheds—2,160 automatic looms under one roof!

We were the first cotton textile mill to install the revolutionary ultra high speed Sulzer shuttleless weaving machines in India. The first to produce terry towels on automatic jacquard looms. And one of the first to install a rotary screen printing machine.

Our fabrics are exported to all the sophisticated fashion centres in the world. In 1977 alone, exports exceeded Rs. 17 crores. Taking our total export earnings since Independence to Rs. 150 crores—which is one-tenth of India's exports of cotton textiles! This export performance has earned for us, over the years, several awards:

- The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry 1972 Award for pioneering export achievement.
- The Government of India Award for outstanding achievement in export promotion for 1972-73.
- The Government of Maharashtra Directorate of Industries Prize for best export performance for 1973-74.
- The Texprocil Award for outstanding export performance in 1976-77.

How's that for achievement?

BOMBAY DYEING

CAMBODIAN'S PRESCRIBE 'MATING PERIOD'

WASHINGTON, Aug. 6 (UPI) — Cambodia's leaders have decreed "mating periods" several days each year during which young men and women may meet romantically without fear of reprisal. But if between mating periods they flirt, engage in sex, or talk about anything except economic development, they are liable to be summarily executed.

That is the account given by Cambodians who have escaped to Thailand since the Communists seized power in 1975.

Rep. John Anderson, R-Ill., obtained copies of interviews with recent Cambodian refugees conducted by U.S. Embassy officers in Bangkok. He released these along with some embassy analyses of the Cambodian situation.

A March, 1977 report from an observer of Cambodia to the State Department states: "One of the sadder features in Cambodia today is that having a 'love affair' is considered a crime."

A refugee from Siem Reap recalled a friend who was discovered having intercourse. The Communists beat him to death, forcing his girlfriend to watch.

Private scholars estimate that as many as 1.2 million of Cambodia's 8 million people may have perished in the bloodbath that followed the fall of Phnom Penh.

"The Khmer Rouge charge that everyone associated with the Lon Nol regime works now for the CIA," a 38-year-old hospital worker said. "Third graders are regarded as 'dangerous intellectuals.'"

The worker continued: "Eight million Cambodians! Ridiculous. At most there are only 3 million,

perhaps only 2 million. The country is empty. A buffalo tender told me there are 400 widows in a village formerly of 2,000 people."

— *Herald Tribune*, August 7, 1978.

THE LOKPAL BILL, 1977 — Contd. from page 9

any reason why he should not be invested with the same powers as are given to High Court and Supreme Court judges of summarily punishing for contempt as laid down in the Contempts of Courts Act. One can be sure he will not abuse such a power if he has been a judge. At the Joint Select Committee stage it was said that such a power cannot be given to the Lokpal because he is not a "court". That is so, but nothing prevents Parliament from saying that he shall be deemed to be a Court for the purposes of the C of C Act.

In the ultimate analysis, the question boils down to this. How far are we really serious in our oft-proclaimed desire to root out corruption in public life? That it has taken over 12 years to get the Lokpal Bill through and we are still squabbling over the petty verbiage of its clauses does not speak in favour of such a desire. There are no two opinions today that the canker of corruption has eaten into the very vitals of the body politic, and so permeated the rank and file of its members as to make a mockery of democratic government. Meanwhile, common people are watching and waiting for things to improve. Some drastic remedy has to be applied early to meet the demand of the people. The Lokpal Bill 1977 does not meet that demand.

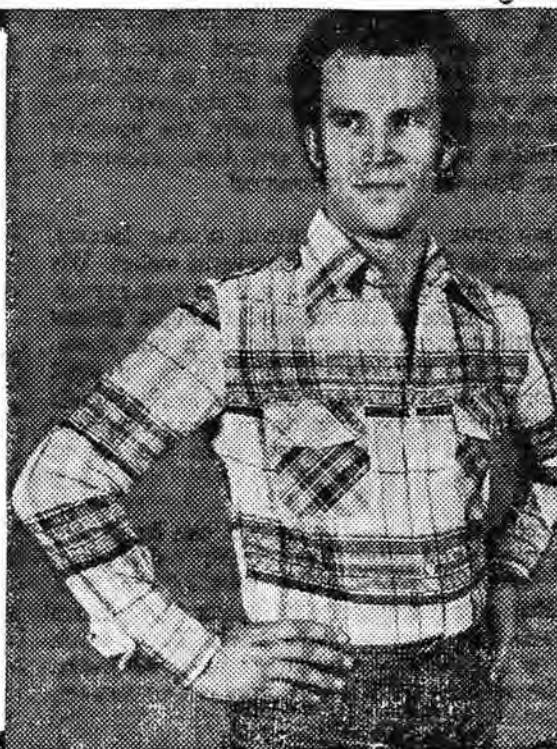
Milton's JEANS & SHIRTS

**wear to fit!
fit to wear!**



milton's limited
Mathuradas Mills Compound,
Lower Parel, Bombay 400 013

India's largest manufacturers and
exporters of readymade garments.



FORESTS ARE VITAL FOR OUR SURVIVAL

Shankar Ranganathan

The principles of forestry were well understood even in ancient times. Plato, the great Greek philosopher, wrote this 2,400 years ago :

"There are mountains in Attica which can now keep nothing but bees, which were clothed not long ago with fine trees. The annual supply of rainfall was not lost as it is at present, through being allowed to flow over a denuded surface to the sea, but was received by the country in all its abundance, stored in impervious potter's earth, and so was able to discharge the drainage of the heights into the hollows in the form of springs and rivers."

In ancient India, Ashoka, like Plato it appears, had a clear concept of conservation. Valmiki and Kalidasa referred to many plants and animals in their epic poems. The Moghuls keenly appreciated natural beauty and created many fine gardens and parks. But since those days, sad to say, little interest has been shown in nature and today it is hard to think of any country in the world, where nature is so ignored as it is in India.

The British introduced modern forestry into India and the Forest Service they created was among the finest in the world. This is not surprising because they have been for centuries among the true adorers of nature.

Today in our country the forests are neglected and are in danger of disappearing. With them will go the wonderful wildlife of India because the forest is their habitat. But there is no need to be sentimental about wildlife when human life itself depends for survival on the forests. The forests help to safeguard the biosphere, which is that portion of the earth within which life exists, to protect especially, the precious topsoil on which our food is grown. How recklessly we treat our life-sustaining resources!

Politicians have made playthings of our forests, parcelling them for the sake of ephemeral votes. We are ignorant, having learned neither from our experience nor that of others. Floods and drought follow each other with monotonous regularity in our country and yet we will not do the first thing to fight them. The forests are our best defence against both floods and drought but we chop down these steadfast allies. How will our children survive in the desert we are making?

Many people think that more food can be grown by bringing more and more land under cultivation. But is this right? A considerable part of the land is not suitable for agriculture. Soil under large areas of tropical rain-forests, especially lateritic soil such as we have in the western and other parts of India, is very fragile and without the protection of forests, the land becomes barren.

It is precisely the thoughtless and indiscriminate removal of forests without any study of the soil, ecology or of land contours which has resulted in the formation of vast areas of waste land in India. Such land—called marginal land—should not be cultivated but should be left to be protected by the forest, various types of vegetation and grasses, to prevent erosion and deterioration of good cultivable land.

To serve this essential function of erosion control, about a third of a country's land area needs to be protected by forest cover. It depends on the terrain too and in mountainous countries like Japan, where the erosion potential is high, as much as 68 per cent is under forest. It takes a hundred years for half an inch of precious topsoil to be formed while severe erosion can remove more than that in less than a year.

Maximising land under cultivation will only result in damaging good arable land and a reduction of food. We must optimise cultivation by improving the productivity of arable soil, not try to grow food on poor soil as well, because the effort in the latter case is uneconomical in relation to the crop grown on it.

The references to the meagre revenue from forests only show the general ignorance of our people and their indifference to one of their most precious assets. Forests are nature's air fresheners and pollution reducers. They produce oxygen and absorb carbon-dioxide. They protect the soil and conserve water and so are essential to food production. By preventing or minimising floods, which cause loss of property and life, they can save hundreds of crores of rupees every year. They provide timber and other raw materials for our industry, which can be increased many times, if the forests are properly managed. They provide habitat for wildlife and recreational areas for us and for foreign tourists. Forests can create employment for millions and much revenue including foreign exchange for our country's prosperity. Like nine-tenths of the iceberg which is not seen, many of these true and great values of the forests are not recognised in India but we ignore them only at our peril.

The forest area in India is stated to be only 22 per cent of the total but an aerial survey would undoubtedly indicate that there is much less than even this. At the rate at which the forest is being cleared every year, there will be none left in thirty years.

I would like to refer to an example from recent history, which we in India need to study seriously. In the earlier part of this century, the USA faced a situation similar to the one we face today. Ill-conceived land settlement policies and rapacious logging had laid low half the country's forests creating dust bowls, erosion and floods. But during the depression years in the thirties, President Franklin Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps, and more than 2½

million young men were provided both employment and challenging work to replant trees, create lakes and reservoirs, forest roads, and fire lines. They helped check erosion and demonstrated proper land use. They developed parks for recreation, stocked lakes with fish and planted refuges for fast diminishing wildlife. In the 9 years of the organisation's existence the young men planted over 3 billion trees, built a million miles of road, 85,000 miles of telephone lines, erected 4,000 fire detection towers, planted 40 million acres of marginal land with forage grass and improved 4 million acres of forest land. We too must do this in India! It would provide employment for millions. It would make our youth appreciate their country better and in the process make leaders out of them.

Because I felt so strongly on this matter, I published a booklet some time ago about the importance of forests. I called it: "Will India Become Another Sahara?" I sent copies to people with the authority and influence to take corrective action. I also sent a few copies abroad to conservation organisations and eminent conservationists, with the plea that the problem of India's forests, although it was a matter to be solved by Indians, was also an international problem. The response indicates that there are many people in India and abroad, who are conscious of the importance of conserving India's forest resources and who have said they will help. The Government of India should make use of their assistance to formulate and implement a good land use policy. This is extremely urgent if we wish to avoid mass starvation which is inevitable if we continue to mismanage land.

Among societies and organisations in India who are trying to popularise conservation are the Bombay Natural History Society, Friends of the Trees, Society for Clean Cities, the World Wildlife Fund, and the Society for Clean Environment. Several companies, by creating parks on their industrial estates out of arid land, are demonstrating to people how they may help themselves. The Rotary International and Lions Clubs are also developing parks and promoting tree planting. The State of Gujarat has an ambitious programme of reforestation and of creating popular support for it. Three of the many international organisations who will help with literature and advice are the International Union of the Conservation of Nature, the Sierra Club, and the Conservation Foundation.

The slogan of the Council for the Protection of Rural England is: Plant a tree in '73. Our greatest need in India too is for individuals like you, to plant at least one seedling a year and to tend it carefully.

This non-political activity will give an opportunity to all of us to work together. Shakespeare in his wisdom said: 'One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.' Let us test the truth of this and we shall be rewarded by the creation of a feeling of kinship that is lacking today in our country. In the process we shall stop the desert from spreading, make India green and beautiful and the future secure for our children.

Based on a talk over All India Radio

A CHARM FOR THE CHARMER

Lakshmi's
BELLERINA voile sarees
Enchanting. Wear for work.
Wear for fun. Around the town.
Around the picnic spots.
Any where and BELLERINA
will please you every wear.
Made from 80s & 100s
pure imported cotton.



THE
LAKSHMI MILLS
COMPANY LIMITED
COIMBATORE
SYMBOL OF
OUTSTANDING FABRICS

VSK/LMC-BAL/657

WITH MANY VOICES

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

—Tennyson

The dumbest question about the Camp David accord comes from those who insist on knowing, "Who won?"

— *Herald Tribune*, September 25, 1978.

In the nepotism department Mrs. Bandarnaike does indeed seem to have been unrivalled, even by the mother of Sanjay Gandhi.

— *The Economist*, August 12, 1978.

Are you not aware of the crushed spirits of your warmest supporters? Do you realise that you are doing to JP's spirit what the Emergency did to his body?

— Rajmohan Gandhi, *Indian Express*, September 26, 1978.

Ernest Bevin, when Foreign Secretary in the chaos and constrictions of post-war Europe, gave a classic definition of freedom. It would come, he said, when you could go to Victoria Station and buy a ticket to anywhere in the world.

— *The Observer*, September 9, 1978.

Special courts have a martial law flavour.

— Chief Justice Y. V. Chandrachud.
Indian Express, September 26, 1978.

FREEDOM FIRST.

C/o Democratic Research Service
Maneckji Wadia Bldg., 4th floor
127 Mahatma Gandhi Road
Bombay 400 023 (Phone: 27 39 14)

Please enrol me as a subscriber to *Freedom First*. I remit the annual subscription of Rs. 10.00

Name: _____

Address: _____

Signature _____

Mr. Morarji Desai today told veteran sarvodaya worker Prema Kantak that none of his cabinet colleagues drank liquor.

— *Times of India*, September 21, 1978.

What do the following have in common? Nguyen Van Thieu of Vie'nam, King Constantine of Greece, General Gowon of Nigeria and the Sultan of Zanzibar.

Answer: They all live in Britain.

— *The Economist*, September 23, 1978.

Oath to a person is unheard of in a democracy.

— Mirza Afzal Beg, *Indian Express*, September 27, 1978.

Sir Harold has many amiable personal qualities with which he is well fitted to adorn the private sphere, and to that sphere he should retire.

In weeks rather than months.

— *The Observer*, September 9, 1978.

Those Siamese twins of many developing countries, bureaucracy and graft.

— *The Economist*, August 12, 1978.

Question: How can the survival of an undemocratic autocrat further the cause of freedom and democracy?

Hard answer: If he is the Shah of Iran.

— *The Economist*, September 16, 1978.

Is our country strong enough, brave enough and proud enough to cancel the Olympic Games in Moscow unless Shcharansky and Ginzburg are released?

— Harriet K. Flinn, *Time*, August 14 1978.

Successive political crises have made the people increasingly skeptical of a (democratic) government's capacity to deal adequately with the immediate aspirations of the people.

— President Antonio Ramalho Eanes, *Herald Tribune*, September 23, 24, 1978.