

# freedom first

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A JOURNAL OF LIBERAL IDEAS

## WELCOME FAROOQ ABDULLAH!

NISSIM EZEKIEL

WHAT is the first thing a newly sworn-in Chief Minister should do? He should dismiss his entire Cabinet and justify it with sound and fury!

Since lovers of freedom and democracy are often admirers of authoritarianism, he is sure to be praised in some quarters for showing "mettle". He is warned, of course, that the new men he appoints as Ministers should be more efficient and honest than their predecessors. But this is mere blah blah.

A day later, when the new Cabinet is announced, it is reported that "most of the ministers . . . are inexperienced in the art of government." So they have had no opportunities of displaying their inefficiency and dishonesty!

Why did Dr. Farooq Abdullah behave as he did? Is there any rational justification for it? If his example is worthy of being followed, as seems to be recommended, why should not the new Chairman of a newspaper combine dismiss his whole old team of editors and chief executives? Why shouldn't a new Chancellor dismiss the Vice-Chancellor, and a

new Vice-Chancellor dismiss all the old guard in the University, heads of departments, registrar and assistant registrars, etc.?

Whatever the legal difference, surely it would be showing "mettle"; and the promise of a "new look" can be trusted to bring forth an immediate recognition of one's "capacity for leadership".

Kashmir's new Chief Minister, within 48 hours of succeeding his lion-hearted father, has already belied expectations of initiative and drive. The Cabinet he has appointed has no new look. And he is now ranged against those he has arbitrarily and quite unjustly deprived of their jobs. Besides, there is the brother-in-law, Mr. G. M. Shah.

The setting in Kashmir is perfect for politics that is almost entirely concerned with the struggle to acquire or retain power, for manoeuvres and strategic moves and in-fighting and family feuds and motivated deals and secret compromises. The common people of Kashmir will gain nothing from the game.

Since Farooq has declared 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 and secularism and communal harmony, based on common standards of judging community conduct. Like his father, the almighty Sheikh, Farooq is likely to have his own viewpoint on these issues.

The last major political action of the ailing Sheikh, granting Muslims who had settled down in Pakistan upto 30 years earlier the right to return to Kashmir, provides a clue to some modes of secularism in India.

It is worth noting that the ex-ministers of Kashmir had written to the Governor *en masse* requesting him to make Farooq Chief Minister. They have been suitably rewarded for their sycophancy by being swept out as irrelevant to Farooq's plans. He has now obviously accepted the view that in the power game there should be no scruples and no proprieties, no respect for persons as persons but only as pieces on a chessboard. It is the same in the rest of the country.



# A VARIETY OF COMMENT

K. S. VENKATESWARAN

## 1. PALESTINIAN EXCESSES

FROM what has been appearing in the Indian media, it would seem as if the exit of the PLO guerillas from Lebanon after their humiliating defeat in the recent war with Israel, has been an occasion of unrelieved gloom for the Lebanese residents in and around Beirut.

First-hand accounts from reputed international news agencies, however, tell a different story. The Lebanese, far from being saddened by the ignominious departure of the PLO forces, who had wrought havoc in large parts of Beirut during their prolonged stay there, are only too pleased with the latest developments. And well might they be, if one considers the horrible experience they have been undergoing these past few years.

Representative of the resentment among the Lebanese towards the PLO is the testimony of a young teacher in Sidon. She minced no words in describing the situation under PLO occupation to a couple of American journalists recently.

The young lady, a Muslim, had lost an uncle in the Israeli invasion and had seen her own brother being captured by the Israelis. That hardly seemed to bother her, compared to the sordid doings of the PLO toughs in the neighbourhood. "We have not been able to keep our schools open," she said, because these toughs had made classrooms dangerous by molesting girls and generally going on a rampage.

Her testimony was corroborated by three others, a Maronite Christian, a Shiite Muslim and a Sunni Muslim, who had equally unpleasant experiences to narrate: an apartment taken over by the PLO, cars stolen, thievery in town up, vineyards and orchards ruined, and so on.

And yet we have our own media exhorting us to believe exactly the opposite.

## 2. PRESS FREEDOM

HEARTENING though it has been by and large, the reaction of the Indian journalistic fraternity to the Bihar Press Bill nevertheless reveals the sheer *ad hocism*, if not hypocrisy, which underlies our mediemen's much-flaunted commitment to freedom and independence.

Some of the most vigorous voices in the current crusade, for example, are those that have held a particularly shocking record of abject servility during

the Emergency. Others, also in the vanguard of the crusade, have distinguished themselves by their sickening stance in endorsing the totalitarian moves initiated by UNESCO and other bodies known for their allergy to the freedom of the media.

Even if these self-appointed champions of freedom succeed in their present campaign against the Bihar Bill, there can be little doubt that no victory of any significance would have accrued to the large cause of a truly independent press in this country. To accomplish that objective, it is necessary, indeed imperative, that journalists realise the fundamental error in their naive belief that government involvement is conducive to the advancement of freedom.

## 3. INTELLECTUALS IN CHINA

ONE of the curious features of the global human rights movement has been the inadequate attention paid to the persecution of intellectuals in China. While raucous voices have been heard over the outrages perpetrated by the communist regimes in Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe, the happenings in the world's most populous country have seldom evoked as much concern.

Numerous excuses have been proffered for this glaring lapse. International scholars on China, it is said, are generally so enamoured of its history, culture and people that they simply refuse to believe that a country which had developed such a high degree of civilisation could be cruel to its intellectuals. But, surely, these scholars could not be blind to the overwhelming mass of evidence—evidence which clearly demonstrated that the barbarities unleashed on intellectuals during the Cultural Revolution were not exactly pardonable.

A more candid explanation comes from an American litterateur who argues in a recent monograph that the reluctance among scholars in the U.S., at any rate, could have stemmed from compulsions of that country's domestic policies. "We feared a return to the McCarthy era of unthinking opposition to Chinese communism and to anyone who spoke positively about its achievements. Despite their cruelties and injustices, most of us believed that the Chinese Communists were the first in 100 years to bring China out of chaos, famine and weakness. Appreciation of their accomplishments overrode our concern for our fellow intellectuals."

# PEKING'S FOREIGN RELATIONS

RAMA SWARUP

THE official NCNA recently avoided direct rejection of Moscow's latest peace overture to end two decades of bitterness between mainland China and the Soviet Union. At the same time, the *People's Daily* published a commentary rebutting the Soviet leader Brezhnev's attacks on Chinese foreign policy, in particular what he called Peking's alignment with the policies of imperialists. This was a reference to Red China's support for US resistance to Soviet policies.

Informed sources believe that despite the tensions with Washington over continuing US arms sales to Taiwan—which Peking regards as a province of Red China—the Communist Chinese leadership would resist the temptation to play their "Soviet card". A strong anti-Soviet stance, though, has been the cornerstone of Red Chinese foreign policy worldwide, and the Sino-Soviet quarrel is too bitter to be resolved overnight.

Red China broke off the border talks with the Soviet Union in 1979 when Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan. Withdrawal of troops from that Central Asian country has since remained Red China's demand for a possible resumption of talks.

Peking has also demanded a pullback of Soviet troops from Red China's border.

Analysts view the Red Chinese statement as con-

taining an implicit message to Washington, asking for some kind of gesture on the Taiwan issue. However, such a gesture is very unlikely at present, for no progress has been made in sensitive Sino-US talks on limiting US arms sales to Taiwan. China wants to set a time limit to end long-term US weapons sales to Taiwan, which it considers a breakaway province.

The Red Chinese leadership has said that China is unwavering in its opposition to arms sales, and that there is "no room for compromise" on the issue.

A classified Red Chinese document, distributed as an internal briefing paper for senior party officials in January 1980, is believed to provide a wealth of candid views rarely seen in official pronouncements. It offers a unique insight into Red Chinese thinking.

While Western foreign policy analysts refer to a "Red China Card" in diplomatic dealings with the Soviet Union, Red Chinese diplomats have other "cards" stuck up their sleeves. Their "American card", for example, is designed to be used against the Soviet Union.

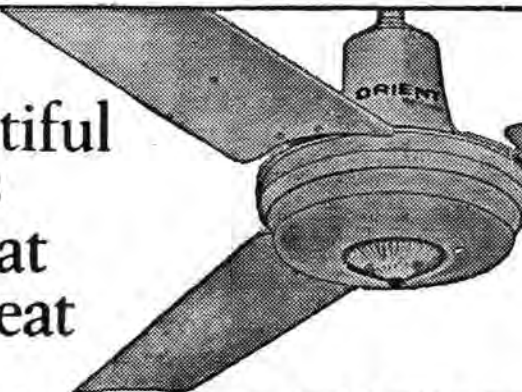
According to the Red Chinese document, the rapprochement between Peking and Washington, begun with the 1971 ping-pong diplomacy and ending with the restoration of diplomatic ties in 1979, was a

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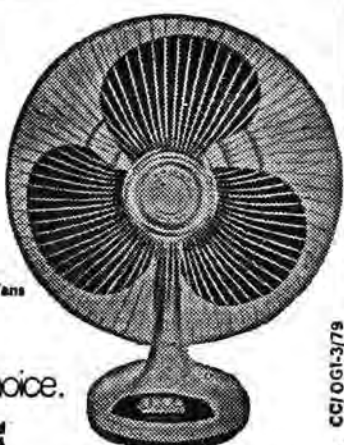
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matter of mutual necessity in the common anti-Soviet struggle.

For Red China, bloody border clashes in 1969 strongly indicated that the Sino-Soviet conflict was no mere ideological split. Therefore, reconciliation with its former arch-enemy, the United States, made strategic sense in the face of a mounting Soviet military build-up.

On the other hand after years of pursuing detente with the Soviet Union, the United States found itself face to face with Soviet challenges to the *status quo* in Ethiopia, North and South Yemen and then Afghanistan.

Because of this, the document noted, the United States was forced to rearm and readjust its foreign relations.

Being attuned to historical parallels, and knowing that the US link could turn sour at any time, the Peking leadership realizes that the main trend today is for the West and Red China to join forces in the struggle against the Soviet Union, over the heads of other nations.

Against the possibility of an American sell-out in time of emergency, and the lack of real trust between Red China and the United States, the Peking leadership can play their own "Soviet card" by dropping an occasional hint of a desire to improve relations with the Russians as a bargaining chip *vis-a-vis* the United States.

Apart from Peking's anti-Soviet strategy, the internal briefing paper for high-ranking Red Chinese officials demonstrates clearly that the current drive to modernize the country is an important consideration in its foreign policy attitude toward the West.

One example is playing the "Europe-Japan card" by actively promoting trading relations with Japan, Britain, France and West Germany in the matter of acquiring modern weapons from these countries recently. This bears in mind that the Americans could be the most attractive suppliers.

Even before Peking officials began business talks with Western Europe, and before even a single deal could be concluded, Red Chinese officials saw American officials hastening to the Red Chinese capital with their latest weapons catalogue.

While Red China views its relations with Japan and Western Europe with equally undogmatic detachment, the foreign policy document noted that Western Europe and Japan appear equivocal about their relations with Red China. For example, they are eager to promote ties with Peking, but they are dragging their feet for fear of incurring Soviet wrath.

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## VOICES-1

### A BOY NAMED SATYAM

TOURISM is Sri Lanka's fastest-growing industry. Tourists in shades ranging from pale ivory to white, pink and dull red seem to thrive like bacteria, on the beaches, under the palm trees, and inside the red-tiled hotels in conditions of heat and moist amply supplied by the shining waters of this "emerald isle".

It was therefore with some relief that we took to the hills in search of Sri Lanka's other famous industry—Tea—at Nuwara Eliya, six thousand feet high and fifty miles from Kandy. Unlike the first, however, the tea industry appears to have suffered a setback. Except for a few thriving estates, the lower hillsides were burnt and brown with the drought, brought about as much by human cupidity as by the unpredictability of nature.

Within the last decade, large shady trees had been cut down to increase the yield, but with them have also gone the birds, flowers, insects and moisture-bearing clouds that provide life. There was now only an artificial man-made landscape, with teams of mechanical workers who do their work with a certain hopeless resignation.

It was on the way down from Nuwara Eliya that we noticed the boy. He was standing a little ahead of a small group of children holding flowers and waving them out for us to buy in the early morning. He was no more than six or seven years old, wearing a T-shirt and a faded pair of shorts that had been hastily patched at the seat, so that we could see his thin brown buttocks rubbing together through the openings, as he ran ahead of the car waving a bright red fistful of flowers. Gerberas. He held them like a flaming torch above his head and shouted:

"Sir! sir! Look. Flowers. Stop. Buy. Five Rupees." We stopped. There were only five or six Gerberas in his fist.

"Two rupees," we said.

"Five Rupees," said the boy, panting, his eyes measuring up the opposition.

By now the other children had also come running down and were thrusting their collection of leaves and dried weeds through the window.

The driver of the car was getting impatient. In another minute he started the car and drove off at full speed, obviously irritated by our indecision.

As we took the sharp hairpin-bend we could see the troupe of urchins scrambling down the hillside through the bushes of tea so that they could meet us at the next turning when the car would have to slow down.

Sure enough the driver had to apply the brakes as

he negotiated the curve. The children danced up and down shouting for money.

"Hunger! Hunger!" they shouted in Tamil. By the time we had taken the fourth such bend it was not an amusing spectacle anymore. There was something grotesque and desperate in this anxiety to sell the flowers. A girl of about fourteen was sobbing as she ran.

With increasing feelings of guilt and dismay at the trend of events that we had so unknowingly started we emptied our purses of all the small change and flung it at them as the car took yet another hairpin bend. The driver, more angry now than ever, refused to listen to our entreaties to stop, and swung his car down at an increasing pace.

Only the boy with the Gerberas managed to stay ahead, still screaming, "Five Rupees. Take the flowers for five rupees."

We had by now thrown out much more than five rupees but he was not interested in scrambling for it like the others. Once more we stopped. The boy was wild-eyed now with the strain of running, and could not talk.

"Listen", we said gently. "You keep the flowers and take this four rupees." We proffered the last two notes of small change we had.

"I want five rupees," the boy said in a hoarse voice. "I got these flowers from the Manager's bungalow. They are worth five rupees." He pleaded with us. He said that he had no father or mother. He was an orphan. . . Hearing this all too familiar beggar's chant, the driver switched on the ignition without waiting to hear anymore and drove off once again.

We crossed the first pass and drove down a valley stopping at a mountain stream that trickled its way down a culvert. There was complete silence. We had lost track of the boy.

It was a relief. The driver resumed the journey at a slower pace, navigating one more pass that would get us out of the hilly country. We had gone almost 25 kilometres down by road when at the next turn we saw a familiar figure dancing like a dervish, holding aloft a bunch of red flowers.

This time the driver himself stopped. The boy had performed an all but incredible feat of scrambling down the steep hillside.

It was the final confrontation. We had the five rupees scraped together by then. The boy clutched at it fiercely and counted the money. "Here, take the flowers," he said, thrusting the now withered Gerberas at us.

"What is your name?"

"Satyam" (Truth), he answered. He was impatient now and wanted to finish the transaction.

"Why don't you keep the flowers," we suggested.

"You keep the five rupees and you can sell the flowers to someone else."

The eyes of the boy seemed to fill over for an instant. We had failed him even in the end because we did not want the flowers. We had cheated him of his victory.

Without a word he turned. He was tired now. His small bottom exposed between his now completely torn pants he disappeared into the hills. On the roadside, the Gerberas lay fractured, a splash of red in the dust.

GEETA DOCTOR

## VOICES-2

### A WONDER TREE

**LEUCAENA leucocephala**, is a leguminous tree grown for the last 2000 years in the state of Mexico in USA. The name of the state "Mexico" is derived from this tree. During the last 20 years, this tree has been extensively planted in countries of South-East Asia and Africa. It is the most promising tree to revolutionise our agriculture, dairy, fuel-based industries etc. Extensive researches have been carried out on this plant during last 10 years.

In India it is known as 'Su-Babul' and has been developed into a number of varieties. Some are bushy trees; some are giants growing up to 65 feet in height and some are ideal for fuel, firewood and timber. Some trees are grown specially for the paper industry.

**Leucaena** trees are known as nurse trees as they

help in nitrogen fixation in the soil. They also provide green fodder for animals, yield gum and colours, namely black, red, brown and yellow. Seeds can be used for preparing cocoa-like drink and flowers can be made into pickles. Nutritional and medicinal values of the tree are being evaluated.

It is an ideal tree for inter-cultivation and inter-cropping patterns. The planting of this tree at the interval of 7'-10' allows the normal agricultural operations and because of nitrogen fixation, it makes the normal seeds grow like high-breed varieties. As this tree grows very fast, about 65 feet in four years, it can play a very vital role in afforestation programmes in our country. This tree is particularly useful to us because it provides fertilizers one tonne per acre wood, firewood 65 tonnes in four years, animal fodder 8 tonnes per acre, and cocoa-like drinks. Other uses include feeding of poultry and sheep on leaves of **Leucaena** which expedite the process of hatching in poultry and facilitate the removal of wool in sheep. It can be used for generation of power and recovery of saline lands.

On account of the above beneficial factors, **Leucaena Leucocephala** can be planted in farms for inter cultivation and also on common grazing grounds; on the boundaries and inside the farms, in barren hilly regions; in plantations of coffee, coconut, mango etc. It can be planted in cities for beautification. If these trees are planted extensively in our country, we shall be able to generate a lot of wealth, additional crops and employment.

In order to take up the plantation of **Leucaena** trees on a mass scale, the measures necessary are: (1) crash programme for plantation, (2) **Leucaena** nurseries, (3) import of **Leucaena** seeds under open government licence, (4) equal treatment to farm and forestry, (5) bank initiative, (6) publicity in villages and (7) better coordination between Agriculture and Forest departments. The Government of India has decided to import 2.5 tonnes of seed of this tree for the next five years. Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank and other banks have started advancing term loans of Rs. 2000 per acre repayable in 5 years at the rate of 6% interest.

Maharashtra Government has accorded pride of place to this tree in programmes of social forestry. It aims at planting 5 lakh trees in each taluka and 2000 trees in each village.

All other states also have taken up plantation of this wonder tree. Each one of us should plant as many trees as possible, as this tree can give us income of about 6 to 7 thousand rupees per year.

V. V. DESHPANDE

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## BOOK REVIEW

### DOMESTIC ROOTS OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY, 1947-1972

By A. Appadorai. Oxford University Press (New Delhi, 1981), pp. x+244, Rs. 80.

UNTIL World War II, the prevailing general view was that domestic policy and foreign policy are two different areas of government activity, differing completely in their underlying compulsion. Foreign policy in that period was largely conducted by the rulers with the aid of a few elitist advisers. The limited domestic policy was conducted largely for the benefit of the common people by the rulers with a varying degree of participation by the people or their representatives. But foreign policy was the exclusive sphere of interest of the ruling elite.

This dichotomy between domestic policy and foreign policy has practically ceased to be relevant in the post-World War II period. It is so mainly because of the increasing inter-dependence of nations, democratization of several national governments, and governmental involvement in welfare activities hitherto exclusively outside the limits of government. Thus, foreign policy and domestic policy have come to be inseparably linked, and the two cannot be separated altogether.

Not only one influences the other but foreign policy can be referred to as domestic policy by other means. Foreign policy-makers have to bear in mind the domestic consequence of their foreign policy actions. Policy makers in the US, for instance, like George Kennan and McGeorge Bundy, have recorded their experience that the first thing they learnt was to consider the domestic implications of their policy. Nehru had said in the Constituent Assembly: "External affairs will follow internal affairs."

Hence, foreign policy is deeply rooted in domestic compulsions. Prof. Appadorai, a veteran scholar of international relations, has brought out this well-argued and well documented study of domestic roots of India's foreign policy from 1947 to 1972. Foreign policy is influenced both by the prevailing international environment and by the domestic environment. Domestically, certain factors like geography, history and tradition, the structure of society and the nature of political organization (democracy, federalism, etc.) for instance, predetermine certain aspects of foreign policy.

For example, if a nation like Nepal with her close religious and cultural ties with India maintains close relations with Communist China and adheres to non-alignment, one has to see the geographical location as an explanation for the same.

If India chooses to maintain close relations with the Arab nations, the explanation has to be sought not merely in our dependence on Arab oil but on the existence of the world's third largest Muslim population in India. It has some "incidental advantages" as Mrs. Gandhi observed in 1967. Arab friendship helps India not to be isolated, in view of Pakistan's persistent propaganda that this country is anti-Arab. This also makes it clear that in the formulation of India's foreign policy, Pakistan as an immediate neighbour is a factor of considerable importance.

India's support to the Bangladesh liberation war could also be seen as at least partly motivated by its impact on Indian Muslims. Bangladeshi secularism, in retrospect, may appear to be short-lived, in view of today's developments, where revival of Islamic communalism seems to be on the cards. But in 1971 the mood amongst the leaders of Bangladesh was in favour of secularism. The then head of the Bangladesh Mission in New Delhi, H. R. Choudhury, for instance, said: "We have buried religion-based nationalism for ever. We refuse to identify our nationhood with religion. We shall be good Muslims, good Christians, good Hindus and good Buddhists. But together we shall be good citizens of Bangladesh."

The development of a secular Bangladesh and a pruned Pakistan could create a sense of greater confidence amongst Indian Muslims and dampen the morale of the pro-Pakistan elements amongst them.

It is not necessary to discuss the influence of every domestic factor on foreign policy to prove the worth of Prof. Appadorai's book. It is a singular contribution to Indian literature on the subject, though Western writers have brought out a number of works on their respective nations. This work is a must for every student of foreign policy-making in India. It is also necessary for policy makers themselves to be acquainted with the domestic roots of foreign policy so that they do not pursue unrealistic foreign policies. Prof. Appadorai has indicated that the present volume is only an introductory one. We look forward to more such books on the subject from him.

P. M. KAMATH

## BOOK REVIEW

### IN DEFENCE OF PRESS FREEDOM

Minute of Dissent to the Report of the Second Press Commission—1982

A Statesman Publication, Calcutta.

A free and fearless Press is the cornerstone of democracy. Unhealthy restrictions imposed on the Press or failure on its part to protest against such restrictions and to exercise its legitimate freedom, upset the effective functioning of democracy.

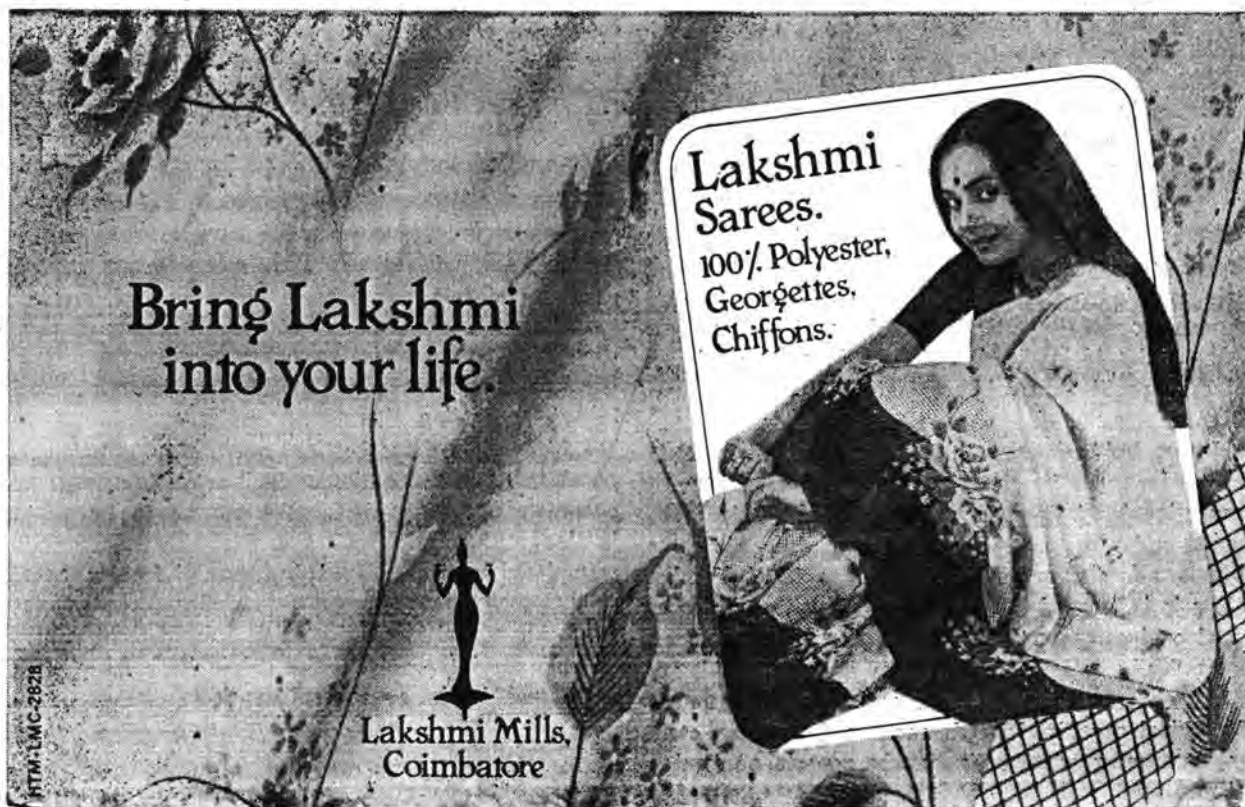
Dissemination of information, discussion of social and political issues, exposure of the acts of omission and commission of the government provide the public with the necessary tools for the exercise of their sovereign power. Indeed, the most important agency that is responsible for formulating Public Opinion is the Press. Hence newspapers have to be within the reach of the general public.

The scope of the functions of the Press has to be enlarged and redefined in response to the needs of a changing society. In the Indian society, bedevilled with semi-feudal structures and social evils such as Bonded labour, the Dowry system and rampant corruption, the Press needs to play the role of an agency of "Reform and Change" as well.

The "Minute of Dissent" authorised by four members of the Second Press Commission brings into focus the whole spectrum of issues involved in the dynamics of running a Newspaper Industry, and the odds against which it has to function in order to fulfil its obligation to the public. The minority that has submitted the dissenting report consists of Justice Sisir Kumar Mukherjea, Rajendra Mathur, Girilal Jain and H. K. Paranjape. Cushrow Irani states in the Preface: "They disagree thoroughly with the assumptions and the conclusions of the Majority Report. . . ."

Unlike the case of the First Press Commission Report, the Report of the Second Press Commission is not being released by the Government for public debate. The key to dissent by the Minority is their conviction that the Majority is set to ruin the best national newspapers by bringing in many stringent measures on them. The Minute of Dissent takes up the cudgels against the majority recommendations to uphold the commercial viability of the Newspaper Industry.

While the majority recommendations seem to be untenable on certain points and tend to stifle the initiative of the Newspaper Industry, the Minute of Dissent would have us believe that the over-riding consideration for a free and fearless Press is its commercial success!



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The recommendations made by the Majority report are the following:

- \* Delinking the newspaper business from other business;
- \* Diffusion of Newspaper ownership and control;
- \* Bringing the Newspaper Industry under the purview of the MRTTP Act and other government restrictions in the form of limiting the number of pages;
- \* A price-page schedule; and
- \* Limit on the ration of advertising space in accordance with the circulation of newspapers.

The tenor of disagreement is reflected in the passages quoted below:

The Majority states: "A person who has taken special interest in the Newspaper business itself is likely to have a greater understanding and competence in such matters. He is more likely to fight for the principles for which he developed the newspapers. This is less likely to be the case with a businessman for whom the newspaper is one among many businesses or is an instrument to help his other business interests." (P. 8)

The Minority reacts: "The idea here is that an owner should be ready to incur losses and even to preside over the liquidation of his business for the sake of the high ideals of journalism." (P. 8)

The Minute of Dissent objects to the price-page schedule as it would be detrimental to quality newspapers. They suggest that while excessive advertisement could be curtailed the same should not be done to the reading matter. They are also opposed to the import duty on newsprint and restriction on advertisement. However they are conscious of the need for a progressive tax on advertisement revenue but reject the fixing of maximum number of pages for a newspaper. They strongly recommend the full application of the MRTTP Act to the Newspaper Industry.

Both the Majority and the Minority Reports recommend the setting up of an Advisory Body or Board of Trustees of eminent men from outside the Newspaper Industry to advise about appointments, promotions, etc. of all editorial and journalistic staff. They differ as to the method of choosing the members of this panel. While the Majority would prefer the Chief Justice of India and the Chairman of the Indian Press Council to do the selection, the Minority would like this to be left to the owners and managers of the Industry.

Ideally speaking, there should be minimal restrictions or no restrictions at all on the newspaper industry. Perforce, those who are at the helm of affairs should hold themselves accountable for fulfilling the role of the Press in a Democracy. Unfortunately, the attitude of some of the leading newspapers in India does not assure the public of their credibility.

There have been instances where proprietors of newspapers have come down with a heavy hand on the legitimate rights of the editors and terminated their services without batting an eyelid. Cases abound where reporters have been taken to task for being objective. There have also been occasions where loans or land allotted exclusively under the newspaper quota have been put by the owners of newspapers into other commercially viable propositions.

In this context, certain restrictions on the Newspaper Industry have to be accepted as necessary evils. Still, a proper balance can be maintained by resisting callous violations by the government of the Freedom of the Press.

The Bihar Press Bill is a case in point. It is gratifying that there are journalists of high calibre who recognise and accept the challenges that the Press in India faces today.

MARY THOMAS

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## LETTERS

### Bankeshwar's interview with Morarji

Dear Sir,

We were both amused and amazed at the juvenile and stupid replies given by Morarjibhai to very serious questions asked by Shri Sumant Bankeshwar. Morarjibhai is supposed to be our elder statesman! In none of his replies did we find any profound wisdom or maturity which is expected from a leader who claims to be such a figure.

1. The Janata Party today is only a paper party, and the weakest among the opposition parties. It is a party of leaders without any mass base even in a single district, let alone any state in our country. It is not cohesive and it has no cadre. It is a combination of jetsum and flotsam of the old Congress (O), the old P.S.P. and a few other paper parties.

Why should stronger opposition parties with a mass base merge with the fast disintegrating Janata Party? To oblige Morarjibhai?

2. After saying that he has never taken any decision in his life under pressure, Morarjibhai says that taking back Charan Singh into his cabinet was a political decision, which has nothing to do with the truth! Does not "any decision" include "political decision"?

3. Morarjibhai says that the F-16 and nuclear bombs do not frighten him at all. Very good, so far as he is concerned, but what about our country? The question is not whether he is afraid or not (a madman too is not afraid of anything in life), but whether the F-16, which is a generation ahead in military hardware, and Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear weapons, pose a threat to our country or not.

All that we can say in conclusion is that the interviewer, Bankeshwar, got the better of the interviewed, Morarjibhai!

Bombay

P. M. DIAS

Sir,

I have gone through Mr. Sumant Bankeshwar's exclusive interview with Shri Morarji Desai. One cannot but agree with Mr. Desai that after the departure of Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Charan Singh both Congress (I) and BLD will disintegrate. Congress (I) has only Mrs. Gandhi as the binding factor. Others in the party are either sycophants or have lost all confidence in themselves.

BLD now stands divided. Its latest division leaves only Charan Singh as the leader of the party. After him one can very well doubt its existence.

But Morarji's optimism about his own party, i.e. the Janata Party is beyond one's understanding. Sumant has very rightly said that the present Janata is a combination of the old PSP and Congress (O) rump, consisting of only ageing leaders without any mass following, or dedicated cadre or even base.

Morarji thinks that the Janata is the only National Alternative to the good old Congress led by Mahatma. People believing in Congress culture will flock around it after the departure of their top leaders!

Assuming Morarji's plea to be true, may I ask him: How many persons are left, even in the Congress, who believe in the ideals of the old Congress culture?

Persons born after 1935 or 1940 know very little of that so-called Congress culture. Most of them do not share its values. The old generation of leaders believing in the Congress concept of sacrifice have already left the party. They are becoming a rare commodity. The few left have no following worth the name.

The old Congress believed in self-sacrifice without caring for rewards. The new Congressmen enjoy all the rewards but make hardly any sacrifices. After Mrs. Gandhi's departure from the scene, they are most likely to join other parties nearing power.

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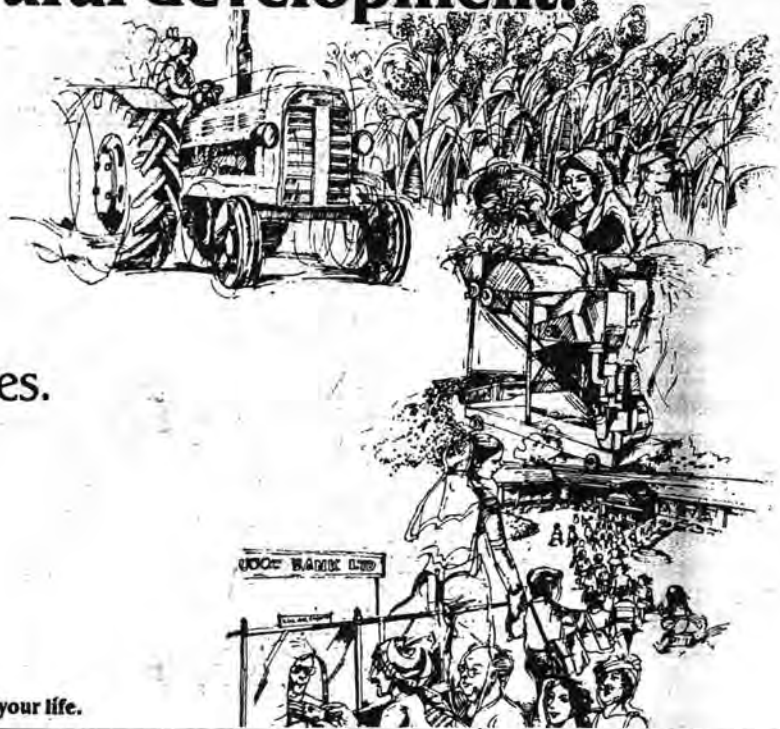
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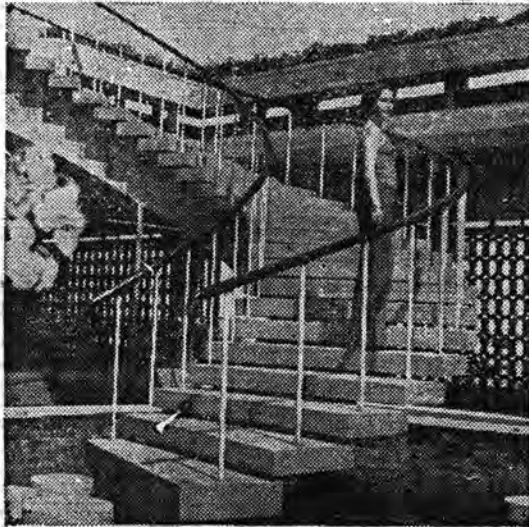
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### WITH MANY VOICES

Those who can, do. Those who can't, set up study groups.

—David Blake in *The Times*, June 7.

All London coppers are members of a minority.

—Advertisement published by the London Metropolitan Police in the *Guardian*, June 7.

It is not part of parliamentary democracy that an Opposition should be free to talk nonsense.

—David Steel, M.P. in *The Times*, May 14.

Jews do not kneel except to God.

—Prime Minister Begin in the *Guardian*, August 5.

When people are in love, it seems, they write such nonsense. When they grow out of love they do much the same, but backwards.

—James Cameron in the *Guardian*, August 10.

Taking bitter pressures from the Americans is preferable to being evacuated with helicopters from the roof of the American Embassy in Saigon.

—Israeli Defence Minister Sharon quoted in *The Australian*, August 31.

The fact that Mr. Enoch Powell is in favour of England, home and beauty does not of itself mean that we or anyone else ought to oppose them on principle.

—Editorial in the *Guardian*, August 13.

In India humour is rare.

—Tyler Marshall in the *International Herald Tribune*, August 16.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation, unlike the late King Charles II, has not apologised for being an unconscionable time a-dying. It should do so. Someone should tell them they are becoming a bore. Except to themselves, they always were. .... I detect in this charade more than a hint of what is called in Arabic the jigeri-poqeri, a quality for which the Palestinians have long been renowned.

—James Cameron in the *Guardian*, August 24.