

A QUARTERLY OF LIBERAL IDEAS

Freedom First

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**What Congress?
Which Congress?**
Minoo Masani

**The Indian National Congress
Its Mission and Failures**
S.P. Aiyar

Remembering the Emergency
R. Srinivasan

The Crisis at UNESCO
Cushrow Irani

LIBERAL MANIFESTO

Drawn up at the International Liberal Conference at Wadham College, Oxford, in April 1947.

We, Liberals of nineteen countries assembled at Oxford at a time of disorder, poverty, famine and fear caused by two World Wars;
convinced that this condition of the world is largely due to the abandonment of liberal principles;
affirm our faith in this Declaration.

I

1. Man is first and foremost a being endowed with the power of independent thought and action, and with the ability to distinguish right from wrong.
2. Respect for the human person and for the family is the true basis of society.
3. The State is only the instrument of the community: it should assume no power which conflicts with the fundamental rights of the citizens and with the conditions essential for a responsible and creative life, namely:
 - Personal freedom, guaranteed by the independence of the administration of law and justice.
 - Freedom of worship and liberty and conscience.
 - Freedom of speech and of the Press.
 - Freedom to associate or not to associate.
 - Free choice of occupation.
 - The opportunity of a full and varied education, according to ability and irrespective of birth or means.
 - The right to private ownership of property and the right to embark on individual enterprise.
 - Consumer's free choice and the opportunity to reap the full benefit of the productivity of the soil and the industry of man
 - Security from the hazards of sickness, unemployment, disability and old age.
 - Equality of rights between men and women.
4. These rights and conditions can be secured only by true democracy. True democracy is inseparable from political liberty and is based on the conscious, free and enlightened consent of the majority, expressed through a free and secret ballot, with due respect for the liberties and opinions of minorities.

II

1. The suppression of economic freedom must lead to the disappearance of political freedom. We oppose such suppression, whether brought about by State ownership or control or by private monopolies, cartels and trusts. We admit State ownership only for those undertakings which are beyond the scope of private enterprise or in which competition no longer plays its part.
2. The welfare of the community must prevail and must be safeguarded from the abuse of power by sectional interests.
3. A continuous betterment of the conditions of employment, and of the housing and environment of the workers is essential. The rights, duties and interests of labour and capital are complementary; organised consultation and collaboration between employers and employed is vital to the well-being of industry.

III

Service is the necessary complement of freedom and every right involves a corresponding duty. If free institutions are to work effectively, every citizen must have a sense of moral responsibility towards his fellow men and take an active part in the affairs of the community.

IV

War can be abolished and world peace and economic prosperity restored only if all nations fulfil the following conditions:

- (a) Loyal adherence to a world organisation of all nations, great and small, under the same law and equity, and with power to enforce the strict observance of all international obligations freely entered into.
- (b) Respect for the right of every nation to enjoy the essential human liberties.
- (c) Respect for the language, faith, laws and customs of national minorities.
- (d) The free exchange of ideas, news, goods and services between nations, as well as freedom of travel within and between all countries, unhampered by censorship, protective trade barriers and exchange regulations.
- (e) The development of the backward areas of the world, with the collaboration of their inhabitants, in their true interests and in the interests of the world at large.

We call upon all men and women who are in general agreement with these ideals and principles to join us in an endeavour to win their acceptance throughout the world.

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Dear Friend,

Our efforts to introduce *Freedom First* to new subscribers is making slow but steady progress. While we are by no means competing with the glossies, it is heartening that we are not altogether ignored by the magazine-browsing public at the news stands. After three decades in 'purdah', *Freedom First* has, if we may use a phrase from commerce, 'gone public.'

We are encouraged by many letters of appreciation. Mr. Philip Mason the author of *The Men Who Ruled India* in a letter to Mr. Masani writes: "I congratulate you on the new format of *Freedom First* which I like very much and I also congratulate you on your admirable article on liberalism..." Mr. Richard Krygier of the Australian Committee for Cultural Freedom observes: "I can honestly say that of all publications connected with the Congress for Cultural Freedom, *Freedom First* has always been closest to my heart. There has never been beating about the bush when *Freedom First* spoke out. Thus to have my name in that particular publication is great pleasure..." Back home Mr. Pramod Mishra of the Orissa Unit of the Hindustani Andolan considers the articles in *Freedom First* as "a positive step to serve democracy" and "bring sanity and consciousness amongst the so-called elite of the country." Dr. Fredie Mehta congratulates *Freedom First* for an "excellent issue" (April) which he "read with keen interest."

Essay Competition

Twenty five essays have been received from students of junior and senior colleges. They are now being scrutinised by the panel of judges. The prize winning essay will be published in the January 1986 issue.

Acknowledgement

Mr. Minoo Masani's articles in this issue are based on his column in *The Statesman*.

— The Editors

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With Many Voices

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

If Panditji had his Menons, his grandson Rajiv has his Singhs.

—Quark, *Times of India*, August 18.

The (textile) mills are closing, the workers live on doles, the cotton grower is in ruins and the masses are naked. That in brief is the situation.

—Sharad Joshi, *Shetkari Sanghatana*, August 16.

How much more truthful his (Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's) statement about the country not being ready for autonomy for the media would be if it read as: the party is not yet ready.

—Amita Malik, *Indian Express*, August 4.

Now, since the Central government has declared a 5-day week in all government offices, God alone knows by how much the birthrate in the country will shoot up!

—Kanti K. Sheth, *Midday*, June 12.

In India, who would dare joke about the PM on Doordarshan?

—Amita Malik, *Express Magazine*, August 25.

Women fall in love through their ears and men through their eyes.

—Woodrow Wyatt, *The Sunday Observer*, August 18.

Muscovites were joking about buying season tickets to Kremlin funerals. "What has twenty legs and four teeth?" Answer: "The Politburo."

—*National Review*, April 5.

The modern terrorist is a megalomaniac plus high-tech.

—*The Economist*, June 22.

Writing is the hardest form of work for the naturally lazy.

—Woodrow Wyatt in his book *Confessions of an Optimist*.

It is rare for me to pass remarks of a general nature on the male sex, in public anyhow. The Lord created it and presumably knew what he was doing; and even if he had slipped up the less said the better.

—Honar Tracy, *The Daily Telegraph*, June 1.

Nobody forgets anything in politics, least of all humiliation.

—A Gujarat politician, *India Today*, July 31.

Free people, free minds, and free markets will develop innovations which will ensure a more prosperous and peaceful tomorrow.

—President Ronald Reagan, *An Essay in Understanding*, U.S.I.S., New Delhi.

He (Emperor Akbar) had, of course, most of the virtues since he engaged most of the historians.

—Will Durant in his book *Our Oriental Heritage*.

A tree is a pole of liberty and every leaf a flag of honour.

—Baba Amte, *The Sunday Observer*, August 11.

When India finally threw off the suffocating rule of the British, the world confidently expected a great Indian Renaissance. It looked forward to the Indian Einstein, the Indian Michaelangelo, the Indian Beethoven, the Indian John Milton. Instead it got the Indian politician.

—Aubrey Menen, *The Sunday Observer*, September 15.

Of Cabbages & Kings

Is Rajiv a Socialist?

MR. RAJIV GANDHI is no socialist. He is certainly not a Reagan or a Thatcher, nor is he a Kinnock. If he caved in to the old bandicoots at the Congress (I) AICC meeting in Delhi last March, it was convenience and not conviction. Or was it a bad case of nerves? He is spared the Anglo-Saxon-Marxist confusion of his grandfather, but is he free of the cynical opportunism of his mother? It is still too early to say. Time will tell. Meanwhile, his inexperience and lack of clear-cut ideological predilections might yet prove to be his best asset. India has already suffered much at the hands of half-baked ideologues.

The crying need of the hour is pragmatism. Politicians in India generally underestimate the intelligence of the people and even today continue to think that catch-words convince them. I remember some years ago, Prof. N. G. Ranga then President of the Swatantra Party pleading within the party's councils for the adoption of "Gandhian Socialism" as the Party's slogan. When he could not satisfactorily convince the formidable array of intellectuals in the Party's National Executive on what exactly the phrase meant, he fell back on the argument that not to talk of socialism meant courting political defeat. In other words, let the contents remain unaltered, change only the brand-name. And that should do the trick. So Rajiv's protestations of socialism need not be taken too seriously. The pity is that he does not need the word for votes but only to keep the old goats in his party happy.

The fact that no one has yet been able to pin-point on which side of the political spectrum he stands, is itself proof of what we are saying.

In such a context what should be a Liberal's attitude to Mr. Rajiv Gandhi? I deliberately leave out the Party because the Congress (I) is merely his shadow. I for one, would extend critical support in areas of economic policy, particularly in his efforts to free the economy from excessive controls. At the same time, uncompromising opposition to his evident desire to promote a unitary system in India, his refusal to give autonomy to radio and T.V. and his government's harassment of civil liberties activists, to mention just three examples.

—SVR

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

- Lewis Carroll



The Future of Chandigarh

MUCH as one welcomes the historic accord reached between the Akalis and the Government of India on July 24, there is, alas, one aspect of it which cannot but sadden the hearts of a great many among us. On Republic Day 1986, the Union Territory of Chandigarh, arguably the only planned, spacious and aesthetically pleasing city in India, will be divested of its independent character and become a part of Punjab. While there can be no two opinions about the rationale behind this change (Chandigarh was, after all, meant to be Punjab's capital), those who have grown to love the city over the years will, understandably, feel concerned over its future.

Will the architectural beauty of Chandigarh (bespoilt though it has been in parts in recent years) be preserved? Or will this city also go the way most others have gone, becoming a victim of indiscriminate and haphazard real-estate development and unchecked influx of people from neighbouring towns and villages? It is heartening to know that at least one leader of national stature has been exercised over these pressing questions and has taken them up with the highest in the land, for whatever the effect is worth.

"The misgivings of the people of Chandigarh are real," says Prof. Bal Raj Madhok in a recent letter to Rajiv Gandhi. "Something must be done to allay these fears before Chandigarh is finally transferred to Punjab."

Among the steps suggested by Prof. Madhok are: the enactment of special provisions for maintaining the architectural and topographical character of Chandigarh; preservation of the common High Court for Punjab and Haryana & Chandigarh; designation of the Punjab University as a Central University; guarantee of freedom in the matter of medium of education enjoyed by the residents; and assurance of a definite share to the people of Chandigarh in the civil services of Punjab. One can only hope that these sensible

suggestions are accepted by the Government and every effort is made to save Chandigarh from decay and death that is bound to be its fate otherwise.

—KSV

The Japanese Mind

FOR SEVERAL years now, the attitude of the American people towards the Japanese has been more or less ambivalent. Admiration has invariably alternated with a tinge of envy and even hostility. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in the field of business and industry where the American entrepreneur, outwitted at his own game by his Japanese counterpart, finds it extremely difficult to come to terms with the changed reality.

The tragedy is compounded by a marked reluctance on the part of Americans to learn and understand the Japanese, says Robert C. Christopher in his recent book *The Japanese Mind* (Pan Books, £2.95). "Except for the little-headed minority who make Japan a lifetime study—and who sometimes do so out of romantic attachment to a vanished world that bears about as much relation to contemporary Japan as Elizabethan England does to Mrs. Thatcher's England—Americans have no idea how Japanese think and feel," says Christopher.

This reluctance, says the author, stems partly from a superiority complex. "There are still people in this country who find it inconceivable that a nation of 'little yellow men' could ever outstrip Americans in anything except duplicity." Perhaps the most grotesque example of this attitude came in the remark some influential members of the US Senate made to a visiting Japanese Minister during the Carter presidency. "Remember, Mr. Minister," they are reported to have said, "the United States don't need Japan, but you need us."

Japanese curiosity about the Americans, on the other hand, often verges on the absurd. "Some years ago," says Christopher, "a young Japanese businessman who was studying English in a class taught by my wife interrupted her disquisition on past participles to inquire whether she wore underwear. When her initial indignation subsided, it dawned on my wife that the young man, who worked for a major Japanese textile firm, was simply conducting a little on-the-spot market research."

—KSV

A Disappointing Tract

THAT the fecundity of some of our legal commentators is in inverse proportion to their originality of thought is by now too well-established to need any elaboration. The latest evidence of this comes in the form of a booklet, pompously titled *Constitutional Aspects of Sikh Separatism* (Prentice-Hall of India, Rs. 5) by Dr. Durga Das Basu. It purports to be an extract from a substantial volume on Comparative Federalism being brought out by the author.

The booklet, we are told by Basu, is "not the work of a politician but of an academician who has been studying the Indian Constitution from when it was in embryo . . . spurning power politics which merely clouds the Truth and generates hatred." The blurb, for good measure, reminds us that Basu has had the honour of being ranked with "Blackstone, Coke and Chancellor Kent" (Well, well, . . .).

What awaits the reader, of course, is something altogether different. Page after boring page, Basu dishes out hackneyed quotations from the notorious White Paper through which the Government unsuccessfully sought to put a veneer of legitimacy on its acts of omission and commission *vis-a-vis* the Punjab. His 'analysis' of the Punjab problem is as flawed as his comments on Sant Longowal are uncharitable, especially when viewed in the perspective of the Sant's recent contribution to peace in that troubled State.

—KSV

Dr. Mohan Siah Mehta

Liberals will deeply mourn the sad demise of Dr. Mohan Sinh Mehta recently in Udaipur.

A gentleman to his finger tips and a true liberal, Dr. Mehta served as a Minister in the erstwhile Udaipur State, later as our High Commissioner in Pakistan and Ambassador in West Europe. His tenure as Vice-Chancellor of Rajasthan University, Jaipur, is remembered to this day. He gave away all his property and money to the Seva Mandir, a Public Trust to serve the cause of the poor rural folk and tribals.

Freedom First pays its respectful tributes to a noble and good soul who did so much for the poor and the unfortunate.

The Indian National Congress : Its Mission And Failures

S. P. Aiyar

THE INAUGURATION of the centenary celebrations of the Indian National Congress on 6th May 1985 roused little enthusiasm in the country and it did not evoke any idealism. It was just one more event marking the beginning of a familiar tale full of sound and fury signifying nothing. Even so, it is for the student of Indian history as well as for the political analyst of contemporary trends, an event which provides an opportunity to reflect upon the significance of some of the trends of underlying forces of the past century of political development.

The India of 1885

This is too long a period for any generalization and we must not ignore the fact that with the exception of the continuity in the name of Indian National Congress, the organization has been marked by several discontinuities, internal schisms, factionalism, and the compulsions of power which have from time to time determined its dynamics and its growth. Several leading figures in India's national movement left the impress of their personalities on the organization from time to time. It has been from its very inception cosmopolitan in its outlook and diversified in its composition. Though not representative of the masses in the strict sense, it articulated the aspirations of the educated classes who very soon constituted an important group spearheading the political movement. Leaders of the Congress at that time came to regard themselves as spokesmen of the country's economic and political problems and thus established a link between the foreign government and the poverty-stricken unlettered masses of India.

The India of 1885 was not characterised by any profound sense of patriotism although there was among the educated sections of the people a certain pride in India's past achievements. This had not resulted in creating a sense of unity across the length and breadth of the continent. Allan Octavian Hume who is generally credited with the formation of the Congress had sent out a caustic letter in 1883 to the graduates of the Calcutta University in the course of which he said:

"As I said before, you are the salt of the land. And if amongst you, the elite, fifty men cannot be found with sufficient power of self-sacrifice

sufficient love and pride in their country, sufficient genuine and unselfish heartfelt patriotism to take the initiative, and if needs be, devote the rest of their lives to the cause, then there is no hope for India. Her sons must and will remain mere humble and helpless instruments in the hands of foreign rulers, for they who would be free themselves must strike the blow".

Sir John Strachey in his remarkable work, *India, its administration and progress* (1888) observed the baffling contrast which characterised the land, its people and the total absence of a single political entity which we have today come to know as India. In a passage which is often quoted Strachey wrote: "This is the first and most essential thing to learn about India that there is not, and never was an India, or even any country of India, possessing, according to European ideas, any sort of unity, physical, political, social or religious: no Indian nation, no 'people of India' of which we hear so much".

In the century that has elapsed since Strachey wrote the above lines there has been a remarkable transformation in the unification of the country through the rapid changes in the physical means of communications and in expansion of the mass media. The creation of a political entity, despite the fact that it is only a fragment of the territory in Strachey's time, is the remarkable achievement of the past century. But political identity has not been infused by any deep sense of nationalism. India is still, to use the title of Surendranath Banerjee's autobiography *A Nation In the Making*.

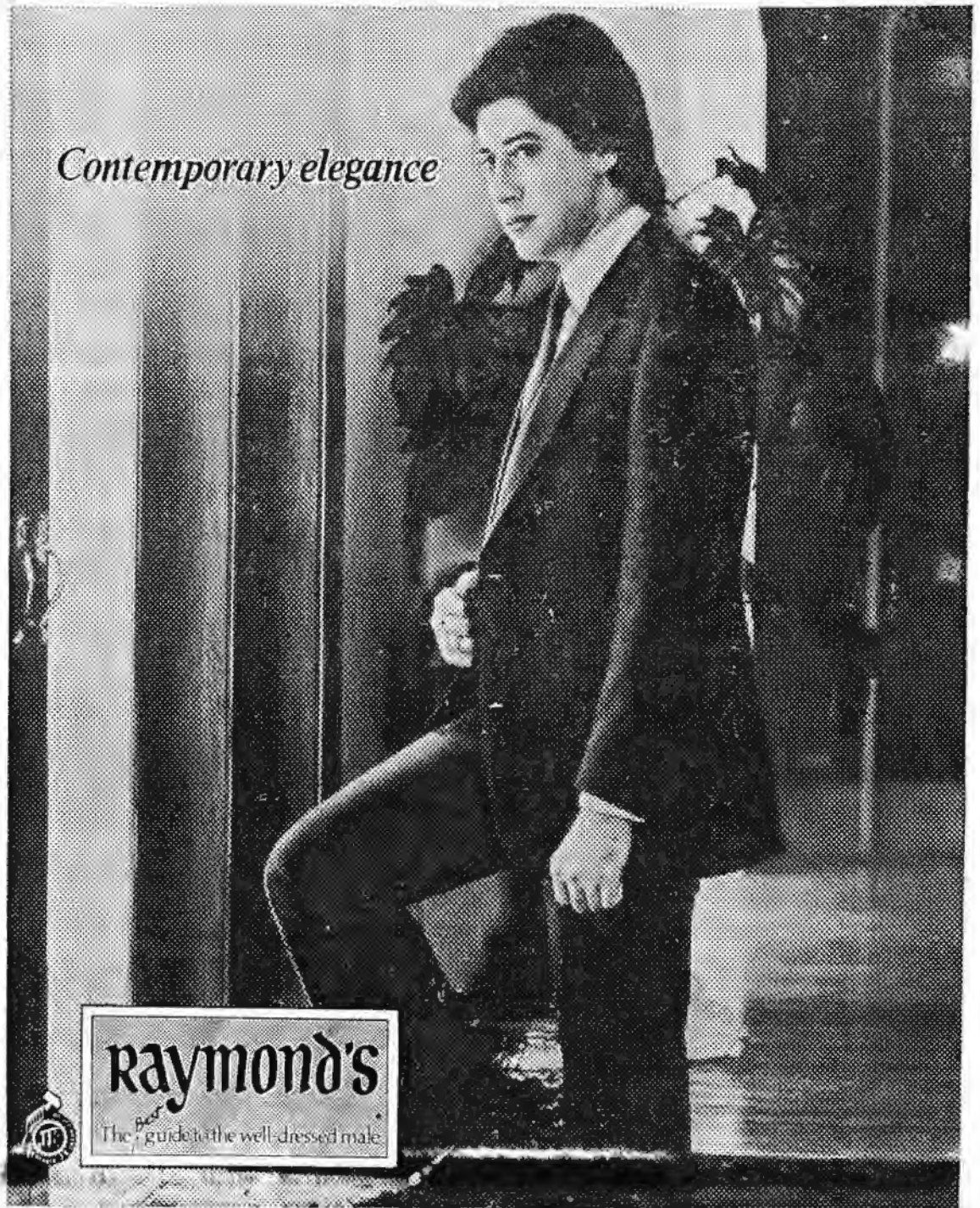
A Nation in the Making

The Congress which has articulated the hopes and aspirations of sections of people throughout the national struggle has not been quite successful in forging national unity. The purpose of this article is to inquire into some of the reasons which have been responsible for this failure of the Congress.

The small elite group of educated urban intellectuals, Lord Dufferin's "microscopic minority", which spearheaded the Congress marked the beginning of a movement which was to shape the political development of

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India. It spoke primarily for those interests like the Indianisation of services, but it soon came to express the economic problems of the people. The unity which characterised it did not last long, for there soon developed sharp differences of opinion on the strategies of political action between the moderates and the extremists. These differences of opinion would have proved disastrous to the Congress but the national movement which reached the peak during World War I soon became broad based under the leadership of Gandhi after 1920. The Congress no longer represented the classes alone but also large sections of the people. The Congress in effect became a mass movement. This development had more than one unfortunate consequence. At the beginning of the century the moderates of whom Gokhale was perhaps the best representative had visualised discipline and training for those who worked for the national cause. The most eloquent expression of this ideal was in the preamble to the aims and objectives of the Servants of India Society:

"Love of country must so fill the heart that all else shall appear as of little moment by its side. A fervent patriotism which rejoices at every opportunity of sacrifice for the motherland, a dauntless heart which refuses to be turned back from its object by difficulty or danger, a deep faith in the purpose of Providence which nothing can shake—equipped with these, the worker must start on his mission and reverently seek the joy which comes from spending oneself in the service of one's country."

When the Congress mobilised the masses it was easy to swell its ranks with untrained volunteers.

From Mass Movement to Political Party

The Congress soon developed an attitude of intolerance towards all who worked outside the organisation. The leadership of the Congress assumed that they alone had the right to speak in the national cause—all others were either communal or henchmen of the Raj. This trend was most noticeably expressed by Gandhi himself in the Second Round Table Conference. He made it clear that the Congress was the only party which was popularly representative, for other delegates were nominated by the government. In a sense his position implied that he represented the Congress and therefore the people of India. Reginald Coupland wrote "this was the first statement, on a public official occasion, of the one party doctrine which was presently to prove the main obstacle to an Indian settlement of the constitutional problem". The intolerant leaders of the Congress found expression in

unexpected ways. In an interesting essay, "Can a politician also be a gentleman?", the liberal statesman V. S. Srinivasa Sastri mentions how a Congress volunteer met him after one of the public meetings when his car had travelled a little distance to apologise for not attending the meeting because there were strict instructions to this effect.

The conversion of a mass movement into a political party became a source of weakness in the functioning of parliamentary institutions after Independence. In 1962 the All India Congress Committee in a circular denounced the opposition parties and went on to say "It must be emphasised that those who criticise him (Nehru) are traitors". *The Indian Express* in its editorial of December 3, 1962 said "The Congress might be the Party in power but it cannot arrogate to itself authority which belongs to only the Government. Much less can it equate itself with the country and hold its leader immune from public criticism . . . the identification of a leader with the nation can only lead to dictatorship". Needless to say this trend has continued till the present day rendering the future of parliamentary institutions precarious in the extreme.

The Dissipation of an Elan

The spirit of Indian nationalism was raised to new heights of intensity during World War II specially during the Quit India Movement. This enthusiasm which preceded the granting of India's independence continued in the first decade of the free nation despite shortages in the economy and frequent droughts in the countryside. At the time of the First Five Year Plan people were willing to make sacrifices for a better future. The quality of the leadership at that time, a stable government and the working of the Indian Parliament all contributed to a sense of pride. All these lasted till the beginning of the 1960s. Political developments after Nehru's death in 1964 were marked by one crisis after another. Authoritarianism in government and seething discontent arising from the failure of the government to solve economic problems led to widespread frustration. Mrs. Gandhi's populist slogan of "Garibi Hatao" was the expression of an awareness of the agrarian discontent.

The massive support which Mrs. Indira Gandhi secured in the 1971 mid-term parliamentary elections yielded rapidly to a form of plebiscitarian dictatorship which enervated the parliamentary institutions. Morality in public life was fast vanishing, and democratic conventions were observed more in the breach. So heavily has this period of our recent history been

documented that it is needless to elaborate it here. The élan of the national movement had completely dried up. As one reflects on this strand in the history of the Indian National Congress one cannot but come to the conclusion that it must share the main responsibility for this state of affairs.

Fuddled Ideology

The Congress which continuously evolved its political strategies in accordance with the exigencies of the time never succeeded in formulating its economic goals in precise terms or in deciding how those goals would be realised. After 1920, vague notions of socialism spread through public life in India. Often, it was no more than the desire to have an egalitarian society. Every brand of socialism from the Utopian to the Marxian had its faithful followers among Congressmen. But the acceptance of socialism had its origin in a resolution of the Karachi session of the Congress in 1931.

After independence, those responsible for planning were attracted to the different forms of socialism as known in the West. However, the word did not figure very prominently in the First Five Year Plan. In 1955, at the Avadi Session the Congress adopting a resolution used the term "Socialistic Pattern of Society". Evidently the term was used to differentiate it from 'socialist'. Businessmen in India were naturally perturbed by what was decided at Avadi, but Nehru lost no time in allaying their fears. During the debate he said: "If the State cannot do something why shouldn't private enterprise start it? The main thing is to increase wealth in the country". Indian planning rested on the idea of a mixed economy and postulated that private enterprise should have considerable freedom to develop but that it should do so in a manner consistent with the objectives in the country's national plans.

The vagueness in socialistic pronouncements by Nehru and by Congress leaders bedeviled Indian planning. Used in a variety of senses the word socialism was drained of all meaning. As one critic later wrote: "Anyone who looked clearly at the pronouncements on socialism in India including those of Panditji cannot fail to be impressed by a certain sense of unreality and vagueness, of ambivalence that surrounds them, not this; not that; not rigid; not doctrinaire; not confiscation; not nationalisation; no violent overthrow of the propertied classes; not Marxian, not Russian; the description proceeds in sonorous negatives, some-

what in the style of our ancient scriptures where the ONE is sought to be interpreted by emphasising what IT is not, rather than emphasising what IT is." (quoted by Amiya Rao and B. G. Rao, *Six Thousand Days*, New Delhi, 1974, p. 19).

The reluctance to define socialism in the context of economic development was part of the logistics of what David Apter called the "Reconciliation System", with its emphasis on pluralism, adjustment and compromise, development through government and private enterprise, a mild dose of socialism and a general ideological diffuseness. This eclecticism in Indian planning was not only the result of the need to reconcile different interests within the country and its own organisation but also the product of a belief that India was capable of proving to be the path-finder in a troubled world, showing the possibility of reconciling the dominant ideological conflicts of the age. In short, this was the economic counterpart of non-alignment in international politics.

Since Nehru was also the Chairman of the Planning Commission it is more than probable that his influence on Indian planning was considerable. In his time the Planning Commission had become more than an advisory body which led many critics to describe it as a "super cabinet".

Confusion Most Confounded

The vagueness in the economic ideology of the Congress had an unfortunate effect on plan implementation. The argument frequently heard, that the Indian government was good at planning but weak in its implementation, is only a half truth. Part of the failure of Indian planning was due to the failure to formulate the goals in precise terms. The most flagrant illustration of this was to be found in the colossal failure of community development. S. K. Dey who was appointed administrator for Community Development was professionally a salesman and knew little or nothing about what community development administration required. Flamboyant by temperament he was given to unrestrained verbosity. He employed every kind of gimmick to get Nehru around to his point of view, and soon he got himself well entrenched in Nehru's confidence. With such a man at the helm it is hardly surprising that the entire programme got bogged down with sentimental and mindless *cliches* like 'felt needs' 'people's participation' and the like. Field workers were quick in parroting words and phrases which they did not understand. Compounded with American jargon the result was confusion most confounded

(see Amiya Rao and B. G. Rao—*Six Thousand Days*, pp. 64). Consider the following dialogue between S. K. Dey and a village level worker;

Dey: How long have you been here?

V.L.W.: Four months, Sir.

Dey: What have you been doing?

V.L.W.: Collecting data.

Dey: About what?

V.L.W.: Felt needs, Sir.

Dey: What do you mean by felt needs?

V.L.W.: Mass Approach Method, Sir.

Dey: Mass Approach Method!

V.L.W.: Yes, psychological approach, Sir.

Fuddled ideology was reinforced by unrealistic assumptions in planning. Prof. Hanson had observed that the success of Indian planning depended on realising the unrealisable. As he puts it the assumptions were:

"If people work harder, if they are less selfish, and if they make the plan theirs, if the administration is

less corrupt and more efficient, if the peasants make full use of the irrigation waters, if the Community Projects create the desired response, if the business community becomes public spirited, if the trade unions behave themselves, if the prejudices and antagonisms associated with region, community, and caste are significantly diminished, if there is more whole-hearted co-operation between the states and the centre"

Giovani Sartori has argued that a mixed economy has the inherent tendency to increase the power of the State. The public sector in India greatly expanded since independence but its working and performance has constituted for the most part a tale of inefficiency and waste. The Indian public sector was devoid of any public spirit. The mixed economy of the 1950s ran into difficulty in the inhospitable climate of radicalism which marked the ascendancy of Mrs. Indira

(Continued on next page)

What Congress? Which Congress?

Minoo Masani

Television and the press are full of the centenary celebrations of the Congress. What Congress? Which Congress?

Let me explain these questions. In 1932 I was detained for underground Congress activities in Bombay. In 1933 I was sentenced to a year's rigorous imprisonment for functioning as President of the then illegal Bombay Provincial Congress Committee. For several years in the thirties, I was a member of the All India Congress Committee and the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee. I participated in the Quit India campaign and courted arrest during Gandhiji's fast in February 1943. In 1945 I was elected as Congress candidate from Bombay to the Indian Legislative Assembly. I was a Congress member of the Constituent Assembly of India and the Provisional Parliament till 1952. That is the Congress I know.

So far as I am concerned, the Indian National Congress died when India achieved independence. So I quietly dropped out of the Congress in 1952 and returned to Parliament in 1957 as an Independent. Mahatma Gandhi had suggested that the Indian National Congress

should be wound up on achieving Independence and its members should divide themselves into two political parties, one in power and the other in opposition. Not only was this advice ignored, but the Congress politicians decided to cash in on the fruits of Independence by converting themselves into the ruling party for generations to come.

The Congress was thus hijacked. What is now being celebrated is for the benefit of the Congress (I) Party and for its glorification. It has nothing in common with the Indian National Congress to which I belonged for some twenty years.

Mr. Nijalingappa, former Congress President, had this to say: "The late Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi, by dividing the Indian National Congress in 1969, had defamed, degraded and destroyed the original Congress and there was no INC as it existed before. I refuse to recognise the function (held in Delhi on 6th May) or the people who are planning to organise it. Now there are as many Congresses as half the letters in the alphabet."

(Continued from previous page)

Gandhi to power in the 1970s. Congress politicians frequently talked as though the public sector alone counted and the private sector was at the mercy of the State. In reality all this radicalism was only skin-deep and businessmen knew it. Big business houses expanded despite the Monopolies Commission. But the worst aspect of the situation was the multiplicity of government rules relating to permits, licenses and quotas in the context of all round chronic scarcities. It led inevitably to corruption and spiralling inflation.

The Congress under Rajiv Gandhi has spoken of administrative reform, control of corruption and holding of the price level. He has again reiterated the Government's policy of socialism. The old wine has been poured into new bottles. When one surveys the economic performance of the Congress from Nehru to the present day one fact emerges clearly. India's revolution of rising expectations has yielded place to the revolution of rising frustration. To such an *impasse* has the country come in the year of the centenary of the Indian National Congress.

The Twilight of Federalism

John Strachey whom we have quoted in the beginning of this article had drawn attention to the cultural and linguistic diversity of India. The political history of India since his time holds out one supreme lesson *viz*, the futility of trying to rule the country from a single centre. The British never tried it and the framers of our Constitution rightly settled for a federal system with substantial powers for the central government. Unfortunately, in the working of federalism the States were reduced to a subordinate position not intended by the framers of our Constitution. Centralised planning combined with a near one-party rule symbolised in the office of one person completely destroyed the partnership between the Centre and the States. Although Mrs. Gandhi professed faith in federalism, her political decisions had the effect of eroding state autonomy. The orgy of defections often reduced representative government to a farce. Governments were toppled and chief ministers dislodged. Mrs. Gandhi appointed her own nominees even though they lacked a local base. The spectacle of Chief Ministers air-dashing to Delhi to consult her on the formation of their Cabinets would have had the quality of a low comedy but for its unfortunate implications. According to one source there was a case of one Chief Minister who made hundred runs to the capital within the spell of a year and a half. Era Sezhiyan, Member of Parliament, commented "He might have been chosen to be the opening batsman of a cricket

team, not as a Chief Minister to shoulder the responsibility of administering a State!" Writing in *The New York Times* magazine, August 10, 1975, Claire Sterling noted that of the 666 days Siddharth Shankar Ray was Chief Minister of West Bengal, he had spent 306 days in the capital, mostly in Mrs. Gandhi's waiting room. Mrs. Gandhi's unconcern for State autonomy encouraged a type of Oriental sycophancy unknown earlier and factionalism had become endemic (*When the Wind Blows*, S. P. Aiyar and S. V. Raju 1978, p. 39). The division of powers was so interpreted so as to place the States in a helpless condition. To cite but one example the interpretation of the Industries (Regulation and Control) Act, 1951 came to be so used that a majority of the industries in the State list came under Central control. This has rightly been described as a fraud on the Constitution. The same tendency has been noticeable in the other areas notably higher education. The most unfortunate consequence of centralisation has been that the States have gradually abandoned their responsibility for development in vital areas of nation-building. The massive support which the Congress received in the general elections of 1984 only reinforced the trend of centralisation of the earlier period. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's pronouncements from time to time clearly show that he is no ardent supporter of State autonomy. If any thing, the Central Government in his thinking has a paramount position in the political system.

The record of Indian federalism during the past three decades clearly indicates that in the culturally diversified society with its vast variations, linguistic, cultural and geographical with each area having its own local history and tradition, it is futile to seek hope that a strong Centre can hammer out those differences and create national uniformities in the pursuit of a mistaken national identity. As in the United States, the problem of central leadership is to create unity in diversity. To create a more lasting union, the Central Government has to derive its strength from the resources available in the States. It is in the States that most of the economic development has to take place although with Central assistance. Wisely did the framers of the Constitution allocate the major nation-building activities to the State List. As Paul Appleby noted, in no other federal system was the Central Government so dependent on the States as in India. From the federal point of view it has been unfortunate that the intentions of the framers of the Constitution have been substantially disregarded because of the concentration of political and economic power in the Union Government. Karl Loewenstein observed that economic planning is the D.D.F. of federalism, that it

slowly corrodes into State autonomy. But this is precisely what has happened.

Plethora at the Centre and apoplexy in the States is disastrous to the spirit of federalism. With the near one-party dominance the polity is perpetually poised on the brink of transforming itself into a quasi-federal system. It is the responsibility of Congress leaders at the Centre to ensure that the country's future is not jeopardised in the pursuit of immediate political expediency.

The completion of a century has cast upon the Indian National Congress not only a status but also a responsibility for the future. It can derive its strength from the rich legacy of the past, from the ideals of its leaders and the dedication of those who died in the freedom struggle.

The history of the Congress for the last hundred years tells us only half the story. For the organisation which was set up in 1885 cannot be understood without the achievements of the century which preceded it. One may recall that in 1784 almost a century prior to the Congress, Sir William Jones had established the Asiatic Society of Bengal and five years later he published the first English translation of Kalidasa's masterpiece *Sakuntala*. In 1797 H. T. Colebrooke, one of the greatest of the Orientalists, began

his epoch-making studies on Hindu law, philosophy, grammar, astronomy and religion. This work which was to create a new sense of pride among the educated classes in the 19th century reached its culmination in 1875 when Max Muller completed his monumental work on the *Rig Veda*.

This was the intellectual background for the Bengal renaissance and other intellectual and reformist movements in Western India and other parts of the country. India was discovering her lost soul and establishing her cultural identity. In the century and a half which preceded the independence of India, the country had produced remarkable men and women in every sphere of activity—men and women cast in a heroic mould. Today when we look back at the history of the Congress one is compelled to contrast that period with the present. History does not repeat itself. The national movement required heroes and the country produced them. The task of nation-building requires on the other hand a more diversified leadership in every field of human activity. Leaders have to grow; they can't be made. Only in a genuine federal system with less stress on Statism can we have a climate in which such leadership would become possible.

Dr. S. P. Aiyar is Head of the Department of Civics and Politics, Bombay University

The Sole of Indian Politics

What's in a sole? Much leather and missile power. And what is it doing in parliament? Many a thing and to go by precedents the sole, not on the foot but in hand, definitely becomes the most impressive way of expressing an opinion.

If Congress sessions before independence were pointers of what was to come later the Surat session of 1907 established the 'sole' right. When Rash Behari Ghosh stood up to speak a smooth sailing Mahratta shoe cut through the air and split the Congress officially into the Nationalists and the Moderates. It was the Nationalists' shoe which had been flung. The session went down in history as the session of the 'sole' split.

Times have changed and with changing times soles have changed. Today there are a variety of soles that frequent parliament floors. From the Mahratta shoe to the chappal, the high-heeled to the flat, the Bata to the Karigar. It all goes with the mien.

Playing the game of follow the leader, one of those games we never grow out of, even visitors But there is many a slip between the throw and

in parliament have taken to flinging their soles. the reach. And what do you do when they are proudly held up as exhibits? It misses the point does it not?

It is all a question of progress. From snoring to walk-outs to slipper throwing. And one of self expression. Then for the practical minded there are advantages. No one can deny that artistry is involved. It's a shorter javelin in a way. Sole throwing is more sophisticated, more intelligent. You are not involved in it after it has taken off unlike fisticuffs or a scuffle. The latter can cause bodily harm you know. To you, which is why it is to be avoided. And if timed correctly it does not boomerang on you. They would only be able to trace a general direction. You don't have to bear any responsibility unless in the frisking of your person on the way in, there is also one appointed to direct a glance at your feet on the way out.

Not surprisingly a sole well thrown has come to mean a battle easily won. No wonder it is taken recourse to so often these days.

—Padmini Menon



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December 1885 - Memories of the First Congress Convention

I was elected representative for Coimbatore, for the first Congress Convention to be held in Bombay city on the 27th, 28th, 29th, and 30th December 1885. On the evening of the 24th, a batch of twenty-one left Madras including Rangaiyah Naidu, the Hon. Subramania Iyer, Dewan Bahadur Raghunatha Rao, Rao Bahadur Anantha Charlu and the others. Till Raichur we travelled third class each paying Rs. 5; we found it extremely uncomfortable and changed over to the second class, this costing each of us Rs. 26.14. Thanks to the arrangements of Dewan Bahadurs Raghunatha Rao and Sabapathi Mudaliar excellent lunch and other eatables in plenty were provided to us on the way. On Sunday, December 26, we reached Bombay at 12 noon. A distinguished group including the Hon. A. O. Hume received us with honour and reached us to the palace of Goculdas Tejpal and arranged for our lunch and other conveniences.

Goculas Tejpal is an open-hearted, bountiful aristocrat endured with unbelievable wealth. After distributing his largesse to friends and relatives, the remaining Rs. 17,59,188-8-10 paise was invested by him in charities and noble causes. The palace was built from the remains of the Fund. The palace is a dream structure of magnificent proportions. In front of the palace is a huge lake reminding me of the legendary Manasa Pampa.

In the central hall itself the walls sparkle as though made of marble and many chairs are arranged against them, so numerous that a thousand men could be seated comfortably. Besides these are several sofas of brilliant colours as well as tables; the marble floors have beautiful carpets, and these must have been fabulously expensive indeed. The ceiling has several chandeliers of an elaborate nature; and these transform the nights into a heavenly place and we are taken care as though we were in heaven itself. The rooms that were allotted us for lodging could not have been more roomy and comfortable. Beds, the sheets, the tables, writing materials, gee-gaws, mirrors all were spotlessly clean and sparkling.

Whether one wanted a hair-cut or a shave or a

drive out in a coach, there were arrangements ready. And those who personally looked after us were the very elite of the city—among them being Dadabhai Naoroji, K. T. Telang, Pheroze-shah Mehta and many others. Central to all of them is elderly Dadabhai Naoroji, who is aged. Eloquent in English, he toils day and night for the amelioration of the poverty of the people of India. At considerable expense to himself, he has gone six times to England to put forward the case for India. Another eminent gentleman is Pheroze-shah Mehta who though the President of the Bombay Municipal Corporation is without a trace of pride or ostentation. Eloquent in speech, he is heard with great respect. Another is Telang who beside being young and handsome is a scholar and his sweet orations will put to shame any swinging bird! He has a bright future ahead of him. There are others equally eminent like Malabari, Ranade, Bhandarkar etc. . . .

The wealth of the city enjoins the citizens with a spirit of independence and both these account for the excellence in many things. Their sturdy spirit of independence compels the European masters to respect them too. As an example I may cite the instance of the high tea to which the principal of the Elphinstone College treated us to (on the evening of the 28th December). The hosts treated us most warmly and cordially, exhibited no distinction of race or colour and offered us fruit for repast. Besides, several Parsi and other charming ladies of Bombay were present and talked in fluent English on matters of state. We returned at midnight.

That the governing class treats the *Swadesis* with respect is evidenced by this. But this in turn surely arises out of their wealth and the sturdy spirit of independence that the citizens exercise. Such a spirit is the outcome of commerce, industry and a spirit of entrepreneurship. I hope that the citizens of the Madras Presidency too will emulate their Bombay brothers and develop their admirable qualities.

(adapted and translated by R. S.)
Kalanidhi, Coimbatore 1886,
reproduced in *Kumari Malar*,
September 1967.

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Operation Flood

Minoo Masani

I had been following with some disquiet the criticism of "Operation Flood" and the part played in that context by Dr. V. Kurien which had been appearing in a section of the press during the past year. I am glad therefore to see the 'Report of the Evaluation Committee on Operation Flood—II' which has been released by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Union Government. The Evaluation Committee had a prestigious membership led by no less a person than Mr. L. K. Jha as Chairman.

In the course of their report the Committee made several observations which discount the criticisms that had been made. Says the Report: "By any standard, Operation Flood had been a successful programme, implemented with competence and dedication, for which the credit should go to the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) and Indian Dairy Corporation (IDC). . . . The effort has not been free from difficulties. The successful implementation of Operation Flood depended not only on the efforts of the NDDB and IDC, but also the agreement and support of the State Governments concerned as well as the response of those engaged in the production and marketing of milk. The time taken in reaching agreements with the State Governments as well as in organising the cooperatives differed from State to State and district to district, so that the pace of implementation was not uniform but frequently lagged behind the ambitious targets originally adopted."

The report lists the significant achievements of the Operation Flood Project.

- (i) "The main areas of operation of the programme are those which are known to be milksheds from where milk has been traditionally flowing into urban areas, mostly through middlemen and traders. What Operation Flood does for the producer is to assist them to organise themselves into producer's cooperatives and get the best possible price for their milk, particularly during the flush season. The profits which the middlemen etc. used to get now accrue to the producers themselves.
- (ii) The producers now earn more income from the sales they make; as a result, they have now more options to meet their family wants than they had earlier.

- (iii) The beneficiaries include a large number of small and marginal farmers, landless labourers, members of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and more particularly their women folk who had no other gainful occupation.
- (iv) Operation Flood, together with other related rural development programmes, has thus a vast potential for tackling the problems of rural poverty.
- (v) Stabilisation of producer prices, which had varied from 40 to 50 per cent between lean and flush seasons, ensuring that producers receive 80 to 90 per cent of the lean season price during the flush season.
- (vi) In all the towns concerned, there has been a steady increase in the availability of milk free from adulteration and at fixed prices. The most remarkable improvement has been in the metropolitan cities of Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, where at one time the supplies were limited and had to be issued against ration cards. The total liquid milk processing capacity of the metropolitan dairies in Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras rose to 35 llpd and their throughout average nearly 28 llpd in 1983-84 as compared to 9 llpd in 1970-71."

The following observations are made regarding the performance of the National Dairy Development Board and the Indian Dairy Corporation:

1. "During the course of the enquiry, while a number of people seemed very critical of the entire operation, the bulk of the evidence to which we have referred earlier left us in no doubt that, overall, the NDDB and IDC have discharged their responsibilities with care and competence. Their task was by no means smooth. While a healthy cooperative tradition existed in some States, in others it was conspicuously absent and often there was opposition; in many States support from officials was not available in the requisite measure. The start of the programme often got delayed due to the time taken in the formation of the co-operative agencies which were to implement

the programme as well as finalising agreements between the IDC and State Governments. In consequence, there have been slippages. Some other weaknesses have also been in evidence to which we have drawn attention in the earlier chapters, suggesting appropriate remedial measures where necessary.

2. "As consultant, the NDDDB has provided technical expertise of a high order in establishing milk collection centres, providing testing facilities, making transportation arrangements, planning and setting up processing facilities and advising on the milk marketing infrastructure. The IDC and NDDDB, between them, have some 800 professions in diverse disciplines, of high quality and motivation. They have not only been able to set up, but also manage efficiently, dairies in the larger cities; for example, the Mother Dairies in several cities which have maintained milk supply in difficult circumstances, while in some cities sick dairies have been handed over to them for management with successful results.
3. "Another area where the two organisations have distinguished themselves is in making

innovations. Among these are the bulk vending system, the use of electronic fat testing machines, the extensive indigenisation of the dairy equipment manufacturing industry, the introduction of aseptic tetrapak milk, the production of a special variety of foot-and-mouth disease vaccine, and the evolution of the molasses lick, which holds promise of reducing the dependence on green fodder and the reliance on the availability of land for producing cattle feed."

The Committee has come to the conclusion that there was very little accuracy or substance in the more material criticism that had appeared in the press. The Committee has suggested certain improvements and made some recommendations which in their opinion would accelerate the implementation of Operation Flood.

I have always been impressed by the excellent work done by AMUL in Anand and what it owes to the ability and leadership of Dr. Kurien, and I am therefore glad that the doubts sought to be created in the public mind have been dispelled by the Jha Committee.

BE HUMANE TO THE TERMINALLY ILL—DOCTORS' APPEAL

We are glad to know that Professor Varde's Bill for the protection of physicians and surgeons from criminal and civil liability in cases where they respond to their terminally ill patient's wish to withdraw treatment has been circulated by the Maharashtra Legislative Council for eliciting public opinion within a year. We are glad that the people of Maharashtra will thus have an opportunity to become aware of the issues involved and express themselves.

Having read and examined the Bill, we find it to be a modest, permissive measure. First of all, it does not legalise active euthanasia. Secondly, it does not compel any doctor to do anything. Thirdly, even when a patient and a doctor agree, the doctor cannot respond to the patient's wish unless a consultant unconnected with the patient certifies to the terminal nature of the illness.

We are grateful to Professor Varde for the measure which we find to be in the interest of the medical profession. As the law stands at present, not only is a doctor who acts in a humane manner at his patient's wish liable to prosecution for a serious offence, but he is also exposed to blackmail and persecution of various kinds. If this Bill is enacted, doctors will be

able to do what they could not do till now without breaking the law.

We would like to appeal to all medical men, hospitals and medical institutions to write in support of this Bill to the Under Secretary to the Government, Maharashtra Legislature Secretariat (E-2), Council Hall, Vidhan Bhavan, Bombay 400 032, and send a copy of their communication to the Society for the Right to Die with Dignity, Maneckjee Wadia Building, 127 M. G. Road, Bombay 400 023, who, we are sure, would put the replies to good use.

Yours sincerely,

(Sd/-).

Dr. P. R. Desai

Dr. N. H. Keswani

Dr. F. Soonawalla

Dr. M. L. Kothari

Dr. J. C. N. Joshipura

Dr. M. K. Kadam

Dr. M. N. Mahendrakar

Dr. M. M. Wagle

Dr. B. N. Colabawalla

Dr. K. D. Desai

Dr. R. Soonawalla

Dr. Lopa A. Mehta

Dr. M. B. Indurkar

Dr. (Mrs) A. C.

Dharmagaonkar

Dr. P. U. Shah

Dr. V. Talwalkar

Remembering the Emergency

R. Srinivasan

In the life of any nation certain events remain extremely important and time and again public memory is reminded of these and they are contemplated from different angles. Every decade interprets and reinterprets such national happenings and draws its own appropriate moral lessons. These affirm the basic philosophy underlying the polity and the ever present need to scrutinize and refurbish it for changing times. The French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, the English Revolution, the events leading to the Declaration of Independence are some such events. In our own continent, the May 5th Movement, the Long March, 1857, Quit India, the Partition are similar events. More recently the declaration of the Emergency should be regarded as a minor but equally important happening in post-independence India. It is quite likely that this will certainly inspire and result in a number of interpretations, assessments and evaluation. The ending of the Emergency and the defeat of Mrs. Gandhi at the polls have been an unprecedented event in the post-independence decades of Afro-Asia.

It is well-known that during the Emergency, the well-established newspapers, generally were compelled to knuckle under though a few fought on vigorously. However, the role of the small journals and the little magazines was heroic. Their battle in the period forms a glorious chapter in Indian politics and doubtless they would be assessed in the not so distant future.

Silence of the Left

It was something of a surprise to learn that recently we completed ten years of the post-emergency experience and it was a chastening experience to recall what contemporary journals and weeklies had to say on this. Some newspapers did come out with editorials. It is saddeningly significant that leftist journals as well established as the *Economic and Political Weekly* had no place to mention the event or comment on its lessons. The veteran journalist Romesh Thapar who closed down *Seminar* rather than truckle down did not comment on this in his weekly letter from Delhi in this journal. This is true of *Link*, *Frontline* and *Onlooker*. Interestingly, *Mainstream* which battled against the Emergency had an issue on June 22 which did not reach the subscribing library

(the Bombay University Library) and reminders have been in vain. It was left mainly to two weeklies the *Sunday* and the *Illustrated Weekly* to have special issues devoted to the Emergency and for *Imprint* to have several articles on this political nightmare. The *Sunday Observer* too had three articles on the Emergency but they were not analytical pieces as much as columnists reflecting upon the event and drawing their conclusions. The three journals *Imprint* (July 1985), *Illustrated Weekly* (June 23, 1985) and *Sunday* (June 23, 1985) had about 24 articles of which only four attempted an analysis of the Emergency. One article emphasized the work and significance of the Union of Civil Liberties and the rights of the citizen. Three eminent journalists gave highly personalised accounts of the Emergency focussing on the happenings through their experience. Besides these, there were other personal reminiscences. Two were downright apologetic and two actually advocated the calling of a fresh emergency!

What is disturbing is not so much public amnesia regarding the Emergency but seeing it as the only solution to the disturbed state of the country. This was immediately before the Punjab and Assam accords. A survey made in the four capital metropolitan cities of India indicated more than 50% of those surveyed almost welcoming the reimposition of the Emergency. An average of 65% would support another Emergency and 37% expected it to be re-imposed (*Imprint*, July 1985). It is quite likely that citizens want a firm government capable of dealing with situations of law and order rather than with the declaring of an Emergency. Also, it is worthwhile asking whether they would prefer to answer in the same mood now, after the serious attempts made at resolving the Punjab and Assam problems. However, the answers do indicate a very serious shortcoming in the political perceptions of the Indian people, particularly because 80% and above of the population of Delhi which was exposed to the excesses of the Emergency seems to have wanted its reimposition. We still have to educate our people on the Emergency and its implications.

Those recollecting their experience of the Emergency have testified to the basic decencies of individuals. Many were extremely human and thoughtful

as for instance the doctor who issued fake certificates of sterilization rather than impose this dreadful punishment on the innocent; of jailers who were considerate, and the unwillingness of the lower levels of the bureaucracy to act inhumanely. Knowing the risk involved, one has to admire them and cheer those who rose to the occasion.

These personalised accounts of the Emergency have not been recapitulated here. They are valuable but they will have to be read to capture the mood of the times. But what is surprising is that even today there is open support for this in some quarters; worse, there are signs of people wanting a reimposition of it. Naturally the Congress warriors of the Emergency are the unrepentant ones who would welcome it. The opposition is of course the whipping boy.

Scar on the Democratic Structure

Those who have analytically commented on the experience of the Emergency stress the scar on the democratic structure that it has left imperishably. The bankruptcy of the opposition as well as the lack of a well-organised underground movement is stressed. But Dr. Subramaniam Swamy testifies to the fine underground organisation which sustained him. The underground was helpful in assisting persons at an individual level but it was not able to sustain for long an organised opposition to the ruling party and the government.

If the opposition fell like nine pins it was because of the advantage that the government had in initiating the battle. A person like Shri Viren Shah while being abroad could not even dream that he would be arrested on his return. What is equally interesting is the collapse of the ruling party as an institution. It was extraordinary that a party with a clear majority had to resort to a terminal measure to run the country in peace time!

It is also significant that Professor Rajni Kothari who has made an incisive analysis of the experience of the Emergency in two separate studies in the *Illustrated Weekly* and *Sunday* reiterates principles long well-established in Liberal schools of philosophy though he admirably updates it for modern conditions. The Indian system had established a "fine balance not just of the polity but of an ancient civilisation that was gradually acquiring a new personality to deal with new challenges" (*Sunday*, p. 20). The Emergency summed up four political nostrums which according to him had to be shown as being subversive

of everything that the Indian political system over the decades had stood for:

- (a) You can use any means in order to do away with property.
- (b) Social stability is more important than change.
- (c) The State is superior and is on a higher pedestal than civil society and in the context of "internal and external trends" the primacy of the State should overshadow everything else.
- (d) Movements and dissenting groups at the grass-root level will disrupt society and can be suppressed.

He argues that these beliefs are still widespread and they can get a renewed lease of life unless we insist upon the restoration of basic political procedures, revive democratic institutions and ensure their smooth working.

Destroying the Democratic Process

In another study in the *Illustrated Weekly of India* (June 23, 1985) he reiterates the arguments and argues that the Emergency was 'a test for us all and for the beliefs and assumptions that we have held dear . . .' (p. 10). He criticises the liberals in the country for their indifference to the massacre of the Naxalites and the denial of basic rights to our brethren in the North Eastern States for a quarter of a century. He argues that all shades of political opinion suddenly discovered the need for asserting basic rights. He is critical of the liberal neglect of grassroot organisations (perhaps he is not aware of the very thing fostered by the Leslie Sawhny programmes). He also points to the lessons that one had to learn the hard way regarding arming the State; many had naively believed that the only way to transform the social order would be by investing enormous power to the State, but they only succeeded in creating a Fascist Behemoth.

The Emergency according to him exposed the fraudulence of several "pretences and deceits that had hitherto passed muster under the masks of democracy and socialism" (p. 11 *Ibid*). The populist wave since the late 1960s which elevated Mrs. Gandhi to a pedestal as the saviour of the poor was but a thoughtless cry for mustering votes. It lacked long-term perspectives and never came to terms with the structural changes necessary in our society in order to further social justice to the masses. In the absence of this, the leaders, the supposed saviours of the masses ironically assaulted their persons, robbed them of their polity security and spread a reign of terror. The

bogus fear of the nation being in danger, that stability and order were imperilled, that civil liberties being the luxury of a few were all raised. "What it cleverly glossed over was the real fact . . . that the democratic process was the only means available to the poor and the deprived for stating their claims, challenging existing hegemonies and doing this on the basis of their own collective power (and not on some condescending leader from above" (p. 12 *Ibid*). The Emergency totally betrayed the electorate.

Grassroots Organisations Ignored

Is the Emergency still with us? The callous disregard of the demands of the regions, the attempts to unseat legitimately returned governments, the equally brutal trampling of the rights of the people in the States of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh clearly indicate that the Stalins are not only in Delhi but in the States as well. Regional political parties have become highly hegemonic preventing expression of opposition, have arrogated to themselves to be the only tribunes of the people and have totally destroyed all dissent. At all levels too much dependence had been made on political parties and other grassroots organisations have been ignored.

V. M. Tarkunde, our veteran fighter for the restoration and protection of civil liberties reminds us of the great role that the P.U.C.L. played during the Emergency in protecting the liberties of the citizen. Since then the P.U.C.L. has been fighting at the State levels a battle against the atrocities of the police and the large number of murders of dissidents described as Naxalites killed in "police encounters". The excesses of the police and their calculated intimidation and killing of people who assert their fundamental rights and that of others, the ruthless exploitation of children and of *adivasis* have shifted the emphasis from the institution of the State to those sections that occupy impregnable positions in society. With a callous disregard for all civilized norms the elite tend to ruthlessly manipulate people for its own narrow selfish ends.

State Terrorism

In several States there is a veritable police-military raj and draconian *diktats* are pushed with impunity. Tarkunde reminds us of the battery of Acts which the governments both at the Centre and the States have armed themselves though the existing laws are more

than adequate to meet terrorism. State terrorism, he reminds us breeds terrorism in its wake.

What the citizen needs to be educated is in the rights that are his which are not to be trampled upon by a uniformed functionary. A.G. Noorani in his *Civil Rights Primer* indicates exactly what these are and the circumstances under which the police authorities can imprison a person or take him to a police station. More importantly, he educates the citizen in telling him that these are generally gross violations of the law. He reminds one of the existing provisions available in the Constitution, of the judgements in the courts and of the legal remedies that the citizens have in the event of their being confronted by the might of the State.

The need to record the lessons of the Emergency still is imperative. After all, the former Prime Minister withdrew all unsold copies of Justice J. C. Shah's authoritative document on the record of the Emergency and a whole new generation has arisen to which the political nightmare is very distant indeed.

Dr. R. Srinivasan is Professor of
Politics, Bombay University

LIBERTY

What constitutes the bulwork of our own liberty and independence? It is not our frowning battlements, our bristling sea coasts, our army and our navy. These are not our reliance against tyranny. All of these may be turned against us without making us weaker for the struggle.

Our reliance is in the love of liberty which God has planted in us. Our defense is in the spirit which primed liberty as the heritage of all men, in all lands everywhere. Destroy this spirit and you have planted the seeds of despotism at your door. Familiarize yourselves with the chains of bondage and you prepare your own limbs to wear them.

Accustomed to trample on the rights of others, you have lost the genius of your own independence and become the fit subjects of the first cunning tyrant who rises among you.

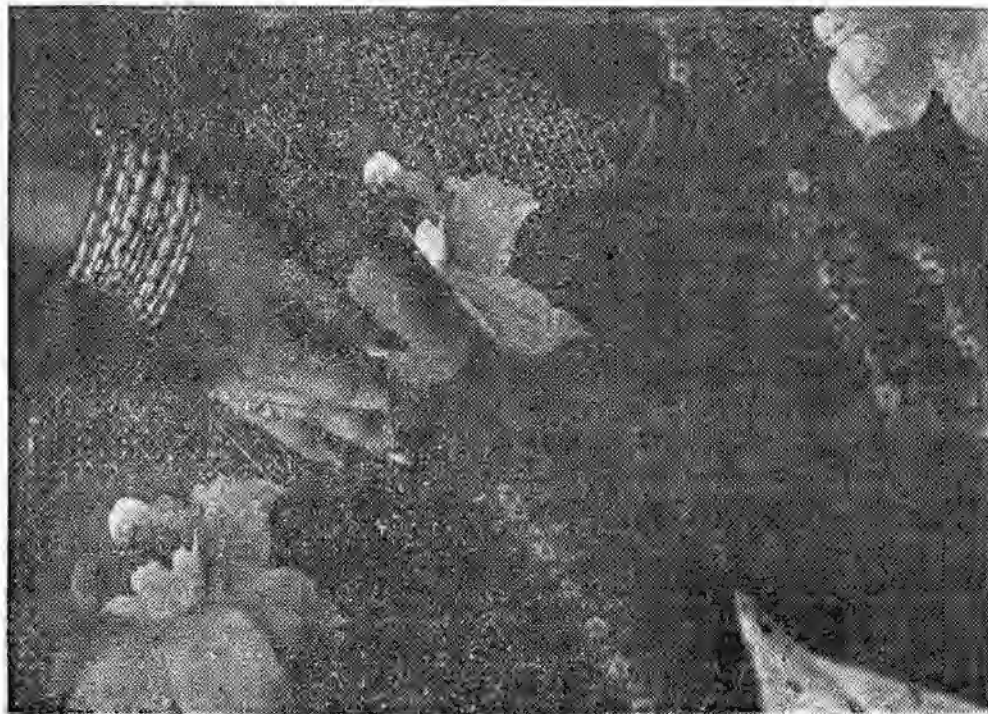
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The Crisis at Unesco

Cushrow Irani

The seven-week session of the Unesco Executive Board, May 9-June 21, 1985, sent out mixed signals. The shortfall of U.S. \$43 million in the Unesco Budget following the U.S. withdrawal at the end of last year has, for 1985 at least, been scraped together. \$25 million have come from savings in the Unesco Budget, long overdue. \$10 million have been appropriated from a fund meant for a totally different purpose—inflation reserve. And \$8 million were raised by additional voluntary contributions; India, in an act of misguided generosity, provided \$500,000 of this figure.

Distorting the Media

The crisis at Unesco has been brewing for a very long time. No one disputes the excellent work that this organisation has done in the cultural and educational fields. Unesco's problems started with the entry of the Soviets and their friends and with their great need to make their ideas of news and its dissemination respectable. For nearly a decade, the international press paid hardly any attention to what was going on at Unesco under the mistaken notion that it was a harmless debating club and its decisions were not binding on any one in any case. It was forgotten that the slogans put together at Unesco were being adopted very quickly by illiberal regimes largely in the Third World to justify and make respectable their efforts to ensure monotonously favourable reporting of their actions and constant approval of their policies on the plea that any dissent is contrary to national interests. The slogan of 'democratization of the media' has been used to interfere with the ownership pattern of newspapers. Attacks have been mounted against 'commercialization of the media' to justify imposing curbs on the revenues of newspapers, particularly advertising revenues. And, for good measure, there were calls for re-defining news which, shorn of hypocrisy, meant publishing only what was favourable to the government in power.

The withdrawal of the U.S. from Unesco jolted the organisation and, more important, galvanized free press countries into action. Great Britain, Japan, the Scandinavian countries, and West Germany not far behind, served notice that they would reconsider their positions unless reforms were instituted. In a desperate effort to stave off U.S. withdrawal, Director-

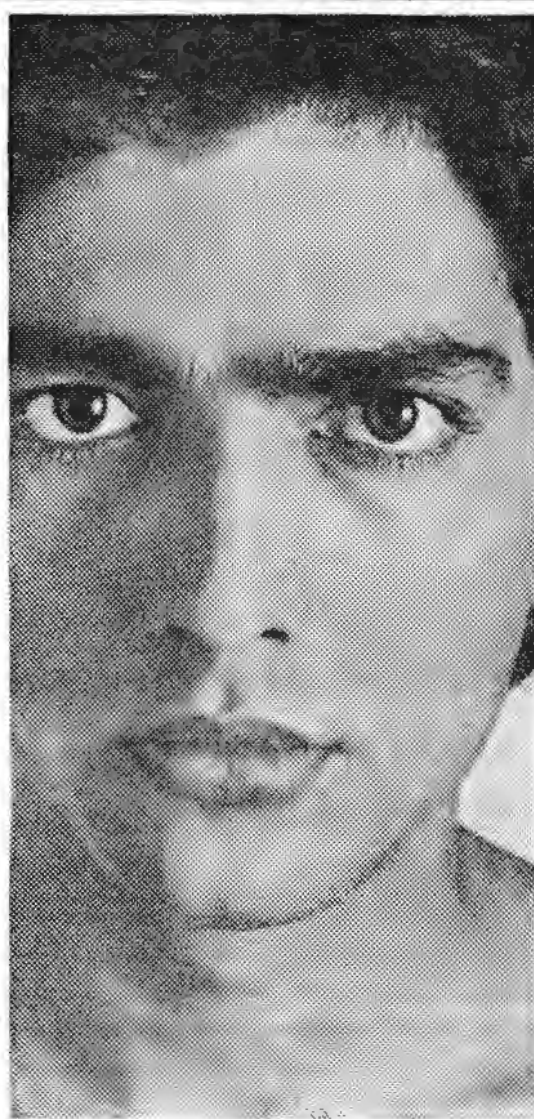
General M'Bow agreed to an investigation into Unesco's management and financial operations by the prestigious General Accounting Office of the U.S. Congress. Its report was damaging. Instead of dealing with the points raised, Mr. M'Bow raised the debate to an emotional level making it an issue of his personal prestige. India's T. N. Kaul lent him strong support at the recent board meeting declaring that this report was illegal and out of order as it was "an unofficial product of a non-executive body in a non-member state". Clever, but not convincing. Once again, the Unesco Secretariat successfully confused the issues and managed to say to each side what it wanted to hear. To the free press countries it was suggested that their concerns were being met because a serious effort was being made to depoliticise Unesco programmes and cut out motivated studies of non-existent issues. To the Soviets and the large number of their allies and sympathisers in the Third World, it was suggested that the changes in the programme were more apparent than real and that, given a little time, it would be business as usual at Unesco.

"Unesco a la carte"

After the withdrawal of the U.S., the Soviets became the largest contributors with 12% of the total budget or 15% of the reduced budget of 1985. They have been making some critical noises about financial discipline and concentrating programmes to achieve results. However, they have made very clear the direction in which they want Unesco to move. A number of working documents and studies have now come out of the Unesco Secretariat which were being held back for many months in an effort to stave off the U.S. withdrawal. One is a working document on World Congress of Youth, which paints a dark and dismal picture of youth in the western world, and in Third World countries still suffering from the consequences of 'imperialism'. By contrast, in socialist countries the document says that there is stress on the "quality of educational systems" easy access to university education, and there are assertions that Soviet youth is "particularly well off" in every way. Another report has been released on "Foreign News in the Media-Reporting in 23 Countries". The leading editor is Kaarle Nordenstreng, President of the pro-Communist International Organisation of Journalists based in Prague. The report had



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been held up for 18 months. Some of its conclusions are interesting. There is a complaint that Tass, the Soviet news agency, the Non-Aligned News Pool and the like-minded Inter Press Service are 'hardly mentioned as a news source even in developing countries'. No comment could be more telling on the lack of credibility of politically organised information systems. The study continues the old code words of the need to 'promote peace and disarmament' and notions of 'development journalism' and 'Third World perspectives' as aids to the 'new journalism'. Another study purports to give a global report on the "International Flow of Information" which has a similar bias. Yet another study is about to be released on "The New International Economic Order—Links between Economics and Communications". Its thrust is predictable.

India Needs to Take a Fresh Look

The Soviets have made it clear that they are seeking immediate benefits for their positions on these issues as the price of replacing the Americans as the leading contributors, provoking one delegate to the Board to complain of "Unesco a la carte"!

The forthcoming General Conference of Unesco in Sofia in October-November is, therefore, likely to be of more than usual interest. It will be more clear then whether Mr. M'Bow is justified in his optimism that things have improved so far that there is no reason why he should not consider running for another six year term as Director-General when his present term expires in 1987. On the other hand, Mr. M'Bow, who is a shrewd tactician, may only be providing an example of the well-known proposition that the best form of defence is attack.

Our young Prime Minister has shown that he is capable of bringing a fresh mind and perspective to bear on tired old ideas. One must be charitable and say that he has not had the time to think about the basic issues of a free press, particularly in the context of Unesco, otherwise it is difficult to explain why he said what he did when he addressed that organisation on his recent visit to Paris. Unthinking endorsement of the positions taken under the pressure of the numerical majority of the Soviets and their allies is not worthy of his emerging reputation. Ambassador Kaul is to be replaced by Sardar Swaran Singh after the Sofia conference. Perhaps this will be the

time for a fresh look at the policies we choose to follow at Unesco.

The Soviets are in a hurry to set Unesco in a particular groove while they believe they hold the initiative. At the board meeting their chief delegate openly stressed that Unesco "is and should be primarily dedicated to political purposes". It does not need much argument to prove that this is not what Unesco set out to be. On the contrary, the emphasis was to break away from political rhetoric and get down to the business of improving the levels of education, preserve mankind's cultural heritage and to promote cultural exchanges between countries and people.

Another Soviet Front?

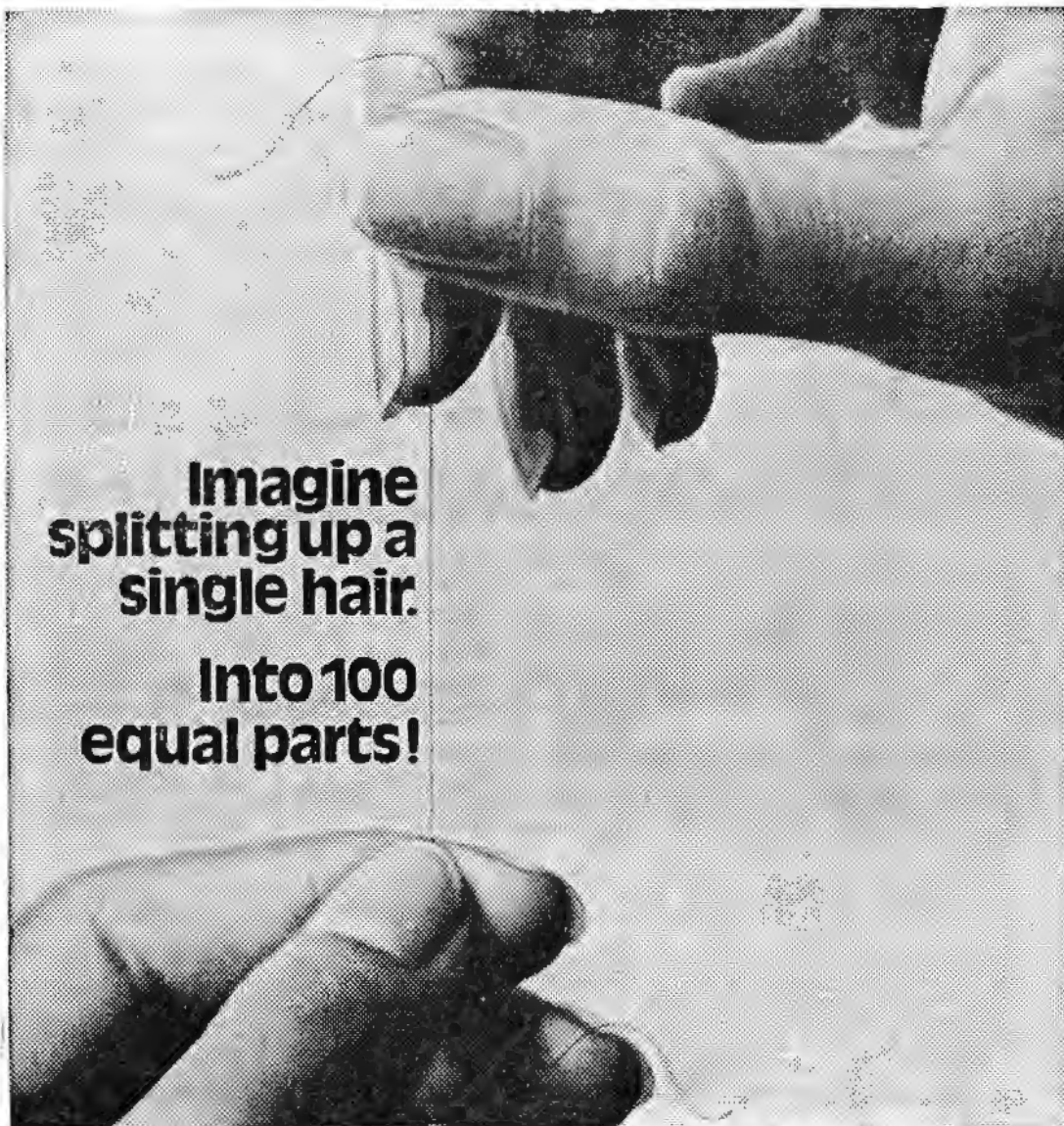
After Sofia Unesco could go either way. It would seem that the Soviets and their friends are opening another front just in case Unesco succumbs to what they would regard as pressures from the U.S. and its allies. There is a United Nations Information Committee which has not been heard from in recent years. Their last session was chaired by Willi Schelegel of East Germany. In opening the conference he declared that "without the *right of peoples to inform* there cannot be a new world information order" (emphasis mine). And this is what the debate is all about. To us, dedicated to free press principles, the right of free speech and expression is the right of the individual which is supported by the State. To others, the argument runs like this. The right is a social right belonging to the whole people. The people express themselves through their representatives—in short, the government. Therefore, it is the right of the government to inform not only its citizens but also everyone beyond its borders. And it goes without saying that the information must be only what that government decides should be collected and disseminated.

The issues have been clearly posed. It is time we made our choice. And on that choice will depend our reputation as a free society.

Cushow Irani, is the Managing Director of *The Statesman*

We do not err because truth is difficult to see. It is visible at a glance. We err because this is more comfortable.

—ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN



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Gandhi Jayanti Thoughts

C. Rajagopalachari

DEMOCRACY is a form of government the essential external feature of which, as apparent to every observer, is that the will of the majority prevails and becomes the law which must be obeyed by all including the minority. This is no doubt the most patent feature in democracy. The question that arises out of this is: What is there specially good in this arrangement by which mere superiority in numbers is given all powers? The answer given is that it is good, because what would issue victorious, if there should be a free fight, is given the fruits of victory without needless physical fighting. Might is the natural law and so it had better be recognized without the expensive proof of a physical struggle, *counting* heads instead of actually testing the relative strength through letting heads be knocked down. This is the rather cynical though seemingly irrefutable way in which democracy is justified.

Surely this cannot be the whole truth. It is too ugly to be the whole truth. What then is the deeper explanation for the universal acceptance of democracy?

Society cannot hold together without some kind of law and order accepted by the individuals composing it. Co-operation is, and felt to be, necessary and inescapable. On what terms can that co-operation be sustained? The sacrifice of submitting one's own will to that of others is a necessary condition for living together. The greater the need to maintain common life, the more willingly do the dissentients make this sacrifice. What is the secret that yields this readiness to sacrifice? Is it the mere need that generates the willingness?

The inescapable law that might is right, as already stated, is too ugly to be the source generating the required sacrifice. It can be more satisfactorily traced to a presumption or confidence in the general mind that what a larger number of people desire must be what is good for all. One's own doubts are resolved by the considered decision of others. Faith in the opinion of others, when they are in larger number, is accepted as a substitute for one's own judgment.

Again it is felt that the total good, where it is in doubt, must yield to the next best, viz., the good of the larger number. If the larger number, after hearing all about it, consider that something is good for them, it is accepted, whatever opinion may be held about it by the dissentients. The good of the larger number must be allowed to be the law, where in the totality of circumstances the need to stay together is

felt to be irreversible. That is to say, the lesser of the two evils is preferred.

In the ultimate analysis, however, there is a third most important element. The acceptance of government by the majority rests on trust. The minority believes and trusts that the majority will rule justly and wisely, whatever particular notion it may be governed by in some matters. It is this trust that makes the people in a minority *entrust* themselves to rule by majority in democracies. It is not a submission to necessity, but a willing *entrustment* of themselves. This trust has not only to be initially secured but must be maintained. It should not just live from hand to mouth, so to say, but be an abiding trust.

How is this abiding trust to be engendered and kept up? Not by appealing to the necessity of submission. But by sustained conduct, engendering positive trust. The majority should demonstrate by its daily conduct that it is trustworthy. It should therefore hear and take all measures to have all varieties of views expressed and heard. It should make it apparent that it conducts itself in the interests not of particular groups but of all the people, as far as possible. A body of wise conventions and practices have grown to this end round democracy, as may be seen in the procedures of various democracies. These procedures are considered most important for the maintenance of democracy. They are not concessions but essential for democracy itself. These procedures include what are called 'freedoms' in modern jargon. They are inscribed in the constitution or in inviolable charters. The mere power of numbers is put as far in the background as possible, so that it may even be forgotten. The more satisfactory these procedures and the more consistently these are observed, the greater is the success and longer the life of a democracy.

Majorities and minorities are not necessarily divisions, resulting from divided opinions on political or administrative issues. They may in fact be based on several unchangeable lines of demarcation such as religion, race, traditional bonds, castes, secular interests, and the like. The great division between Muslim and Hindu for long divided the people of India in recent times, culminating in the division of India into two different States. The non-political lines of division may often be sought to be concealed or camouflaged and made to appear as political, because there is something to be more or less ashamed about in the former. Certain affiliations are felt to be in-

dissoluble and operate, in fact, cutting across the ostensible political divisions. Religious and denominational divisions are only an obvious instance. Other affiliations which have formed themselves for historical or other reasons are often as insoluble as religious affiliations and persist without merging into the political divisions.

The idea that democracy rests on the compulsion of physical superiority is not only ugly on the face of it, but may prove unreal. The strain involved in the obedience given to law and administration, merely on that physical basis, may be so great as to snap the bond that holds the people together, especially when external dangers compelling internal co-operation and unity fade away. War conditions serve to unite, while peace in the world as a whole tends to the breakdown of the precarious life of democracies not founded on real social unity. Not the superiority of numbers but living trust, engendered and sustained in the working of the democracy, is the vital force that must sustain the life of democracy in any country.

Political ideologies and dogmas may divide parties, but when entrusted with government by a majority vote, what democracy calls for is not merely fulfilment of electoral promises made to the majority but just rule and just democratic procedures in all matters. If the interests that bind the individuals together inside the group that is entrusted with government, mislead them to act in disregard of justice and the fundamental 'freedom' embodied in the democratic procedures, trust fades away and with it democracy too fades away, transforming itself into a regime backed by force only, as if a conquering army ruled those whom it successfully suppressed, besides imposing its discipline on its own members.

In confirmation of this conception that trust is the essential vital force of democracy, and not mere superiority of numbers, we may call to evidence the well-known fact that often minority governments are formed in democracies, which perform their function quite satisfactorily. Indeed they may sometimes do better than majority governments, because their power, being precarious, must be sustained by greater consideration and more obvious justice in all matters.

A very interesting episode, not generally known, has been brought to notice by Mr. P. Kodanda Rao in his political biography of V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, the illustrious leader of the Liberals in India after Gokhale. In the course of the negotiations for Indian independence between Gandhiji and the Congress, on the one side, and the British Government on the other, Gan-

dhiji wrote a letter from his prison to the Viceroy in September 1944 proposing that the British may quit, leaving the Government of India in the hands of the Muslim League headed by M. A. Jinnah, since the League and the Congress could not agree to one scheme and since, without such agreement, the British would not quit. Gandhiji offered to persuade the Congress to agree to this proposal. Gandhiji obviously wished to impress on the Muslims of India that the Congress would agree to independent India being governed by the Muslim League party and that the Congress did not want Britain to remain in order to insure justice and good government by the minority. Jinnah had been holding exactly the opposite position. He did not like foreign rule. He hated it as much as the Congress did. But he did not trust the Congress majority to deal justly with the Muslims after the British left. He therefore wanted British overall Power to continue and he objected to all proposals on one ground or another for this reason, which he kept in the back of his mind. Gandhiji wished to impress on Jinnah and on the British that the Congress would trust the League to govern India justly in all respects, although the latter may have doubts and reservations about the Congress. The proposal that Britain should quit, leaving India in complete charge of a minority community under Jinnah's leadership was deemed to be an absurd proposal, if it was not a sinister trick. The British would not look at it. Mr. Kodanda Rao quotes Sastri in the book to show how angry he was to learn from me that the proposal had been really and seriously made by Gandhiji. In fact he was so upset that it threw him into a fit of *angina pectoris* which prevented my explaining the spiritual basis of the proposal. The Liberal politician thought the proposal amounted to total defeat and surrender to the Muslim League.

The conclusion of this analysis of democracy, to illustrate which the above episode has been referred to, is that democracy in a pluralist society is sustained not by force of numbers but by the vital force of trust, the maintenance of which must, therefore, be the greatest concern of statesmen guiding democracies. Majorities in office may become so intoxicated by long enjoyment of power, that some ideologies and dogmas and ambitions may mislead them into forgetting this basic principle, thereby endangering democracy. Democracy is a form of trust, not a variety of brute force. Let us remind ourselves of this on Gandhi Jayanti.

Report of Seminar

Reservation in Education and Public Services

The Committee set up by a seminar to discuss the question of Reservation in Education and Public services (see *Freedom First*, July 1985 "The Great Reservation Debate") has made its recommendations. Space constraints prevent us from reproducing the report in its entirety. However we publish below the concluding part entitled "Recommendations for Alternatives" and "Recommendations for Implementation". The report has been forwarded to the Prime Minister and the Home Minister. Readers interested in the full report may please write to *Freedom First*, 4th floor, Maneckjee Wadia Building, 127 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 400 023.

Recommendations for Alternatives

IN VIEW of the many failings of Reservation, the Committee examined a number of possible alternatives. In doing so, it had to keep in mind the fact that the objective was to uplift the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, whereas this objective has almost been forgotten in practice and Reservation has come to be thought of as an end in itself.

The alternatives would become apparent if it was realised that Reservation itself came up as a method of advancement because employment opportunities were severely limited and there was a shortage of educational institutions. It was believed that members of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes would never be successful in the fierce competition for these scarce jobs and seats in educational institutions. In the case of jobs, it was also a fact that all the pressure was concentrated on the government and public sector jobs and Reservation could not cover the remaining 85% of the jobs in the private sector, the agricultural sector, the unorganised sector and the self-employed sector. The obvious alternative, therefore, was the fundamental one of increasing the total number of jobs in all sectors and the number of educational institutions without detriment to the interests of the country, i.e. without overmanning the services or lowering the standard of education.

The increase in jobs in totality is the ultimate objective, but there is one segment where a qualitative change is possible which could widen the potential for employment. This is the area of self-employment.

If education and training were orientated towards training people in trades, vocations, handicrafts and other such occupations, it would have the two-fold effect of reducing the pressure on jobs and simultaneously the pressure on seats in colleges and universities. This is because a person who is equipped for and intent on self-employment is less interested than otherwise in college education and jobs.

Our recommendations are inspired by these considerations. At the same time, we are conscious of the fact that Reservation itself has become an emotive issue and has become embedded in the nation's psyche. It would be unrealistic to expect any government in India, however well-intentioned, to be able to dislodge Reservation completely, certainly in the short term. We would, therefore, emphasise that a reform of the existing system of Reservation and the steps that we recommend below should not be regarded as mutually exclusive. In many cases, they will run parallel to each other. In other cases, the reforms would be dovetailed to the phasing out of Reservation that we have recommended.

It is in this spirit that we recommend the following measures:

- (a) Side by side with the speeding up of the implementation of the policy of free, universal and compulsory education, the families of Scheduled Castes and Tribes should be provided with financial aid and incentives to enable them to send and to retain their children in schools.
- (b) To reduce the pressure on jobs (now mainly in the government services and the public sector) by increasing the capacity for self-employment and simultaneously minimising the clamour for seats in colleges and universities, it is essential that the educational system should be urgently revamped to guarantee concentrated vocational education and practical training for trades and vocations, to be imparted from a cut-off level of education, at which point, on the basis of performance and aptitude, the students concerned decide to opt out of college/university education. An indispensable prerequisite to this is that, while preparing the specifications for various categories of jobs, the emphasis on university degrees is ruthlessly removed, to make recruitment com-

patible with the newly oriented system of education proposed by us.

- (c) Financial institutions and banks should be directed to provide special financial assistance and incentives, guidance and encouragement to persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes for setting up trades, businesses and industries.
- (d) A national manpower plan should be formulated and constantly reviewed and updated, setting out targets for the supply of persons for those key categories of manpower whose availability is of critical importance to the nation. Action should thereafter be taken to ensure that these targets are met by the education and training of persons of the right calibre. It is obvious that in doing so it will have to be accepted that merit alone should be the criterion, but the plan should provide for special facilities for more intensive training to a specified number of persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes.
- (e) Assuming that our recommendation for phasing out Reservation is accepted and implemented, the entire thrust of favoured treatment should be swung towards those who are economically backward, irrespective of caste or community. Material assistance in the shape of books, campus, residential accommodation, mid-day meals, uniforms and other necessary assistance should be provided. Inevitably, those who are economically backward even beyond the stage when Reservation is phased out will preponderantly belong to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. To that extent, they ought to be the major beneficiaries of the favoured treatment. Again, persons of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes should be provided with special training and facilities in general, with extramural coaching classes and institutions, for upgrading their intake-capacity for education. For this measure to be successful, it is essential that the term "economic backwardness" is defined with meticulous care on the basis of objective criteria.

Recommendations for Implementation

For the purpose of investigating the entire problem and for making recommendations towards a reform of the system of Reservation and the implementation of the alternatives recommended above, or any others

that may be considered suitable, the Government of India should set up a national commission.

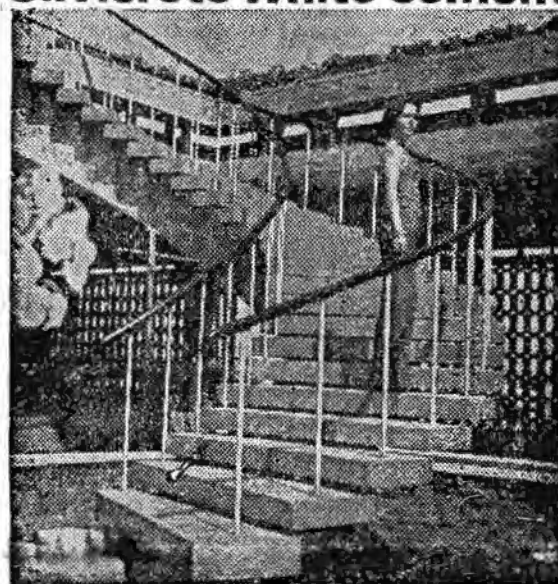
The composition of the commission is important and we recommend that it should comprise three persons; a retired judge of the Supreme Court, an educationist and an incumbent or retired chairman of the Backward Classes Commission.

The commission will have a strict mandate to complete its study and make its recommendations within specified time.

The Government should act swiftly on the recommendations of the commission and should mount a professionally managed national campaign through the media, from public platforms and throughout the country about the commission's recommendations and to orientate public opinion towards acceptance and active co-operation. This task would be made easier if the Government were to succeed in winning the support of most, if not all, political parties.

This Committee is convinced that unless the Government responds to the gravity of the situation and acts on our recommendations, the issue of Reservation will widen the rift between classes and communities, threatening the very integrity and progress of the nation.

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The Hegde Phenomenon

Louella Lobo Prabhu

All true democrats visualise democracy as a pluralistic policy, and to that extent, must welcome any challenge to the monopolistic hegemony of any one Party. Mr. Hegde's freak victory in 1983, and his hard-fought and hard-won victory now, were therefore salutary for that one reason, if for no other. Indeed, since 1983, the way Devaraj Urs was once before projected for a while, Mr. Hegde has been steadily built up by the media as Prime Minister material. Because his first accession to power was not a solo but a team effort, and a disparate team-effort at that, all sins were forgiven him when, in the name of survival, he did many things which suggested he was quite the lily-white hero an infatuated Press made him out to be. Most notorious among the sins of his earlier regime were the admission of defectors. If these disappointed those who believe that nothing justifies the use of improper means, they did not deflect the hero-worship of others who believed that survival excuses everything.

Mr. Hegde's public halo is a P.R. miracle, considering he is so short on actual performance. While his tenure as Rajya Sabha member was not distinguished by a single memorable contribution to any debate, he appears, nonetheless, to have laid a solid foundation of support in the Party. This accounted for his selection as Chief Minister after the 1983 election, when he was not at that time even a member of the Assembly.

A Friendly Press

To do him credit, his lifestyle is now austere and open to public scrutiny. He runs a tight ship within the Party, and if there is dissent in its ranks, it rarely reaches the newspapers. He and his colleagues are apparently accessible, or more so, than their predecessors. And they did take up in earnest one measure which has won them solid support in the villages: a bore-wells programme which, despite the swipe of critics, has accomplished more in these three years than that of former governments in thirty. But the C.M.'s biggest coup is to have the Press eating out of his hand, not only taking the Press into confidence—or appearing to do so—but with unobtrusive carrots like pensions for selected journalists and the like. His predecessor, on the other hand, chose to confront the Fourth Estate, with the result that his sins—and they were many—got magnified, while his good works, notably the abolition of Chairmanships for politicians, were deliberately underplayed. Even if he were not

the shrewd operator he is, Mr. Hegde, following Mr. Gundu Rao, would in any case have been the darling of the Press and through the Press, of the State, as well.

To evaluate promise and performance before and after the elections, it is possible that despite his affront to regional honour, when he dismissed Hegde as irrelevant, Rajiv Gandhi might still have carried the day. Polls showed the Janata Party in a touch-and-go position, before certain last minute populist announcements turned the day decisively. These included subsidised rice; mangalsutras for couples participating in mass marriages, free text books for students, and a gift package of expensive lollipops which are yet to be disbursed.

Doubtful Measures

The problem is payment. In all fairness, the last government, and its predecessors also ran up overdrafts, as are other Congress governments currently. However, if other people's trespasses do not excuse one's own, it may be said that it would be impossible for the State to remain within the Budget, if it is squandering largesse on populist schemes. Power continues to be an enormous constraint, but it does not stop the government from saying there will be no change in its policy to have 1000 new industries a month. Moreover, while various Treasury payments including those for T.A. are being dishonoured, there is simultaneously a scheme for generous stipends to graduates, and direct absorption of all S.C. graduate rank-holders into government service, bypassing entrance examinations. The government is also showing signs of extreme linguistic fanaticism, by outlawing English from the Secretariat, and insisting that Secretaries note in Kannada, thus reducing the level of noting to that of a clerk or a P.A., not the Secretary.

Let it be thought, gentle reader, that this author is a Congress stooge, let me clarify here, that the only Party to which I belonged was the Swatantra Party. Unlike some of its erstwhile members, I did not think that the Janata Party's philosophy represented Swatantra philosophy given a wider base. As events have transpired, it would appear that the Janata Party lacks pragmatism in economic matters, modernity and secularism on the other.

Louella Lobo Prabhu is the Editor of *Thought*

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Non-Political Civic Action

Komala Sarathy

The capacity of the Indian public to take things lying down seems unlimited. The people in Delhi are no different. Whether it be minor day-to-day irritants or injustice at the national level, there is a curious reluctance to fight them. The normal reaction is one of acceptance, of coming to terms after at best feeble, half-hearted protests.

But the tide seems to be turning at long last. Over the past few years, some voluntary organisations have emerged which are serving as platforms for redressal of grievances of the people as consumers—in relation to both government and industry. In the process of taking up these issues, these groups are trying to educate the Delhi public about their rights and the need to stand up for them as well as helping them overcome their largely self-imposed lethargy. In this way, these groups are—consciously or unconsciously—strengthening the base of democracy by making people 'self-sufficient'.

Common Cause and *VOICE* (Voluntary Organisation in the Interest of Consumer Education) are two non-political, non-profit organisations taking up the cause of the urban middle class. They operate at different levels. *Common Cause*, established five years ago by a group of prominent citizens (Mr. H. D. Shourie is its director) takes up issues arising from various government regulations, pensions, taxes, civic amenities, public utility services, electricity and water bills, etc.

VOICE, set up in 1983 by some young teachers and students of Delhi University (its convenor is Dr. Sri Ram Khanna), takes up the cause of the consumer: unfair trade practices, violation of laws, discretionary allotments by public sector companies, and so on.

Redressal through proper channels of authority—through the courts, through lobbying in Parliament etc., marks their approach. All laws have lacunae and if these are removed, it will have a 'ripple effect'. Dharnas and demonstrations, on the other hand, it is felt will not have a lasting, concrete effect.

And they have had their successes. The first success of *Common Cause* was when the Supreme Court upheld its contention regarding certain discriminatory provisions in the Pension Liberalisation Rules, 1979. *Common Cause* has also taken up the problem of house tax, rent control laws, accidents caused by DTC buses, telephones, speed breakers, etc. and got its point of view across to the authorities concerned.

VOICE, too, in the short span of its existence, has had some notable achievements. The first major one was to get a stay on the allotment of Maruti cars from the discretionary quota. This will affect the larger issue of discretionary allotments by all public sector companies. *VOICE* has also taken the soft drinks industry to task for violating certain provisions of the Fruit Products Order and television manufacturers for charging for after-sales service in the first year of purchase. It has also got the Bata 'Bubblegummers' Contest' stopped on grounds of misleading the public and tried to get the Wills 'Made for each other Contest' stopped on grounds of unfair trade practice. Wills however went on with the contest after a successful appeal in the High Court.

The government, these organisations feel, cannot solve all the problems faced by the people. Indeed, it would be wrong to expect it to do so. For the government is overburdened with work and hampered by bureaucratic procedures. Besides, people must learn to act on their own initiative.

It is in this mobilisation of public initiative that these groups are facing problems. People are not unaware of the issues involved, but seem to have convinced themselves that they cannot do anything. There is also a tendency to sit back and let someone else do all the necessary work. H. D. Shourie is flooded with letters bringing to his notice loopholes in various laws and the steps that can be taken to remedy them. But a lot of legwork and detailed research is necessary and here he faces a shortage of manpower. *VOICE* also faces the same problem. It gets a lot of letters asking it to solve various cases but very few offer their services. Even regarding complaints, Dr. Khanna finds that people from the South are more aware of their rights as consumers than those from Delhi.

Miracles are what people want and miracles are what these groups are determined not to deliver. They will not fight individual cases. But if an individual comes to them for help they will willingly do all they can by way of information, legal advice, and will even lend their names. But the actual fight will have to be carried out by individuals. These and various other voluntary organisations face insurmountable problems—of resources, manpower and public apathy. But they are determined to carry forward their task.

Komala Sarathy is a
Freelance Journalist

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Amid the Colour Blindness, a Vision of Hope

Bernard Levin

The remarkable number of black South Africans who have entered police stations in robust good health, only to experience a sharp attack of death before emerging, reminds me yet again of the comforting truth (the reminder will not be of much comfort to the dead Africans or their families, of course) that an astonishingly high proportion of wicked men are also stupid.

You would have thought that after the murder of Steve Biko, which did South Africa almost immeasurable damage (though again, not as much damage as the two policemen did Biko), somebody would have passed down the word that since South Africa has enough laws, and enough reliable judges and magistrates, to convict any African of anything at all and put him away in silence for as long as might be desired, it is quite unnecessary, and even counter-productive, for the police to beat their prisoners' brains out with such depressing frequency.

From the murdered imam in 1969, from the murdered Biko in 1977, from the murders by police continuing to the present day, South Africa garners nothing but harm; would it not serve her interests better for her leaders to take action sufficiently ruthless—say, hanging a couple of policemen with blood on their hands, *pour encourager les autres*—to stop it?

To the solution of this mystery there may be a clue in a recent South African court case. It concerned a group of five white youths, all aged 15 or 16, who kicked and beat to death two black men, one of whom was 68 years old; there appeared to be no motive for the killing other than the enjoyment of it.

The boys were arrested and charged with murder; they pleaded not guilty, though they later changed their plea, presumably on legal advice, to one of guilty of culpable homicide, which plea was accepted.

A clinical psychologist, a Dr. Carnie, gave evidence for the defence. He claimed that tests proved that the boys "were not violence oriented"; well, that's good to know because if they *had* been violence oriented they might have really done somebody some harm. Dr. Carnie also said that the killings (which he called "the nasty incident", presumably to make sure that nobody would leave the courtroom under the impression that they constituted a *nice* incident) might never have happened if the boys had not been in a group.

I can understand that, of course. Although one of the men they killed was 68, the other was only 36, and the individual members of the killer gang might well have hesitated to take on both men without the safety of numbers. At the end of the case, there was the regulation weeping mother, who said "All his life my 15-year-old son has been soft and gentle and would not harm a fly. I don't know what got into him". (Neither do I, though I know what got into Mr. William Nkosi and Mr. Solomon Kuna—five pairs of boots and a number of blunt instruments.)

So far we have dealt with the "culpable homicide" ("Oh why", sang Betjeman, "do people waste their breath, devising dainty names for death?"); it now behoves us to consider the sentence. Mr. Justice Curlewis, in passing it, saw the crucial point immediately. "These are not the type of people that can be sent to a reformatory or to jail", he said, I should think not; they might dislike it, for instance, or meet a socially inferior class of people inside, and after all, they had done nothing but bash the life out of two human beings. Mr. Justice Curlewis also ruled out caning as a penalty; he did not, he said, think that would be "suitable punishment" for the five culpably homicidal youths. Again, that seems to me reasonable, they might not have enjoyed the experience at all.

What, then, did he in the end decide was "suitable" punishment for this "type of people"? He sentenced them, the naughty old Judge Jeffries, to spend their weekends for a whole year working in a hospital. The hideous cruelty of this sentence became apparent in his very next words, which must have caused gasps of horror in the court: "the scholars, I understand are all . . . keen sportsmen. For a year they can forget about any weekend activity".

If we conclude that this is a case of an unscrupulous white judge letting off white youths in circumstances in which black men would have been hanged, we have missed the point. There is no reason at all to believe that Mr. Justice Curlewis is anything but a fair and honest justicer, and that he believed every word he said. What is wrong with the judge is not that he is a wicked man, it is that he lacks the ability to see the facts of the case, the nature of the killers and the fate of their victims, in the way that

would be natural to anyone who has lived his life outside South Africa.

When, after the Spanish conquest of Peru under Pizarro, the first reinforcements and supplies from home arrived by sea, the ships hove to just off shore. The Indians literally could not see the vessels, for their inability to comprehend sights so extravagantly unlike anything they had ever seen before led not to ordinary bewilderment but to hysterical blindness; communication between eye and brain was temporarily severed, and where the Spaniards saw a flotilla, the Indians saw nothing but an empty ocean.

So it is, I am sure, with Mr. Justice Curlewis. A lifetime of accepting South African values, a lifetime of living within a set of unchanging assumptions, a lifetime of regarding black and white as two wholly different and eternally separate species, a lifetime of feeling part of a protective *laager*, one weakness or gap in which may destroy everyone—all this means that the enormity of the judge's behaviour was not the deed of a wrongdoer but the result of a withered imagination, made sterile by the South African osmosis.

That should not be surprising; what *should* be sur-

prising is the number of South Africans who, though they breathe the same air as Mr. Justice Curlewis, have managed to break free of the effect of it. I say that that should be surprising, but I must add that to me it is not. The same phenomenon, in a much more striking form, can be observed in the Soviet Union; men and women brought up amid lies have found the truth inside themselves, and lived by it, in yet another reproach both to the Manichee and to the fools who claim that environment is all. In every generation, in every unfree land, there are those who can see and understand the evil by which they are surrounded, and reject it.

Mr. Justice Curlewis is not part of that evil; he is only unable to grasp it, and in that he is kin to most white South Africans (for the number who knowingly do evil cannot be much larger than those who see and defy it). One day, in South Africa, everyone will be able to see that for five young degenerates in search of an evening's amusement to kick to death two human beings is about as abominable a crime as it is possible to commit. I do not know when that day will dawn; but I am certain that dawn it will.

Courtesy: *The Times*, London.

Black Despotism

Minoo Masani

I am delighted at the overthrow of Milton Obote, President of Uganda. According to the world press, more people were massacred during his present regime than even Adi Amin was able to accomplish! One is not surprised to read that the people of Kampala expressed their jubilation by dancing in the streets with joy.

Obote, however, is not the only despot in Black Africa, Mr. Mugabe, the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, is another. He has been campaigning for the establishment of a one-party dictatorship, despite the Constitution which prevents him from doing this till 1990. According to Bishop Muzorewa and Mr. N'Komo, his two opponents, Mr. Mugabe is responsible for rigging elections and massacring his opponents. Bishop Muzorewa has said: "We are now in an even worse situation than under the colonial regime, maybe worse than racist South Africa." Worse than racist South Africa? Coming from a highly respected black leader, this is as if one were to hear a Zionist leader refer to a situation as being worse than Hitler's Germany." Yet this is another worthy whom New Delhi is fond of receiving on the red carpet when he visits our capital at non-aligned conferences.

It is against this background and experience in Black Africa that one has to consider the prevailing situation in South Africa. In the last few months, some progress has been made towards the abolition of apartheid. One of the most obnoxious provisions which prevented men and women of different races from marrying or living together has been abolished. Similarly, there has been considerable relaxation with the restrictions on residence in various localities. Despite the hysteria in Delhi and some other places, the people who govern South Africa are not monsters and it is a sad mistake to talk as if they are.

A few days ago I read a press item that a very beautiful film about animals in the African jungle named "Beautiful People", which was showing at a Bombay theatre, was in danger of being banned because some idiotic bureaucrat had discovered it had reached India through South Africa. So what? Here was a film which had run for some fifteen weeks to full houses, full mostly with children who loved it. Is the Indian child to be frustrated in his or her love for animals by this stupid obsession against South Africa? Why in God's name then do they not ban Soviet films coming from a country where oppression is worse and dictatorship total?

Is It A Bloodbath They're After?

John O'Sullivan

Now that the TWA hostages are safely home, Congress has decided the time is ripe to retaliate against South Africa. Last week, the Senate voted 88-12 for a bill that would progressively impose economic sanctions on South Africa if apartheid is not considerably dismantled over the next 18 months. An earlier bill, passed by the House of Representatives, would impose more Draconian penalties at once. A committee of the two houses will meet soon to reconcile these measures.

The final result seems likely to be mild. The Senate bill was passed after a deal between Senator Jesse Helms and the majority under which he agreed not to filibuster if his colleagues would limit themselves to minor and symbolic sanctions. Should the joint committee produce more stringent measures, Helms and the White House would presumably organize strong conservative resistance to it. Knowing this, the committee will probably be circumspect.

Besides, the present arrangements suit most people quite well. Those opposed to sanctions and in favour of "constructive engagement" hope that the passage of a mild symbolic measure will take the steam out of the "Free South Africa" movement with its demonstrations and Society "arrests". Many of those who voted for the bill, on the other hand, did so as a gesture of moral virtue rather than as an effective means of transforming South Africa. It was "an extremely important and long-overdue statement of how we feel about ourselves," said Senator John Kerry with ringing narcissism.

A fine point of theory divides both sides. Both agree that the Pretoria government is racist and oppressive. But they are divided over the question: is South Africa a unique symbol of political evil in the world today? If it is, then the US should cut all ties with it. If it is merely another oppressive government then the US might reasonably use diplomatic contacts and economic pressure to prod the South Africans along the path of reform.

The first view, perhaps inspired by guilt at the fact that apartheid existed in the American south only 25 years ago, is not uncommon. Well-informed Americans often refer to South Africa as the most oppressive system in today's world, evil and implacably nazi. The police suppression of black unrest, in which more than 400 people have died since the autumn, is adduced in support of that theory.

But is South Africa more oppressive, even on this evidence, than Vietnam, Iran, Ethiopia or, until

recently, Cambodia? Surely not. Moreover, the same liberal Americans are dimly aware that South Africa has also retained certain liberal democratic features—a still independent judiciary, a half-free press (which between them have uncovered much of the police brutality and its lack of reasonable justification), outspoken anti-government churches, opposition parties and black political organizations. But they prevent such knowledge from contaminating their general view of the country.

Similarly, commentators dismiss the political changes in South Africa since 1979, among them the recognition of black trade unions, the repeal of the Mixed Marriages and Immorality Acts, the granting of freehold in black townships, the end of "whites only" job reservation, and the establishment of representative institutions for the Indian and coloured communities, as "cosmetic".

Of course, these reforms are inadequate, but they still continue. And when a South African quasi-official body like the Human Sciences Research Council can describe apartheid as "unworkable"—which is rather like the Moscow University sociology department denouncing Marxism-Leninism—it is surely plain that further reform is likely.

What accounts for the grudging almost hostile reception for the reforms in the West? The laws prohibiting inter-racial sex and marriage, for instance, were considered major offences against human dignity until they were repealed; they were then dismissed as likely to affect very few people. It is almost as if some of apartheid's critics do not want to see it eroded peacefully. They want a dramatic conclusion, a bloodbath in which the wicked perish.

Does this perhaps explain the insouciant lack of attention to the consequences of sanctions? When Senator Helms pointed out, quite correctly, that discouraging investment in South Africa would increase black unemployment, Senator Alan Cranston replied that this was like arguing that Lincoln's freeing of the slaves made them worse off. That riposte would be well and good if Senator Cranston were freeing the slaves in South Africa as well as depriving them of jobs. But sanctions will advance political rights for black South Africans only by the roundabout method of making them so poor and wretched that they will brave any repression to improve their circumstances.

How would such a policy make us "feel about ourselves"?

Courtesy: *The Times*, London.

Liberal International Press Communique

1. Ending its 10 day mission to South Africa, a Liberal International delegation today came out strongly against apartheid, calling it an inhumane and immoral system, incompatible with fundamental human rights.
2. The five delegation members said they had called on the South African government to:
 - issue a declaration of intent to dismantle completely the system of apartheid;
 - release Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners;
 - bring together the leaders of the country in a national convention with a view to establishing a just constitution, acceptable to all South Africans;
 - end the State of Emergency and return to the rule of law;
 - establish a common citizenship, abolish the Population Registration Act, the Group Areas Act, the pass laws, influx control, forced removals, detention without trial and banning orders;
 - refrain from military action in neighbouring countries.
3. The delegation stated it considered international pressure on South Africa necessary and helpful in bringing about fundamental reforms. It believed international cooperation to this end should be strengthened.
4. The delegation were impressed at seeing the determination and persistence of the South African Liberals, members of the Progressive Federal Party, in their stand against apartheid and for their courage in the battle for democracy, social justice and human rights.
5. During its stay in South Africa, the delegation has met with Cabinet Ministers, opposition leaders, representatives of churches, business, trades unions, the media, academics and voluntary organisations in Johannesburg, Soweto, Pretoria, Cape Town, Cross Roads and Durban.
6. The group will report to Liberal International members and affiliate parties in more than 40 countries, as well as to the Executive Committee of the Liberal International. They will present a resolution at the organisation's Congress in Madrid in October. The delegation comprises,
 - Former Swedish Minister of Trade, Hadar Cars (delegation leader)
 - British Liberal Party African Affairs Committee Chairman, Rex Collings
 - Canadian Liberal MP, Aileen Nicholson
 - Dutch European Parliament Member, Gijs de Vries and
 - Liberal International Director, Margaret Burnett.

LETTER

India Facing Environment Crisis

M. V. Kamath ("Ecology—the Drift towards Disaster," April 1985) is to be commended for his penetrating description of the worsening global environment in the face of increased population pressures and worldwide abuse of scarce natural resources. His article is especially valuable for its relevance to the Indian context where the obsession with increasing GNP has caused havoc to the natural resource base. Economists and planners of all persuasions would do well to re-examine their assumptions about economic growth especially when it is created by plundering the dwindling natural habitat.

India is one of the many unfortunate countries that has failed to halt the denuding of its forests, the contamination of its atmosphere, and the pollution of its rivers. Our planners have assumed that limitless economic growth can be generated by more production

and intensive cultivation without taking into account the depletion of scarce natural resources. For this oversight of our planners, the nation is paying a bitter price in the form of increased desertification of cropland and the poisoning of the environment by toxic wastes. Conspicuously, India has failed to recycle its refuse and waste matter ignoring all warnings to the contrary by ecologists. The result is that resource scarcity has begun to affect India's economic development.

Kamath's article should serve as a stern warning to the starry-eyed staff of Yojana Bhavan who draw pleasing pictures of India's future. The task of creating wealth is expensive and burdensome and runs up against the limits imposed by nature.

— Kamal Wadhwa

Profiles of Indian Liberals

D. V. Gundappa (1887-1975)

R. V. Murthy

It is one of the unfortunate compulsions of a large country that some of the most eminent of our leaders should be totally unknown in other parts. Gundappa, who for more than half a century made Mysore his field, for awakening the educated and giving a filip to social awareness, political reform and social movements, remains a liberal with a cosmopolitan outlook. None among even the distinguished group of liberals could do the things that he did with an amazing virtuosity—translations, writing songs, poems, plays, political pamphlets, biographies, editing newspapers and journals authoritatively commenting on the Gita and many things besides.

Thoroughly well-versed in the classics of European liberalism, he was equally at home in Indian traditions as well.

To be described by no less a personality than the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastry as “an extraordinary man that deserves to be known and met as a person” is no small honour. Dr. D. V. Gundappa (D.V.G. as was popularly known) deserved that tribute in full measure. He was not merely a journalist, a writer of biographies, a dramatist or an organizer of movements and institutions, he was something more; he was the person who saw life in all its entirety. Perhaps because of this, he could be such a dispassionate observer of human life and express himself so “freely, frankly, fearlessly and disinterestedly” as he always did.

Leader of Kannada Renaissance

What strikes this writer who had the rare privilege of knowing him personally and watching him rise to eminence was his extremely pragmatic views on men and matters. In my opinion only a true liberal could do so, especially considering that some values were contrary to those of one's own admirers and genuine friends—in this case Dr. M. Visveswarayya, Sir Mirza Ismail and the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastry. D.V.G. revered and respected these great men because of their disciplined life and unsullied character. D.V.G.'s dispassionate views, expressed frankly and fearlessly often landed him in trouble particularly when he worked as a journalist. But his good fortune lay in the support he received from his erstwhile employers like Anantha Rao of *Servedaya Prantasana* and M. Srinivasa Syargad of *The Morning Standard* of Mysore. The late Professor V. Sitaramaiah, an eminent poet and writer in his own right, appropriately regarded D.V.G. as “one of the three leaders

His ideal was Gokhale and he tried to both rationalize and spiritualize politics in his native State and eventually prepare it for national responsibilities. Legislator, Senator of the University, tireless Committee and Council member, Gundappa with a rare sense of independence served on all these and tried to build up a civic community and was responsible for raising Kannada to great heights in matters of discussion and debate. He started the Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs mainly to focus the attention of the public on matters of public interest.

He was offered a pension by the Government of Karnataka which he refused to accept for he did not want to forfeit his right to criticize the government. It was indeed most difficult to make him accept any state or national award.

of the renaissance in modern Kannada literature”. He had the courage to maintain that as a language Kannada could be cultivated “for better expressiveness of the modern spirit and aspirations”. And he had also the decency to demonstrate it by resorting to a variety of compositions in old, medieval and modern Kannada—and this at a time when to use Kannada or any other Indian language was regarded as *infra dig*. D.V.G. could easily do just as well in Sanskrit, Telugu or English. Though he belonged to the old generation, he was not a fossil as old people tend to gradually become. Alert as always—unto the last, he could combine the best and the lasting features of both the old and the new traditions, especially the values enshrined within. His respect for values, regardless of whether these were old or new, was indeed proverbial. To him, truth, dharma and progress summed up culture.

Fundamentally, D.V.G. was a *Vedantin*, to quote Professor Sitaramaiah, again. That is why probably, in all his writings which cover every fact of life,—social, religious, political or economic—he was conscious of the conceptual background which he believed in analysing at length and in interpreting fully for the benefit of his readers. Being a keen student of human life and highly conscious of human suffering—he himself came from a poor family—he could not resist the temptation of rushing into dealing with a number of questions concerning human life, aspirations and objectives. He was a voracious reader, thanks to the interest in reading inculcated in him by two well-known teachers and well-wishers of his younger days, the late R. V. Krishnaswamy Iyer and Ramadasappa. By this time, he had also mastered several Sanskrit

works and studied in depth the different schools of philosophy. In his commentary on the *Bhagawad Gita*, therefore he could draw on his learning and faithfully record as also attempt a reconciliation of the different interpretations of the three great Acharyas.

Honours Refused

It was D.V.G.'s good fortune that he came in contact with some of the wisest people of his days. Early in his career as a writer, he met and impressed even connoisseurs like N. Narasimhamurthy and M. G. Varadacharya with his thorough grasp of a subject and his balanced outlook thereon. It is not surprising, therefore, that his account of the life of Rangacharin, the first Dewan of Mysore, attracted the attention and admiration of the great engineer-statesman of India, Dr. M. Visveswarayya who, when he became Dewan of Mysore, invited D.V.G. to take up a responsible position in government and help him in his developmental activities. As was only to be expected, D.V.G. declined the invitation and later, a similar invitation from another great Dewan of Mysore, Sir Mirza Ismail. D.V.G. feared that by becoming a part of the Establishment he might lose the opportunity of being able frankly to criticise the government. In fact his criticisms had already begun to be noticed by government and often these proved too bitter a pill for the powers that be to swallow easily. However, the true liberal that D.V.G. was, he never failed to support any good and constructive move of the government.

Although a citizen of a princely State and a doughty champion of their point of view it may not be known to many that the Kannada term *Rashtraka* (nationalist) owes its origin to D.V.G.. While supporting the princely States in their legitimate aspirations and demands, he did not lose sight of the fact that he was an Indian first and a State subject afterwards. In this way he was very pragmatic in his approach to matters of public concern. But to be frank and practical is not always easy, certainly not in our country today. For, more often than not, those who express such views are liable to be misunderstood. D.V.G. too was often a victim of such misunderstanding. However, unlike the so-called politicians of today it did not deter him from saying what he felt was right and in the best interests of his country. He did not mind being in a minority of one.

Democracy and Discipline

D.V.G. could possibly afford to do this by reason

of the fact that he was a true democrat in the best sense of that term. His commitment to the democratic ideal was so complete that he could never tolerate democratic values being questioned. If something went wrong in a country wedded to democracy his explanation was that there was something wrong in implementation or in those responsible for it. For this reason, perhaps, he laid much stress on discipline. "The first enemy of a democratic system" he would remark "is indiscipline in the citizen". Discipline, was D.V.G.'s message to his countrymen. He was among the few to assert that citizens could exercise their rights only after they had discharged their responsibilities. As everyone knows in a democratic State these responsibilities are shared by all. Under the theory of the separation of powers, the State exercises democracy by dividing such responsibilities among the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. According to D.V.G., the judiciary is by far the most important. He always praised an impartial judge. Only those who sought neither power nor office could be impartial, he used to say and add: "A citizen who does not desire a seat of authority can act like an impartial judge."

Long before many others, D.V.G. sensed the dangers to India arising from frenzied passions whipped up by politicians for narrow political ends. He warned his countrymen of the dangers of trusting unscrupulous, vicious and demagogic types as unfortunately many of our politicians are today. In his most remembered and oft-quoted Kannada classic—*Manku Thimmana Kagg*a—which brought him the National Academy Award (and which he accepted only at the repeated insistence of the then President of India the late Dr. Radhakrishnan) he expressed his expectations thus: "Good living in peace and helpfulness can make each life not only self-sufficient in strength to some but be of use to others." How far removed we are from this goal!

D.V.G.'s heroes were great liberals like Gokhale and Srinivasa Sastri. The deep reverence with which he held the former resulted not only in that great institution—the Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs in Bangalore but also in his gifting away the entire purse that the affectionate people of Karnataka presented to him on his 70th birthday. His was a life that should serve as a beacon to the young and continue to inspire future generations.

R. V. Murtly is an economist and former editor of *Commerce*.

The Lease on Life Expires

Darius Cooper

They are a varied band: men and women, old and young, rich and poor. They are the inhabitants of what is probably the most dynamic nation in the world. They are the citizens of Hongkong. Also they are under a sentence of death.

In 1997, just twelve years away, these five and a half million human beings will see their country usurped by communist China. The opponents are unequal. On the one hand, unarmed men and women like you and me; on the other, the guns of the Red Army.

Hongkong was (until this cloud of doom shaded its future) a country rich in the most valuable resource that any economy can command. No, not oil, gold, or anything like that; but simply Freedom. With its uncontrolled economy, unfettered foreign trade and unmanipulated currency, Hongkong shot up to prominence as an economic machine of unbelievable potential.

Angels Do Not Mate with Demons

China, on the other hand, is a nation where even today thousands die of the atavistic malady of starvation! It is a communist State where elementary freedoms are denied its citizens, where deceit, factionalism, bribery, and the 'aristocracy of pull' have full sway. It is Hongkong's anti-thesis.

Yet, this stumbling, rotting carcass of a giant seeks an alliance with the tiny angel of modern production and trade. It cannot be. Angels do not mate with demons.

Over 30% of China's foreign exchange comes from Hongkong and surely the communists look at that small country as a juicy morsel. But, food cannot remain food if it is mixed with poison. And, similarly, under communist control Hongkong will wither and die. Despite all its protestations to the contrary, China will not leave Hongkong to its own devices. If it wants to do that, it does not have to take it over in the first place. It would recognise that its presence would mean that many businesses would shut down (as they already have) and that a free Hongkong is in its own interests. Why then does China want to

take over Hongkong? Is it to be a place for the communist top bureaucracy to invest its private capital? Is it just a blind urge to destroy the best symbol of free-enterprise capitalism? One can only guess.

Doomed

Hongkong is doomed under the Chinese. It does not require a very deep knowledge of history to realize that. Consider the strains on the Chinese rulers that will force them to control the economy of Hongkong. As in any capitalist country businesses are born and die. But will the communists let businesses die, especially if they have invested their own money in them? With their absurd ideas about economics one can imagine how they would try to control the currency, delay business crashes, support uneconomical industries, and generally play havoc with the working of the economy. One control will necessitate others. The domino effect will come into play with geometrical increase in impediments to freedom. Dissent will have to be controlled. People will have to be jailed to keep order. And, one step at a time, Hongkong will lapse into a full-fledged communist State.

Surely any right-thinking human being will understand that the people of Hongkong have the right to live as a nation without being tied to an agreement signed by their grandfathers. Surely, the British policy towards China is very different from the stance they took on the Falklands issue. Is it because they know they cannot use their force against China?

No, it is not on a piece of land that the 100-year lease ends in 1997; the lease that ends is a lease on lives. China, one would imagine, has leased out 5½ million lives and now demands that they return to serfdom and servitude.

No voice is raised for the victims.

The tragedy is that around the globe, 7000 million people are watching in silence. Is this not a grave indictment of the human race? Are we not an accessory to the crime?

Darius Cooper is a student of the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta

In Lenin's Mausoleum

Jaroslav Seifert

Beneath the red wall, beneath the domes
golden and gleaming
on his catafalque in sweet repose,
as if just dreaming,
in a glass coffin Lenin lies,
as though by Death unmarred,
watching with half-closed eyes
the soldier who stands on guard.
Bayonet fixed, he passes long hours
by Lenin's side,
inhaling the scent of faded flowers
while the clock outside
marks time's swift evolution.
The red flag's still there
but where is the revolution—
where?
The Kremlin wall, red like a field of poppies,
its teeth bares in ire.
There Comrade Stalin has his office,
but no revolutionary fire.
Suddenly the silence is shattered
by the sound of shooting—
at the Lubyanka enemies and traitors
they're executing.
Now Lenin seems to awaken.

He stretches out a hand:
'Why do I lie here forsaken?'
Tell me that, my friend.
'When out there in the streets they need me
I cannot say.
Don't leave me here to sleep, but lead me
to join the fray.'
But the soldier shook his head and pressed
the lid down tight.
'No, you just lie here quietly and rest.
Why go and fight?'
'Sleep, comrade, and be glad you're here.
These days it's best to keep
your nose clean, don't you interfere.
Good night, go back to sleep.'
Lenin falls asleep. In his quiet tomb
the shadows gather in,
his tranquil face permeated
with wax and paraffin.

[Translated by George Theiner
From *Verses on a Wall*,
published in 1937 in
Prague by Prokop Laichter.]

Courtesy: *Index on Censorship*



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Navsari Cotton and Silk Mills Limited

Scholarship to the Gulag

Musa Harun

A Jordanian Student's Experience of Soviet Education

MY EXPERIENCE with the Soviet educational system began in 1975, when I was given a "free" scholarship through the Jordanian Ministry of Education to study agriculture at a higher institute in Leningrad. Although my parents are devout Muslims who regard Soviet communism as inherently atheistic and anti-Islamic, they nonetheless approved of my study plans because they are poor farmers who had no means of financing my continued education anywhere else.

In 1981, I was awarded a master's degree with honours from the Academy of Forestry in Leningrad, and after the summer vacation, I returned to Leningrad to study for my doctorate. During the autumn of 1981, some of my Soviet instructors and fellow-students began urging me to join the Communist Party and work for the Communist cause upon my return to Jordan. When I resisted, this appeal was repeated by certain foreign students, including fellow-Jordanians. Sometimes they provoked heated political debates with me, which usually ended with my voicing harsh criticism of the Soviet regime. Later, some of the statements I made during these debates were repeated to me by my KGB interrogators.

Arrested

When I continued to ignore all urgings to join the Communist Party, I found myself selected more often to deliver political speeches at gatherings of foreign students—speeches prepared by my Soviet professors and handed to me to read aloud, sight unseen. I delivered the speeches two or three times, but I refused to continue this practice when I found the texts to contain derogatory comments about Islam, the King of Jordan and Jordan's friends and allies. At no time during this period, however, did I remotely expect that I might be arrested for expressing my political views. Rather, by the time that I finished my doctoral dissertation in the early weeks of 1984, I fully expected that I would receive my doctorate in three more months, and that the Soviet authorities and I would finally part ways.

It therefore came as a complete and utter surprise to me when I was arrested on February 22nd 1984.

In fact, the manner of the arrest was so skilfully contrived that I did not realise I had actually been arrested until almost two days later. As it happened, a Soviet official came to my room in the morning and, without introducing himself, asked me to accompany him to the visa department for thirty minutes. Instead of going to the visa office, however, we entered a KGB building at no. 4, Liteynyi Prospekt, where the official told me not to be concerned because we would only be staying for a few minutes. Here several officers questioned me about myself and my studies, then the first official took me to another building nearby.

Interrogation

In this second building, I met the man who was to be my interrogator for the next two months: KGB Major Vasily Vasilyevich Belyayev, a short, powerfully-built man of about 50 years, with silvery streaks in his black hair and several stainless steel teeth showing in his mouth. Belyayev, I was soon to learn, was a man who never tired during long interrogation sessions and who never showed anger, impatience or human emotion; I think the man did not possess a single nerve in his body after spending so many years at his grim occupation.

We spent the rest of the day in an interminable discussion on scientific, religious, philosophical and political questions. I was still very naive at this point, and I treated the questioning like the intellectual debates I had shared so often with my classmates. At the end of the session that evening, I asked the major for permission to leave, and he told me to wait a few minutes while he made some inquiries.

When Belyayev returned, he told me that I must remain overnight for administrative reasons which would be cleared up the next morning. When I objected, Belyayev suggested that I go to speak with another official, whose office was not far away. I was then taken down the road to a place surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards and was thrown into a tiny cell no more than two and a half metres on each side. Incredibly, even then I did not believe

that I had been arrested because I knew I had committed no crime.

On the second day, a different KGB officer questioned me in a very friendly manner and assured me that he was going to help me. When he finished his questioning, he presented me with an official letter from a Leningrad judge stating that I was "under investigation", and asked me to sign it; I did. Then my clothes were confiscated, and I was taken naked to a stinking, unventilated cell, where—hungry, thirsty and shivering—I spent a sleepless night in temperatures which went down to minus 10 degrees centigrade.

Inhuman Conditions

On the third day, Major Belyayev returned to resume the interrogation, and I was given food for the first time since my arrest. The major reassured me that I would be released very soon, but three or four days of interrogations passed without any changes, except that my clothes were returned to me. After nearly a week, I was taken by military car to Kresti Prison no. 45/1, located at No. 7, Nabirezhnaya Arsenalnaya. I was again thoroughly searched and this time given a cell whose dimensions were approximately 80 cm by 80 cm—so small that I could not even sit up. I was to stay in this detestable prison for eight months under conditions that I did not believe could still exist in the twentieth century. There I met a number of other foreign prisoners, including two young Finnish tourists and students from Afghanistan, Nigeria, Palestine and Angola.

After two months at Kresti Prison, Major Belyayev produced a KGB dossier which he said contained evidence that I committed violent assaults in 1981 and 1982 against certain Soviet students, including my Russian girl friend. I vehemently denied this, and Belyayev promised to have me out of prison in two days. I never saw Major Belyayev again.

One month after my last meeting with the major, a female official named Nadezhda Batalovna visited me and told me that she would be investigating my case in place of the major. She repeated many of the questions which Belyayev had asked, and two months after her visit I received an official letter stating that the date for my trial would be set soon. I realised then that I must demand my rights under the Soviet Constitution, or I might never leave Kresti Prison. I wrote a letter to the prison authorities in which I demanded to communicate with the Jordanian Embassy in Moscow; to name a lawyer of my own

choice; and to send a protest to the United Nations. The prison warden sent me a reply that I should put my letter down the latrine. Next, I began a hunger strike. On the eleventh day of my fast, I was taken to a vacant room by four armed guards and rendered unconscious, after which a tube was stuck down my throat and liquid food was pumped into my stomach. The Soviet authorities have developed powerful means to deal with hunger strikes.

After spending some five months in prison, I was visited by a court-appointed lawyer, Stanislav Stepanovich Barlov, who asked the same questions I had been asked so many times before by the other interrogators. At the end of this questioning, he tried to persuade me not to appear in court, and offered to help me by smuggling some letters to my friends in the USSR and Jordan. I gave him some letters to send, but I still insisted on appearing at my own trial. The next day the lawyer tore the letters in pieces before my eyes, saying that he did not mail them because he feared the KGB might intercept them.

Courtroom Charade

On the morning of July 11th, 1984, I went on trial in a Soviet court. The judge read the charges against me, which consisted of an utterly fictitious allegation that I had beaten my girl friend and several other Soviet nationals whose names I had never heard before. I denied the charges, and the judge asked whether I would agree to having the trial proceed without the "victims" being present. When I exclaimed that I did not even know the victims and demanded the right to face my accusers in the courtroom, the judge replied that the victims lived near the Black Sea and would not be able to travel to Leningrad for several months, in which case I would have to remain in Kresti Prison. As I was desperate not to remain in that terrible place, I agreed to stand trial immediately. When that cynical courtroom charade was finally over, the judge sentenced me to six years of hard labour. My Russian girl friend was in the court when the sentence was read; she had not been allowed to testify in my defence—now she only sat in the gallery and cried.

I spent another two months in Kresti Prison before I was finally transferred to a hard labour camp in the Mordovian Autonomous Republic, located several hundred kilometres southeast of Moscow. The special train in which we prisoners travelled took 24 hours to make a journey which a normal passenger train covered in one third the time, because the train stopped frequently along the way to take on additional

detainees. I recall how, before departing on our trip, each prisoner was given a piece of salted fish to make it easier for the KGB's guard dogs to track us if we tried to escape.

In The Gulag

My new home was to be a KGB "lager" near to the closed military towns of Lepley and Potma. In the camps there, I met fellow-prisoners from a wide variety of countries, including Arab students from Syria, Palestine, South Yemen (Aden) and Jordan. While each of their stories is different, I am convinced that most of them were as innocent of criminal acts as I. Much the same can be said for inmates I met who were citizens of other countries, including France, West Germany, Finland, Bulgaria, Afghanistan, China and North Korea.

Conditions were indescribably harsh in Mordovia; everyone spent long hours cutting stone, grinding glass, working with metal and wood, and assembling prefabricated building units which we were told would be sent to Siberia. We were fed very little, and my weight, which had been around 80 kg before my arrest, dropped to a low point of 62 kg during my initial weeks under the camp's strict labour regime. Camp discipline was uncompromising, and those who violated the rules were beaten with plastic truncheons on their backs, chests, hands and kidneys; or put into narrow isolation cells; or thrown into tubs of freezing water; or forced to carry heavy bags of sand up and down hills to the point of exhaustion; or put inside a plastic bag until the prisoner fainted from lack of oxygen. Medical care was practically non-existent: nearly every prisoner suffered from rheumatism, digestive disorders, toothaches and other chronic ailments caused by the harsh climate, poor nutrition and the lack of adequate sanitary facilities. The possibility of escape was absolutely zero. The only serious attempt I witnessed during my sojourn in the camps was in February 1985, when four Koreans attempted to tunnel their way out; I shall never forget the sound of their screams as they were attacked by the camp's guard dogs.

Released

I was released from the prison camp in Mordovia one year and four days after my arrest in Leningrad, and sent to a special house for freed prisoners in Moscow until my repatriation to Jordan could be arranged some three weeks later. I firmly believe that

I owe my release more than anything else to the tireless efforts of my family, who learned of my disappearance through other Jordanian students in Leningrad, and mobilised the resources of the Jordanian Government to demand my release. Had my government not exerted intense and constant diplomatic pressure on the Soviet regime to account for my whereabouts, I fear that I might never have left the Gulag alive.

It has been three months now since I returned to my native country. My health has been improving, although not yet restored to normal, and I am greatly enjoying my work outdoors producing fruit and grain on our family's farm. Every week, I visit the Jordanian Foreign Ministry to seek the return of my personal belongings which were left behind in my room at the time of my arrest. Above all, I seek the return of my master's degree diploma, my doctoral dissertation and the papers which I accumulated during more than eight years of study in the USSR. Although I finished all the required work toward my doctorate degree before my arrest, I harbour little hope that the KGB will ever let the Academy of Forestry acknowledge the degrees that I have earned there. For under the Soviet system of education, my scholarship—and thus my degree—were granted on the implicit condition that I become a willing tool of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. When I refused to betray my native land as the price of an education, the authorities withdrew my rights to the benefits of my Soviet education.

Countless times during the long nights of suffering I spent in Krestli Prison and the Mordovian Gulag, I wished that I had known in advance the price I would be forced to pay for my participation in the Soviet educational system. Now that my ordeal is over at last, I feel a solemn duty to warn other students who may be looking forward eagerly to a "free" scholarship to study at a Soviet university, or perhaps merely a "free" trip to participate in Moscow's World Festival of Youth and Students this July. To those students, I say this: consider the price which I paid, and ask if it is worth what the Soviet Union has to offer.

Courtesy: Swiss Press Review

If Gorbachev Dares

IT IS UNLIKELY that Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev's new team will dash for full economic reforms, but 98% of their citizens would enjoy a huge increase in real income if they did. The modern Soviet Union says it has three times as many scientists and engineers in its non-farm workforce as has the United States. It spends $1\frac{1}{2}$ times as much of its national income on research and development as does Japan. But it somehow turns these superb inputs into such tiny outputs that a Soviet citizen is only one fifteenth as likely as an American to have a motor car. In 1913, Colin Clark estimated, imperial Russia had a real product per man-hour $3\frac{1}{2}$ times greater than Japan's. Russia has spent its nigh 70 socialist years slipping relatively backwards, to may be a quarter of Japan's rate now. What has gone wrong?

The Scope for Making Russians Richer is Immense

In the late 1950s Khrushchev understandably thought that communism could "bury" the west because his central planners were successfully bringing young farmworkers into huge projects that produced electricity, steel and bulk chemicals at 20 times those farmworkers' previous productivity per head. Today's Russia, with the world's largest steel and oil and gas industries, has such products running out of its ears; but, see our table, it uses each unit of energy three times as wastefully as France, each kilo of steel $3\frac{1}{2}$ times as wastefully as Britain. These figures, and some others in this article, are from a scholarly and unpublished paper by a researcher at the Polish Academy of Sciences.

Less "plannable resources are used far more wastefully even than energy and steel. Some Comecon factories find they have no nails with which to shut their packing cases. They react by making inside the factory many things and services that western firms would subcontract outside at sometimes (say western managers) under a tenth of the cost. All of these unnecessary inputs are then translated into alleged dollar value through multiplying their wildly excessive cost by an exchange rate which pretends that one rouble is worth more than a dollar, one East German mark equals a D-mark. This conversion proclaims that the average East German or even central Moscow housewife is richer than the British one. When that *Hausfrau* or Moscow shopper enters a British Sainsburys, she is surprised.

Planners in countries like Czechoslovakia try to handle 5m products, which means that the committee at the top, even if it works a 90-hour week, has

about $3\frac{1}{2}$ seconds a year to arrange the infrastructure, production and distribution for each. All the socialist countries now pass down to the managements and some workers in each enterprise incentives to increase the volume of production, but—in the absence of a market system—cannot curb costs or improve quality. How can anybody measure quality when a tractor going to a Polish private farm gets careful enough maintenance to last seven years longer than if it goes to a state farm?

At the beginning of each five years plan, there is a written commitment greatly to expand the production of tractors and every other working tool, in order to replace the ever vaster number of state farms that are acceleratingly breaking down. This is deemed to require a great increase in investment in tractor-making factories, and in transport facilities to carry tractors about, all ordered at the same moment and therefore all running simultaneously into some bottleneck that the planners had not thought of. In the middle of most five-year plans there is thus an order for investment to slow.

During the 1976-80 plans, eastern Europe tried to avert this slowdown by heavy foreign borrowing. This increase in money supply, in economies already fully employed, naturally made the familiar bottleneck crises worse. Between the mid-1970s and 1984, an East German's waiting time for a car increased from 6-7 years to 11-12 years, a Pole's waiting time for low-cost family housing from 8-12 years to 16-20 years (i.e. until the children who qualify him for the waiting list have left home anyway).

A leader doesn't have to sell secondhand cars

Why do these very educated peoples in Russia and eastern Europe not dash for freer markets, and away from this mess? A main answer is the *nomenklatura*: the system whereby jobholders, including mana-

Inputs misused

	Energy waste*	Steel waste*
Russia	1,490	135
E. Germany	1,356	88
Czechoslovakia	1,290	132
Hungary	1,058	88
Britain	820	38
W. Germany	565	52
France	502	42
Switzerland	371	26

*Kilos of coal equivalent and of steel used to produce even an alleged \$1,000 worth of gdp in 1979-80.

gers of enterprises, are picked by a local communist party committee at the appropriate level in the party hierarchy. This has become a system whereby 2% of the population gives the top managerial and bureaucratic jobs to itself and its cronies, in return for kickbacks on a Byzantine scale. A Polish newspaper reports that only just over half of the consumer durables in Krakow go through normal distribution channels, while 45% go through "private rationing schemes". Since a new car can be sold secondhand at about 2½ times its original price, the nomenklatura likes this system fine.

Unlike the nomenklatura, the top military men—including the KGB—do not generally live off black markets; they get their job satisfaction because the budget gives them 10% more gnp to spend than they would have in any civilised country. The thought might one day occur to them (and to the top people immediately around Mr. Gorbachev) that the nomenklatura's opposition to free markets cuts gnp by at least two thirds. But little joy should be expected from the late Yuri Andropov's idea of economic reform (which was to put some black marketeers in prison, and continue with the planning nonsense as before) or from Hungary's and China's type of partly freer markets.

As our table shows, Hungary has done well by

communist standards, but not by capitalist ones. China may be about to give a bad name to partial co-operation with capitalist running dogs, because it is attempting it while still at the Khrushchevian stage when big projects temporarily seem attractive. It is getting foreign investors to finance some of these big projects, but they will probably withdraw when (like the banks lending to the Polands in 1982) they understand that the present system cannot earn China enough foreign exchange to pay them back.

The Soviet Union is in a different league. It has a much more educated labour force than West Germany had when its economy was totally disrupted by black markets and the "cigarette-currency economy" in 1947; it has been longer out of the entrepreneurial swim than ex-Nazi Germany had then been, but its people need not feel as cowed. If Mr. Gorbachev did an Erhard-type dash for nearly total freedom from economic controls, the Soviet Union could have something like a post-1948 West German economic miracle. Any such dash for freedom would almost certainly involve also a dash for detente, so if Mr. Gorbachev recognised this it would be the biggest development of our time. The nomenklatura will try to ensure he doesn't dare.

Courtesy: The Economist.

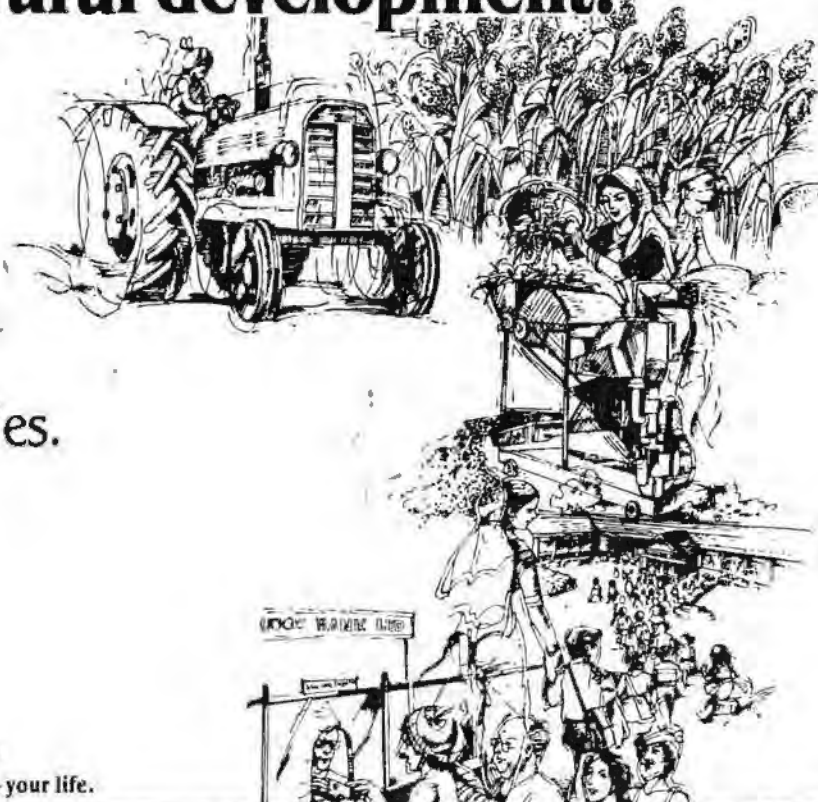
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Foreign Press Excerpts

Private Utilities

Few would have guessed back in 1979 that the sale of state-owned industries to the private sector would prove one of the most popular and successful as well as one of the least challenged policies of Mrs. Thatcher's Government. It has won such broad acceptance that the process would now be politically hard to reverse. That is because the experience of privatization has been so good.

The mere prospect of having to face the disciplines of the market made a readily discernible impact on management, for instance at British Airways or Jaguar, long before they were actually sold out of the public sector. Once the deed was done, managers revelled in the new found flexibility and freedom of action, valuing their escape alike from the dead hand of Whitehall and the transfixing glare of adversarial politics. By and large, sales growth has accelerated profitability has risen and the organizations have come alive, competing more successfully for custom than before.

Following privatization, this changed atmosphere has spread to employees down the line, contributing greatly to improved performance. That change has been most notable where a large proportion of employees have taken a stake in their company, as at National Freight or British Telecom. Across the board however, and with the exception of the bed-rock ideologues, the lack of any desire among employees for renationalization is striking.

As a result, criticism of privatization has increasingly concentrated on peripheral issues: first the scope and conduct of stock market issues and now the use of privatization to fill holes in Government financing.

The new techniques evolved for the sale of British Telecom, show that the City and ministers have finally worked out how to encourage and sustain mass share ownership of these national assets.

The Government still has a case to answer on the charge that some of the ends of privatization—notably greater competition—have been subordinated to short-term Treasury convenience. That, however, should not be allowed to fog the thrust of the policy or the need to pursue it with renewed vigour into the heartlands of the public sector.

From now on, the burden of the move from public to private—and especially to mass share ownership—must lie in tackling the great public utilities, many of which are natural monopolies. In theory, public ownership here had the advantage of accountability

and sharing any monopoly profits communally. Experience, however, has shown that the benefits of privatization are so important in their own right—introducing competition for finance if not for custom—as to resolve doubts over transferring utilities to the private sector. Experience has also devalued the theoretical benefits of public ownership. In British Telecom's case, the introduction of competition, however nugatory in some areas, and of the regulatory licence policed by Oftel, however weak, make an advance on any consumer protection offered in practice by public accountability.

Treasury ministers searching for alternative revenue have often proved the worst monopolists of all. So it is reasonable to conclude, with Mr. Moore, that regulated private ownership is preferable to nationalization if not, as he would have it, that state ownership is "never the preferred alternative". Even in a loss-making industry such as the railways, a private company or companies bidding for open subsidies would be an improvement.

That is not to say that the Government has yet developed adequate regimes for privatizing utilities. The scope for competition has not yet been exhausted. It was ridiculous to add to the natural monopoly of British Gas with controls on landing and export of North Sea gas, or to create an artificial monopoly by keeping all three London airports in a privatized British Airports Authority. The regulatory regime for British Telecom is inadequate and needs to be supplemented with public hearings on the American pattern in future cases. Where, even small, regional parts of monopolies can readily be split off without substantial economic damage, that would be useful for control and comparison. And the Government should avoid freezing monopoly structures in concrete in the terms of sale to new shareholders.

It should also be possible, in some cases, to identify an essential monopoly element and treat this differently from the rest of a business. Such issues will come particularly to the fore when privatization of electricity is considered.

Ministers should also pay more attention, particularly in the coal industry, to the employee buy-out system used at National Freight, which is so often held up as an example but has not been used as a model.

It is encouraging that Treasury ministers are now coming to grips with these issues. They have more work to do before they have resolved them.

Courtesy: The Times, London.

India and Afghanistan

Since he succeeded his mother, the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, has visited both the Soviet Union and the United States. It is perhaps fitting in the Indian context that he visited Moscow first, for traditionally India's relationship with the Soviet Union has been closer than that with the United States. This is accepted in Washington, and the Soviet alliance threw no shadow over Mr. Gandhi's visit to the United States. The American President was indeed well content to compare the Indian Prime Minister's political position with his own: they are the leaders of the two biggest democracies in the world, and there is therefore a certain fundamental similarity in the problems which face them.

These factors surely give Mr. Gandhi the independence of view and the position to play a special role in bringing freedom to Afghanistan. As a Soviet ally, he has taken great care not to cause offence, and every Indian utterance with regard to the Afghan problem has shown remarkable circumspection. From a democratic leader, this could be taken ill, since for most democrats the Soviet position in Afghanistan is simply the crassest denial of democracy. But if the Indian middle-of-the-road position can be used to bring freedom to Afghanistan without the Soviets losing face, then it could be worth while in the end. It can hardly have any other justification.

India's position with regard to Afghanistan has been compared with that of the United States towards the Middle East. In the latter case, America is the only country which can deal with both sides in the basic conflict, but because of what has happened in the past it is most reluctant to do so. As far as Afghanistan is concerned, India has not yet tried a peacekeeping role, yet Mr. Gandhi must know well that this is in the long run the most serious problem facing the sub-continent in which he is the most important national leader. If an equitable answer is not given to the national aspirations of the Afghan people, there is little doubt that the situation will one day lead to a wider war.

Democracy is not a state in which people act like sheep. Under democracy individual liberty of opinion and action is jealously guarded.

—MAHATMA GANDHI

An Embarrassing Guest

We have learnt of a recent Soviet gaffe with the Indians, which has caused much embarrassment. On 27 April the Soviet Embassy in New Delhi gave a lunch for leading Indians as a run-up to VE Day Anniversary celebrations. The original guest list had included the Indian Foreign Minister, the Minister of Defence and most of their senior advisers. Ali declined to attend and in the event the most important Indian guest was a Professor from the Jawaharlal Nehru University. After lunch the Soviet Ambassador, Rykov, rose to his feet and gave a long speech, on predictable lines, about how the Soviet Union crushed the Nazis and won World War II. He sat down to thunderous applause and the Guest of Honour rose to reply. He declared that he simply could not accept what Rykov had said, which was offensive to him personally and to Indians generally. The Soviet Union may have had a part in beating the Nazis, but so had the Indians and indeed the Western Allies. But perhaps, even more important, the Indians had fought a long and bitter war here in the Far East against an equally tough enemy. (The clear implication was that not a single Soviet soldier had been involved at the time.) He sat down to stunned silence.

Although the press were present, not a word appeared in the papers the following day. Nor has anything since.

Courtesy: *Counterpoint*

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(Approved by I A T A)

BOOK REVIEWS

INDIA UNDER PRESSURE—Prospects for Political Stability by Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr.; Westview Press/Boulder and London; 1984; Pp. 214.

In his 'acknowledgement' Prof. Robert Hardgrave reveals that the research upon which his book was based "was supported under contract by the United States Department of State." Prof. Hardgrave goes on to affirm that "views or conclusions contained in this study should not be interpreted as representing the official opinion or policy of the Department of State."

Professor Hardgrave, who teaches at the University of Texas in Austin, was a victim of a Communist-led campaign for daring to write this book in June 1984 (four months before Mrs. Gandhi's assassination) in which he had the effrontery to discuss the possible future of India after Mrs. Indira Gandhi ceased to be Prime Minister. Even Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, who was badly briefed, replied to a question in the Lok Sabha last January and described Professor Hardgrave's report as "abhorrent."

One would have thought from all this hysteria that was evoked, that Professor Hardgrave must have made some alarming prognostications about the chaotic future of this country without Mrs. Gandhi's presence at the helm.

I have had an opportunity to read the book. Imagine my surprise to learn from it that Professor Hardgrave in fact made two predictions in March 1984, both of which have now proved right. The first was that Mr. Rajiv Gandhi would succeed Mrs. Gandhi as Prime Minister in a smooth manner and the second that India was due for a period of political stability under its new government. Prof. Hardgrave's accurate scenario cannot be faulted. Let me quote what he has to say:

"Unlike the earlier successions, where there were a number of potential contenders of national stature and visibility, there are today few obvious candidates beyond Rajiv. Mrs. Gandhi, far more than her father, has been the banyan tree under which nothing grows. . . . In the grief—and political panic—that will follow upon Mrs. Gandhi's death, the initial reaction of Congress MPs is likely to be to rally behind Rajiv. . . . As the surrogate for his mother, Rajiv, in dynastic succession, would provide continuity in leadership. At a time of unease that follows the loss of a leader, the selection of Rajiv as Prime Minister would respond to concern for national unity and political stability—the probable Congress party themes for

the election campaign. Moreover, in elections following relatively soon after the death of Mrs. Gandhi, Rajiv would inevitably draw a sympathy vote from a nation in mourning. . . . President Zail Singh—hand-picked by Mrs. Gandhi and beholden to the Nehru family—could invite Rajiv to form a Government. There would surely be an outcry against the violation of parliamentary convention but, given the nod, Rajiv would have little difficulty, at least initially, in sustaining a majority in the Lok Sabha."

A little later in the book, Professor Hardgrave goes on to say: "Whatever its mode or circumstance, the succession—if it is to occur in the next five years—will likely be conducted with order, posing no threat to the stability of either the Government or the constitutional order."

Regarding the mendacious Communist 'disinformation' emanating from Moscow and spewed out by its stooges in this country, Professor Hardgrave has pointed out that a copy of the study was, as a matter of courtesy, given to the Indian Embassy in Washington for the information of the Government of India.

As it happens, I have known Professor Hardgrave. He was good enough, along with Mr. Raja Rao, the Indian writer, to invite me some years ago to give three lectures on Mahatma Gandhi at the University of Texas. I had the pleasure of being a guest in his own home in the countryside outside Austin and enjoyed his hospitality. He in turn stayed a night or two with me when he was later in Bombay. I was one among many people whom he met in Delhi, Bombay and elsewhere, who held varying points of view in the course of research. Professor Hardgrave has been a friend of India and an admirer of Mahatma Gandhi.

I wonder if copies of the book are available in India? I received my own copy from Professor Hardgrave in response to my request. Far from denigrating Professor Hardgrave's research, an intelligent Government in Delhi would encourage an Indian publisher to buy the Indian rights and bring out an Indian edition of the book. Obviously, we still have to learn to distinguish who are our friends and our enemies.

—Minoo Masani

DOWN MELODY LANE by G. N. Joshi; Orient Longmans; Pp. 168; Rs. 60.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE is a household name in thousands of Indian homes and it has been a symbol of excellence in production and fidelity in recording. The symbol is better known than the Company, the

Gramophone Company of India. The history of recording began at the beginning of the present century when a subsidiary of an internationally known British concern was established in Calcutta around about 1903. For some inscrutable reason it was called the Gramophone and Typewriter Company, the two products having little in common except a potential market for both. By 1909 however the company ceased to deal with typewriters and devoted itself entirely to the gramophone. Branches were opened in Delhi, Bombay and Madras and in the following decades it established a near monopoly in the Indian subcontinent; with all the evils associated with such monopolies. When the history of recording comes to be written in detail the Gramophone Company of India will undoubtedly be its hero, but not without some serious blemishes of character. The Company was ruthless in capturing the market often employing dubious methods and it succeeded despite the fact that its recording equipment was obsolete.

G. N. Joshi the widely known musician of Maharashtra joined the Company in 1938 and was its chief recordist for many years. In the course of his work Mr. Joshi came into contact with a wide variety of people in the world of music—famous singers like Bade Gulam Ali Khan, Allaudin Khan, Begum Akhtar, Pannalal Ghosh, Vilayat Khan, Ravi Shankar to name a few; well-known composers of film music, Naushad and C. Ramchandra, famous singers of yester-years like K. L. Saigal and Khurshid and royal patrons of music not to mention politicians like Morarji Desai, all formed Joshi's varied clientele.

Down Melody Lane is a thoroughly enjoyable record of how Joshi was able to get the famous artistes to record for HMV. This book is rich in anecdotes which reveal less known sides of the famous singers. Joshi is a shrewd observer of human nature, he noticed the strengths and weaknesses, the foibles and peculiarities of the persons he had to deal with. He is a subtle-souled psychologist. In 1951-52 when the Government of Bombay embarked upon its policy of Prohibition, Joshi saw in it a golden opportunity to get business for the Company. It was suggested to Morarji Desai that if his voice along with that of many others were recorded and his speeches played to masses of people it would give a high push to the government's policy. Morarjibhai quickly seized the idea and a recording appointment was fixed. One afternoon Morarji walked into the studios of HMV on the stroke of the appointed hour asking ministerially whether everything was kept ready. When it was suggested that Morarji could have his voice tested he was irritated at the thought and sternly brushed it aside. Meekly

the Chief Minister's speech was recorded, punctuated by frequent clearing of the throat. When it was played back Morarji was angry. Joshi calmed him down saying that he must have had a hard day's work and must be suffering from cold and that there could be a recording some other day. It worked like magic and on the second appointment Morarji himself suggested a testing of his voice before the final recording!

I leave it to the reader to read similar anecdotes about the great singers. And there are anecdotes as well that help us take a peep into the palaces of native States. One young Yuvaraja in Rajputana who had invited Joshi to give a performance came disguised to the station to receive him and acted as a chauffeur. The same Yuvaraja acted as a *cycle-rikshawallah* in Baroda and accompanied him to the house of a musician there.

An earlier version of the book in Marathi was immensely popular and the English version will enable a much wider readership. Joshi writes with great ease and felicity of expression and holds the readers' interest. It is a book that will be welcomed by all those who look nostalgically at the evolution of classical and popular music in the past few decades.

—Rajalakshmi Aiyar

STATUS AND POSITION OF WOMEN IN INDIA by Kiran Devendra; Vikas; pp. 186; Rs. 95.

The Indian Constitution pledges equality of status and opportunity, justice and dignity of the individual to men and women alike. Still, an Indian woman cannot free herself from age-old traditions, conventions and complexes. After Independence, some attempts have been made to study the position and problems of the Indian women. Since the 1970's there has been a steady growth in research activity pertaining to women's status. The Report of the Committee on the Status of Women was the first major attempt to study the existing data on social, economic and political aspects of women's position in India. After that, research gained momentum, and some serious researchers started working in this new discipline. So far as the legal aspect of women's problems in India is concerned, not many studies have been done. The Government has passed some progressive laws to revolutionise the status of women but how far these laws have brought the desired change remains a perplexing question. The work under review is a modest attempt to answer this question.

It reviews the laws passed by the Government of

India to improve the status of the women, specially of the Hindu women, till 1975. So far as the protection of economic rights of women is concerned, the author finds that in spite of the passing of the Factories Act, and Maternity Benefits Act, the conditions of work for the Indian woman are pitiable. She still faces sex discrimination at work. Protective laws do not benefit her due to loopholes, and the working woman continues to carry a double load of work—at home and in her office. The author convincingly argues that women's employment trends indicate that major forces affecting women's employment stem from structural changes within the economy as a whole and from the intensification of socio-economic inequalities; and as women are a vulnerable group with fewer opportunities, they have been affected more adversely than men.

So far as the Hindu women's rights relating to marriage and property are concerned, the author explains the various relevant laws such as the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, and the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956. She discusses the Hindu Code Bill—its provisions, criticisms and social repercussions, and points out the ineffectiveness of the Dowry Prohibition Act and misuse of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act. She rightly observes that women's roles, rights and norms of behaviour are still greatly influenced by cultural factors like family, kinship groups, religious traditions and caste hierarchy. She is sensible enough to realise that legislation in itself cannot achieve results unless it is supported by socio-economic changes, an awareness of rights and responsibilities, effective legal implementation and follow-up machinery. While emphasizing a change in social attitude, the author brings to light some inadequacies in the existing laws; she states, for example that the laws of inheritance would be more helpful to women if they are made coparceners.

The book also reviews some legislation for social welfare, and contains useful information in the Appendices, e.g. Appendix II reveals the changes brought by the partition in the lives of women, and Appendix III uncovers Dr. Rajendra Prasad's views on the Hindu Code Bill.

Though the Indian woman has been oppressed by conventions and suppressed in a male-dominated society, it is difficult to agree with the author's observation that "even in the freedom struggle men brought women out to fight with the unspoken dictum of 'thus far and no further'". Participation of women in the

freedom movement marked the beginning of a new era for Indian women. Inspired by Gandhiji, women proved to be able and disciplined soldiers with an independent mind engaged in the fight for freedom.

The work under review would have gained in authenticity if the conclusions were substantiated with some cases and judgements. In-depth study of some laws would have thrown better light on the legal disabilities of women. Also, it would have been more relevant if the period under review was extended upto 1985 instead of stopping at 1975, as many such laws as the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 and the Dowry Prohibition (Amendment) Act, 1984, were passed during the past decade.

—Usha Thakkar

THE CHAMCHA AGE—An Era of the Stooges by Kanshi Ram; published by the author; pp. 134; Rs. 10.

My friend Kanshi Ram, President of the Backward and other Minorities Classes Employees' Federation (BAMCEF) has written an angry book with the rather fascinating title of *The Chamcha Age*. *Chamcha*, as Kanshi Ram explains is an "indigenous word used for a person who cannot operate on his own." In the book he uses the word synonymously with "stooge", "agent" or "tool". Essentially he directs his ire at those members of the backward communities who have chosen to cast their lot, whatever be the reason, with Caste Hindus. Such persons are described as being tools or *Chamchas* of the Hindus.

The author points out that the class of *Chamchas* was a direct result of the Poona Pact which itself was forced on Dr. B. R. Ambedkar by Gandhiji who went on a Fast unto death to force the British to withdraw their support to Ambedkar's campaign for separate electorates for the Depressed Classes, the Untouchables or Harijans as Gandhiji called them. About the Fast itself Ambedkar had this to say: "There was nothing noble in the Fast. It was a foul and filthy act. The Fast was not for the benefit of the Untouchables. It was against them and was the worst form of coercion against helpless people to give up the constitutional safeguards . . . and agree to live on the mercy of the Hindus. . . . How can the Untouchable regard such a man as honest and sincere?" (*What Congress and*

Gandhi has done to the Untouchables?—B. R. Ambedkar, (1945).

Dr. Ambedkar wanted that Untouchables have their own candidates elected by their own people. In his letter to Ramsay Macdonald, the then British Prime Minister, Gandhiji explained why he opposed separate electorates for the Depressed Classes: "Without arguing, I affirm that for me this matter is one of pure religion. . . . In the establishment of separate electorates for all the Depressed Classes, I sense the injection of poison that is calculated to destroy Hinduism and do no good whatever to the Depressed Classes."

Kanshi Ram is a sincere person and, whether one agrees with him or not, he deserves to be heard which is not something you can say about many members of his class who serve as show pieces of both the ruling and opposition parties.

Recommended reading for serious students of the subject. Copies can be obtained from Mr. Kanshi Ram, 5323, Hardhian Singh Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi 110 005.

—S. V. Raju

In Brief . . .

INDIA: THE SIEGE WITHIN: Challenges to a Nation's Unity by M. J. Akbar; Penguin; 1985; Pp. 325; Rs. 46.60.

WIDELY praised as a reliable tract on modern political history, Akbar's book examines three of the most momentous crises of post-Independence India: the Partition, the Kashmir question and the Punjab problem. Though not everyone will agree with all of Akbar's conclusions, the book is painstakingly written and quite informative.

A JUDGE'S MISCELLANY (Fourth Series) by M. Hidayatullah; Tripathi; 1984; Pp. 167; Rs. 65.

THIS highly-readable volume is an anthology of Hidayatullah's speeches and writings between 1981, and 1984—a period during which he held the office of Vice-President of India. The topics covered include law, education, art, economics, public administration and literature.

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF INDIA, Vols. 1 & 2 by M. Rama Jois; Tripathi; 1984; Pp. 723 & 388; Rs. 32.50 & Rs. 21.

RAMA Jois, a Judge of the Karnataka High Court, has attempted to put together a representative collection of material on ancient and modern legal, judicial and constitutional systems and, what is more, made it available to the interested reader at an unbelievably low price. The work covers a wide area, including the concept of *dharma*, substantive civil laws, rules of interpretation, the place and role of the judiciary from the earliest times to the present, and so on. The section on contemporary constitutional developments is, unfortunately, rather too cursory, but that does not detract from the essential usefulness of the work.

COMPARATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL LAW by Durga Das Basu; Prentice-Hall of India; 1984; Pp. 528; Rs. 150.

FIRST in an ambitious series of ten volumes on comparative constitutional jurisprudence, this book by Basu is disappointing. Though it purports to deal "critically with burning topics like doctrines of 'basic features', 'political questions', 'separation of powers', 'rule of law', 'natural justice', 'due process', 'right to human dignity and privacy', 'constitutionality of capital punishment', etc.", the treatment is woefully superficial and uninspiring.

POWER, PASSIONS AND PURPOSE: Prospects for North-South Negotiations ed. by Jagdish N. Bhagwati and John G. Ruggie; The MIT Press; 1984; Pp. 338; Price not stated.

"THE volatility of the perceptions of power configurations and the complexity of the interaction among these perceptions and negotiating positions and processes have contributed to the malaise that afflicts the current state of the North-South dialogue," argues Jagdish Bhagwati in this volume, which is a product of the International Conference on Global Negotiations held in New Delhi in 1983. Included in the volume are a dozen substantial essays which seek to explore "new directions in the North-South negotiations".

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