

Bulgaria and Reality

NISSIM EZEKIEL

In international as in national politics, Mrs. Gandhi is now flying around verbally, with a cultivated indifference to inconvenient facts. In Bulgaria, steadfastly subservient to the Soviet Union in its military build-up, she calls for an end to military build-up. Satellite host country and its empire-building total tyranny, interfering in Asia whenever they can, applaud Mrs. Gandhi's opposition to "foreign interference in the Asian continent".

Is there a single Bulgarian in a position to criticise the stockpiling of weapons in Eastern Europe? No. That is why the Bulgarian government is delighted to hear Mrs. Gandhi reject the argument that the stockpiling of weapons postpones war. It is a criticism of the other side, not the side that is providing the banquet. The Russians and their East European colonies don't even have to argue about it. Their military policy has been based on the stockpiling of weapons virtually since the end of the second World War.

Mrs. Gandhi is being glibly self-indulgent when she pleads for bilateral and peaceful resolution of conflicts in Asia and elsewhere. If she is serious, she must raise and define the ideological positions that cause those conflicts. She must tell us where she stands ideologically. By not doing so, she does not rise above the differences that create military dangers; she merely blinds herself to them in order to repeat her *mantra* of peace.

Bulgaria is a slave nation. Mrs. Gandhi joins its President in calling for "Sovereign equality". Bulgaria's economy is tied firmly to the economy of the Soviet Union, with its political system similarly tied up. Mrs. Gandhi joins its President in a futile, farcical

plea for "restructuring international economic relations on an equitable basis". Is she really ignorant about Bulgaria's economic and political system? Equity, to that system and its doctrines, means only expansion of state power within, and greater opportunities for calling the tune abroad.

Mrs. Gandhi repeated in Bulgaria her view that growing economic disparities among nations was a source of global tension. Bulgaria's mighty contribution to the reduction of those disparities is of course well-known! By echoing the voice of its Master and never taking thought on its own for a minute, Bulgaria has actually let down the South and the Non-Aligned. Mrs. Gandhi treats it, pathetically, as a true ally.

As for tension, Bulgaria has abolished it within its borders by the normal communist method : Terror. Mrs. Gandhi did not mention it nor did the majority of Indian political commentators. Terror in communist countries is taken for granted by most of the non-communist countries of Asia, accepted and overlooked in dealing with them.

Amidst the expected sentimentalities (Bulgaria, land of roses; India, land of lotus) there was also a reference in Mrs. Gandhi's first speech, during her ten-day three-nation tour, to "obstacles in the way of economic development". While India was building up her economy, "military conflicts were imposed". By whom? Not by the Soviet Union's presence in Afghanistan, but by resistance to it through arms to Pakistan, that is the implication.

Mrs. Gandhi doesn't even have to spell it out these days. The Soviet Union does not impose military conflicts by military and political expansion. America does by trying to halt it. This deadly untruth is not a contribution to peace. It is a contribution to Soviet hegemony.

A VARIETY OF COMMENT

K. S. VENKATESWARAN

1. Soviet Law

CLOSELY following the Union Law Minister, Mr. Shiv Shankar's laudatory remarks on the Soviet legal system after his recent visit to that country, reports began appearing in the Indian press about the government's move to consider adopting some aspects of the Russian model to the administration of justice in India. According to the apologists of the move, "the administration of justice in the USSR has the reputation to be very speedy", and therefore worthy of emulation in this country, where the courts have been clogged with pending cases.

While no one can quarrel with the proposition that speedy disposal of cases is a highly desirable objective in any efficient judicial system, the choice, nevertheless, of the Russian model for emulation is far from comforting. By now the abuses and perversions that Soviet law has been subjected to under official auspices, have been elaborately documented by numerous international organisations concerned with human rights and civil liberties.

Their verdict is all too clear: "Both the written Soviet law and its application are still subject to considerations of political 'expediency' which often dictates that legal and constitutional principles must be sacrificed to current political goals."

It is a measure of the confused thinking which pervades official minds that the Hon'ble Law Minister laconically compared the Soviet and British legal systems on the question of parliamentary supremacy. Perhaps Mr. Shiv Shankar needs to be reminded that Britain, with all its institutional shortcomings, still remains a liberal democracy, with a fairly high degree of political morality and a fiercely independent judiciary.

It would require an apologist of extraordinary pifacedness to claim the existence of similar conditions in the Soviet Union.

2. India and West Asia

Dr. Subramaniam Swamy, the irrepressible Janata M.P., is not exactly known for being discreet in his pronouncements on matters national and international. Indeed, he has by now acquired an unenviable reputation for speaking out of turn, both within his party and outside. Even so, it would be churlish not to acknowledge the validity of many of his seemingly irreverent observations.

In a recent issue of a popular periodical, for instance, Dr. Swamy has come out with a blistering attack on India's diplomatic dishonesty in West Asia which is as unanswerable as it is refreshingly forthright.

It is Dr. Swamy's contention that "the Indian government's policy of maintaining a public posture of support to the Arabs and relaying private assurances of sympathy to Israel has led to diplomatic perversions and to a general loss of credibility."

No perceptive observer can have failed to notice the painful consequences that have ensued from this self-defeating policy of hypocrisy in international relations.

For many years now, official Indian spokesmen have rarely ever missed an opportunity, whether in international forums like the U.N. or elsewhere, to proclaim their unqualified support to the Arab cause, just as they have never resisted the temptation of castigating Israel in and out of season. The result, however, has been far from successful, even in broad diplomatic terms.

As Dr. Swamy pertinently points out, "in every diplomatic and military conflict that India has engaged in, the Arab vote has been cast in favour of India's opponent."

Surely, enlightened self-interest, if not anything else, should dictate a more pragmatic approach in the conduct of our foreign relations. But given the peculiar preferences and prejudices of our policy-makers, that would be asking for too much.

3. The Missing Scientist

The savage restrictions placed on intellectual freedom in communist regimes may not be widely appreciated by the Indian academic community. It is heartening to know however, that concern on the question of non-participation by Soviet scientists in international conferences still continues to engage the attention of professional bodies in the rest of the free world. This is borne out by a letter circulated to high energy physicists in America recently.

The letter, which comes as a sequel to a Resolution adopted by the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics in Tokyo in 1978, refers to the unexplained absence of Prof. L. B. Okunn of the Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics in Moscow at the XXth International Conference on High Energy Physics held at Wisconsin earlier this year.

"He had accepted the invitation to give (the major summary) talk, and until shortly before the Conference he was still hoping and planning to present it. His name was included in the official USSR list of participants. We do not know why Prof. Okunn was unable to come. We received no advance warning that a difficulty had arisen. The conference organisers only learned of his inability to participate when he did not arrive with his USSR colleagues on the day before the conference started."

Since this is admittedly not an isolated instance of non-participation by Soviet scientists, the conclusion seems inevitable. Despite its occasional affirmations of commitment to international scientific collaboration, the totalitarian regime in Moscow still deems it necessary to keep academicians on a tight leash. The reasons are only too obvious.

Meanwhile, is there no one in the Indian scientific community courageous enough to raise his voice, however symbolically, in protest against such frontal assaults on intellectual freedom?

☆

☆

☆

A CHARM FOR THE CHARMER

Lakshmi's
BALLERINA 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 90s & 100s
pure imported cotton.



WHY SADAT WAS KILLED

RASHMI TANEJA

The Iranians called him a mercenary dictator, the Palestinians a traitor, Colonel Gaddafi of Libya condemned him as a cowardly reactionary. In western eyes he was a great statesman and a champion of peace. Whatever the final verdict on Anwar Sadat, his assassination has created turmoil in the Middle East, uncertainty within Egypt and left a void on the world stage.

During his eleven years in office, Sadat often dazzled the world with spectacular moves in the politics of the Middle East and the wider world. When he succeeded Gamal Abdel Nasser as President in 1970, most observers saw him as a colourless figure and only an interim president. Within a few months he had foiled an attempted coup and arrested the conspirators.

In 1971, Sadat signed a "friendship and co-operation treaty" with the Soviet Union only to repudiate it a year later. He expelled 20,000 Soviet military experts brought in by his predecessor Nasser, following Egypt's defeat in the six-day war with Israel.

On October 6, 1973 Egyptian troops crossed the Suez Canal to wage war with Israel in an attempt to end the stalemate between them. The war did not result in a triumph for Egypt but gave a much-needed boost to the flagging morale of her people.

Four years later, Sadat stunned the world again by going to Jerusalem on his mission of peace. This precedent-breaking visit, which was condemned by all the Arab states, marked the beginning of direct negotiations with Israel under the mediation of the United States. These negotiations culminated in the Camp David Peace accords on September 17, 1978.

Under the terms of the formalised peace treaty of March 16, 1979, Israel promised to co-operate with Egypt on a search for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East, and to return captured Sinai territory. The last segment of Israeli-occupied Sinai is due to be returned in April 1982.

On the domestic front, Sadat took populist measures such as dismantling the centralised administration of his predecessor. By 1974, he had abandoned Nasser's socialist economic policies in favour of an open-door *laissez-faire* position. The programme of economic liberalisation created disparities of wealth, and exacerbated tensions within Egyptian society, which climaxed in the nationwide bread riots of 1977.

Meanwhile, the country's stagnating economy and its pro-western stance provided fertile ground for the emergence of dissident groups both of the left and the right. While left-wing opponents comprised Nasserist supporters, the right-wing was mainly the Muslim Brotherhood, an organisation of Islamic extremists. In 1970, as part of the domestic liberalisation programme, Sadat had ordered the release of hundreds of the Muslim Brothers, in the hope that they would act as a counterweight to his Nasserist opponents.

With the upsurge of Islamic revivalism in the Arab world, and the growing disenchantment with the failure of the President's domestic and foreign policies, the Muslim Brotherhood increased its support among the masses.

In recent months, the group had intensified its attacks on the government. A month before Sadat's death, sectarian riots had broken out between the Coptic Christians, Egypt's largest minority, and the Islamic fundamentalists. In a desperate response, the president ordered the arrest of 1500 people in a crackdown not merely on religious extremists but political critics as well. The mood in the country had turned sombre and ugly towards the end. It is doubtful that the assassination by a handful of Egyptian soliders was an isolated event. The mass arrests of Islamic extremists both before and after the assault suggest otherwise.

The conduct of Sadat's foreign policy earned him the mistrust of the Arab world. Egypt's Arab neighbours saw the Camp David peace agreement as no more than a political sell-out, an act of infamy. It was merely a bilateral

peace treaty between Egypt and Israel which did not take into account the central issue of Palestinian autonomy, and the future of the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Egyptian leader, with his grand designs for the region, had left the champions of the Palestinian cause — the Syrians, the Jordanians and the Palestine Liberation Organisation — out in the cold.

The truth baldly stated is that the United States in conjunction with Israel allowed the peace process to stagnate and the delay proved fatal for Sadat. While former president Jimmy Carter kept the Camp David peace process alive, President Reagan failed to realise that his policies had placed his only Arab ally in a vulnerable position. In the months preceding his fall, Sadat's advice to the Americans to recognise the PLO, was brushed aside. Furthermore, the intransigence of Mr. Begin, the Israeli Prime Minister on the Palestinian question, Israel's air attacks on Beirut and the Iraqi nuclear reactor in Baghdad left Mr. Sadat in a perilously exposed situation.

Meanwhile, the new President, Mr. Hosni Mubarak has inherited a difficult legacy from Sadat. Like his predecessor, Mubarak is caught between global considerations and domestic politics. He has pledged his support for the continuation of Sadat's policies. At present he has little choice. His immediate priority will be to contain the disruptive fundamentalist elements within Egypt. Another goal for Mubarak is the recovery of the remaining Sinai territory by April 26 next year.

It is unlikely that Mubarak will be cast in the mould of Sadat. While Sadat's policies isolated him from his Arab neighbours, his successor may be more conciliatory towards them. He will certainly be under considerable pressure to rejoin the Arab fold. A possible alignment with the more moderate Arab states such as Saudi Arabia cannot be ruled out.

Likewise, Mubarak might mend his fences with the Soviet Union which had been given short shrift by Sadat. It is conceivable that Mubarak will distance himself from the United States' present policies, notwithstanding. He is familiar with the dangers of too close a friendship with the Western ally. As the Shah of Iran and Anwar Sadat learnt to their cost, the American embrace can turn into a stranglehold.

SADAT : Another View

Our Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi's description of President Anwar Sadat as a leader of an unpopular regime propped up by the West, must rank as the most unfortunate statement that any Indian Prime Minister could have made on a courageous leader of a friendly country.

The God-given charisma and our people's unbounded love for the Nehru family seem to have warped Mrs. Gandhi's judgement altogether. For a person who claims to have learnt the lessons of peace, non-violence, international relations/amity at the feet of Mahatma Gandhi and the great Nehru, this statement is deeply hurting and shocking. It must be remembered that, apart from the hapless Palestinian refugees, President Nasser and Anwar Sadat's Egypt suffered the most in the senseless policy of permanent confrontation with Israel. It took greater courage to reverse this policy than wage a continuous war in that emotionally surcharged atmosphere. And if it is indeed a question of popular thinking, let there be an opinion poll through a secret ballot and we will find that a majority of our people do not approve of our policy of indirectly supporting such confrontations.

Only a strong and reasonable Egypt with international support can achieve durable peace in West Asia and work for a just solution to the Palestinian issue including a possible internationalisation of the holy city of Jerusalem.

ARVIND A. DESHPANDE

raymond's suitings

A GUIDE TO THE WELL-DRESSED MALE



The Raymond Woollen Mills Limited

J. K. Building, N. Morarjee Marg,
Ballard, Estate, Bombay-400 038.

Your search for precision welding equipment ends here.

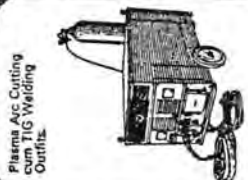
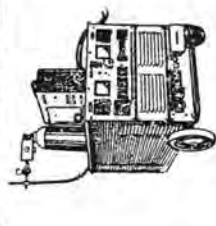
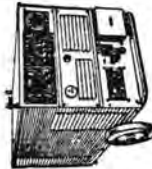
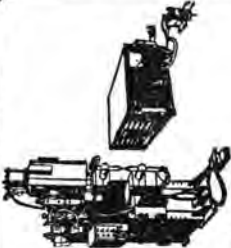
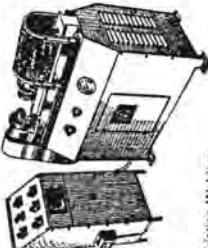
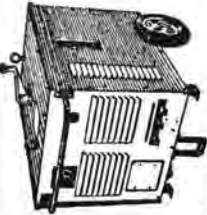
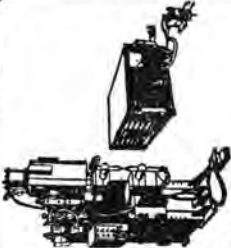
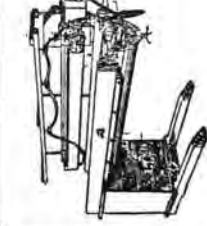
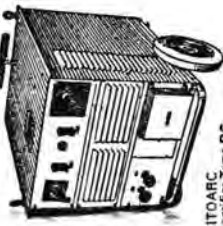
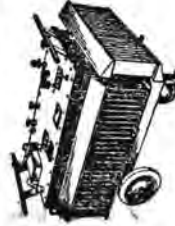
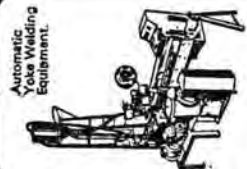


ADVANTERLIKON LIMITED
 Bangalore • Bombay • Calcutta • Cochin • Delhi
 Hyderabad • Madras • New Delhi • Panaji • Pondicherry
 For enquiries quote key No. AO 357 and
 write to P. B. 1546, Bombay-400023.

Whatever your requirement, whatever your line of manufacture, if welding plays an important role in it, contact Advanterlikon for total systems capability. If you settle for less, it could cost you more!

If your need centres around custom-built equipment, tell us about your requirements. We can design and tailor-make equipment, and systems to suit your jobs, specially the repetitive ones.

At Advanterlikon, a source from which springs the widest welding equipment range. Transformers, Generators, Rectifiers, Power sources and outfits for TIG, MIG, CO₂, submerged arc and resistance welding. You name it. We have them all.

 Motor Generator Welding Power Sources	 Motor Generator Welding Power Sources	 Plasma Arc Cutting Outfit	 Plasma Arc Cutting Outfit
 GAS TUNGSTEN ARC Welding Equipment AC/DC Composite Outfits	 PULSED TIG Welding Outfits	 Resistance Welders	 Resistance Welders
 DIESEL ARC Diesel Engine Driven Welding Power Sources	 ROCKETARC Air-Cooled Welding Transformers	 Resistance Welders	 Weld Samars
 CITOARC Rectifier Type DC Welding Power Sources	 ROCKETARC Air-Cooled Welding Transformers	 Automatic Tack Welding Equipment	 Semi & Fully Automatic Submerged Arc Welding Equipment

Peras 740-357

36 Chowringhee Lane

"The British Raj is over", reminds Miss Violet Stoneham in the film, **36 Chowringhee Lane** written and directed by Aparna Sen and produced by Shashi Kapoor. This clipped remark epitomises and captures the isolation and loneliness of the 65-year-old spinster-heroine of an evocative and powerful film.

36 Chowringhee Lane has a relatively simple plot. Miss Stoneham (Jennifer Kendal) is an Anglo-Indian School teacher teaching Shakespeare in a school in Calcutta. She has a brother, Eddy (Geoffrey Kendall), who is ill and is kept in an old people's home. Miss Stoneham's niece Rosemary (Soni Razdan) has left India and married a man whom she really did not love very much but is apparently quite happy with him in Australia where the couple have migrated. Miss Stoneham is therefore quite alone and forlorn, living in a Calcutta 30 years after Independence.

While attending the wedding of one of the school children, a former pupil, Nandita (played by Debashree Roy) meets her. After attending a service in church on Christmas day, Miss Stoneham emerges from the church and sees Nandita with a friend. She invites them home for a cup of coffee. Nandita and Samresh Moitra (Dhritiman Chatterjee) reluctantly accept her invitation, as they wished to be alone. This starts a new relationship between the three. Miss Stoneham, who had yearned for friendship, is now in the irrepressible company of the vivacious couple.

However, "tired of stealing kisses in taxis" the couple manage to persuade her to lend them her flat during the day, ostensibly passing off Samresh as a promising writer. The lovers are totally absorbed in each other; Miss Stoneham is conveniently forgotten once they are married.

After their wedding, Miss Stoneham visits the couple at their elegant home provided for by Nandita's parents, only to discover that the couple had deceived her by pretending that they were going to be away for Christmas when in actual fact they have invited their friends for dinner. She has carried a Christmas cake for them specially prepared to give them a surprise on their return. She leaves their home after watching the proceedings discreetly from

the outside and is again completely alone (her brother having died earlier).

This is the first film directed by Aparna Sen and marks Jennifer Kendall's major breakthrough in the role of Violet Stoneham. Miss Stoneham is not an extraordinary woman. Yet it is the very mundane quality of her life which is captured, with a telling sensitivity and remarkable poise, by the gifted Jennifer Kendall.

The Anglo-Indian community is brought into sharp focus through the character of Violet Stoneham. Yet it may be possible to view her as being the embodiment not just of a dwindling community but also the symbol of isolation itself, especially in old age.

Miss Stoneham's role in her school is carefully delineated. She is relegated to teaching grammar in junior classes, Shakespeare being assigned to a young Indian teacher. Yet the undeniable fact is that the pupils seem to enjoy their classes more with the new recruit than with her, when they had been largely inattentive. She stoically accepts her new role, and temporarily finds herself reinvigorated by the youthful Nandita and Samresh.

The young lovers are depicted with candid fervour. Nandita is gentle but weak-hearted, her boy-friend is the typical brash go-getter and charmer. They provide a perfect foil to Miss Stoneham's quiet restraint and dignity. Their boisterous moon-struck happiness is shared by her momentarily, only to receive a cruel blow at the end.

There is a powerful dream sequence in the film when Miss Stoneham recalls how her fiancé Davy was killed in the war. Her agony at the loss of her betrothed is moving indeed. In fact, it is perhaps the only scene where her emotions are fully expressed.

There are several motifs in the film. The hymn "Silent Night" is played in the background during the Christmas when Miss Stoneham first encounters the young couple. Its strains, "sleep in heavenly peace" are ironically contrasted with a survey of Calcutta's poor shivering in the streets below.

This hymn is again employed at the penultimate end of the film when Miss Stoneham discovers her rejection by Nandita and Samresh. They are enjoying the company of their friends when one of them inquires of Samresh as to whether the antique record player (gifted to

them by Miss Stoneham) actually works. Samaresh proudly asserts that it does and plays "Silent Night" on the turntable! Miss Stoneham in anguish leaves the scene. It is a year since she met them, and the wheel has indeed turned full circle.

36 Chowringhee Lane is a moving commentary on the perennial themes of the old and the young, the decrepit and the new.

RAMNI TANEJA

VOICES—2

The Right To Die

Apropos Mr. M. R. Masani's profound and rational views on the human right to die with dignity, and the media coverage on the subject, I make the following observations.

We should remember that the Indian Penal Code which defines an attempt to commit suicide as an offence and prescribes its punishment was drafted by Lord Macaulay. It became law in 1860. Lord Macaulay was a Christian. According to Christian theology, life and death are within the exclusive domain of God Almighty and any human interference with either is a sacrilege. All Christian societies and nations hold this belief. It is for this reason that Christians do not approve of euthanasia as well as of voluntary termination of pregnancy, although the population explosion has made the latter an imperative necessity.

Macaulay had no insight into Hindu Dharma and traditions. Hindu Dharma has never looked down upon voluntary death. According to Valmiki Ramayana (Uttarkand Kand — Sarga 109 & 110) Bhagwan Sri Ramachandra, having reached the conclusion that his life's mission was completed, plunged into the Sarayu river and cast off his mortal coil.

The Mahabharata proudly proclaims that the Pandavas and their queen having reached a ripe old age left Hastinapura for the Himalayas and gave themselves up to bitter cold in blizzards of snow (Swargarchana Parva). It is written in Shrimad Bhagavata Purana (Ekadasha Skandha Adhyaya 30) that when Bhagwan Sri Krishna was struck by a hunter's arrow and the hunter having realised his error, offered to extract the arrow, Shri Krishna replied that he preferred to leave the world this way as it was time for him to depart. Lest

YOU'RE IN GOOD COMPANY WITH A GOOD COMPANY—LIKE SUNDARM FINANCE

A COMPANY 26,000 DEPOSITORS
BELIEVE IN

Yes, Sundaram Finance looks back on over 26 years of dedicated service. Service that has helped it grow from a company with a capital base of Rs. 2 lakhs, to one with a paid up capital and reserves exceeding Rs. 372 lakhs.

The total assets of the company as of 31st December 1979 exceeded Rs. 15 crores and the company has on its rolls over 6,700 customers and 26,000 depositors.

REPUTATION FOR RELIABILITY

Each year more and more customers and depositors come to Sundaram Finance, because, over the years the company has built up a reputation for reliability and service.

The shares of the company have also registered substantial appreciation—proof of growing faith in the organisation.

WE OWE IT TO YOU

You have helped us grow, helped us to serve the road transport industry and most of all helped us to serve you.

No wonder Sundaram Finance is the largest hire purchase company in India, today.

SUNDARAM FINANCE LIMITED
180 MOUNT ROAD,
MADRAS 600 006.

these be dismissed as acts of gods or as mythology, and therefore of no guidance to human beings, let us look at some human events.

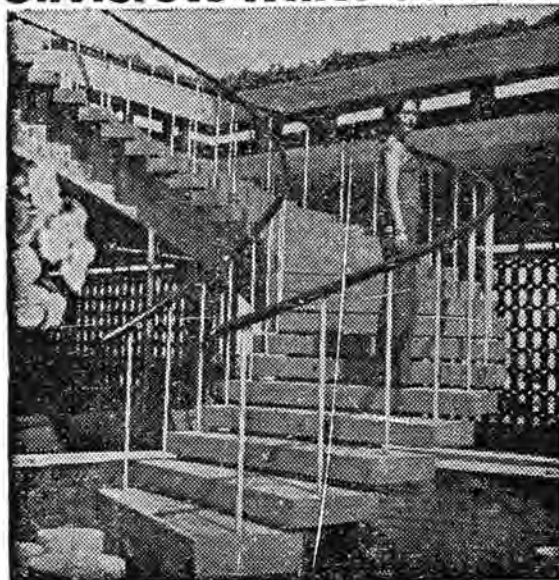
Adi Shankaracharya invited his own death at Badrinath by drowning in the river Alkananda. So did Swami Rama Tirtha. Sant Dnyaneshwar took Samadhi (death by voluntary asphyxiation) at Anandi near Pune. Swami Vivekanand took Maha-Samadhi at Belur Math on Friday the 4th July 1902.

Fear is expressed in some quarters that unscrupulous persons might take advantage of such liberty to gain their own selfish ends. Surely, law makers do not desist from enacting a beneficial measure for fear of its being abused. If it were so, society could hardly make any progress. Moreover, the law can take care of any abuse by providing that any person who for his own benefit, by force, fraud, intimidation or culpable negligence, brings about such a situation as to cause another person to commit suicide, shall be suitably punished.

Is this a subject for social reform, like widow-remarriage? For a Hindu, the answer is in the negative. The fact is that the law as it stands to-day contravenes Hindu ethics, usage and scriptural traditions.

PRAJA R. PAREKH

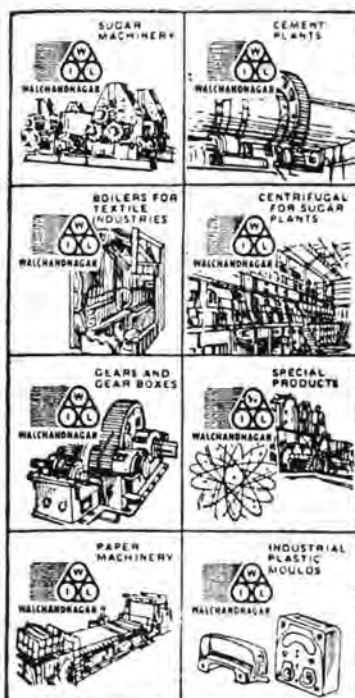
Silvicrete white cement



not just exclusive...marvel-lous!

1 product of The Associated Cement Companies Ltd

ACC



Symbol of industries

At Walchandnagar, we design, develop and manufacture a wide-range of equipment — to keep the wheels of your industry moving.

We manufacture complete Sugar, Cement Plants & Industrial Plastic Moulds. With years of experience and collaboration with Maag, Foster Wheeler, Polysius and Hein Lehmann, WIL has helped bloom a number of industries in India.

Your expertise and our equipment can make the nation industrially stronger. That's our way of serving the nation.



WALCHANDNAGAR INDUSTRIES LIMITED

WORKS: WALCHANDNAGAR, DIST: POONA, MAHARASHTRA. Grams: Walsakhar, Walchandnagar. Phone: 35 & 36, Walchandnagar.

REGD. OFFICE: CONSTRUCTION HOUSE, WALCHAND, HIRACHAND MARG, BALLARD ESTATE, BOMBAY-400 038. Grams: Walsakhar, Bombay. Phone: 268091. Telex No. 011-2780.

A WALCHAND GROUP INDUSTRY

TRIBUTE TO A. B. SHAH

(Extracts from a speech at the condolence meeting held at Pune on 16 October 1981)

In accordance with Prof. Shah's wishes no religious rites were observed at his funeral, nor any speeches made. That was in the fitness of things for the great rationalist and humanist he was. I understand that he also did not want any condolence meetings to be held to mourn his death. Nevertheless, I do not think we are really going against his wishes in holding this meeting.

What Prof. Shah really asked for was that every Indian should devote himself or herself to creating in this country, in his own words: "the social and cultural pre-conditions for a society based on freedom, equality, and the dignity of the individual". That is what he dedicated himself to all his life, with ability, energy, and consistency. That, he felt, is the supreme task of the moment.

In Prof. Shah's death the humanist movement, and the cause of social and cultural progress in this country, has suffered a grievous loss. He was one of the finest intellectuals India has produced. He was a man of both thought and action. A clear and courageous thinker and writer, he always took great pains to be just and impartial when presenting, analysing, and discussing the views and arguments of those who differed from him, and even of those who attacked or opposed his ideas.

Prof. Shah was one of the few non-Muslims in India, or perhaps the only one, who made a serious critical study of Islam, and was even considered an authority on it by some scholars and followers of that religion. As a result of this, because of his analysis and sharp criticism of Muslim religious beliefs and social practices in India today, he aroused the antagonism of many, and was even accused by some, of being anti-Muslim. Hardly any of those, who described him as such, challenged his views on the basis of facts and arguments, so far as I know, or in the columns of **New Quest** or **The Secularist** which were always open to responsible criticism, genuine controversy, and exchange of ideas.

If a Hindu criticises Hindu religious beliefs and social practices, he is looked upon as a religious and social reformer; if a non-Hindu does it he is described as "anti-Hindu". If a Muslim criticises Muslim religious beliefs and social practices he is looked upon as a heretic; if a non-Muslim does it he is described as "anti-Muslim". Such an attitude precludes all social and cultural progress. Criticism must be met on the level of ideas, arguments, and a knowledge of facts, and not with reference to the birth or beliefs of the individual concerned.

Prof. Shah analysed and criticised all religious and social beliefs and practices in the crucible of reason and on the basis of freedom, human equality, and universal moral values. I am convinced that Prof. Shah was incapable of being anti anybody. His study and analysis of Islam as a religion and his sharp criticism of its social practices was motivated by a genuine desire for the social emancipation and cultural progress of Muslims as fellow-citizens. Their social and cultural problems, he urged, should be the concern of all Indians who are committed to the building up of a just and harmonious social order in India. For him, obscurantism and fanaticism anywhere were a threat to human freedom and dignity everywhere.

It had become necessary to state unpalatable truths and unpopular facts in order to educate public opinion, particularly where sentiment ran counter to public interest. Prof. Shah had the courage to do so at the risk of arousing antagonism and of being misunderstood, in some cases even by his friends. Many may not have agreed with his ideas or accepted his arguments, but none could doubt his sincerity and integrity.

Prof. Shah impressed all those who knew him by the volume and quality of his intellectual output, and he endeared himself to his friends by his simplicity and modesty.

A. SOLOMON

THE WORLD OF BOOKS

RIPPLES ON JAMUNA by W. D. THATTE
Matrik Publishers (India) Private Ltd. Pages 180.
Rs. 40.00

The ripples of this book, suggested by the title, create scarcely any ripples in the reader. It is a weary depressing exercise to have to plod through pages of the author's self-proclaimed "monumental works".

The scramble for power whether in the British Raj or in our post-independence era should make for fascinating tales of intrigue if not history. In tracing it on the banks of the Jamuna, however, the author turns pedantic, cynical and verbose by expressing the obvious. The colourful sound and fury of Indian politics, — although it might signify nothing — is solely missing.

Were the momentous days of the Freedom Struggle and the latter-day efforts at seizing authority to govern the world's largest democracy totally empty of meaning in the social, economic and political sense? The author declares, "Let us await the day when this process of polluting the Jamuna waters will be totally stopped by her favourite children sitting in Parliament, and unless this is done there is hardly any chance of this Western plant of democracy taking roots in our land."

Depravity in all walks of life is not confined to India alone. Unfortunately, in deploring the morals, politics and philosophies of the men and women at the helm of affairs, the author fails to provide insights into or reasons for the malaise. In ignoring the positive aspects of the Indian power scene, the author has left the reader bereft of an analysis of power in the Indian context.

Occasionally, cases of interest do exist in the novel book, such as the descriptions of a "capitalist press" in a "spineless democracy". Like the cutate's egg even this book, which endlessly moralises, is good in a very few parts. Pious and pompous sermons mar it. "Indian Experiment in Democratic Socialism is a fine exercise in Extended Oligarchy. Each time new oligarchys proclaim 'no doubt all are equal but we are more equal than others'.

"This infighting (in Delhi) is not complete as

yet, the real Kurukshetra is still ahead. Just a collection of the armies of faithfals has begun."

That a book of this nature commands a price of Rs. 40.00 boggles the imagination.

PREETH J. BIDDAPA

ART HERITAGE 2. General Editor, E. Alkazi,
Published by Art Heritage (Tansen Marg,
New Delhi (110 001) pp. 94.

This is a substantial-looking art magazine a little like Marg in appearance. It is described by its publishers as "a survey of Indian art, past and present . . . published in book form as part of a continuing series by Art Heritage Gallery."

The second number is a highly finished product in the best sense. Even the advertisements, which are a necessary evil, have not been allowed to make it ugly; they take the form of etchings from the Raj, each one "presented by the advertising company, in the front and at the back of contents. The cream-coloured matt paper on which they are printed is a pleasing contrast to the glossiness of the rest. There is a generous number of illustrative photographs, and as one moves on one finds that they have been judiciously chosen to assist the reader's comprehension.

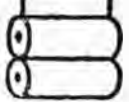
The themes are wide-ranging: from a discussion of symbolism in early Indian art, to the paintings of the Gwalior court, to essays on modern Indian painters like Gieve Patel and Nalini Malani. To a layman it seems that the styles of criticism, too, are varied; Santo Dutta writes about some modern painters in a free-ranging, somewhat personalised style; Geeta Kapur's approach to Nalini Malani is a more socio-historical one; Anand Krishna applies the weight of a knit-picking erudition to the work of the 18thC Garhwali painter Mola Ram.

In short, the standard of scholarship is un-

usually high. But may I make a plea now on behalf of readers like myself, who are very willing to learn more about Indian art if only it were made a little easier to absorb? With one or two exceptions, the essays in this issue suffer from the scholarly Indian disease of being in no way a pleasure to read. Sentences are monotonously the same length, the pace does not vary, the tone does not change, the syntax is uniformly heavy, and invariably too many ideas are crowded into one sentence.

The process of reading, then, becomes one of negotiating a series of intellectual bumps rather than a smooth journey. In one case, indeed, the author described some bad paintings at length, but when he moved on to some unexpectedly good work by the same painter, his tone was so ploddingly unchanged that I had to re-read to understand what he was saying. And such complete inattention to style, I suppose, is something with which even E. Alkazi cannot deal.

SHAMA FUTEHALLY



**To create
a good impression
use West Coast Paper
for writing
printing
packaging
and many other uses**

WEST COAST PAPER

Shreeniwas House,
Hazarimal Somani Marg, Bombay 1

Nachiketa Publications Limited

5 Kasturi Buildings, J. Tata Road,
Bombay 400 020.

A STATESMAN ENTERPRISE

Books for all bookshelves and budgets:

	Rs.
Aesthetics and Literary Criticism	by R. B. Patankar 10/-
Bihar Shows The Way	by S. K. Datta-Ray 75/-
D. M. K. In Power	by P. Spratt 10/-
Education In The Fourth Plan	by J. P. Naik 6/-
Freedom Of The Press In India	by A. G. Noorani 6/-
From the Jhelum To The Volga	by S. Nihal Singh 15/-
Gandhi And The American Scene	by C. Seshachari 8/-
Glimpses of Old Calcutta	by R. R. Chowdhury 55/-
German Scholars On India —Vol. II	75/-
Hindu Muslim Relations in Bengal 1905-1947	by H. Rahman 15/-
Indira's India: A Political Notebook	by S. Nihal Singh 35/-
Indian Polity: A Plea For Reform	by R. A. Gopalswami 10/-
India In Transition	by M. N. Roy 12/-
India's Carribean Adventure	by K. Bhimani 8/-
Kerala: Yenan of India	by Victor M. Fic 25/-
The Career Of The Secondary School Teacher in Poona	by P. Kale 9/-
The Phases Of Indian Nationalism, and Other Essays	by Dietmar Rothermund 12/-
Traditional Recipes Of India	by Mrs. B. J. Maneckshaw 22/-
Under The Indian Sky	by A. Chanda 10/-
Writings And Speeches Of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan	by S. Mohammad 16/-
What Price A Free Press? Edited	by V. V. John & A. B. Shah 9/-

Also Available From:

THE STATESMAN LIMITED

Statesman House
Connaught Circus,
New Delhi 110 001

Statesman House,
Chowringhee Square
Calcutta 700 001.

Fagun Mansion
26 Commander-In-Chief Rd.
Madras 600 105

FREEDOM FIRST

INDIAN FEDERALISM TODAY:

Malady is Over-Centralization

P. M. KAMATH

In all Federal states — whether the U.S.A. or Canada or Australia — there is a tendency toward centralization of powers in the National government. Interestingly enough, in the unitary states like the United Kingdom or France we see a trend towards decentralization of powers to local bodies.

The demand for decentralization of powers has been raised in India from time to time, especially since Mrs. Gandhi's electoral victory in 1971. The demand has been made again by the non-Congress governments, in particular the governments of Jammu and Kashmir and of West Bengal, since Mrs. Gandhi's return to power in January 1980.

The demand for decentralization of powers was of course heard during the short period of Janata rule at the Centre as well. Marxists in West Bengal, Akalis in Punjab and the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, for instance, had proposed a national debate on the issue.

President Neelam Sanjiva Reddy also joined the discussion. Delivering the 6th Govind Vallabh Pant Memorial Lecture in New Delhi March 1978, he pleaded for decentralisation of powers to the states. He said that the common man felt completely "alienated and marginalized" in the present Indian political process. The need, he thought, was to end the centralized system where fewer people tended to take the basic decisions.

President Reddy said so when the Janata — which was committed to decentralization — was in power at the Centre. In retrospect, the Marxist Government which has experienced both Janata and Congress (I) at the centre, now feels that under the Janata Party they had greater state autonomy. But interestingly, only once for three years when the Congress was out of power at the Centre, did the Congress-ruled states complain about their loss of state autonomy.

For instance, Vasantdada Patil had bemoaned the loss of state powers when he said that the states had been reduced to the status of municipalities. As a matter of fact, the states ruled by parties other than the ruling party at the Centre, enjoy greater powers vis-a-vis the Centre in comparison to the states ruled

by the ruling party at the Centre.

Today, through a degree of manageable conflict with the Centre, the non-Congress (I) states like West Bengal and Tamil Nadu exercise powers which could not be conceived at the state headquarters ruled by the Congress (I) states.

This only demonstrates the fact that to some extent the perennial controversy of centralization versus decentralization is political. However, the fact that there is centralization of powers in Indian federalism is too obvious to be demonstrated. This is due to historically compelling circumstances which prevailed at the time of formulating the Indian Constitution.

The political events of the period soon after 1947, like the communal carnage and the Telangana uprising, made the founding fathers write a Constitution with a strong and powerful central government. This is evident in the distribution of powers between the state and the Centre they adopted, provision for central appointment of the Governors of the states, provision of numerous sources of revenue to the centre, and central services at the head of the state administrative set up.

Since the emergence of Mrs. Gandhi as a strong national leader in 1971, the malady that has increasingly afflicted the Indian political system is the trend towards over-centralization.

In this sense, one discovers that the degree of centralization varies in different functional areas. Take, for instance, financial relations. As a rule, in the administration, the smaller the unit of administration, the more difficult it is to levy and collect the taxes. In another sense, the political cost of raising funds by the smaller units is heavier, since they can be more easily punished politically than the Centre. Hence the states prefer the collection of taxes by the Centre, though now and then they make a protest. But what the states really demand is a greater allocation of funds raised by the Centre.

In the area of administrative relations, the top echelons in the state administrations are filled by centrally recruited (IAB) personnel. However, they are operationally under the ad-

TERRIFIC TOGETHER



CINTHOL SOAP AND TALC

The perfect partners for deodorant
protection—a bath with Cinthol Soap
and a sprinkling of Cinthol Talc—
to take you to great heights of freshness.

CINTHOL by *Godrej*



Interpub/CTS/1/80/R

ministrative control of the state administration. The Centre cannot extend its control over the state services, mainly due to linguistic diversities which exist in the states. This fact makes the Centre-State administrative relations a balanced one. Whereas in the area of economic activities, the Centre-State relations tend to favour the states. The Centre might provide guidelines but the states have to enforce the acts.

In the case of Land Reforms, the Centre has been simply unable to impose its will on the states. Recently, the Centre was against the Maharashtra Monopoly Cotton Procurement Scheme, and Mr. Venkatraman the Union Finance Minister did say it in so many words. Yet, the state leadership was able to get the scheme extended.

What strikes the headlines in newspapers is the Centre-State **political** relations. And rightly so. Because it is political relations that directly or indirectly determine the pattern in other functional areas. Here, there is undoubtedly over-centralization of powers in the Centre, both at the government and at other political levels. The state Governors are appointed, transferred and sacked at the sweet will of the Central leadership.

The founding fathers never envisaged the office of the constitutional head of the state government as a party office. The Governor once appointed holds the office for five years or until his successor takes over. This clearly implies the possibility of an extension and not termination prior to completion of the term. If the "pleasure of the president" was to mean the sweet will of the ruling party at the centre, the makers of the Constitution would not have taken the trouble to mention the term of office as five years.

Politically, within the Congress (I) Party, power is concentrated in the High Command. Prior to the Emergency of 1975, the High Command included few influential leaders at the national level. But since then and especially after the January 1980 return of Mrs. Gandhi to power, the Congress (I) High Command virtually means Mrs. Gandhi. During the first phase of her leadership, she had at least maintained a nominal duality between the Presidentship of the Party and the Prime Ministership. But since her return to power in 1980, Mrs. Gandhi continues to function in a dual capacity—as Prime Minister and the Party President.

In her capacity as the supreme leader of the party, Mrs. Gandhi makes and un-makes Chief Ministers in the Congress (I)-controlled states. No minister can be appointed or dropped from the cabinet or their portfolios changed without her consent. The State level party apparatus is again a creation of Mrs. Gandhi. The presidents are nominated by her and not elected, Pradesh committees are all **ad hoc** and not elected, and as always tickets are given from the centre at the elections.

This kind of over-centralization of power at the political level is the very anti-thesis of the Federal principle. Federalism caters for political, regional and linguistic diversities, and encourages local variation and initiative. The purpose underlying the federal principle is to enable a large number of people to actively participate, experiment, commit mistakes and learn from them. Instead, in our present system, the nation and party is asked to depend on one individual for solving every problem.

This kind of over-centralization of power creates very simple administrative problems as well. Since everything has to be cleared by the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister cannot attend to every problem for sheer lack of time, nothing moves, causing what the former Burmese Prime Minister, U Nu called, administrative constipation.

Over-centralization of the kind discussed above is not in the long-term interest of developing a mature democracy in India. What the Federal structure in India needs is a federalized **political** process. The federalized political process I am speaking of should include inner party democracy, freedom of action at all levels of the party, and encouragement of local initiative. The leadership has to move from the lower echelons to the top. Of course, some move in the leadership ladder quickly, some slowly, and some never.

Today, Congress (I) leadership in the states has developed a vested interest in promoting the personality cult, as they are all creations of Mrs. Gandhi. Mr. Antulay has said that inner democracy is useless. Mr. Arjun Singh of M.P. goes to New Delhi to offer his homage to his leader and her son. With such leaders at the state level, I am aware that my plea for a federalized political process is likely to be a cry in the wilderness. The Congress (I) as the dominant party has the major responsibility to bear in this regard.

We are behind every stop



Make your safety a certainty with BI Girling spares



For your copy of a Free information booklet in English on Brake Care write to us clearly indicating your name and address in block letters.

Brakes India Limited
Padi, Madras 600 050

SAA/BI/01/1

Beautiful ways to beat the heat

Whatever your need, whatever your taste or your budget, Orient can offer more of what you want. More of quality, more of beauty, more of value, and more of choice—the widest selection ever!

Why sweat this summer?
Beat the heat, with Orient breeze at your fingertips!

Guaranteed for two years

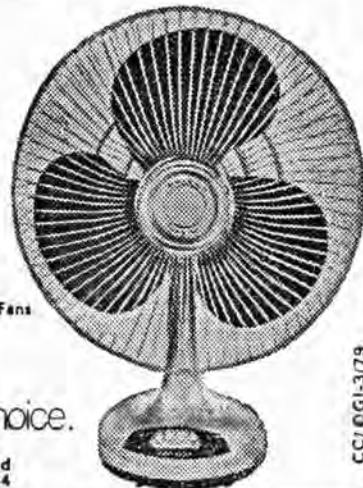
ORIENT FANS

4 Ceiling Fans • 6 Table Fans • 2 Pedestal Fans



More of beauty. More of choice.

Orient General Industries Limited
6, Ghore Bibi Lane, Calcutta 700 054



CC/OGI-3/79