

A QUARTERLY OF LIBERAL IDEAS

Freedom First

October 1987
No. 395

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★ **Leadership for the 21st Century**

R.M. Lala

★ **The Conditions which Generate Communal Conflict**

Ratna Naidu

★ **An Industrial Policy for the 21st Century**

A.H. Doctor

★ **De-regulating Industrial Relations**

Sudhakar Nair

★ **The Indian Soldier
— Cornerstone of our Democracy**

C.L. Proudfoot

The Theory of Development & the Future
(Part I) by Prof. Amlan Datta

Freedom First

A Quarterly of Liberal Ideas

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SEND PAYMENT TO: *Freedom First*, 4th floor, Maneckji Wadia Building,
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Dear Reader,

It is a sad commentary on our social mores that we should feature in this issue the profile of one of the greatest emancipators of Indian women in South India (Kandakuri Veerasalingam Panthulu) at the very time when a young teenage girl was forced to commit *suttee*. What is disgusting is the support that many members of the ruling political *elite* gave to this degrading form of head hunting. One can legitimately wonder how on earth it is going to be possible to build up a future for the year 2000 on such a socially unstable foundation.

The sheer lack of leadership at different levels; the proliferating festering communal frenzy and slogan-mongering taking the place of hard level-headed thinking whether it be in the setting of practical industrial goals or labour legislation are all so infuriatingly dogging our footsteps. We publish in this issue essays by writers who can speak with authority on these subjects.

Rumblings in the communist world (also referred to as the 'socialist' world) generally go unnoticed in the Indian press. Dr. Fang Lizhi, referred to as "China's Sakharov" is an astrophysicist. He was expelled recently from the Communist Party, after being charged with "bourgeois liberalism." Dr. Fang has been a dissenter in the best traditions of the word. He was first ejected from the Chinese Communist Party in 1957. After an unsuccessful attempt at "re-programming" him he was restored to Party membership in 1978 and given full-professorship at the University of Science and Technology (Hefai). Dr. Fang Lizhi's speech, extracts of which we carry in this issue, provide an example of the indomitable will of man which no amount of "re-programming" can subdue.

We are too near to fully appreciate the yeoman service that Ram Jethmalani is rendering not only to the present Indian Republic but the future citizens of India, yet to be born. Single-handedly he has upheld the highest values of public probity and accountability. We are grateful to Mr. Kamal Wadhwa for his commentary on Jethmalani's crusade for a clean public life.

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

Modern Prime Ministers cannot be Harischandras, but Mr. Gandhi is telling too many lies.

K.R. Sundar Rajan, *The Sunday Observer*, July 26

With all its outer trappings of a democratic party, the Congress (I) was, and still remains a one-person party.

Janardhan Thakur, *MID-DAY*, July 18

For the Kremlin to declare in favour of universal openness is as strange as the Vatican announcing the demise of sin.

Norman Davies, *The Independent*(London), March 27

I have since found that the older you get the less you learn about anything recent. You remember the past, and only the past

Dom Moraes, *Sunday MID-DAY*, June 2

It's Sanjay Time again in the gardens of Doordarshan.

Iqbal Masud *Sunday MID-DAY*, July 26

The country is not waiting for a "national alternative". It is waiting for a *better* alternative. This is nowhere in sight.

K.R. Sunder Rajan, *The Sunday Observer*, May 3

The greatest service which all those who admire M.N. Roy could do in his honour is to restrain themselves from making a cult of him.

V.K. Sinha, *The Secularist*, March/April, 1987

Conspiracies are being hatched and they have their godfathers abroad. We will teach them such a lesson that they remember their grandmothers.

Rajiv Gandhi *Sunday Mid-Day* June 14

Time was when getting a loan or credit was considered undignified or *infra dig*... Today, getting credit or a loan is a sign of prosperity.

The Chandigarh Staff Correspondent, *The Hindu*, August 27.

We must recognise that this whole business called "governing" is all about making the life of the ordinary citizen more livable, not increasingly less tolerable.

Jaswant Singh, *Seminar*, December 1986

It is I who protects (sic) you. They can't publish one line apology. We're not Englishmen. We're Tamilians, wearing dhoties, not suits. Try joking to a pedestrian and see the consequence.

Hector Pandian, Speaker of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, *Indian Express*, April 5

If there is one thing that the Rajiv Gandhi government will be remembered for historically, it is for making corruption a national issue. Corruption is as much a part of the Indian ethos as floods and droughts.

Editorial in *KAISER-E-HIND*, September 1987

British government minus efficiency plus corruption equals the Indian Government.

V.P. Mehta quoted by Khushwant Singh, *Free Press Journal*, August 16

When there are no values, money counts.

E. Disby Baltzell, *Fortune International*, July 6

Iraq started this war (with Iran), and will have to pay a price for ending it. If that price is Saddam Hussein's head, it is not the business of the West's to say it should not be paid.

The Economist (London) Sept. 5

OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

Information Monopoly Challenged

On 11th September the Bombay High Court admitted for hearing a petition inspired by the research undertaken last year by the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom and The Indian Liberal Group describing the manner in which All India Radio and Doordarshan suppressed and distorted news, gave undue prominence to ministers of the Union government and made available information and even entertainment in a biased manner to listeners and viewers of the government monopolised broadcasting and telecasting media.

The petition has been filed by Mr. Minoo Masani, Founder of *Freedom First* and Mr. P.C. Chatterjee, former Director General of All India Radio. The application for admission was made by Mr. Atul Setalvad, supported by Mr. Navroz Seervai. The date of the hearing has not yet been fixed.

A couple of months ago the late Mr. Romesh Thapar had filed a case in the Supreme Court demanding greater autonomy for AIR and Doordarshan. The petition filed by Masani and Chatterjee goes much further. It is against the Union Government's rejection of an application by Masani and Chatterjee to set up broadcasting stations in Western India; in other words for the setting up of private broadcasting stations as a fundamental right of Indian citizens. A summary of the writ petition is published on page 6 of this issue.

SVR

Our Striking Teachers

For the last 50 days teachers in junior and degree colleges have been on strike. At the time of writing, the Bombay University College Teachers' Union is on the verge of a split, with a number of college teachers wanting to go back to work. Teachers, college by college are now meeting separately to decide

on whether to go back to work or not.

The public at large is still not clear on what exactly are the demands of teachers. Basically it is the normal one for more money. According to a report appearing in the *Indian Post* of September 14, "the main demand of the agitating teachers are parity of pay-scales of junior college teachers with senior college teachers, that is a pay scale of Rs. 2,300 to Rs. 4,000; implementation of pay revision from January 1986 without lowering of pay scales and increase in work load..."

Have any of these demands been conceded after 50 days of refusing to teach? Marginally perhaps. The Government both Union and states were almost indifferent. Teachers striking is not quite the same as, say, bank employees or telephone technicians going on strike. After all teachers refusing to teach provides students with a bonus in terms of holidays, but does not dislocate commerce and industry. The only ones to be dislocated are the poor parents who have idle children on their hands. As the father of a college-going boy I can say that even he is getting bored with the surfeit of unexpected holidays.

The teachers have not only lost the strike but have also lost whatever little respect they had from students. With what justification can teachers now persuade a bunch of striking students at some future date not to do so? What will be the impact of the strike on enforcing discipline already seriously eroded? Do the teachers view their profession merely as a job or do they attach some better values to their vocation?

While the right to strike is an inalien-

"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



able weapon in a democracy, it is not undemocratic to ban strikes by government servants or policemen or teachers provided they have an alternative to ventilate their grievances and secure redress. Perhaps an arbitration board comprising eminent educationists whose final decision would be binding on both teachers and governments would be one solution insofar as the teaching fraternity is concerned.

If the Union and state governments congratulate themselves on having 'broken' the strike, their victory will without doubt turn out to be pyrrhic. They now have an army of teachers with a chip on their shoulders with more than a dash of cynicism which they will pass on to the students; not to speak of periodic attempts to disrupt examinations and the like.

The sight of teachers marching in procession with placards demanding better wages is most unedifying not to speak of reports where teachers have come to blows and traded abuses. One wonders how many of these teachers would be prepared to go out on the streets to protest abuses of academic freedom?

SVR

Samar Sen and Romesh Thapar

One of the paradoxes of Indian political life is that some of our men exhibiting the finest sensibilities are committed individuals wanting to usher the socialist haven in our country. Samar Sen was one such but even those who did not share his enthusiasm were to be his admirers because of his sturdy

sense of independence, his uncompromising qualities and yet catholic interests. After all he started life as a poet but his poetic career ended by the time he was thirty. It spoke volumes for his qualities as an intellectual that his defunct weekly *Now* was founded by the Late Humayun Kabir and attracted some of the best writing of that period in India. Nothing like it was available in our country then, and it is doubtful if anything similar is available even today. His *Frontier* expounded the Naxalite cause and was run on a shoe-string budget. It is indeed a sad commentary on our national press that the passing away of such a person should be so thinly reported.

Another distinguished columnist whom we will all miss is Romesh Thapar. A leftist reminiscent of the 'Popular Front' days he was later to rue his youthful enthusiasm for the Stalinist variety of socialism. He was known to intellectuals and student circles as editor of *Seminar* a journal that highlighted many aspects of Indian society and not merely dwelt on its political shortcomings. He was for long, close to the centres of power but was to be disillusioned with the kind of politics that Mrs Gandhi practised with such consummate finesse. His finest hour was during the dark days of the Emergency when he stopped publishing *Seminar* rather than humiliate himself before the czars of censorship. He also sought some sort of internal exile by totally stopping writing his columns for journals.

The latter years saw him giving short shrift to the vaporous enthusiasm of socialism and in trying to find meaning in more pragmatic and native formulations such as Gandhiji's. Perhaps the best monument to his memory will be if the Supreme Court gives a judgement ending the tyranny of the government over AIR and Doordarshan.

RS

Our Government Discovers Drought

Even those who are casual readers of newspapers would have known that for the past three years many parts of India have been in the grip of drought, and near famine conditions prevail in large tracts of the country. Many public bodies have cried themselves hoarse and photographs in the newspapers have carried horrendous pictures. Yet

through these three years we have held India Festivals in the U.S.A. France and more recently in the U.S.S.R. wasting valuable public funds not to speak of a pointless *swadeshi* festival held in Delhi.

Now, our government has suddenly awakened to the ghastly reality of drought conditions and is mopping up resources by mulcting the poor tax payer. Long long ago Kautilya advised that the king should keep himself informed of all happenings in the country but our Prime Minister is primed with information of happenings in South Africa and Fiji and other exotic places. However, better late than never.

RS

Messing Around with the People's Business

Last month a half page advertisement in the national press inserted by Vayudoot, the "feeder airline" announced that Vayudoot had decided to get into the courier business.

Those who have not heard of Vayudoot or have not had the 'good fortune' of travelling on one of their planes, could be excused if they assumed that here was an airline which after making a thundering success of its primary activity, viz. flying passenger planes, have now turned their attention to strengthening the courier industry in general and the post office in particular.

Unfortunately a gentleman who took Vayudoot's advertisement at its face value and having an urgent document to be despatched decided to use the new "Ultrafast Courier Service". Lest I be accused of maligning this loss making airline, let's see what Mr. A.K. Roy (for that is the gentleman's name) has to say:

"I wanted to send a non-personal mail packet to Jamshedpur and rang up the Vayudoot offices in Bombay as per the phone numbers given in their Vayudoot "Ultrafast Courier Services" advertisement ... On the first number (6129357) I was told that this was the deputy general manager's number and it must be in the advertisement by mistake. They asked me to call 6121405 (which is also in the ad.). When I rang that number, I was told that "This is Vayudoot, baba ! Not some courier, furier!" So then I tried the third number (20448585) and I tried it all after-

noon but I couldn't get through. Eventually when I did get through I was told that "Office *bandh ho gaya*. Kal phone maro." (translated-the office is closed phone tomorrow).

"Vayudoot was started as feeder airline. Can it not do its first basic job efficiently without putting its fingers into many pies? Has ITDC closed down that Vayudoot needs to offer holiday package tours ? Shouldn't Vayudoot concentrate on its own business and not try to grab the bread out of private-run courier companies or SPEEDPOST, particularly at a time when newspaper reports talk about their not being able to close their doors properly during flight?" (*Sunday Mail*, Sept. 20)

That, we may tell Mr. Roy, is precisely the problem. Meddling in the people's business is by now a well-recognised disease of successive Indian governments from Pandit Nehru to Mr. Rajiv Gandhi (notwithstanding the latter's frequent admonitions of public sector undertakings and corporations). Our governments at the Centre and the states make watches, motor cars, scooters and bicycles; bake bread; supply milk and manufacture cloth to mention only a few items of their enterprise. In other words, our governments do everything but govern!

How true the old Gujarati proverb that when the king becomes a trader the people become beggars. The people of India (other than the beneficiaries of the Permit-Licence-Quota Raj of course) are already in penury.

SVR

We have a government that cannot govern, a Prime Minister who cannot administer, a leader who cannot lead. A hundred managers cannot make a leader any more than a hundred midgets can make a man. And a nation of seven hundred fifty million Indians cannot be led by midgets. In a moment of aberration, these small men may have succeeded in gaining power, but this moment is now behind us and we can now see the reality for what it is. When the next moment of truth comes, and it will come sooner than we think, this nation must not be found wanting. This indictment is, therefore, also a warning that a nation must be on its guard, particularly against those who now presume to lead it.

((From a BJP Publication "Two years of Congress Mistrule")

Leadership for the 21st Century

R.M. Lala

Dr. Johnson spoke of politics as the last refuge of the scoundrel. In India it has become the scoundrel's first choice. Could this trend be reversed? Will men of character go into public life once again at some cost to themselves and their careers?

As time and technology advances, the demands on leaders grow. And as demands grow their weaknesses are more readily exposed; be they the weaknesses of Ronald Reagan in Washington or Rajiv Gandhi in New Delhi. The early decade of the post-war period had giants ruling some nations, Adenauer in West Germany, De Gaulle in France, Churchill — though past his best — in the U.K. Truman proved a formidable President in America. Nowadays the task of leadership is far more complicated than ever before.

Think of the world of Roosevelt 50 years ago. Neither nuclear war, missiles, space, terrorism, pollution or the oil crunch impinged upon his time and attention. His recent successors have had to cope with all these.

On the Indian scene it is the same story. The demands on leadership grow but the calibre of leadership of the Constituent Assembly and the first Parliament has not been equalled.

Even countries that once swayed empires seem to have shrunk on their statesmanship. "Our leaders appear as exceptional...not for their greatness but their pettiness, not for their capacity to inspire the nation but for their capacity to depress it," comments British columnist Peregrine Worsthorne, in *The Daily Telegraph*. He adds:

Leaders with Character

"To be a giant in public life today, is almost impossible and even those who do not start off as pigmies are all too likely to be reduced to that stature in the end... As a result potential rulers tend to take their talents to other fields."

The last sentence is especially true about India. Our potential rulers feel more at home in business, industry and the professions.

The leadership India produces in the 21st Century will be related to the socie-

ty India strives to create between now and 2000 A.D. In pockets of Bihar, for example, the Mafia are the political bosses. If they ever attain state power, it will be difficult if not impossible to get out of their grip. Dr. Johnson spoke of politics as the last refuge of the scoundrel. In India it has become the scoundrel's first choice. Could this trend be reversed? Will men of character go into public life once again at some cost to themselves and their careers? The answer to that question may be a decisive factor in the good governance of India.

Apart from political leadership we need leadership at all levels, social, educational, industrial, above all the bureaucratic.

The first requisite of civilised life is leisure — leisure to think, to create, to accomplish.

The other is adequate communication with fellow beings. In the four years I spent in the UK, never once do I recall the phone going out of order or misbehaving. In India nowadays, the moments when some phones fully function are moments to be cherished. The middle class which should throw up our future leadership is pinned down to the struggle for existence. After travelling vast distances to work, hunting for a flat or a gas cylinder, or getting admission for a child at school, they have little time or energy to spare for society or the country. We have created the craze for materialism accelerated by attractive T.V. advertisements but we have not created a climate conducive to the formation of a refined civilisation.

Even granting we can attain a way of life more conducive to civilised existence, what kind of leadership will we require in the ruler himself to hold India together?

Conditions for Successful Leadership

The first condition of a successful

leader in a country as diverse as India is the confidence of the minorities (especially the Muslims) and the lower castes that the man at the top is not a communalist or a sectionalist. He has to belong to the whole country. Our people do not expect miracles in their condition, but they do expect fairness. The Nehru family succeeded in shaping that public image. This image is a historic requirement from the time of Akbar. When a ruler like Aurangzeb does not have that fairness, an Empire crumbles. Akbar belonged to a minority religion and a race alien to the Hindus that constituted India. He had the choice to rule by the sword or by consent. After a brief spell with the sword, he opted for rule by consent. He married a Rajput princess and their son Jahangir became the heir to the Moghul throne. "In him", said Jawaharlal Nehru, "the old dream of a united India took shape, united not only politically but organically fused into one people."

In his *History of India* (Pelican Vol.II) Percival Spear says:

"Leaders, however inspired, are not enough. It has to be creative leadership if it is to charm a mixed people to cooperate in goodwill rather than acquiesce through fear. Akbar's stroke was to raise himself from the position of the leader of a minority Indo-Aryan foreign group (the Muslims) to the accepted ruler of all Hindustan."

I am quoting this because it is going to be increasingly difficult for one man to find acceptance in the whole of Hindustan. We will be lucky during the third decade from now if one party can keep some foothold all over India.

The future will require in our leadership another quality Akbar had, which Spear notes:

"He was more humane than most men of his time and more tolerant.

Above all he possessed the creative imagination which can use success to transform a situation rather than humiliate an opponent and can use the ordinary motives of the average man for creative purposes."

In Nehru's time the Ministries were powerful and so were several ministers. A Rafi Ahmed Kidwai or a Maulana Azad did not dance to the tune of the Prime Minister or kow-tow to the staff of the Prime Minister's office. Indira Gandhi concentrated enormous power in her own hands reaching out to control all Ministries through the P.M.'s Office. She made herself great and her ministers small.

Devolution of power to her Central Cabinet and to the states will alone make India governable in the years to come. The temptation and tendency will be to concentrate more and more at the Prime Minister's Office. As Rajiv Gandhi should realise by now, the P.M. has neither the time nor energy to attend to the flood of files and puny man in the P.M.'s Secretariat will drink in the sweet juices of power. During the last few years, India has become somewhat like a democratic monarchy where courtiers call the tune. The P.M. may or may not know of their doings but it is the P.M. who is on the firing line.

Our Attitudes Need to Change

Over a decade ago, Prof. A.L. Basham, author of "The Splendour that was India", brought to bear on the future his perspective of the past. He wrote that India would respond to a man of religion who would go into politics. He had another Gandhi in mind whose religion was spacious and all embracing.

Providence gave India a golden opportunity in 1977 to write a new page of history, but Janata lost the opportunity. In 1985 again a great chance came and Rajiv Gandhi did so well, but by 1987 the magic vanished and shadows of the arms deals swept over the country and his reputation.

Conservative as India is, entrenched in her old ways, she will have to alter her attitudes of mind and work if the right leadership is to emerge within the next decade.

Mr. R.M. LALA is the author of the best seller
In Search of Leadership

Broadcasting Monopoly Challenged

Writ Petition in the Bombay High Court

Mr. Minoo Masani, former Member of Parliament and Mr. P.C. Chatterjee, former Director General of All India Radio, have filed a writ petition in the Bombay Court challenging the Government of India's monopoly in broadcasting through All India Radio and Doordarshan.

The writ petition arose as a result of the Union Government's rejection of an application by Mr. Masani and Mr. Chatterjee for permission to set up an independent broadcasting station for radio and television in Western India with medium power transmitters.

The Petitioners wished to form a public limited company for the purpose based in Bombay. The Board of Directors of this company would comprise men and women of high standing and integrity and with knowledge of the technical aspects of media communication.

On April 28, 1987, the Ministry of Communications turned down the application saying it would not be possible to grant a license to set up a broadcasting station.

Mr. Masani and Mr. Chatterjee contend in their writ petition that "under the Constitution of India, these facilities (broadcasting services) are open to the Union of India, the State Government as also to the people of India."

They had made it clear, in their application to the Minister for Information and Broadcasting that "the purpose in establishing these broadcasting services was to supplement what the Government Agencies were doing...in a manner that would be objective, and not committed, as the Government Agencies are, to the official point of view, both in regard to news and features."

The writ petition draws attention to the parallel between the freedom of the press guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) and the freedom to express oneself through the medium of radio and television. The "right to freedom of speech and expression includes all forms expression which are necessary for communication between persons and the right to set up broadcasting stations for

radio and television."

Arguing that "it is manifestly in the public interest to permit the dissemination of news by parties other than those controlled and owned by the State" the Petitioners point out that the "free flow of information, and the voicing of opinion, even if it be critical of the Government, is basic to any democratic society...The free press in this country serves, in a large measure, this vital and basic function. However, the most potent medium for disseminating news in the country is wholly and solely within the control of the Government...No democratic government should be permitted to exercise power to choose what information and news should be allowed to be disseminated and what information and news should be suppressed from the people. The Government, through AIR and Doordarshan, does precisely this...The only way in which the citizens of this country can obtain news and information in a free and objective manner is by the creation of broadcasting stations independent of Government control..."

In this connection, the Petitioners have drawn attention to a study carried out by the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom and the Indian Liberal Group to monitor the broadcast of the News in English by Doordarshan. The study, covering a period of ninety days between April and August 1986, "clearly establishes the biased manner in which the news is broadcast, and, what is worse, the manner in which important news is suppressed."

The writ petition prays for a declaration that Government's monopoly of AIR and Doordarshan is *ultra vires* Articles 14, 19(1)(a) and 19(1)(g) of the Constitution of India and for the Court to order the Government to permit the establishment of broadcasting stations for radio and television in the western region of India alongside AIR and Doordarshan.

The Conditions which Generate Communal Conflicts

Ratna Naidu

Regionalism is not an intractable problem since it may be contained through dialogue and negotiations fostering inter-regional relations of give and take. The communal problem is much more intractable to policy options.

Communal conflict evolves out of structural conditions which are different from regional or caste conflict. Before we delineate the conditions which generate communal conflict, it is useful to make clear the analytic distinction between these different kinds of conflicts. Regional and communal movements emerge out of aspirations of "minorities by will", whereas the caste based communities are "minorities by force." Minorities by will seek to retain their identity (whether of language, religion or sect) and therefore in a sense their minority status. Minorities by force seek assimilation or in the language of Indian sociology, sanscritization, so as also to claim for itself the culture of the dominant status groups. The crucial distinction between communalism and regionalism is that the communal situation is characterized by tension between culturally distinct but geographically intermingled communities, whereas in the regional situation the demographic spread of the communities seeking protection for the regional culture is such that it is economically viable and allows for autonomously governable regions.

Causes of Communal Conflict

In the caste situation or colour bar the anger of communities who have been isolated and concentrated by force for centuries at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder may be contained through legislation. Nor is regionalism an intractable problem since it may be contained through dialogue and negotiations fostering inter-regional relations of give and take, and at the extreme the creation of autonomously governable regions or even secession. However the communal problem, as we shall see is much more intractable to policy options.

The potential for communal conflict exists where the minority refuses to be assimilated and where the population distribution is such that the communal

virus would merely get exacerbated by successful secession. The word "potential" must be underlined, for of course culturally distinct communities co-exist all over the world and in India in particular. The Parsis, the Marwaris, the Christians and until recently the Sikhs also have been living in this plural state system without too much difficulty. The question then arises, when does the potential for communal conflict become potent?

There are three social conditions which generate communal conflict.

First, the perception of a threat of withdrawal of privileges, (social, economic and political) which is enjoyed by a certain class of a community trigger a process of self-fulfilling prophecy whereby this class gets locked in combat with the majority community. The upper class Muslims were certainly fearful of the consequences of withdrawal of status in an independent India peopled by Hindu majorities. It is now being speculated that the perception of threat of withdrawal of economic and political privileges which accrued to the Jat Sikh landlords, as the captains of the Green Revolution, made a major dent in Hindu-Sikh relations.



Consider that new technologies, infrastructure and support system were extended by a government in a vital sector of the economy — that for more food production. Consider that these opportunities were perceived by a class of the ethnic group whose reputation for hard work, initiative and inclination towards unbridled aggrandizement is the stuff out of which fables are created. Consider, again, that in less than a dozen years the logic of the capitalist mode of production enabled this small minority to corner the bulk of the land and the profits from the Green Revolution while the pauperized landless labourers spilled across the Punjab countryside. Even as the impoverished voters sought assurances from the political elite, the captains of the Green Revolution stoked Centre-State disagreements on agricultural prices and policies, on river water disputes, and quantum of central investments in the State to provide outlets for the profits from agriculture through the Akali Dal. Thus, whereas elsewhere the Centre-State problems have taken the form of regionalism, the predilections of a class allowed for a communal situation to develop in the Punjab. The communal ideology is the only one which could camouflage the intra-community issues of unemployment, inequality, deprivation and pauperization of the masses — the social consequences of capitalist agriculture in an underdeveloped economy. To suction all the aggression which are inherent to these issues and direct them full blast to ethnic enemies, the magic weave of the fundamentalist of course is essential. The politicians in the service of vested interests aid and abet the fundamentalist to fudge all class lines and to draw the community into an ethnocentered seamless web.

Examples of this war of elites which suction entire communities into communal wars may be given by looking into many other countries as well. The

resentment of the upper class Malays in Malaysia against the Chinese, and the Sinhalese elite against the Tamilians were nurtured in their envy of the prosperous immigrant communities who are well equipped to be in the forefront of development activities in the post-colonial decades. The "sons-of-the-soil" in these countries made a determined bid to capture economic and political power and privileges, releasing in its wake bitter communal wars.

Secondly, we must mention again the problem of demographic spreads of the communal minority among the majority community. The communal minority is spread among the majority population in patterns which preclude the possibility of containing the minority within autonomously governable regions. Ethnocentrism of the communities therefore cannot find normal expression through regional and secessionist movements. The demographic factor had always militated against any solution to the Hindu-Muslim conflict since Muslims were distributed in every state of the Indian union. It is obvious, that the creation of Pakistan did not solve anything but merely gave a new lease of life to Hindu-Muslim conflict in India. Indeed, one might speculate that if Pakistan had not emerged so precipitously, at least two major Indian states would have had muslim majority, and the Hindu-Muslim differences could have been negotiable in the framework of centre-state relations.

The Demographic Factor

The demographic factor also militates against any territorial solution to the Sikh-Hindu conflict. Whereas the Sikhs are 60 per cent and the Hindus are 38 per cent of the population in Punjab, the overwhelming majority, 69 per cent are Sikhs in the rural areas. The Hindus are reduced to a minority (29 per cent) in the rural areas. In urban areas the Hindus are 66 per cent and Sikhs constitute 31 per cent of the population. In fact this pattern is repeated in every district in the Punjab. The organic inter-dependence of town and country would militate against any solution through the creation of Khalistan. Thus the communal problem is intractable to political solutions because the communal minority has social, political and cultural ambitions which are aborted by discontinuities in its demographic spread. Of course the size of the minority *vis-a-vis* the majority has a great deal to do with the extent to which these can be fanned. One might add that the demographic factor would have the same impact also when there is a threat to ethnic majorities through "over-foreignization", of the population through the inflow of immigrant communities as in the case of Assam, and as in the emerging situation in the Darjeeling district.

The simmering discontent due to the spread effect of the frustrations of the elite, and the demographic factors out-

lined above, could in different cultural and historical contexts disappear, or at least need not necessarily turn *pathological* or *self-destructive*, a psychological condition which is essential to communal conflict. This, indeed, is the third condition which generates communal conflict.

This is the condition of the continuous deepening of hate in the memory bank of the ethnic groups. Once ethnic conflict enters the path of violence, hate begins to get recorded on the grooves of memory such that for generations to come the ethnic groups organize themselves against each other *not* to win economic or political battles but to settle the residue of psychological hurts from earlier battles. Such are the pathological elements in Hindu-Muslim relations. Such is the story of hurt and humiliation with reference to Hindu-Sikh relations today. I have witnessed this self-destructive communal bitterness in Malaysia during my field-work there, the same bitterness exists between the communities in Sri Lanka and other countries which suffer from the communal dilemma. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we find ways and means to halt the current terrorism, both State terrorism and terrorism of the people against one another.

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Drought-A Man-made Problem

When I wrote *Our India* for Indian children in 1940, I quoted a beautiful Bengali poem by Jasimuddin which was by way of a prayer to the Rain Gods:

'Black Cloud, come down, come down;

Flower-bearing Cloud, come down, come;

Cloud like cotton, Cloud like dust,
O let your sweat pour down!

Blind Cloud, Blind Cloud, come,
Let your twelve Brother Cloudlets come,

Drop a little water that we
May eat good rice.

Straight Cloud, Strong Cloud, come,
Lazy Cloud, Little Cloud, come,
I will sell the jewel in my nose and buy
An umbrella for your head!

Soft Rain, gently fall,
In the house the plough neglected lies,
In the burning sun the farmer dies,
O Rain with laughing-face, come!

I had assumed that as soon as we got freedom, we would attend to the needs of irrigation and see that we were no more at the mercy and caprices of the Rain Gods.

Little did I imagine that in 1987, I would read a headline in the newspapers: 'M.P. Students Pray to Rain God'. The reason for this tragic situation is that for the last forty years our Government in Delhi has consistently neglected the need for irrigation in this country in favour of Government Steel Plants which produce the costliest steel in the world. As my friend Jayaprakash

used to lament: 'If only there had been a tube well dug in each village in place of these giant steel plants!' But then Nehru was a blind admirer of Stalin and liked to ape him and his priorities.

When ministers of the Union or State Governments wring their hands at the current drought as if it was an infliction of Nature, let them realise that they and their predecessors in office are the guilty men who have kept India at the mercy of the Rain Gods and put steel plants in advance of agriculture and irrigation. The drought is a man-made problem.

Minoo Masani

De-mythifying Minority Rights

Lionel Fernandes

Minorities have every right to expect that their distinctive group identities be recognized and safeguarded against abuse or discrimination. But do they have the right to develop vested interests in perpetuating fundamentalist and obscurantist traditions and practices within their fold?

The question of minority rights has increasingly come into focus in the context of both national and international affairs. This is a welcome development in as much as concern for the dignity, interests and rights of human groups that find themselves in a minority on the basis of race, language or religion reflects an advance in human consciousness without which human civilization cannot march ahead. This indeed has been the entire burden of historical experience the world over. The suppression of minorities has inevitably been counter-productive in that the majorities themselves have had to pay an unacceptably high price for it over the long term. It is therefore no expression of a condescending benevolence on the part of majorities that minority rights should be respected and given some sort of guarantee against abuse, but rather the result of hard-learned lessons born of social strife between majorities and minorities over several generations.

Minority Rights Indispensable

To confine our attention to the national context, it does not require any extraordinary degree of enlightenment to realise the wisdom behind constitutional guarantees for ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities that are scattered throughout the length and breadth of our country. These guarantees are the indispensable links that forge national unity and solidarity out of a highly pluralistic society. They link minority groups to the political system, to the majority groupings as well as to one another in a broadly adaptive and integrative socio-political pattern, which notwithstanding the surface impression of amorphousness, affords an elasticity and flexibility that makes for durability. Without these guarantees, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to create among the minorities a sense of identification with the political system and of

belonging to the national community. And in a highly heterogeneous society like ours, where even majority groupings in one region will find themselves in a minority situation in other regions, and where the so-called majority is more of a legal fiction than a sociological fact, being in reality more of a honey-comb of minorities clustered together without a central organizing principle, it makes eminent practical sense to extend constitutional protection to ethnic linguistic and religious minorities. Indeed, India could very accurately be described as a land of minorities.

But Can Minority Rights Be Counter-Productive?

Having said all this, one cannot fail to notice a disturbing trend in our contemporary national life. It is that of a growing 'minority consciousness' among increasingly vociferous sections of the national community. One could not quarrel with a healthy 'consciousness' if it were not that it often borders on a 'complex' that does not augur well for national life. Minorities have every right to expect that their distinctive group identities be recognized and safeguarded against abuse or discrimination. But do they have the right to develop vested interests in perpetuating fundamentalist and obscurantist traditions and practices within their fold? Should they be permitted to virtually set up a state within the State by allowing their leaders to exact levies, impose sanctions and call for holy wars, while often suffering places of worship to become hotbeds of sedition, social strife and crime? Do the rights of minorities include the prerogative to keep sections of their respective communities in protracted bondage, or to deny individuals or groups from minority communities the right of access to the civil authorities — executive, legislative or judicial — for

the redressal of their grievances, some of which may arise precisely from the peculiar conditions prevailing within their respective minority groups or sects? Do minority rights mean that educational and other institutions run by them should claim exemption from conformity with rational rules evolved by the public authorities for the general good of the civic community? Can minority-run schools, colleges and hospitals be given a *carte blanche* to deal with their employees in the manner they deem fit in respect of recruitment and terms and conditions of service, with no government interference, on the ground that they are minority institutions and enjoy special constitutional protection?

These are some of the questions that need to be faced if national cohesion is not to be hostage to sectarian demands. It is a matter of experience and observation that not all versions of minority rights can stand scrutiny on rational, socio-scientific criteria. Some such versions would conflict with the principle of sexual equality by relegating the females of a particular community to a position of subordination, disadvantage and inferiority vis-a-vis the males of that community. Other versions would conflict with the requirements of public order by permitting some citizens to carry weapons while others would be denied that right. Still other versions would militate against present-day norms of hygiene in the matter of disposal of the dead. Yet other versions would put a disproportionate amount of power and patronage in the hands of clerical elements within certain minority communities, thereby diluting the principle of equality before the law on the basis of which every modern national community is built and sustained.

Wanted a National Civil Code

If modernity in an integral sense is

predicated on a humane, rational and scientific outlook on life, it follows that any State that claims to be modern in its set-up and its objectives cannot afford to take a neutral or passive stand on socio-political questions affecting various sections of the national community, not excluding the minorities. If it did so, it would land itself in the anomalous situation of being all things to all men and therefore not much to anybody in particular. It would surrender its leadership role to retrogressive elements whose appetite would only grow with the feeding. Such a weak-kneed State could not effectively promote a common citizenship based on equitably shared benefits and burdens and on rationally allocated rights and responsibilities. There would be a bewildering variety of civil regulations applicable to various sections of the purportedly national community and this could not but weaken the fabric of the polity. All this points in the direction of an urgently required — and sadly missing — National Civil Code that would effectively weld India's disparate majority — minority groupings into a modern national community. This does not mean that the minimum common denominator of national life in all civil mat-

ters would be laid down and adhered to. There seems to be no other reasonable way to undermine the worrisome phenomenon of communalism that never seems to go away notwithstanding the many administrative and political measures taken or sought to be taken to date. After all, communalism is nothing if not the symptom of an exaggerated sense of community separateness which manifests itself in the typical siege mentality which in turn engenders antagonism towards any other community perceived as a threat to the identity of one's own community.

Cultural Pluralism and Civil Authority

Pluralism in cultural, religious and even political matters is one thing, and is not only to be tolerated but even encouraged as a source of enrichment. But pluralism in civil matters is a different proposition as it prevents civil authority from exercising its essential overarching societal function of mediating between individuals and groups on the basis of common perceptions of rights and obligations, benefits and burdens. When personal laws are pre-empted from the scope of direct civil jurisdiction, a very sizeable chunk of authority is taken away from the public do-

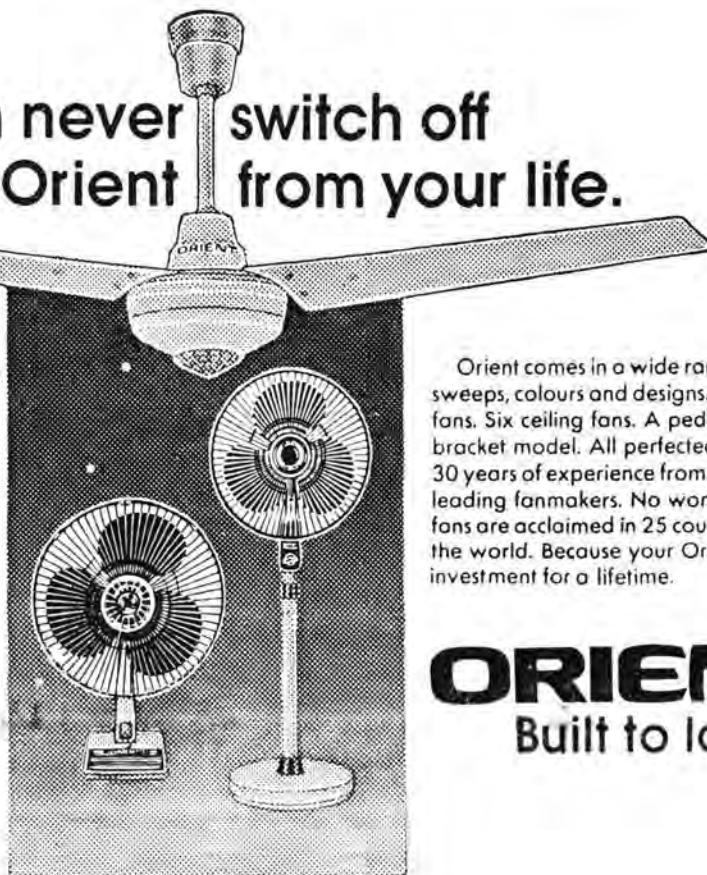
main and is vested in less representative individuals and groups who claim allegiance from their followers on a traditional, ascriptive basis rather than on a rational-legal one. Thus obscurantism gains many an entry point into the body politic and the rational-legal elements of the state are constantly pitted against the traditional ascriptive elements that have been given an official status within the system. This is a fatal flaw built into the system and needs to be rectified at the earliest. It is incongruous to have a common penal and criminal procedure code without a corresponding civil code applicable to all individuals and groups within the national community. It is time we spoke of common human rights, applicable to majorities and minorities alike, and took meaningful steps towards the formulation of a truly enlightened, secular National Civil Code that could be introduced on a voluntary basis in the first instance and that could serve as a pilot project for a more definitive one to follow in the proximate future. It is in this positive sense that minority rights need to be de-mythified.

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Industrial Policy for the 21st Century

A.H. Doctor

Our country is making determined efforts to enter the 21st century as a significant industrial power. The essential components of an appropriate strategy for ushering our country into the 21st century as a significant industrial power can be summed up as basically four: technology transfer, import substitution, product-quality improvement and man-power or human resources planning.

The first two components (viz technology transfer and import substitution) imply fighting a battle on many fronts. It involves fighting the vested interests in imported technology, evolving an appropriate import substitute strategy, and finally developing our own R & D.

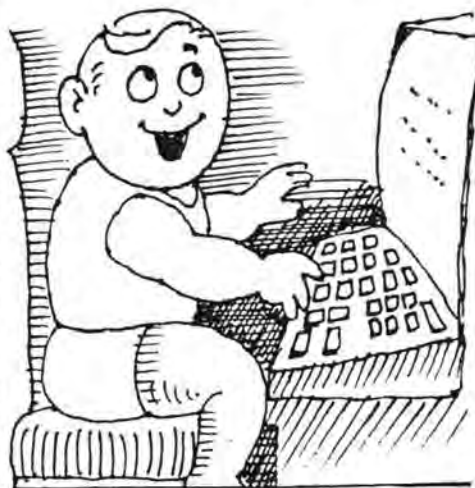
Today we have numerous vested interests in imported technology. These are the people whose interest in imported technology stems only from considerations of private profit and not from any long-term national perspective. Today our private sector imports technology mainly for the production of consumer goods such as cars and televisions. One industrial unit is even known to have imported technology for the preparation of potato chips. This must stop. Government should only allow import of technology for the capital goods sector and here too strictly for the purpose of enabling it to bridge the technological gap. As of today, we appear to be modernizing our non-essential sector at the expense of the vital capital goods sector.

Technology Transfer

The first requisite of a good technology transfer policy is to have a clear idea of what we want and what is good for us. We must be judicious in the selection and choice of Technology. Rather than make a fetish of importing every new technology, we must weigh the advantages and disadvantages of every new technology independently for ourselves. No technology transfer is worthwhile if it does not serve the country's number one priority programme of eliminating poverty. It is heartening to note that the Prime Minister once observed in parliament that he will not

Today our private sector imports technology mainly for the production of consumer goods such as cars and television sets. This must stop.

Government should only allow import of technology for the capital goods sector strictly for bridging the technological gap.



be deterred from introducing the latest technology in industry by the uninformed cry of the ideologues that it would lead to a steep rise in unemployment. There is considerable scope for science and technology, he observed, to be taken to the rural areas in order to fight poverty and backwardness. At the same time care will have to be taken to see that technology transfer does not destroy the science and technology base already so painstakingly developed or hinder the development of local R & D efforts.

While on the subject of technology transfer, it is necessary to emphasise one other point. It is necessary for us to develop the necessary negotiating skills. This is because the really significant technologies (especially in the defence industry) are not to be had for the asking. Yet, thanks to the keen competition among western nations, it is not all

that difficult to get the technology we want provided we know how to negotiate for it.

Import Substitution Strategy

A judicious and well planned technology transfer policy must be accompanied by an appropriate import substitution strategy. We don't have to substitute everything we import. The cost of substitution is an important factor. Unless it is a strategic component, it makes no sense if a component costing a dollar is substituted by an indigenous product costing a thousand rupees. The second factor an import substitution strategy cannot afford to ignore is the time factor. We can ill afford to take our own sweet time to develop a substitute process or technology because, then, by the time we do so, a new or better technology will have already replaced it or rendered it obsolete.

Ultimately the aim of our import substitution strategy must be to develop a whole new product. In other words, we need to develop fundamental research (not merely a single process substituting research) which will push our science and technology to the frontier areas. For instance, in the field of agriculture, our scientists must evolve appropriate crop technologies such as early maturing, high yielding, drought resistant varieties. In like manner, they could concentrate on developing moisture conserving technologies.

The third vital component of our industrial policy relates to the improvement of the quality of our products. Today many private and public sector companies can get away with giving the consumer a low quality product thanks mainly to the near monopoly position they enjoy. Hence the crying need of the day is to permit as much competition as possible and dismantle all cumbersome and obstructive controls. Where this is not feasible or desirable, government must introduce quality control measures.

Yet another thing we can do by way of improving the quality of our products is, as the Prime Minister has suggested,

concentrate on a few select areas, wherein in five or ten years, we can become the leaders of technology, say, in family planning products, high yielding drought resistant seed varieties etc.

Finally since the quality of products is intimately linked with R & D and innovativeness in industry, and since experience shows that meaningful R & D and innovativeness is highly co-related with the degree of concentration and size, government must allow firms to expand or grow to a size commensurate with meaningful R & D activity and innovativeness.

Human Resource Development

The final component of our new industrial policy will have to be manpower and human resource planning. If we have to produce the man-power our industry will require by the 21st century, then, planning for that must begin right now. Three factors need urgent attention. Firstly, since the base for all manpower and human resources planning is universal elementary (standards one

to six) education, we must achieve this goal at the earliest possible. This is why the Seventh Plan and the National Education Policy both lay emphasis on and hope to achieve this goal by 1990 when it is expected that elementary education will have covered nearly 92% of the population in the age group of six to fourteen. Secondly, we have to strengthen the vocational element in secondary education; and thirdly, work for greater co-ordination and co-operation between universities and industry.

Our underlying objective behind all this endeavour must be human resource development creating a scientific temper, which is different from setting up a few laboratories manned by highly trained scientists. If we develop that temper first then scientists and indigenous technology will naturally grow out of that.

Finally an important aspect of our human resource planning policy will have to be preventing the brain drain. For this it is necessary for us to develop

those industries which will help retain our brightest graduates at home. To mention just one such industry— computer software. We have a large trained man-power in this area and there is a tremendous demand for Indian-made computer software particularly in the USA. The products imported by the few companies in the field — Tata Burroughs, Computronics India and the units in the Free Trade Zone of Bombay — have been very well received in the American markets. Government policy must aim at helping such industries to develop on a priority basis as it will not only check but perhaps even reverse the brain drain.

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The ideas I stand for are not mine. I borrowed them from Socrates. I swiped them from Chesterfield. I stole them from Jesus. And put them in a book. If you don't like their rules, whose would you use?

— Dale Carnegie

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The 'Dog' that Barks !

Kamal Wadhwa

Ram Jethmalani's marathon questioning of the Rajiv regime has set a healthy precedent. The questions are a potent way of rallying anti-Gandhi forces now scattered and demoralised by years of bickering

The 30-day interrogation of Rajiv Gandhi via the press by the noted lawyer and former MP, Ram Jethmalani, has stirred a hornet's nest of controversy in all strata of Indian society. The 300-plus questions posed by Jethmalani cannot be dismissed as mere hearsay by any literate person because they carry an astonishing number of detailed particulars about the Bofors arms deal, the Fairfax affair, and the private shenanigans of the Prime Minister and his friends. What's more, the questions are based on intensive research and travel by Ram Jethmalani, who has spent much time and effort in Sweden, Switzerland and Italy to formulate his queries to the Prime Minister. Rajiv Gandhi's failure to respond meaningfully to the questions is surely an indication of embarrassment and of being caught on the wrong foot.

With the Prime Minister declining to undergo Jethmalani's interrogation, the public's reaction has varied from expression of outrage against Jethmalani to resigned acceptance of the Prime Minister's guilt. Here are some exam-

ples of the mindless vitriol directed at the jurist:

"The dog who barks at a thief is a domestic dog but you are a street dog who cannot distinguish (between) thieves and gentlemen but barks aimlessly. It seems your father is someone other than the man you call father."

(Signed)

A friend of your son's wife.

or:

"Dear Rascal Ram Jethmalani, You are helping terrorists and defending cold-blooded murderers of our late beloved PM Indira Gandhi. You are really traitor of our country. Once you have run away. You must run away immediately"

(Unsigned)

Of course, there were encouraging and positive opinions, too, such as the following excerpt printed in the *Gulf News* of July 14, 1987:

... 'We do not have a qualified opposition whom we can trust or who can effectively take up the matter of importance to that level either in Parlia-

ment or in public. Therefore, it is nothing but natural that an enlightened citizen like Ram Jethmalani has to voice his feelings and grievances through a reputed Indian newspaper...

"...Here the culprit is Rajiv Gandhi. He as 'Mr. Clean' should not have left Ram Jethmalani unchallenged. As a renowned lawyer of class, Ram Jethmalani is determined to prove what he says. But by taking refuge under the immunity and protection offered in the Indian Constitution, our Prime Minister is playing a hide and seek game for the last six months."

Corruption — The Only Issue

The issue that is foremost in the public consciousness, however, is the problem of corruption. This fact was evidenced by the large number of letters received in Jethmalani's office narrating personal experiences. Wrote one reader to Jethmalani:

"Corruption has created havoc with the lives of the people, particularly the salaried and the unemployed



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whether upper or middle class. It has encouraged inefficiency, crime and disrespect for Law. Today a criminal anti-social element has no fear of the law. So also crooked businessmen. By witnessing all this, you have started using your pen which is slowly taking effect.. If we can succeed in forcing ourselves from this corrupt government, I am sure there will be real peace. The first thing that could happen is every corrupt minister/official should be sacked. Not only will prices of all essential items come down, but the Government may even have to reduce income tax drastically..."

Some supporters of the Prime Minister, bristling against the charges of corruption levelled at their leader by Jethmalani, took the opportunity to pose their own questions to the peripatetic advocate. One Major Malhotra wondered how much Jethmalani had earned by way of advocacy and consultancy and whether the payment was made by cash or by cheque. He asked:

Did Jethmalani disclose his full income in his income tax returns? Could he produce his books of accounts and show how much he spent on his trip to Sweden to unearth evidence against Gandhi?

These questions were somewhat pointless as in public meetings Jethmalani has consistently denied evading income tax even affirming that his tax returns were on public record and open to inspection. As to the query on his Swedish trip, it is a well-known fact that he has an international reputation and a circle of distinguished friends overseas — a point also repeatedly and publicly stressed by him.

Major Malhotra also asserted that the Prime Minister was not bound to answer any question from anyone unless it was raised in Parliament as a starred or unstarred question. He added that if the Prime Minister were to answer Jethmalani's questions, then he would be forced to answer every question posed to him by any of the 800 million people of India. Malhotra conveniently overlooked Jethmalani's standing as a jurist and national leader with an undeniable *locus standi* to ask such questions. But then most of Jethmalani's detractors have failed to make out a logical case for ignoring his questions.

There were some responses addres-

sed to Jethmalani from eminent personalities of the ruling party, too, who rushed to defend their beloved Prime Minister in any way they could. Most of these Congress-I figures did not bother to weigh the facts published by Jethmalani but succumbed to near hysteria in their defence of Rajiv Gandhi.

Antulay to the Defence

Former Chief Minister of Maharashtra Abdul Rahman Antulay, was another public figure to react quickly and servilely to Jethmalani's crusade against the former's leader. Of course, his approval of the Prime Minister's epithet "barking dog" in relation to Jethmalani was understandable; the one-time chief minister faces a long court battle with every possibility of being convicted of corruption. Read this excerpt from Antulay's letter to the *Indian Express*:

"At whom Jethmalani, at one time or another, has not barked? Has he not barked at the Supreme Court as an institution when he gave an interview in late 1985 to *Probe*? Didn't he then blackmail this apex judicial forum when he said to the effect that 'Should I not get justice (in the Anthulay case) at the hands of the Supreme Court, I'll expose it even by committing contempt of court?'

Of course, Anthulay's letter was irrelevant to the questions posed to the Prime Minister by Ram Jethmalani. The former Chief Minister is waging a personal vendetta against the jurist who has successfully ended the career of this Congress-I stalwart. Antulay's furore against his nemesis was based on a mixture of fantasy and downright nonsense. He compared Rajiv Gandhi to an elephant and Jethmalani to a toothless dog. According to the former chief minister, an elephant like Rajiv Gandhi "walks" while a dog like Ram Jethmalani "barks!" Antulay then digressed to the subject of Indira Gandhi's regime and accused the noted barrister of being a sworn enemy of the Nehru family. He concluded his tirade with the crude statement:

"...There is nothing new, therefore, in his bark at Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. A dog has to act upon its own base, animal instinct! But, lo and behold, the bark cannot at all be at Hershmann who has been barking at the two respectable judges of our Supreme Court inspite of the 'barking' claim of 'a consistent public record of

upholding judicial integrity and independence...' But what can Jethmalani do? His bark is in obedience to a foreign whistle. His instinct won't work unless the whistle emits 'chhu!' In the circumstance, what can Rajiv Gandhi do?..."

The vindictive outpouring of the Antulays will remain etched for some time in the public mind; what is likely to be forgotten is the more serious deliberation sparked by Ram Jethmalani's interrogation of Rajiv Gandhi. For example, the Punjab Sikh Lawyers Council (PSLC) issued a weighty statement in Ludhiana on June 19 defending Jethmalani:

"The Punjab Sikh Lawyers Council here today in its emergency meeting deplored the remarks made by the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi against Mr. Ram Jethmalani, an eminent jurist and President of the 'Lawyers for Democracy' that he (Rajiv) was not bound to reply (to) every dog that barks — thereby equating Mr. Ram Jethmalani with a dog, when he made charges of corruption against the Prime Minister in the case of (the) Bofors kickbacks."

"These remarks cannot but be regarded as unworthy of (the) high office Mr. Gandhi holds. Even a block level leader would have thought twice before making such remarks."

Whatever the merits of Jethmalani's questions, there is a consensus in many liberal circles in India that Rajiv Gandhi's denigration of his accuser was in poor taste. As the prolific letter writer, I.V. Mahbubani explained to the *Indian Express*:

"...That Mr. Jethmalani has done his homework to shoot off a ten-point fusillade of charges against the P.M. for the next one month is easy to understand but Mr. Rajiv Gandhi should have maintained silence. He should have waited to see what more munitions Mr. Jethmalani was exploding before coming out with another explanation or taking a legal course. By making a boorish and objectionable remark, he has given the game away. It is now too late in the day for him to retrieve the situation by crossing swords with the noted jurist."

The Intellectuals' Response

The more potent responses to Jethmalani's questions, however, came

from intellectuals such as Upendra Baxi. Wrote Baxi in the July issue of *Lex et Juris* — the Law Magazine:

"The statement attributed by the *Indian Express* to the Prime Minister, which is neither confirmed nor denied so far, was made in the context of Ram Jethmalani's very specific allegations of corruption in the Bofors deal directed at the Prime Minister himself. Asked for his response, the Prime Minister is said to have said that he does not propose to answer every dog that barks.



"Jethmalani agrees with the Prime Minister, when he says, in his open letter to the Prime Minister, that dogs bark only when they see thieves, Jethmalani is not making any empirical statement concerning the behaviour of Indian dogs nor about thieves. If it is true that Indian dogs bark every time they see a thief, they would literally never stop barking!

"... it will be a sheer distortion to say that Ram Jethmalani called Rajiv Gandhi a thief. Both the worthy gentlemen were merely exercising their democratic right to freedom of speech and expression; neither was engaged in name-calling; both respected the dignity of discourse so vital to the preservation of democratic culture; and both thus helped to secure the future of democratic dignity for the coming generations.

"Unlike the lawyers, an acute understanding of metaphorical speech was provided by G.K. Moopanar, speaking for the Congress-I. He accused Ram Jethmalani of disrupting the

Constitution of India. It is clear to his insightful mind that if all Indian citizens were to be imbued by watchdogism, the Constitution will be disrupted. If we read the emerging corpus of canine jurisprudence as a whole, we find Ram Jethmalani expounding on the consequence of such watchdogism. He was able to say to the Prime Minister that his 'late mother and late brother' had developed a 'healthy respect' for him. Now Moopanar's logic becomes irresistibly clear. The Constitution is dis-

rupted when the flow of healthy respect is inverted. In Moopanar's analysis 'healthy respect' is due from the citizens to their rulers and not vice versa. A reversal will endanger constitutional democracy in India.

We thus witness an important fission in the evolving school of canine jurisprudence. The central jurisprudential question entailed here is: Should citizens be sleeping dogs or watch-dogs? The Moopanar sub-school affirms that the Constitution contemplates the sleeping-dog role for the Indian citizens; the Jethmalani sub-school affirms the opposite."

Upendra Baxi's exposition of the 'canine jurisprudence,' detailed in the preceding paragraphs, was one of the rare instances of support for Ram Jethmalani from the Indian intelligentsia. In public meetings addressed by him, Jethmalani has repeatedly castigated Indian intellectuals for failing to respond to his mission to expose corruption in

the ranks of the ruling regime. Baxi's stance was a fitting tribute to Jethmalani's crusade and will certainly shake up the reticent members of the Bar who to date have not ventured to take sides in the controversy surrounding the Prime Minister.

Using Wealth in the National Interest

Whatever the limitations of the response elicited by Ram Jethmalani, his marathon questioning of the Rajiv regime has set a healthy precedent. The questions are a particularly potent way of rallying the anti-Gandhi forces now scattered and demoralized by years of bickering. The Janata experiment of 1977 may not be duplicated but Jethmalani's message of a two-party republic has fallen on receptive ears. Judging from the events in the past few weeks, the formation of an anti-corruption front is certainly in the offing. The question is whether these scattered disorganized movements will coalesce into an opposition party with the strength to challenge the Congress-I's self-styled arbiters of the nation's fate. Another subsidiary question is whether the current upheaval will produce a leader of national stature and prestige to counter the dynastic rule of the Nehru family.

These are turbulent times for the Indian republic. A nation which idealizes poverty and has conducted a relentless campaign against its wealthy citizens, has been rudely aroused by a jet-setting lawyer who has spared no expense for the success of his mission. Given the resource constraints facing even the most vigilant citizens, how can any Indian launch an international investigation on the scale mounted by Ram Jethmalani? The message is clear: India needs more wealthy citizens and independent centres of power with the wherewithal to finance accountability exercises. The benighted masses of India are blind in their devotion to their leaders; they cannot reason with their oppressors especially when they are so dependent on the Central Government for survival. Ram Jethmalani has shown what education and a modicum of wealth can accomplish in a poor country.

MR. KAMAL WADHWA is Assistant Editor of *Lex et Juris* — The Law Magazine

The Persecution of Rama Swarup An Appeal for Help

Respected Masaniji,

Many thanks for your letter of 27th May together with the clipping of *Statesman* in which you have kindly made reference to me...

There is a guard of police of 28 people repeat 28 people around the clock at my house. I am allowed to meet anybody — but in the presence of police officer. My telephone lines have been out. Mail is censored. And my Sujana Singh office has been burgled on 9th May 1987 by the landlord with the help of the police, and all my office record, files and furniture taken away. Photo copy machine and typewriters etc. I have reported the matter to the police — but no action so far. They are keeping quiet. If someone comes to meet me he is harassed by the police next day. I am isolated.

It will take 5—6 months more before the case is decided. I wanted to have a typist — request turned down. Bank account is frozen. My wife's account is opened by the Delhi High Court but the State is going for appeal to the Supreme Court. How I will live. Who will give me to eat?

I need at least 3 — 4 lakhs to fight the case. My wife has sold jewellery. I don't know what will happen to me after 2 — 3 months — when I will have nothing to eat.

I need your help. Could you please raise some funds for me. Even one rupee will be of help to me...

It is all KGB. and Red China which have landed me into trouble... I will keep it up my fight against communism.

Yours

(Rama Swarup)

A few weeks back I received a letter from my old acquaintance, Mr. Rama Swarup, which made me rather sad. He has given an anguished account of the treatment to which he is subjected and his financial plight and has appealed for financial assistance. Since Mr. Rama Swarup has been a good friend I am requesting the editors to publish this short note and extracts from Mr. Rama Swarup's letter dated 13th June 1987.

Unfortunately none of us are men or women of affluence and can only make a modest response to his appeal. I shall be glad if any reader of *Freedom First* who reads this issue sends his or her contribution to the editors of *Freedom First* who will pass on the money to Mr. Rama Swarup. A cheque in favour of Mr. Rama Swarup will not be of much help because, as he points out, his bank account has been frozen and he cannot operate it.

It is sad that, although the High Court

of Delhi released him on bail, the Supreme Court went back on that humane decision and gave him partial bail limited to house confinement. He has mentioned the disgraceful conditions to which he has been subjected. All this because he is charged with a breach of the Official Secrets Act.

As I have said elsewhere, I am not in a position to comment on those charges but, even assuming they are true, the denial of bail for over two years and the restraints to which he is now subjected are a disgrace to democracy and reflects poorly on the course of justice in our country.

We want a Supreme Court which will do justice under the Constitution — not over it. In our courts we want a government of laws and not of men.

— Franklin Delano Roosevelt

45th Anniversary of Quit India

One of the worst fiascos we have had in Bombay for a long time took place on 5th August when the Prime Minister tried to re-enact the adoption of the Quit India resolution at Gowalia Tank maidan. The *Statesman* quite rightly carried its Bombay correspondent's report under the title: "Day of Dishonour for Freedom Fighters".

Except for Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali there were no leading members of the Quit India agitation present. Mr. Achyut Patwardhan, Mr. Morarji Desai, Mr. S.M. Joshi and Dr. Ushaben Mehta all refused to accept the invitation, wisely anticipating what kind of 'tamasha' it would turn out to be. Aruna Asaf Ali is of course a charming woman and I had the pleasure of co-operating with her in the underground from 1942 onwards. But, later on, she blotted her copy book by becoming a communist fellow traveller and by being given a Soviet Peace Prize which is normally awarded for services to the communist cause.

This reminds me of an amusing development which happened many years ago. General S.S. Sokhey, the Head of the Haffkine Institute, was once awarded some peace prize on the recommendation of a fellow scientist, Professor Joliot-Curie. This he accepted. A little later, Mr. Romesh Chandra, a communist functionary who represented India on the Comintern, approached General Sokhey and asked for the prize money. General Sokhey expressed great surprise and asked, 'why?' to which Mr. Romesh Chandra explained that these prizes were really intended for the local communist party and was not to be pocketed by the persons so honoured. General Sokhey told Romesh Chandra, quite rightly, to climb a tree and kept the money. I hope Mrs. Asaf Ali did the same.

I myself was quite rightly not invited and given the pleasure of turning down the invitation because I wasn't present at Gowalia Tank maidan on 9th August 1942. But, in response to the plea of my good friend Jayaprekash Narain who

was leader of the underground, I joined the activities, edited the underground journal called '9th August', went to Delhi to meet Mr. William Phillips, President Roosevelt's special envoy to India, and did many other chores for my colleagues. In February 1943, however, I got somewhat bored with being underground and courted imprisonment in Poona during Mahatma Gandhi's fast.

The question arises, why was the 45th anniversary celebrated? What is significant about 45 years? This, as far as I know, is the only celebration after 45 years of any happy event. I can only guess the Prime Minister's prestige and credibility had fallen so low that his advisers looked around for cosmetic measures to repair the damage. There was no celebration after 40 years because, at that time, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi was not the Prime Minister. There will probably be no celebration after 50 years because, with some luck, he might not be Prime Minister by then. In fact, somebody quite rightly observed that "the only Quit India on 9th August this year was that addressed to Mr. Rajiv Gandhi by a bored and tired nation!"

V.P. Singh

Although I had earlier written about him appreciatively in this column, I did not have the pleasure of meeting Mr. V.P. Singh till recently. This was at dinner at a friend's place and, since it was a social function where the talk was off the record, I shall have to desist from referring to it.

The impression I formed of Mr. Singh was that he is a man with some charm and intelligence. At the same time, I found that that, due to his past environment, namely, the Congress Party in the U.P., he is somewhat limited in his knowledge and understanding of our country's problems. That of course is not his fault but it does show the need for him to broaden his horizon now that he has emerged as a possible future Prime Minister of this country.

For instance, the fact that he chose to appear on a public platform in Bombay for his first public meeting here in the dubious company of Mr. Datta Samant, when much more prestigious offers were open to him, betrays his ignorance of the facts of life in Bombay. It was a bloomer to which some bad adviser

committed him, when he had the opportunity to check on that advice.

What bothers me more about Mr. Singh is that in all the statements he had made since his leaving the Union Government, there has been no reference to India's prime need, which is to abolish the excessive controls to which we have been subjected in the name of the socialist pattern and the need to privatise Government enterprises which, like white elephants, are eating into the substance of our country.

I for one am not interested in a change from one Prime Minister to the next if the latter does not appreciate that, if India is to progress, there needs to be a U-turn in economic policy as Mr. N.A. Palkhivala has often reiterated. If we are still to continue under another Prime Minister to be dominated by the dead hand of the past which has come to us from the days of Jawaharlal Nehru and Mrs. Indira Gandhi, I see no virtue in such a change. I am therefore delighted that Mr. R.H. Mody, Chairman of TISCO, has put his finger on the spot when he advised Mr. V.P. Singh to demand that "we get rid of all damn controls and licences since these are the chief causes of corruption."

Swiss Bank Accounts

There has been a lot of ill-informed comment about obtaining disclosure of money deposited by Indian citizens in banks in Switzerland. The only sensible and well-informed articles that have appeared on the subject have been two by Mr. A.G. Noorani in the *Illustrated Weekly of India* of May 24, 1987 and the *Indian Express* of July 15, 1987, and one by Mr. Govind Talwalkar in the *Times of India* of July 6, 1987.

The position seems to be fairly clear that the Swiss banks who have maintained a tradition of secrecy extending over several centuries are not likely to depart from their tradition. In this context the hypocritical action of the Union Prime Minister and Government of sending an official delegation to Berne was an attempt to fool the public at the taxpayer's expense.

The law in Switzerland is apparently very clear that the banks can only be expected to divulge details about fore-

igners' accounts if:

- (a) The country concerned has taken criminal proceedings against the person concerned and, what is more important,
- (b) that the offence for which a person is being tried is also an offence under Swiss law.

As it happens, in most civilised countries, including Switzerland, banking money abroad, provided there is no tax fraud, is not a crime. Therefore, an offence under FERA is not an offence under Swiss law.

A somewhat similar situation arose many years ago when President Nasser of Egypt lost the six-day war against Israel. According to a story that emanated from Cairo, which shows that the Egyptians have a highly developed sense of humour, President Nasser, being hard up for cash, sent a delegation of diplomats to the Swiss Government in Berne requesting them to arrange that the names and bank balances of all Egyptian citizens in Swiss banks should be disclosed to the Egyptian Government, as they needed desperately to put their hands on that money. The Government in Berne explained patiently to the Egyptian diplomats that, unlike the position in countries in the Third World, the banks in Switzerland were not subject to Government control and that therefore the Swiss Government was helpless. They suggested that the Egyptian delegation go to Zurich to meet the head of the Swiss Banks' Association, which they did. They were politely told in Zurich that though the answer normally would be in the negative, out of regard for their great leader President Nasser, the bank's president would consult his colleagues and give a considered reply a couple of days later. When the Egyptians returned for the Swiss Bank's reply, the Swiss Banker said that he and his colleagues had agreed to make an exception out of regard for Nasser. They would disclose the names and bank balances of Egyptians on condition that the list was published in toto in the daily newspapers of Cairo. At this the Egyptian diplomats said "Please forget about it, we withdraw our request". So they returned to Cairo to report to Nasser with their tails between their legs.

As Mr. Noorani has put it: "The impediments exist in New Delhi, not in Berne."

The Theory of Development and the Future

Amlan Datta

While to an older generation the name of Amlan Datta would be familiar, the younger generation may not know equally well his pioneering small book For Democracy, which carried encomiums from an international audience. An economic historian not bound by rigid ruling orthodoxies, Professor Datta's small book on collectivist economic experience has remained an important contribution to the literature of economics.

After teaching for decades, Professor Datta became Vice-Chancellor of more than one University, the last assignment being at Shantiniketan. He has had his share of the turmoils that Vice-Chancellors of West Bengal are invariably heir to, but his fortitude, cheer and aplomb in difficult situations were indeed qualities that impressed his friends.

He is a prolific writer in Bengali too. We publish an English translation of his Ashok Kumar Sarkar Memorial Lectures in Bengali, sponsored by the Ananda Bazar Patrika.

The unrivalled teacher and expositor of economic development during the last part of the 18th century was Adam Smith. It was then, the birth hour of the Industrial Revolution in Britain. David Ricardo was both the vehicle and critic of Smith's doctrine. After him, among those who had created a stir in the realm of thinking on the subject, Karl Marx and John Stuart Mill in particular are worth remembering. During the period, in a few other countries like Germany, rapid industrialization had begun. And in Britain the industrial revolution had travelled beyond its infancy. The explanatory notes of Smith's reputed book were no longer sufficient now. In the light of the experience of the 19th century, it was both possible and necessary to set it out in a new way. A period of more than a century has passed since Mill and Marx. There has been the inevitable revelation of more new facts and experiences which would have been difficult to locate within the confines of the 19th century. The thoughts of predecessors are still valuable. Nevertheless, the time has come for thinking anew. Merely the analysis of the ideas of the past is not enough.

The year 1776 saw the publication of that famous work of Adam Smith, *An Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Smith was both a theoretician and a philosopher on the one hand, and well acquainted with economic history on the other. The subject of Smith's investigation was the basic causes of economic development. In the age before Smith, the mercantilist doctrine reigned in the realm of economic theory. The exponents of this

doctrine believed that the more gold and silver accumulates in a country's treasury the more economic development will be promoted. Adam Smith was severely opposed to the mercantilist doctrine. He wished to say this emphatically, that increasing the amount of bullion or coins is not the fundamental truth about economic development. Development calls for a realistic basis. Skill of labour or the capacity for work are, for instance, the real determinants of economic development. We have to find out how the capacity for work can be increased. We have to place history and theory side by side in order to realize the answer to this question. Adam Smith said that along with the spread of the market the division of labour in the industry was increasing, and with it the skills of labour. If the same man has to do all the work, no special skill can be expected of him in any one job. If the same person has to do everything from cobbling a shoe to delivering a sermon, there is little

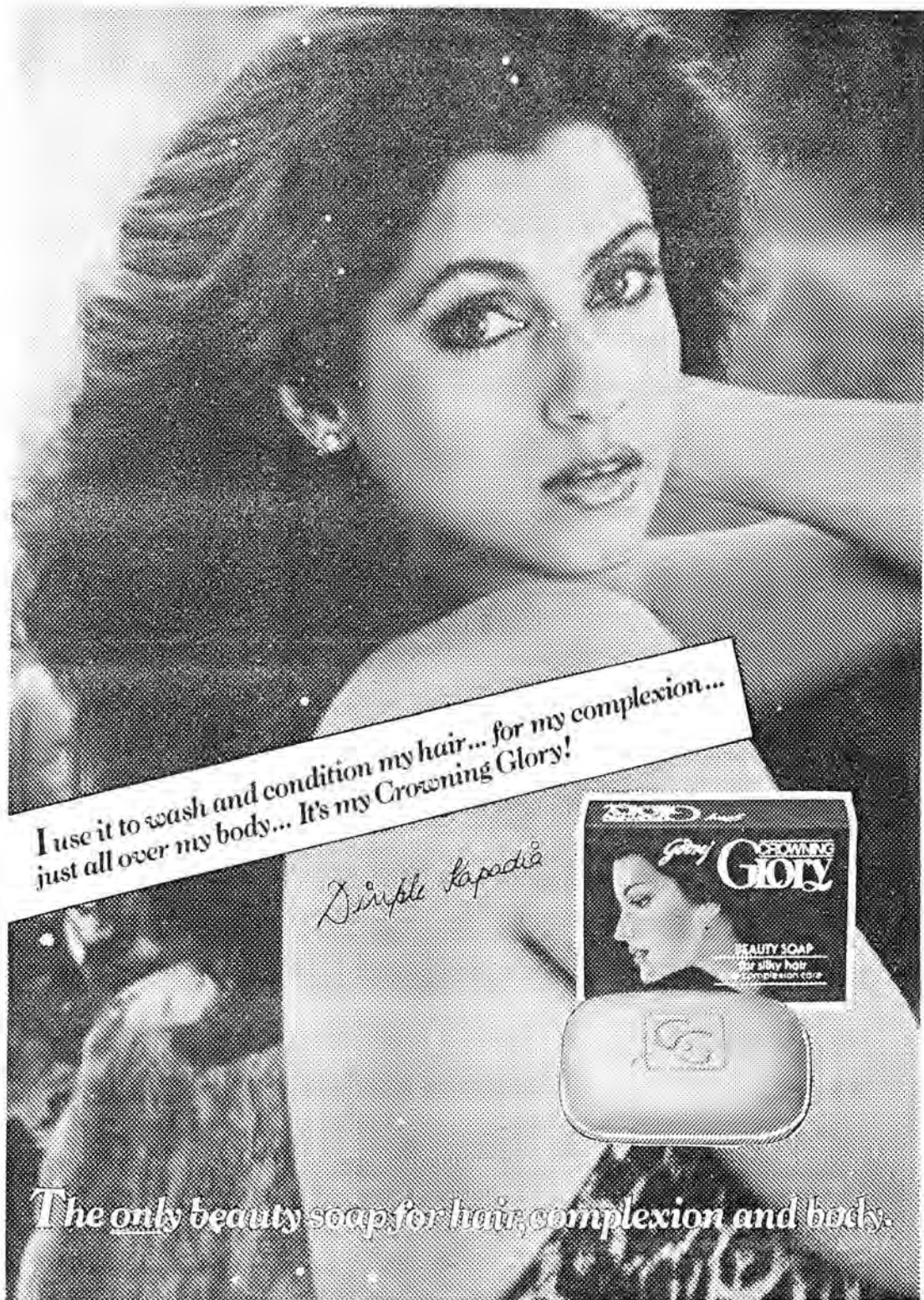
possibility of his being an expert in mending shoes; it is also difficult for him to be learned in the scriptures. Needless to say, Adam Smith had a particular type of division of work in mind. With the growth in the scale of the industry, the whole of the production process does not remain in the hands of an individual, it is divided into small parts and one or more workers are employed in each. As the much divided process becomes mechanised, the use of machines increase. All this can happen only when there is a need for large scale industrial production, and this is possible solely with the widening of the market. If the peasant's daughter sits at home and spins her cloth there is little scope for division of labour. But with the growth of the market grows the cloth mill; the process of work becomes atomized and with this the use of other machines also increases.

Due to the division of labour no one produces the bulk of his or her necessities any longer, everybody has to depend on the market. Before the mill owner sells his product in the market he has to pay the labourer his wages, so that the latter may get his mouthful by the end of the day. But capital is needed to pay wages in advance. Thus capital is essential for the division of labour and market oriented production. Capital comes from savings. That is why Adam Smith laid stress upon savings.

Thus, in Smith's thought, division of labour, growth of the market, savings and capital are connected to each other. The skill of labour grows on the



Adam Smith



I use it to wash and condition my hair... for my complexion...
just all over my body... It's my Crowning Glory!

Dimple Kapadia



The only beauty soap for hair, complexion and body.

basis of all this. This is the real foundation of economic development.

If this base is absent, it is not possible to make the country prosperous by merely increasing the quantity of money in circulation. This emphasis on objective analysis is a particular feature of western classical economics. Economic phenomena appear before us wearing the mask of money. Behind that mask lies 'real' economics — labour, land capital i.e. tools and the food for the labourer's subsistence. Commodities are produced by the joint and skilful use of such factors. The market is for the exchange of commodities. Money aids this exchange. Grease helps to turn the wheel, but the grease by itself does not make the wheel. The wheel of the economy in motion has to be brought into view. The strength of classical economics lies in this attention towards 'objective analysis'. In the opinion of some later economists this is also one of the causes of its weakness.

We have seen earlier that Adam Smith assigned a particular place to savings in the theory of development. This can be cited as another feature of classical economics. Adam Smith's difference in attitude towards landlords and industrialists is worth noting. There was a deep suspicion at the back of his mind for merchants and industrialists.



David Ricardo

Such classes of people given the chance, bring adversities for the common people — there are such remarks in his writings. However, in the work of economic development, in the task of increasing the riches of the country, he has placed merchants and industrialists above the landlords and the aristocratic classes. People from aristocratic classes are not savers, but industrialists are.

Savings and their investment, these only are important for development. These are also necessary for the development of agriculture. Approaching agriculture from the point of view of commerce also brings about its improvement.

The State and the Economy

What should be the place of the State in economic activity? Many say that Adam Smith left everything in the hands of the market, he did not leave any room for a residual role for the State in economics. This is a wrong notion about Smith. Of course, the important role of the State in economic functions is acknowledged. But he also understood that if everything was left to the merchants there would be a tendency towards monopoly. Thus, without an ever-alert participation of the State, commerce cannot remain untrammelled. Besides, there are many activities whereby national life is improved on the whole or benefited, but it is not quite possible for any individual businessman to do such work. Smith's favourite example was a system of education for the common people. In such areas he wanted an important role for the State.

Landlord — Industrialist Conflict

The leading figure in classical economics after Adam Smith was David Ricardo. We have a clear analysis of the conflict of interests between the industrialist and the landlord in his writings. Smith had emphasised the point that the landed classes were not very eager to save or invest, they were eager to indulge in luxuries, and therefore in the field of economic development the role of this class was weak. Ricardo demonstrated that in the realm of economic principles the attitude and interests of these two classes were different. The question had become important through a contemporary political debate. During the period of Napoleon, due to the hostile relationship between France and Britain, French wheat for a time could not reach England. For quite some time after the death of Napoleon there continued to be a duty on the import of French wheat in the interests of the farmers. There ensued a debate as to whether the duty should remain or be taken off. If abolished, relatively cheaper wheat would be available to the common people of England. If the price of wheat was lowered then

the landlord's rent would decrease. But with growing food prices, wages would also rise, which would be a loss to the industrialist. Ricardo was for the abolition of import duty. The conflict between the interests of the landlord and the industrialist had become clear in the context of this agitation. Ricardo expounded this as a theory. He too, like Smith supported free trade.

Like the clash between the interests of the landlord and the industrialist, especially in the short run, there is also a conflict between the industrialist and the worker. It is not that Adam Smith or Ricardo did not notice this. There are remarks in Adam Smith's writings that because the labourers are not organized they cannot bargain with advantage with the industrialists. But neither Smith nor Ricardo laid stress upon this conflict. In their view savings and investment are more important in the interests of the nation. This is where the consideration of the long run comes in. Can there also be an improvement in the situation of labourers due to economic development? According to classical economists that depends on other circumstances, the chief among which is population control. As industries grow in a country with the accumulation of capital, so does the demand for labour.

With unrestricted growth in their numbers, the poverty of the labourers cannot be eradicated. Malthus mentioned this with emphasis. However, he was aware of the possibilities of birth control. All accepted this, from Smith to Mill. It is necessary to keep unhindered the accumulation of capital on the one hand and birth control on the other. Only then can there be an improvement

Many say that Adam Smith left every thing in the hands of the market, he did not leave any room for a residual role for the state in economics. This is a wrong notion about Smith.

in the conditions of the working classes; this was the contention of the classical economists.

Competing Demands

A question can be raised here if the storing of capital would be enough? It has also to be seen whether there is a chance of it being invested. If the opportunity for the investment of accumulated capital is decreased, would not an economic crisis arise from that itself? On this there was some difference of opinion among the classical economists. Nevertheless, the view of the majority in short was this: Suppose there are two areas of investment for production, the cultivation of food crops and cloth mills. Those who are engaged in agriculture also need clothes, while those who are connected with the industry also have a demand for food. If capital is invested in both the sectors according to their proportion, then production will not be hindered by the paucity of demand. It may happen, of course, that too much money would be sunk in the cloth mills and agriculture would remain neglected. In that case there will not be enough demand in the market to buy the excess cloth, because the income of the cultivators will not be enough. In other words, if a proportion is not kept in the investment of capital in the different sectors, there can be a crisis in the market. It takes time to remedy the mistake but it is possible to come back to the right path by reading the signs of the market. The economy advances by continually correcting such mistakes. More capital has to be invested in order to increase supply from which more income as well as demand is generated. Even if we add the machine industry along with food crops and cloth in our hypothetical framework, the argument will not fall apart. Although crises appear in the market from time to time, the investment of capital and economic development proceeds, overcoming periodic aberrations. The path of history is not smooth, and accepting this, classical economics has taught us to concentrate upon long term determinants of economic development than on periodic fluctuations and inconveniences. This is also one of its main features like that of the 'objective' analysis. In the long term view there is only one obstacle in the path of development acknowledged by classical economic theory. There is a limit to the productive

capacity of the soil. As a result, the rate of development at one stage may well confront ever growing obstacles. But that is not a crisis of the market. The long term limits to development are determined not by the lack of demand but by the limitations of the productive power of the land. Here, land does not merely denote the land for agriculture. In a wider sense all kinds of natural resources including oil and energy have to be taken into account.

It is said that the classical economist believed in the capitalist system. This is not altogether mistaken. But neither is it fully correct. Somebody who accepts the fundamental conclusions of classical economic theory is not necessarily a supporter of capitalism. Let us consider, for instance, John Stuart Mill. He more or less accepted the principal ideas of the classical school. But he was deeply sympathetic towards socialism and cooperatives. He put his faith in a reconciliation between individualism and socialism. He had hoped that along with the growth of education and culture, society will move towards cooperation. Whether his thoughts are rationally acceptable or not, let the debate be put off for the present moment.

Labour as a Commodity

Although the influence of classical economics was powerful during the beginning of the 19th century, there was no dearth of critics. We can mention, for example, the names of List and Sismondi. However, the great scholar Karl Marx surpassed the rest in renown. It is impossible to give here a comprehensive introduction to his thinking. Still, it is necessary to say a few words in brief.

Associated with Marx's name, his theory of exploitation has gained much popular currency. Man produces commodities by his labour. The values of goods are determined by the amount of labour embodied in them. In the capitalist system, again, labour itself is a commodity because it is bought and sold in the market. There is a difference between the amount of value created by the labourer and the value he gets as a return for the labour. The difference is the surplus value. The capitalist buys labour and the surplus value is thus appropriated by him. This is called exploitation. This exploitation is measured by the surplus value. The capitalist class is bred upon this surplus value.

Marx's Economic Ideas

How is the value of labour, i.e. its wage, determined? In the interests of the rich, the labourer receives the lowest wage whereby he can maintain himself with great difficulty, and return yet again to be sacrificed in the process of production. Capital is accumulated from surplus value out of which new



Karl Marx

labourers are employed and machines bought, at the root of whose manufacture lies labour again. Along with the growth in the accumulation of capital, the demand of the capitalist for labour is naturally expected to rise and so are the wages, as a general rule, by the pressure of demand. But the richer class is firmly resolved to check wage rise. To begin with there is something like an understanding or an unwritten compact among capitalists as buyers of labour. Besides, with the possibility of wage rise, the owner of industry resorts to increasing use of machines reducing the employment of labourers. As a result of the use of machines the number of unemployed grows in the ranks of the labourers. By the pressure of growth among the unemployed, the wage remains at the lowest level.

Along with this, another tendency of capitalism has been discussed in Marxian economics. With the increasing use of machines in industry the primacy of large industries is established. Small industries either become appendages of large ones or depart, losing out in the competition. Gradually capital becomes concentrated in the hands of small number of capitalists. This way two opposite poles are created in society. At one pole is situated a small number of the rich who hold the accumulated capital, while at the other is the deprived mass who have nothing left with them except labour power. This way, society becomes divided into the two camps respectively of capitalists and labourers

and the room for the middle classes becomes increasingly constricted. The contradictions within capitalism now become clear and sharp. On the one hand due to the progress of capital and machinery the productive powers increase extraordinarily. On the other hand, due to the poverty of most of the people their purchasing power remain limited. A serious obstacle is created in the path of the sale of commodities within the country. Capitalists are thus forced to search for foreign markets. There ensues conflict and imperialistic war between the different capitalist countries over foreign markets. This way the internal crisis is spread around the world. The lesson of marxism is that capitalism does not stay still, its inherent contradictions increasingly become alarming. This way the path of revolution is prepared. The leading role in the revolution is assumed by the working classes. The modern class in a way is a creation of capitalism itself. On the other hand it is the destroyer of capitalism. According to marxist theory after the revolution, a society free from exploitation will be established. The State machinery that had once been the instrument for exploitation and oppression in the hands of the capitalists will now be under the control of the working classes. There are also several steps in the evolution of post-revolutionary society, the first of which has been termed socialist and the higher, communist. Because the State is fundamentally an oppressive machinery to protect class domination, its necessity will obviously end in the society of the future, free of exploitation. That is what Marx expected. The dictatorship of the working classes is a historical phase on the road to it. The final goal is the overall freedom of mankind.

It is generally accepted that the roots of marxian economic theory were there in classical economic thought, particularly in Ricardo. Still, some important dissimilarities between the two perspectives are easily noticeable. Everybody, including Ricardo and Mill, knew that unrests from time to time appeared in economic life. But Marx believed what the classical economists did not, that within the capitalist monetary system the crisis will inevitably continue to mount. Smith and Marx both agreed that with the help of capitalism the increase in the productive powers of in-

It is not surprising that a considerable section of the new middle class is revolutionary in theory. It is also not surprising that they are, in practice, for stability and restrained change. This disharmony between the theory proclaimed and the life style observed is the basic character of the drama of their life.

dustrial revolution is unprecedented. However, Marx theoretically did not acknowledge, while the classical thinkers did, that even within the capitalist system, improvement in the standards of living of the working classes was possible. Needless to say, this difference in economic perception was connected to politics, and in a wider sense, sociology.

Facts do not always correspond to theory. Yet, the purpose of theory is to help the understanding of facts. The social scientist must compare theory with facts, and revise the original theories if necessary. To the scientist, no accepted theory can be the last word. Now what are the broad facts?

Labour and Middle Class in Capitalist Societies

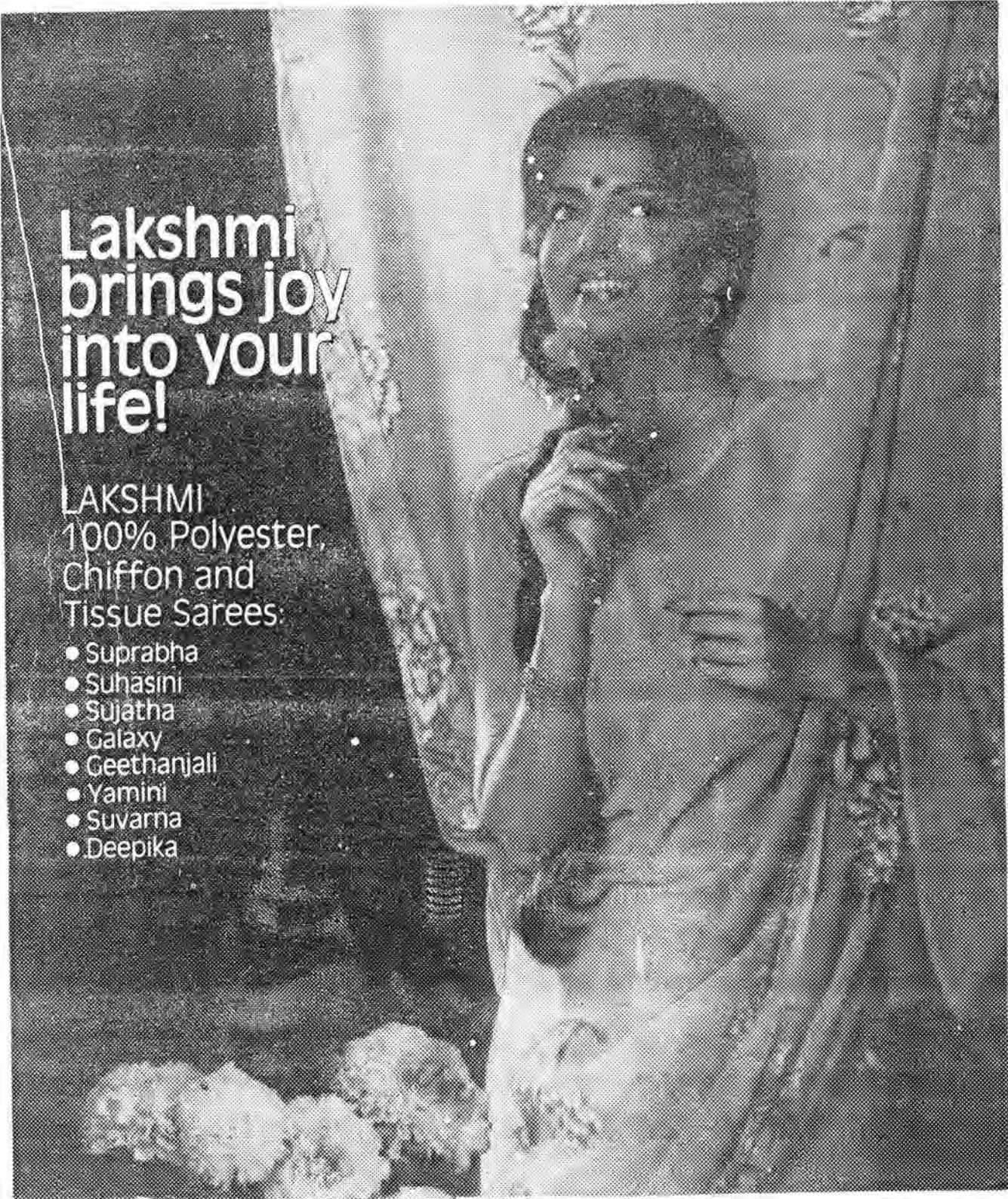
In the western capitalist countries inequalities in the distribution of wealth are present in a large way. However, the living standards of the workers have improved, although presumably, their feeling of deficiency has not been lessened a bit. In Japan, Western Europe or America, today's workers in comparison with workers of one or more generations ago, have a much improved living condition. This has been possible due to the spread of education, the growing power of workers' organizations and the advancements in technology. Of course, all these notions can be criticized. The criticism which can often be heard in Marxist circles is that the improvement in the living standards of

the common people has been possible by exploiting the labourers of under-developed countries. The western capitalist has been able to bring some affluence to the workers of his own country by transporting poverty abroad. In other words, working classes in advanced capitalist countries are nourished by the fruits of imperialism. Nothing more than that.

Another remarkable event in this century has been the origin and growth of a new middle class. The middle class is not merely a sum of small businessmen and industrialists. Other types of people are there in this group. With industrial development the number of teachers, researchers and technicians is continuing to increase. They have been included in the ranks of the middle classes. They are not capitalists, but many of them are highly educated. Capital has been invested in their education, due to which their capacity for income has grown. The source of this income is not uneducated labour. On the contrary, costly education itself, is the main capital. They cannot be grouped along with other labourers. Their numbers have been increasing in the industrially developed countries. This new middle income group is not undermined by the competition from modern industries, rather it grows in their shelter. Another prop of the new middle class is the bureaucracy. In the modern state, be it under capitalism or nationalism, the number and strength of the bureaucrats have been increasing. Even in a country like ours, they are flourishing. High level bureaucrats can by no means be seen as one with the working classes. They are sections of the new middle class. Today's educated middle class is aware of the fact that society is mobile. There are plenty of causes for frustration and despair in their personal lives, in the atmosphere of cruel competition. It is not surprising that a considerable section of the new middle class is revolutionary in theory. It is also not surprising that they are, in practice, for stability and restrained change. This disharmony between the theory proclaimed and the life style observed is the basic character of the drama of their life. The new generation is plagued by this hypocrisy, although this becomes a part of their life very quickly.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Translated by Mr. Sudipta Sen.



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De-regulating Industrial Relations

Sudhakar Nair

Corsica, said the great historian Gibbon, is more easily deplored than denied; And so it is with our industrial relations. If our economy is to be put back on the rails, it is inevitable that sooner or later government will have to address itself to the task of evolving a sound industrial relations policy that will see it through, at least, the next decade. Perhaps in no other area have so many Commissions toiled as hard and produced so little. The last of these was, of course, the National Commission on Labour set up with trumpets and fanfare and laid to rest without even an obituary.

Need for the Right Perspective

Any attempt to enumerate a sound industrial relations policy must founder if the government does not have its perspectives clear. It must be prepared to throw off its blinkers and accept industrial relations as a problem of group dynamics with all its attendant socio-economic ramifications rather than as a purely legal problem. As long as the focus is on law and legalities, industrial relations will continue to be a playground for lawyers.

Viewed in this context the clamour for a common labour code though desirable in itself, is only a part-solution. What is needed is not modification, but de-legislation. The need is to reduce legalities to the minimum which alone will give the necessary positive impetus for a bilateral approach to industrial relations. As in every other sphere of life there will be those with a vested interest in legalities and litigation who stand to lose if there is a shift in emphasis. The labour lawyers, the legalistic trade unionists and lawyer—personnel managers, would prefer to perpetuate litigation as a way of life in industrial relations. But there must be a shift in focus if sanity is to prevail.

Wherever there are clearly demarcated constituencies operating in the same area, there are bound to be differences of opinion, which may at times, escalate into conflicts. Much more so in the field of industrial relations, where each party even though engaged in a

common endeavour, and even accepting that they have a common endeavour, and common stake in the organisation, sees the other as a hindrance in achieving its own goal. Each, of course, views the problems of the enterprise from its own point of view, and ends up developing a love-hate relationship. In industrial relations the "one-eyed man" is not better than the blind. It is partial sight that makes for confusion, mis-interpretation and mistrust.



It is imperative that industrial relations be pulled out of the clutches of politicians and muscle men and handed over to an independent autonomous body. Let's call it the Industrial Relations Authority of India, set up under a special statute and enjoying the same status as say, the Election Commission.

Any potential source of conflict must provide for a legal or quasi-legal framework within which the ultimate solution must lie. But that must be an alternative of the last resort. Unfortunately in the present situation the first step is to keep the record 'straight', for which every letter is drafted and vetted by the legal adviser. The legal recourse is on the face of it not the first alternative; but, behind the facade of correspondence and discussions the preparations for a legal battle are only too evident.

Therefore the urgent need to de-legislate. This is an aspect of which not much thought has been given. What is needed is a widening of the legal framework, to increase the distance between a bilateral solution and access to law. The legal approach to industrial relations is also an escapist approach, the attempt of the parties being to get the dispute referred to a court.

Government and ministers cannot stay away from meddling in industrial relations. Workers are solid vote banks, and it pays to project oneself as a great defender of the "weaker side" though there is sufficient evidence to prove they are not.

Governmental Interference

The ostensible reason for governmental or ministerial interference is that the economy cannot afford strikes and lockouts and hence industrial relations must be rigidly regulated. Whether such regimentation and control has had any impact can be assessed from the statistics of man-days lost each year. In fact it is only because the government is there like a watch dog, that parties take no initiative in hammering out a solution, but work towards a "reference".

In the ultimate analysis it pays the government not to be over-enthusiastic about the effects of strikes and lockouts on the economy. Far more damage is being done by employees in governmental departments, public sector units, banks, etc., who in any case do little work even in normal times. That apart, what government must view with seriousness is the manner in which every industrial relations situation slowly but surely degenerates into a law and order situation.

The first positive step towards a vibrant industrial relations policy is for the government to give the profession of industrial relations a measure of autonomy. It must be accepted as a profession just as much as Marketing or Cost Accounting. What a pity that there is no professional body which will ensure that only those with the requisite expertise

will practise it as in Medicine or Law. It is imperative that industrial relations be pulled out of the clutches of politicians and muscle men and handed over to an independent autonomous body. Let's call it the Industrial Relations Authority of India, set up under a special statute and enjoying the same status as, say, the Election Commission. It is only then that one can think in terms of overhauling the present system of disputes settlement, without legal overtones and consequent delays.

Another important aspect of industrial relations that must receive priority attention in the next decade is the question of a national wage policy. We cannot continue to suffer this ridiculous situation where peons draw more than school teachers and bank clerks more than college professors. A national wage policy requires hard thinking, if only because it requires unpopular decisions to be made. A major prerequisite is craft or trade-wise job descriptions on a national basis. These

flexible job descriptions ought to be the framework within which existing jobs in various trades should be filled. Because a national wage policy is best based on trades/crafts vis-a-vis other criteria, it may involve the re-structuring of trade union federations and their re-organisation on a craft basis. Would the government and the political parties of this country have the courage to face up to this reality?

Our Work Habits Must Change

Last but not the least, any grandiose plan for a more effective industrial relations system will remain only on paper, unless we inculcate in our working population, a more honest and responsible work ethic. Overtime is of course a known disease, so also organised absenteeism. The more subtle ways of undermining an organisation are: refusal to work on alternate jobs; reluctance to carry out tasks allied to the main job; and work-to-rule. No doubt a great deal of blame can be laid at the door of managerial inertia; but it is also the outcome of absolute job

security. The popular belief today is that one can do anything — or not do anything — and get away with it. This belief is further strengthened by a spate of court decisions that defy simple administrative logic.

Prof. Van Dusen Kennedy in his excellent book on industrial relations in India talks of a tendency among us to be "tender minded". That is, to hold out high ideals and place hopes on the innate goodness of people to adapt to and mould themselves to the ideal socio-economic culture. Change is a contradiction in terms. Change is all pervading and yet so difficult to effect consciously. Kurt Lewin's theory of change applies to our work habits as to every thing else. High ideals are not enough to "unfreeze" our way of doing things. There must be a judicious blend of inducement and coercion so that we "move" and "refreeze" in work habits that are based on the dignity of labour and commitment to a national cause.

MR. SUDHAKAR NAIR is Corporate Manager, Personnel and Administration, Airfreight Pvt. Ltd.

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The Indian Soldier: Cornerstone of our Democracy

C.L. Proudfoot

Today's *Jawan* is no longer a gallant block head who is only ready "to do or die", he is a literate person with an inquiring mind and access to all strata of the media. And whilst he is still ready to do or die, he now also reasons why.



Soldiers are a strange distant breed of men frantically worshipped in the brief periods of national danger and forgotten afterwards, especially when they doff their uniforms and become civilians again. There has never been compulsory military service in our country, where our sons have been compelled to undergo the rigours of training and campaigning, where the military milieu of a classless, casteless, disciplined service to the Nation comes back to every home. The historical genesis of the Indian Army as it existed at the dawn of Independence has made it a way of life in India for us to sit back and pay professionals to do our fighting for us.

What was the strange urge that drove certain types of Indians to the profession of arms through the centuries and still drives them on? From the dawn of history, India has echoed to the sound of marching feet and the thunder of hooves, whether Alexander's phalanxes, the Moghul cavalry or the armies of warring princes; of Portuguese, Dutch, French and English invaders; soliders and soldiering was very much part of life and the bearing of arms a popular and respected profession. Two hundred years of British rule consolidated solidiering into a select calling, open originally only to those who proved the doughtiest warriors, and later to others. Whilst this era served to raise military professionalism to an aesthetic culture confined to an elite, a large portion of our population was emasculated by the very absence of warfare and estranged towards militarism.

Our Warriors

In World War II (1939-45) an Indian Army of more than 3 million volunteers bore the brunt of the fighting in the Middle East, Burma and Italy; its famous Divisions won the admiration and respect of Allied soldiers in the Eritrean Campaign, in the fighting retreat down

the Malay peninsula, in the Western Desert, up the Italian boot and at Monte Cassino; in the long and bitter campaign from Imphal to Rangoon. Returning home battle-weary and homesick after six years of war, they were denied the heroes' welcome they had a right to expect. They returned to the partition both of the country and the Armed Forces, the tragic horrors of the transmigration in Punjab in which they acquitted themselves honourably. Shortly afterwards they were again launched into battle in Jammu and Kashmir and sad to relate, many Indian soldiers who had spent years in foreign climes dreaming of their families, never got back home after all.

After Independence the Army saw us through the Jammu & Kashmir Campaign, but the unpredictable acceptance of a U.N. enforced Cease Fire agreement against the wishes of the Indian Commanders was a bitter blow to an Army on the wings of victory, after months of toil and sacrifice; a Cease Fire which gave half Jammu & Kashmir to Pakistan on a platter and precipitated a "Kashmir Problem" which need never have existed, but will now remain with us forever as a suppurating sore.

Then came the disaster of 1962. Defence Minister Krishna Menon (Nehru's evil genius) and his strutting, posturing protege General B.M. Kaul severely ravaged the morale of the Indian Army, re-

sulting in the disgraceful rout inflicted on us by the Chinese. The Army recovered sufficiently to hold its own against Pakistan in 1965, and was in top fettle under Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw when it blasted the Pakistan Army to liberate Bangladesh in 1971. But since then there have been no wars and a highly motivated professional army which has spent more than fifteen years in border patrolling, internal security duties and ceremonial drills cannot but be sensitive to prevailing civilian pressures and influences.

To-day the fact that "corruption is a worldwide phenomenon" is constantly illustrated by happenings in governments, industry and even military establishments throughout the world. In India too, as in the rest of the world, the system of kickbacks has existed these many years, and it is only recently that the astronomical scales of payoffs and the exalted level of acceptors has provoked public scandal. When these are accompanied by cancerous political instability and terrorism, and communal holocausts growing in frequency and ferocity, the time has come for responsible citizens to bestir themselves, get off their butts and join hands in a countrywide movement to help the Government set things right. And if the government is incapable of doing so with the help of the people, then it must be changed in the ultimate interests of the country.

Sustaining Morale

It is in this environment that the morale of our Armed Forces, and especially the Army must be considered. Today's *jawan* is no longer a gallant blockhead who is only ready "to do or die"; though he works and lives within the limitations and constrictions of camp and discipline he is a literate person with an inquiring mind and access to all strata of the Media. And whilst he

is still ready to do or die, he now also reasons why.

Those of us who have served with the Indian Soldier, admired him and loved him over many decades, still rate him as the best professional soldier in the world, evaluating those fundamental qualities of the profession of arms. But we are concerned about the future for many reasons. Because of our country's very vastness and unique problems of a multilingual population beset with disruptive pulls of caste, creed, linguistic differences, provincialism and political immaturity; and the existence of a largely illiterate population accessible only by the audio-visual media exclusively under Government control; because of all these powerful divisive factors which our country has inherited, India's greatest need is at least one single wholly predictable, reliable, immutable force for stability. This the Armed Forces have provided. Through a turbulent forty years of freedom, the Armed Forces have stood staunchly behind the Government, most often unseen and unheard, but always there; the

OFFICER'S PRAYER

Lord, make me worthy
Of the men I serve
Worthy of their loyalty
And devotion to duty,
Their wond'rous willingness
And ready laughter,
Their great humility
That asks so little
And gives so much
So readily, without complaint,
Grant their simple wishes, Lord
And bless them, please
For in this world
No better soldiers breathe
Than these.

— C.L.Proudfoot

(From the author's book 'A Soldier's Song')

great bastion of democracy; always ready in times of national disaster and crisis; efficient, dependable, unquestioning.

When Politico-military dictatorships sprouted all around our periphery, India's Armed Forces have steadfastly

avoided politics. But observers on the sidelines, watching the decline of fundamental values in public life and the erosion of discipline in high places are genuinely perturbed. For whilst discipline thrives on example and imitation indiscipline is a dread disease that spreads quickly downwards and outwards. And all we can do is to pray that the disease may not percolate even to the Armed Forces, especially to younger officers who have not yet been blooded in battle and are more susceptible to mal-influence; pray that there may be no ill-advised selfishly-motivated interference with the Armed Forces, no misguided attempts to change its proven structure, no political pressures permitted to disrupt its functioning or transmute its hallowed traditions.

For, so long as the Indian soldier retains his special ethos of a completely apolitical professional fighting man, dedicated to the ideals of Service to the Country through his regimental mystique, loyal to the Government elected by the People, so long will democracy survive in India.

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Indian Democracy at the Cross-roads

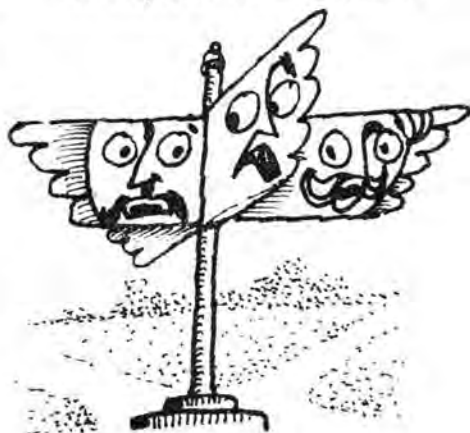
C.V. Elias

Close on the heels of his dynastic succession to the Premiership of India, the Indian electorate gave Mr. Gandhi a massive vote of confidence, and bestowed on him a lot of sympathy and good will. His public utterances gave one the impression that he would soon get rid of all power-brokers and wheeler-dealers that dominated his party at different levels. Some of the more optimistic observers ventured to predict that he would soon move away from Nehru-socialism and non-alignment quietly, subtly, shrewdly. Hopes were running high when he made his spectacular debut on the American stage. His press conference in Washington exuded self confidence. The world press praised his aplomb and panache, and even his good looks.

By the beginning of 1987, things began to go wrong. As one dismal month followed another, follies, misfortunes and misdeeds abounded. Then the nation had taken a charitable view of his failures. He had failed to implement the Punjab accord and violence in the state had become a festering sore. Nonetheless he could defend himself on the ground that all the judicial wisdom in the country had failed to give him a neat formula for the transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab. Until the dismissal of the Barnala government it was an ugly stalemate; Mr. Gandhi apparently tried to strengthen the hands of Barnala; though they had not succeeded in curbing violence to any appreciable degree, it had not yet become so outrageous. In a dramatic bid to stem the tide of unpopularity in Haryana, on the eve of the Haryana election he dismissed the Barnala government and stepped up anti-terrorist measures. The Khalistan terrorists hit back with blood-freezing fury. The nation was stunned, humiliated and bewildered as they dishevelled out with unrelenting callousness, a regular diet of horrors.

All this wouldn't have affected the fortunes of Mr. Gandhi if other things had not gone wrong at the same time. For a long time it had been rumoured that Mr. Gandhi had scant respect for the President of India and that he had not briefed

If the non-communist democratic opposition has the vision and the political acumen to sink their differences and unite under an able leader they still have a chance of averting disaster and preventing Indian democracy from slipping into the abyss of totalitarianism



him on important domestic and foreign policy issues. When questioned in Parliament the Prime Minister tried to fend off criticism by telling parliament untruths which were exposed by a smarting President to the Press.

PM's Shrinking Image

A succession of events further damaged his credibility. Fairfax and the Defence kick-backs, electoral reverses in three states and the ignominious defeat in Haryana were all index to his sinking image. The moving of V.P. Singh to the Defence Ministry, the new clique around him — all these did not do anything to further his image. The result is that despite his massive majority in parliament and a two year breathing time, he has already become a lame duck prime minister.

As a scion of the ruling family, and as one who inherited a political trust it is natural to expect that the Prime Minister will not resign his office.

So he is bound to make a desperate effort to stay in power beyond 1990 and complete his pre-ordained task of tak-

ing this unfortunate country to the 21st century. To achieve this end what are the options open to him?

Mr. Gandhi's Options

He could go in for a nation-wide campaign to regain electoral support after taking decisive steps to refurbish his image. The steps he has to take are: (1) To reject the discredited clique that surround him; (2) to bring back into the cabinet prominent dissidents like Mr. V.P. Singh, Mr. Arif Mohammed Khan and possibly Mr. Arun Nehru; (3) to make a clean breast of all that he knows about the kick-back scandals; (4) to restore the confidence of honest congressmen by re-introducing internal democracy in his party. But can one expect a weak, confused, ill-advised man like Mr. Gandhi to take such courageous steps?

He could resign the premiership and offer single-minded devotion to rebuilding the Congress Party.

He could form a national government by bringing into his cabinet outstanding opposition leaders who enjoy a great deal of public support besides being honest and competent. It is doubtful if the opposition leaders would take the bait even if Mr. Gandhi deigned to take this drastic step.

He could muddle through the next two years, resigned to an inevitable loss of power in '89, yet determined to stage a come-back when an uneasy opposition coalition at the Centre makes a mess of it as Janata did in the late 1970's.

One cannot rule out the possibility of the declaration of an 'Emergency', for specious reasons and with some acquiescing opportunistic political parties supporting it.

A Second 'Emergency'

Most people in India think rather facetiously that the second 'Emergency' like the first will not last long; sooner or later Mr. Gandhi will have to go to the country for a fresh mandate and when it happens the opposition will be returned to power as Janata was in 1977. History

need not repeat itself. A second 'Emergency' could toll the death knell of Indian democracy. Unable to resist internal and external opposition to his assuming emergency powers, Mr. Gandhi will get sucked irretrievably into the Soviet orbit. In the process, the communists could capture power and offer us a "People's Republic of India" instead of our rather colourless Republic of India. It is time the liberal opposition in India saw that we are living under the ominous shadow of a 'People's Republic of India' and rallied the forces of freedom to combat this grim threat. If they do not, then the most populous democracy in the world would succumb to Soviet imperialism.

There is still a general impression in the country that the non-communist parties in India are composed of a bunch of ineffectual power-seekers who have so far failed to unite on a coherent plan of action. One can however find a ray of hope in the emergence of Mr. V.P. Singh as a powerful integrating personality; if he worked in concert with outstanding figures in the opposition like Mr. Ramakrishna Hedge, Prof. Madhu Dandavate and Mr. L.K. Advani, there is still hope for the opposition parties recognizing and adopting the right options in this critical hour.

While campaigning vigorously against the threatened declaration of emergency they should keep demanding that Mr. Gandhi step down and seek a fresh mandate. He will not oblige so long as he has a majority in parliament. Chances are that Mr. Venkatraman, the new President would much rather sign the Declaration of 'Emergency' than dismiss an unpopular Rajiv government. All that the opposition can do in the circumstances is to create a climate of opinion in the country totally opposed to 'Emergency' and the suspension of democratic freedoms and wait patiently for the next general election.

Alternative Leadership

The electorate has decisively rejected the Congress-I in all the state elections since 1985 and will in all probability reject it equally decisively if a general election is held any time between now and December 1989. Power seems to be within their grasp. But are they prepared for it? So far there is no such sign that they are. In order to make the opposition acceptable to the electorate

they need a credible leadership with one leader projected as the shadow Prime Minister. Will the opposition face up to this daunting task of facing the electorate under a single leader backed by all the democratic opposition parties in the country? This is the sixty million dollar question!

Besides leadership, the opposition needs a credible coherent policy and programme of action fundamentally different from the policies pursued by successive Congress governments and the messy Janata coalition. As regards our domestic economic policy and foreign policy, there is as much difference between government and opposition as there is between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. It is time they presented to the nation the challenge of a new policy.

Discard Discredited Policies

Ever since 1947 the twin pillars of our policy have been Nehru-socialism and Non-alignment. Both are flawed beyond repair and the opposition must have the courage to reject them lock, stock and barrel.

Jawaharlal Nehru was a well-meaning man who had an ingrained weakness for the socialist ideology of the inter-war years. He, like a lot of deluded leaders of his generation, believed that poverty could be eliminated by minimising the role of private enterprise and maximising public ownership. Nonetheless he wouldn't go the whole hog and abolish private enterprise altogether as they did in Russia. Instead he chose a pattern of mixed economy in which central planning played a decisive role. I do not think we have ever appointed a commission of economic experts to find out whether our five year plans were resounding successes or disastrous failures. All that we know is that most of our public sector enterprises are in the red and that every year their mounting losses are written off. In areas where the public sector enjoys a monopoly no comparisons can be made and it is not easy to assess their relative success or failure.

The Changes in Russia

While Nehru launched his socialist economic policies based on public ownership and central planning, the western world was realizing that public ownership of major industries, even service industries, has been a colossal fai-

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lure. In the U.K. the conservatives under Mrs. Thatcher who promised a relentless policy of de-nationalisation or privatisation extending even to service industries like water supply, urban housing and broadcasting have won three successive elections. Even the Labour Party has toned down its commitment to socialism. In France and Germany the socialists and social democrats have lost power. The Spanish socialist government is too pragmatic to be called socialist.

Even the Russians and the Chinese have conceded that Stalinist socialism was an economic disaster, besides being an affront to human dignity. Gorbachev who has inherited Stalin's socialist empire has had the candour to concede that collective farms that do not produce enough grain to feed people, and factories that can produce only sub-standard goods do not make economic sense. Mr. Gorbachev's personal economic adviser, Prof. Abel Aganbegyan, said a few weeks ago that he would like to close down thousands of unprofitable Soviet enterprises to reduce the state's direct role to 30 percent or less by 1990. They are envisaging an economy in which there will be wholesale trade between individual factories, farms and consumers with the state not directly involved. He argues that Soviet industry needs the bracing effect of international competition and the influence of external market on the quality of the goods they produce and the technology they use. Gorbachev himself has said that there should be no upper limit on the amount of money that an honest man should be allowed to earn. It looks like a complete *volte face*.

Our sick industries are bleeding white the nation's slender resources. Bureaucratic incompetence, widespread corruption and general inertia have ensured mounting losses in most of them. Nehru's panacea for all economic ills has become a huge white elephant. Why can't the opposition have the gumption to say that if returned to power they would dismantle Nehru-socialism and replace it with a rational economic policy based on individual initiative and private enterprise reducing the role of the state to one of ensuring, by means of shrewd controlled measures, that greedy entrepreneurs do not unduly exploit the masses.

Non-Alignment has Failed

Our foreign policy is in a mess. If all our neighbours, China, Pakistan and Bangladesh are hostile to us, there must be something fundamentally wrong with our foreign policy.

We were a subject nation. And the subject-nation psychosis made us morbidly anti-imperialist and hostile to all the advanced western democracies which had shed their imperialism.

Nehru, the western educated Brahmin, who formulated our foreign policy even before the dawn of independence took a firm anti-imperialist stand. Though he chose to stay in the Commonwealth, it was anti-imperialism that determined our policy. There was something Quixotic about our waging a ceaseless war against imperialism even after it had become a thing of the past. It was anti-imperialism that led us to non-alignment. Though we are ostensibly non-aligned we are inextricably aligned with the Soviet Union.

So Nehru's non-alignment has put us on the back of a tiger; we need all the skill and courage in the world to dismount. It is time we asked ourselves whether this tiger ride, this geo-political entanglement is inescapable, whether it is in our best interest. Mao as well as well as Sadat had the courage to get out of this oppressive alliance and send thousands of Soviet 'Advisers' and technicians packing home.

We are getting steadily sucked into the Soviet orbit; our foreign policy, even our domestic political and economic policies are determined by our alliance with the Soviet Union. We keep on importing inferior Soviet technology, Soviet defence equipment etc. We have chosen to buy even high-tech from the Soviet Union while she, on her part, is desperately trying to beg, borrow or steal it from the advanced western world and Japan.

As long as our foreign policy is subservient to the Soviet grand design we run the risk of being treated as an enemy by the Western Alliance with all its unpredictable consequences. Besides we shall never be able to get a favoured nation treatment in the U.S. while Pakistan has become one of the most favoured nations. We can keep mourning about AWACS and the superior computer technology that Pakis-

tan keeps importing from the U.S. and even about American connivance at Pakistan going nuclear while posing proudly as the champion of the oppressed nations of the world and forging our links ever more strongly with the Soviet Union. Why can't the opposition present to the nation an alternative foreign policy based on enlightened self-interest?

If the non-communist democratic opposition has the vision and the political acumen to sink their differences and unite under an able leader with an alternative domestic and foreign policy, they still have a chance of averting disaster and preventing Indian democracy from slipping into the abyss of totalitarianism.



THE NEW KINGS

There are no longer kings and chieftains today. But the netas and babus who have taken their place have not ceased to be predatory. Political power is no longer based on the divine right of kings. It is now based on the vote, and despite the imperfections of Indian democracy this has an impact. There is considerable difference between the profit maximisation of a king and a neta. The former could be open about it but the latter needs to get re-elected, and so it is in his own long-term interest to limit the size of this loot and see that some benefits get through to the public. However, the ancient notion that the state is the personal fief of the ruler has not been eradicated from the minds of the ruler or the ruled.

Indian Express, Dec. 15

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RAKA 1768 87

"That Government is Best that Governs the Least"

— Mahatma Gandhi

Jyoti Sandesara

Gandhiji looked upon an increase in the power of the State with the greatest fear, because although while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality, which lies at the root of all progress. People should carry out all the welfare activities for themselves. In the short run, however, "Parental" government is necessary as the people are ignorant of their responsibilities. As they progress in understanding, as their moral level rises, and as social co-operation develops, the need for government will be less and less. What democracy and liberty require is the development of spiritual and moral values.

The compulsive nature of state authority damages the ethical basis of the individual's own action for, an action is moral only when it is voluntarily performed. A government which is based on violence, even though it may pretend to work on the principle of 'one man one vote' is really not rule by all. The people are government-minded, but government is not people-minded. The essence of democracy lies in the control of the people over the government. Rulers are the people's servants, People, the real masters. Democracy must 'spring from within', from the spiritual aspirations of ethical individuals. It will be a "Spiritual Democracy", achieved through decentralisation of political power. A top heavy administration with a small base is likely to topple down with little or no force and it is this that makes the democracies of today rather "untenable".

An individual's opinion should have greater weight than the opinion of the many, if the opinion is sound. Swaraj Government will be a sorry affair if people look up to it for the regulation of every detail of life. The authority of the government is incapable of bringing about any revolutionary change among the people. The day any revolution gets the backing of the government, it declines, becomes bureaucratic, institutionalised and conformist. Swaraj is a

condition where none would exercise authority over anybody else. Everyone is his own ruler, without causing hindrances to his neighbour. Government cannot succeed in becoming a non-violent state. The State does not disappear all at once but its authority gradually vanishes or it exists like the alarm-chain in a railway compartment to be used only in an emergency. The functions of the higher bodies shall be advisory and not mandatory, they shall guide, advise, supervise but will not command the lower bodies. Gandhi's ideal of grass-roots democracy is that which "runs its affairs smoothly and effectively without much State interfer-

ence". *Sarvodaya* has its roots in the ideal of self-government of, for and by the people.

Gandhi accords a secondary place to the State. His social ideal is of a stateless and classless society. As the ultimate end, he seeks a state of self-regulated, self-adjusting, and enlightened anarchy where coercion from any external authority has no place, such a society being run by disciplined individuals, that discipline being self-imposed. His distrust of the State is a pronounced feature of his theory because the State has force as its major attribute. He wanted a democratic State where the citizens had the capacity to resist non-violently any abuse of authority. Consistent with his doctrine of non-violence, Gandhi emphasised the reformative character of punishment. He was opposed to the death sentence, because to him, crime was bad, but not the criminal. His advocacy of self-sufficient, autonomous villages was to inculcate the virtue of self-reliance and moral uplift. The trusteeship doctrine lays stress on "Social Justice". It includes legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth. Since liberty is commensurate with social responsibility, some form of statism becomes inevitable. The only democratic answer to statism or to totalitarianism is trusteeship.

He was a democrat in the sense that he gave primacy to the individual in his scheme of thought. He stressed the value of the individual in his philosophy and consequently adopted a critical attitude to the claims of the State. The legislative state cannot directly promote morality, its function being the removal of hindrances to a better life. The limitations on the power of the State should be real and not abstract. It is for the society and individuals to see that the State does not override its authority. He prescribes the supremacy of the moral law over legality. The word "Individual" finds expression in Gandhism not as a bundle of rights that he claims from the

The Rajaji Foundation

On the occasion of Rajaji's birth anniversary last year, The Rajaji Foundation sponsored an essay competition on the topic "That Government is best that governs the least."

Unfortunately according to the verdict of the panel of judges none of the entries qualified for the first and second prizes.

Extracts from the two essays published on this page and the next were awarded consolation prizes.

Lack of space prevents us from publishing the two essays in full.



State, but an ethical man bound by a sense of duty. Allegiance to the state is derived from adherence to an ethical level.

Gandhi's concept of democracy had nothing to do with numbers or majority or representative rule in the ordinary sense. He emphasized service and sacrifice as the motivating forces. In a democracy the dangers of the tyranny of the majority are inherent, and so democracy cannot be a lasting solution to political problems.

MISS JYOTI SANDESARA is a 3rd year B.Com student at the P.D. Lions College

Vijay Raghavan

It is no mere coincidence that we hear demands for Khalistan, Greater Mizoram, Jharkhand state and Gorkhaland, but not a single voice espousing the cause of 'India Land'. The Government has betrayed her masses. Economic deprivation, coupled with oppressive administration has led to a total breakdown of the people's faith in our system. As long as people get the feeling that something is being done for them they brave all their poverty and take things in their stride.

Coming to what has happened after the Mahatma's death, the less said the better. Yes, indeed every Indian Prime Minister has claimed to be Gandhiji's follower. Hardly has a public function gone without his name being eulogised in the last 40 years. The first generation of leaders were at least committed. But most of the present lot has put the Mahatma to shame. Politics today has

become a stepping stone for accumulating wealth and power. Corruption has become the order of the day. The man on the street is being systematically victimised and ostracised by the vagaries of red tapism, the complexities of outdated laws, the arrogance of the government 'Babu' and the cunningness of the local politician. He is being further ground to dust by the oppression of the police *Thanedar*.

Our country today is a typical example excessive government leading to retardation of public excellence. Bureaucratisation has led to innumerable blockades in the road to progress. Projects get delayed. Politicians announce programmes with great pomp and show, jungle grows around the foundation stone and slowly people forget about the projects. If the nation as whole suffers, naturally the minority communities suffer the most. This leads to a feeling of insecurity. Insecurity in turn breeds fundamentalism, secessionism and widens the communal divide. A few incidents of violence adds to the fire, and where there was no problem, a fresh and mammoth agitation pops up (example the Gorkhaland issue). At such times due to excessive red tapism, dependance on legal procedures, prompt action is not taken to right the wrongs. The Punjab Accord will illustrate the point better. Government as usual, bungled a golden opportunity to win back people's support by entangling itself in judicial commissions, tribunals and terms of referendum of the accord. The letter of the accord took undue precedence over the spirit with which it was signed.

The result is there for all to see. Here again is an example of our excessive and over government. What was basically a political accord, was turned into a legal and government accord only to aggravate an already worsening situation. On the other hand, if proof is needed of what a less governing government can achieve, one need not go far but look at the Finance Ministry. Impractical, illogical tax rates were slashed, rules were simplified and government decisions were preceded by intense debating of issues. A certain amount of honesty and faith was reposed in the tax payer, and today the revenue collection graph has taken a dramatic upswing. Lower and reasonable rates have made people more honest, and collections have nearly doubled.

Now to come down to the last but not the least (by no means) important questions posed? What would I do if I were to become the Prime Minister? *Analysing*, every Indian loves; *doing* every Indian shirks from. My priorities can be listed as follows:

1. Education of masses
2. Drastic Judicial and Electoral Reforms
3. Coming down with a heavy hand on corruption
4. Slashing red tapism and bringing in a sense of responsibility and accountability in the bureaucracy
5. Basic/Minimum sanitation and hygiene facilities.
6. Emphasis on rural uplift.

MR. VIJAY RAGHAVAN is a 3rd year Arts student at the S.L.V. Jhaveri College of Arts

The Strait-Jacket

The welfare State is the postulate of the Constitution of the Union of India: not socialism. The difference between the two is the difference between a jacket and a strait-jacket. The former is worn for comfort, the latter is intended to restrict the movements of a person suffering from a violent form of insanity. Much of the advertisement done on behalf of socialism, and a great deal of its vogue in under-developed countries is traceable to the confusion between socialism and the welfare State, people equating one with other. There are many ways of organizing and maintaining a welfare State other than the strait-jacket method known by the name of socialism. The

conservatives have done it in Britain and America had been at it too. Socialism gives too much power to the State which must be exercised through highly paid officials. The members of the bureaucracy at various masters levels become the masters of the economic life of the people. They hold together like a clique. Their contacts with those who for a profit produce and distribute, and do other services required for the life of the society, result in various forms of corruption, concealed monopolies and exploitation.

These are turned to good use for political power-purposes, so that the same group manages to remain in uninterrupted power although we are under a

democracy.

Democracy can flourish only under certain circumstances. It requires conflict as well as social cohesion, called 'affection' by Aristotle. It requires conflict, for otherwise the *Ins* could never get out. It requires social cohesion, otherwise the *Outs* could be waging perpetual civil war as the Dravida Kazhagam in the South wants it. Social cohesion, Aristotle wrote, is more important than even justice. Developing classes and class jealousy for the purpose of votes is fatal to democracy.

C.Rajagopalachari
Swarajya, Aug. 13, 1960

Democracy, Reform and Modernization

Fang Lizhi

Human rights are fundamental privileges that people have from birth such as the right to think and be educated, the right to marry and so on. But we Chinese consider these rights dangerous. Human rights are universal and concrete, but at present we lump freedom, equality ... with capitalism and criticize them

We now have a strong sense of urgency to achieve modernizations in China.

But what kind of modernization do we want? The truth is every aspect of the Chinese world needs to be modernized. But do we want to be completely Westernized? No new controversy, this question has been asked for more than a century. As for myself, I think that complete Westernization is the only way to modernize. Liberalize every aspect of life, of course. What we must not do is declare what must be maintained, what must be preserved unyieldingly and so on. Frankly, I feel we still lag behind because these decades of socialist experimentation since Liberation have been — well, a failure. This is not just my opinion. It is clear to all eyes.

Socialism is at a low ebb. There is no getting around the fact that no socialist state in the post-World War II era has been successful, and neither has our own thirty-odd year-long socialist experiment. There are those who claim that China is too large, too poor, and too overpopulated for socialism to succeed here. Some say that we have accomplished quite a bit in getting as far as we have. These excuses can be refuted on theoretical and practical grounds. China's population density is not overwhelming. According to my research on the subject, each square kilometer of arable land in China supports 750 people, but the same amount of land in Japan supports twice that number, up to 1500 people per square kilometer. Why can't China achieve Japan's level of production!? Both countries once were in a similar economic state. Just after the war, Japan's economy was as backward as ours, so China's present situation cannot be explained as a result of population pressure. Claims that China is too poor may be



Dr. Fang Lizhi — 'China's Sakharov'

disproved on the same grounds.

FROM MARX TO MAO, COMMUNISM HAS FAILED

I will illustrate my point with examples drawn from socialist countries. I find the case of East and West Berlin particularly striking. Though they are separated by a tall wall, West Berliners who want to go to East Berlin do so freely. They need only buy a vacation pass. West Berlin is materially rich, but in East Berlin there are few consumer goods in the markets and the people look like they lead severe lives, despite the impressive architecture that abounds in that part of the city. The difference between East Berlin and West Berlin is clearest at the border. There is a brief customs check on the West Berlin side, but going back the vehicle itself is thoroughly examined, for fear the East Berliners might escape to West Berlin. If their society is so fine, why do they worry about people escaping? The socialist movement, from Marx and Lenin to

Stalin and Mao Zedong, has been a failure.

Of course, socialism has some positive aspects. What deserves our attention, however, is the fact that the practice of socialism has not produced them. We should face this problem squarely and not allow ourselves to be blinkered by narrow orthodoxy. Clearing our minds of all Marxist dogma is the first step. Last year I advocated the same idea at Beijing University; my statements were passed on and some people upstairs took issue with it. Now I learn that the same ideas are to be found in the documents of the Party Central Committee, acknowledging, in effect, the narrowness of Marxism-Leninism. Let me clarify what I mean. Marxism contains some insights into the nature of civilization, but in practice it leads us to accept only the truths of Marxism and dispense with all the other lessons of history. It rejects all positive elements to be found in other peoples,



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cultures and history up to Liberation. But no aspect of humanity may be rejected, for all contribute to civilization.

Smash Orthodoxy

Since Liberation, the tendency to consider China superior to other peoples and cultures has become nothing less than a religion. Now the Long March, the fiftieth anniversary of which we celebrated last month, was undertaken by a vanguard that braved hardships of every kind, all the way from Jiangxi to Shanbei, in their quest for truth. Their spirit deserves our praise. But the propaganda Bureau embellished it to the degree that the Long March now appears to be the accomplishment of people of extraordinary caliber, an event without historical precedent, and so on. These grandiose claims are simply inaccurate. Frankly, I think Chinese history does indeed bear testament to events similar to the Long March; I refer to Xuan Zhong's journey to India. Xuan Zhong's journey and the long March were quests of the same order. Xuan Zhong himself was a very significant figure in Chinese history. In India he became so adept at Buddhism that he became the right-hand man of the Prior at a Buddhist academy. He was not simply chosen by those in power, as is the practice today, but had to prove himself in debate, prevailing over several hundred other candidates. He was one of two Chinese (Both scholars of Buddhism) mentioned in a work by an eminent historian of science for their contribution to humanity. The significance of his quest for wisdom was in no way inferior to the Red Army's Long March. Therefore, the latter was not entirely without historical precedent. What is unprecedented are propaganda claims, feudal in character, that attempt to enshrine a certain orthodoxy and discount all other truths.

Sweden's Successful Socialism

Thus we must commit ourselves to complete and thorough liberalization. We must remold our society by absorbing influences from all cultures. What we must not do is isolate ourselves and allow our conceit to convince us that we alone are correct. World civilization is the composite product of every culture. Socialism is one facet of this vital world civilization. Although it stands at a low ebb today, there are several different

types of socialist societies, each trying to achieve the goals of socialism in its own way. Not all have failed utterly. During a conference I attended in Sweden last July, a Swedish acquaintance informed me that Swedish socialism was true socialism. Over half of their industries, he said, are nationally owned and there are no great disparities of wealth. Their standard of living is very high; their per capita gross national product equals \$ 19,000, far beyond ours. He asked about our social welfare system, so I was forced to admit that the one we have is nothing compared to Sweden's which genuinely provides social welfare. Their government promotes Marxism, too. Furthermore, the Swedes consider television to be an instrument of education, so commercials are banned. Considered as a whole, from ideology to a level of social development far beyond our own, Sweden is more socialist than China. The Swedes call their socialist experiment a success.

We must consider Swedish socialism to be more progressive and rational than Chinese socialism. China emphasizes class struggle and dictatorship of the proletariat, destroying the capitalist class in the process. The Swedes, on the other hand, promote social harmony as the means to resolve class and other social contradictions. During the 1950's, Sweden, like China, took radical steps to adjust social relations, even obliterating a social class in the process. However, the victim was the proletariat rather than the capitalist class. They obliterated the proletariat by transforming the bulk of the Swedish population into bourgeoisie. I feel their experience merits serious consideration.

We are hobbled by many old ideas which we have grown to accept as natural. Going abroad leads one to realize that those old habits of thought are flawed. We still have too many feudal tendencies.

Democratization — What it Really Means

Not long ago we asked for democracy (which) is quite different from relaxation of restrictions. The critical component to the democratic agenda is human rights, a touchy issue in our country. Human rights are fundamental privileges that people have from birth, such as the right to think and be educated, the right to marry, and so on. But

we Chinese consider these rights dangerous. Human rights are universal and concrete, but at present we lump freedom, equality and brotherhood together with capitalism and criticize them all in the same terms. If we are the democratic country we say we are, these rights should be stronger here than elsewhere, but at present they are nothing more than an abstract idea.

I feel that the first step toward democratization should be recognition of human rights. Everybody has different views and methods, but if they are integrated according to democratic principles people can become united societies and nations. However, the whole issue changes the moment we come to consider democracy as something that is maintained by collective effort, for already democratization has come to mean something performed by superiors upon inferiors — a serious misunderstanding of democracy. Our government does not give us democracy by loosening our bonds a little. It gives us only enough freedom to writhe. Freedom by decree is not fit to be called democracy, for, unlike Western democracy, it fails to provide the most basic human rights. Our newspapers often report the inspection tours of the people's representatives. Representatives of the people making inspections? Think about it. Does such a thing take place in a democracy? Representatives are selected by the people. They should *represent* their constituency, not *inspect* it. An institution that inspects the people is not democratic.

Democracy Starts with the Individual

Representatives should spend some time listening to their constituencies before sessions of the National Assembly; then use the Assembly as a forum for presenting the views of the people. But far be it for our representatives to represent our opinions. Actually, I once considered it perfectly natural to put up with inspection tours. Then, early this year, I spent several months at a research institution in New Jersey. One day I received in the mail some information from a state congressman describing what he had recently accomplished in the state legislature, his voting record, what issues were being discussed — in short, giving an account of his politics. It was his report to the people, demonstrating the congressman's respect and offered to represent at the next session

of the state legislature those who did not agree with his stand on issues. He cared even for the views of a Chinese man who had been accustomed to calling American society a false democracy. In our genuine democracy, on the other hand, I have never received a report of my representative's activities or his voting record. My representative will be only too happy to cast my vote without having the vaguest idea of what I think. That is why our 'genuine democracy' will never be a match for the false democracy'.

In democratic nations, democracy flows from the individual and government has responsibilities towards him. Objectively speaking, government depends for its continued operation upon the taxes he pays. Taxes return to the individual as services coordinated by the government, such as schools, hospitals, public welfare and municipal government. The situation in China is quite different; we praise our government whenever it finally gets around to doing something for us, when in fact the government has done nothing more than fulfill its obligation. What Chinese intellectual life lacks utterly is a democratic social conscience. Our political institutions need many reforms, but the development of a democratic social conscience is absolutely vital.

Educated Men are not the State's Tools

The large number of violent incidents that have taken place recently in Europe have destabilized Western life, so there is vast public support for a crackdown there. When I flew to France last July, that country was experiencing a wave of airline terrorism. There were proposals to call upon French citizens to report any suspicious person or incident. The police would be empowered to detain suspects on these grounds alone. This law would "protect the interests of the whole society." The measure was rejected after much discussion in the French National Assembly. Why? Certainly not because the French people approve of violence. Rather, the opposition argued that such a law would produce informers, and the very existence of informers would corrode the democratic nature of French society.

In China, on the other hand, it is not only normal for me to inform on you if I

suspect you of something, but a positive virtue as well; I would be praised for my alertness and contribution to class struggle, in spite of my disrespect for democracy and human rights. Citizens should be protected against accusation on the grounds of casual suspicion. In China, however, people live in constant fear of casual suspicion. Democracy will never take root in a society like ours.

Let me mention just a few more things. It is only logical that we intellectuals and scientists have independent standards for evaluating what goes on within our ken. In many Western nations, universities are independent of government. Management of the university system, educational content, academic standards and goals should be determined by academic leadership, not political leadership. Money, of course, is still a necessity, and for this the universities need government's helping hand, but government responsibility should end there. Many Western universities are independent even of industry. My point is that higher education can become an important democratizing force; to liberate oneself from slavery to government and other non-intellectual authorities one need only consider knowledge to be an independent organism. But not in China. What our universities produce are tools, not educated men. Our graduates cannot think for themselves. They are quite happy to be the docile instruments of someone else's purposes. China's intelligentsia still has not cleansed itself of this tendency. For example, in my field, physics, the most valuable opinions are those of colleagues in the same field, but in the world of Chinese physics the most important opinion is that of political leaders. Therefore, people in my field still perceive themselves as tools rather than independent arbiters of their own values. The same problem exists outside physics. As a physicist I frequently come in contact with Chinese social science, and I have discovered that some social science research is directed by official pronouncements.

This would be academically defensible if the political leaders responsible for research goals were scholars of philosophy, or scholars of anything for that matter. They are not. But however worthless their views may be from an academic standpoint, academics nevertheless need the government line to sanction what they do. Research con-

ditions in the West offer a striking contrast. There nobody will interfere with research, no matter what conclusions are reached. On the contrary, western governments actively seek scholars' opinions, review their data, and request permission to use their ideas. Western governments need academic opinions to justify their policies, rather than vice versa. Knowledge is independent of power. It must never submit, for knowledge loses its value as soon as it bows to power.

Science should be allowed to develop according to its own principles, free of any ideological straightjacket. Marxist critiques of academic methods since Liberation have been utterly erroneous, and while it is true that they have diminished in number, we still have to put up with them. I know this from personal experience. I have heard grumbling about my political ideas, and that is fine, but simply will not accept any interference in my scientific research. I am an assistant editor for *Science Digest*. Last year we carried an article introducing quantum astrophysics, a new branch of science. We scientists have our own theoretical and hypothetical tools for judging the consistency and correctness of our work if we have to. This is all part of the scientific method. After its publication we received a letter from someone very high in the Party accusing its author of subjective idealism. Of course, criticism of science is fine, but if it tries to pass itself off as philosophy it just doesn't wash in scientific circles. The editors replied that *Science Digest* published only science, not that kind of Marxism that arrogates to itself all standards of correctness. We physicists and astronomers have our own standards. What does philosophy have to do with us? We didn't care a bit that the author of the letter was none other than Comrade Hu Qiaomu himself. We welcome comments from you if you understand astrophysics, but if you don't then get out of our way! Democracy will have no protection until the entire scientific community is filled with this spirit. The products of scientific knowledge should be appraised by scientific standards; we should not be swayed by the winds of power. Then we can modernize. Then we will have real democracy.

Kandakuri Veerasalingam Panthulu

M. Murlidhara

Ranade called him the 'Vidyasagar of the South' because of many causes he can be called the creator of modern Andhra consciousness. Every Telugu is a beneficiary of the toils that this great son of Andhra battled all his life.

The life and story of Veerasalingam Panthulu will be remembered in the south as a pioneer who fearlessly exposed the evils of obscurantist superstitions, advocated freedom of thought, championed the cause of women's education, stressed the need for public morality and strived to uphold humanitarian values. Ranade called him the 'Vidyasagar of the South'. Born in a very poor family struggling even to get a formal secondary education, he rose to the very top by sheer hard work and self-discipline. Champion of many causes he can be called the creator of modern Andhra consciousness. Every Telugu, wherever he be, is beneficiary of the toils that this great son of Andhra battled all his life. Born in Rajahmundry he was a frail sick child, whose survival after an attack of smallpox was itself a miracle. He not only battled for social reforms but for his life as well, troubled as he was by chronic asthma.

Early Years

Losing his father at a tender age he was deeply influenced by his mother and he used to always remember her with gratitude for all that she did to him. His poverty cut short his meagre education. Privations compelled him to take up a job at the age of twelve. He became an apprentice to one of his relatives working in the Revenue office. He spent his leisure trying to learn English, Arithmetic and Sanskrit. By 1860, Veerasalingam joined the government district school. At school, he proved to be a very brilliant student winning all the prizes for scholarly proficiency as well as special prizes for good conduct. Telugu was his favourite subject, which he later was to shape as a supple instrument in spreading the message of social reform.

Two incidents at school indicated his qualities. He was interested in studying

a Telugu classic known as *Vasucharitram* but this was priced at Rs. 5/- which was beyond him. He played truant from school, and studied this at the shop paying a rent for this privilege. His mother came to know about this and bought the expensive book for him. Interestingly later in life he was to revolt against the type of literature that *Vasucharitram* illustrated. The other incident was when he led a strike of students calling for the replacement of the headmaster of his school who could hardly teach English; for doing this he was severely reprimanded by the authorities. Ultimately the authorities were compelled to institute an enquiry and the findings vindicated the stand of the students led by Veerasalingam.

Early marriage, a separate domestic establishment, illness all conspired to delay his completion of formal education till he was 22. He also passed various entrance examinations, conducted by the government and qualified himself for government service. He, however, preferred teaching and did ample justice to his chosen profession.



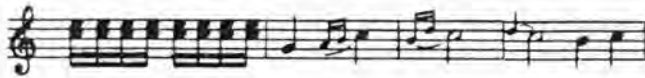
Kandakuri Veerasalingam Panthulu

From the year 1871, when he was appointed as a junior assistant in the government district school at Rajahmundry on a salary of Rs. 25/-, till his last days, he passionately devoted himself to the cause of education and his admirers lovingly called him Panthulu — which in Telugu means teacher. He was a good teacher though harsh in dealing with the students. However, his iron discipline did not make him unpopular with the students. Some of his students with whom he was very harsh, later paid glowing tributes to the master.

Social Reformer

In 1874, Veerasalingam was posted as a headmaster of the anglo-vernacular school, on a salary of Rs. 44/- which was quite a big jump from the meagre sum that he was earning. More importantly, he was able to put his ideas in concrete form. His association with foreign missionaries and perusal of western writings impressed him with the imperative of social reform; he was able to critically view his own society. He found that ignorance was at the root of all evil. He took upon himself the task of spreading women's education in the teeth of social opprobrium. Besides speaking and writing on this, he started a girl's school, one of the first of its kind to be started by an individual in the Telugu districts. He made his friend, Malladi Atchanna Sastri, headmaster of the school. Simultaneously he made his debut in journalism, with a monthly *Vivekavardhini* (1876) which became popular. It must be remembered that this was long before *Kesari* was started. Basavaraju Gavarraju, a close associate and Veerasalingam formed a group to promote social upliftment and religious reforms in the environs of Rajahmundry.

By 1876, Veerasalingam had to sever his links with his school, and returned to

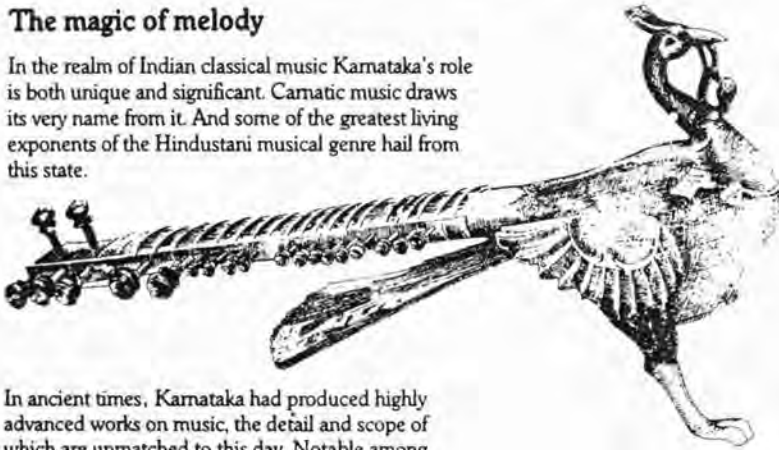


Born in the innermost recesses of the soul, man's creative spirit is boundless. And expresses itself in a thousand ways. Painting, sculpture, drawing. Poetry and prose. Dance, drama and music.



The magic of melody

In the realm of Indian classical music Karnataka's role is both unique and significant. Carnatic music draws its very name from it. And some of the greatest living exponents of the Hindustani musical genre hail from this state.

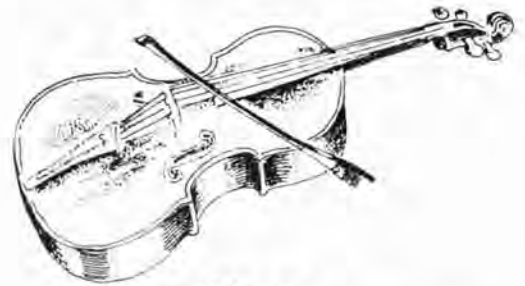


In ancient times, Karnataka had produced highly advanced works on music, the detail and scope of which are unmatched to this day. Notable among them are Bharata's *natyashastra*, Matanga's *brihaddesi*, Shrngadeva's *sangita ratnakara*, Vidyaranya's *sangitasara* and Ramamatya's *swaramelakalanidhi*. Composers too were equally prolific, the most famous being Purandaradasa. Whose *pillari geetas* are till today the foundation lessons for any student of Carnatic music.

With this background, it is not surprising that Karnataka has produced some top musicians in Carnatic music — Veena Sheshanna, Bakshi Subbanna, Mysore Vasudevacharya, Muthiah Bhagavathar, Bidaram Krishanappa, Devendrappa and T. Chowdiah to name only a few.

In Hindustani music, the songs of Amir Khusro were well known in Karnataka as far back as the 14th century. Also highly renowned was musician-composer Sultan Ibrahim Adilshah II of Bijapur whose *Kitaab-e-Nauras* is full of compositions in the Hindustani dhrupad style. Some of the most famous figures on the national arena of contemporary Hindustani music too are from Karnataka — Bhimsen Joshi, Gangubai Hangal, Dr. Mallikarjun Mansur, Kumar Gandharva, Devendra Murdeshwar and Basavaraj Rajaguru.

This prolific musical activity is no accident. Karnataka's unique geographical position makes it an ideal meeting ground for all kinds of styles, concepts and ideas. Nurtured by rulers whose patronage of the arts is legendary.



The power of the pen

Karnataka's literary history is more than a thousand years old. And the works of its early writers display remarkable erudition and skill. The Jaina period saw great epics like Pampa's *bharatha* and Ranna's *gadayuddha*. The Veerashaiva movement followed, the moving spirit of which was Basaweshwara — religious teacher and social reformer. He enriched Kannada literature with a new style of poetic prose called *vachanas*.



Modern Kannada literature has been upholding this immensely rich tradition. Four of the recipients of the prestigious Jnana Peeth award, out of the 14 awarded so far, are from this state — K. V. Puttappa (Kuvempu), Bendre, Karanth and Masti Venkatesa Iyengar.

It can be said without exaggeration that there is no field of literature that Kannadiga writers have not explored and excelled in — be it prose, poetry, lyrics or drama.

The drama of life

Karnataka's folk theatre has an ancient and rich tradition — the two principal forms being yakshagana and the puppet theatre. Yakshagana is a vibrant, colourful spectacle of elaborate costumes, melodious music and vigorous dancing. Karnataka is also famous for its *harikatha* and *gamaka*.

Music, poetry, dance and drama are the sparkling facets of the diamond that is Karnataka. Come, see and experience it for yourself.



karnataka
information

Karnataka — celestial in thought, wondrous in creation

his home town. Working in an English school was not to his liking for it involved knee-bending. He would rather be unemployed and pursue social activities. By the end of the year he was again offered the Junior Telugu Assistant's position in a government school, and back to the old salary of Rs. 25. Though reluctant, the counsel of his headmaster Mr. Metcalfe made him accept it. His return to his home town marked the beginning of a renaissance in Andhra. A furious debate had started in Andhra between the conservatives who tended to be obscurantist and the liberal reformers. This, in many ways, recalled the earlier debates between Vidyasagar and his opponents in Bengal and the fierce personalised battle of ideas that was to take place in Poona between the followers of Tilak and Agarkar.

Veerasalingam's opponents were led by a formidable scholar of great attainment, Kokkanda Venkataraya Panthulu who had the support of sections of the population and those who controlled printing presses.

Veerasalingam's journals could not be printed for no one was favourable to

his ideologies and he had to start his own press. The battle was between conservatism and social reform. In this Veerasalingam had the advantage for he was backed by knowledge of western science, history and sociology. The battle between the giants divided the whole of the educated sections of Andhra. Dogmaism and obscurantism could not for long face the razor sharp parries of Veerasalingam.

The debates were carried on through the journals and magazines that the respective parties started. Both resorted to serious disputations, and were not averse to using satire, humour and parodies to further their claim. This was to be a distinct gain for the cause of Telugu Journalism. *Hasya Sanjini* of Veerasalingam and *Hasya Vardhini* of his opponent have an important place in the development of satire and humour.

Writing for the Common Man

As the debate progressed the need to simplify the language of journalism began to be stressed and here again he took the lead. He made effective use of the simplified Telugu language in his writings. This he did despite the fact

that he was a master in writing the orthodox classical type. His earlier writings won for him acclamation from scholars and pundits. But he found that the common man could not understand a thing of what he wrote. Then he started to reflect on the purpose of language. If it were to be in the grip of an elite, it would be of no use to society. A language could flourish only by writing for the ordinary masses to whom the writer had a moral responsibility of education and guidance. He tried to rid the language of old complex, and obscure forms, simplify grammar rules and use the spoken language in writings.

It was the contention of Veerasalingam that the raising of social standards was the foremost duty of a journalist. In those days certain vices were common among the educated and the rich. Corruption and bribery of public offices was taken for granted. No function private or public was complete without the participation of a nautch.

Ill-treatment and sexual harassment of widows was winked at and in some cases justified on religious grounds. More than anything a spirit of civic re-

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Where Excellence Leads

sponsibility and social awareness was lacking. Each group was interested in protecting its own interest. It was in such a society that he wanted to bring a transformation, inculcating a spirit of sacrifice and truthfulness. He wanted to educate people to revolt against injustice. "Wherever I came across a wrong done, it is not in my nature to put up with it in silence. I shall have no peace of mind, until I found a remedy for it ... It has been my firm conviction from the outset, that morality was vital for practice of religion", he wrote.

Offending Vested Interests

His journalistic ventures earned him many enemies, landed him in financial losses and made him suffer mental agony. Yet he did not deviate from his chosen path. The policy of *Vivekavardhini*, he boldly professed, would be to spare no wrong doer, however eminent he be in society. He knew he would be facing many difficulties in this pursuit. He wrote in an early issue of *Vivekavardhini* "If bribery is condemned, the local satraps would be offended; if concubinage is denounced, the gay lotharios would be outraged; if outmoded customs are discouraged, the unlettered masses would feel unhappy; and if ostentatious rituals are disapproved of as going against the true spirit of religion, the priests and preceptors would be mightily displeased. If the journal were to prove true to its self-chosen mission, it must need offend such a wide variety of vested interests"

Fighting against nautch and concubinage was fighting against great odds, for these had acquired some social recognition. There were no welfare schemes in those days to come to the help of such destitutes. Dancing provided a regular source of income. He himself engaged them when he arranged a widow remarriage. The abolition of the *Devadasi* system in the Madras Presidency owed not a little to his work and that of his disciples.

Exposing Corruption

Veerasalingam's great achievement was using his journal to expose corruption and bribery with concrete proof. Since law schools had not become widespread there was a system of granting certificates to eminent writers, and persons working in lawyers' offices, to practice as lawyers in District Munsiff courts. This system was known as

Sanad. No prior educational qualification or a law degree was required and favouritism was widely practised in the issue of *Sanads*. The District Judges who were English were advised by local senior officials on this. A particular *Sheristadar* (as the native official was called) turned this into a profitable business and eliminated all those who failed to meet his demands. Veerasalingam was convinced that one Mr. Wallace unconsciously lent himself to be a party to this, and of his failure to act when things were brought to his notice.

Vivekavardhini sprung into action, exposing the guilty in issue after issue; and shocking an aghast public by this exposure, earning both praises by the general public and the ire and criticism of government officials. Summoned to appear before the court, Veerasalingam stood firm and refused to answer questions put to him by the judge about the authorship of the controversial articles. He argued he was under no legal obligation to do so. The District Judge could do no more in the matter, although he wanted to prosecute him for contempt of court. In the meantime the High Court was seized of the entire episode and after examining the case promptly ordered the cancellation of all *Sanads*.

Another of Veerasalingam's exposures of corruption at court was to be more damaging. A District Munsiff by name P. Sriramulu, was notorious for accepting bribery. He found the writings of judgements laborious and usually would designate the work to the government pleader who was his brother-in-law. The usual practice was to award judgement depending upon the amount of bribe that the party would offer. Veerasalingam learnt that the judge had altered his written judgement in a particular case and had rewritten an entirely new one after he was adequately bribed. One night Veerasalingam collected the entire wastepaper of the court and reassembled the torn judgement. Once he was in possession of the evidence he fearlessly placed the facts before the public. An enquiry was conducted by the District Judge. At Court he produced the original judgement that he had resurrected and the charges framed in *Vivekavardhini* were upheld. The judge found that a whole bunch of court officials were involved in the ugly episode. Some people lost jobs, but the

mental torture of the Munsiff was so severe that he committed suicide.

Widow Remarriage

A new chapter in the history of the modern South was ushered in when Veerasalingam joined the Brahmo Samaj. Till then his and his youthful friends' activities of social reforms were in areas like inter-caste dining, emphasising the need for post-puberty marriage of girls, fight against untouchability and so on. They got but limited success. It was only when he visited Madras that he came into contact with Brahmo Samaj leaders from Bengal. He read their writings and new horizons opened up. The issue of widow remarriage now interested him. But arguments had to be hammered out and the material available in support of widow remarriage was rather meagre. A Telugu pamphlet by scholar Rangacharya came to his help. He also mastered ancient writings on the subject and prepared his case on a strong foundation. Fully armed with these and fully aware that he was opening a Pandora's Box, Veerasalingam advocated the cause of widow's remarriage at a public lecture at the Vijayanagaram Girl's School in Rajahmundry on August 3, 1879. His argument was based on both liberal and scholastic view points. Against the conservatives he argued that there were a number of instances of widow remarriages in ancient Hindu life. The writings of learned authorities like Yagnavalkya, Parasara sanctioned them. It was but natural that his talk should cause a storm among the Telugu people. The conservatives unable to defeat Veerasalingam on points of logic resorted to violence, only to be defeated in their own game by the loyal students of the 'Panthulu' who were his strength. They accompanied him everywhere and formed a security ring around him. Fearlessly Veerasalingam carried his message of widow remarriage to all the important towns of Andhra. He was prepared to face his critics, counter their arguments with effective evidence and sound logic and was prepared to listen to the other side of the issue.

An organisation called Widow Remarriage Association (WRA) was formed to effectively carry on the ideas into practice. While some champions founded the Association, others supported it in other ways. Parents of many unfortunate widows looked upon Vera-

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*THE MYSTIC 'AUM'
AS IT WOULD APPEAR
TODAY IN DEVNAGARI*

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salingam as a saviour. Young people were enthusiastic and came forward to marry widows. But the social opposition was quite formidable. Although there had been earlier instances of widow remarriages in Calcutta and Maharashtra as far as back 1869, it was possible in South India only in 1881. The first widow remarriage in the South did not take place in Madras, where sufficient ground work had been done, but in Rajahmundry. It was mainly due to the efforts of Veerasalingam.

The event itself was dramatic for the possibility of assault upon the bridegroom could not be ruled out. He had to be literally smuggled under darkness to the place of marriage. Many members of WRA were prevented from attending the marriage by being locked up in the houses. Some of them however did manage to come. The professional priests, cooks and others who were needed in conducting the marriage boycotted the marriage. But with the active assistance of his well-wishers, students and above all the British officials, Veerasalingam created history in arranging the first widow remarriage. Within four days a second wedding was successfully carried through. The orthodox did not take to these and invoked the authority of Sankaracharya. His Holiness sent letters of excommunication to many members of WRA, which was sufficient to panic them. Many begged for forgiveness and rejoined the mainstream. However the followers of Veerasalingam challenged legally the competence of the Sankaracharya. The devotees of the Guru tried to settle the issues in the streets but they did not expect the thrashing they got from the students of Veerasalingam. By 1884, when more than ten marriages had been conducted the police were no longer necessary to ensure peace on these occasions.

Political Activity

From 1880s, a new phase of activity attracted Panthulu. His restless mind now sought the sphere of public political activity. He entered the Rajahmundry Municipal Corporation as a nominated member. His record as a corporator was exemplary. He was impartial in his dealings with such thorny issues as encroachment on government land, non-payment of house taxes, and it was natural that he should make enemies. Neither did he allow himself to be bos-

sed by the British officials. When a proposal was made to make the Sub-Collector who had punitive powers to be Chairman of the council, Veerasalingam was the only person to protest against this.

His voice was one of sanity during the Salem riots of 1883. For Veerasalingam, not only English education but the British system of administration and government were much needed benefits. These were unavoidable in the times then. His stress was on social reform and gradual social reform. He did not include political independence. In fact the very thought of severing connections with the English scared him. He was not opposed to political rights but sincerely felt that Britishers would gradually give these rights.

It was his contention that prior to British advent in India, we never had any system of rule of law, orderly justice, and social equality. These ideas came into being only due to our contact with the English. Therefore there was a historic necessity for British rule in India.

Veerasalingam like many other liberals looked at only one aspect of British rule. He paid no attention to the violence, cruelty and the systematic economic exploitation by the colonial rulers.

But by 1905 he found himself out of step with the new nationalism inspired by B.C. Pal and the *Bande Mataram* movement. In the new frenzied atmosphere his ideas sounded jarring. Social isolationism was inevitable. People who had gone to school with him turned against him and branded him an agent of the imperialists. There was a move to expel him from the membership of the Town Hall. It was deeply distressing to note that in his old age he was subjected to scandals; and his name was unfortunately associated with that of a destitute widow who lived in the Rehabilitation House that he had promoted. However when he breathed his last (May 27, 1919) he had laid the foundation for a new Andhra and a renaissance in the region that was completed by those who began their education under him.

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Count Otto Lambsdorff

Some two years back I had mentioned in this column my conviction that the charges preferred against my friend Count Otto Lambsdorff would prove to be infructuous and I had applauded Count Lambsdorff's resignation of his office as a Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany as a commendable gesture. I am delighted therefore to read in the world press that, on February 16, a German Court acquitted Count Lambsdorff of any charge or suspicion of corruption or of lining his own pockets. With this charge out of the way, Count Lambsdorff can now look forward to high office in the German Liberal Party, the F.D.P., and the West German Government in future.

The Court however found Count Lambsdorff and two other fellow accused guilty of a technical offence of abetting evasion of income-tax in respect of donations made by a business house to a political party. Boldly counterattacking, Count Lambsdorff has raised some inconvenient questions. While admitting that he used a loophole in the law to raise money for his own party, he claims that the treasurers in all the three leading democratic parties, including the Social Democrats, have been doing the same and, if he is guilty, so are many others. Why should be he the only one to face trial? Count Lambsdorff's stand has led to a helpful change in the law which now allows 50 per cent tax deduction on contributions to political parties, which was not the position when the charges against Count Lambsdorff were framed a couple of years back.

As an intrepid champion of competitive free enterprise and the man who is now carrying the flag first raised by Ludwig Erhardt, the maker of "the German miracle", Count Lambsdorff's acquittal and his continued assertion of sound economic policies which, alas, only a small minority in his country including the late Professor B.R. Shenoy and I have been advocating, is to be welcomed.

Minoo Masani

FROM THE FOREIGN PRESS

For 'Democratic' Read 'Totalitarian'

SPR.T. How would you describe the present state of Afghanistan? A little difficult, without abusing some one. The truth is, as we know, that it is a Soviet satellite — even a Soviet puppet. There is no evidence that anyone in Kabul does anything without asking the Soviets.

But the problem is that Mr. Mikhail Gorbachov does not like the role of a puppet show owner. He wants to change the image of Afghanistan. Does he also want to change the content? Only the future will tell us that.

George Orwell thought that misuse of words was a threat to democracy. He wrote a convincing essay to that effect. But he died before the worst examples of his "newspeak" came into existence. One of these was the "German Democratic Republic" to designate precisely that part of Germany which is not democratic.

Another example, a few decades further on into the sombre history of totalitarianism, is the "Democratic Republic of Afghanistan" which was installed at the precise moment when the last vestige of democracy was wiped out in Kabul.

Now Mr. Gorbachov's — well, shall we say "friend"? Mr. Najibullah, in Kabul has decreed a change of name for his country. The new constitution describes it simply as the "Republic of Afghanistan". In view of the Soviet occupation, even this is a slight exaggeration, though we won't quarrel with it. But the reason given for the change is a little strange: use of the word "democratic" "alienated part of the people". Not surprising, when you come to think of it — and Orwell is proved right yet again. But what he did not foresee was that the totalitarians would ever themselves agree.

profit. And then the state can tax the profit. Those who have been doing their odd jobs with one eye looking behind them for years now have to make up their minds whether they are going to legalise themselves and pay taxes. They will feel more comfortable if they do.

Nor is this new arrangement simply a matter of regularising the situations of people who have been working illegally. There are plenty of people in the Soviet Union who could have worked in this way but did not dare to do so. One result of this is that the service industry is lamentably backward, in many cases literally non-existent. It has been impossible to get anything mended.

This has all happened once before in Soviet history: for about a year at the time of Lenin's New Economic Policy in the 1920s. Then it went into reverse, and under Stalin those who had taken advantage found that they were marked for life. Many thousands actually did suffer with their lives in the purges.

Mikhail Gorbachov will be ready to swear that this will never happen while he has anything to say. But a lot of the Muscovites with their banners supporting the general secretary's themes will have a hollow laugh for this. How long, they ask, will he have his say? Some of them think it is a miracle that he has lasted as long as he has. What, they ask, will tomorrow bring?

Exit Small Pox; Enter AIDS

SPR. The World Health Organisation is studying what appears to be an astonishing discovery about the origin of AIDS: that it is linked to the eradication of smallpox in the third world. The small pox vaccine responsible for this great improvement in the quality of human life in the developing world may have awakened the AIDS virus which had lain dormant previously. How else do we explain the amazing fact that the greatest spread of AIDS coincides with the most intense smallpox immunisation campaigns in Africa?

COURTESY: *Swiss Press Review*

Profit in the Soviet Union

SPR.T. As they walked in their thousands through Red Square on May 1st as they always do, the citizens of Moscow seemed well aware that something surprising was afoot in their lives. Those anxiously looking for opposition to the reform policies of Mikhail Gorbachov were unable to discern any sign that anything was out of place. Support for the general secretary was everywhere apparent, and the new slogans of openness and reconstruction moved freely among the old "Workers of the world, unite"

For generations now the Soviets have talked about Marx and Lenin. Will they ever talk Marx and Gorbachov? Thinking Muscovites must have been aware that there are plenty of contradictions between the old slogans and the new. Not the least of these is in the sphere of profit. Marx objected to profit, and so did Lenin. But in the Soviet Union apparently loyal Communists have been making profit for years. There has

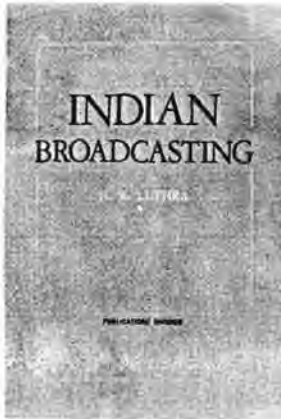
been unspoken knowledge of the fact that the economy of no country can run without the profit motive. Unspoken; yes, indeed. So many things in Soviet society — and in the society of other Communist countries — have been unspoken; and this is one of the things that Gorbachov's openness is all about. If the people are to learn to feel that they have a stake in their own country, then they have got to get rid of the fact — which they all know — that the citizens of the Soviet Union have been living a lie this half century past.

A lot of those who were celebrating May Day in Moscow were no doubt also mulling a serious personal problem over in their minds. Those who had been doing odd jobs for years and getting paid for them had had to watch what they were doing. Their activity was illegal, and they could be imprisoned for it. Now, quite suddenly, it has been recognised that people work better if they have the possibility of making a

BOOK REVIEWS

INDIAN BROADCASTING by H.R. Luthra, Publications Division, Govt. of India; 1986; Pp 531; Rs.56

BROADCASTING IN INDIA by P.C. Chatterjee; Sage Publications; 1987; Pp; 210 Rs.150



How pleasant it is to review two books on broadcasting by two good friends who were also my colleagues in AIR. The books came out within a year of each other between 1986 and '87. Mr. P.C. Chatterjee, retired as Director General AIR, and Mr. H.R. Luthra, was Deputy Director General when he retired.

Mr. Chatterjee's book was commissioned by the prestigious International Institute of Communications, London, and is one in a series entitled "Case Studies of Broadcasting Systems." It gives an all-round picture of radio and TV in India and is a hand-book for everyone. Mr. Luthra's book, is a more detailed study of Indian broadcasting from its inception to date. It is a tribute to the author that with wit and imagination he has made a long story (500 pages) so readable. Particularly enjoyable are the pen pictures of some of the colourful, brilliant and eccentric individuals who, to AIR's good fortune, laid the foundations of our broadcasting system.

It is only to be expected that both the books cover the same ground, starting with the early history of broadcasting, describing the increasing volume and variety of output of the two media, the policies which have been evolved with regard to programmes for rural listen-

ers, music, religious festivals, political broadcasts, news and current affairs, and so forth. The organisation behind the programmes which the public receives, such as the personnel policy and the financial and administrative arrangements and the structure built up over the years are all touched upon. All this has been dealt with in books and reports over the years though, of course, each expresses its author's point of view of AIR's performance.

So what is new in these two books?

It is his treatment of the early period of broadcasting which distinguishes Luthra's book from those which preceded it and from Chatterjee's book. I marvel at the meticulous and painstaking research into the old files and records resulting in a wealth of interesting and even amusing information which not only throws light on the beginnings of broadcasting but on the working of the then Government of India, the British civil servants, many of outstanding ability, who were responsible for taking decisions which were to mould our institutions for years to come.

Some of Luthra's quotes from the old records illuminate the clash of personalities and ideas. At the centre of most of these clashes in the broadcasting sphere was the lonely maverick Lionel Fielden, the first Controller of Broad-

casting. Those of us who knew him well can understand how maddening he must have appeared, with his anti-bureaucratic stance, to the *pukka sahibs* of the Indian government. But how thankful we were then, and are now, for Fielden's singlehanded battles for the right values for Indian broadcasting and for the appropriate organisation required to promote them.

Luthra records numerous skirmishes with the bureaucracy; most interesting were his attempts to get Gandhiji and Nehru involved in broadcasting as an invaluable aid to India's future progress. In spite of discouragement from the Home Member of the Viceroy Council he met Gandhi, Nehru, Rajaji and other national leaders. He wrote to both Gandhiji and Nehru in 1936 asking why they would not lift a hand to help him. Gandhiji replied, from Sevagram, Wardha:

"I value the confidence you have given me. My sympathies are with you in your troubles but you have to take them philosophically. Those who know you would like to avail themselves of the facilities you may give them but they know that the harm done by such cooperation will be greater than the good intended."

Nehru's letter was couched in more friendly and even affectionate terms.

"Your letter reached me and it made painful reading. I am afraid you are a misfit in that job, or in India; but then all of us are. You blame others including innocent me! But does not the fault lie really in the environment, in circumstances which are bigger than individuals, in the unhealthy relations between India and England? ...I wish you could come here and spend a few days with us. I would be happy to have you and perhaps you might feel better and calmer for a change..."

"I wish I could help you. Perhaps I can in some odd ways. Write to me sometimes about books and pictures and anything else you like. Your letters will be welcome. In spite of politics I have not lost my humanity."

But despite his good contacts with Indian leaders Fielden left India a disappointed man — convinced that he had achieved very little for Indian broadcast-

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ing.

Both books deal, to varying extent, with the question of autonomy for Radio and TV. Mr. Luthra's book, being an official publication, could not, by its very nature, enter into the controversy. He has quoted extensively from the Chanda Committee's Report and from the report of the Verghese Group on autonomy for AIR and Doordarshan, both of which came out strongly against control of the media but he himself does not enter the fray.

Mr. Chatterjee, on the other hand, has advanced some interesting new arguments in favour of autonomy which deserve wide study and acceptance. Commenting on the government's "decision" that autonomy cannot be granted, for a number of unconvincing reasons, Mr. Chatterjee questions the very idea that it is for the government to decide how and to what extent government control can be lifted. It is only recently that government's right to control broadcasting has been questioned. Article 19 1 (a), which guarantees freedom of speech and expression, and is the bedrock of the freedom of the press, equally guarantees freedom of broad-

casting. It was taken for granted that while the press is free, broadcasting is a central subject and this means control by the Central government.

On the analogy of the press, broadcasting programmes should be in the hands of diverse groups to ensure access to different shades of opinion. There has not been a situation in which there was only one newspaper in India. If an individual or a group of persons have the right to set up a newspaper and if, as a result, there are hundreds of newspapers in the country, how can government persist in maintaining a monopoly of broadcasting? Insisting on maintaining a monopoly the government is violating the fundamental rights guaranteed under the constitution. Media autonomy is not a right which the government gives to the people; it is a right which has to be wrested from the executive through the courts.

After firing this salvo Chatterjee discusses the question of government control of the media from some other angle. Mr. Noorani a distinguished lawyer quoting a Supreme Court judgement has contended that even if broadcasting is run by the government equal-

ity before the law demands that fair representation must be given to all aspects of opinion (Article 14 of the Constitution and Article 19(1)(a)).

What is required is documentation and proof by the opposition parties, or by any public body, that AIR and Doordarshan have been unfair and arbitrary in their presentation of opinion on public issues. It was to meet this requirement that a study of Doordarshan's news in English was commissioned by the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom and the Indian Liberal Group. The purpose was to assess Doordarshan's standards of objectivity, fairness and good reporting. Spread over 90 days between April and August '86, the study used the *Times of India's* coverage of news as reference. It confirms what is already widely accepted – that Doordarshan is guilty of not only distortion but also suppression of news. The study also comes up with factual evidence of the disproportionate coverage given to the establishment in general and the Prime Minister in particular. The report based on the study provided conclusive evi-

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dence, if any were required, of the manipulation of a vital medium – a state monopoly – to subserve the interests of the party in power.

It was to put an end to such bias that a writ petition was moved in April 1987 by Mr. Romesh Thapar, the late Editor of *Seminar*, whose lawyer, Mr Noorani, argued that the court must ask the government to frame a scheme for the functioning of the media which would be in conformity with the fundamental rights of the citizens. On 21st July 1987 the Supreme Court admitted this for a full hearing as Public Interest Litigation, seeking fair and equitable coverage of events by AIR and Doordarshan. The case will come up for hearing on 15th September 1987*.

Mr. Chatterji touches another important issue, first considered in recent times by the Chanda Committee (1966) and recently taken up by Hegde, the Chief Minister of Karnataka. This relates to the possibility of different parties being in power in the Centre and the states, and the probability that the state's perspective might not find a place in the policy of the AIR. There have been no conventions guiding such contingencies, but paradoxically the Government of India Act of 1935 allowed the provincial units to use the facility. Members of the Constituent Assembly, notably Pattabhi Sitaramaya also advocated that the states should not be denied the right to operate broadcasting stations.

In this, as in many other respects, we are travelling backwards instead of forward. The liberal provisions of the 1935 Act and the liberal trend of the discussions in the Constituent Assembly have given away, forty years later, to a determination on the part of government to exercise exclusive power over the media.

Both Mr. Chatterjee and Mr. Luthra refer to the absence of a communication policy which results in bias, distortion and authoritarian control over the media which under government control are treated, by the government itself, as agencies to publicise and defend its decisions and actions. There is no clear

perception of the purpose the media are intended to serve, nor of their role in the process of development. Since we have no escape from this depressing situation the only hope we have is from the court. It is to be hoped that the Supreme Court will be the guardian of the rights of the people in this respect as it has been in other matters as well.

Mehra Masani

A GANDHIAN THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION by Ignatius Jesudasan; S.J. Orbis Book, New York; Pp 179; \$ 10.95

Ignatius Jesudasan's book is, in his own words, "an attempt at a systematic presentation of Gandhi's theology of liberation in the context of its development within the historical experience of India's liberation." It has very little overt connection with liberation theology, particularly the Marxist-inspired, radical Christian movement associated with the Latin American church, or closer home, the movement associated with the struggle of the artisanal fishermen in Kerala.

The title then is clearly a misnomer: those who may pick up the book thinking it addresses liberation theology issues as presently understood are warned that it does nothing of the sort. In that sense, the book is a disappointment. One would have eagerly looked forward in fact, to the prospect of an extremely articulate Indian Jesuit scholar like Jesudasan demonstrating how a radical Catholic theology of liberation might be compared with its Gandhian version or, even posed against it. That would have set the stage for a classic battle between Gandhi and Marx, and also provided an excellent opportunity for evaluating their opinions on the other radical system of ideas, pre-Pauline Christianity. However, except for a very brief allusion to liberation theology of the Latin American kind at the commencement of his study, Jesudasan scrupulously avoids any discussion of it. It is amply clear that the issue does not bother or interest him: it is completely outside his focus.

The book seems to me to be essentially an effort to grapple with the challenge that Gandhi, basically a Hindu,

posed, and continues to pose, even today to the Roman Catholic Church, and to its claim to be the exclusive repository of the Christian message.

Those who have some idea of the history of the encounter between Christianity and Hinduism, will know that much of it was a deadly enactment of mutual disdain, contempt, admiration and hatred.

Of the two religions, Hinduism faced Christianity defensively practically throughout the colonial period. As for Christianity, being the religion of the conquerors, it used the opportunities thus afforded to strut about with superior airs. Despite its rank association with a brutal system of exploitation (colonialism), Christianity was able to present itself successfully as a *critique* of Hinduism, offering to reform it and eventually attempting to compel it to get rid of some of its undesirable practices. The movement to cleanse Hinduism and reform it, led by people like Ram Mohun Roy and Swami Vivekananda, was patently West-inspired. So successful indeed was Christianity in projecting its superior image, that the movement even donned features totally antithetical to Hinduism, and thereby weakened it considerably. As Ashis Nandy points out in *The Intimate Enemy*, this involved trying to turn Hinduism into an organised religion, with an organised priesthood, church and missionaries; proselytization; attempts to introduce the notion of a sacred Book, and so on.

The appearance of one man alone, Gandhi, changed all that. All of a sudden two centuries of implacable hostility and condescension on the part of Christianity were replaced by grudging respect for its more ancient cousin. A man of immense personal power, Gandhi was also a Hindu. He was also a powerful destroyer of false myths. One of the first of these to go was the self-image the conquerors had of being a superior civilisation, with a superior religion.

As Jesudasan observes.

"That India was dominated by the country whose ruler was the head of the Church of England and of the established Church in India did not help to raise his estimation of Christianity. He saw the church as sanctioning both materialist civilization and the exploitation of one race by another. Here he judged Christianity's contribution to In-

* This was written before Mr. Romesh Thapar passed away and before Mr. Masani and Mr. Chatterjee filed a writ petition in the Bombay High Court against the Union Government's rejection of their application for the setting up of private broadcasting stations in Western India.

dia as essentially negative in character, though useful in that it helped Hinduism to set its house in order."

Here was a man whom every one acknowledged was a better Christian than all those other Christians put together. Yet, incomprehensibly, it was not Christianity but a foreign religion that had manufactured him. He was ready to accept whatever Christianity offered him, but, as Jesudasan notes, "that which reconciled Gandhi to any teaching of Jesus was not his alleged miracles, but the conformity of his teaching with Gandhi's criteria of universal morality." Gandhi's Catholicism was absolutely stunning, irreproachable and boundless. It was all the more astounding too because he remained a staunch Hindu. In comparison with his stand, the Catholicism of the Roman Catholic Church seemed narrow, parochial, self-serving and vitiated.

Christianity could scoff at *swamis*, *sadhus* or *rishis*; it could not deal however with a Gandhi. And for the first time in the encounter between the two religions, it was Christianity that was forced by this formidable individual to go on the defensive. The Hindu was compelled to function as the teacher.

It is basically within this context that one should mark the significance of Jesudasan's study. It does not say anything remarkable really. But the act of saying what he has to say is probably of greater significance. The Gandhian theology of liberation is rooted in the simple revelation that Gandhi made religious faith "an ally and an instrument in the social and political liberation of human beings." But that is hardly an extraordinary thesis: Jesudasan himself admits that "always in history religious people have spoken out vigorously against the abuse of power and have denounced intolerant situations." Most of the six chapters of the book revolve around the Gandhian interpretation of *swaraj*, and Gandhi's vision of a liberated society.

The book however seems destined for a Roman Catholic audience, and not for the rest of mankind. Even its vocabulary is distinctly sectarian, often Greek. In this sense, it is not the first volume of its kind, but remains heir to a series of other remarkable books that have dwelt in some form or another with the tortuous relationship between Christianity and Hinduism.

Foremost of these was Raimundo Panikkar's *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, and there have been others. Most of these works were composed on the haughty assumption that Christianity was the only universal religion; other religions had truth value in so far as they manifest elements of what Karl Rahner, the Roman Catholic theologian, has called, "anonymous Christianity." Their authors could not accept or their arrogance did not allow them to accept that the anonymous presence of Christ was unnecessary to dignify these religions. The latter stood on their own convictions and first principles. Vatican II did not radically depart from this attitude when it acknowledged condescendingly that non-Christian religious teachings differed from the teaching of the church, but "nevertheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men."

Jesudasan himself does not escape this annoying tendency. Thus he writes. "This system (of conflict resolution in Gandhi) based on satyagraha with its components of *satya*, *ahimsa* and *tapasya*, drew heavily upon the Christian model of contrition, repentance, conversion and reform." The chapter is headed, "The Way of the Cross as the Way to Swaraj." Gandhi's model, he writes later, "of conflict resolution can be identified as contritional, penitential or conversional, and hence Christological." No one but a Catholic would understand the true connotations of these terms. If I have not berated him harshly here, it is because the author's intent is to repair Christianity not Hinduism.

Later, towards the end of the book, Jesudasan suggests that Hinduism's henotheistic conception of a favourite God, *Ishta Devata*, would allow an exclusive worship of Jesus for those who find in such worship the way to their God-realization." Obviously, the unknown Christ of Hinduism is better off with a more recognizable face.

In this endeavour of transforming Christianity Gandhi would have delightfully supported Jesudasan. Unlike Roy, or Vivekananda or Nehru for that matter, Gandhi saw the West in gross need of help itself, let alone having any moral authority to lecture Hinduism. Jesudasan's book, in so far as it seeks to reinvent Christianity through Gandhi, is am-

ple proof that Gandhi was not off the mark.

Jesudasan acknowledges Gandhi's profound influence on Christianity. He observes that Gandhi perhaps indirectly contributed to Vatican II's document on non-Christian religions and its decree on the Church's missionary activity. The difficult question Jesudasan however must answer is whether this did change anything or whether it remained cosmetic in nature. Jesudasan admits the central problem of Christianity in its relations to other religions is its Christocentrism, that the concept of Christ is exclusive in that just being a Christian is not exactly the same as being a Hindu. One has to be in conformity with the "paradigm of the paschal experience of Jesus Christ." That those denied such participation are also therefore denied salvation.

Jesudasan attempts to bypass this exclusivity by arguing that Christocentrism was a survival necessity of the early Church, and that it is not necessary today. He also argues that Christianity in the new setting "would have to be undogmatic and true to the spiritual insight of Jesus of Nazareth, discovering and establishing links with liberal elements in all other religions and finding its rightful place in the larger fellowship of faiths to come, of which Hinduism, with its genuine catholicity is an advanced even if imperfect example."

He also suggests that Christianity emphasizes morality as the way of its union to God. Both these principles are distinctly Gandhian.

This is where Gandhi would perhaps part company with Jesudasan. The suggestions Jesudasan makes in regard to Christianity would destroy the institution as we know it, just as a few decades ago, the reformers of Hinduism offended it by importing ideas antithetical to its fundamental nature. This institution (the church) has been unable yet to come to terms with Marx, a thinker from within its own cultural milieu. It is hardly to be expected it will change its spots inspired by a Mahatma. At any rate, one has just to look at the writing of present day Christians, from M M Thomas to John Paul II, to realise that none of them would ever dream of compromising on the centrality of the person of Christ, and all the Christology it entails.

Christianity requires neither a Gandhi

nor a Marx. If it did then Christ is verily dead. A religious tradition cannot be transformed from looking at other traditions: it can only regenerate itself by returning to its pristine sources. Gandhi's theology of liberation is best kept for his own countrymen. The better issue to study is why the present Church is unable to resurrect a fresh theology of liberation from within itself (as Gandhi did in regard to Hinduism) to deal with the socio-economic, and political liberation of the peoples of the world.

Claude Alvares

POEMS OF LOVE AND WAR.

Selected and translated by A.K. Ramanujam; Oxford University Press, Delhi; 1985; Pp 329; Rs.80

Of all the Dravidian languages, Tamil has had an ancient tradition of poetic literature and claims have been made of its being contemporaneous with that of Sanskrit. However, the ancient poems remained in obscurity and were brought to light only from the 1880s. The Tamil poetic tradition of a particular school has themes that arrange themselves both geographically as well as figuratively around two foci the home and the external world, the worlds of love and of war, the court, death etc.

At first appearance the geographical and thematic divisions may strike one as arbitrary but there have been naturalists who have pointed out that the geographical classification of the Tamil poets has a definite correspondence with Tamilnadu.

Since their discovery, attempts have been made to popularize these poems by translations. Generally these were attempted by scholars and it has been alleged that they have not always succeeded in conveying the bare beauty of the originals. In more recent years very careful and conscious attempts have been made to recreate them for the modern reader. This is the latest among such attempts; it represents continuous reworking of the translations for over a period of nearly two decades and should be regarded as perhaps the most satisfactory of the translations that are available. Besides containing a substantial body of verse, it tries to represent almost all types of poems of the ancient Tamils. Also, the introduction

and the elaborate afterword help the reader to place these in the context and to form his own judgement of the poems.

One can approach the reading of the book as a scholar, read the introduction and the afterword carefully and work one's way through the poems with the help of the notes, the commentaries, the glossaries etc. This is something that only specialists will attempt. The "common" reader would best begin reading the poems straightaway and re-read them and go back and forth. In doing so, what appears strange at first reading will fall into a pattern later and one may even empathise with some of the poems. And many of these will take their place among the best in the world.

Lack of space constrains us to comment only to two groups of poems — those on love (pp. 7-30) and kings at war (115-123). Comparing the translations at pp. 7-30 with the originals, one notices how close the author is to the mood and the words in Tamil. Particularly commendable is the poem on p.30 which reproduces the very repetitions in the original.

Like moss on water
in the town's water tank :
the body's pallor
clears

as my lover touches
and touches
and spreads again
as he lets me go
as he lets me go.

All these poems are on the mood of separation and on remembrance of sweet memories. The concrete environs are in striking contrast to the total absence of any description of the man and his memories that are commemorated! Most of the poems are by the girls and only one by the beau himself!

The poems on kings at war glorify what we have learnt to abhor — war and the reality of sudden cruel death. The sheer glorying in gory details of war do not reflect the sensibilities of those who have witnessed war themselves as much as singing panegyrics of their patrons.

While Ramanujan tries to capture a tradition of love that has been written of memorably a thousand years ago, the inheritors of the tradition will find all these strange. For they are now fed on the soap operas and song and dance sequences on the idiot box which glorify another type of love, far from the moods that the book captures so vividly.

R. Srinivasan

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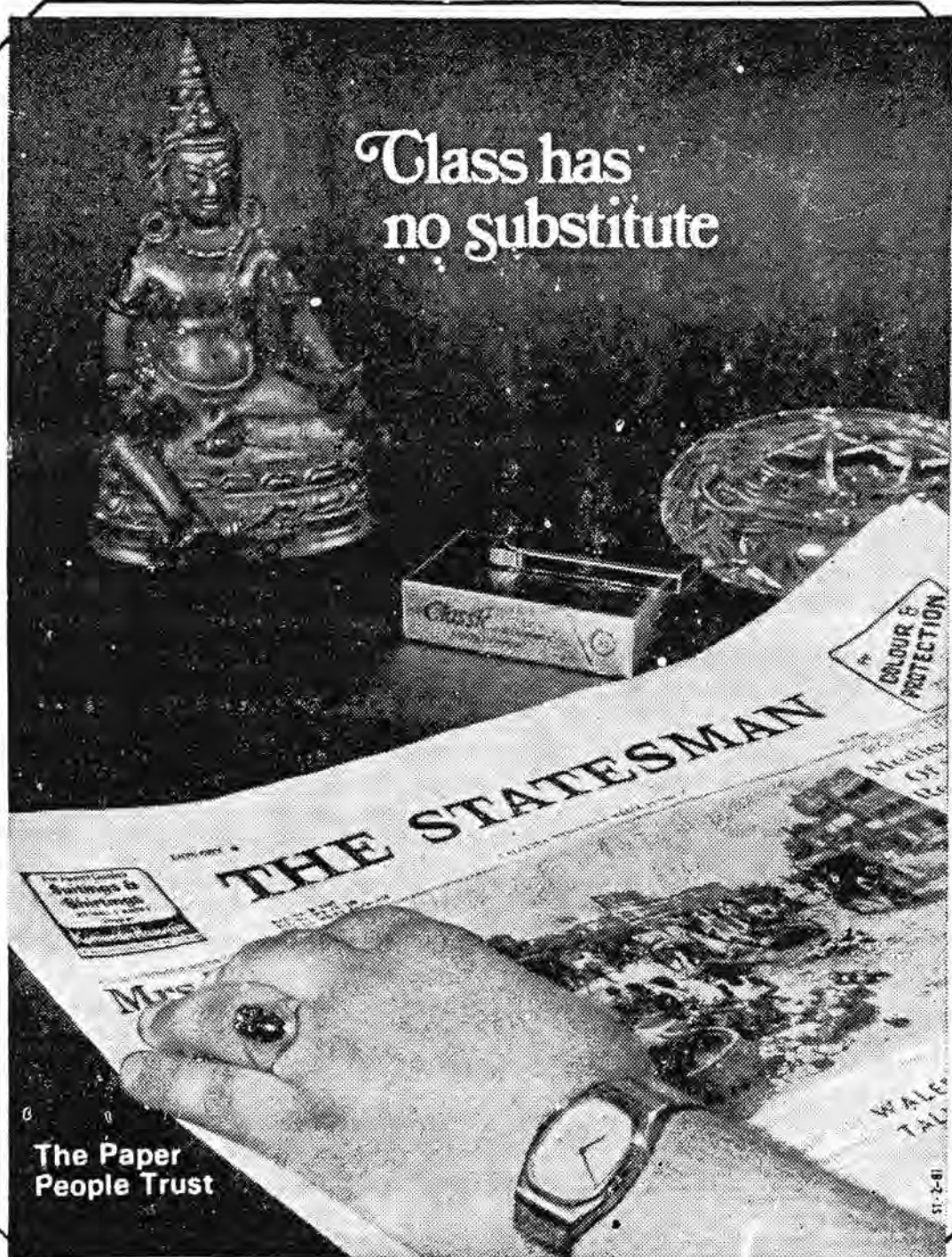
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