

A QUARTERLY OF LIBERAL IDEAS

Freedom First

October 1981
No. 391

PRICE
RUPEES FIVE

THE STATE AND THE ARTS

Nissim Ezekiel
Govind Talwalkar
Krishen Khanna
Mehra Masani
Sai Paranpype
B.K. Karanjia
Vijay Crishna



Manohar Malgonkar on J.R.D. Tata



Symposium on the right to live and the right to die

on Saturday, November 22 9:15 a.m.-1:15 p.m.
Sunday, November 23 9:15 a.m.-5:45 p.m.

In the air-conditioned auditorium,
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Homi Mody Street, Fort. Bombay.

Among the speakers are:

His Excellency Sir Edmund Hillary

Mr. Minoo Masani

Mr. Soli Sorabjee

Justice Sujata Manohar

Mr. Laxman Shastri Joshi

Prof. S.S. Varde

Dr. Praful Desai

Justice R.A. Jahagirdar

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Freedom First

A Quarterly of Liberal Ideas

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Dear Reader,

We are indebted to the Leslie Sawhny Programme for permission to reprint papers by eminent persons from the world of Arts presented at a Seminar on "The Arts, Letters and the State" held in Goa between August 15 and 17. Space constraints have compelled us to condense the papers. We have however tried to ensure that their central thrust is not lost in the condensation.

We have many new subscribers. However, we have lost a little in advertising support. While the former is encouraging the latter is naturally worrisome. We would appreciate hearing from subscribers prepared to help us secure advertisements.

We would like to stress that the new format of *Freedom First* has been welcomed by all those who have spoken or written to us. This however can continue only with your active cooperation.

Please write to us and we shall be glad to send you our advertisement tariff rates.

As usual Mr. Masani's comments contained in this issue are with the kind permission of *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

Our foreign policy is not dictated by morality. Nor does it seem to be governed by practicality. It appears to be guided by pique.

Kaiser-e-Hind, August 1986

It is 39 years since we took over this country. And just look where the bastards have taken us! This is not the India of my dreams. I'd rather Allah takes away my life than let me live in this country.

V. Abdul Jabbar, a pedlar, *Illustrated Weekly of India, August 17*

How can it (Advisory Committee on National Security) be high-powered if most of its members are Nehru family retainers with no independent standing?

Subramaniam Swamy, *Imprint, September 1986*

The bane of Indian sports are the politicians.

India Today, September 30.

A politician is a person who approaches every subject with an open mouth.

Adlai Stevenson, *Times of India, August 18*

The greatest danger to democracy and the rule of law is not from a violent and manifest blow. It is by gradual erosion, a little precipitation, that freedom is usually and finally lost.

Ram Jethmalani, *Lex et Juris The Law Magazine, September 1986.*

To combine Air India and Indian Airlines is like yoking a horse and donkey to the same vehicle. The donkey will hold back the horse, but because of the mulish quality of a government monopoly, the horse will be unable to pull the donkey forward.

Munoo Masani, *The Statesman, September 23*

... in strategic affairs as in market economics, an abundance of information is an excellent shock-absorber. *The Economist* September

He (Morarji Desai) is full of fads and fancies which he is entitled to be, we all are, but he has no right to make them into political issues.

Vijayalakshmi Pandit, *Gentleman, August 1986*

These days when you throw stones at the English you are merely defending your national rights.

Mr. Francis Mkhoma, General Manager, Barclays Bank of Zambia to Mr. Dhiren Bhagat, *Sunday Observer, September 21*

Stone-throwing at Ministers in India is on the increase, says a report.

In an ideal democracy the leaders should be within a stone's throw of the public.

The Heritage, August 1986

It is a distinct Indian trait not to record events as they happen. As yet we have no accurate and dispassionate account of the Emergency.

Bharat Warrierwalla, *Seminar, August 1986.*

In a country like India television channels should be utilised only by the state. Control must remain with the state. V.N. Gadgil, Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting, *Sunday Mid-day, September 28.*

The buck in West Bengal stops with Jyoti Basu. At 74, he is the party, the government and state, all rolled into one.

Sunday, September 28

Baba black sheep
Have you any seats?
Yes sir, Yes sir,
Three rooms full.
One for the SC
One for the ST
Rest for the BC
None for the merit

Slip-joint hunted by Andhra students against increased reservation of seats. Cited by Nazneen Vimaladai.

Business India, September 8

Of Cabbages and Kings

If Brazil Can Why Can't We

Brazil which had one of the largest external debts (102.4 billions in 1984) and totally dependent upon foreign associations to the extent of importing even the simplest of items today has become an exporter of light aircraft, telecommunication equipment, computers, high quality rolled steel products etc. From being dependant upon western technology, it has almost reached a status of equality even in high technology that is involved in combat aircraft. Only a few years back there was no real computer industry, but today they have captured 50% of the local produce. This in spite of open competition from the outside world. Brazil does not have the large scientific and technological manpower that India has.

Two factors have contributed to this: The industrial policy that has been followed has encouraged competition with none of the swaddling restrictions that our country revels in. Thus in steel both government enterprises and private enterprises co-exist. And private enterprise is allowed to develop. Since it has to operate in the context of severe competition it is compelled all the time to be efficient. The cost of production of steel is lower than Japan, favourably compares with South Korean costs, and the US now has put barriers on its import!

Secondly, the Research and Development units are not large but small. They are closely linked with the need of the users and have promoted import substitution and indigenous methods.

Obviously we have a lot to learn from Brazil.

Learning From Meenu

It is likely that some readers of *Freedom First* have already read about this but one cannot repeat what I am writing often enough. It makes us good to feel reading this in a world increasingly run by thugs and dacoits.

In the recent hijack trauma at Karachi a girl of sixteen called Meenu travelling

in the ill-fated plane with her parents was separated from them. She got out of the plane while hit by a shrapnel. Her head was bleeding profusely and on her way to the airport she heard the crying of an infant left in the plane. The child's parents had rushed off to safety. In the vast confusion, in the plane and the surroundings, she walked back to the plane, calmly picked up the child and restored her to her parents.

Meenu was treated at Frankfurt and her head was swathed in bandages. The world becomes a comfortable place because of such modern St. Francis.

Eclipse of our Legislatures?

One of the unfortunate casualties in modern political systems has been the legislature which has remained central to the political ideology of liberalism. Legislative dominance over the executive as an inseparable part of a liberal political framework was developed before the evolution of political parties. Today, party discipline and tight control have rendered legislatures shadowy selves compared to what they were earlier.

It is this that made Indian political thinkers as divergent as Gandhiji, M.N. Roy and Jayaprakash Narayan to regard parliaments as irrelevant. A serious and systematic fundamental re-thinking will have to be attempted if the legislatures are to become central to liberal systems. We have yet to develop it.

Meanwhile, in our country right from the time of Nehru, attempts have not been wanting to side-step parliament. The plethora of ordinances passed to escape legislative scrutiny and control has remained one of the seedier aspects of our government. And increasingly parliament has become incidental to prime ministerial govern-

"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



ment - a feature that our late prime minister introduced, for it was convenient to her style of functioning. Recently the futility of exercises like the Public Accounts Committee has been highlighted in the press. The reports are ineffective and without any impact.

One reason for the indifference of the executive to face the legislature has been attributed to the collapse of parliamentary skills. It appears that many in control of the government are not eager to face the legislature at all. Conferences of Speakers have been alarmed at this nibbling away of a central political institution and have pressed, time and again, that legislatures should be in session atleast for ninety days in a year.

It appears that U.P. takes the cake in having the least number of days when the legislature is in session. Last year it met for a mere 39 days. Moreover Chief Ministers are not always present and Ministers are not interested in the proceedings of the House - and important issues do not figure in the House at all.

Perhaps in the annals of world parliaments there has been no instance as in Uttar Pradesh where the opposition had to stage a *dharma* in front of the Raj Bhavan and climb over the locked gates to present to the Governor their demand for a special session of the Assembly to enquire into serious happenings in the state.

RS

A world turned into a stereotype, a society converted into a regiment, a life translated into a routine, makes it difficult for either art or artists to survive crush individuality in society and you crush art as well. Nourish the conditions of a free life and you nourish the arts, too
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J.R.D. Tata – A Profile in Trusteeship

Manohar Malgonkar

Men and women prominent in public life are said to dread the prospect of some muckraker digging up what they had said in the past on some vital issue to show how immature, contrary, or plain stupid, their earlier thinking had been. If so, Mr. J.R.D. Tata must stand out as a glaring exception. On his own admission, he has not only given in to pressure from colleagues to have excerpts from his speeches going back to the beginning of his working life published in book form, but even endorsed the indiscretion by allowing himself to be persuaded to supply a foreword to it. Only someone who is not at all anxious to whitewash what he had said years earlier can indulge in such a rash exercise.

The book, 'Keynote' is edited by Mr S.A. Sabavala and Mr R.M. Lala, and it is a glossy, handsome volume which it is a pleasure to handle. As may be expected, the bulk of its content is formed by Mr Tata's pronouncements on the affairs of the numerous companies he heads. Indeed as he disarmingly explains, "many of the excerpts are from the Chairman's annual statements to shareholders". But these statements take on an added significance in the light of his revelation that he made use of them to ventilate his views on the economic policies of the Government of the day, not, as it turns out, always to run them down but, when occasionally, they happened to show a spark of wisdom, to praise them too. While these observations bring out how, for the most part, Governmental planning and policies have been misguided, blinkered and harmful, they also show his disrelish for the sharks and whales of his own world, its profiteers and black marketeers. He deplores state capitalism and brakes on growth just as roundly as he deplores the barren materialism that had come to be identi-



fied with big business in the past. His earnest and compellingly rational arguments for clean, efficient and socially responsible business practices alone should serve to make 'Keynote' the bedside reading of our second and third division company executives in the same manner as 'Iacocca' has become the bedside reading of their American counterparts.

But, mercifully for the general reader, not all of 'Keynote's' contents focus on business affairs. Many of them relate to other subjects which come within the range of Tata's interests. Heading the list there is his infatuation or should one call it an incurable addiction with flying. Appropriately enough, his aviator's certificate which bears the number '1', makes him the country's very first pilot. Psychologists may even find some

deep significance in the way he has tampered with his family's crest. As devised by the founder of the steel city, Jamshedji Tata, it consisted of a ring enclosing a hand gripping some rodlike implement which resembles a sceptre. Under the ring was the motto: *Humata, Hukhta, Hvarshta* which, in the ancient Avesta language, mean: Good thoughts, Good deeds, Good words. Mr J.R.D. Tata has embellished the ring with a pair of outsized wings.

At that no one will deny Mr Tata the self-evident symbolism of wings as a hallmark of his special brand of leadership. Granting that the house of Tatas was already an industrial giant at the time of his taking over its stewardship, it was a somewhat earth-bound giant. It was J.R.D. who gave the giant wings in the form of an awareness of new horizons; not only goading it to diversify and proliferate but indeed to soar, by establishing India's very first Air Service, the Tata Air Mail, the progenitor of Air India, no less.

I tried hard to locate at least one speech that specifically concerned itself with what Mr Tata describes as his "continuing love affair with the languages, literature and poetry of France and England." There isn't one. It was almost as though Mr. Tata, having in a weak moment revealed that his bedside reading is not formed entirely of company balance sheets, remembered that such an admission from someone whose life is devoted — or in his own word 'dedicated' — to business, is like confessing to a secret vice. All the evidence of this particular love affair that 'Keynote' provides is the clear, active, engaging style of the speeches. Nevertheless, it is autobiographical giveaways such as this one that lift 'Keynote' from being a compendium of wise sayings on business matters. They show up Tata not as the head of a corporation

but a private man, and thus establish his credentials to speak on behalf of the rest of us. Indeed they make it easy for the reader to feel a little sorry for a Mr Tata who, at the age when most of us have barely begun to settle into careers, was suddenly called upon to take on the chairmanship of Tatas. He speaks nostalgically of his 'carefree' life before.

Living was cheap in those days. Rs 1000, which was a little more than I got, was a princely salary...There were...no shortages for people who had money.

It was a crossroads decision, no doubt made after a good deal of soul-searching and not without a wrench, for he confesses to have been "torn between an urge to be personally involved in the freedom struggle...and responsibilities to his business." He stayed with business and asserts that he has "never regretted that decision," leaving his contemporaries to question if it really was the right road he took. Surely the man who, in the harsh world of big business, has managed to remain true to his human qualities, a dreamer who

is also an achiever, would have provided just the sort of balancing influence that the nation needed at the time of its birth or re-birth?

In 1938, when he made a resolve to "dedicate himself and his firm to carrying out Jamshedji Tata's vision," the 'carefree' days were gone. Work took more and more of his time and made inroads into leisure hours as I can myself testify by a stray glimpse of his routine I was offered during the early years of the war. I was a soldier then and on a visit to Bombay, and staying with Mr Tata's brother-in-law Sir Dinshaw Petit. On a Sunday some of us were taken to Juhu to spend the day at the cottage which Mr Tata kept there. We spent the day swimming and sunbathing — all except our host who, even though deressed conventionally as for a seaside holiday, in brief shorts and resplendent Hawaiian shirt, which I remember coveting, slumped in a canvas chair poring over files which he had brought home.

Even a random sampling of 'Keynote' reveals these human qualities, in a self-confessed "nasty temper"

and an urge to correct other people's drafts, in sallies of humour, even in a disposition to starry-eyed reverence towards the political leaders of his youth, but above all in his concern for the consumer, the citizen, the common man. In one form or another, he bobs up again and again, himself bemused and unworldly and often with his stomach rumbling, he finds in this towering figure from the other end of his world, a vigorous and involved spokesman on his behalf. During the years that the

thousands of products of his companies have made the name Tata a household word in all of India's languages and dialects, the man who has headed these concerns has not only himself filled out into a model of executive leadership but also, on the evidence of his track record, earned a right to speak for the common man. Is this one consideration itself not enough to make some of us wonder if, after all, in 1983 Tata did indeed take the right turning in the road.

Mr. MANOHAR MALGONKAR is a well-known novelist.

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The Masani Viewpoint

On August 12, 1986, a Division Bench consisting of two judges of the Supreme Court ruled that singing the national anthem is not compulsory under the Constitution and the laws of this country. They therefore ordered three little school children, who had stood at attention during the singing of the national anthem in a school in Kerala but had not joined in the singing because of some conscientious religious objection and who had been expelled from school, to be reinstated. Kerala is the only State in India where such an absurd compulsion is imposed. I am sure most people in India must

consider their judgment. Mr Praful Bidwai in two long articles in a daily newspaper has analysed the ineptitude of the Attorney-General's action under the heading: 'Parasaran petition is ill-conceived'. But what bothers me is that the Attorney-General should try to create an offence in our democracy which only exists in fascist countries.

I happened to have sung the *Vande Mataram* at flag hoistings in British prisons in defiance of jail discipline but, as it happens, I do not always sing the *Jana Gana Mana* at public functions these days. There are two reasons for this. The first is

Jana-Gana-Mana- To Sing or Not to Sing

have heaved a sigh of relief at the Supreme Court's order protecting the three innocent school children from victimisation.

Unfortunately, there is a tribe of chauvinists who seize every opportunity these days to voice their 'patriotism', which was rightly described by Dr. Samuel Johnson as the "last refuge of a scoundrel". These people thrive in the climate of conformity in which we now live. It is not surprising therefore to learn that some members of Parliament were perturbed at this judgement of the Supreme Court. What is shocking, however, is that the Attorney-General of India, who should have known better, has moved the Supreme Court to re-

that singing the anthem in prison days invited punishment, but today any idiot or traitor can sing *Jana Gana Mana* for free. My second reason is that I have a somewhat raucous voice and do not join the chorus for fear of spoiling the effect. I must confess that on some other occasions the singing of *Jana Gana Mana* is so out of tune that I refuse to join in murdering the anthem.

If the Attorney-General has his way, which I hope he won't, I shall be impaled on the horns of a dilemma which would involve either absenting myself from all functions where the national anthem is likely to be sung or standing in dignified silence and inviting another term of prison.

Mr. Sathe's "Heresies."

In three articles which appeared in the *Times of India* of 4th, 5th and 6th August 1986, Mr. Vasant Sathe, a Member of the Union Cabinet contributed a critical analysis of the present economic system in India. "We can't go on the way we are" was the title of the first article. On 17th Au-

gust, Mr. Sathe gave an exclusive interview to the *Telegraph* of Calcutta in the course of which he observed: "We equated the Public Sector with Socialism and turned it into a holy cow". The pith and substance of Mr. Sathe's criticism in his articles and interviews can be summarised

as follows: The causes of our dismal performance primarily lie with the adoption of a wrong concept of socialism which equates an over-employed, top-heavy, inefficient and unaccountable public sector with socialism. What is more, having set up the public sector we started treating it as a holy cow and considered it blasphemous to even question the performance of the public sector units. Mere questioning was considered to be reactionary. We forgot that in communist societies not only the public sector, but practically the entire economic activity is managed and controlled by a single ideologically dedicated, committed and accountable political party. In the Indian situation, we have left the public sector in the hands of an ideologically indifferent service which is not accountable for its performance and results. Worse, by making most of these public sector areas monopolistic we have eliminated a basic element of efficiency, i.e. competition.

Mr. Sathe is of course right. His criticism of current policies is not as far-reaching as that of the Swatantra Party to which I belonged but it goes pretty far in that direction. Mr. Sathe is one of a large number of people in India who believe that "we can't go on the way we are". Unfortunately for him and for the country, the Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, evidently thinks we can go on mumbling and bungling the way we have been doing. On 22nd August Mr. Gandhi is quoted by the press to have categorically stated that "the views expressed by Mr. Sathe were not those of the Government". In order not to leave anyone in doubt on this subject, the Prime Minister went on to say "there is no question of our Party taking a U turn on this issue".

The correct thing for the Prime Minister to have done would have been to maintain silence in regard to the trial balloon that Mr. Sathe had floated and not to shoot it down. That was the line taken by Mrs. Indira Gandhi when she was the Prime Minister and Mr. Sathe had published a book containing similar heresies.

Crusade or Witch-hunt ?

I have very little knowledge of the activities of business houses and the mysteries of the Stock Exchange and I am therefore entirely unqualified and unwilling to comment on the merits of the controversy that has been raging between Reliance Industries and its detractors.

I must confess however that, as a reader of certain daily newspapers, I have found the disproportionate amount of space being devoted to attacks on Reliance quite a nuisance. Thus, for instance, a daily newspaper which I read every morning devoted no less than half a page to this topic on 23rd August and several other days. Mr. Dhirubhai Ambani has drawn a lot of flak, some of which is perhaps caused by the envy of those who are accustomed to a modest "Hindu rate of growth", as the late professor Raj Krishna described it, for an entrepreneur who has been satisfied with nothing less than an American rate of growth.

I was particularly intrigued by a news report from Delhi that some hundred members of Parliament, who included seventy members of the Congress (I), had made a representation to the Union Government for the appointment of a Commission of Enquiry into the activities of what they described as an "industrial monopoly". Since my impression was that Reliance Industries had been operating in an open market on equal terms with other manufacturers, I thought that perhaps my knowledge of the English language was deficient and that I did not know the right meaning of the word 'monopoly' since a hundred wise men in Delhi appeared to hold a different view. As usual, I therefore turned to the dictionary. To my relief, I find that my knowledge of English is not after all inferior to those of the hundred wise men in Delhi. The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1982) describes "monopoly" as "an exclusive possession of the selling of some commodity or service".

Obviously, if there had been a monopoly exercised by Reliance Industries, it would have fallen within the mischief of the M.R.T.P. Act which, incidentally, does not apply to Government monopolies which are the only real monopolies in India and which are exploiting the consumer shamelessly without let or hindrance.

Members of Parliament are not, however, the only people in India who are illiterate in so far as the word 'monopoly' is concerned. Many years ago, in 1960, when I was Chairman of the Road Transport Reorganisation Committee appointed by the Union Government, we toured the entire country for several months. I remember that in Madras more than one Government official referred to T.V. Sundaram Iyengar & Sons, who ran an excellent road transport service beyond compare, as a monopoly. Since this was transparently untrue, I asked them whether T.V.S. were not competing with other transport operators. When the answer was in the affirmative, I gently pointed out that they were using the wrong term. To this they replied in all innocence that they believed that anything big was a monopoly! It would appear that Members of Parliament today suffer from the same confusion. So let me explain that size and monopoly are two entirely different things - that a small enterprise can be a monopoly and a big enterprise may not be a monopoly when it competes with others. Reliance Industries, though big, are certainly not a monopoly.

Gandhi and Subhas

Among the most fascinating people whom I have had the privilege of knowing was Subhas Chandra Bose. I corresponded with him at some length about the Congress Socialist Party in the mid-thirties and saw a great deal of him when he was Con-

gress President in the late thirties. The last time I saw him was at Tripura at the session of the Indian National Congress over which he presided in 1939 when the majority of the delegates - with the Congress Socialist Party to which I belonged abstaining - voted for Mahatma Gandhi against Subhas Bose.

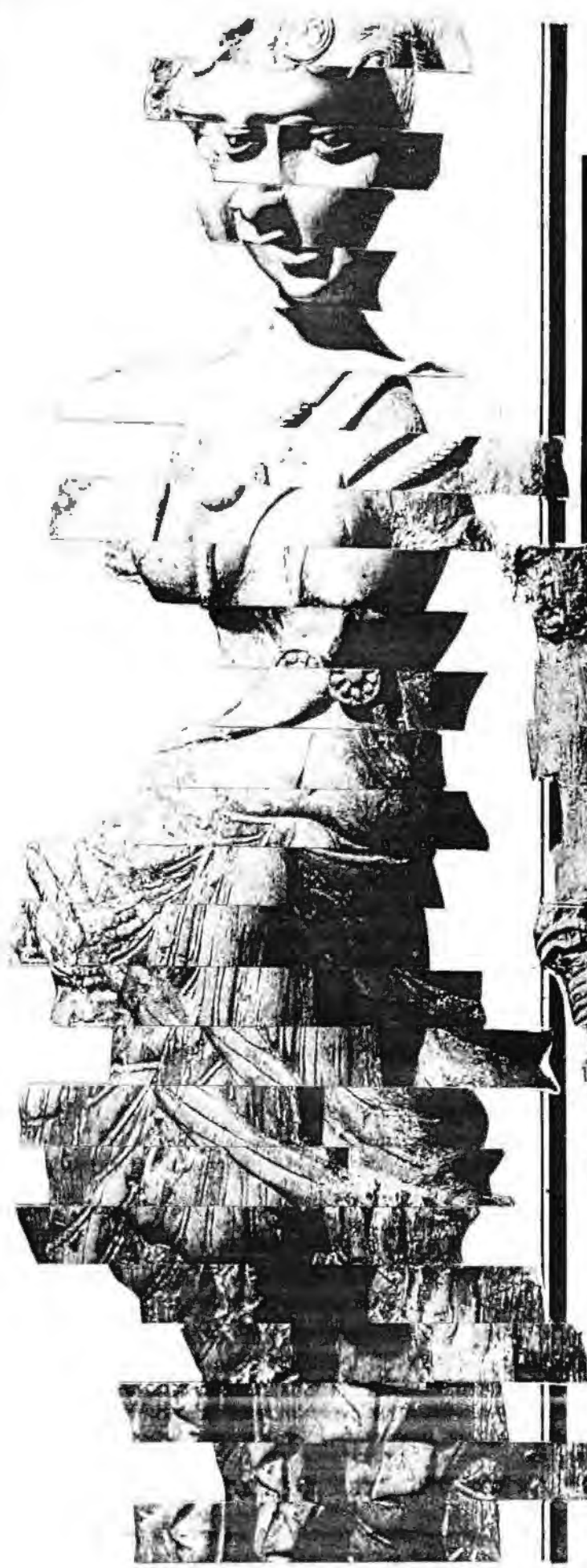
Now, after forty-seven years, a book has been published called: *The Mahatma and Netaji - Two Men of Destiny of India*. The book is written by my old friend, Professor Samar Guha, who was a member of Parliament. I remember him as a man of considerable learning and political courage, but also a deeply emotional man. His loyalty to Netaji was one of the channels in which his emotion was expressed.

There can be no doubt that Gandhiji and Subhas Bose were two very different kind of people, though they had certain qualities in common. It is not surprising that Samar Guha should stress not only the difference between the two, which were sometimes quite acute, but also the qualities that bound the two men together.

As it happens, I had very pleasant and friendly relations with both Gandhiji and Subhas. In my memoir *Bliss Was It That Dawn* I had written:

"Subhas and I got on very well. We were both businesslike and decisive and lacked the characteristic common in India of beating about the bush. So we always knew whether we agreed or disagreed, which is more than I could say about the majority of my political companions at any given time."

My own formulation about these two men would be that Subhas Bose was a nationalist *par excellence*, while Gandhiji was a great humanist who cared for human beings wherever they might be located. Nirmal Kumar Bose, another great son of Bengal, once wrote three articles in the *Congress Socialist* asking the question "Is Gandhi a nationalist?" When I showed those articles to Gandhiji and asked him if he had read them and what his answer would be, he said: "Yes; Nirmal Babu is right. I am not a nationalist."



THE STATE AND THE ARTS

By and large liberals the world over are votaries of limited government. This attitude stems from the Liberal's belief in the primacy of the individual vis-a-vis the State.

The Arts and Letters are, in a free society, the expression of individual creativity. If this proposition is accepted then it logically follows that a democratic State has a minimal role, if at all, to play in the Arts and the Letters.

In free India, unfortunately, we have had a succession of meddlesome governments poking their not so attractive noses in matters that really ought not to concern them whether it be in trade and industry or the Arts. The basic motivation in interfering is control.

Admittedly this interference is not as total as in the Soviet bloc or communist China. Nor is it as free as in the countries of Western Europe or in the United States. We are somewhere in-between.

The Arts on a Leash

or paint what it likes. It is only when the writer, the painter, the playwright or the dancer is unable to resist government largesse that the problem arises. There is, as always, a price tag attached to aid. In such a situation is it fair to blame the government for seeking to control or regulate the Arts?

The Leslie Sawhny Programme had organised a seminar in Goa in August to discuss "The Arts, Letters and the State". A veritable who's who from the world of the Arts and the media took time off "to pause" and "recharge their batteries" as one participant observed. Also present to add weight to this august company were a couple of men from the Establishment. All in all, one looked forward to scintillating ideas spewing forth by the dozen. Was this expectation justified? Personally speaking I returned rather disappointed and perhaps with a pinch of disillusionment. That there was no unanimity, was to be expected even if the 'consensus' crafted towards the end of the deliberations sought to create an impression of broad agreement.

As the subject of the seminar itself suggests, the basic theme centred around the role of the State in the Arts. Does the State have a role at all? If so, to what extent? What effect does patronage by the State have on the quality of the output? Are State awards conducive to the promotion of excellence? Are AIR and TV creative media? Should they not be autonomous? What is the position of censorship? Does not censorship inhibit creativity? If censorship is undesirable what are the alternatives?

I suspect the *Establishmentwallahs* (present purely in their individual capacities) enjoyed themselves at the sight of the *culturewallahs* tying themselves into knots over the question of State assistance whether in the form of cash, awards or sinecures. For, there was indeed ambivalence in this matter. A strong minority view was that the State should strictly leave them (the writers, artists *et al*) alone and let their works be judged at the market place; there were others who felt that State help should be in the form of institutional assistance; yet others preferred tax reliefs to direct financial help.

Nowhere, said a journalist participant, has State patronage thrown up a genius. Another pointed out that the

best works of Faiz Ahmed Faiz were written in jail. His works after an official appointment were second-rate. How many, this gentleman asked, remember the names of all those recipients of Sahitya Akademi awards for literature in the regional languages of India. His solution — scrap the Sahitya Akademi!

Some participants objected not so much to the State giving awards *per se* but the manner in which such awards were decided upon. The problem said another, was that bureaucrats who have not the competence, judge works of art. The riposte to this from the government worthy at the seminar was telling: 'what about the fact that judges of literary awards in some states distributed the awards among themselves!'

There was no agreement on whether AIR and TV should be independent of the State — in other words the need for private TV stations or those owned by state governments. In fact the discussion on autonomy for AIR and TV did not lead anywhere. The official point of view was put forward rather forcefully that the people are not yet ready for autonomy. The question is really not one of ownership said the government-man. No causal connection between ownership of this medium by the State and its coverage of news and views has been established. It was all a matter of more efficient and imaginative management. But TV news lacks credibility, said a stage personality. It has become a propaganda mouthpiece. Why? because it is run by bureaucrats. Creative organisations cannot be run by bureaucrats but only by people who understand the medium. Said another in agreement, that government servants who mentally become pensioners at the age of 25 have to quit if the medium is to become dynamic.

Those who were intimately connected with TV and present at the Seminar did not say very much in support of autonomy. The answer lies not in confrontation one of them pleaded. Why not a sponsored programme which is independently financed by a group of industrialists taking care to ensure that these men from industry are not in a position to influence the professionals in the newsroom.

On censorship there was a sharp division of opinion. There were those who

(and in my view quite rightly) were totally opposed to censorship of any kind. Let people judge and if a play or a novel or a painting does not meet with their approval then the play, novel or painting concerned will fall by the wayside. The other view was that censorship was necessary. The problem again was that censors comprised of people who lacked appreciation of the art form concerned. Put people who care on censor boards or committees and if the laws are applied creatively, censorship would not be so objectionable. Intervening, the civil servants exuding sweet reasonableness said government was aware that all was not well. So they decided to resolve the problem by transferring censorship from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to the Ministry of Culture!

The *piece de resistance* in my view was the manner in which the announcement that government planned to increase its aid to the arts from a mere 12 crores to Rs. 51 crores was received. This said one proved government's good intentions. But the point is where will this money go. To which the answer was towards promoting Zonal Arts Councils to take arts to the people. This means that Kathakali artists in Kerala would have an opportunity to perform in Mizoram. A country wide criss-crossing of artists which incidentally would also promote national integration. What if the men and women of Mizoram are unable to appreciate Kathakali? They will, they will. And who will be put in charge of these Zonal Arts Councils? Government officials in the rank of under-secretaries!

And so it went on. Much was said but it all generally boiled down to this: State interference in the Arts should be minimal; at the same time State assistance (the majority view) was needed and essential. As I understood it our more creative brothers and sisters by and large quarelled not so much with the system as the manner of its execution. Like a sheltered economy offers businessmen security so does the present system where our Arts folk are concerned. They appear to prefer to be at the end of a leash rather than be free birds winging in the sky. So much the pity.

S.V. Raju

The Limits of State Involvement

Nissim Ezekiel

My first assumption in this paper on The State in relation to the Arts, including the Media, is that the State we have in mind is democratic in every sense of the word. Whatever its weaknesses and faults, whatever the condition of the economy and the distortions of the social relations, the Government must be democratically elected and replaced, dependent at all times on the process broadly described as democratic. If it is a dictatorship, even that of a Party and not of an individual, what it does for the arts and the concessions it makes to the media are of no interest to me.

My second assumption is that the State, and the Government which temporarily exercises power in its name, is not identical with Society and Culture. At its best, a Government is only one expression of Society and Culture; it cannot, therefore, and should not speak in their name. It is a practical necessity and an instrument of a people's will. When it tries to manipulate that Will, it has already begun to betray it and to imply that the Government has some transcendent historic mission. Democrats who concede that claim do so because they have sub-consciously abandoned their faith in the people. They hope and dream that a handful of individuals with supreme power will accomplish for the people what the people themselves seem incapable of accomplishing on their own.

My third assumption about Government and the State, which is the last I shall mention to avoid making this a purely political argument, is that the standards and principles by which a Government has to be judged are ultimately human, not ideological. I believe in some perennial human values which matter or ought to matter more than specific political, economic and social policies. I reject the way of thinking about history which attaches equal importance to positive and negative effects of decisions and actions by



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those in power. To illustrate what I mean, I quote from a recent review of a book entitled *Rethinking The Soviet Experience: Politics and History Since 1917* by Stephen F. Cohen (OUP, New York).

- (1) "The systematic murder of millions should not be justified or blurred but the modernisation which took place afterwards should also be noted. This is how Cohen wants Soviet studies to proceed".
- (2) "Stalin's was a desperate attempt to cope with the social crises created by his leadership. But though he annihilated millions, millions of others gained in one way or the other. He found adherents to his policy in those who were elevated in the party or state set-up". (*The Times of India*, June, 1, 1986).

It would be a waste of time to analyse the proposition that while some left or right wing Government persecuted and imprisoned thousands of writers and artists, thousands of others received substantial grants for writing poetry and novels or painting portraits and landscapes which contributed greatly to the enrichment of the nation's Culture. I want to say clearly and firmly that I am not in favour of that kind of cultural enrichment, which is in fact a mockery of culture.

If my assumptions are accepted, the question is what a democratic and humane Government should do for the arts and how, what its relationship should be to the media and why. Let me deal now with the first part of that problem, which is considerably less difficult and controversial than the other.

It is virtually impossible for a Government in our times to do absolutely nothing for the arts. At the very least it would find itself maintaining the commitment to art-education institutions made by its predecessors. This may be less out of interest in art than in education. In addition, there would be academies of arts and letters as well as prizes from trust funds.

Academies of Letters, prizes from trusts when controlled by government raise larger questions than those strictly relevant to State support for the Arts, but they ought not to be ignored. In the long run the Arts are discredited in the process, and among artists themselves individuals raise their voices against it. The benefits go to the mediocre and to a new breed of literary and art bureaucrats, as they may be called, whose contribution to culture is often either minimal or wholly negative. There is no real leadership, no effective role for ideas but only a tremendous waste of money, time and energy. What is created is only a facade of institutions, journals and projects, which function without raising standards, without facing the formidable challenges of our

time and place. We can identify the areas where State support is provided as in the case of museums or art schools, but nothing supremely valuable happens in them.

I must add that on these grounds it is still a mistake to discount the work being done and to demand a return to an earlier condition. The constructive way is to keep up criticism of State-supported ventures of all kinds to explore their possibilities, to remind ourselves of their larger, profounder purposes in relation to society and culture, to build up the pressures so that ultimately more is gained in terms of those ideals which remain meaningful in the midst of persistent failures.

The responsibility for the failure of State-sponsored art-institutions must be shared by Society and Culture. I must admit that such a sharing may lead eventually to despair, when it appears that nothing and nobody can make a State-apparatus sensitive. But private enterprise is not a viable substitute particularly in a Third World country such as ours.

The alternative I have in mind is a State-sponsored but autonomous body, which implies a whole way of thinking about politics, society, education, the arts and the media, separately as well as collectively. Just as one of the three fundamental assumptions I stated in the beginning was that the State referred to in our subject is democratic and humane, whatever its weaknesses, so also I now assume that both State-sponsorship and autonomy are essential in the contemporary world if support to the arts is to be on the required scale.

And that proposition immediately faces us with the delicate and complex question: What is the scale of support that would be considered adequate. Is there any such fixed scale, and can it be kept under control? By what yardsticks do we measure the public funds allotted to the arts compared to those for other purposes?

I quote in this context from *The Culture Gap: An Experience of Government and the Arts* by Hugh Jenkins, Minister for the Arts in Britain for two years 1974-1976 (London, Marion Boyars, 1979).

"The needs of the Arts Council increased at a much greater rate than its grant and the more money it received

the hungrier it became for still greater resources".

The figures mentioned by Mr. Jenkins are: "£ 350, 000 in 1946/47 and in 1977/78 over £ 50 millions". This resulted in what Mr. Jenkins ironically refers to as "a novel concept of government dependance", since the report for 1953-54 declared that even if only half-a-million pounds were withdrawn from the available public money for the arts, "nearly all the national institutions of music and drama in this country would have to close down".

It is that kind of situation which should now be anticipated and avoided by those who believe as I do, in State support for the arts. Mr. Jenkins makes two positive points about the relationship between the State and the Arts during his time in the late seventies and the foundation for it laid in the preceding decades. One is that though the actual achievement fell far short of its ideals, "the groundwork was laid for an unprecedented involvement of government in the arts". The other point is that successive Governments kept their promise of not interfering with Arts Council decisions, of not giving orders or even advice in specific cases. That would be too much to expect in our country. So we have even stronger reasons for modernisation and discrimination in advocating schemes for Government support to the arts. Taking my cue from the policy statement in Mr. Jenkin's book, I would advocate funding for the first two out of the three heads under which Government support to the arts may be grouped i.e. education and preservation, and the minimum for the third, i.e. patronage.

Before I proceed to some other aspects I would like to mention the fact that for most people interested in it, only the patronage counts. Expenditure and effort under the other heads is taken for granted and the Government gets no credit for it. If an arts school is subsidised, everyone, including its students, staff and administrators consider it merely one of the unquestionable obligations of the Government, and it has truly become so. On the other hand, prizes, awards, research grants, etc. are appreciated as expressions of genuine involvement in the arts by the party in power, and these are sometimes multiplied till they lose virtually all their prestige.

There is also a distinction to be made between support to the arts for the sake of artists and similar support for the sake of the people, for the sake of a society and its culture. Carrying out an Arts Policy in terms of the former is comparatively easy, and is often confined, un-intentionally to regional capitals and other urban centres. The beneficiaries are the educated and the comparatively affluent. Popularising art calls for an altogether different kind of effort.

The function of the Government is to do everything in its power to strengthen the presence of the arts and to make it accessible in the interests of the whole community. It must not control or dominate the scene, nor make the flourishing of the arts dependent on its support. It must only promote and assist, encouraging the community for its own sake and not for the sake of the artists to integrate them in its normal, day-to-day consciousness. For an artist, as Charles Morgan once put it "is neither the community's priest nor the community's slave, but a member of it who holds in his special charge certain qualities essential to its spiritual life. He is, as it were, the breath of the people's imagination without which they perish..." (From "The Artist in the Community" in *Liberties of the Mind*, Macmillan 1951).

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The Dissenter

Sufi Shah Mullah Shah, when he was advised to flee from the wrath of Shah Jehan is, reported to have said, 'I am not an imposter that I should seek safety in flight. I am an utterer of truth. Death and life are to me alike. Let my blood in another life also red-dens the impaling stake. I am living and eternal. Death recoils from me, for my knowledge has vanquished death. The sphere where all colours are effaced has become my abode.' Mansuri Hallaj said, 'To cut off the hands of a fettered man is easy, but to sever the link that binds me to the Divinity would be a task indeed.'

The Perils of State Support

Govind Talwalkar

While criticising the government for trying to corrupt writers, intellectuals and artists, we must also remember that bodies or institutions which are created by government are manned by some of the writers and artistes and if there is some hanky panky they themselves are to be blamed and not the government. Corruption, nepotism, groupism and such other vices are not confined only to governmental circles; our universities and such other public institutions too have lowered themselves in the public eye by their nefarious behaviour.

The modern state is all pervasive and the world of letters cannot function completely independent of it. But the role of the state and that of letters is contradictory if not in conflict with each other. Ideological states pledge themselves to control all aspects of human activity. Fired by a certain philosophy, they want to build an utopia and, what is worse, they concentrate excessive power and build a closed society.

Plato the first philosopher — statesman had no compunction in accepting the fact that it was the business of the rulers to lie. In *The Republic* Plato wrote: "it is the business of the rulers of the city, if it is anybody's business to tell lies, deceiving both its enemies and its own citizens for the benefit of the city." He urges that these are useful only as medicine, but the ruler of the state must not behave like some of those ordinary doctors who have no courage to administer strong medicines. He must be a more courageous man, since he must be determined to administer a great many lies and deceptions — of course for the benefit of the ruled. In this sense all modern rulers and politicians are 'Platonists.'

Literature as philosophy must seek truth as well as beauty and cannot reconcile itself with politics or the state. So, for centuries we have witnessed a conflict between the two and many writers, poets, and intellectuals have been condemned to poverty and prisons, even to sacrificing their lives.

Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, many South American states and many Communist states offer examples. Osip Mandelstam's life is a moving account of a poet's struggle and Solzhenitsyn a living example of the undaunted spirit.



If it is the business of the ruler to lie, it is the business of the writers to tell the truth. It is not only totalitarian states that strangle truth; democratic governments too do the same. In *Truth and Power*, Mr. Hans Morgenthau wrote: "The President of the United States, too can do almost anything. He can play with truth, deform it and discard it at his whim. But there is one thing he cannot do, he cannot still the voice of truth." Therefore the intellectuals have to stick to their guns. "In the face of this misunderstanding and scorn for the function the intellectual can and must perform for the political sphere, the intellectuals of America can do one thing; live by the standard of truth — that is

their peculiar responsibility as intellectuals and by which the man of power will ultimately be judged as well," Morgenthau averred.

However, it is not my contention that in a democratic society the world of letters should all the while be at loggerheads with the state. It never is. Insolence of power must be resented but at the same time the arrogance of the intellect should not be tolerated. We have also to guard against hypocrisy and intellectual dishonesty. Everyone loves flattery, the difference is only one of degree. Writers and artists are easy victims. Even though writers and intellectuals are zealous about their freedom many of them crave for recognition

from the powers that be.

This human weakness has, in a strange way, been revealed in a recent article in the *Sunday Times*, London, ('A system Without Honour,' 15th June 1986). Mr. Norman Lebrecht, while discussing the system of conferring honours deplores the fact that Her Majesty the Queen on her birthday did not confer honours on writers, poets and dramatists. He says:

"For most of this century Britain's artists have been mocked by the honours system. Peerages and knight-hoods are reserved for performers and arts administrators, while the creators of our culture are fobbed off with three meaningless letters behind their names. In the 60th Birthday List, Her Majesty once again failed to acknowledge the genius of her nation. In this realm, the prophets remain scandalously without honour. France, for instance, has always cherished its creators and made them feel important (sometimes too important. I know of one French Composer who has run out of excuses for turning down dinner invitations from cabinet ministers). West Germany heaps honours and money on its artists. In Britain, the arts cash goes to institutions and the honours to those who run them.

"Titles, like them or not, are valuable. They boost a writer's prestige and make a composer a more valued commodity in international concert halls."

What is the position in India? After Independence, governments at both the central and state levels have adopted various measures affecting the world of literature. Linguistic reorganization has given rise to new dimensions. The last two decades have seen state governments taking to the printing of school textbooks. Though a part of this printing is done in private presses, the bulk of it is done in those established by government-appointed textbooks bureaus. This has adversely affected printers some of who were also publishers. One cannot say that the text-book business was above corruption when it was in private hands. But after the state takeover, besides corruption, inefficiency has left its imprint and consequently adversely affected publishing business too. Publishers used to risk publishing some scholarly books

and books with a skimpy sale – as they could make up the loss by printing textbooks. With text-books going to the government the enterprising spirit in publishing has almost disappeared. Serious literature has therefore suffered in the process. Text-book printing, which used to subsidize literary magazines has lost an important patron. Despite government grants these magazines are struggling for existence, and are diminishing in number and quality. This is not an atmosphere conducive to the healthy growth of literature.

Other fallout effects have been linguistic chauvinism, local patriotism and a total loss of objectivity and critical analysis. Whole governments and generations are brought up on aggressive nationalism, anti-liberalism and narrow provincialism. In a caste ridden society this is an added calamity.

One shudders at the future intellectual and other equipment the captive clientele will inherit.

Various state governments have appointed literary and cultural Boards. They have also adopted a scheme to award annual prizes to the best books in different categories. This is supposed to promote creative writing. There are instances of some governments intervening occasionally in the awards. There are others who regard the Board as one among many of their departments. Persons selected to staff such Boards in most cases lack literary sensibilities.

In Maharashtra the Board of Literature and Culture has started a scheme under which literary workshops are held at various salubrious places, where the young and also not-so-young are invited to participate. The hope is to promote creative literature and the Board thinks that if young writers are taken to tourist resorts and lectured at by selected individuals, creative activity will flourish. Selection of speakers and moderators has generally betrayed a lamentable bias. No outstanding creative works whether novels or short stories or plays have been written as a result of these excursions.

The Government of Maharashtra has another scheme which offers financial subsidy to the first publication of any author. The Committee set up to recommend deserving cases has scarcely time to go through the hundreds of manuscripts that are piled up; and besides, there is rampant nepotism. Not a

single outstanding book has benefited by this scheme. On the contrary mediocrity has been patronised. But the scheme will continue because too many interests are involved including the government's opportunity to patronise and reward.

The quest for an international image has made several states promote World Tamil, Telugu and Kannada conferences; these have to be funded and are heavily subsidized at the cost of basic amenities to the citizens such as drinking water. It will be worthwhile examining whether any enduring work of literature ever emerged because of such conferences.

Sahitya, Natya, Sangeet and Lalit Kala Akademies take care of the respective arts. Festivals are held and now we export our arts systematically whether they be snake charmers or Kathak artistes. These Akademies award prizes annually; it is believed that factionalism and intrigue do play a part. Since these are manned by creative artistes we should blame them and not the government for anything shady. It could be said that a similar record is to be seen in our universities and other research institutions.

Sahitya and Natak Akademies award prizes each year. One can admit that such awards are given in recognition of achievements. If the writers and artistes do not crave for such awards and do not humiliate themselves to get them then there is nothing to complain. But these bodies too are infested with intrigue and groupism.

While criticising the government for trying to corrupt writers, intellectuals and artists, we must also remember that bodies or institutions which are created by government are manned by some of the writers and artistes and if there is some hanky panky they themselves are to be blamed and not the government. Corruption, nepotism, groupism and such other vices are not confined only to governmental circles; our universities and such other public institutions too have lowered themselves in the public eye by their nefarious behaviour.

The National Book Trust was formed with the laudable intention of promoting translation of noteworthy books in thirteen languages, thereby promoting knowledge of literary works in the different Indian languages. The affairs of the National Book Trust have been far from

satisfactory. I would like to quote a report from the *Indian Express* of 11 May 1986.

"The National Book Trust has grossly mishandled the scheme of publishing books on national integration. Even as parliament is debating the government's draft education policy which lays stress on national integration, the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India just presented, severely criticised the National Book Trust in handling the prestigious scheme of Nehru Bal Pustakalaya."

As far back as 1967 the Education Commission had recommended a set of about 100 books to be written by the best scholars in the country, translated and made available in every school. The recommendation was considered by a committee of members of parliament and was accepted by the Government and the scheme was entrusted to the National Book Trust.

Grants totalling Rs. 156.6 lakhs were released to the Trust by the Government up to the end of 1985 for the scheme. But the target of 1,300 titles in 13 languages resulted only in 170 titles upto to March 1985. Even out of the published titles, nearly half of them have remained unsold or undistributed. The advisory panel which was set up to conduct an annual review met only twice in six years. The recommendations of the Administrative Staff College that the National Book Trust should initiate sample surveys for the evaluation

of the *Nehru Bal Pustakalaya*, have not been implemented till now.

As against the target of 1335 titles to be published in ten years only 579 have been published in sixteen years and that too only in three and not in thirteen Indian languages. Infructuous expenditure led to 60 titles being dropped. A huge stock of unsold books is another glaring shortcoming of the Trust. Losses on sale amounted to Rs. 147.8 Lakhs.

Creative literature is a private enterprise and government patronage will not create a Tolstoy, a Chekov or an Eliot. Hence the government should not bother itself with the task of throwing up creative talent. Recognition by the discerning readers or audience is the true reward for a creative writer or artist.

Does it mean that governmental help is not needed at all for the world of letters? I think there should be some *via media*. In England the Arts Council receives funds from the government annually. The Arts Council in its turn gives grants to various art activities. It also gives financial assistance to some literary and art journals and magazines. Decisions of the Council at times come under fire but by and large they are accepted as fair.

Literary or scholarly magazines require substantial financial provision. Some private institutions do underwrite such publications but these are inadequate. If we had an Arts Council on the British model we may find more literary and scholarly journals. The gov-

ernment should also think of giving tax concessions to individuals and institutions who wish to donate to such activities.

Private publishers find it difficult to undertake publication of scholarly works. In Western countries universities serve as intellectual powerhouses with a formidable publishing schedule. These universities are endowed by governments as well as by individuals. Our industrial houses should be encouraged to do so likewise. Scholarly volumes which come out from these foreign universities are a matter of envy as well as joy. Governments at the centre and the states should encourage and help the universities and similar institutions to carry on the work of publishing with no strings attached.

In conclusion I would once again quote Morgenthau:

"The only point I want to make here is that the decisive distinction between the intellectual and the politician lies on their orientation toward different ultimate values. In his search for the truth, the ideal type of intellectual is oblivious to power, in his pursuit of power the politician at best will use truth as means to his ends. Yet the two worlds are also potentially intertwined, for truth has a message that is relevant to power and the very existence of power has a bearing both upon the expression and the recognition of truth."

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The Contemporary Art Scene

Krishen Khanna

The relationship between the State and the Arts can range from complete indifference towards the Arts to a moderate financial support of sorts without too much political interference or to one of financing the Arts completely and also having a say in the directions which the Arts are to follow.

There is hardly a country today which is altogether indifferent to its Arts. Political entities need their cultural fronts, and even where the Arts are more or

less left alone, the State does encourage and support a section which suits its purpose. In the United States, for example, though the Arts are managed by private and non-governmental agencies, the State Department does have a policy both for the development of the Arts within the country and its exposure outside. The programme initiated by the States during the great depression is well-known, and though everything produced under this scheme was not of

great merit, it did provide the artists the wherewithal to keep going. It should be said to its credit that having provided the funds, it did not exercise any control over the content though much of it was critical of the Administration.

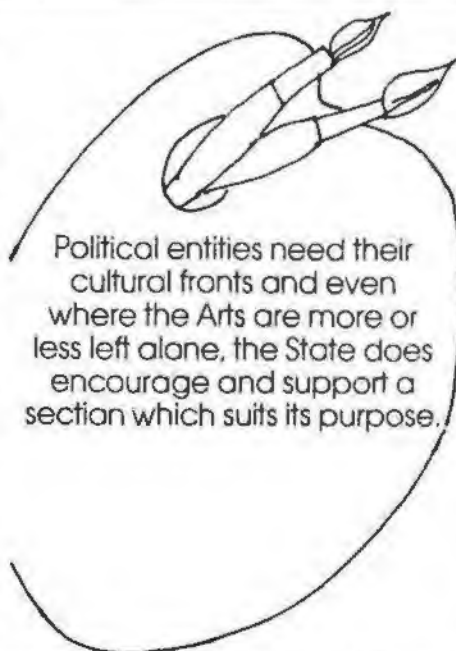
The United States funds scholarships and fellowships, funds and assists museums, etc., but generally leaves the Arts to follow their own directions. It has encouraged the growth of museums and private support of the Art through

suitable laws. It does not interfere directly nor does it lay down a unitary policy of what is to be encouraged and what is not with the result that art of all kinds finds expression. Quite often conflicting tendencies exist at the same time. There are inevitable interactions, often quite violent, there are movements and anti-movements. The process is one of continual flux with which policy-makers and bureaucrats have nothing to do. All the same it would be wrong to assume that there are no external influences. The Galleries and the market exert enormous pressure, and so do critics. As big money is involved, so are its controls. Though it is still possible for an artist to work quietly and away from the glare of publicity and big money, the lure and the pressures are so great that it becomes almost impossible to withstand them.

What happened to the first generation of abstract expressionists is a well-known story. Tired of a Philistine culture which pervaded the upper reaches of New York, they moved downtown to the "Village" but were not left alone. The tycoons anxious to prove their culture, "discovered" them. Enormous success and the distortions that it sets up won out. There is no denying that some excellent work was done, but with it there was an avalanche of Abstract Expressionists. It was difficult to find any other kind of work in the Galleries or for that matter, in modern museums. Satire was reached very soon and it was then the turn of Pop Artists, to be followed by OP Artists etc. It is not as if these artists had not been working, but their emergence had to wait for an opportune movement, and the system decided when that was to be. Warhol's remark that every artist has his ten minutes of greatness can be understood in this context.

We in this country have had a long tradition of the State as a major patron of the arts and also of providing directions. The construction of our great monuments and their endowment were under royal patronage. There were some great builders among the monarchs. The great temples and monuments are eloquent reminders of this. So are the manuscripts and paintings which were executed in royal ateliers.

During British Rule, court artists found a living in producing pictures for the Sahibs, who wanted to record their



Political entities need their cultural fronts and even where the Arts are more or less left alone, the State does encourage and support a section which suits its purpose.

living conditions and the flora and fauna of a strange land. It also produced a Raja Ravi Verma, and we were given a full dose of Victorianism. I believe that our musical traditions were less affected, and these sought refuge in various princely States. They were able to survive through princely patronage and provided aesthetic sustenance to the *cognoscenti*.

The relationship becomes complicated after Independence and the spread of democratic ideas. There was no question of direction being given from a single source or supporting any one direction, the desire for regaining identity was matched by ideas of freedom and liberation. As a patron the State could not foster either, and this neutral attitude was evident in the categories which the Lalit Kala Akademi made in its early annals. There were separate sections for Traditional Arts and Modern Art. The State also felt responsible for the moral well-being of the nation. When Souza's exhibition went up at the Artists' Aid Centre, he was told by the authorities to take down a particular painting as it was offensive to the general public. He complied. The same thing happened to Akbar Padamsee who refused.

Padamsee was charged for obscenity and had to stand trial till his acquittal in 1954. As artists we were delighted at his vindication. The question, however, remains. Should the State have the right to distinguish between that which is vulgar and obscene and liable to excite the baser instincts and that which transcends even the so-called baser emo-

tions in a work of art? The domain of art cannot be confined nor does it get bogged down or equated with the most violent of its preoccupations. This question has assumed greater importance with the cinema, TV and video which are infinitely more accessible to wider viewing than the plastic arts and even the performing arts. They are media with a much greater public impact. It need hardly be said that a very small proportion of this category comes anywhere near resembling art. It is mostly *kitsch*, a combination of sentimentality, violence and sex. Since these films do affect the impressionable, the State feels obliged to place suitable curbs on such productions which, it feels, are detrimental to the moral health of the community, in much the same way as it prohibits the use of drugs.

In the same way, the State can and does prohibit the exhibition of films which it considers will undermine its own existence. Since Art is not hamstrung by approved categories, and since the State is not the best judge of Art, there is an area of conflict. Mr. Khrushchev could with some justification reject the blatant mixtures of Hollywood as a diet for his own people, but when he vehemently denounced the sculpture of a modern Russian artist, he had to be told by him and in public that he was not competent to make such judgements. It required courage and a firm belief in his work to say that. It was also fortunate that Mr. Khrushchev was tolerant. In the preceding regime the consequences could have been worse.

In my personal experience as an artist, I have had two interesting encounters. The first concerned a painting called "Game I" which was acquired by Indian Airlines, and the then Chairman had intended to make a gift of it to Sheikh Mujibur Rehman. It appears that there was some dispute between the Ministries as a result of which the painting was not sent to him nor even installed in the office of Indian Airlines but was dumped in its warehouse along with broken furniture. I was told that the four military Generals plotting at a table, which was the subject matter, was not suitable for their office. The friendly smile with which I was told this was as much to say "You've been paid so why are you bothered?" It now hangs in a prominent position in Yad Vishem Museum in Jerusalem. The second instance concerns a purchase contem-



plated by our Ministry of External Affairs. A senior member of this service had seen a large painting of people huddled in the rear portion of a truck, and had asked me to have it delivered to his office. Months later I was asked by the late Richard Bartholomew to take it back from his office. I was told that Richard, who had been on the Committee, had rejected it. I asked him what had happened and he told me that though he had liked the painting he did think that it was too near the bone and wouldn't be suitable for hanging in any of our missions abroad! Appropriate Art for such locations is that which is easy on the eye and doesn't raise too many questions.

Perhaps our Museums would take a different view and act more profes-

sionally. In actual fact the manner of functioning of our National Gallery of Modern Art is quite bureaucratic and corresponds to the way in which other departments of Government function. One would expect that its collection would represent the very best that has been produced over the last four or five decades. It does not, and the reason is the system of selection adopted. Artists and Galleries are expected to send paintings etc. once a year, generally before the closure of the financial year, and a committee appointed by the Department of Culture proceeds to make purchases. Anyone who knows anything about making collections will find this procedure ridiculous. Artists do not generally submit their works for acquisition unless they are hard up. There are enough people in the private sector who are keen collectors and they manage to beat the Museum to it. Curators have to be on the prowl the whole time and know what is happening instead of taking a pick, once a year, from what is served up to them.

The surprising and sad aspect of our scene is that there has been no great private initiative for creating museums and galleries. By making certain enactments in our laws, it could create a favourable climate for the creation of museums, as was done during the Kennedy era in the U.S. Those who do have the resources prefer to endow other social institutions. Contemporary Art is accorded a low priority, and understandably so when one considers that over a third of our people are still living below the poverty line.

The State still needs Art to conduct what Mrs. Pupul Jayakar recently called "Cultural Diplomacy". Bearing in mind their intended purpose, one can under-

stand the emphasis on past achievements and traditional crafts which are uniquely Indian. Contemporary Art, which depending far more on the individual than upon a group, containing differing and conflicting tendencies, and its achievements which are in a constant state of evaluation, represents an uncertain area to draw upon for this purpose. It requires expertise to make a presentation from this scene, which is not so readily available. Even when it is, there are constraints. It is hardly ever a question of picking the most relevant works and making a forceful representation. There is a widespread feeling that every direction which is being followed must be given representation. This is further complicated by the consideration of giving regional representation. Inevitably, such exhibitions are compromises at the expense of quality. This situation, incidentally, is not unique to us. Commissioners for various Eastern European countries to our *Trienales* have mentioned similar constraints.

Fortunately in our situation, it is still possible for impressive exhibitions to be mounted abroad without Government assistance or interference. Since there are none of those constraints under which Government sponsored exhibitions are mounted, such exhibitions are more pointed and more meaningful even though they represent only a limited point of view.

Chances are that our State will continue and possibly enlarge its relationship with the Arts. Simultaneously there will be activities carried on by individuals which may not have the blessings of the State but which will have a place on the art scene all the same.

MR. KRISHEN KHANNA is a well-known painter.

TV and Radio – The Case against Monopoly

Mehra Masani

All governments would like the media to be friendly and uncritical. How nice it would be if there were no comments about incompetence, inefficiency, corruption, and no exposure of scandals relating to their members. All governments

take various measures to achieve such an "understanding" attitude on the part of the media but their success depends on the degree of authoritarian and totalitarian trends in society. In the communist countries all the media are not

only controlled but operated by the government and entirely subservient; but in societies which are committed to the democratic way of life it is understood that the right to speak, to advocate, to dissent, to question is at the very found-

ation of what makes a democracy work.

All the same, even in democratic societies, press freedom is a historical accident which is too late to undo and has to be tolerated. If the press had not been free from the earliest days, no government would have given it the freedom that it now enjoys.

Frustrated by its inability to exercise authority over the press, the government of India wants to keep the tightest possible control over the other mass media, radio and TV.

It would seem that every Indian government wants to keep a firm hold over radio and T.V. The Janata Government came to power in 1977, after the Emergency, promising to grant full and genuine autonomy. But it prevaricated after assuming office and the Prasar Bharati Bill, which it introduced in Parliament, provided for the government's right to issue directives whenever necessary to be carried out by the radio and TV organisations! However the Janata Government did adopt a more liberal stance. It introduced election broadcasts and did not rule out autonomy for the media as Mr. Gandhi did at his press conference in the USA, and later in India, when he declared that "we are not ready for autonomy for AIR and Doordarshan". Who, might one ask, is not ready? The broadcasters are ready and so is the public. It is only the government and its political supporters who are not.

The case for autonomy and freedom from government control for the electronic media is now very widely known and accepted except in government circles. The disadvantages of the present system are obvious and can be summarised as follows :-

- (a) The negation of the people's right to full information which is fair and unbiased. A democratic society must be an informed society.
- (b) The very limited service both on radio and TV which is provided under government auspices because of faulty planning. The only way to reach the people in rural areas is through local radio and TV stations.
- (c) The unbalanced manner in which programmes are directed to city people, mainly the middle

Mr. Rajiv Gandhi declared that "we are not ready for autonomy for AIR and Doordarshan." Who, might one ask, is not ready? The broadcasters are ready so is the public. It is only the government who are not.

class, whereas the greatest need is of the poor in the rural areas.

- (d) Wrong priorities. Whereas a large amount of time and money is devoted to light entertainment on TV, the radio is neglected although it is only through radio that the vast mass of rural people can be reached. It will be decades before TV can become a mass medium.
- (e) News and comment broadcast both on radio and TV are biased heavily in favour of the ruling party and the government. All talks and commentaries broadcast by AIR and Doordarshan are supposed to be governed by the AIR Code, drawn up in 1967. It is a purely negative code. It does not permit criticism of friendly countries, talks of religion or communities. Incitement of violence, aspersions against the President, Governors and the Judiciary, attacks on a political party by name, hostile criticism of any State or the centre, anything obscene, defamatory and against law and order. Such a code cannot be regarded as a substitute for a positive policy for encouraging free and fair debate reflecting diverse opinions on matters of controversy. The code was abrogated during the emergency but was restored by the Janata Government, which did try to observe its provisions. In recent years it is

ignored more and more frequently. For example, although the code forbids criticism in the nature of a personal attack on any state government, AIR and Doordarshan report, at length, speeches by the Prime Minister attacking the opposition, even though they are political speeches made by the Congress President. There is of course no right of reply. On AIR and Doordarshan the distinction between the party president and Prime Minister stands destroyed. The suppression or dilution of news and opinions unpalatable to the government is accompanied by the infiltration into the news bulletins of unimportant items pertaining to the ruling party.

- (f) The absence of a communication policy results in the various distortions mentioned earlier. The media are treated, by the government itself, as propaganda agencies. There is no clear perception of the purpose of broadcasting. Broadcasting is totally unitary in a supposedly federal set up. There are no constitutional safeguards for our broadcasting services. Other countries in the free world protect the media from political interference.

Broadcasters

The State tries to control artists and writers for its purposes and succeeds to the extent such people are dependent on the State for favours, big or small. But the State has no monopoly of publishing books or newspapers and magazines, no monopoly for making films, organising music or dance recitals, staging plays, or organising exhibitions of paintings and sculptures. Imagine the situation if the State had such a monopoly, as indeed it does in totalitarian countries. In India the State does have such a monopoly in respect of broadcasting. Nobody can broadcast except under State auspices.

The plurality of publications and proprietors means a competitive market for news; even if one publication is put down or bows the line another raises its head. Plurality gives journalists mobility and makes for independence of action when there is pressure from proprietors.

In broadcasting it is only those who can ignore the substantial benefits

which flow from regular broadcasting engagements, who can refuse to accept the directives of AIR and Doordarshan.



Numerous instances can be cited of high-handed censorship and rejection of programmes by AIR and Doordarshan. Arbitrary selection of broadcasters, favouritism and what amounts to blacklisting of certain artists and writers, cancellation of programmes already scheduled, for example the film *New Delhi Times*, scheduled after approval by everyone from the minister downwards, but cancelled literally at the last minute. No one in Doordarshan could say why. *NewsLine*, a news Programme by M.J. Akbar, started with much fanfare about independent news coverage, was abruptly withdrawn after a few instalments.

Professional broadcasters, those who man the broadcasting service, are even worse off. Firstly, their recruitment as government servants starts them off at a disadvantage. The promotion policies also militate against any initiative. The craze for permanency and job security allows the government to exploit the staff mercilessly. The low morale of the broadcasting staff is entirely due to the fact that there is no escape to jobs in other broadcasting organisations.

The staff must be selected for special aptitude for broadcasting and must treat broadcasting as a vocation. This is not possible when they are selected by the Union Public Services Commission as civil servants. Inevitably, broadcasting is becoming a career, like any other in the government, and not a profession. It

is not also possible to attract the best available talent on the low salaries offered.

Another sop to its critics is government's declaration that it has granted "functional autonomy". What does that mean? Firstly, it would require that the government must give freedom to the news staff of AIR and Doordarshan to report events objectively and to the staff in general to decide in what manner publicity should be given to the government's activities and policies so that unimaginative and heavy-handed use of the media could be avoided.

Secondly, the heads of AIR and Doordarshan should be given more administrative and financial powers to improve their services and to recruit the right kind of staff to man them. The Directors of the two organisations must have greater powers to modernise their equipment.

But what is the basis for assuming that such functional autonomy has been granted? Is it conceivable that a news editor who is an employee of the government would dare to omit from a news bulletin an insipid and repetitive speech by the minister on the grounds that listeners would not be interested? Could a news commentator possibly analyse the government's inability to govern? Would it be possible for the Chief Engineer of AIR or Doordarshan to point out the disadvantages of locating a transmitter in a city in which some government bigwig wanted it for political reasons? When the government judges the performance of its employees by the number of broadcasts they arrange on this or that, what functional autonomy can it be expected to grant? In fact all decisions regarding programme policy, personnel policy, budgeting and administration are political.

The Centre and the States

Possibly the worst consequence of the government monopoly is the denial to the States the right to use the media. In a recent article in the *Indian Express*, Mr. Hedge, Chief Minister of Karnataka, asked "why not a State's channel"? He said, "it speaks for the vision and broad-mindedness of the Founding Fathers that not only did they retain this provision in the interim constitution of independent India but made it more favourable to provinces as well as to the acceding States". When the Constituent

Assembly began its deliberations Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya submitted a note on 28th June, 1947 to the Union Powers Committee suggesting "concurrent jurisdiction over broadcasting" between the centre and the States. Comments Mr. Hedge "It is a document showing prophetic insight, written as it was nearly 40 years ago." Pattabhi Sitaramayya wrote "broadcasting has to play a very great part in future India, particularly as a medium of educating and informing the masses. Its value is greater to rural than urban India. While to the urban areas it may be an instrument of entertainment, to the rural population it will be a powerful medium of education through entertainment."

Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya went on to point out that as education was a provincial subject, educational broadcasts must be a provincial subject too, and likewise, rural uplift.

The members of the Constituent Assembly considered this note positively and decided that while the centre should continue to have the exclusive power to regulate broadcasting all over the country, it should not prevent the provinces and the States from operating their own broadcasting stations as they could do even at that time under Section 129 of the Government of India Act, 1935.

But now the central government does not consider it possible to allow the States to have their own radio and TV channels. The decision is political because the government does not want to lose its exclusive power to control broadcasting.

The Karnataka Government's answer to this is to acquire 350 video jeeps fitted with TV sets and video cassette players which will move all over the State to project development activities. Other non-Congress States will no doubt emulate this excellent enterprise.

And now what can we do about this sorry state of affairs? Over some years now it has been suggested that the right of the government to control broadcasting should be challenged in the law courts but no concrete steps were taken.

In a recent issue of *Seminar* (March 86) Mr. P. C. Chatterjee, a former Director-General of AIR, asked why no one had questioned the right of the government to control broadcasting. He says,

"Media autonomy is not a gift which the government gives to the people; it is a right which must be wrested from the executive through the courts."

Mr. Chatterjee's argument is that if the freedom of the press is based on Article 19 (1) (A) of the Constitution, access to all shades of opinion through broadcasting is the right of every individual in India provided for under the same article. If an individual or a group of persons can start a newspaper and as a result we have thousands of newspapers in the country why should government have a monopoly of broadcasting?

Mr. A.G. Noorani has, in several of his writings, contended that even if a broadcasting organisation is run by government it has an obligation under Article 14 of the Constitution, which guarantees equality before the law, and Article 19 (1) (a) relating to freedom of thought and expression, to function in a fair and impartial manner. He has quoted a supreme court ruling as follows:

"Whatever be its activity the government is still the government and is subject to restraints inherent in its position in a democratic society. The constitutional power conferred on the

government cannot be exercised by it arbitrarily or capriciously or in an unprincipled manner. It has to be for the public good."

It is good that public opinion is now veering round to the view that we should appeal to the judiciary to curb the powers of the government to prevent our broadcasting services and our broadcasters from providing the kind of service appropriate for a democratic society.

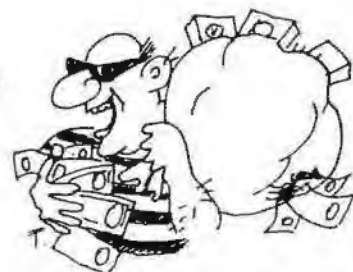
MS. MEHRA MASANI retired as the Deputy Director-General of All India Radio

Cinema and TV – Playing Contemporary Roles

Sai Paranjpye



In India, we are very 'message' oriented, especially if the State has something to do with it. We are not happy till we have a banner to wave or a slogan to shout. These exercises in propoganda and policy publicity are usually so simplistic that they end up by being self-defeating.



The Film — this very vital and potent medium, is threatened today as never before by TV and Video. It is time, every lover and well wisher of cinema, did some constructive thinking.

The video avalanche has swept audiences off their feet. It is not a passing fancy as some of us had wishfully thought, but a permanent phase. The reasons for its success are manifold. How heady to bring high drama and racy adventure to one's living room, and to entertain — or rather, be entertained by Amitabh Bacchan or Sridevi in the intimate surroundings of one's home. The advantages of video viewing over cinema going are many. Suffice it to admit that the little screen has overshadowed the big screen. We have to accept and accept with good grace that video is here to stay.

What we can and must combat is video piracy. This is where the State steps in — or should, in a big way. Government must make very strict rules,

and also enforce them severely to counter this menace at every stage. The granting of licences to video libraries and parlours should not become a matter of routine. Regular checks should be conducted to ensure that no illegal prints and copies are available. Crippling penalties and severe punishment for those found guilty of video piracy will certainly help arrest this plague, if not eradicate it entirely. A plague it certainly is because the very economic backbone of the Film Industry has been dealt a death-blow by the video pirates. Who would queue up to pay Rs. 7 at a Cinema Hall, for a film already seen at a throw-away price in the neighbourhood video parlour? Malpractice in the world of film entertainment is by no means a new phenomenon however. It is almost as old as the industry itself.

In the olden days when films were screened at nickleodeons in America, a crude but effective system to double

profits, was invented by the exhibitors. It was called bicycling. The print of a film rented by the owner of a nickleodeon would be sublet to another owner for a price. And an errand boy on a bicycle would trundle the prints to and fro between the Halls. This shuttle service, though crude, was no less dishonest than the sophisticated *modus operandi* in force today.

Doordarshan

Seemingly, another threat to the well-being of films may be considered to be - albeit unwittingly - the information, instruction and entertainment Medium Supreme - Television. It is perhaps too early in the day to gauge the exact extent to which the sudden popularity of Doordarshan will affect the cinema-going habit of the people. But undoubtedly to an extent - enough to alarm the Film Industry. But T.V. is vital to a growing nation. Its capacity to promote awareness and knowledge in developmental and educational

spheres is really unlimited. Over the past two years, the power and the fury of Television has been unleashed on audiences in a very big way. Transmitters have mushroomed all over the country, and the National Network now unites the country for a few magical hours every evening. Social conversation now hinges on the previous evening's serial. A television set is now an item of necessity - not luxury.

This official propaganda organ of the Government, is however a double-edged weapon and has to be handled very judiciously, lest it does more harm than good. In its role in relation to big brother film - it need not be a negative one as is generally feared. Actually it can give a helping hand to the film industry, and indeed Doordarshan has taken a few steps in the right direction in this respect. Parallel cinema, thereby meaning the non-formula film with something serious to say - needs protection and patronage. By screening brave cinematic efforts in its Sunday slot, Doordarshan is doing a noble thing. However, in its anxiety to help good cinema, it must not lose its sense of proportion. Low budget shoe-string films are not necessarily all good. Recently, one was exposed to a pathetically sub-standard film dealing with dowry death and bride burning. I would like to say that providing a platform for such less than mediocre films would do more harm than good to a given cause. Doordarshan's decision to project award winning, socially relevant, experimental films - Hindi and regional - is laudable indeed.

Not so laudable is its persistence in screening vile *masala* films - containing every ingredient that the Government publicly abhors with a frightening regularity. Sex, violence, superstition

and inanity are to be found in abundance in these films, and by telecasting these, Doordarshan - and thereby the State, gives the Art of hypocrisy an official status. What I particularly abhor or detest is the way superstition is fed and common sense thrown to the winds in these films.

Then again, the liberties taken while presenting facts and procedures must be kept in check. Army officers in air force uniforms, and doctors predicting pregnancy by feeling a woman's pulse - are examples of the blatant disregard for authenticity. Blood donation is a particular favourite with these film makers, and one has seen a heroic mother collapsing and dying after donating blood. So much for the cause of blood donation. The way the woman is projected in some of these commercial films, and thereafter telecast by Doordarshan is a downright disgrace.

Doordarshan can further help the cause of cinema, by regularising and stepping up a commendable activity they have already started - that of encouraging a special genre of film the telefilm. T.V. is a specialised medium - with special demands. It is an intimate medium - a medium for close ups. Extravaganzas like *Quo Vadis*, *War and Peace*, *Mughal-e-Azam* - lose their splendour on the little screen.

I would like to add here that because it is a State platform, one should tread somewhat warily. In India, we are very 'message' oriented, especially if the State has something to do with it. We are not happy till we have a banner to wave or a slogan to shout. These exercises in propaganda and policy publicity are usually so simplistic that they end up by being self-defeating.

Education, family planning, a scientific approach, health and hygiene, uplift

of the weak and vulnerable sections of society all are valuable goals. In the achieving of these goals - all too often a vital factor is sacrificed - **ENTERTAINMENT**. I sincerely feel that were we to be a better entertained nation - we would be a better nation. But alas, our Indian psyche frowns on anything frivolous and unfortunately entertainment is condemned for being a non-serious activity. It is occasionally condoned if there is a message attached - but I plead for entertainment - as end in itself. By entertainment I do not mean the lost and found, separated triplets, daredevil stunts on cliff tops or belly dances in night clubs - but entertainment which uplifts, soothes, delights and generally makes one a happier human being. Entertainment like food is essential for our system.

To quote from personal experience, I was fortunate to have spent four years of my childhood in Australia where I was brought up on films like *The Wizard of Oz*, *Song of the South*, *Tom Sawyer*, all of Disney's creations and *Danny Kaye Musicals*. I saw play productions of *Peter Pan*, the *Snow Queen*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Sindbad*, *Treasure Island* and so on. I read *Winnie the Pooh*, *Dr. Doolittle*, *Enid Blyton* and later *Scott*, *Dickens* and *Jane Austen*. Pure unadulterated entertainment. If there was any message attached to these plays and books I failed to notice it. But I owe a debt to all this exposure and to a very large extent what little I have been able to contribute to the creative media, is a direct result of my childhood forays in the world of entertainment.

MS. SAI PARANJPYE is a well-known film director

Travails of the Indian Cinema

B.K. Karanjia

That India is today the biggest film producing country in the world is truly astonishing when you consider that it is perhaps more difficult to make films in India than in most other countries, and that the Indian film "industry" has

grown to its present stature without protection asked for from or given by the erstwhile foreign rulers, and without responsibility shared by free India's successive governments.

It is more difficult to make films in

India than elsewhere because the challenges our film-makers face are truly and uniquely bewildering - the challenge of finance at usurious rates of interest, the challenge of raw stock supply of poor quality and insufficiency, the

challenge of getting dates from stars, the challenge of indiscipline and lack of the minimum standards of professional conduct, the challenge posed by the vagaries of censorship, which are no mere vagaries but gross violations of the screen's freedom, the final challenge of fitting too many films into too few cinema halls.

It speaks volume for the dare-all, risk-all spirit of our pioneering film makers that they have been meeting these challenges, though they have not always been able to surmount them. They have over the rugged years acquired the uncanny knack of getting around problems without bothering to solve them. Because of the manner in which the film "industry" has grown or rather outgrown itself, it has failed through its long and chequered history to set up any sort of machinery for regulation that would be acceptable to all its different and conflicting sectors. There is an irony incidental to this that the Indian film which by popularising Hindi has contributed so vastly to national integration has at the same time failed to integrate itself! The word "industry" applied to film making in India has to be put within inverted commas.

The Indian film is almost eight decades old. It has a base broad enough to have three major and many more smaller centres of production. It has over two scores of studios, a manufacturing unit for raw stock, seven laboratories to process the exposed stock, well-staffed training institutes and the real and potential capacity of employing over a lakh of skilled labour and highly specialised technicians with a turn-over in millions a year. From an initial production of barely half a dozen films a year, its production today is over 900 films year, earning for itself the distinction of being the biggest in the world. With a total investment of about Rs. 2000 crores and the net collection at the box-office of over Rs. 500 crores, it yields the handsome amount of nearly Rs. 600 crores a year to the State and Central Governments, without getting much in return except higher taxes year after year for its initiative and enterprise.

But even if Indian cinema has the dimensions, it lacks the disciplines of an industry. At least in the pre-war years when the studio system prevailed, there was a semblance of organization and discipline. When the studio system

Our Cinema presents the strange spectacle of being subject in some aspects to purely State dictation and deprived in other aspects of the behest of individual fancy. It is subject to control without regulation when the need is for regulation with the minimum of control

died, much that was good in Indian cinema died with it. The new money that flooded the film industry in the post-war years included black market money, which gave rise to the disastrous practice of under-the-table payments to stars, music directors and others. This not only coloured the mode of payment, it also coloured the mentality of film-makers. Films began to be sold on star names, so much so that stars today define the economy and determine the very existence of the film industry. A current joke in our *filmi duniya* is that every time a film star sneezes, ten producers get heart attacks. There has been a steady deterioration of cinematic values. The get-rich-quick mentality has enthroned the 'formula' as king. In most Hindi films today, the characters are stereotyped, the situations utterly predictable. You know the end in the beginning, though sometimes to understand the beginning you have to wait till the end, but the trouble is that by the time you've come to the middle, you have just about had enough.

In this heterogenous group that constitutes the film industry, modern concepts of business like Production Planning, Investment Appraisal, Market Research, etc. are conspicuous by their absence. It is an "industry" whose proliferating trade bodies suffer from a lack of common purpose and betray a pathetic inability to abide by resolutions vociferously passed — an enterprise in which rank individualism has never been able to give way in substantial measure to the collective principle.

Given this set of circumstances that are worsening with every passing year, one would logically expect a responsi-

ble Government to step in boldly to rectify the situation. The Government's interest however, has been evident mainly at the time of the Central budgets with an ever-increasing burden of taxes. As and when sporadically things got so bad that Delhi had to take note, the standard palliative of appointing a Committee was resorted to. But no sooner were the reports received than more often than not they were filed and forgotten. It was thanks to the recommendations of some of these committees that today we have bodies established by the State like the Film & Television Institute of India at Pune which has provided commendable training in the art and craft of film making; the FFC and subsequently the NFDC which is doing its best to encourage those talented and promising film-makers who wouldn't get finance from conventional sources and to promote the building of more cinemas; and the National Awards which for all their shortcomings have recognised and encouraged merit in different departments of film making. There are also the two monopolistic monoliths, the Films Division and the Hindustan Photo Films. The Division in spite of its occasional good work has on the whole had a deadening effect on the documentary film movement in India. As for the HPF, had it belonged to the private sector, its continuing malpractices would have led to its closure ere now. Considering the vastness of this "industry" and its potential for growth and development, what has been done is not nearly enough. Much has been said and less done for this industry than for any other.

What really ails the film industry was diagnosed by the Patil Film Enquiry Committee way back in 1951 — lack of a sound organizational base, rank individualism, indiscipline. But its major recommendation of a statutory body called the Film Council to make the industry strong and help it to help itself did not find favour with the bureaucrats because the stronger the industry, the weaker would be their control over it. It is worth recording here that no less than three Ministers for Information & Broadcasting — Mr. K. K. Shah, Mr. I. R. Gujral and Mrs. Nandini Satpathy — announced on the floor of the Lok Sabha that such a Council as envisaged by the Enquiry Committee would be shortly established.

Even its details were worked out. But the promises so solemnly made were

not kept. The excuse given as an afterthought was that the film "industry" was opposed to the Council. This was an untruth because while a small minority did express some misgivings to which I shall refer later, the "industry's" apex body, the Film Federation of India, went on record with a resolution favouring such a Film Council, as did other trade bodies like the Film Directors' Association.

The idea behind a statutory body like the Film Council to supervise and regulate the making and showing of films was to provide the film industry with a permanent Round Table, in a manner of speaking, a table around which the parties to any dispute would sit not only at times of crisis, but day to day under the auspices of the statutory body. Not only producers, distributors and exhibitors would be parties to it, but most important of all, Government and, to a lesser extent, educational and other interests concerned.



Since the success of the Film Council would depend on the wholehearted co-operation of the film industry as a whole, certain misconceptions, regarding it had to be cleared. The industry had to be convinced that the Film Council is going to be the industry's own body, and not the Government's; that the Film Council would not in any way interfere with the creative aspects of film making but that, by virtue of the functions entrusted to it and its statutory powers, it would ensure a better climate for making films and make crea-

tive freedom more truly meaningful; that the Council would adequately represent film producers who are the mainstay of the industry; that the Film Council would encourage the serious film-maker and the man with a stake in the industry as against the adventurer, the fly-by-night producer; that it would strengthen the various associations of the industry, help them to enforce certain basic standards of professional conduct among their members; avoid unhealthy competition between members and act as an appellate authority over disciplinary and other important aspects of their activities; and above all that both State and Central Governments would recognise the Film Council as the apex body of the industry and accept it as the principal adviser on all film matters including, inevitably, taxation.

Here it may be worthwhile to take note of a country like France for several reasons. The problems that continue to plague our industry bear an uncanny resemblance to those that beset the French film industry rising from the ruins of war. The first step the French Government took immediately after the war was to pass the Cinematic Act of October 25, 1946, declaring cinema to be "a trade of special character", thus conferring on it a distinctive status. The second step was to set up a statutory body, the *Centre Nationale de la Cinematographie*, whose main purpose briefly, was to lay the foundations of a great industry by registering the licensing of each and every filmic enterprise, and checking and counter-checking financial practices at all levels. The *Centre Nationale* laid down that no one could start a film without a licence or visa for which the producer in question had to satisfy the *Centre* regarding his ability, financial and technical, to complete the film. But once the film was completed, the *Centre* assumed the responsibility for its release. The visa granted to the film producer was a guarantee to that effect.

The French Government, further, took a sympathetic attitude to cinemas, studios and laboratories threatened with closure. It gave them technical advice and, if necessary, financial assistance. A special independent commission under the aegis of the *Centre* was appointed to look after the interests of small producers, distributors, theatre-owners and others. Finally, the *Centre* took upon itself the responsibility

of ensuring that the industry observed the commercial ethics, proprieties and disciplines necessary for conducting any sound business. All branches of the industry were obliged to fill in their returns every fortnight, and since each activity of the industry was licensed, various returns were tallied for their correctness. No deception in film returns, indulging in black-marketing activities or committing irregularities was tolerated. Unprofessional conduct on the part of a star, director or technician, such as not giving proper dates, could lead to him or her being black-listed.

Australia offers an even more pertinent example. So heavy was the influx of British and American films in the post-war period that had the Australian government not awakened to the realities of the situation, an entire generation that was growing up and going to the movies would possibly never have seen an Australian film. The Australian government acted swiftly by setting up, through an Act of Parliament, a statutory body, the Australian Film Commission, administering government funds to assist both feature and non-feature films and a number of film-related organizations. Simultaneously, government film corporations were set up in every state to provide a broader base for both financing and production. And unbelievable as it must seem to us in India, with a view to control escalating costs and consolidate the film industry's economic viability, a Tax Incentive Scheme was introduced by amending the Income Tax Assessment Tax to attract more private investment in films.

We in India are plagued by speculative promoters attracted mostly by the glamour of the film trade. Our government is doing nothing about this. The Australian government, on the other hand, devised a package which reduced the tax deduction from 150 to 133 per cent but at the same time allocated a special fund of five million dollars to be administered by the statutory commission. As a result of the government's enlightened film policy the last 18 months have seen a steady flow of foreign film buyers from the major American studios visiting Australia with a view to film purchases. Prestigious film festivals like Cannes have acknowledged the emergence of Australian films, and the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences recently

honoured an Australian film with an Oscar.

We fight shy of a statutory body. We do not realise the vital difference between regulation and control. We talk of creative freedom. But surely to function in chaos is not to be free. Shining proof of this is that despite all the powers enjoyed by the *Centre Nationale* in France and the Film Commission in Australia, they have not touched even the remotest fringes of artistic and cinematic creativity and, on the contrary, since these bodies started functioning, there

has been a renaissance of French and Australian cinema.

The crisis in Indian cinema is too deep-seated for makeshift arrangements and piecemeal solutions. Our need is a fundamental one. The very climate of film making needs to be changed. Our cinema presents the strange spectacle of being subject in some aspects to purely State dictation and deprived in other aspects at the behest of individual fancy. It is subject to control without regulation when the need is for regulation with the mini-

mum of control. We cannot in this day and age return to the studio system, but we have to devise some sort of system to at least return to the values that prevailed in our cinema in the pre-war years. A renaissance in Indian cinema has to be in the nature of a revival and a recapture, to enable our film makers once again "to question and probe, to feel the truth of life intensely and depict it fearlessly."

MR. B.K. KARANJIA is editor of *Screen*

Theatre – Let People be the Judge

Vijay Crishna

Why should we have people sitting in judgement on the works of others from any standpoint at all? If the people who come to see the play don't like it, pretty soon that play is going to collapse anyway.

Kautilya in his *Arthashastra* written between 321-326 B.C., entrusts the duty of entertaining people to the lowermost class of society. He also laid down strict rules for them such as which part of the city they should live in, where they should camp in the rainy season etc. in great detail. He did not want actors to hurt the feelings of the people, and explicitly warned them to avoid making comments on some socially sensitive things. Performing artistes were also required to pay entertainment tax - tax on their shows, income-tax to the king and in difficult times half their income was to be taken away as state tax!

Kautilya went on to say that the actor community were "thieves in effect though not in name," though he recognized that because they moved from place to place exhibiting their histrionic skills, they had excellent potential for spying and conducting espionage activities without arousing suspicions (both Machiavelli and Mata Hari could well have taken leaves out of the book of this great Indian master-politician!). And, indeed, spying would appear to be a natural occupation for a playwright! In fact

the English playwright Christopher Marlowe has long been thought to have actually been a spy.

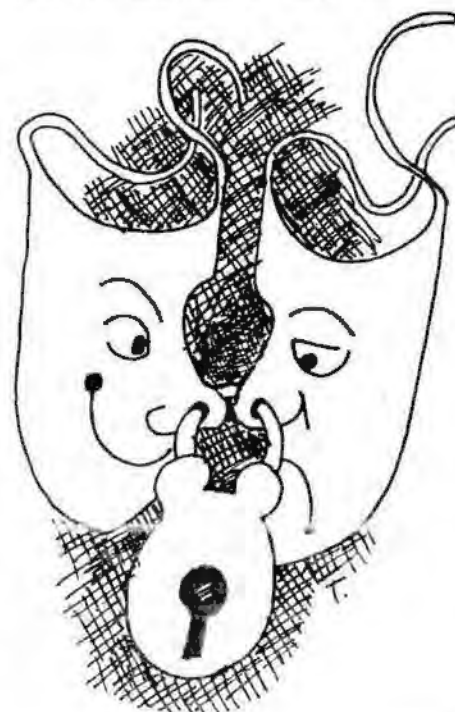
Bharata Muni, in the *Natyashastra*, a treatise on dramaturgy written around the 2nd century B.C. also prohibits actors from showing certain things on stage. He thought that these things were aesthetically irritating to the taste of the audience. His work indicates that some sort of censor seemed to be at work even before his time.

This socially disapproving view of theatre and performers has continued down the ages. In Europe, the church bellowed in outrage at the dawn of what became known as the Dark Ages.

In England, the first Act of Parliament concerning itself with control over the stage was passed under James I, (and reinforced a century later by the Act of 1712) under which "common players of interludes" were classed as "rogues and vagabonds". It was not until 1895 when Henry Irving was knighted that the profession finally achieved the respectability that state recognition accorded.

In India, the social situation has mir-

rored pretty much what has happened elsewhere, and the advent of films and a "new" school of performers has not improved things. I mean, you wouldn't want your daughter to marry one!



So what do we have? A potent live medium, with the power to move people, using words of fire and performers who need to be kept properly in their place. And where do you end up? With the state watching you very carefully, is where a lot of people have ended up, down the years!

As we have already seen, in ancient India censorship was already busy at work – from a social angle. In ancient Greece playwrights like Aristophanes (circa 430 B.C.) were often in trouble for their sharp political satires. Indeed, when the colonels seized power in Greece just a few years ago, they banned his plays! How's that for longevity in spirit!

In Europe during the Middle Ages, when the so-called Mystery plays (religious mysteries, not the other kind!) were in vogue, plays were often banned in particular states depending on whether they were Catholic or Protestant in nature.

By 1530 in Britain, social and political questions like unemployment involved the theatre more and more, with stage space being given to passions and ideas endangering the established order. Henry VIII's break with Rome at this time inspired tight control over the content of plays (i.e. they began encouraging Protestant plays). Much physical violence resulted; a play caused an uprising in York in 1540, another a rebellion in a Norfolk village in 1549. And the response of successive governments was to control content even more. Later, the civil war in 1642 ripped England apart and Parliament banned *all* plays and closed theatres for 18 years, till the Restoration and Charles II. In France, Cardinal Richelieu, Chief Minister of Louis XIII and the most powerful figure in Europe, created the *Academie Francaise* in 1634 to "maintain standards of literary taste". The first victim was "Le Cid" by Corneille, his great masterpiece which unfortunately violated the prescribed rules of tradition and form. Interestingly, though he defended himself, Corneille did not reject the idea that it was right to legislate for the kind of art the stage required.

In recent years, in places like Czechoslovakia, Shakespeare is a banned playwright because the ideas are too inflammatory!! In South Africa,

there is strict state control over theatrical works.

Dousing the fiery Muse

Around the world, censorship by the state has basically, taken the form of having to submit a text for written approval (in the shape of a sort of licence). Most governments, excluding notably the U.S.A., have used this at some time or another. In England, whom we have looked to for much inspiration in the past, the post of Lord Chamberlain was given wide powers in 1737 over the stage primarily for suppressing heresy or sedition and later almost exclusively to political and religious issues arising out of play-texts. Attention to the normal aspect was paid to the extent of prohibiting riotous or immoral behaviour at dramatic performances. This situation remained right until the Theatres Act of 1968 abolished the Lord Chamberlain's right of censorship over play-texts. Private cases can be brought against plays, but only *after* production, such as was brought in 1981 against Michael Bogdanov, director of *THE ROMANS IN BRITAIN* by Howard Brenton (for the National Theatre) under the Sexual Offences Act (the case was withdrawn before any point of law could be established).

Closer home we have had the well-known banning of Pratap Sharma's *A TOUCH OF BRIGHTNESS* in Maharashtra, where even the passports of the cast about to travel abroad to perform it were impounded. Unlike the other productions, which were prosecuted after they hit the stage, and most of which cases failed anyway, Pratap's play did not win its case till 7 years later, after it had been performed abroad by foreign groups several times. Vijay Tendulkar has also incurred the displeasure of the censors over his plays.

Stand up and be counted

It is a matter of great interest and admiration that in the U.S.A., no office corresponding to the Lord Chamberlain and no separate legislation in regard to the theatre has ever existed. There, if something onstage incurs somebody's displeasure they can lodge information with the police. This can only occur *after* the production of a play considered immoral or obscene. Such information is often lodged and actors have been arrested onstage and taken into custody to be tried under the Federal &

State laws dealing with literary works as a whole.

This is a very clean and clear-cut way of dealing with the matter, and consistent with their general philosophy of allowing full free-play to the market forces.

We, on the other hand, are always trying to do too much, and end up frustrating the real objectives. The state feels it necessary to safeguard "the interests of public decency and morality" (embodied in Article 19 of the Constitution) by setting up watch-dog bodies such as the 21-member Stage Performances Scrutiny Board established in 1954.

Instead of being totally concerned with raising general standards of performances, having new theatres etc. we end up trying to strangle ourselves! If we were honest with ourselves, we should really be saying to ourselves: 'Now look here, we are Indians (and proud to be so) living in the year 1986. In our own individual right we are as good as anyone anywhere in the world. We have good minds that are capable of imbibing the best this world has to offer. Let us concentrate on moving steadily forward. Let us not burden our shoulders with shackles of the mind. We are each capable of understanding what we like and what we don't and are also capable of doing something, if necessary, about it. We would like our country's and states' governments respectively to get on with the business of helping the country to forge ahead. We would also like to get to the 21st century on par with the rest of the world. Let us jettison all the cant and the useless committees and the useless rules and the prejudices and the humbug. We are a mature people – let us show it.'

If it were possible for all of us to say this, and start acting accordingly then silly little things like censorship could be taken by the scruff of the neck and flung out of the window. Why should we have people sitting in judgement on the works of others from any standpoint at all? If the people who come to see the play don't like it, pretty soon that play is going to collapse anyway. The Theatre is the ultimate interaction between performer and audience – a two-way interaction – so let us leave it to the mechanics and the physics and the chemistry and the magic of that mystery. All else is nothing.

MR. VIJAY CRISHNA is a well-known stage actor and playwright.

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Theatre as Political Dissent: The Kenyan Experience

A Government may try to suppress dissent but no government can suppress self-expression by a whole people. As Ngugi says: "The Kamirithu idea can never die. It will grow."

Padma Srinivasan

October 20, 1952 is dearly remembered by the common village and townsfolk of Kenya as Man Man Freedom Fighters' Day. On that day their most heroic leader Dedan Kimathi led the Kenya Land and Freedom Army on to an armed struggle against the brutal rule of British settlers. The struggle lasted for 10 long years. In the words of one of Kenya's senior historians, Maina-Wa-Kinyatti, "Mau Mau was the peak of African nationalism in Kenya". The songs, which have in them "the very flames of war", are still on everyone's lips. For the peasants and workers of Kenya the memory of the struggle is a living, burning one.

Embarrassing History

But this phase of history has been a continuing embarrassment for the Government and political elites who, at independence, stepped into the white men's shoes, maintained the *status quo* and revived the tyrannical colonial laws. African elites inherited the big farms of the British settlers and often evicted the sons of the soil as illegal squatters. The latter were turned on the road with their belongings, their children, their cattle, their goods and everything. For the common people, *Uhuru* brought only flag independence.

The Government, which came to power because the freedom fighters had laid down their lives in the forests and the mountains, began to feel uncomfortable whenever references were made to the sufferings and sacrifices of these martyrs. Efforts were made to discredit and ignore the freedom struggle. Eminent scholars lent a helping hand with learned interpretations and conclusions that Mau Mau was a sectarian revolt and not the pivot of Kenya nationalism. Such efforts rarely go unrewarded. During a debate in Parliament on charges of discrimination against forest fighters, Ole Tiptip (the Assistant Minister for Commerce and Industry) said: "I believe we obtained our independence in a very nice way at the instigation of the

British Government but not through fighting in the forest!" The ruling elites have been hoping that this embarrassing phase of history – viz. the freedom struggle – will quietly be forgotten and that they can continue to enjoy their mansions, their Mercedes Benz, their luxuriant plantations and their lucrative businesses undisturbed by the masses. But the people have not forgotten.

The Struggle for Self-expression:

Their hunger and their helplessness in shanty towns and make-shift villages is a stark, everpresent reality. It is the reality of the betrayal of the people and their revolution. In the writings of Ngugi wa Thiong'o we see the urge of the common people for self-expression. In his village of Kamirithu, where poverty reigned, was a ruined youth centre where goats grazed amid broken walls. The villagers decided to form a committee and revive the activities of the place under the new name of Kamirithu Community Education and Cultural Centre. They wished to uplift the place and change the lives of the villagers. The Committee felt that money was less important than hands and brains. The committee thought of adult education (adult literacy, continuing education, etc.), cultural development (music, dance, drama, etc.), material culture (furniture, basketry, leather-work, music-crafts, etc.) and health. The process of decision-making was to be democratic and collective, with each member drawing on his special experience in identifying and tackling problems. There were sub-committees for education and culture. Ngugi was elected chairman for the latter. The villagers were specially keen about plays. Besides entertainment and self-expression, they could raise money for day-to-day expenses like chalk, writing materials and electricity bills. All this happened in 1976. By April 1977, Ngugi brought to the Centre the outline of the script of a play called *Ngaahika Ndeenda*, "I will marry when I want".



The script was Ngugi's only in its barest essentials, for the peasants soon made it their own, altering this and adding that. They hoped to have the actual performances five months later, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the declaration of the State of Emergency in Kenya and the beginning of the Mau Mau armed struggle. They worked with great enthusiasm and discipline. They gave up drinking alcohol. Ngugi became an observer of the intoxicating power of collective self-expression in the village. He says: "I saw with my own eyes peasants, some of whom had never once been inside a theatre in their lives, design and construct an open-air theatre complete with a raised stage, roofed dressing-rooms and stores, and an auditorium with a seating capacity of more than two thousands persons." They had a dress rehearsal on September 25, 1977 which drew a vast crowd. After four months of sustained work, the final performance was one in which the actors communicated their joyous sense of a new power to the audience.

The Government Strikes

With the sure instinct of all dictatorships the Government struck a blow at all this dangerous activity. On December 16, 1977 the district commissioner at Kiambu withdrew the licence for further performances of *Ngaahika Ndeenda*. The

villagers were plunged into depression. Later he explained that this was done in the interests of public security. How does creativity affect public security? Kenyatta's Government arrested Ngugi at midnight on December 30-31, 1977. In his prison-notes he writes: "But I searched every corner of my mind and heart to see if I could find a speck of wrong-doing in joining hands with Kamirithu peasants and workers in our open democratic venture of building our village, and I could find not the slightest trace of wrong to challenge my conscience".

At the time of Ngugi's arrest there was the following exchange between him and the prison superintendent which gives us a clue regarding the psychology of dictators. The polite, young superintendent says: "I have read all your books. I was planning to come to see *Ngaahika Ndeenda*. Then I read in the papers about the ban. Tell me, why really did they bring you to this place".

"I don't know", says Ngugi. "But it could be because of *Ngaahika Ndeenda*".

"What's wrong with the play? What was it about?"

"Our history. The lives of peasants and workers".

"What's wrong with that?" "I don't know!"

"No, there must have been something else", he says, as if he is talking to himself. Then he suddenly shoots a question which is also a statement of his lingering doubts: "Tell me the truth, was the play really being acted by workers and peasants?" "Yes. They all came from Kamirithu village!"

It appears, as Ngugi says, that there are some people who seem to be scared of any independent cultural initiatives by the people.

The People Rise Again

In 1977-78 it might have appeared that the Kamirithu phenomenon was a local one, in spite of the fact that enthusiasm for drama was catching on. Even one of Ngugi's prison warders had been wanting to see it. The ban, followed by the novelist's detention, created a stir in both national and international academic circles. The people of Africa have an inborn flair for music, mime and acting. So, it is natural that the African people's theatre should reflect the drama of real life. Yet, in spite of the ban and detention, the events connected with Kamirithu Theatre would still seem to us minor, local ones had it not been for the great resurgence of enthusiasm throughout Kenya for a subsequent play in 1982. This new play

was called *Maitu Njugira* (Mother, Sing for Me). It is because of the resurgence of 1982 that the events of 1977 can be seen correctly as epitomizing the awakening of national consciousness itself.

Ngugi had been at it again. This time, his bare script told the story of a plantation, where the white settler is shot by one of his workers, because of his ruthless oppression, and is succeeded by a Kenyan, who continues the oppression of the people in the same way as his predecessor. As before, the peasants and workers of Kamirithu threw themselves into its production and direction with an even deeper sense of involvement. To transcend language barriers the play was rigged up as a musical, full of song, dance and mime. While they awaited the Government's permission for the public performance at the Kenya National Theatre at Nairobi, they continued their rehearsals at the University. The workers and peasants of Kamirithu recreated the play through collective discussion - 'let us try this' and 'let us try that'. And, Ngugi tells us, some of the results were extremely beautiful. These rehearsals on the University campus began to attract vast crowds which travelled from distant places such as Mombassa in hired buses. By 3 p.m. the hall was overflowing with people, waiting for the rehearsal to begin at 6.30 p.m.

During the practice, the audience would often stream onto the stage and join the dancing. Everybody had been profoundly moved with feelings of sadness as well as hope at the thought: 'We are *one* people, we are all Kenyans'. The audience did not like the pessimistic ending of the play and they rejected it, for, Ngugi tells us, "They felt that they had to show that despite the tremendous oppression the struggle continues. The fact that one was defeated did not mean that one could not rise up again and continue the struggle." The play had touched a deep chord in the nation's heart; hence the involvement. When someone wondered how village folk could act in such an outstanding way, people said: 'They did not perform. They were themselves!'

The rehearsals had been going on for barely a week when twelve to fifteen thousand people from all walks of life managed to see it. There had been no advertisements, not a single poster, but just word of mouth. It was a kind of national occasion. Indeed theatre had begun to sweep up a great wave of consciousness among all Kenya's peoples as one nation.

But what of the licence? Government's response to the repeated requests for permission was sullen silence. Then it began a brutal campaign of cultural and political repression. It refused to allow the Kamirithu Theatre Group to enter the Kenya National Theatre for the final performance. A squad of armed policemen was at the ready to oust the group of peasants and workers, should they try to force their way into the theatre. Three weeks later, Moi's Government sent three truckloads of armed policemen to Kamirithu Community Education and Cultural Centre and razed the open air theatre to the ground. The previous day the regime had deregistered the Centre and banned all drama and theatre activities in the areas. Several University professors and journalists were arrested. Later, outspoken politicians like George Anyona were detained. A brave lawyer named Khaminwa, who dared to take up the cases of these detainees, was detained without trial.

Follow-my-Footsteps

The first six months of 1982 witnesses an unprecedented wave of repression. Moi has set the policy of *Nyayoim* (follow-my-footsteps) before the nation; they cannot ask: 'where are you leading us?' for that would be treason. It is also treason to question the presence of foreign military bases or of foreigners (from Britain, U.S. and Israel) on Kenyan soil. And it is treason to criticise British deeds in colonial Kenya or dwell, in one's lectures or writings, on the brave resistance by the common people to colonial rule. This wave of repression against an innocent nation provoked the *coup* of August 1, 1982. The Government took the opportunity to tell the world how right it had been in taking stern measures. It was also a good chance to make more arrests and silence critics.

But how long can it keep the lid down on a boiling cauldron? A government may try to suppress dissent but no government can suppress self-expression by a whole people. As Ngugi says: "The Kamirithu idea can never die. It will grow."

Dr. Padma Srinivasan is lecturer in the Centre of East African Studies, University of Bombay

THOU SHALT NOT READ

John le Caré, Ian Fleming, Hedrick Smith and Abou Bakr Belkheir are among those whose books have been banned in The People's Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville)

Index on Censorship 5/86

An Old Story Retold

Readers will recall Prof. Ookerjee's article in the last issue of *Freedom First* on the new education policy without a copy of the policy available to him. Soon thereafter we received from Mr. H.M. Patel M.P., the draft policy along with the parliamentary debate on this issue. On our request Prof. Ookerjee agreed to comment on the draft, which we publish below. Ed.

S.K. Ookerjee

The trouble with the Draft is that most of its policy statements are so general and so obvious that without strategies being worked out, they are, most often vacuous clichés...

'All teachers should teach and all students study' (7.2), declares the Draft National Policy on Education — 1986 (the 'Draft'), which implies; of course, that all of them don't. The aim of the new Policy is to make them. An old, old story — at least half a century old — is once again warmed up and served. The Radhakrishnan Report said it all in 1949 and the Kothari Commission said it in 1966. The tone has always been one of urgency: 'Urgent steps will be taken to protect the system from degradation' (5.27). Before 'degradation', 'further' should, of course, be inserted. Limiting myself to 'higher education', I can say that the various aspects of the 'degradation' or deterioration have always been clearly spelt out and the directions (repeat, directions) in which repairs should be carried out have been indicated. It is when we come to specific and concrete actions that we have always been stumped: either we cannot discover or decide what steps to take or, knowing these, our efforts, such as they are, get thwarted by forces we cannot resist.

We know, for example, that there should be 'de-emphasis on memorisation' and there should be 'continuous...evaluation...spread over the total span of instructional time' and

that we should 'promote the reading habit' (8.24, 8.8). The Kothari Commission has said it all. What the Draft has omitted the debate in Parliament has supplied: "In a recent survey it was noticed that 70 per cent of those present in the classroom are mentally absent", said a member, and "about 62 per cent of the students retain their interest for the first 15 minutes and some of them do not even know the subject the teacher is teaching". It should be added that those who don't attend classes even physically form a high percentage.

There are certain specific steps which have again and again been suggested and are entirely feasible: 'improvement in the conduct of examinations' and 'the introduction of the semester system' (8.24) and, much more effective, a drastic change in the style of the question papers, which would necessarily entail different kind of answers, answers that would encourage the reading habit, make mere memorisation irrelevant and unrewarding and would make classroom attendance (physical and mental) worth while. But let even a whisper get around that such changes are contemplated, and you will face adverse student reactions, protests from student-bodies that you are tampering with long-cherished traditions; vice-chancellors will be besieged and violence will erupt on the campus. And then the authorities will surrender, the vice-chancellors will be released (with dignity unimpaired), we will be back to square one (or zero) and all will be happy. It would have been a great step forward if the Draft had annunciated a clear policy that once certain measures had been decided upon, after due deliberation, in the interest of sound education, they would be implemented come what may and (as we are fond of saying) without fear or favour. 'Great

universities and timid people go ill together', said the Kothari Commission in 1966. Twenty years later we still have many timid people; do we have great universities? The Draft says that the U.G.C. and the Councils of Higher Education (to be set up) will develop 'Methods to keep watch on standards' (5.30), but is silent on what they will do if the standards do not rise or even fall. Here, too, some unambiguous policy statement would have been welcome.

The suggestion to increase the 'flexibility in the combination of courses' (5.29) is a positive one and would certainly be effective in counteracting the students' boredom with their studies and all the ills that follow from this major sickness. 'More flexibility in courses offered and greater freedom of choice of subjects' was recommended even by the Kothari Commission. Here, at least, is something that can be implemented without difficulty and surely without objections from the students. It is only our innate conservatism that stops us from going all the way with this suggestion.

As in the past, much is said about the teachers. 'The pay and service conditions of teachers have to be commensurate with their social and professional responsibilities and with the need to attract talent' (9.2). 'Teachers should have the freedom to innovate, to devise appropriate methods of communication' (9.1). In the parliamentary debate also similar views were expressed: "The teachers' dissatisfaction is directly responsible for the deterioration in education. A teacher with a banner in his hand and a slogan in his mouth is never an asset for any institution", said a member. (There are implications here which the honourable member perhaps did not have in mind.) However, apart from such beautiful but vague sentiments,

The numbers in brackets are the paragraph numbers of the Draft National Policy on Education — 1986.

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the Draft has not expressed any clear opinion as to how the above-mentioned commensurability is to be computed or laid down any policy regarding the principles according to which pay-scales should be fixed, the periods at which they should be revised, the inexplicable disparity between the emoluments of college and university teachers (the former doing more work and getting less pay than the latter!) and the work-load.

It is utterly lacking in imagination and even cruel to expect the teachers to innovate and devise new methods when their salaries are not only incommensurate with their responsibilities but are barely sufficient to keep together their bodies and souls (if they still have them) and when they are not only burdened with an absurdly heavy lecture-load but quake under the perpetual threat of its increase. The Draft maintains a strategic silence on the question of work-load. There is no assurance that increase in pay will depend only on the rise in prices and will not be linked up with more work, no assurance that agreements reached from time to time between teacher-bodies and the government will be honoured by the government and not unilaterally altered by petty officials according to their whims and without the slightest notion about the nature and requirements of higher education. When all efforts at reasonable persuasion fail and no notice is taken of their genuine woes and views, what can the teachers do but have banners in their hands and slogans in their

mouths? "For a bit of a thing they should not go out in the streets", says a Member of Parliament. Mind you, only a bit of a thing!

Keeping all that I have said in mind, it seems somewhat incongruous to talk of 'the erosion of essential values' and 'the cultivation of social, ethical and moral' values' (8.4-6). This has always been our obsession – we think that values can be 'taught' or 'inculcated' without trying, in our day-to-day educational business, to act in keeping with those 'essential values' we talk about or to do anything to preserve them. The Kothari Commission recommended 'education in moral, social and spiritual values', with some periods set aside for the purpose. The Radhakrishnan Report had a whole chapter on 'Religious Education' which ultimately boiled down to plain moral education, because the Report discovered that 'religion cannot be imparted in the form of lessons...measured in hourly doses' (Ch. VIII). It didn't realise that neither can morality. It certainly cannot be, as the Report suggested, by the reading of great lives and great literature 'in hourly doses'.

While, on the one hand, the Draft says that 'value education should help to eliminate obscurantism,... superstition and fatalism' (8.6), it also, on the other hand, says that 'the role of old masters, who train pupils through traditional modes, will be supported' (8.2). I cannot pretend that I know how to inter-

pret this dark saying, but if it means the ancient system of uncritically accepting and memorising what an 'old master' says, then I don't know if the two suggestions can be comfortable bed-fellows. In fact, the Draft – not unlike the earlier ventures of the same kind – is keen on performing a difficult balancing trick – bringing about 'the fine synthesis between change-oriented technologies and the country's continuity of cultural traditions' (8.1) without having quite worked out all the implications and realised the pitfalls.

Defending the Draft, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao said in Parliament:

"Now, someone may ask me: 'Where is your strategy? Where is your plan of action?' Well, I must say 'I wanted the policy to be first approved. How do I prepare a strategy before finalising the policy?'"

But the line dividing policies and strategies is a fuzzy one. The trouble with the Draft is that most of its policy statements are so general and so obvious that, without the strategies being worked out, they are, most often, just vacuous *cliches* and, as the Parliamentary debate shows, they do not provoke much discussion. Who could find fault with the idea that there should be reform of examinations, that students should be made to read *et cetera*? The whole question is, How? Let us wait, then, till Shri Narasimha Rao prepares a strategy.

* I would very much like to know the difference between 'moral' and 'ethical' values.



Senator Giovanni Malagodi

In the July issue of *Freedom First* we had carried Senator Malagodi's article "The Maintenance of Freedom." Through an oversight we published on that page a photograph of another illustrious Liberal, Gopal Krishna Gokhale which ought to have appeared on page 29. Our apologies to Senator Malagodi whose picture we publish.

Ed

AN OUTGROWN DILEMMA (1950)

ARTHUR KOESTLER

THE ANTINOMIES "Socialism and Capitalism", "Left and Right", are rapidly becoming meaningless, and so long as Europe remains bogged down in these false alternatives which obstruct clear thinking, it cannot hope to find a constructive solution for its problems

At first sight the alternative "Capitalism or Socialism" appears much more concrete and meaningful than "Right or Left." But on closer inspection it will be found that the term "Socialism" has suffered a semantic decay similar to that of the "Left," German National Socialism, Russian Soviet Socialism, French Socialism which is Marxist with a pinch of salt, British Socialism which is Christian, non-Marxist, Fabianist, and heaven knows what, all derive their emotional dynamism from the fetish-power of the same word, attached to quite different meanings.

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Dr. M.R. Jayakar

V.B. Kulkarni

Mukundrao Ramrao Jayakar was born and brought up at a time when Britain had reached the pinnacle of her imperial glory, holding a quarter of the globe in fee. While in its prime the Roman Empire consisted perhaps of 120 million people and an area of 2.5 million square miles, the British empire comprised in the days of Queen Victoria 372 million people living in eleven million square miles — ninety-one times the area of Great Britain¹. The rulers of such a mighty empire, the largest ever known to mankind, had persuaded themselves that, while everything else in the affairs of men was transitory, their dominion alone was durable and ever-lasting! They looked upon India as the pivot of their overseas possessions, dismissing with disdain the wise observation of Turgot, the French statesman of the eighteenth century, that colonies were like fruits which clung to the tree only till they ripened. They accordingly formulated policies in the hope of ensuring that the Indian fruit would never ripen!

Though formidable, the Indian uprising of 1857 was certainly not aimed at frustrating such imperialist designs on the part of Britain. The leaderless insurgents knew what they did not want but were wholly ignorant about how the country should be administered in the impossible event of their success in expelling the foreigners. Besides staying away from the uprising, the English-educated class, which had gained direct access to the immense storehouse of Western knowledge and appreciated its value for a national renaissance, was convinced that any premature withdrawal of the British would not be in the best interests of their motherland.

The new rulers had suppressed widespread violence and disorder and had

brought the entire subcontinent within the frame of a single government based on the rule of law. The doctrine that no person could be arrested or imprisoned without the due process of the law and the concept of personal liberty enshrined in the writ of *habeas corpus* were the most precious innovations in the Indian political system. Perhaps, for the first time in India's annals, it was the *government* that became more important than the man or men that headed it. None could claim immunity from the laws of the land and none could escape the consequences of defying them.

Jayakar was brought up in a family which had not only long traditions of ancient Indian learning but which fully appreciated the value of Western enlightenment. His maternal grandfather, Vasudev Jagannath Kirtikar, under whose roof he grew up, was a great Sanskrit scholar, an eminent lawyer and

a man of sterling personal rectitude. He watched over the upbringing of his grandson with the unsleeping eyes of Argus and at his death in 1911 he had the supreme consummation of ample reward for his labours. Jayakar, who was born in Bombay on November 13, 1873, was equally fortunate in his mother Sonabai who inspired in him a deep devotion to the immemorial pieties of the land and admiration for the heroes of the great Epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. Besides awakening in him a profound respect for his country's ancient heritage, she encouraged him to study the life and achievements of Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha empire. Widowed at an early age, Sonabai was forced to take shelter with her son under the roof of her father. She never wearied in reminding her son that the affluence amidst which he was growing up was not his and that he should lead a life of utter simplicity. Jayakar, whose attitude towards his mother was one of deep respect and affection, never deviated from her salutary advice.



Kirtikar's reputation as a great scholar and a leading lawyer vastly helped his grandson to establish close relations with some of the outstanding men of his times. Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842-1901), of whom it can be truly said, as Walter Bagehot observed about Palmerston, that "his personality was a power", was a frequent visitor to Kirtikar's residence at Lonavla, a health resort near Bombay. Described by A.O. Hume, the founder of the Indian National Congress, as "the great god Mahadeo" and acclaimed by Welby, another well-wisher of India, as "Socrates", this man of massive learning loved to hold wide-ranging discussions

with Kirtikar. Jayakar, who sat at the feet of the two masters, felt vastly enlightened by their illuminating conversation. Ranade has gone down in history as "the father of public life in Maharashtra"² Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915), who regarded Ranade as his exemplar, himself was a man of gigantic stature besides being a great institution-builder. He founded the Servants of India Society in 1905 in order to create a band of selfless men totally dedicated to the cause of their motherland. Gokhale invited Jayakar to join his Society, but the young man politely declined the honour on the ground that "the price required would be total renunciation of every other pursuit". Being a man of varied interests, he felt that he would not be of much help to an institution that was scarcely distinguishable from the Society of Jesus. He, however, hoped that Gokhale would not give him up as a "lost soul and deprive me of all touch with you and your noble work"³.

Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), the *bete noire* of the British bureaucracy, was cast in an entirely different mould. He did not share the belief of either Ranade or Gokhale that the British would voluntarily relinquish their sovereignty over India and retire gracefully to their island home. Since he was convinced that freedom could be won only through sacrifice, he wrote spirited political articles in the two weeklies specially started by him for this purpose. Jayakar looked upon him as his *Beau Ideal* and came closer to him than to the other two leaders, one of the reasons being that Tilak lived longer than they. Jayakar, to whom the death of Tilak in August 1920 was little short of a personal bereavement, admired his senior not only because of his scholarship and combative spirit but also because of his utter indifference to political ambition. Asked what he proposed to do after India came into her own, the great man said in all humility "I would teach mathematics for the rest of my life"⁴. If in the India of today there are such self-abnegating politicians, they are truly the salt of the earth.

Jayakar was essentially a man of temperate political views, but it was impossible for him to withhold his admiration from the patriotic revolutionaries who cheerfully flung their lives at the altar of their motherland. Wasudev Balwant Phadke, described by an eminent historian as the father of militant

nationalism in India, raised the standard of revolt in 1878-79 near Poona. Although it was easily suppressed, it made a profound impression on the mind of Jayakar despite his being barely six years old at that time. In later years, he came to know many revolutionaries, including Shyamaji Krishnavarma, an affluent scholar who had settled down in Britain and became the mainstay of militant young Indians visiting that country. Jayakar's relations with Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, that prince among Indian revolutionaries, were close and cordial. He knew that Savarkar's life was indeed a saga of leonine courage and incredible suffering and sacrifice. He was, however, convinced that the goal of national emancipation could not be achieved by the self-immolation of individuals. Other methods had to be found and practised. It was left to Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi to discover and enforce them. Jayakar's personal relations with the Mahatma and his attitude towards the latter's political philosophy will be discussed later in the course of this article.

Jayakar, who followed in the footsteps of his grandfather by entering the legal profession, was sworn in as an advocate of the Bombay High Court on April 17, 1905. In his time, the Bombay Bar abounded in legal giants but he had little difficulty in rising to the top, thanks to his sound knowledge of law and persuasive eloquence. His mastery over Sanskrit greatly helped him to become a widely-acknowledged authority on Hindu Law. He assisted the famous commentator on Hindu Law, Dinshaw Mulla, in writing the chapter on *Stridhan*, dealing with woman's peculium. It is the most complicated branch of Hindu Law. Mulla gratefully acknowledged his indebtedness to Jayakar for dispelling "the cloud of obscurity hanging round it" and for placing "it in a clear cut form before the reader"⁵. Jayakar did not devote all his time to his profession, since politics, philosophy, literature, art and music had as much attraction for him as law. Even so, he effortlessly earned as much as Rs.16,000 to Rs.18,000 a month — a sum of money which constituted a sizable fortune in those days. He had specialised in the law of adoption which provided an almost unlimited scope for litigation. Since adoption disputes arose mostly in rich families, lawyers versed in this branch of Hindu Law reaped a rich

harvest. Jayakar deplored such a sorry state of affairs and recorded his unhappiness over the increasing impoverishment of well-to-do Hindu families.

After practising law for thirty-two years, he accepted the Judgeship of the Federal Court of India in October 1937. The work in the Court was too little to keep him fully engaged which forced him to withdraw from it and accepted in January 1939 an even more exalted position as a member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. At a time when the war was deciding the future of mankind, it was impossible for him to absent himself from his motherland. He accordingly bade farewell to his colleagues on the Bench in March 1942 and returned to India to participate in its fateful politics.

Jayakar, who claimed that he was a "responsive co-operationist", did not believe in boycotting the legislatures created under the Montford Reforms, although he knew that they contained no embers that could be fanned into a heart-warming flame. He entered the Bombay Legislative Council in February 1924 and moved into the wider arena of the Legislative Assembly at New Delhi in November 1926 by defeating a Congress candidate. Whether the proceedings related to coal or constitution, his participation in them was invariably illuminating and instructive. The Treasury Benches heard him with deep respect not only because there was a spell-binding charm in his speeches but also because he spoke with knowledge and authority. In September 1927 he strongly supported Rai Sahib Harbilas Sarada's bill seeking to prohibit child marriage. Earlier on March 15 of the same year he made an impassioned plea for throwing the King's Commissions wide open to Indians in the Army. He was most forthright in his denunciation of the Public Safety Bill which sought to arm the Executive with Draconian powers to suppress the growing power of industrial labour. The Speaker, Vithalbhai Patel's ruling on the Bill on April 11, 1929 declaring it out of order was regarded as a great victory for Indian nationalism. Undaunted by the rebuff the bureaucracy, however, managed to get the hated legislation put on the statute book through the Viceroy's Ordinance. Throughout his public life during the British period, Jayakar was confronted by such official arbitrariness, but moderation remained his sheet-anchor.

Jayakar's attitude towards Mahatma Gandhi was strangely ambivalent. He admired the Mahatma as an unsurpassed galvaniser of national political life and as a man of flawless character. He once told his friend, Barrister A.G. Mulgaonkar "I differ from Gandhi violently, but if he asks me to jump out of this window, I shall do it." Even after he left the Congress and became a leading member of the National Liberal Federation, he never wavered in his friendship for the Mahatma. His differences with Gandhi were entirely political since he sincerely felt that methods like Satyagraha and mass movement were most likely to mortgage heavily the future of the country to forces of anarchy. But Whitehall's India policy gave the Mahatma no other option. As a disciple of Gokhale, he too realised the value of constitutionalism and moderation, but when he saw that the Congress had drawn a blank although it had practised it most scrupulously since its establishment in 1885, he felt that recourse to some other course of action had become imperative. Sir Samuel Hoare, later Lord Templewood, Secretary of State for India and the architect of the Government of India Act of 1935, the last British statute on Indian constitutional reforms, admitted that Gandhi was most reasonable at the second Round Table Conference in his political demands but they were turned down. Even when the British empire was at the stage of total disintegration, that sublime reactionary, Winston Churchill, told his favourite colleague, Anthony Eden "what a calamity it would be to win the war and lose India". Gandhi was thus forced to adopt his new technique which would have been wholly unnecessary if Whitehall had been true to its own commitments. Besides, since the Mahatma's methods were founded on high moral principles, his campaigns ought to be regarded as *extra* rather than anti-constitutional. Indeed, he "brought in the moral law to supplement rather than supplant official law and thus saved India during the British period from large-scale terrorism, massacre and race hatred".

Jayakar and his respected colleague, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, took upon themselves the two-fold task of bringing pressure to bear on Whitehall to hasten the pace of Indian political reforms and at the same time of promoting reconciliation between the Government and

the Congress, especially when the latter launched its mass movements from time to time. Sapru was indeed a Titan and it has been well said of him that there were none above him and few near him. The two men, to whom moderation was an article of faith, played a vital role at the three Round Table Conferences in London. At the first session lasting from November, 12, 1930 to January 19, 1931, the Congress was not represented, but, as Professor Sir Reginald Coupland points out, its point of view was ably presented by Jayakar since among the group of Indian Liberals at the Conference he knew its mind best. Both he and Sapru played a crucial role in bringing Gandhi and the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, together which led to the signing of the famous Pact of March 5, 1931. The agreement facilitated the presence of the Mahatma at the second round of talks in London lasting from September 7, 1931 to December 1, 1931. Though widely recognised as the true representative of India, Gandhi gained nothing for the country by his participation in the deliberations since there was a well-planned conspiracy among the reactionaries at the conference to ensure the failure of his mission. The two Liberal inseparables tried in vain to gain some tangible political concessions for their motherland by presenting a closely-reasoned memorandum at the third and last session of the conference on December 27, 1932. Their unremitting labour during the second world war towards this end proved equally futile. The observations of Lord Listowel, the last Secretary of State for India, provide a fitting conclusion to this discussion. Stating that Gandhi was the "voice of the majority" at the London Conference in 1931, he calls attention to the fact that "British statesmanship at the pre-war decade was at the lowest ebb." He asserts that the transfer of power in 1947 was "no more than a mitigation of the failure of British policy to part with it earlier, and to a united India."¹⁰

Politics was the life-breath of Jayakar but he found no use for it in free India. He was a member of the Constituent Assembly but could make no significant contribution to its proceedings. Age never weakened his zeal for work. In fact, he was by temperament one whom life consumed but rest killed. He was an indefatigable diarist and kept a record of his activities which is probably

equalled by few for its sheer magnitude and meticulous details. It is a measure of his industry and passion for chronicling that as many as 1,158 files of his correspondence have been deposited with the National Archives in New Delhi. In addition, he has left behind a stupendous volume of valuable material so that one probably requires one's whole lifetime in order to study the entire mass of documents thoroughly. Jayakar played a key role in the establishment of the University of Poona and was its first honorary Vice-Chancellor from 1948 till his retirement in April 1956. He loved the good things of life and was an admirable host, some of his guests being Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru and Sir Maurice Gwyer, Chief Justice of India. He was a generous giver and deserving institutions never appealed to him in vain for financial assistance. His long and eventful life came to an end in Bombay on March 10, 1959. The National Liberal Federation has faded out of existence but the ideas and ideals for which its members stood are imperishable. Personal integrity, restraint, tolerance, pragmatism and an enlightened mind are the true hallmarks of liberalism. India will be twice blessed if only its present rulers realise the value of these principles in its governance.

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Mr. V.B. KULKARNI is a well known journalist.

the biggest selling magazine which reaches some 50 million Americans a week, is *TV Guide*

The Economist,
September 27

Alarm Signals from the Farm Front

Bhanu Pratap Singh

Why do large areas of our cultivable land remain uncultivated? Why are our farmers reluctant to intensify their cultivation? And, in the light of poor utilization of potential already created is investment of huge sums of money on major and medium irrigation works justified?

The Green Revolution, that was ushered in with great fanfare, has petered out, unnoticed. It has turned out, that the average annual growth rates of production of all crop groups have been slower in the post-green revolution period than in the pre-revolution years. What is even worse, if we divide the post-green revolution period (1970-71 to 1984-85) into three quinquenniums, we find that the growth rate of foodgrains production has been stagnating at about 146 m. tons. Against 180 kgms, the minimum required for adequate nutrition (2400/2100 Cals. per capita per diem), the average annual per capita availability of foodgrains from domestic production in the current year will be more than 168 kgms. A higher per capita availability of foodgrains out of domestic production was achieved as early as 1970-71, and five times subsequently. The thrust for a quicker growth is totally lost. This has happened in spite of larger investments having been made for agricultural development in the later years.

The Government will no doubt try to explain the shortfalls in production by blaming the monsoon. But what have they to say about the declining trend from one quinquennium to another? The monsoon of the current year is yet to unfold its pattern, but anyone who is in touch with rural India can safely predict, that the actual production in 1986-87 will be nowhere near the target fixed for the year. Similarly, one can say, that the target (178-183 m. tons of foodgrains) set for 1989-90, the terminal year of the VII Plan will not be achieved, unless the reasons for the sluggish

growth in agriculture are properly understood, and overcome.

Input Targets Not Fulfilled

Growth in production depends on extension of net area shown, intensity of cultivation, and application of more inputs. During the last 10 years, neither the net areas sown, nor the intensity of cultivation, has increased significantly. The VI Plan targets of additional inputs-use have also not been achieved. Between 1979-80 & 1984-85 consumption of NPK Fertilizers was to be increased by 4.4 m. tons, and irrigated area by 13.6 million hectares. The actual achievements have fallen short of the targets by 1.4 m. tons (31.8%) in fertilizers, and 5.6 million hectares (41.2%) in irrigation. But for these shortfalls, the target of foodgrains production of the VIth Plan would have been more than fulfilled. These shortfalls cannot be explained in term of the

vagaries of the monsoon. The real reason for stagnation in agriculture is that the terms of trade for farmers have been continually becoming more and more adverse. In the following table the declining growth rate of production seems to run parallel to declining indices of real farm and wheat (procurement) prices.

The loss of purchasing power, due to increasingly adverse terms of trade, have prevented the farmers from increasing their inputs-use, which even now is at a very low level. For the same reason, the net sown area as well as the intensity of cultivation have not increased, though there is considerable scope for both.

Hunger Not Due To Shortage Of Land

According to the *Seventh Five Year Plan 1985-90* "Out of our geographical

Declining Growth Rate Of Foodgrains Matches With Declining Real Farm Prices

Quinquenniums	Average Annual Growth Rate of Foodgrain Production	Average Index of Real Farm Prices	Average Index of Real Wheat (Procurement) Prices
1970-75	3.44	95.7	84.7
1975-80	3.11	85.5	72.6
1980-85	2.86	78.9	56.2

Source: Derived from data in "Economic Survey 1985-86"

NOTE: Quinquennium 1970-75 includes years 1970-71 to 1974-75; and so on.

In the above table, five yearly averages of production, as well as of indices of real prices have been used for comparison, to even out any fluctuations due to weather aberration. Indices of "Real Farm" and "Real Wheat (Procurement)" prices, which represent the purchasing power of "All Farm Products" and "Wheat (Procurement)" in terms of all non-farm products have been obtained by dividing the price indices of "All Farm Products" and "Wheat (Procurement)" by indices of "All Non-Farm Products" and multiplying the quotients by 100.

area of about 329 m. hectares, the cultivable area, net sown area, and gross cropped area comprise 186 m. hectares, 143 m. hectares, and 175 m. hectares respectively". From this it follows, that 43 m. hectares of cultivable land remain uncultivated. This area is about 23 percent of our total cultivable area, and more than the total area of arable lands in four countries, viz. Pakistan, Nepal, Bangla Desh, and Japan, which support a population of over 300 million. Further, our double cropped area is only 175 minus 143 = 32 million hectares, against 62 m. hectares, which is now claimed to be irrigated. Also, nearly one-third of the country receives annually more than 1000 mm of rain, which is sufficient to grow two crops in a year, if nature's bounty is properly conserved. Why, inspite of these natural advantages, as well as the huge irrigation potential that has been created, has the intensity of cultivation in India remained as low as $175/143 = 1.22$? The intensity of cultivation in 1950-51 was 1.11. Since then irrigation potential has increased three-fold, but intensity of cultivation by only 10 percent. These facts should make our planners sit up and think: (1) Why do large areas of our cultivable land remain uncultivated; (2) why are our farmers reluctant to intensify their cultivation; and (3) whether in the light of poor utilization of potential already created investment of huge sums of money on major and medium irrigation works is justified?

It is estimated that nearly 800 million people in the world today suffer from hunger, out of which nearly one-third live in India. In the face of such world-wide hunger, the U.S.A. is quite often blamed for laying off huge areas (giving subsidy to farmers for not cultivating part of their land), which could otherwise produce foodgrains to feed the hungry millions of the world. But what about India, which is doing the same — though informally — i.e. leaving uncultivated 23 percent of its cultivable land, and cultivating the rest most indifferently. The reason for laying off in U.S.A. and leaving vast stretches of land uncultivated in India is the same; i.e. that foodgrains, like all other commodities, for example coal, steel, cement, fertilizers and electricity, cannot be produced and made available to the poor, at prices that they can afford. The fault lies not with the farmers, whether they are Americans or Indians, but with the economic systems of those countries — in-



cluding India — which have produced millions of unemployed, who lack purchasing power to buy two square meals for themselves.

The Other View

Now let us look at the situation from another angle. In spite of reduced production in 1984-85 and 1985-86, procurement of foodgrain by Government in these two years has gone up, instead of coming down. Together with carry-over stocks, the F.C.I. is now holding nearly 30 million tons, for which there are few buyers in India and abroad. One of the reasons for poor off-take, for public consumption from the F.C.I. godowns is the high price, and poor quality of its stock. Till recently, it was offering its wheat at Rs. 222 per quintal — now reduced to Rs. 205/- when better quality wheat was freely available in the open market at less than Rs. 200 per quintal. Subsidy to the F.C.I. has failed to compete with private trade, and provide any relief to the poor in the form of lower prices. Whatever be the reason, the fact is that the huge stocks held in

The "Three Times" Claim

Addressing a Kisan rally in Delhi on Feb. 16, 1981, Shrimati Indira Gandhi had stated, that India was the only country in the world, whose food production had risen three times in thirty years, and that India had become self-sufficient in foodgrains. Following in the footsteps of her mother, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, addressing from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the last anniversary of Independence Day, repeated the same claim of India having increased her food production three times between 1950 and 1985.

Shrimati Indira Gandhi was, of course, totally wrong in making the claim. In the thirty years between 1950-51 and 1980-81, foodgrain production had risen by only 2.3 times, and not 3. As regards her claim of self-sufficiency India imported foodgrains in all the four years, she remained in office. Shri Rajiv Gandhi, though making the same claim five and half years later, is only less wrong than his mother. During the thirty five years from 1950-51 to 1984-85, the minimum production of foodgrains was 54.9 m. tons in 1950-51 and the maximum 152.4 m. tons in 1983-84. Even if we compare the maximum with the minimum, the ratio is 2.77 and not 3. But the scientific way of determining the growth-trend is not to compare the maximum with the minimum, but the average production of the first quinquennium (1950-51 to 1954-55) with that of the last (1980-81 to 1984-85). If we do that, we find, that the increase in foodgrains production during the intervening 30 years has been only 2.19 times. In the meantime, population has also increased by 1.89 times. Thus the net gain in 30 years is an increase of 15.87 per cent in per capita availability of foodgrains from our domestic production. But even this increased availability is 7 percent short of the minimum requirement for 'adequate nutrition'. At the rate at which we have moved towards self-sufficiency in foodgrains in the past 30 years, we may be able to make up the shortage of 7 percent by the turn of the century.

(Bhanu Pratap Singh)

Government godowns at enormous cost to the public exchequer, have not helped the poor to eat better.

To sum up, the alarm signals that we are receiving from our farm sector are as follows :

- (1) Slow growth-rate of production, because producers do not have the incentive, or in other words, the savings to invest in land for higher production.
- (2) Huge Government stocks, for which there are few buyers.
- (3) Rapid escalation in subsidy to the F.C.I.
- (4) widespread undernourishment due to lack of purchasing power among large sections of our people.

The response to such a complex situation should not be to let agriculture languish, but to diversify it to produce and process more supplementary foods such as fruits, vegetables, fish, poultry and other animal products, of which there will be a growing demand in India and abroad with rapid urbaniza-

tion and sophistication in tastes. We need to develop an integrated system of production, processing and marketing (including exports) for supplementary foods, on the pattern of the Amul Dairy. In fact, there should be one such complex in every district, if not in every Taluk, to produce, process and market one supplementary food, which can best be produced in that area. Under the suggested production-processing-marketing arrangements, farmers will receive the appropriate inputs and technical advice through the marketing channel, and be able to dispose off their produce at prices, agreed to at the beginning of the production cycle. The arrangement will be similar to that which is being entered into between the National Seeds Corporation and seed growers. This type of integrated production/marketing system will require considerable capital, discipline, a high degree of cooperative spirit, and managerial skill. But if we wish to banish from our land, poverty, unemployment, under-nourishment, and also the perpetual want of foreign exchange, we have no choice but to find the capital,

as well as the talents needed to intensify, diversify, and commercialize our agriculture, which has an almost unlimited potential.

In trying to achieve the potential, we will have created so many jobs for the poor, and put so much purchasing power into their hands, that the widespread hunger of today will become a memory of the past. But transition from low intensity to high intensity agriculture will take some time. During the intervening period, we should revive the "Food for Work" in a big way, and in its original form, because its modified version the "National Rural Employment Programme" suffers from some inherent defects, which have reduced its scope and impact. Suffice it to say, that in one single year 1979-80, more food-grains were utilized under the "Food for Work" programme than in all the five years of the VI Plan, under the "National Rural Employment Programme."

Raymond's Suitings

The ^{Best} guide to the well-dressed male



The Closure of *La Prensa*

Last month the President of the Sandinista Government of Nicaragua, Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra was in India. This great champion of freedom and liberty was wined and dined. Doordarshan viewers were treated to his perorations.

His love for liberty and freedom of the press is evident from the following correspondence between his government and the President of *La Prensa* (the equivalent of our own *Times of India*). It is for our readers to judge the man for whom our rulers rolled out the red carpet. Are we still the land of the Mahatma?

MEDIA DIVISION
Ministry of the Interior
Managua

Managua, June, 26, 1986

Mr. Pablo Antonio Cuadra
Editor
La Prensa

Dear Mr. Editor:

Following higher orders, I inform you that upon receipt of this letter *La Prensa* will be closed for an indefinite period.

Very truly yours,

Captain Nelba Cecilia Blandon
Chief of the Media Division
Ministry of the Interior

***La Prensa* is Closed Communique**

The Media Division of the Ministry of the Interior informs the Nicaraguan people that:

- 1.- The immoral appropriation of 110 million dollars for the contra forces approved by the US Government means the continuation of the war of aggression, now openly declared, which has been encouraged, defended, and even procured by some unpatriotic sectors within our country.
- 2.- While our people gather their strength to confront and defeat the imperialist aggression that has brought death and destruction to the people of Nicaragua, *La Prensa*, acting as the mouthpiece of the aggressors, has increased its provocation and disinformation efforts, in an attempt to justify the American aggression, and has denied the validity of the Contadora Group as the only possible solution to bring peace to Central America.
- 3.- *La Prensa* has never fulfilled its social, ethical, and professional responsibilities and has neglected the social obligations it has, as a newspaper, because it has not mirrored

the common objectives of the people of Nicaragua.

- 4.- On numerous occasions it has violated and ignored the resolutions issued by this Division and has reproduced and disseminated clearly unauthorized material.
- 5.- Despite the repeated warnings given to the management of *La Prensa*, the newspaper continued to show its contempt and disregard for Public Order and Security.
- 6.- Due to all these facts, and based on Decree No. 130 of October 31, 1985, and on Articles 1, 2 and 3 of the General Provisional Media Law and Articles 42, 43 and 46 of the Ordinance of said Law, this Division has resolved to suspend the operations of *La Prensa* for an indefinite period.

Issued in the city of Managua, on the 26th day of June of 1986.

Media Division
Ministry of the Interior

As can be seen from the note sent to *La Prensa* by Captain Blandon, we were told that "following higher orders, I inform you of the closure," whereas the communique published in *Barricada*, the official government newspaper, reads: "this Division has resolved to suspend the operations of *La Prensa* for an indefinite period."

We would like to inform you that the original of said communique never reached us.

La Prensa
Managua, Nicaragua

Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra
President of the Republic
Managua

Commander Ortega:

The order for the indefinite closure of *LA PRENSA*, issued on June 26 by the Media Division of the Ministry of the In-

terior of your government, is arbitrary, illegal, and unfair.

That measure violates the Declaration of Human Rights and Duties signed by all the nations of the Hemisphere, which reads: "Every person has the right to investigate, to form an opinion, and to express and communicate ideas through any medium." It also violates the Fundamental Statute of the right to work because it has brought unemployment to over 230 breadwinners who work for *LA PRENSA*.

Please note, Mr. President, that you are not deceiving anyone with your accusations against *LA PRENSA*. From the very beginning, you personally told journalists that "newspapers such as *LA PRENSA* should disappear." Your accusations are unfounded. The closure of *LA PRENSA* is a carefully orchestrated maneuver against the freedom of expression of all Nicaraguans.

To link your decision to close *LA PRENSA* to the attitude of the American Congress is a mere pretext to institutionalize a totalitarian political system, in opposition to the Western and Christian principles of the people of Nicaragua. After several years, your government can boast of having silenced all the voices that opposed the Sandinista government. First you silenced the broadcasting stations, then the radio station of the Church, and now, after four years of brutal control over the opinions of Nicaraguans, expressed with great difficulty in *LA PRENSA*, it is our newspaper's turn.

LA PRENSA has always been faithful to its motto, "Serving Truth and Justice," and has limited itself to telling the truth inside and outside Nicaragua; it has never let itself be controlled by the opinion or will of others. Issues that only concern Nicaraguans are discussed in free newspapers published outside Nicaragua because you yourself have

imposed such strict controls on the free thinking of all Nicaraguans.

You call yourself a defender of our National Sovereignty but the fact is that with your arbitrariness and excessive power you have jeopardized our sovereignty, because you have turned domestic issues into topics of discussions and decisions abroad. And all because you insist on governing in a dictatorial fashion.

In any case your government is responsible for everything that *LA PRENSA* has published after March of 1982. Your government, practicing one of the most brutal forms of press censorship ever seen in the civilized world, has approved everything that *LA PRENSA* printed after said date. You are totally responsible for the brutal censorship imposed by your government, as well as for its results. Your power should not blind you to your own mistakes.

By closing this last redoubt of civic opposition in Nicaragua, this defender of the rights of Nicaraguans, which were violated by Somoza and now are violated by your government, you are showing that you have opted for totalitarian Communism and that, contrary to what you say, you prefer military solutions. Measures such as the closure of *LA PRENSA* contradict the peaceful attitude that you try to show to the negotiating groups in Nicaragua, and even endanger the right to life of the citizens of Nicaragua, the only right that

the Government, in its effort to control everything, has not taken away from them.

Your Party's radio station, Radio Sandino, slanders us and calls us traitors. Is this by mere chance or is it a logical coincidence? The Somoza regime had called us traitors because we fought in favour of freedom. And the Somoza regime destroyed *LA PRENSA* seven years ago because it considered our newspaper a symbol of the popular opposition to that regime. What led your regime to close *LA PRENSA* indefinitely? Do you fear, perhaps, that the dissatisfaction of the people of Nicaragua is reaching the levels of 1979?

You are closing *LA PRENSA* because you fear the truth. You are afraid that the people of Nicaragua, despite the brutal censorship, despite the continual closures, or perhaps in spite of the closures, will discover the source of their hunger and despair; you fear telling the people of Nicaragua how many innocent people are killed day after day by a civil war that you could end, if you wanted to, and that you started when you betrayed the original democratic goal of the Revolution.

It is true that a civil war is raging in Nicaragua and that it has embroiled both the United States and the U.S.S.R. However, that does not justify the way in which you and your government are controlling fundamental human rights, such as the right to think, to have an opinion, to disagree, or simply to be in-

formed. Commander Ortega, the tradition upheld by *LA PRENSA* in its 60 years of existence has been not to fear wayward power; our Editor, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro Cardenal, lost his life fighting for the freedom of Nicaragua.

Please be assured that Nicaragua will be a Republic once again, with or without your government. You have enormous power and maybe you have forgotten that when we study the history of oppressed people, we cannot find a single repressive system that has lasted long enough to extinguish the aspirations of men willing to fight for their freedom.

As long as *LA PRENSA* remains closed by an act of your government, an act that civilized people consider a "barbarity," you will have to bear that shame in front of the civilized world. Sixty years of fighting with and for the people cannot be erased with a decree. We know that the people of Nicaragua are with us and lament the arbitrary suspension imposed by your government. And the people of Nicaragua hope that *LA PRENSA* will be able to resume its operations shortly, with total freedom.

Very truly yours,

EDITORIAL BOARD OF *LA PRENSA*
Violeta B. de Chamorro
President

Courtesy: *Exchange*

A user's guide to real communism in 1986

China cannot be a modern country until it makes itself democratic, said its party paper, the *People's Daily*, on May 8th. Is the world's largest Communist party no longer truly communist? Italy's comrades were told by their leader last month that they are a "fallible human association, like any other". Is the Communist party with the biggest vote-pulling power in Western Europe no longer the real thing? Even Russia's Mr Gorbachev agrees that much of Marxism has had its day. Is the bewhiskered spectre who has been haunting the world for 138 years finally fading away?

Consider what makes a real Com-



munist party. Counting comrades used to be easy. They had three loyalties in common. First to Marx, who believed in class struggle and a "scientific" route to a workers' paradise on earth. Next to Lenin, who wrote the rules on how to

run a revolution-making party. And finally to the Soviet Communist party, led by Comrade Stalin, as the first party to follow Lenin's rules and start building the society Marx had predicted.

First to go was fealty to Moscow. When Khrushchev exposed Stalin's crimes in 1956, he disillusioned many communists who had stoically endured Stalin's bloodletting because they believed it had been done in an honourable cause. The old respect for Russia never recovered. The subsequent rift between Russia and China meant that communists were free to choose their loyalties. Although most chose Mos-

cow, the idea that there was only one possible path to communism was as dead as any victim of a Stalin purge.

By trampling down the new shoots of "democratic socialism" in Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Russians helped to create the Eurocommunists, who reject the bullet in favour of the ballot box—well, up to a point—as their path to power. That was a blow to Marx's enthusiasm for violence as the only way to bring about social change. Even the French Communists, who have stayed closer to Moscow on most things than their Italian comrades, have stuck to the ballot box (which won them less than 10% of the vote in this year's election), although most people suspect they would dump it if they ever got to power.

Bigger changes were to come. Several communist governments have taken a razor to the hairier of Marx's economic theories. His workers' paradise has receded so far into the future that it seems a thing of the past. In Eastern Europe reformers looking for ways to make their economies work have dismantled bits of the Stalinist model of central planning, and have turned for new inspiration not to Marx but to the market. Price, productivity and efficiency—good capitalist words—are the planners' new jargon. Hungary has ventured a few yards down the non-Marxist road. Bulgaria and East Germany have at least recognised the need to streamline their planning techniques. Even Mr Gorbachev has talked of the need for change in Russia, though he has produced little of it so far.

Out ahead of them all is China's Mr Deng Xiaoping. He was the first to pronounce that Marx is dead. Although China's 800m peasants still lease their land from the state, almost all of them grow what they want and, like real capitalists, pocket the proceeds. Does abandoning first Moscow, then Marx, mean that China is abandoning communism? By the one remaining measure—Lenin's—the answer is no.

Real communists don't ditch Lenin

Lenin's first rule for running a Communist party—democratic centralism—means that decisions and orders come down from the top and are obeyed: with dire consequences for anybody with the temerity to talk back. Party leaders are selected by a cabal, not elected. Of course, not all non-communist parties elect their leaders democratically either.

The difference is that in a democracy parties are voted in and out of power, so that they are ultimately responsible to the electorate for what they do. That was not what Lenin had in mind.

His second party rule was that power once won, must be used to control every aspect of society: not just the political machinery, but the economy, religion, culture, all means of communication. This goes far beyond "ordinary" dictatorships. Only thus can all opposition be crushed. This disciplined ruthlessness brought Lenin's Bolsheviks to power in 1917. It is a testament to Lenin's rule-book that no Communist party since then has voluntarily given up power. Poland's communists came closest to giving it up involuntarily in 1980-81, but martial law put a stop to that.

By Lenin's measure, none of today's ruling Communist parties has really changed. Mr Gorbachev's appeal for "openness" is a one-way business: people he wants criticised get criticised, not the other way round. In China and Hungary the party has decided to interfere less in the economy but party organisation and discipline are still tight. *That recent Chinese call for greater "democracy" was a plea to let bright minds*

think unorthodox thoughts about science and the arts, not about politics. To keep rising in their chosen profession, China's high-flyers in industry, agriculture, science or the arts will sooner or later have to join the party. And that party's Leninist core remains intact.

Eurocommunists are a bit more adventurous. When they say they want to be voted into power, they claim they would allow themselves to be voted out too. But not even the Italians, who have wrestled hardest with their Leninist conscience, have abandoned the rule on party discipline. The question is: would a party organised in Lenin's image not be tempted to do the rest of its master's bidding once in power? It is that question-mark, not just the name, that still separates Italy's Communists from parties of the democratic left.

Communism is not the creed it was. Marx would find few real comrades today. But those appalled by the drop in ideological standards can cheer up. There is still one bolthole for refugees from the post-Marx world. You can get away from it all in Albania.

Courtesy: *The Economist*

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But what if US Gunboats were Threatening the Cape

Peregrine Worsthorne

If the American 6th Fleet were this weekend manoeuvring with menace somewhere off the South African coast, oh, what cries of gleeful encouragement we would be hearing from all the high-minded upholders of international morality. Even now Messrs Kinnock and Steel would be calling on Mrs. Thatcher to despatch the Royal Navy in support and condemning her roundly should she not be willing to do so. From every church in the land, too, there would be prayers for the speedy demise of Mad Dog P. W. Botha and blessings pronounced on the head of President Reagan for his part in this Godly crusade.

As it is, of course, this weekend's scenario is very different, since instead of threatening South Africa, the United States is threatening Libya. So in place of praise and thanksgiving there is outrage and condemnation, with much questioning of America's right to intervene in the internal affairs of another weaker country. What would have been welcomed as a morally mandatory use of power against South Africa becomes imperialist sabre-rattling when applied to Libya. Nor do these double standards surface only over the possible use of

armed force. Attitudes to economic sanctions also change out of all recognition, depending on the target. The same people who think that punitive measures are absolutely required to bring Botha to his knees cannot wait to point out why such medicine would make no moral or practical sense against Gaddafi.

In sober reality, racism is only one of the many evils in the world and, because so widely and passionately perceived to be evil, probably less dangerous than those evils that still have many powerful defenders and champions, like Communism and terrorism. No super-power champions racism. It is not an idea on the march. Nor is the South African regime in the least interested in exporting racism. Communism, on the other hand, is championed by a super-power which makes every effort to spread it. International terrorism, too, has many defenders and practitioners and is very much a fashionable phenomenon, not least in the West.

At present Congress is at one and the same time blocking funds for the liberation of Nicaragua from the Marxist Sandinistas and voting in favour of punitive sanctions designed to liberate South Africa from the racist Boers. In the case

of Nicaragua, too, great play is being made by Congress of the dangers of American involvement there leading to a new Vietnam. In fact, of course, this danger applies far more properly to what might happen in South Africa, since a destabilised South Africa, could suck the United States down into a most fearful quagmire.

This does not mean that South African racism is a problem that the international community in general or the United States in particular should ignore. But it does not mean that those who expect the United States to intervene to solve it cannot complain or protest when the United States claims the right to intervene to solve the greater problems as well. Yet too many, particularly on the Left, do so complain. So long as America rations its do-gooding to destabilising nasty Right-wing dictatorships, like those of Marcos in the Philippines and Duvalier in Haiti, all is well, but let it dare lay a destabilising finger on Left-wing dictatorship, as it did in Allende's Chile and is trying to do now to the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, and all hell breaks loose.

Courtesy: *Sunday Telegraph* (London)

Letter

The Battle of the languages

The 'Gandhian Satyagraha' over the four-year old Karnataka Government's order on the teaching of Kannada, which started with a bang, ended with a whimper.

The upshot of this agitation is that it is the Maharashtra Government which is now compelled to withdraw its 1978 order making Marathi compulsory in primary schools of the disputed areas of Maharashtra! The entire Satyagraha proved to be counter-productive indeed.

The face-saving formula that the Karnataka Government would withdraw its order on the teaching of Kannada in primary schools, if it is proved that there is an element of compulsion in the order, has failed to save the face of the Samyukta Maharashtra Seema Samiti leaders! 'If' is the thing! Shri Hegde

caught the S.M.S.S. leaders on the wrong foot.

Several persons were killed, maimed and injured. Several shops, schools, government vehicles and police chowkies were burnt. Many factories, including one big biscuit factory, were gutted, rendering thousands of workers unemployed. Over 1000 full-grown trees were axed in addition to the uprooting of telegraph poles. One train was derailed. What is worse even water pipes were destroyed, depriving the people of Belgaum of drinking water for over ten days!

Shri Sharad Pawar, defending this vandalism, says that pressure was necessary to bring a change in the Karnataka Government's policy over the language issue. But, at what price and with what result? There is no change in the Karnataka Government's policy over the language issue, because the S.M.S.S. leaders failed to prove that

there is any element of compulsion in the Karnataka Government's order!

There is really nothing wrong in making Marathi compulsory in primary schools in the disputed areas of Maharashtra or in making Kannada compulsory in primary schools of the disputed areas of Karnataka. If any language has to be learned at all, it should be adopted earlier rather than later, because the younger the child, the easier it is for it to learn a new language other than its mother tongue. It is in the interests of the children of the State concerned to learn the language of the State in which they live, and if they don't, they will be the sufferers. They will not get any government jobs in their State. But linguistic chauvinism is as dangerous as religious fundamentalism and totalitarianism.

S.S. Bankeshwar

Book Review

DUSKLANDS by J.M. Coetzee; Penguin Books, 1983, pp. 125; £2.25

IN THE HEART OF THE COUNTRY by J.M. Coetzee Penguin Books, 1982, pp. 139; £1.95

J.M. Coetzee's acute tragic sense has its roots in the tensions and hatreds of his South African background. His novels have won him several awards, including the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize (1980), the James Tait Black Memorial Prize (1980), and the Booker McConnell Prize (1983). Coetzee's vision goes to the root causes of violence; the intensity of his insight comes across powerfully in the two novels under consideration, *Dusklands* (1974) and *In the Heart of the Country* (1980).

Dusklands, Coetzee's first work of fiction, comprises two novellas, *The Vietnam Project* and *The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee*. The protagonist of *The Vietnam Project*, Eugene Dawn, is a specialist in psychological warfare, involved in broadcast propaganda during the Vietnam war. Dawn emerges as a pathetic, self-deluding individual who craves attention. His feelings of being suppressed and his guilt at being involved in such a morale-destroying project determine the narrative's progress to a shattering climax.

At one point, Dawn says: "Had I lived two hundred years ago I would have had a continent to explore, to open to colonisation. In that vertiginous freedom I might have expanded to my true potential." *The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee* takes up precisely this situation. Based on real life, it is the journal of a Boer exploring virgin territory in 1760. His massacre of a Hottentot tribe exhibits at work the same psyche as Dawn's only turned outwards this time.

Through Dawn's statement that he is "in the heart of America", Coetzee conveys that *Dusklands* is not simply two case-studies; it is a core-level exploration of the psychology of violence. The same implication underlies the title of *In the Heart of the Country*, the impassioned diary of Magda, a young woman living on a remote South African farm. It is an extraordinary tale of obsessive fantasies, a portrait of loneliness and festering anger ending in madness.

Loneliness is, in fact, the key factor in Coetzee's analysis of destructiveness. Eugene Dawn is driven to psychosis because he is alienated from even his own body: "I am intense only because my will is concentrated on subduing spasms in the various parts of my body....I am vexed by the indiscipline of my body. I have often wished I had another one." The desperate need for human contact, when operating at the group level, leads to wars; speaking of the Vietnamese, Dawn asks, "Why could they not accept us? We could have loved them. Our hatred for them grew only out of broken hopes." Race prejudice too is a result of the same insecurity: Magda says, "My father was harsh and domineering only because he could not bear to ask and be refused. All his commands were secret pleas....Would he have embraced a rebellious slave as a father embraces a prodigal son?"

Violence is man's only weapon against terrifying isolation. It reassures man that he is not alone. Jacobus writes, "The gun is our last defence against isolation...The tidings of the gun: such-and-such is outside, have no fear. The gun saves us from the fear that all life is within us. it does so by laying at our feet all the evidence we need of a dying and therefore a living world."

The alienation Coetzee projects is not a heroic one. Man does not stand splendid in tragic isolation, but is futile and forlorn. Even Jacobus does not fit into the traditional explorer-hero mould, the reader does not know whether to pity or be revolted by him. Dawn is tormented by self-doubt, and Magda too admits, "I cannot see a necessity behind what we are doing, any of us....Why can we not accept that our lives are vacant as the desert we live in?....I do not see why the story of our lives should have to be interesting."

Although Coetzee's social commitment is undeniable, his work is not one-dimensional. One theme of *Dusklands* is the correlation between knowledge and the capacity for destruction. And throughout *In the Heart of the Country*

there is a motif of Art-u/s-Life. Magda writes, "Aching to form the words that will transform me into the land of myth and hero, here I am still my dowdy self in a dull summer heat that will not transcend itself....What automatism is this, what liberation is it going to bring me, and without liberation, what is the point of my story?"

Coetzee's novels throb with felt experience. He does not evade issues behind a mask of clinical detachment, but tackles them head-on, with the jaggedness appropriate to his themes. In addition, he has a flair for unexpected, sharp images which flash across the rough hewn texture of his work: Dawn says "My creative spasm comes only in the morning, when the enemy in my body is too sleepy to throw up walls against the forays of my brain."

All three narratives employ the first-person technique. This suits Coetzee's purpose, for the self-revelations of Dawn, Jacobus and Magda are the perfect vehicles for his explorations into human motives. Within this framework, the reader's responses are controlled skilfully. For instance, Dawn's superior at work is also named Coetzee, thereby establishing him as the author's alter ego. Dawn's reactions to him thus become an index of his own neurosis. In this and other ways, the narrative technique is constantly manipulated to serve specific ends, never becoming a mere mechanical device.

Coetzee's novels make for compelling reading without sensationalism, deep feeling without sentimentality. His probings into destructiveness combine contemporary relevance with enduring worth. The weight and depth of Coetzee's themes, his power, certainty and sustained intensity make him one of today's most significant writers.

Surajit Bose

They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scolding and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three.

JAMES LOWELL

**THE MAHATMA AND THE NETAJI,
TWO MEN OF DESTINY OF INDIA** by
Samar Guha, Sterling Publishers,
1986; Pp.244; Rs.125.

To Samar Guha, Subhas Chandra Bose was undoubtedly the greatest Indian leader of the twentieth century and as such, fit for hero worship. Mahatma Gandhi, known to the world as the apostle of non-violence, achieved his greatest glory only after the escape of Subhas from India in 1941 when he refused to condemn Bose and on the contrary, offered him the gift of 'open rebellion' in the form of the Quit India Movement in August 1942. At this time when Gandhi and other leaders were in jail, it was Subhas and Subhas alone who dominated the scene through his radio messages from Germany.

Both the earlier non-violent movements, Non-cooperation and Civil Disobedience, were resounding failures according to Guha. Only the Quit India Movement was successful because the Mahatma had tacitly accepted Bose's version of nationalism and violent revolution.

The heroic saga of Bose, his historic

escape from prison in January 1941, his plunge into the unknown peril of a world war, his organising of the Azad Hind Legion in Germany, his broadcasts over the Azad Hind Radio, his triumphal march with the INA and the Japanese army towards the Indian frontier, the liberation of eastern Manipur, the siege of Imphal and the cry of 'On to Delhi', has sufficient dramatic and historic interest to stand by itself and needs no comparison with Gandhi or anyone else.

Quite likely, Gandhi's estimate of Bose underwent a radical change in view of his great sacrifice for the motherland. This, however, does not imply that his philosophy of life changed from that of non-violence to violence. Gandhi was never dogmatic. Truth for him was always relative for it was perceived by imperfect man. He had his critics and opponents but his heart was large enough to accommodate them as well as his friends and followers.

It appears that the author has some kind of grievance against all the Congress leaders except the Mahatma after 1940. His ire is specially directed against Patel, Azad and Nehru who cal-

led Subhas a 'misguided patriot'. Nehru, he says, 'invented secularism because of his guilty conscience about Pakistan' and the Sardar is dismissed as an outstanding political organiser devoid of "a historical, philosophical or ideological mind." Guha is however justified in pointing out the total neglect of Netaji and the INA by the national government after the transfer of power. No attempt was ever made to use this great legacy of Indian nationalism.

The Chapter, "A Vaishnav and a Kshatriya" is an attempt to trace the differences between the Mahatma and the Netaji to their caste and family backgrounds. Both were essentially Indian and essentially spiritual in their outlook. The author skilfully traces the deep, stabilising Jain influence on the Mahatma and the inspiring, catalytic impact of Vivekananda and Aurobindo on young Subhas. Because of these early differences, Gandhi followed the path of peace and non-violence (*Shantivada*) and Subhas the cult of power and strength (*Shaktivada*).

In 1938, when Subhas contested the presidency of the Tripura Congress, Gandhi did not support him. Instead, in

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the contest between Gandhi and Subhas, the Mahatma did not come out exactly with flying colours. The incident still rankles in Guha's mind after a lapse of almost half a century. He believes that "Gandhi adopted virtually a kind of unconcealed vindictive attitude towards Subhas as if to teach him a political lesson."

From 1941 onwards Subhas decided to try the means of violence and revolution to overthrow the British Power. He proclaimed in no uncertain terms that Mahatma Gandhi had failed as a political leader. However, according to Guha, after the escape of Subhas from India, the Mahatma's attitude towards him changed radically. This in turn, was responsible for the rejection of the Cripps Proposals and the call of Quit India or open rebellion in 1942. This is corroborated by Louis Fischer and Azad. In 1942, Gandhi did not think of negotiating with the British nor did he make a fetish of non-violence. In fact Quit India was a complete departure from Gandhian Satyagraha and it brought Gandhi very close to Subhas.

On a visit to India, a few years after the transfer of power, Lord Attlee was asked to what extent the British decision to quit India was influenced by Gandhi's movement. Attlee is supposed to have replied with emphasis on each syllable "mi-ni-mal". Guha believes that the British left India because of Bose and his INA which threatened the British government with defection of the armed forces and the police.

Sometimes the author's enthusiasm makes him claim more for Subhas than is proper as when he avers that he alone created international sympathy for the cause of Indian independence. Unfortunately there are several shortcomings of style and substance which detract not a little from the value of this book. On the whole, the style of writing is ponderous, involved, repetitious and heavily weighted with unnecessary words which obscure rather than illuminate the meaning. Some new words and phrases have also been coined viz. gloriest, adoration, conjoint heroes, etc. The book has no pretensions to scholarship but judicious use of footnotes would have undoubtedly lent authenticity and restraint to the work. Despite these limitations, the book does add a new dimension to the history of the Indian National Movement and Subhas's role in it.

Aloo Dalal

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN INDIA by A.R. Kamat, Somaiya Publications, 1985, pp348, Rs. 135.

There exists a consensus among Indian intelligentsia that the present system of education in India, a legacy of British rule, is outmoded, unsuited to our needs, does not deliver the goods and, therefore, should be changed. Since Independence, a number of proposals by commissions/educationalists have been considered. However, all these have attempted to alter/improve the structure and techniques of education in isolation of its socio-economic environment. The belief underlying all such attempts, including the recent policy statement on education, is that it is the engine of socio-economic change.

The book under review surveys the educational development in post-Independence India and Maharashtra (ch.3 and 4) followed by a critique which relates education to structural changes and its socio-economic-political roots. The author undertakes a highly readable detailed study of education in the context of social, economic and political changes in India. (ch. 5.6). An attractive feature is its discussion of the educational problems of Scheduled Castes/Tribes, Muslims and Women (ch.8.9).

The study brings out the well-known features of the Indian education systems and its failings viz:

- that despite three decades of growth in education half the illiterate world population lives in India;
- that the drop-out rate at the primary education stage is quite high;
- that only 10% of matriculates join vocational courses;
- that backwardness in literacy and schooling is closely correlated to economics and social indigence;
- that there is dual education system: an elitist educational structure for the sector of society that counts, while the common masses have to make do with a sub-standard one.

From all this the author concludes that "the system has lost all its vitality and is beyond revival" (p.136).

In the light of the analysis of the book it is interesting to note that the recent policy statement of the Government's National Policy on Education - 1985 reinforces some of the features outlined above and deals with the failings only

superficially. Thus, if the dual character of the present higher educational structure results in the creation of a 'super elite', surely opening of the proposed 'Navodaya' schools will only extend the evil thus further reinforcing social inequality. Similarly, the emphasis on vocational education will not solve the unemployment problem unless it is accompanied by economic growth. One will then have to conclude with the author that "the crisis in secondary and higher education... reflects the deeper crisis in our social structure; and it does not look as if it can be met with purely educational measures; it is bound to persist and grow" (p.111). And, if one follows the line of discussion in the book, one will have to doubt how far education can be used "as an agent of basic change in the status of women" and Scheduled Castes as envisioned in the new policy statement. The author argues that "in spite of the significant educational advance they have achieved ... it is not likely to help them progress very far in terms of significant political benefit or share in political (or economic) power" (p.170).

The author holds therefore that "the so-called policies in education are only palliatives, the only salvation is in its replacement, in a revolutionary perspective, by a new one. However, this will come about only as a part of general restructuring of Indian society..."

These conclusions of the author, a noted marxist, flow from his conceptual framework outlined in the opening chapter. This is the chief strength (and weakness) of the book. He takes the stand that education is not the prime mover of social change but is a part of the socio-economic-political-situation. He rejects both the mechanical marxist as well as the purely liberal stand on the role of education. He believes that the goals, objectives and structural pattern of education are largely influenced by the dominant politico-economic structure and the various powerful groups in society. The system works with a decisive bias in favour of the dominant strata; yet it helps the process of social change as a necessary and vitally important collateral factor. From this perspective he argues that the education system in India maintains inequalities, perpetuates existing social structures as well as ideas and values of dominant classes with only limited literacy; and finally advance in science and technology lead to "a limited embourgeoisement".

ment of certain segments of the population". He maintains that educational development will not bring about desired social changes; the existing patterns will prevent any such thing. He stresses the need to bring about a transition to a post-capitalist – socialist society – in which education will assist the development "of socialist economy and socialist culture". The weakness of the book lies in so far as it does not offer a convincing strategy for this transition and the role of education in it.

R.S. Morkhandikar

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF GLOBAL ENERGY by R.K. Pachauri
Oxford University Press, 1985;
pp 191; Rs.110.

This book centres around the problem of global energy in the context of the spiralling oil prices. It views the problem in the aggregate, analyses the evolution of OPEC and its structure and develops scenarios for the future world energy as well as for the international economic order. A thorough account of events in the international oil industry leading up to the foundation of OPEC

and a detailed record of the organisation are presented with extensive statistical details.

According to the author, the North-South problem has been compounded by the oil price increases of 1979-80. He is highly critical of the Brandt Commission Report and quotes extensively from the *Wall Street Journal* which epitomizes the philosophical opposition to the spirit and contents of the report in developed countries. According to him, the Brandt Commission report "has largely fallen on deaf ears."

He foresees that the nations of the Third World are likely to encounter more serious problems in the future because of higher prices for oil imports; of their inability to finance the development of indigenous energy; and of the weak markets for their exports in the strong protectionist markets of the industrial nations. In advocating change in the existing system, he rightly observes that the realities of international politics have to be kept in mind.

He sees the demand for a new international economic order "as much an exercise in global geopolitics as an expression of economic self-interest." It

does not imply a revolution in the existing world system. He is pessimistic about the prospects of the establishment of a new international economic order as there is hardly any consensus on large-scale reform of the international monetary system, and even less for any increased transfer of resources from the North to the South. He sees the debate as likely to continue as an endless ritual.

The author's very frank analysis provides an "establishment" perspective that can be characterized as "monopolistic liberalism" and represents the dominant view in the industrialized countries on a precipitated debate about the desirability for a basic structure of the future world political economy.

B.N. Mehrish

INDIAN WOMEN: A STUDY OF THEIR ROLE IN THE DAIRY MOVEMENT By Marty Chen, Manoshi Mitra; Geeta Athreya, Anila Dholakia, Preeta Law and Aruna Rao; Shakti Books, New Delhi; 1985; Pp 153;Rs. 150.

Most of India's poor rural women are actively engaged in primary agricultural production, plantation, cattle rearing,

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processing, dairying and marketing of these products. Their contribution in the dairy farming sector is not insignificant. In fact, dairying has been recognised as women's work. They are the major contributors to milk production and animal husbandry. Most dairy-related jobs such as cutting and fetching grass and fodder, bathing the buffaloes, cleaning cattle-sheds, milking, pouring milk at the collection centres and such other labour-intensive work is done by women in landless and small peasant households. Yet, where there is higher incidence of milk consumption, women and female children are relatively deprived even within the households. The income from dairying, too, rarely reaches them directly. They are not integrated even into the new structures which are meant to widen dairy cattle ownership and provide inputs and better returns to producers. They are neglected so far as the producer training programmes are concerned where in mostly only men are involved. This neglect not only strengthens the pattern of unequal access to resources between men and women but also has an adverse effect on production. Thus, there is the need to integrate women into the organised co-operative dairy sector, thereby counteracting vested interests and deep rooted biases against women.

The book under review presents four case-studies of action projects undertaken with the purpose of promoting women's roles in dairying in different parts of the country. The first, a case-study from Andhra Pradesh discusses the problems and prospects of providing extremely poor rural women with an asset base and an income source, through the acquisition of milch bovines, provision of adequate inputs and services, and marketing arrangements within the framework of a dairy co-operative.

The second case-study, also from Andhra Pradesh, is of a non-governmental voluntary agency engaged in rural development for the past 17 years.

The third case-study – the self-employed Women's Association (SEWA)'s women's dairy co-operatives – is a case-study from Gujarat.

The fourth – CIAD women's dairy co-operative is a case-study of the Sathumadurai women's co-operative in Vellore in Tamil Nadu.

The studies are a research of the cri-

tical role played by poor rural women in India's cooperative dairy sector. They show that though attempts are made to form all-women's dairying cooperative societies, the mere formation of such societies does not solve the problem of poor women. Also, a marketing network alone is not sufficient to ensure the successful working of a cooperative. Unless certain inputs are made available their potential cannot be enhanced. All the studies illustrate that lack of finance is an obstacle to the formation of poor women's dairy cooperatives.

One important point, however, which the studies make is that women are capable of participating and running a dairy programme all on their own if given an opportunity and proper training. They can learn and understand not only the economies of dairying and the management of a dairy cooperative but can also effectively play the part of a para-veterinarian. The interesting models and approaches developed by the various agencies featured in the case-studies are indeed worthy of study. Each case-study has also proposed certain specific solutions to the problems faced by it. The studies taken as a whole advocate that much can be done in the field of cooperative dairying. The concluding chapter in the book gives a set of specific and general policy recommendations for policy-planning for women in cooperative dairying.

The recommendations given in the volume if given effect to, will lead to changes to suit the needs of local women. It will fulfil the needs of poor rural women and will help in improving not only their status but also enhance dairy production.

Rosbeh Bilimoria

HANNIBAL'S FOOTSTEPS by Bernard Levin; Jonathan Cape, London; Pp 174; £12.50

Our hero, the author of the book under review, Bernard Levin, takes a fancy for Hannibal and follows his footsteps across the Alps in France starting from Augues-Mortes to Le Pain de Sucre on the French/Italian border. Hannibal had his army and elephants. His purpose was to conquer Rome. That was in 218 B.C. Bernard Levin was accompanied by a television crew of six

and his journey in mid-1984 lasted six weeks. He candidly reminds us that Hannibal in his journey had no shops, no wholesalers, no system of food distribution or transport. In fact, Hannibal's greatness lies in his sheer ability to lead over the Alps an army mostly of mercenaries and that too in winter without roads or maps, fourteen centuries before the invention of the compass.

Bernard Levin's journey covers 37 points all listed with the map of the area on the front and the back covers of the book. There are some vivid descriptions, some excitement when the author risks his life on high altitudes climbing up or down, his stay in hotels (once even in a monastery), his relishing or disliking food in restaurants, his becoming a goat-herd, his meeting interesting people, the gorgeous majestic landscape on the way, etc.

What makes it fascinating reading is the author's frequent historical and literary references, his reflections on life, art, philosophy. It is this facet that makes the book a literary diary – a well written piece of *belles lettres*. This and the magnificent colour plates – fifty in all – make this book an ideal leisure companion.

As to the 'why' of his following Hannibal's footsteps, Bernard Levin writes: "It was a *memento vitae*." At the same time he was very well aware that such a test was a vain one. His fifty-sixth birthday was just a few days away and with this adventure he could convince himself that he was fitter than he had ever been in his life. On a different level, "the most stimulating aspect of the whole march had been, undoubtedly, the contrasting landscapes."

While walking and mountaineering and while busy with the day to day mundane routine physical activities, Bernard Levin often thinks, muses, ponders, ruminates over some of the serious facets of life. Thus, his discovery: "The terrible truth is that evil, when it is in arms, can be defeated only by arming good." Gandhiji and his followers, the pacifists will not agree with this. Or again, "But nature cares not at all for us, indeed does not know we are here, let alone why. Nature does not arrange its beauty and serenity for us; it is not even aware that it is beautiful and serene, because 'nature' is only a word we have devised in order to personalise something which is forever impersonal."

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