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GEETA DOCTOR

THE FRUITS OF COMPROMISE

S. V. Raju

The people of India voted the Janata Party to office on the strength of its election manifesto. There were several promises made in the manifesto. One such was to restore the liberties of our people, robbed from them by the previous regime. This pledge, the Janata has redeemed to a large extent though, judging by the lawlessness prevalent in the country today, one could well say "I voted for liberty, not for licence". That however, is another story.

The other major promise was the Janata Party's pledge to rescind the infamous 42nd Amendment to the Constitution rammed through a captive parliament and ratified by submissive States during the 19-month dictatorship. In effect this pledge implied the Janata Party's determination to make India safe for democracy. There was no ambiguity in this electoral assurance and certainly no escape clause that the promise was subject to political exigencies. All that they then said was, "give us the majority and we shall throw the 42nd out of the window". In the implementation of this pledge, the Janata Party has miserably failed, showing neither political courage nor the will to remove from the Constitution elements that all but prostituted the great document hammered out with such great care in the Constituent Assembly by the Founding Fathers of this Republic.

For the second time inside a year, *Freedom First* feels compelled to deal with this important matter. Again for the second time, it has become necessary to reproduce the following passage from the election manifesto of the Janata Party for the General Elections of March 1977:

"The Constitution was amended to sanctify and institutionalise a total concentration of power in the hands of the individual — the Prime Minister. The authoritarian trends that had unfolded themselves over the past few years were embodied in the 42nd Amendment which was bulldozed through Parliament. To call it an amendment is a misnomer. It is a betrayal of the testament of faith that the founding fathers bequeathed to the people and it subverts the basic structure of the 1950 Constitution. It vitiates the federal principle and upsets the nice balance between

the people and Parliament, Parliament and the judiciary, the judiciary and the executive, the States and the Centre, the citizen and the Government. It is the culmination of a conspiracy to devalue democracy that started with the deliberate and consummate scuttling of democratic processes in the ruling party, and the concentration of all power in the hands of a leader who has been sought to be identified with the nation or to be placed above it."

The manifesto then went on to pledge that it would seek to rescind the 42nd Amendment.

Given the contours of the party position especially in the Rajya Sabha, the leaders of the Janata Party were well aware of the difficulties in the way of implementing this particular pledge. They were no doubt aware that even though they were returned to the Lok Sabha with an overwhelming or absolute majority, they were still in a minority in the Rajya Sabha. But at that point of time, it did not matter. There was no talk of seeking a consensus, even less a compromise, and that too with the perpetrators of the 42nd.

The process of restoration of civic rights cannot be considered complete until the Constitution is restored at least to its pre-42nd form, if not to its original

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IN THIS ISSUE

We are happy to carry Mr. Zahiruddin Ahmad's reflections on the partition, the problems it brought in its wake and the need for closer ties between the three countries in the sub-continent. A seminar in Kashmir pondered on the problems of the Third World. We carry a brief report. World News pay tribute to two giants who passed away recently — Ignazio Silone and President Jomo Kenyatta.

Kerala's Mini Boom

"Please have patience, we will cook you while you wait" says a note on a menu card meant to reassure prospective customers of a newly opened restaurant. Such incongruities are now a regular part of the Kerala scene, ever since the Middle East opened its golden doors attracting a veritable flood of Keralites in the last few years. The echoes of the petrodollar boom have woken up remote little towns which have been asleep since the days of Vasco da Gama. Imitation five star hotels, with hilarious continental specialities misspelt on their menus, have sprung up to cater to the more sophisticated needs of the newly returned men who once upon a time used to loiter at the tea shops while their women worked in the fields. Thatched roofs have been replaced by concrete, and mud floors with mosaic tiles in the hundreds of "Dubai villas" which garishly dot the countryside. The lowly banana has been upstaged by the golden apple "imported" from Kashmir, grass mats have been changed to plastic ones made in Japan, while the men proudly wear the imprint of the Middle East on their wrists with Seiko watches, and display their families cheerfully wrapped in nylon and terylene.

In a detailed study undertaken by the *Economic and Political Weekly* it was noted that out of the 95 households in a given area, one to three persons had gone abroad from every family. The rest were waiting, visas in hand, for their turn. The majority had left in the latter half of the seventies, and according to the survey, were to be found mainly in four countries: Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar and Sharja. Among the reasons why Keralites in particular have been a success in the Middle East, may be the fact that three fourths of those who have gone are Muslims who would be better able to adjust to the stringent religious sanctions prevailing in these countries. They have also the advantage of having had a basic education upto SSC, provided by the socialistic education policy in Kerala, as well as having been used to migrating in large numbers to other parts of the country in search of odd jobs such as hotel boys and drivers.

What is disturbing to note is the conclusion arrived at by the study. "It was found that more than 90% of the savings of householders were either invested in land and buildings or spent for marriage purposes. A part of the savings were also invested in durable consumer goods such as radios, cycles etc. These households do not have any productive investment in industries. Only four households had invested money in taxi cars. An inquiry with the local banks also revealed that there were no fixed deposits or other deposits in the banks worth mentioning from the households earning foreign money."

It would be foolish to imagine that the present construction boom in the Middle East will create endless opportunities for Kerala's surplus population. Already there are signs of a gradual tapering off in the number of available jobs to relatively unskilled workers. The number of passports and visas that are

being issued at Ernakulam has dropped so dramatically in recent days that the passport office is said to be facing the problem of retrenching more than a hundred temporary hands. The number of applications has dropped from two lakhs to fifty thousand within the last year.

Nobody appears to have given a thought to what will happen when those who have benefited from the Middle East bonanza start coming back. It is a social responsibility that the government cannot afford to ignore for very long. For it must be borne in mind that unlike the more affluent sections of society who might have the means and the foresight of safeguarding their interests by stashing their money away into Swiss accounts and the like, these people have faithfully repatriated all their hard earned foreign exchange savings. Some form of counselling service should be provided to ensure that this is not completely frittered off in immediate and non-profitable avenues which will soon be of no use. In short the government should wake up to the fact that Kerala, which has always been a breeding ground for revolution, will soon be facing a revolution of rising expectations when the mirage created by the Middle East boom floats away beyond their grasp. GD

"Uninformed" Indeed!

Law Ministry spokesmen are working overtime these days. Elsewhere in this issue we have referred to their views on the 45th Amendment to the Constitution. Now they wish to assure the people that government's decision to remove the right to property from the Fundamental Rights Chapter is not all that bad. According to a UNI report published in the *Times of India* of September 18, these gentlemen of the Law Ministry would like people believe that those who are apprehensive are really "uninformed" for believing "that the government would have the right to arbitrarily deprive them of their properties."

It might interest these legal luminaries of the Law Ministry to know what an eminent "uninformed" person has to say on the importance of the right to property:

"The right to property is essential for the effective and meaningful exercise of various other fundamental rights. A very few examples would suffice to illustrate this point. The right to freedom of the press under Article 19(1) (a) would be worthless if a publisher could be deprived of his printing plant and the building in which it is housed without compensation. The right under Article 19(1)(c) to form trade unions would be denuded of its true content if the property of a trade union could be acquired by the State without compensation. The right to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India, which is guaranteed by Article 19(1)(e), would be derisory if the State could expropriate the citizen's hut or house or household effects.....

"Property" has become a dirty word today.

'Liberty' will become a dirty word tomorrow."

Incidentally this "uninformed" individual is none other than that eminent jurist and constitutional expert and at present India's Ambassador to the U.S.A., Mr. N. A. Palkhivala. SVR

Rajneesh at Poona

Poona is reeling under an orange peril. The followers of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh flow past the streets like bright orange corpuscles on cycles, autorickshaws and juktas painted orange, or just by foot. As a result Poona which has always prided itself on being the bastion of Hindu orthodoxy is suffering from more than a touch of arteriosclerosis. Public disapproval of the goings on at the Ashram has hardened to such an extent that the "Bhagwan" is said to have definitely decided to move to a more hospitable spot, while the other day one of the ashramites (a girl) was said to have been raped by the locals.

None of this appears however to have changed the behaviour of the ashramites who were in a state of "Kundalini" bliss when we visited the Ashram the other day. The atmosphere can only be described as mind bogging, which is inappropriate, since a sign at the entrance of the Meditation hall requests, "Please leave your shoes and minds behind here."

The area occupied by the Ashram is small, which explains why the devotees spill out in such numbers into the streets and lanes leading up to it. Once outside, also, they can smoke, and most of them squat on the roadside in twos and threes quietly talking to each other and smoking. What is remarkable is their complete self possession. They just do not seem to be aware of themselves or of how completely out of place they are with their surroundings. This gives them a certain freedom of expression in their appearance, not in the generally filthy ridden, sickly manner that one associates with hippies, but similar. The followers of Rajneesh have a much healthier and happier look. Their style of dressing denotes a complete lack of inhibition or preconceived notion as to how they should look. Afros abound as well as blond manes and henna-ed tresses that can be found on both males and females.

The girls quite obviously do not wear any undergarments, so their robes which range from brilliant shades of chilli red to pale saffron cling revealingly to their young bodies exciting the gratuitous curiosity of passers-by who are frankly fascinated. This casual provocation is no doubt what outrages public sentiment, though of course it can be argued as to who is more immoral, the girls who are unconscious of themselves as sex objects, or the spectators who cannot see them as anything else. What is noteworthy is to see the young women pedalling merrily on their bicycles or walking all by themselves, quite without any fear, even at night, oblivious to any dangers in such a situation.

The doors of the Ashram are massive and ornate, like the doors to an earthly heaven, carved and studded with brass. The guardian angel who has been deputed to stand by, is in white with a small halo of curls. He looks like a Roman Centurion and is about as friendly, for it is not the time for visitors. We are nevertheless allowed to take a small walk. Two boutiques at the entrance sell cassette recordings of the music that fills the Ashram causing everyone to gyrate instinctively. There are also innumerable photographs of Rajneesh filmed from various angles and blown up into a variety of sizes.

The music is compelling, haunting, stirring recollections of sounds of running water and birds singing at mountain streams. So may have sounded the pipe of the Piper of Hamelin. One is drawn to the Meditation hall which is a vast thatched umbrella open on all sides, with plants and flowers surrounding it. Various particles of beings are gyrating inside so that it appears at first, like an enormous discotheque but there is no noise except the music, and the movement involves the head, arms and shoulders more than the groin. A lot of the dancers have saffron eye masks covering half of their face. Nobody touches any one else and some just sway dreamily to the music while the others work out elaborate rhythmic contortions. Some of them are stripped to a small piece of cloth around their waist, but most are dressed in flowing garments, which along with their brightly coloured hair, lend a weird choreography to the scene. The kundalini dancing lasts an hour and there are similar Sufi dances also. When the participants are tired, they simply go and stretch out at the side and fall asleep.

Outside the meditation hall people keep responding unconsciously to the music throbbing through the place. When they talk to one another, they stand close, palms outstretched and touching as though closing an electrical circuit of communication. As we walk by, a couple is standing in the middle of the path. The man is tall and blond, the girl is short and dark haired, they hold each other in a close but detached embrace, their arms clasped around each other's waist. They notice neither each other, nor those who walk past, nor a whole bunch of small children, some of them nude, who are shouting and playing around them. Are they involved in "Couple Kundalini" perhaps? Others are preparing food, or cutting the clothes which are sold at another small boutique which stocks the beads, bags, chains with Rajneesh locketts and bars of "Dharma Soap" made without the artificial perfumes found in ordinary soaps which Rajneesh is said to be allergic to, and which is therefore banned from use.

One sympathises with the Poona residents. Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh obviously has the most fantastic sense of humour. He has posed a threat so audacious in its destruction of all the cant and hypocrisy so dear to any orthodoxy, that one can safely predict that Poona will never be the same again. GD

The Fruits of Compromise — Contd. from page 1

and pristine glory as adopted by the Constituent Assembly — a demand that Rajaji ceaselessly made till the end of his life. All that the Janata Party was expected to do was to fulfil its election pledge to remove the evil features in the Constitution introduced into the document by a dictatorship to give it self the garb of legitimacy. Surely not an unreasonable demand. And if there were MPs who opposed the total repeal of the 42nd they would have been exposed before the bar of public opinion. Unfortunately the Janata Government betrayed a deplorable lack of political guts. Not wanting a rejection of the 45th Amendment, they sought to water down the 45th to a level they expected would be acceptable to the Opposition. And yet the followers of Mrs Indira Gandhi (including of course her CPI allies) threw it out of the Rajya Sabha anyway. A rejection of the 45th seeking total repeal would have given the Janata Party an immeasurably stronger weapon to attack the followers of Mrs Gandhi. The defeat of even a weaker measure simply fails to enthuse.

Where was the need for the Janata Party to consult the Opposition? In his front page article in the November 1977 issue of *Freedom First* the then editor, Mr. M. R. Masani asked: "Does it mean that a Government in a parliamentary democracy should only introduce legislation for which a majority in both Houses of Parliament is assured in advance." Pointing out that the British House of Lords — with a Conservative majority — had on more than one occasion thrown out legislation adopted by the House of Commons, Mr. Masani asked whether this meant the Labour Prime Minister Mr. James Callaghan should in such a situation send for Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, the Conservative Leader of the Opposition and say: "Margaret, old girl, do you mind very much if I introduce a Bill for such and such purpose and will you please tell the Lords to behave? If you don't I shall desist from introducing the measure in the Commons." If Mr. Callaghan were to do this, wrote Mr. Masani, he would not have lasted long in office.

The accomplices in the Emergency (itself a stupid word to describe what was really a dictatorship) had the gall to shoot down even the anaemic 45th without compunction. Actions speak louder than words and their action in defeating the 45th proves beyond doubt that the political predators of 1975 and 1976 are not only not repentant but have in fact challenged the people's verdict of March 1977. The provisions in the 45th which met with the Opposition's disapproval are by themselves significant. The following is from a report in the *Indian Express* of September 12:

The clauses voted down in the Upper House include those relating to:

- Restoring to the fundamental rights chapter primacy over the directive principles of State policy;
- Identifying fundamental rights, free and fair elections and independence of judiciary as basic features of the Constitution and provision for vesting the electorate with the sovereign power to approve or reject in a referendum any amendment prejudicially affecting the basic features;

— Defining the expressions "secular" and "socialism" in the preamble to the Constitution."

Such indeed are the fruits of compromise. In this context, the Law Ministry's reported advice to the Government to accept the truncated Bill (i.e. minus the provisions rejected by the Rajya Sabha) as, according to them, it "still contains a number of safeguards against subversion of the Constitution by a transient majority in parliament" is both pathetic and typical of the bureaucracy. They prefer to follow the old adage "half a loaf is better than none" except that in this instance it is not even half a loaf but only a few crumbs that the people are asked to accept.

One could perhaps presume that the Law Ministry's leak in the *Indian Express* reflects the thinking of the Law Minister, Mr. Shanti Bhushan who has in any case not hidden his feeling that the 42nd is not all bad. Speaking at an election meeting on March 8, 1977, Mr. Shanti Bhushan asked, for instance, "If there are good parts why should we oppose them?" The Law Minister's heart is obviously not really on the job. But the issue is not that there are some good parts to the 42nd. Even parts of a rotten apple are edible. The point is the manner in which the 42nd was legislated and its overall objective. Both are reprehensible.

It is to be fervently hoped that the reported advice of the Law Ministry is rejected by the Government. The Bill should be allowed to lapse and this time the Janata Government should introduce a fresh Amendment Bill seeking to repeal *in toto* the 42nd.



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THIRTY YEARS AGO-THIRTY YEARS LATER

Zahiruddin Ahmad

Mr. Zahiruddin Ahmad is settled in Australia. He sent in this article on the 30th anniversary of Indian independence

Time, it seems, has come to say a few things. About events which happened thirty years ago. And about what those events look like thirty years later. Time for a bit of rethinking.

Of course I remember the 15th of August 1947, the day when we became both free and divided. I was in Calcutta and, as everyone knows, a miracle took place in Calcutta on that day. For a whole year — from the 16th of August 1946, when the Muslim League had declared "Direct Action" day, to be exact — Calcutta had been a divided city. It was unsafe for a Hindu to be seen in a Muslim area, unsafe for a Muslim to venture into a Hindu area. Suddenly, on the 15th of August 1947, the sky cleared and Hindus and Muslims rejoiced together as never before. We all shouted, "*Hindu Muslim bhai-bhai, nahin larenge, nahin larenge*"! It was marvellous.

Alas, that promise was not fulfilled. In 1951, my family — a Bengali Muslim family — had to leave for Pakistan. I joined the Civil Service of Pakistan in 1955 and resigned from it in 1957. I have not been to Pakistan since.

I have never really believed in the ideology of Pakistan. Mr. Jinnah said, "The Muslims of India are a nation". From what I have read and understood of the history of India and from what I have seen of Indian Muslims, it seems to me far truer to say that the Muslims of India are no more than castes of Indian society.

For the basis of Indian society — I say of "Indian" society, not just of Hindu society — is caste. The system is, perhaps, best compared to a vast honey-comb, where each caste occupies a separate cell or a group of cells. Foreigners who have come to India have been absorbed into the system, in the sense that new cells have been created for them, so that they could both retain their identity and, at the same time, belong to the system. The honey-comb itself has never been destroyed.

The same thing happened to the Muslim invaders and the converts from Hinduism to Islam who form the overwhelming majority of the Muslims in the sub-continent. They became separate castes of Indian society. In our own times, we can speak with some justification, I think, of Punjabi Muslims, Gujarati Muslims, Bengali Muslims, etc., as separate castes, each caste with its sub-castes.

Of course, class comes into the picture as well. But class, in the sense of a socio-economic group, has, I think, been absorbed into the caste system of India. One may speak, for instance, of a Bengali Muslim middle-class caste, a Bengali Muslim lower middle-class caste, and so on.

I say this largely because all the criteria of caste apply to the Muslim castes. They are endogamous, though not as rigidly, perhaps, as in the case of most Hindu castes; they follow certain groups of occupations; and, of course, they have the usual Muslim taboos about food and drink.

I have read Tara Chand's book on the *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* (1963) and Aziz Ahmad's *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (1964) as well as his (Ahmad's) later work on *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan* (1967). Neither author, it seems to me, is wholly right. A common Hindu-Muslim culture, such as Tara Chand speaks of, may have existed among the ruling classes — both Hindu and Muslim — in Muslim India. Hindu rajahs who paid tribute to, or worked under, Muslim rulers may have learnt Persian, worn Muslim dress, built palaces in the Indo-Muslim style, but all this left the Hindu masses untouched. On the other hand, to speak of the civilisation which developed during the many centuries of Muslim rule in India as a "foreign" culture in the Indian environment is clearly wrong. Indo-Muslim civilisation — and I do believe there was, and is, such a thing — is Indian. Not simply because the mass of the Muslims of India are converts from Hinduism and have carried over into Muslim society many features of Hindu society (such as, adherence to caste ideas); but also because there is nothing in the basic theory of Indian society — the theory of caste — which prevents the acceptance of Indo-Muslim society as Indian, even if, to some extent, separate from Hindu society.

Indian civilisation, as far as I know, has never been, nor ever claimed to be, a homogeneous civilisation. It is heterogeneous. There is room in it, literally, for all sorts.

Which is why I am prepared to believe, as Aziz Ahmad does, that the Bhakti movement of medieval Hinduism and the Sufi movement of medieval Islam (both of which touched the lives of the masses of India) were parallel developments — and parallel lines, of course, never meet. But then, there is room in Indian civilisation for parallel — indeed, antagonistic — developments. India has never, to my knowledge, admitted only a single line of development.

There is another point. Mr. Jinnah and his followers (such as Aziz Ahmad) spoke and speak of Hindus and Muslims as two nations and two cultures, sharply and clearly distinguished from each other, sharp black contrasted with sharp white. Such a black-and-white picture ignores the infinite shades of grey which exist in Indian society. In pre-partition India, it was possible to meet Hindus and Sikhs from the Punjab or Sindh who were highly "Muslimised", if a knowledge of Persian and the use of Urdu for reading, writing and speaking, were distinctively "Muslim". At the other end of the spectrum, there were many Bengali Muslims who were just as highly "Hinduised".

Yet another point, and an important one, is that whatever the kings and emperors may have done or the poets and scholars written or spoken about, the people of India — the people who live in our villages, the poor people — have, in the course of centuries, arrived at a certain way of living with each other: accepting each other's differences and living at peace with each other for most of the time. Clashes do

occur, of course, but left to themselves, our people, if they do not exactly love each other always, do not hate each other always, either. We accept each other, because we accept anything which has been here for a long, long time.

I have known Hindu-Muslim relations at the worst of times and in the worst of places: Calcutta, 1946-47. People speak of the Great Calcutta Killing of 16th August 1946 but what many do not know of are the touching acts of humanity by which Muslims placed themselves in considerable danger to save Hindu lives and Hindus risked the wrath of Hindu mobs to save Muslims.

I remember Monday, the 19th of August 1946, when the Army moved in to restore order in Calcutta. When their trucks came to our area of the town, the doors of a dispensary near our house opened for the first time in four days and, from within, a whole horde of Hindu women and children ran out to get into them. For four nights and three days, the Muslim pharmacist had sheltered them from the mobs. Of course, after the Army trucks left, he was beaten up for his pains.

Indeed, the fact that I am alive today is thanks to a Hindu friend of mine, who saved me from a Hindu mob in a Hindu area of Calcutta — where a peace procession which we students had taken out was attacked — when it would have been the easiest thing in the world to have pointed me out as a Muslim. Instead, he put himself to considerable trouble to lead me out to a safe "neutral" area.

So I do not believe that Hindus and Muslims are mortal enemies. I believe they can live together peacefully and have done so in the past.

Why, then, did we split? For historical reasons dating back to the beginnings of British rule in India and the rise of the English-educated Hindu and Muslim bourgeoisies. When the British East India Company began to establish their empire in India, the Hindu merchants and traders — such as Jagat Seth and Umichand in Bengal — proved to be their "natural" allies against the Muslim rulers. Later, when the empire had been well-established, the Hindus were the first to take to English education, while the Muslims — through pride or whatever — lagged behind by several years. The Hindu College in Calcutta was founded in 1817, The Aligarh College in 1875.

Secular Indian nationalism, such as was preached by men like Surendranath Bannerjee or Gopal Krishna Gokhale never had much of a chance in India. It was too much of an Indian branch of English, Victorian liberalism. A more rooted-in-the-soil-of-India Hindu nationalism had to come about, if it was to stir the Hindu masses of India. It came about through men like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in Bengal and Bal Gangadhar Tilak in Maharashtra.

This specifically "Hindu" nationalism, though understandable, was the first thing which went wrong the first thing which drove the Muslims to separation.

The second thing, beyond any doubt, — at least, in my mind — was deliberate British policy: the separate electorates of 1909.

I have read both Wasti (*Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement, 1905-10*, Oxford, 1964)

and M. N. Das (*India under Morley and Minto*, London, 1964) on the Morley-Minto reforms. There can be little doubt that Das's book represents a more substantial piece of historical research. Reading both books carefully, I have come away with the conviction that the interests of the British government in India at that time coincided with those of the rightist elements among the Muslims — who viewed the drift of the younger generation of Muslims towards the Indian National Congress with alarm — to concede the demand of these rightist elements for separate electorates. The speed with which the British acted in this respect seems to me highly suspicious. Nawab Mahdi Ali Khan, Mohsin-ul-Mulk's letter to Archbold was written on 4th August 1906. The Muslim demand was virtually conceded, in principle, by the Viceroy on 1st October 1906. One should contrast this with the 40 years which the British took to concede the very moderate Congress demand for "simultaneous examinations" for admission to the Indian Civil Service.

To absolve the British of any deliberate desire to set Muslims against Hindus — especially, when their power was being challenged by the "terrorists" in Bengal — is naive. I do not believe that the British were devils, but I am not prepared to believe that they were angels, either. They were men who did what was in their interest to do: to divide the opposition in order to ensure the continuance of their rule in India.

We were fooled in 1909. We were fooled once again in 1922, this time by the Mahatma, when he called off the non-cooperation movement, instead of allowing it to continue alongside the Khilafat movement. I admit that the sight of the Indian Muslims getting all worked up about the Khalifah of Islam, whom neither the Arabs nor the Turks cared much about, has always seemed a bit absurd to me, but a genuine anti-British Hindu-Muslim movement might have developed, had the Mahatma not punctured it in 1922.

We were fooled a third time in 1931, when the Mahatma signed the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and went to attend the second Round Table Conference in London. When he came back, the British had perfected their plans to crush the Civil Disobedience movement in India and this they proceeded to do, with great savagery, in 1932.

So we have been tricked by the British and very badly let down by our leaders. Indeed, had it not been for the Second World War and the post-war Labour government in Britain, I wonder if we would have been free in 1947.

We became free in 1947. I left for Pakistan in 1951. I left Pakistan in 1957. Disbelief in the basic ideology of Pakistan was not the only reason why I left that country. There was something I was ashamed of.

I refer to the treatment of minorities. Lahore was once a centre of the Sikh population of the Punjab. The shrine of their 5th Guru is situated there. When I went to Lahore, I did not see a single Sikh turban there. I was told exultantly by a Pakistani that all Sikhs and Hindus had been either driven out or killed in 1947-48.

In contrast to this, there are, at present, some 60

million Muslims in India. Of course, they have their frustrations and disappointments. So have other Indians. One does not have to be a Muslim to be disadvantaged in India. The practice of the Islamic religion is free. Not even the worst enemies of India have accused her of persecuting the Muslims. Had there been such a persecution, there would have been a Muslim rebellion in India, such as there is in Eritrea or the Philippines. But there is no sign of any such rebellion. And there is no sign of a mass-migration to Pakistan, either, after the initial rush of 1947-58.

I feel ashamed of this contrast. My shame is not shared by many Pakistanis.

I cannot but believe that the partition of India in 1947 was a great mistake — a mistake which has hurt the Muslims of the sub-continent far more than it hurt the Hindus.

For one thing should not be forgotten. As a result of the partition of 1947 and the subsequent creation of Bangladesh in 1971, what was once a united community of Muslims is now divided into three parts, in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. It is obvious that a community — any community — so divided is less effective and less strong than a united community. Had India not been partitioned, the total number of Muslims in the sub-continent would now have been about 200 million.

Of course, these 200 million would still have been in a minority over against the Hindus and others. But a minority of 200 million is one which no one can ignore. Neither should it be forgotten that whereas the Muslims are capable of united action — as the Pakistan movement showed in 1940-47 — there is no society in the world more divided than Hindu society.

Mr. Jinnah pictured Hindu society as a monolith, out to crush the Muslims. This monolith is a myth. Apart from the innumerable divisions of caste, creed and language, which fragment Hindu society, most Hindus, I should think, are neither pro-Muslim nor anti-Muslim. Their main concern in life is, simply, to make both ends meet. The Muslims do not come into the picture at all.

For which reason, I believe it is true to say that, had India not been partitioned in 1947 and had the Muslims stayed in an united India with a strong Muslim party to back up their claims, they would have dominated the scene in India.

But enough of the past and enough of lost opportunities. What of the future?

One thing is indisputable. The situation now is totally different from that of 1947. Bangladesh dealt a death blow to Pakistan in 1971. The future of what remains of Pakistan seems uncertain. India has thrown off Congress rule after thirty years. Time, as I say, has come for some re-thinking.

I suppose, to talk of re-unification is sheer madness — though I would beg all to remember that when Chaudhri Rahmat Ali first put forward his idea of Pakistan, the few who heard about it thought it was mere madness. Yet Pakistan came to be.

But what, except a lack of common sense, prevents us from cooperating in economic activity? Co-operating in and co-ordinating our monetary and financial policies, our trade and commerce, our customs duties (a Zollverein?), our water resources,

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Milton's JEANS & SHIRTS

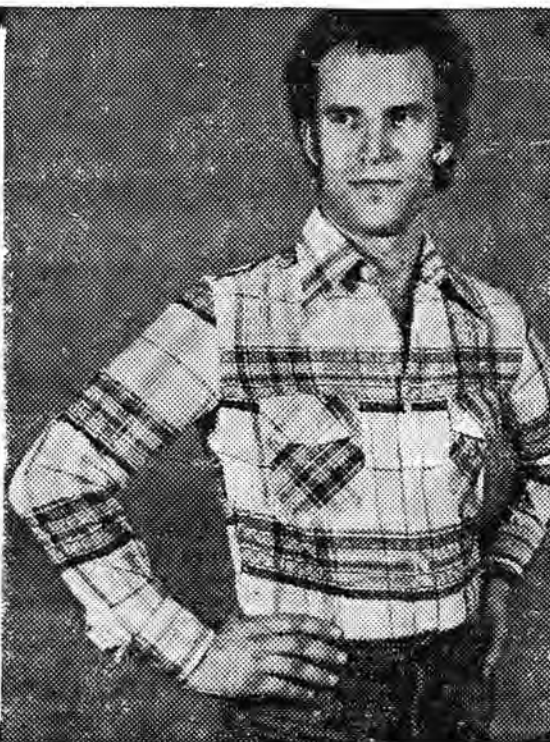
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PROBLEMS OF THE THIRD WORLD

Report of a Seminar

There was wide variety in both the individual political orientation, the personal experience and the national backgrounds of the twenty four participants who came from Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Switzerland, Sweden, Malaysia, Singapore, Togo, Sri Lanka and India and who included Mr. Bhanu Pratap Singh, Minister of State for Agriculture and Irrigation, Mr. J. R. D. Tata, Hon. G. Malagodi, Mr. B. K. Nehru, Mr. M. R. Masani, Mr. David Wrimark, MP, Mr. H. Schaefer, MP, Mr. G. Wuest, Dr. John Marsh, Mr. V. K. Narasimhan, Dr. R. C. Cooper, Mr. V. I. Chacko, Mr. Richard Reich, Dr. Surinder Pruthi, Mr. G. Olympio and Mr. Urs Schoettli.

The seminar held in Srinagar (Kashmir) from September 6 to 9 began with an enlightening exposition of the problems of the Third World by Mr. L. K. Jha, Governor of Jammu and Kashmir.

The seminar devoted its attention to the obligations, priorities, policies and inadequacies of the Third World or developing countries. It was stressed that developing countries have to depend primarily on their own resources and follow policies and create a climate where it would be possible to raise productivity, encourage entrepreneurship and modernisation. They too have a responsibility in creating a more rational, just and cooperative human and economic relationship and order. This calls for a rational division of labour, transfer of capital, technology and knowledge and a willingness to manage affairs efficiently and economically.

Therefore the will and capacity of governments in developing countries to eschew autarchic policies to build up an honest and efficient administration and to stimulate economic growth and social development is a decisive factor.

The seminar was unanimous that one of the tasks facing the Third World was to step up agricultural production and productivity. It was felt that without considerable increases in agricultural productivity the Third World countries cannot:

- (a) step up their exports;
- (b) strengthen their balance of payments position; and
- (c) effectively participate in the world economy.

Agricultural productivity enhancement would not only enable the Third World countries to take their share of the tremendous upsurge expected in demand for food but will also help them cope with the massive internal need for greater quantity and better quality of food and raw materials within their country. The seminar also felt that the increased efficiency in agriculture and higher level of demand would generate a much larger employment potential.

The seminar discussed in detail the subjects of transfer of technology and the concept of appropriate technology. It was pointed out that the question of

transfer of technology had acquired highly emotional and political overtones. It was felt that certain practices followed by LDCs like non-protection of patents, etc. was, in the long run, harming their own interests in the matter of benefits from transfer of technology. The three aspects of the issue which had become central to the strident debate were: whether developing countries could not evolve their own appropriate technology; whether import of technology had an element of exploitation in it and whether it did not reduce the recipient countries to perpetual dependence. It was noted that there was greater sale and purchase of technology among the developed countries themselves and that Japan and Brazil which had largely bought expensive technologies had actually benefited and become large exporters. It was recognised that a majority of LDCs suffer from over-population and unemployment. It is obviously advisable to subject this issue of technology transfer to further objective examination. It is necessary to get away from the dangerous tendency of making any kind of technology whether described as advanced, intermediate or appropriate as the sole answer to our problems. Technology and modernity, i.e. change in attitudes go together. If they do not, we may have change but no progress. Appropriate technology means appropriate to the local resources, physical conditions, levels of knowledge and attitudes. It must also be appropriate to the overall social objectives.

The role of the Multinational Corporations (MNCs) came up for a discussion at length. The seminar was aware of the fact that MNCs had become a subject of intense controversy in recent years although the debate had generated more heat than light, especially on alternative strategies of dealing with this significant historical phenomenon. The seminar took into account the objections to MNCs. But it was felt that even the rational ones were open to such aberrations and the best way to deal with these objections and aberrations were bilateral agreements, blanket agreements between governments concerned and adoption of a code of conduct.

The undoubted right of every country and its people to regulate the operations of MNCs was recognised as also the understandable desire to maintain and preserve national identity. On balance the development and growth of MNCs was to be welcomed as a force for a better cooperative international order.

In conclusion the seminar recommended that more individuals citizens be made aware of the problems in the Third World; liberal organisations should be in the forefront in spreading such awareness at grass root levels on a continuing basis and in shaping the reasons of humane realism that are at the basis of such effort; and that Ministries and agencies dealing with economic cooperation should give increased publicity to their work and the benefits to both LDCs and developed countries.

LEARNING THE RIGHT LESSONS

P. G. Mavalankar M. P.

Have we, or have we not, learnt any lesson from all that happened during the nineteen months of emergency. Those ugly and utterly immoral events of the emergency abound in warnings and lessons, and unless we take heed of these warnings and lessons we will be disloyal to ourselves and to posterity. The Fifth Parliament, barring a few honourable exceptions, was made to conform to the dictates of one individual. Parliament, by and large, was made captive, the press was punished and politicians, political opponents and dissenters were shut down and silenced under MISA. Lakhs of people were arrested under MISA. or the DIR and the Shah Commission report says that preventive detention was converted into punitive detention. Nowhere in the democratic world is preventive detention considered punitive detention. I ask in all humility, whether we have learnt a lesson. I do concede, no one can be taught, especially hon. Members of Parliament or politicians, but surely each one of us can learn.

This is what the Shah Commission in its reports, findings, observations and recommendations expect of us, whether we belong to this party or that party, or inside the House or outside the House.

Difficult Choice

Do we want democracy, or do we want the dangers of authoritarianism to come back? Do we want the rule of law to be restored, preserved and strengthened, or do we want arbitrary actions done in a most high-minded and cavalier fashion?

Do we want the independence of the judiciary, or the subverting and smothering of the entire judicial process? Do we want a free Press or an enslaved Press? Do we want an informed and an alert citizenry, or an apathetic one? Do we want an upright and impartial administration, or a servile, obedient, self-interest-finding and self-preservation-seeking administration? Do we want continuous and critical participation or only occasional involvement by the people when an election or a by-election comes. Do we want an enlightened, vigilant and vibrant public opinion or an ever-sleepy and silent public yes-manship? These are very difficult choices. They are clearly enunciated in the Shah Commission's report, but they are very difficult choices, nevertheless.

Copies of this report (of the Shah Commission) were burnt in many cities, and in my own state, viz. Gujarat. I was ashamed of it. The Congress (I) people did it. I told them: "If you have a better and a more clear alternative, why don't you put it before the people?" It was only in Hitler's Germany that books were burnt, and only in the British democracy that books are read. As long as books are burnt, democracy will be destroyed, but when books are read, a democracy will prosper. I want the leader of the Opposition (Mr. M. K. Stephen, Indira Congress) to remember that burning of reports and books smacks of a fascist, dictatorial tendency. I can understand you may not like a part or the whole of the Shah Commission's report. But instead of burning it, the better thing will be for you to bring out your own.

Act Courageously:

I told Mrs. Gandhi in this very House on 22nd July, 1975, (little less than a month after the declaration of Emergency) that it was not the act of a courageous Prime Minister; that the act of promulgating the Emergency was the act of a weak and cowardly Prime Minister. As the Shah Commission clearly says:

"In the absence of any explanation, the inference is inevitable that a political decision was taken by an interested Prime Minister in a desperate endeavour to save herself from the legitimate compulsion of a judicial verdict against her."

At another place, the Shah Commission's report very succinctly states what is expected of this (the Janata Government):

"The Government has a special responsibility to ensure that extra-constitutional centres of power are not allowed to grow, and if and when located, to snuff them out ruthlessly."

This is what is expected now of this Government, of this Parliament and of all of us.

Mrs. Gandhi and her caucus and her political supporters have committed several types of offences. Their criminal offences are now being investigated. Her political assaults on freedom and democracy have been well punished in the March 1977 elections, when the people of India gave their clear verdict. But what about her constitutional crimes? How do we deal with them? We seem not to be very sure. What can this Parliament do? What can this Government do? That is the vital question and I beg of the Government to think and act courageously and convincingly on this point before time runs out because time is of the essence in this kind of a thing.

(Based on a speech in the Lok Sabha on August 3, 1978)

Good Roads do most to
develop the country and

**CONCRETE
ROADS*
ARE BEST**



*with **ACC CEMENT**

WORLD NEWS

IGNAZIO SILONE: THE MAN WHO STOOD UP TO STALIN

The Italian novelist, Ignazio Silone, aged 78, one by break with Stalinism, has died in hospital in Geneva. He had been ill for several months.

Mr. Silone was the founder of the Italian Communist Party and a friend of Lenin and Trotsky. He left in 1930, attacking Soviet Communism for tyrannical degeneration under Stalin. He was one of the outstanding writers of the anti-Fascist movement in Italy and spent most of Mussolini's rule in exile in Switzerland.

He was born in Pescina dei Marsi, a poor, rugged village, on May 1, 1900, and had come home from school when the great earthquake of Avezzano 12 miles away completely destroyed Pescina in 1915, killing his parents and many of his relations. He was saved by holding on to a windowsill.

While still at school he was writing secretly in the Socialist Youth Weekly *Avanguardia*. When his schooling was over he was found to have consumption and was given six months to live. He flung himself the more passionately into this work with *Avanguardia* and became its editor in 1917. Two years later he was recognised as the leader of the Italian Socialist Youth Movement, and when the crises occurred in the Italian Socialist Party at its congress in 1921, Silone was among those who walked out to form the Italian Communist Party with Bordiga, Togliatti and the others.

Inevitably Silone, now aged 22, became the head of the Young Communist League in Italy, and in this capacity he made three journeys to Moscow, the last of them in 1927. In 1922 he spent six months in Berlin as the guest of the German party, and in 1923 he was sent to Spain for the Communist party. There he was imprisoned and then expelled.

He deputised for the Italian Communist Party secretary, Palmiro Togliatti (who was also secretary of the Comintern) in Moscow, on one occasion, and attended the meeting of the Communist International in Moscow together with Togliatti in 1927. At this session Trotsky's Chinese policy came under discussion, and a vote of censure was proposed. Silone described (20 years later, in a symposium by ex-Communist writers, "The God that Failed") how he refused to vote on this censure motion, and how, since Comintern decisions had to be unanimous the voting was then arranged to take place in his absence. This opened his eyes to Communist methods, more than any other factor at that time, and he stated in his essay that he left the Party in 1929.

His health broke down in 1929 and the doctors ordered him to Davos, where he wrote "Fontamara" in 1930. He had no passport and he devoted himself almost entirely to writing. There was a book of short stories called "The journey to Paris", his "History of Fascism," and in 1934 "Bread and Wine." In 1936 he wrote "The School of Dictators."

Silone was elected to the Constituent Assembly which was formed to draw up a new Italian Constitution and he became a member of the Italian Socialist Party Executive (leaders Nenni and Saragat) until the great split in 1947 when Nenni remained tied to the Communist Party with his Unity of Action Pact, and Saragat came out with the more Social Democratic elements in the party who refused to be tied to Moscow.

Silone never again felt, as he said, "sufficiently strongly about any party in order to tell lies about it," and remained an independent, in spite of a reconciliation with Saragat.

The Guardian August 24, 1978

PRESIDENT JOMO KENYATTA

The late President of Kenya was a pioneer of African freedom. But, much more than that, he was a pioneer of what should be done with freedom. He had no ambitions of wielding international authority for his country other than by example. And he was a strong adversary of racial discrimination — also by example.

Jomo Kenyatta was imprisoned by the British for many years because they were sure he was the secret leader of *Mau Mau*. They thought he was a leader of darkness and death. Kenyatta, by popular demand, went almost directly from prison to the seat of government and his immediate concern was to prove to the British that they had been wrong about him. The policy on which the whole of his presidency was to be based was mutual forgiveness — and Jomo Kenyatta avoided the common mistake among African leaders of thinking that only one side deserved well of the future.

Today, Africans, Asians and Europeans coexist in Kenya. Kenya's way to Socialism is based on the mixed economy of European social democracy. And, for this reason it is more prosperous than any of its neighbours. For, although Kenyatta's example richly deserved to be followed, it has not been — not yet, at least, in East Africa. But, if all goes well, free Kenya will outlive its first leader, and the seeds which he has sown will flourish.

Swiss Press Review, August 28, 1978.

LIGHTER CHINESE HAND IN TIBET

One of the greatest enemies of the Chinese Communists, since the Tibetan people were enrolled amongst the citizens of the People's Republic by force in 1969, has been the traditional leader of the Tibetans, the Dalai Lama. He is now reported to be consulting his followers in India about the possibility of reconciliation and return.

Such consultations are themselves an important event. And there is some evidence that they are taking place in the general framework of negotiations

between India and China. For, ever since political asylum was granted to the Dalai Lama, strenuous Indian efforts have been made to see that he does not indulge in political activities offensive to the Chinese Government. His mere presence on Indian soil has been enough to sour relations between these two great neighbours, and it has always been Indian policy not to make matters worse by allowing intrigue.

The Dalai Lama himself first made the suggestion of a possible return in a newspaper interview a few weeks ago. Talking to *Himachal Pradesh*, he said that he might be able to accept Chinese sovereignty over his country if he could get satisfactory evidence that the overwhelming majority of his countrymen wanted him to. It is clear that it would never be possible to obtain such evidence by elections, the only sure method of testing people's opinion, because elections do not form part of the Chinese Communist (or any other Communist) system. So part of the work consists of consultations amongst the Tibetans in India, and much of the talks will be concerned with reports of the situation across the border.

The Tibetans are deeply religious, and nearly two decades of Communist persecution have not been sufficient to extirpate this religious feeling. Nor have the wholesale transfers of population to which Tibet has been subjected been sufficient to get rid of the national consciousness of the Tibetan people. The continued existence of a flourishing Tibetan culture in India and in many other countries has had its reflection in the country itself — for to Tibetans the great Himalayan barrier is one of the most permeable — and certainly the least shutable — frontiers in the world.

Much of the credit for the apparent new attitude of the Dalai Lama must be attributed to the Chinese

Government. Chinese do not like losing face, and there must have been much soul-searching in Peking before the first overtures were made. These do seem to have come from Peking, however, and the Dalai Lama's first reaction was to reject them on the grounds of the continued presence in Tibet of 300,000 Chinese soldiers. But Indian pressure was added, and the upshot is an apparent change of attitude on the part of the Tibetan leader.

— *Swiss Press Review*, July 31, 1978

THIRTY YEARS AGO-THIRTY YEARS LATER (Continued from page 7)

and so on? Is free travel between the three countries totally impossible? Or a free movement of goods — given the need for protection in special areas?

And is it really necessary to spend so much money on "Defence" against each other?

One can always hope. As it says in the Holy Book:

Thy Lord has neither forsaken thee nor hates thee.

And the Last shall be better for thee than the First.

Thy Lord shall give thee, and thou shalt be satisfied.*

* * *

*Arberry, A. J., *The Koran Interpreted* (Oxf., 1964). ch. 93.

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Book Review

India's Economic Policy. A Gandhian Blueprint by Charan Singh; Vikas Publishing House; Pages 122; Price Rs. 30.

The crisis in the Janata Party precipitated by the strain in the relationship between Morarji Desai and Charan Singh is likely to erase from public memory the contribution Charan Singh has made to the shaping of the new economic policy of India.

His book *India's Economic Policy* is a serious and noteworthy attempt to analyse several of the maladies with which our economic system is afflicted and to work out alternate strategies of development. Basing his thesis on Gandhian principles (the book is subtitled: *A Gandhian Blueprint*) he puts forward a convincing case for giving primacy to agriculture, decentralization, and labour-intensive technology.

Economic policy is the computation of labour, capital and land into the most appropriate equation. India has an abundance of labour, an acute shortage of capital and naturally a fixed amount of land. The proportion in which these variables are combined, and the manner in which land is used will determine the nature and rate of development of the country.

In 1947, Charan Singh argues, there were two alternative strategies before the makers of India's destiny.

One emphasized labour, had least dependence on capital and stressed the full utilisation of land through agriculture and village industries. This was inspired by Gandhiji. The second strategy combined capital intensive industry with labour saving mechanisation and a centralised structure, in imitation of the model of the Western countries.

India decided to follow the latter. Charan Singh accuses Nehru of making his one big mistake of aping the USSR and opting for the highly mechanised, trickle-down-from-the-top' model that still exists today. He puts down the failure of economic planning in India to two reasons: 1) 'Misallocation of financial outlay between industry and agriculture, and 2) 'Introduction rather multiplication of the big machine'.

Backing his arguments with relevant data he shows that though investment for the organised industry was stepped up from 4.9 per cent in the first Plan to 23.8 per cent in the Second Plan (and has never fallen below 23.7 per cent) the total contribution of the manufacturing industry to the GNP only rose from 16.3 per cent in 1948-49 to 17.7 per cent in 1968-69. A paltry sum indeed compared to the capital utilised!

Agriculture and its allied industries with their tremendous potential for creating jobs were pushed into the background and literally 'starved of capital'. Allocations for agriculture were reduced from 37 per cent in the First Plan to 17.3 per cent in the Second Plan and thereafter were never increased beyond 23.4 per cent.

Pointing to Western Europe, Japan and other countries, he argues that in every case agricultural

development preceded industrial development and that capital-intensive and mechanised industry developed as a result of labour shortage.

He puts the onus for the present economic crisis on Nehru and the Congress Government. As a result of the faulty policies adopted by them, even 36 years after independence there are 42 crores of people living below the poverty line, unemployment is assuming alarming proportions and big business and monopolies are increasing. Unemployment, he argues, is the worst consequence of heavy industry, while, the emergence of monopolies is not an accident but a result of conscious planning.

Countries like ours with an abundance of labour, dazzled by the Western advances instead of opting for technology appropriate to our circumstances opted for a highly mechanised and capital-intensive system. This has bogged us down in an even increasing economic crisis and has retarded our real development.

He writes, "the heavy or capital-intensive industry whether in the private sector or public sector has served to create a dual economy with small enclaves of prosperity in a hinterland of poverty, unemployment and stagnation..... the idea that prosperity can be attained through a steady expansion of industrial enclaves until they embrace the bulk of the population and percolation over time, of the benefits of a high rate of GNP to all strata of society is as unsound in theory as was proved in practice."

The only solution then, considering the circumstances is a complete reversal of the policies. For 30 years agriculture has been neglected. Conscious efforts should now be made increase the agricultural output per acre and there should be a simultaneous reduction of the number of workers per acre.

On the basis of cogent reasoning he derives a rule for this country. He says, "It can be stated as a rule of thumb that the degree of economic development of India turns on the extent of improvement in agricultural practices we are able to effect and the amount of capital we are able to invest in land...."

Several sophisticated arguments have been developed to refute Charan Singh's thesis. While the debate in the world of experts will go on, one thing is certain that the stamp of this school of thought, whether derived through Charan Singh or independently, will remain on the economic policies of the Government for a long time to come regardless of Charan Singh's remaining at the helm of affairs. There is an additional reason to think why these ideas will remain. Many economists in their search for seeing some continuity in the policies of the Janata Party have concluded that at the stage of development where the country has reached, the shift in emphasis suggested by Charan Singh is both relevant and necessary. To this way of thinking both Nehru's policies as well as those which the Janata Party is following now get justified.

Sonal Shah

Film Review

"GHATASHRADDHA"—UNRELIEVED GLOOM

People who do not like art films are generally regarded in the same light as those who say that kittens should be drowned, criminals hung in the streets to provide edifying public entertainment, and that gas chambers are a convenient way of controlling the population. So it is with no easy conscience that one proclaims "Ghatashraddha" (The ritual of excommunication), the Kannada film that won this year's President's gold medal, as the most disappointing, dreary, dismal experience that one can hope to see. If this is supposed to be whole truth about "the reality of Indian life" then its best to start building those gas chambers fast for the entire Indian population, and perhaps invite Mr. V. S. Naipaul to officiate over the funeral rites, so that he may record in his justifiably exalted prose style, the only real solution to a doomed civilization.

The story revolves around a small boy who is being initiated into brahminhood at a small village school run by a Brahmin named Udupa. The Brahmin has a widowed daughter who helps run the establishment with its dwindling number of students. She instinctively mothers the homesick child, who like all children in such films is suitably owl-eyed and emaciatedly appealing. From the very first glimpse of the daughter whose name is Yamunaka, we know of course that she bears a tragedy too deep for words, which again in the way of such films can mean only one thing — that she is pregnant. Naturally it takes at least half of the film before any of the other characters realise this. The second half of the film is devoted to the consequences of the situation. Yamunaka has been made pregnant by the low caste village schoolteacher whose attempts to assist her in her trouble are watched by a pair of students studying at her father's school, who in the temporary absence of her father, torment her with their crude jokes and attentions. She tries to kill herself by putting her hand into a snake pit which she knows is inhabited by a cobra, but even the cobra does not oblige her.

Finally there is a long drawn out, appropriately gruesome, sequence, of an abortion being performed upon her by the low caste midwife. This is choreographed with a drunken dance item, being performed by what looks like a group of stone-age men, but who are meant to be untouchables, who have been induced into a drunken orgy, so that Yamunaka's cries will be drowned out. Her ordeal is however not yet over. By the time she limps back leaning heavily on the small boy, Nani, her father has returned. The whole village is against her and wants Udupa to ritually excommunicate his daughter by performing the "Ghatashraddha" ceremony. He does so with admirable detachment, while Nani is taken back home by his father. As Nani leaves the outskirts of the village he sees a grotesque figure with a shaven head and a begging bowl hiding under a tree. It is Yamunaka. She has become a non-person.

The central theme of the movie focuses on the relationship between the soulfull-eyed Yamunaka and the even more soulfull-eyed Nani, which apart from the obvious poignancy of the situation, involves a lot of soulfull staring into space. "You really missed a

lot by not following the conversation" a lady remarked to another at the end of the film, which had subtitles in English, to provide for such a contingency. "What conversation?" one felt like asking. The general speechlessness that seems to afflict characters in art films, was more than ever evident in this one. For interminable minutes the camera focussed on either the eyes of the child gleaming in the darkness, or the young woman staring back, equally dumbly.

What one particularly objects to is that such films are lavishly praised as being "realistic" and "true to life" just because they seem to tackle the grimmer aspects of it, while the popular entertainment films are condemned as being false because they concentrate on the more frivolous side of things. In fact, both err, in exaggerating and thereby falsifying the picture. What is a amazing in "Ghatashraddha" is that not one character (except for the child-spectator, who only watches and cannot affect the situation) has an appealing side to his nature. The woman is totally beaten and resigned to her fate, the father is unreachable to the point of being inhuman, the other two students are bestially vicious, the schoolteacher is a study in pusillanimity, while the other villagers are unified in their desire to destroy the girl. One cannot help but recall another movie with a similar situation, "Zorba the Greek" in which the young widow is stoned to death by her neighbours for committing a similar indiscretion, while her lover, a visiting English writer, watches helplessly. But even as horrifying and shocking to the senses as this last scene is, the final impact of the movie, which has several such harrowing moments, is one of an affirmation of life, even in the midst of death, of a triumph of the spirit, even through pain, so that the whole experience becomes worthwhile. The only message of "Ghatashraddha" is of defeat and resignation.

Most art films are generally commended for the imaginative use of photographic effects, but it should be pointed out that an excess of this can also become highly stereotyped. In a majority of such movies the screen increasingly becomes an area of darkness, with one spotlight picking up a tear, an eye, a nose, a broken pot of water, a barred window or any other scrap of symbolism that comes in the way of the director. In his autobiography Charlie Chaplin has this to say to such directors, and one agrees heartily: "Personally I loathe tricky effects, photographing the fireplace from the viewpoint of a piece of coal or travelling with an actor through a hotel lobby as though escorting him on a bicycle, to me are facile and obvious...When a camera is placed on the floor or moves about the player's nostrils, it is the camera that is giving the performance not the actor. The camera should not obtrude."

The tramp who became a legend could even give a bit of useful advice to those seeking to portray the tragic side of life. He could tell them that a tragedy that wallows endlessly in the depths of human misery is not half so impressive or touching as that which floats up, fleetingly triumphant, on the wings of a smile.

Geeta Doctor

A TRULY NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL

Maj. Gen. E. D'Souza PVSM (Retd.)

At the end of the blood bath that characterized World War I, Rupert Brooke, recalling the sacrifices made by his countrymen of the three Services for a lasting peace in England wrote those stirring words "for our today they gave their tomorrow". We, in India, have had recourse to these sentiments after the many conflicts that we have been engaged in since 1947. The list is impressive — Kashmir 1947-48, Hyderabad, Goa, the Rann of Kutch, the 1962 war against China in lofty Ladakh and NEFA, the 1965 conflict against Pakistan in Rajasthan, Punjab and Kashmir and the border skirmishes against the Chinese on the Sikkim watershed, and the 1971 war on the western and eastern fronts. As if this, indeed, is not enough, we have been involved in a cold war on the Indo-Pakistan border in Jammu and Kashmir since 1948 where servicemen have lost their lives in skirmishes, on mines and due to avalanches and lightning. The counter-insurgency operations in Nagaland and Mizoram, one of the most frustrating operations for the Army in some of the most difficult terrain in the world, has claimed thousands of lives. In these wars, cold and hot, our servicemen have ungrudgingly made the supreme sacrifice so that our borders are inviolate and we can live in peace. Only recently did Prime Minister Morarji Desai at Leh, like his predecessors, eulogize the many sacrifices made by our soldiers and airmen in the harsh conditions of service. When he spoke, he had in mind the difficult terrain that our Services are required to operate in for the Nation's security — the Rann of Kutch, the hot and waterless Thar Desert, riverine Punjab, the mountains of Jammu and Kashmir, the snowclad and high altitude Karakoram and Himalayas, the leech infested jungles of our eastern borders and the flat, water-covered area of Bangladesh. Our sailors patrol silently the stormy waters of the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea, so much in the news today. These occupational hazards in which eternal vigilance is demanded of our servicemen, are too well known to be repeated. Our airmen are required to fly fairly vintage aircraft, land and drop supplies in terrain, conditions and weather that defy description. These sacrifices have been made without fanfare, day-in and day-out, without respite, since 1947. It is, therefore, beyond comprehension and surprising that our leaders and the Nation recognize these sacrifices only immediately before and after a war. But thereafter? The roar of the lion subsides to a barely discernible bleat of a lamb. Is not the fact that our dead, and there are so many of them, who have made the supreme sacrifice — have no truly *National War Memorial* a matter of shame? It is customary from time immemorial for tribes, states and nations who seek peace, to erect suitable National War Memorials to remind a grateful Nation of the sacrifices made by these unknown and unsung heroes.

Many self righteous politicians and bureaucrats who run the country will be the first to take up cudgels that we do have a National War Memorial in the Capital. This fact is not disputed but is it a truly Na-

tional War Memorial befitting the many sacrifices made by our servicemen without a break since 1947? Certainly not and hence this article.

An Insignificant Memorial

The National War Memorial, as it stands today, was hastily conceived in 1972 possibly because the high and mighty who guide our destinies were suffering from pangs of conscience or a guilt complex, call it what you may, in the aftermath of the 1971 war. The result? A small samadhi over which rests a reversed rifle with fixed bayonet. On top of the butt is a steel helmet. An eternal flame flickers on top of India Gate. An armed sentry from each Service, in turn, mounts guard. As a backdrop are the flags of the three Services. So far so good! But where precisely is this small monument located? Under the impressive arches of India Gate — a drop in the ocean as it were. Does this not smack of double standards and hypocrisy? With Raj Path bifurcating and running round the two sides of India Gate, very few motorists stop to "admire" our War Memorial. Fewer still of the many pedestrians stop by it in silent meditation or even place a flower on it. Why then, this lack of interest by the common man?

First and foremost is the Memorial itself, architecturally without meaning and small in size and located as it is within the confines of an Imperial Monument, India Gate. Nor has the man in the street ever witnessed a visit, official or otherwise, of the Supreme Commander, our President, to this Monument. Once, on January 26, prior to the commencement of the Republic Day Parade, is official homage paid by the Prime Minister in the form of a wreath-laying ceremony. Except on one occasion in two and three quarter years in Delhi, no foreign dignitary, military or otherwise, has ever been requested to lay a wreath or visit this "samadhi". Yet, in almost every other

The measure of achievement



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

How's that for achievement?

BOMBAY DYEING

country, a visit to the tomb of the Unknown Soldier is a must. It is indeed fortunate for the Nation that our Jawan (immortalized by the late Lal Bahadur Shastri after the 1965 conflict in his salutation "Jai Jawan Jai Kisan") is so self-effacing and uncomplaining!

Every Nation in the world without exception, in the east or west, north or south, has its National War Memorial, be it a democracy, monarchy, republic or theocracy. We have only to look into our own gardens of the past. The British never failed to honour its dead heroes and these Memorials, decaying today, are evident in almost all Cantonments in the country. There is, for instance, one in Pune, unveiled by the Prince of Wales in 1921. Yet, in every major town in the country today are edifying Memorials to freedom fighters or martyrs — on the Marina in Madras and in Hutatma Chowk in the heart of South Bombay to name but two that come to mind. Yet for the thousands who have been killed in action like Brig. Usman, Wing Commander Noronha, Nand Singh, VC, PVC, Albert Ekka PVC, Piru Ram, PVC Jadunath Singh, PVC, Ajit Singh Sekhon, PVC, Hav. Abdul Hamid, PVC, Capt. Mulla, IN, MVC of INS Khukhri, Shaitan Singh, PVC of Chusul fame and their comrades, we have one small insignificant Memorial "hidden" within the splendour of Imperial India Gate. Is this, perhaps, the politicians' method of saying that the present day Indian Army, Navy and Airforce continue to have vestiges of the last Imperial Raj because members of the Armed Forces are apolitical? Or is there a nagging fear that the Services may become too popular? Whatever the reason, there should be no doubt that a worthy National War Memorial in the Capital, designed by competition on an all-India level, is necessary. Such a monument should project the secular nature of our Armed Forces, should be such that it has, in addition, the theme of peace — a peace ensured by the supreme sacrifices made by these unsung heroes who tend to be forgotten even before the last shot is fired. This Memorial should be such that by its majesty and theme it should attract the man in the street to remind him and his that because of our today, they gave their tomorrow.

And, finally, if one may be permitted, a post-script, it is only apt that such an article should appear in *Freedom First* in its 27th year of publication — twentyseven years of Freedom secured and assured by our unsung soldiers, sailors and airmen who, willingly gave their lives that we, who live, may breathe freely.

We can't laugh at ourselves

NEW DELHI, August 6 (UNI):

The word "Marathi", found offensive was cut out by the censors from the dialogue "we Marathi people fail here and ascribe the failure to the entire Indian people."

A character in a recently released film, a comedy, cuts off another character with this remark every time the latter breaks into Marathi.

The film's hero Amol Palekar spoke of this to film critics here to show that Indians could not laugh at themselves.

Times of India, September 7.

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.



WITH MANY VOICES

"The deep

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

—Tennyson

Memories are terribly short. Motilal gave us Nehru, and Nehru gave us Indira, and Indira gave us Sanjay, and Morarjibhai gave us Kanti and Jagjivan Ram gave us Suresh, and Bansi Lal gave us Surinder, and Kamalapati gave us Lokpati, and Pant gave us Pant, and and Shukla gave us two Shuklas and so on.

Romesh Thapar,
India Today September 1-15, 1978

What does Chaudhury mean by saying that he has been treated like a peon by the Prime Minister? Doesn't he know that a peon of the Government of India enjoys job security which no Minister has?

D. E. Nizamuddin,
Sunday, August 27, 1978

The teething troubles of BHEL (Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd.) are not yet over. It will take another twenty years before they achieve perfection.

Ajit Sarkar, *Sunday*, August 27, 1978

FREEDOM FIRST,

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Fear is no basis for foreign policy.

— Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, *Sunday Statesman*,

August 6, 1978.

The Civil Service is quite capable of putting friction in the wheels if it does not like something.

D. N. Chester, *The Times* London
August 8, 1978

It is because the checks from the States have not been there that the balance has been so hopelessly lost at the Centre.

Ashok Mitra, *The Illustrated Weekly of India*,
August 27, 1978.

The first step to controlling government is understanding it.

The Economist, August 26, 1978.

The dollar is dropping because demand for the dollar is dropping, because there are too many dollars, because dollars are created by the Federal Reserve, because the U.S. Government spends more dollars than it receives, because Congress passes spending laws, because voters want them.

I.D. Brukes, *Time*, August 28, 1978.

They came after the Jews, and I was not a Jew, so I did not object. They came after the Catholics, and I was not a Catholic, so I did not object. They came after the trade unionists, and I was not a trade unionist, so I did not object. Then, they came after me, and there was no one left to object.

Quoted by Judith Hjerstedt, *Time*, August 14, 1978.