

SHUFFLE AND RESHUFFLE

NISSIM EZEKIEL

Newspaper headlines and editorial comments focus increasingly these days on Cabinet and Ministerial Council changes of personnel. The impression created is that these are of the highest importance. "Adik Gets Finance", for example, implies that Maharashtra's finances are now in safe hands. Why else would it be on the front page of eveningers whose distinction lies in knowing what the public wants?

Comments on what may be called the shuffle and reshuffle phenomenon in Indian politics assume that it is on the same level as similar changes in other countries. The difference surely is that in our case it is rarely a matter of policy, almost always of personalities and of pressure groups.

Vasant Sathe was not removed from the Information and Broadcasting Ministry because he differed from Mrs. Gandhi about the role of that Ministry or because of some other crucial political issue. He lost his post, it is suspected, because he attracted excessive public interest. Publicising Mrs. Gandhi in excess was not sufficient compensation.

If such are the standards—or lack of them—at the Centre one can easily imagine how our Chief Ministers function. In the first place, they play safe by flying to Delhi over and over again, proceeding with their reshuffling only

after full approval of the Prime Minister. They are of course praised for their initiative, and only partially blamed for any subsequent failures by their proteges.

The ousting or resignation of a Minister because of a political crisis is no cause for anxiety about the political process. But what we get along with it is horrendous news about corruption, connection with criminals, misuse of power in a host of ways (often with the connivance of the Chief Minister) and factional activity well beyond the normal expression of differences on principle. The public cannot help taking the cynical view that the new incumbents in power closely resemble those who have lost it, and that given the opportunities they will perform equally well (i.e. badly).

A Chief Minister who drops a member of his Council for alleged misbehaviour replaces him in carefully calculated fashion by another representative of the same faction. The new man has a record of virulent personal criticism against the Chief Minister. All the same, he is preferred to an independent supporter, since factions have to be kept in control.

The media often congratulates such a Chief Minister for his "skill", though it is obvious that personal enmity is not a sound basis for political co-operation. A

Minister who is at "loggerheads" with his Chief is thus replaced by one who is certain to be in the same position after a new months.

Our State Councils grow larger every year, not because of administrative but of political needs. The followers of certain Ministers have to be "accommodated", and doing this is described as "broadening the base".

As for cohesion and efficiency, acknowledged to be desperately needed, our commentators invariably say that "it remains to be seen" whether the expanded, shuffled and reshuffled Ministry will show signs of them in any degree worth mentioning. It is all a matter of hoping against hope: that the wrong means will somehow at some time lead to the attainment of the right ends.

The truth is that nothing remains to be seen; we can see it now if only we choose to overcome our normal lethargy and evasiveness.

Further, the wrong means demonstrably used in the reorganisation of State Councils of Ministers have no prospect of leading to the desired ends.

All our talk about what the Central leadership should do or not do falls on deaf ears. Yet, our editorial writers recommend to it the enforcement of discipline in party ranks, the curbing of factionalism, and the punishment of inefficiency.

RUSSIA, AMERICA AND INDIA

BHABANI SEN GUPTA

During my recent visit to Moscow I had extensive discussions with Soviet academics, media men and foreign service officials on issues and problems in South Asia and Soviet policy for the region. Soviet academics made it clear that in current Soviet strategic perception Southwestern and South Asia constitute a single geo-strategic region. The stability and security of South Asia, in Soviet perception, is inextricably linked with the security and stability in South-west Asia.

This new strategic concept was of course put forward by President Brezhnev during his New Delhi visit of December 1980. The concept has since been built into a strategic architecture by Soviet experts on South and Southwest Asia.

Soviet strategic thinking is built around three frameworks of international relations. One is the Soviet framework which is erected on the plinth of peaceful co-existence, detente and the "natural alliance" relationship between the Soviet Union and its socialist allies on the one hand and the national liberation movement in the former colonies and semi-colonies on the other. Pitted against the Soviet framework is the American framework which, in Soviet perception, is erected on "imperialist capitalist exploitation" of the third world and containment of the Soviet Union and its socialist allies.

Between these two frameworks the Soviets recognise the existence of a zone of independence, consisting of countries which are basically anti-imperialist and therefore in sympathy with the Soviet Union and national liberation movements but which pursue policy of non-alignment. They are not willing to join either the Soviet or the U.S. framework of international relations.

In South Asia, according to the Soviet perception, Afghanistan belongs to the Soviet framework and Pakistan to the American framework, while India occupies an independent position in spite of its treaty relationship with the Soviet Union. The Soviets perceive Iran also as belonging to the independent zone.

The strategic struggle in South Asia is between the Soviet framework and the American framework. The main thrust of Soviet policy in South Asia is to undermine and defeat the between countries belonging to the Soviet framework and countries which pursue independent domestic and foreign policies.

Soviet experts made it clear to me that there could be no withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan

as long as the regional environment remained hostile to the Marxist government in Kabul. The Afghan delegation to the Asian conference, consisting of an academic, a foreign office official, and a ranking member of the ruling national democratic party, told me that 40 per cent of the territory of Afghanistan was now controlled by the Kabul government while 20 per cent remained in the hands of the rebels. The remaining 40 per cent was controlled by neither but was gradually coming under Kabul's effective control.

Members of the Afghan team as well as Soviet academics said that a congenial regional environment rather than effective territorial control by the Kabul regime was the essential requirement for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Only with a congenial regional environment would there be no intervention in Afghanistan's internal affairs by the United States and its allies, including Red China and Pakistan.

The Soviets were hopeful that the talks between Iran and Pakistan would eventually lead to the creation of a regional agreement on "non-interference and non-intervention" in Afghan affairs on the basis of which it would be possible for the Soviets to withdraw their troops from Afghanistan. The Soviets expect the negotiations to be protracted and have the will to maintain their military presence in Afghanistan so long as the situation demands it. Although no one talked about the costs of the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan, I had the feeling that Moscow is in a position to bear the cost for an indefinite period.

With regard to Pakistan, the public Soviet stance is highly negative. In the Soviet media as well as academic writings, Pakistan is seen largely if not entirely as an ally of the United States and Red China. In private conversations, however, Soviet scholars concede the existence of several "positive elements" in Pakistan such as the hostility relationship between the regime and the people, the "deep anti-Americanism" of the population, the desire of the people of Pakistan for friendly relations with the Soviet Union and India, and the foreign policy formulations of the Pakist Peoples Party.

The Soviets remain committed to the territorial integrity of Pakistan and would be strongly opposed to its balkanisation.

There is no expectation in Moscow that Gen. Zia-ul-Haq would, in the foreseeable future, significantly improve Pakistan's relations with the Soviet Union. Soviet experts on Pakistan see the military leaders as

firmly pro-American. They also see Pakistan being ruled by a coalition of the military, the bureaucracy, large land-owners and a handful of capitalists. But the Soviets also perceive a rising tide of political awareness in the Pakistani people and a growing desire on their part to rule themselves.

In the current circumstances, the Soviets do not expect the Pakistani government to enter into strategic deals with the United States. But there is genuine apprehension in Moscow that in the event of a war in the Persian Gulf involving the United States, the Pakistan rulers would be compelled by the Americans to concede military land and naval bases to the United States.

The Soviet Union's image of India remains very bright. India is seen as an independent peace-loving country, a trusted friend of the Soviet Union, a major regional power with a strong influence on world affairs. Both the Soviet experts in international politics and the common Soviet citizen hold India in high esteem and affection. Indira Gandhi is universally admired in the Soviet Union and hailed as a great Asian leader and a great leader of the peace-loving people of the world.

The Soviets would welcome a no-war pact between India and Pakistan if the accord would lower Pakistan's linkage with the United States. To put it bluntly, the Soviets would judge a no-war accord between India and Pakistan by only one measurement: whether or not it pushes the sub-continent within the American framework of world politics. If this be

the Soviet assessment of an India-Pakistan no-war pact, Moscow would consider it to be a great setback for its foreign policy.

On the other hand, Moscow would highly welcome an India-Pakistan no-war accord if it strengthens Pakistan's non-alignment, making India and Pakistan more independent of the United States. The strategic quality of a no-war pact between India and Pakistan would be judged in Moscow probably by the test of whether or not Pakistan would make a formal commitment not to lend military bases to the United States in any circumstance. The Soviets therefore completely agree with the Indian government that a mere no-war pact agreement will be of no value if it did not act as a barrier to great-power intervention in the region.

Soviet experts on India have concluded that "step by step" India has arrived at the capitalist system of development. But they regard India as an "Independent Capitalist" country and not as part of the peripheral backyard of the capitalist imperialist system. There is, in Soviet perception, no obstacle to cooperation between the USSR and India as long as India remains independent. In fact, the Soviets project Indo-Soviet friendship as a model of relationship between two different social systems.

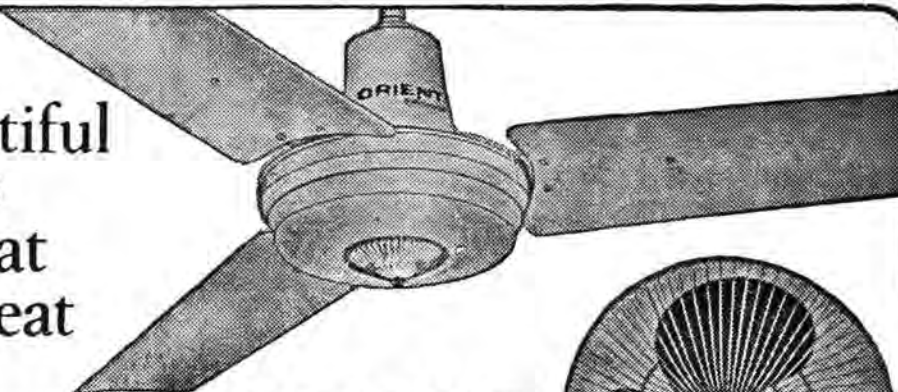
However, Soviet specialists are closely watching the current changes in India's economic policies, the concessions offered to multi-nationals and foreign monopoly houses for investment in India. They are watching out for the political impact of these changes.

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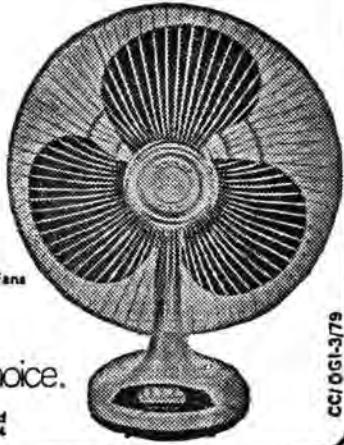
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BUSINESS WITH CHINA

RAMA SWARUP

Many disillusioned and often disgruntled Western and Asian traders complain of exorbitant charges and arbitrarily fixed prices when doing business in mainland China, where only primitive trading conditions are provided.

About 350 foreign firms have offices in Peking, and hundreds more send travelling businessmen to the capital. More than 20 banks have opened offices, many in the past few months, despite Red China's economic retrenchment and moderate growth.

Businessmen generally complain about a lack of apartments, inadequate hotel and office space, high rents, travel problems, inconsistent tariffs, unskilled help and double-standard prices for local people and foreign visitors.

These complaints compound the problem of actually doing business in Red China, with its network of uncommunicative bureaucracies. Among the biggest foreign annoyances are housing and office space. There are virtually no office buildings set aside for foreigners and few have apartments, which means most businessmen live and work in cramped hotel rooms.

According to one disgruntled trader, the hotel rooms are small and uncomfortable, with no privacy and no kitchens. He found it impossible to bring his family.

Many foreigners are stuck in the remote, dilapidated Friendship Hotel, and 181 people protested when the management recently doubled the rent for business guests.

All imported goods, including typewriters, filing cabinets, even a bottle of vinegar, are subject to tariffs ranging from 25 per cent to 300 per cent, often arbitrarily applied.

The Red Chinese eagerness for foreign exchange has fostered a pricing system in which foreigners often pay double or treble for some items. They must use foreign currency certificates rather than Red Chinese money or yuan.

According to the Red China area manager of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, who briefed a Red China business conference in Singapore, he had to tackle the problem of the very imprecise Red Chinese commercial law. As an example, he said, banks seeking confirmation of the legal enforceability of certain agreements had failed to obtain satisfactory answers.

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FREEDOM FIRST

Inefficiency of Communism

J. G. TIWARI

It is often stated that in modernising and industrialising a nation, communism may violate man's basic rights and exact terrible sacrifice, but human values aside, it efficiently and rapidly builds a modern economy. A common assumption among radical nationalists is that communism is brutal but efficient.

Brutal communism is, but its efficiency is doubtful. Its basic weakness is that communists subordinate economics to political control. Being a totalitarian system, it leads to the establishment of a central power that allows no independent power system to exist. Every group in society must be under the direction and discipline of the centre. Such total political control vitiates economic development.

Agriculture provides an example of the economic cost of subordination to the communist political control system. It is generally agreed that agricultural productivity and output must be raised as a condition for industrialisation. Modern industry requires a strong agricultural base and therefore developing nations must need progress in agriculture if their main goal is fastest wide-spread pilfering. How efficient, in reality, the Soviet farmers are is indicated by the vital roles of the products of their private farms which, though 3 per cent in size of the total cultivable land, supply 30 to 66 per cent of the dairy, meat and agricultural requirements of the population of the country. The Soviet system does not admit of de-collectivisation, because it leads to the emergence of a community of peasant proprietors who, in history, have given rise to capitalism. Agricultural economy is subordinated to the political needs of the communist rulers, and hence the perennial food crisis in communist countries. An economically illogical policy is followed for political reasons.

Foreign policy provides a further example of how communist political structure causes economic inefficiency. A communist party is an organ designed for power — total power. Its structure is geared to that goal, and its full-time functionaries are trained to its pursuit. When a communist regime comes into being, it sooner or later absorbs all domestic power, subjugating or eliminating independent groups. Since the party is geared to always seek power, it has a built-in tendency to turn its power-seeking drive beyond its national boundaries. Ideology, factionalism and nationalism reinforce that tendency.

This expansionist policy aims at upsetting the *status quo*, evoking the hostility of developed nations which react with hostility and policies of containment against expansionist states. Therefore, relations between

developed nations and expansionist communist states become strained. This has a debilitating impact on the economy of communist states.

Such a situation makes every communist state maintain a very expensive military establishment, thus diverting tremendous energies from development. Communist developing states such as China, North Korea, Albania, Vietnam and Cuba spend a greater portion of their wealth on armaments than non-communist developing nations. Thus in 1966-67 the communist states mentioned above spent 10.18 per cent of their GNP on armaments against the average of 3.8 per cent by India, Korea and Greece.

One of the greatest needs of an under-developed country is for capital. Much of it must be generated domestically. But to the extent the developing nations can obtain foreign assistance, they can grow faster and with fewer sacrifices for the people. It is therefore strongly in the interests of the developing countries to maintain good relations with capital-rich countries. Such good relations should be the top priority task of the foreign ministers of developing nations. Going communist is an effective way for a developing nation to bring on hostility and cut off capital flow from the advanced Western nations. Adopting an expansionist foreign policy, which communist ideology and totalitarian structure make likely, is even surer to bring on counter measures from the West.

In the present structure of world relations, then, the communist political system has a built-in tendency toward antagonising the potential sources of Western capital. Thus the subordination of economic need for capital inflow to communist political drives can only result in a slow-down of economic growth or increase in people's sacrifices.

Communists overestimate the capacities of the central government. They expect it to make agricultural policy, to provide incentives for workers and peasants, to plan an effective balance between various economic sectors, to produce all the nation's needs and to set up a country-wide distribution system. Such a hyperbolic estimation of the capacities of the centre stems from their desire to dominate everything through one and the same instrument available to them, and that is state power. The performance of communist economies proves how unwarranted is this confidence in the capacities of a central government.

Communist economies are marked by lack of incentives for the producers, imbalance between various sectors of the economy, high production costs, production of shoddy consumer goods, bottlenecks of the distributive system, and scarcities of the necessities of life.

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MONARCHY AND THE MODERNISATION OF NEPAL

B. C. UPRETI

"Modernisation" has become a popular concept for the study of political behaviour. It has been defined by different authors in different ways. Generally, it is related to industrialization, urbanization, economic development, increase in GDP, rationalization of political and administrative structures, etc. To us, it appears to be a comprehensive phenomenon which brings about radical changes in different spheres of the society.

The institution of monarchy is fast disappearing. Great monarchies of the world have been lost in the pages of history. Those who have survived today, though a very few, are because they have adopted different roles according to changed conditions. The monarchy is an institution which has always received its sustenance and survival from the support of a traditional elite which is opposed to change. However, in the present time it is not possible for any country to keep itself aloof from the socio-economic changes taking place in the outside world. These changes have given rise to certain new forces opposed to the traditional elite.

In these circumstances the survival of monarchy depends on the accommodation of the emerging elite, as well as on maintaining the traditional elite. Most of the monarchies disappeared because they could not resolve this dilemma. Those who survived, adopted a new role, such as the constitutional monarchy. Yet, there are monarchies who have succeeded in changing themselves from constitutional monarchies to ruling monarchies by weakening the new elite. In this form they have continued to be based on the support of the traditional elite. But in order to accommodate the rising aspirations of the people, they continued to serve as an agent of modernisation.

In accommodating two diverse forces, the monarchy has to set the goals of modernisation according to its own needs and preferences. It is not possible for them to totally let loose the forces of modernisation. Therefore, such monarchies have adopted the policy of "limited modernisation". The Nepalese monarchy seems akin to this form.

The present monarchy was founded in 1769, though its origin is older. Before 1769, there were various small monarchical systems. It was in 1769 that Prithvi Narayan Shah, a ruler of the Gurkha principality, conquered other principalities and founded the kingdom of Nepal. The Shah rulers established a strong system in which all powers were vested in the king.

But the absolute powers of the king had to face numerous challenges in the course of time, in the absence of a strong ruler.

The issue of regency, and conflicts in the royal family gave rise to various noble families, one of whom ultimately succeeded in capturing political power, under the leadership of Jang Bahadur Rana. He took over powers from the king in 1846 and established the Rana rule. Till 1956 he had succeeded in taking over all the powers vested in the King. The real King was pushed into the background. He was merely a figurehead, and the country was ruled by the Ranas. This situation continued till 1951 when the King was liberated from the Rana autocracy.

Monarchy has a significance in Nepalese society from the religious and the traditional point of view. Nepalese society is largely a follower of Hinduism. It has been declared a Hindu state under the constitution of 1962. Only a Hindu can be the King of Nepal. Thus, monarchy is directly related to the religious sentiments of the people. In this regard the monarchy has become a source of religious inspiration.

Even today, the King is regarded as an "Avtar of Lord Vishnu". It is needless to point out that the Nepalese are highly religious. It is a Hindu society in the true sense of the term. In Nepal the institution of monarchy has been a unifying force among various ethnic communities and religions. Even during the Rana rule, this role of the monarchy was maintained. In fact, it was for this reason that the Ranas did not seize the crown, because it was not possible without breaking the institution of monarchy itself. The symbol of unity would have been lost. Thus, the integrative role of the monarchy has been considered throughout the history of Nepal till today.

After the 1950 political change, a new phase began. The country was faced with the numerous challenges of modernization. During Rana rule, the Nepalese was a regimented society. The Ranas did not allow even minimum socio-economic changes in the country. People were deprived of socio-religious reforms, higher education, economic changes and political rights. In fact, they had believed that socio-economic and political reforms would bring consciousness among the people which would ultimately pose challenges to the Rana autocracy. Hence Nepalese society was kept backward.

After 1950, Nepal was faced with a "revolution of rising expectations". The people came in contact with

developments taking place in the outside world. The emerging elite demanded such developments within the country. The monarchy was expected to take steps towards modernising Nepalese society and to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the people. He was the symbol of all sorts of development activities.

Nepal provided an example of an underdeveloped economy. Till 1950, it did not have a transport and communication system. Heavy industries were almost non-existent. Only a few small industries such as jute and match wood factories were in operation. Social services were very poor. The economy was unplanned. 94% of the population was dependent on agriculture but this sector itself was undeveloped! The mode of cultivation was traditional and production was low. The irony of the fact is that it did not have capital and technology to mobilise its resources.

The monarchy took up the responsibility of socio-economic reconstruction. Greater emphasis was laid on the development of roads, airports and telecommunication systems. A number of Highways has been constructed since then, linking various isolated regions of the kingdom. In 1956, Nepal introduced its First Five-Year Plan. Since then it has completed five Five-Year Plans and has entered into the Sixth.

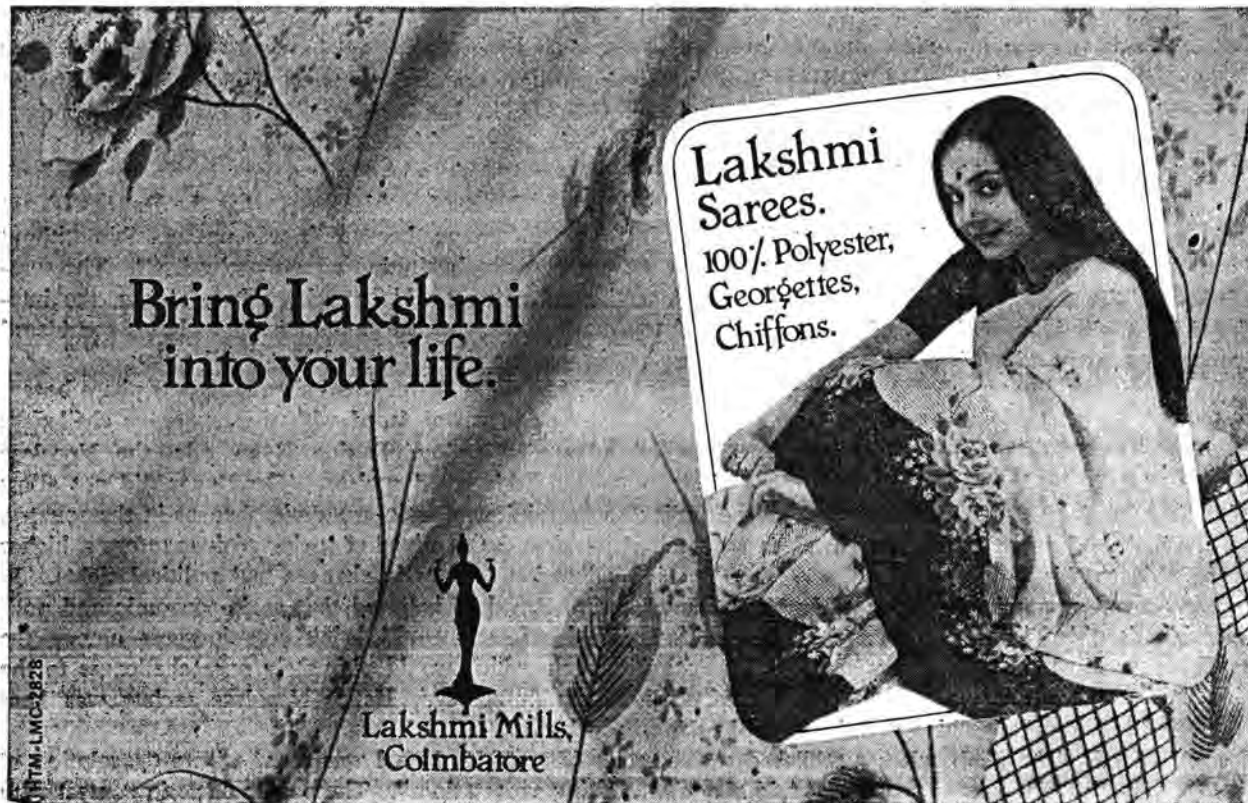
Efforts have also been made towards the development of irrigation, hydro-electric power generation, horticulture, forestry, integrated rural development

and so on. Since the 1960's, industrial development has also taken place. Foreign private capital has been introduced for the development of this sector. In the field of agriculture, new technology and fertilisers have been introduced. Attempts have been made to improve land structures through land reform programmes.

In the field of social development a number of services have been introduced, such as public health, education, postal services, drinking water supply schemes, etc. Since Nepal did not have capital and technology, it tried to seek huge amounts of foreign aid from bilateral and multilateral sources.

In Nepal the whole economy is controlled by a few hands. Whatever has been the rate of growth its benefits have gone to the rich classes only. The corrupt, inefficient administration, faulty planning, loopholes in policy implementation and lack of political credibility has further worsened the situation. The huge amounts of foreign aid have benefitted only a few. Because of faulty economic policies it has not been possible to attract capital towards the neediest spheres. One example is that because of highly profitable export-import business, it has not been possible to attract private capital in the manufacturing sector.

Thus, it can be said that regarding economic modernisation of Nepal what is apparent is not reality. No doubt the monarchy has attempted modernising the Nepalese economy, but it has remained



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confined to certain structural changes. The monarchy has not made such attempts which could make modernisation meaningful. Because of its own political prerogatives no thought seems to have been given to equitable distribution. In fact, under the garb of economic modernisation, a "sub economy" has developed in Nepal which benefits the upper classes only.

The spirit of the 1950 movement was to establish a democratic political system in Nepal after the overthrow of the Rana rule. Consequently, the monarchy took the role of an articulator of the Nepalese political consciousness. King Tribhuvan was given the respect of "The Father of the Nation" and considered an architect of democracy. In February 1951, King Tribhuvan declared that Nepal would be governed in accordance with a constitution drawn up by a constituent assembly composed of the elected representatives of the people. The Government of Nepal Act, 1951 was a significant move in this regard. Efforts were made to change the non-political character of the monarchy. However, the democratic forces failed to secure political stability in the kingdom. Because of intra-party and inter-party conflicts there were frequent changes in the government. The alignment and realignment of the democratic forces complicated the already confused politics.

These circumstances, however, paved the way for the monarchy to consolidate all powers in its own hands. The political role of the monarchy increased with King Mahendra's accession to the throne in 1955. He took a direct interest in political affairs and created a dynamic image of the monarchy in the politics of the country. He accused political parties of creating instability. However, he did accept the demand for a constitution and general election. Thus, in 1959, Parliamentary democracy was established in Nepal. It was a successful attempt towards political modernisation of the kingdom.

The experiment in Parliamentary democracy proved to be short-lived. In 1960, King Mahendra abrogated the Parliamentary government and took over power. It was a serious set-back to the process of political modernisation of Nepal.

In 1962, a new political order was introduced. It came to be known as the Panchayat system. King Mahendra viewed it as an indigenous model suited to the tradition and culture of Nepal. He was of the opinion that the western type of democracy was not suitable to the Nepalese environment. In fact, King Mahendra was thinking in terms of a political order such as the basic democracy of General Ayoob Khan of Pakistan, the guided democracy of Sukarno of Indonesia, and the class organisation of Nasser of Egypt. These countries had rejected western democracy and evolved a political system which they claim-

ed to be the third-world model of democracy. But in reality it provided legitimacy to their autocratic rule.

The Panchayat system was faced with certain inherent contradictions. While it was stated to be aimed at the establishment of democracy at the grass-roots level, it did not have any mechanism for this purpose. The political parties which are considered to be vehicles of educating the masses were banned. People were deprived of organised political activities. Similarly, it emphasised the principle of decentralization, but in practice proved to be a highly centralised political system in which monarchy was the holder of all powers. The Panchayat hierarchies which had to act as units of decentralization, were not assigned any power. Moreover, the whole political and administrative system continued to be run by a few castes who had been dominant in the power structure since the days of the Ranas. Other ethnic groups have not been mobilised.

The same trend seemed to continue in the 1981 general elections of the national Panchayat. It does not seem to express the spirit of democratising the polity.

In the third amendment to the constitution certain changes have been made in the present set-up. However, the basic tenets of the panchayat policy i.e. partylessness and the supremacy of the King remain.

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THE YEAR OF THE CHILD AND V.D.

By MAJOR M. P. VORA (R)

THE United Nations had declared 1979 as the International Year of the Child to focus public attention on the child's plight and to improve its quality. The International Year of the Child (I.Y.C.) has come and gone but the maintenance of good health is a continuous process. It was the most appropriate time to take stock and review measures to achieve the object envisaged.

India has adopted a national policy for her children and declared them as "a supremely important asset whose nurture and solicitude are her responsibility". There are the National Children's Board, the National Commission for the I.Y.C. and the Indian Council for Child Welfare. However, these institutions resemble pious platitudes only, as the reality of apathy, aversion and inaction continues unfailingly. It is imperative that prevailing attitudes are changed, prejudices are cast aside and inactivity towards the large number of hapless and miserable children in the country is discarded.

Much publicity was given over various media to many aspects of childhood disabilities such as mental retardation, paralysis, blindness, deafness, nutritional deficiencies, etc., the number of children involved in each category and measures taken or to be taken for their correction. However, in none of these talks or articles was any reference, even by way of narration, to the vast number of children involved in venereal diseases, a serious hazard for children! The I.Y.C. was the best time to awaken and alert the public and to make them aware of their menace, gravity and magnitude.

Our failure to recognise V.D. in children to a great extent is due to a false conception of it. The significance of a high incidence of V.D. in children has been, unfortunately, considered unworthy of attention and ignored. This conspiracy of silence regarding V.D. is a familiar experience especially of venereologists. The age-old assumption that venereal diseases are associated with promiscuous sex relations or immoral sex behaviour continues to weigh on the public mind; children are usually not involved in such acts; hence its incidence in children is generally not anticipated and appreciated.

For our purpose, it is enough to consider children upto 15 years of age, irrespective of when puberty begins or ends.

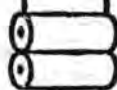
The writer would emphasize that these diseases do attain significant proportions in children and contribute greatly to their illness, disabilities and death. A

large number of children experience health hazards of different magnitudes, apart from the sizeable loss of child population. An authentic assessment of all data in both qualitative and quantitative terms is very necessary but is often not available, overlooked or ignored by health authorities.

The number of children who become victims of V.D. cannot be stated precisely, for want of accurate statistics and, particularly, when there is a strong tendency to push under the carpet everything that concerns V.D. However, some indication of the extent and magnitude of V.D. in children can be inferred or deducted fairly accurately from the circumstantial evidence and otherwise sketchy information available in some parts of the country.

The term V.D. may appear misleading, irrelevant and inappropriate, when one speaks of congenital syphilis caught in the uterus or ex-utero at the time of delivery. But there is no substance in this. Person-to-person transmission of V.D. by direct (sexual or assexual) or indirect contact is common. V.D. can incidiously cripple or destroy fellow-beings irrespective of age, sex, colour, caste and economic or social status.

The micro-organisms that cause V.D. are not inhibited or restrained by barriers like age, sex, climate, season or place. They attack humans at all times and everywhere. They have a serious impact not only on the individual human victim but also on other members of the family and the whole community. Of all



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the social ills of man, the least manifest and least likely ever to be static are venereal diseases. However, they are often relegated—notwithstanding the alarming rise—to a position of no importance, because of the stigma. They are rarely spot-lighted like malaria, leprosy, typhoid, cancer or tuberculosis.

Treponema pallidum of syphilis can affect a foetus in the uterus, at the time of its delivery or thereafter, threatening its very existence or inflicting permanent disabilities. But this is conveniently ignored. The virtual unawareness, lack of appreciation and absence of concern impair or destroy the very well-being, health and happiness of childhood. Doesn't this amount to flagrant violation or denial of the United Nations' aim and solemn declaration of the Government?

It is said that the child population constitutes nearly 40 to 42 per cent of the total population of the country. If the total population of India is assumed to be 700 million, the child population comes to 280 to 290 million. Out of this child population, how many suffer from V.D.?

Nearly 125 to 130 infants out of 1000 born yearly die soon after their birth; of these, how many deaths are due to syphilis or the virus infection venereally transmitted? What is the role of syphilis and gonorrhoea in the causation of disabilities like blindness, deafness, paralysis and mental retardation among children? V.D. may cause abortion, miscarriage, still-

birth or neonatal death.

Authentic data regarding prematurity, new born mortality, infant mortality, child mortality and the rates of various disabilities in children are of prime importance to the health planners and venereologists. These questions, therefore, require proper answers from our health authorities, to determine precisely the effects of V.D. on national child health. Will the health authorities in the country pay adequate attention to these questions, collect necessary data and compile statistical studies, to throw light on this vital topic?

While searching for information, the writer stumbled upon the report by the Bombay Social Hygiene Council on Bombay City for the year 1920. Though it is outdated, it is sure to give an indication of the havoc V.D. can cause. "The J. J. Hospital recorded that 18.7 per cent of the indoor patients and 23.3 per cent of the outdoor patients had an evidence of V.D. At the Motalibai and Cama Hospitals for women 10 to 15 per cent patients were seropositive for syphilis. Among 2,000 yearly stillbirths in the city 18.5 per cent (370) were due to syphilis. Out of 9,000 children that died annually, 3,000 died of congenital syphilis. Of the blind 30 per cent, of the deaf 25 per cent and of the mentally deficient 50 per cent children were due to the result of V.D."

But this report could not act as an eye-opener!

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BOOK REVIEWS

WHAT NEXT IN THE LAW by Lord Denning; Butterworths (Distributed in India by N. M. Tripathi & Co.); 1982; Pp. 352; £5.95.

Since 1979, Lord Denning has been coming out with a book every year. Written in a style that stands out as much for its elegance as for its economy of words, these books contain absorbing accounts of Denning's life and experiences at law. They are interspersed liberally with his personal reactions to the crucial issues thrown up during his long and distinguished career on the Bench.

Although they became instant best-sellers, these books did not fail to attract their fair share of hostile notice, especially from the leftist establishment in England. It spared no effort to castigate the learned judge for his allegedly anti-labour, anti-immigrant, reactionary bias. Less vociferous critics, who included some of Denning's judicial brethren, were content with conferring on him the epithet of **vieillard terrible**.

Viewed against this background, it was not entirely surprising that Denning's latest book should have stirred up yet another controversy. This time, though, the voices of protest were shriller and more numerous. Even sections of conservative opinion joined the chorus of resentment over certain remarks Denning had made on, among other things, the sensitive question of jury selection. Consequently, the book's publishers were forced to withdraw the 10,000 copies they had issued on May 20, in the face of threatened legal action.

Meanwhile, the Society of Black Lawyers and the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers, two avowedly radical groups, wrote to the Lord Chancellor demanding Denning's retirement from the Bench forthwith. They felt that his remarks were not only derogatory, but "couched in terms virulent enough to destroy any remaining credibility he may have as an unbiased and impartial interpreter of the law."

On May 25, less than a week after the book was published, Denning himself announced that his long innings as a judge would come to an end on July 31. It was a sad day for his countless admirers in the profession and outside.

What exactly did Denning say to bring upon himself such a groundswell of ire and antagonism? The offending passage itself provides the answer. It was Denning's view, honestly held, that only "sensible and responsible members of the community should serve on juries." He went on to say that "the English are no longer a homogeneous race. They are white and black, coloured and brown. They no longer share the same standards of conduct. Some of them come from

countries where bribery and graft are accepted as an integral part of life and where stealing is a virtue so long as you are not found out."

In making these remarks, Denning was doubtless being far from tactful, the more so because he was still a sitting judge. But whether the remarks themselves justify the unprecedented reaction they provoked is a matter well worth pondering by those who cherish the values of democracy and free speech.

Whatever its background, the book itself is eminently readable. It begins with brief but absorbing pen-portraits of the great legal reformers: Bracton, Coke, Blackstone, Murray and Brougham who, between them, did far more for the evolution of Anglo-Saxon law than any of their successors through the centuries. Denning has succeeded in capturing a compelling sense of history while evaluating the work of these stalwarts.

The following sections deal with such diverse topics as trial by jury, legal aid, libel, the law of privacy, fundamental rights, and so on. By far the most fascinating part of the book is the penultimate chapter entitled "Misuse of Power" which is a reproduction of the Richard Dimbleby Lecture delivered by Lord Denning in 1980. In this chapter, Denning is obviously on very firm ground, expounding as forcefully as ever his unshakeable conviction that "the most important function of the law is to restrain the abuse

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of power by any of the holders of it—no matter whether they be the government, the newspapers, the television, the trade unions, the multinational companies, or anyone else.”

Evidently, even the most ardent admirer of the learned judge will find it hard to agree with everything in his book. Some of Denning's conclusions, tentative though they might be, are *prima facie* controvertible. Others are potentially damaging to his image as a judge. That should not, however, detract from his essential greatness as a first-class human being whose contribution to the cause of justice has deservedly made him a legend in his own lifetime.

Wasn't it Lord Scarman who characterised the post-war era as the period of legal aid, law reform and Lord Denning?

—K. S. Venkateswaran

INDIA OF THEIR DREAMS

THE INDIA OF OUR DREAMS. Editor: M. V. Kamath. IBH Publishing Company, Bombay. Rs. 25, Pp. 19 + 226.

Journalists are generally critics of public affairs, not in the sense of being out only to criticise and condemn but as those who look at both sides of a question. By

doing that, they perform a very useful and essential public function. They should be acclaimed for it, instead of being blamed. Sometimes they may even take upon themselves the role of pathfinders for the general public.

This book belongs to the latter category. A number of journalists have joined together to draw a picture of "The India of Our Dreams". They belong to different schools of thought and work for a variety of journals. Ordinarily, there is nothing to unite them except their common feeling for the country of their birth, and their desire to see it triumph over its present difficulties. There is no doubt in their minds about the ultimate triumph, and yet the remedies that they suggest are not the same.

It is remarkable that not one of the writers has suggested the withdrawal of liberties or the tightening of strings. They all stand for expansion of freedom and for the decentralisation of power. Some have expressed in strong terms their resentment against the recent tendency to concentrate power.

Five prominent journalists have contributed to the volume. In addition there is a common piece by several economists putting forward their collective point of view.

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LETTERS

OPPOSITION PEACE MARCH

Dear Sir,

The Peace March organised in Delhi on 4th October 1982 by some opposition parties including the Communist Party of India, the Communist (Marxist) Party of India, the Democratic Socialist Party and the Forward Bloc, is reported to have been attended by lakhs of people from all over India. It was therefore a success.

It is a good sign that these opposition parties have a united approach at least regarding the attainment of Peace. But their demand, as stated on the giant banner carried in front of the procession, was that national security atomic weapons should be banned and the struggle of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation should be supported. These seem to me self contradictory.

No doubt from the point of view of national security of all nations and of international peace, it would be a good thing if all nations including the nuclear powers are pressurised to ban atomic weapons altogether. But how can the objective of peace be achieved by giving unconditional support to the PLO? It is common knowledge that the PLO is a terrorist organisation, and you can't expect peace from a terrorist organisation. Any moral support given to the PLO should not mean that we in India support terrorism. We should not forget the lessons that the Father of our Nation taught us so clearly, and which we profess to follow.

In this context Pope John Paul's recent meeting with the PLO leader Yasser Arafat is relevant. In spite of severe criticism by the Israeli Prime Minister Mr. Begin, the Pope (who is the Head of the Catholic Church, the largest religious organisation in the world) held the meeting as planned. He called on all sides in the conflict to abandon every recourse to war, to violence and to the forms of armed struggle some of which in the past have been particularly ruthless and inhuman.

If we genuinely wish to help in solving the common problem of both the Israelis and the Palestinians, we should not support either of them unconditionally. The leaders of the Peace March in Delhi seem to have ignored this important aspect of the matter.

New Delhi.

S. G. Mampilli

Sir,

I have just finished reading your journal **Freedom** First of October 1982.

May I draw your attention to the discrepancy in your editorial entitled "Welcome Farooq Abdullah!" In the paragraph beginning "Since Farooq has declared," etc. you write: "... his intentions to strengthen ties with New Delhi, **reciprocal co-operation would be natural on India's part.** But the scenario will not unfold according to **India's wishful thinking about integration . . .**" etc.

I have underlined the worlds which are objectionable. Such words are misleading and cast doubts on Kashmir being a part of India. It looks as if Kashmir or its Chief Minister is dealing with a foreign country. I object to such implications.

Bombay.

Ms. S. S. Rao

Editor's reply: Kashmir has a special relation with India. A move on Kashmir's part to strengthen ties with India implies expectations, which cannot be ignored.

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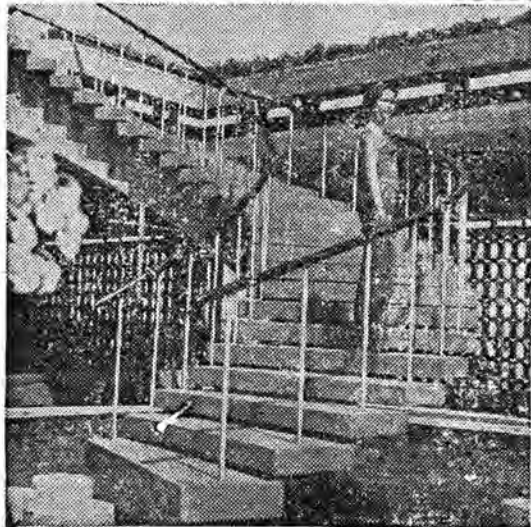
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WITH MANY VOICES

Who are the three most secure chief ministers in India? According to the current joke in Delhi—Jyoti Basu, M. G. Ramachandran and Farooq Abdullah. Spot anything common?

—*The Sunday Observer*, September 19.

I am not just involved in tennis but committed. Do you know the difference between involvement and commitment? Think of ham and eggs. The chicken is involved. The pig is committed.

—Martina Navratilova as quoted in *Newsweek*.

If a judge can wear a turban to work, why can't a schoolboy?

—*The Economist*, August 21.

Our American friends should remember that Israel is not Chile and I am not (President) Allende.

—Prime Minister Begin as quoted in *The Times*,
September 11.

No one suggests that the Hongkong masses are looking forward to a bright new future under Chinese state socialism.

—*The Guardian*, September 18.

October is one of the peculiarly dangerous months to speculate in stocks. The others are July, January, September, April, November, May, March, June, December, August and February.

—Mark Twain quoted in *Herald Tribune*, Sept. 23.

The Pope is shot; so are two US Presidents; who'll be next? Ulster burns every night; Riots break out in Leeds, Brixton, the South Coast towns. There are bomb scares at Kennedy Airport. Troops besiege the Spanish Parliament; terrorists take hostages, kill businessmen in Germany, judges and statesmen in Italy, policemen, soldiers, and civilians in the U.K. The Middle East crackles with threats of violence. Soviet troops kill 50,000 people in Afghanistan. In such a world, who's to say that the bang-bang dramas are out of place?

—"M" in *Encounter*, August 1981.

The so-called period *detente*—roughly 1970-'80—was the golden age of Soviet expansionism.

—Jean-Francois Revel in *Encounter*, August 1981.

It is interesting to wonder whether Angola, Arghanistan, and Iran would have occurred if Saigon had not fallen.

—Robert Elegant in *Encounter*, August 1981.