

Freedom First

A QUARTERLY OF LIBERAL IDEAS

October
-December 1992
No. 415
Rupees Ten

40TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

The Earth's Environment: What the Quarrel's All About

B.D. Sharma, Shyam Chainani, Jal Khambata,
Swaminathan A. Anklesaria Aiyar, Paul Johnson

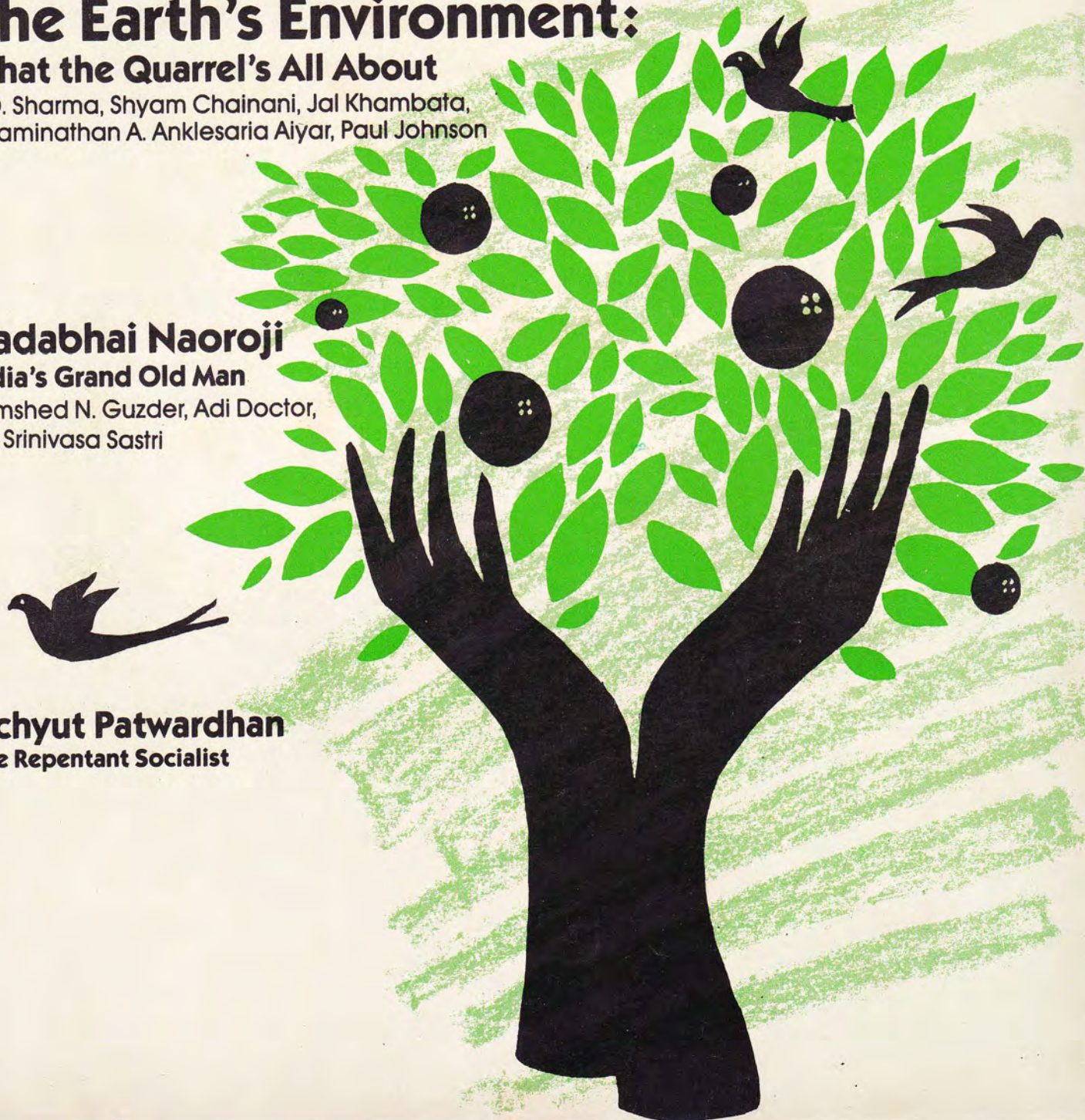
Dadabhai Naoroji

India's Grand Old Man

Jamshed N. Guzder, Adi Doctor,
V.S. Srinivasa Sastri

Achyut Patwardhan

The Repentant Socialist



Genocide in Tibet

Do You Know?

- * More than 1.2 million Tibetans have been killed.
- * More than 6,000 monasteries have been destroyed.
- * Thousands of Tibetans are still imprisoned.
- * His Holiness the Dalai Lama was forced into exile in 1959.
- * China uses Tibet as a nuclear-waste dumping site.
- * Tibetans are already outnumbered by Chinese in Tibet (6 million Tibetans versus 7.5 million Chinese)
- * Tibetans are being arrested and killed for demonstrating against the Chinese occupation.

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Depending on your interest and ability there are many ways in which you can help the Tibetan people.

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- * Express support for the Tibetan people's right to freedom by writing to newspapers and magazines.
- * Write to your MP about Tibet and ask him to support the cause of Tibet in parliament.
- * Ask your MP to persuade the Government to support the Dalai Lama's peace initiatives for Tibet.
- * Ask your MP to demand that the Government recognize the Tibetan Government-in-Exile under the leadership of the Dalai Lama.

For further information, please contact

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Freedom First

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PUBLISHERS

Democratic Research Service

4th floor, Maneckji Wadia Bldg.

127, Mahatma Gandhi Road

Bombay 400 023

Tel: 27 39 14

Published by J.R. Patel for the
Democratic Research Service and
printed by him at Parsiana Publications
Pvt. Ltd., 300 Perin Nariman Street,
Bombay 400 001

Typeset at Ace Fototypesetters
264, Kalyandas Udyog Bhavan
Near Century Bazar, Worli 400 025
Tel: 436 2365

Single Copy: Rs. 10

Annual: Rs. 30

Life: Rs. 400

(add Rs. 10 for outstation cheques)

Overseas (II Class Air Mail)

Annual: USD 20 or £ 10

Life: USD 100 or £ 50

Cheques to be drawn in favour of
Freedom First and mailed to publishers
at address listed above

BETWEEN OURSELVES...

Ask anyone, be he a farmer or city dweller, and he will tell you that the weather cycle is changing. On this there is universal agreement. Differences emerge on *why* the weather is changing.

No one wants to see his home destroyed. The Earth is his home and we do not think, barring madmen (and perhaps aliens!) anyone would consciously seek the Earth's destruction. No one consciously again, seeks to spoil the Earth's environment. Greed could, for a while, blind man's perceptions and his priorities but here too, he is bound to take note of realities and accept his responsibility — for no one wants his home destroyed.

Then what's the quarrel all about? A large number of the Earth's citizens met in Rio in June this year to ponder and debate this question. The cover feature of this issue is not a report on Rio but a discussion of the problem of the environment with Rio as a point of reference. While wading through a large number of reports and analyses of environmental problems we arrived at one optimistic conclusion: No one, but no one, consciously wants to destroy Mother Earth.

We bring you widely differing views seen from different perspectives. We would welcome your views too and would like to know whether you share our optimism.

We have taken the liberty of reproducing extensive extracts from Dr. B.D. Sharma's article in *The Sanctuary Magazine*. In the process we discovered what a fine magazine it is. Readers who may wish to subscribe to this journal should send in their subscriptions One year (6 issues) Rs. 98; Two years (12 issues) Rs. 190; single copy Rs. 20) to: Sanctuary Magazine, 602, Maker Chambers V, Nariman Point, Bombay 400 021.

August 1992 was the centenary of Dadabhai Naoroji's historic election to the House of Commons. We consider it a privilege to pay our tributes to India's Grand Old Man on the occasion: The likes of him are born but rarely.

S.V. Raju, R. Srinivasan

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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

At the present rate, the country's calendar of heroes will soon rival the Catholic Saints' calendar.

Sham Lal, *The Times of India*, August 15

I am no longer enamoured of the Indian Constitution though for a major portion of my life I have laboured to protect it.

(Retired) Justice Krishna Iyer,
The Sunday Observer, August 16

For reasons best known to them, Mr. V.P. Singh and his colleagues appear to have decided that the best way to serve the democratic cause is to paralyse the epitome of the democratic process, parliament.

Inder Malhotra, *The Times of India*, August 20

If religion is the opium of the masses secularism seems to have acted as a blinker in the case of an influential segment of the political class.

G.M. Telang, *Indian Express*, August 21

In India we only talk about hockey, we do not play it.

Hockey coach Balkishen Singh,
The Illustrated Weekly of India,

I certainly object to the word India – the word given by the British.

Bal Thackeray, *Indian Express*, September 13

For his expose of corrupt politicians, planners, industrialists, bankers, businessmen and bureaucrats, Harshad Mehta deserves a Bharat Ratna.

Reader P.C. Singh in a letter to
The Sunday Observer, September 6

God has not appointed Pakistan as a guardian of Muslims in the sub-continent.

Spokesman of the All India Babri Masjid Action Committee, Mr. Javed Habib, *The Hindu*, August 31

You open a manhole in Bombay and you have Special Executive Magistrates (SEMs) crawling out of it.

Municipal Corporator Ramdas Nayak,
The Times of India, August 31

When we politicians are in power we forget about autonomy for the electronic media because we keep appearing on the TV and the wives remain happy with the publicity their husbands are hogging.

Former I&B Union Minister I.K. Gujral,
The Sunday Observer, September 20

If (the British Labour Party's) Kinnock Wins Today, will the Last Person to Leave Britain Please Turn Out the Lights.

Headline in *The Sun* quoted in *The New Leader* May 4

A Parsi treats his (78 rpm) records more delicately than he does his wife.

78 rpm record collector Vijay Nafrey,
The Times of India, September 5

Is the front page of *The Times of India* reserved only for politicians, miscreants and scoundrels?

Reader R.B. Dhuru in a letter to
The Times of India, August 21

Indians have become immune to filth.

Scaria Meledam, *Indian Express*, August 30

In the case of Fergie, every picture was worth a thousand words. After all, the sighting of royal breasts is rarer than that of comets.

L.K. Sharma, *The Times of India*, August 30

Please let us have no more sacrificial lambs, (like Rajiv) from the Gandhi family. The system is doing very well without them.

Tavleen Singh, *Indian Express*, September 6

OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

"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



Hathos in the Indian Press

Almost all of us experience hathos when reading about people like Harshad Mehta in the press — and many of us cannot have too much of it. (Hathos "is the power to excite feelings of pleasurable loathing".) Few among us have time to contemplate the effects of unsavoury publicity on these about whom things are written.

The well-known columnist Prem Shankar Jha has offered some comments in the *Hindu* on this business which ought to interest readers of *Freedom First*. He instances the incident relating to a former judge of the Calcutta High Court who had an excellent practice of law in the metropolis. His premises were raided and a holier than thou Income Tax Commissioner "called in the press and announced that the tax authorities had found large amounts of black money and evidence linking Mr. Justice Mitter (the judge in question) to several notorious smugglers and 'FERA' detenus." Wide publicity was given to this salacious story but the Income Tax Department could prove nothing to substantiate its wild allegations.

Justice Mitter "filed defamation cases against all those who had published the report, in courts spread from one end of India to the other end dragged to courts at least two score editors all over the country. Every newspaper had to print an apology in the prescribed form, but the dirt, once thrown, did not entirely get washed off."

Jha reminds us of the adverse publicity given to industrialists like V.M. Kiroloskar, Kapal Mehra and Lalit Thapar. This of course is only a partial

list — in a number of cases no charges could be proved. "But the overall impression that India's industrialists were a bunch of crooks sank deep into the public mind." The arrest of Sanjay Singh and Ms. Ameeta Modi and later of Mr. Kirti Ambani too are recalled. Nothing was proved. But while the case lasted "not a day passed without the CBI or the Bombay police letting the press in on some fresh evidence that they had uncovered. And so, piece by piece, a complete picture was built in the public mind of the guilt of all these individuals." In fact that they were proved innocent did not attract equal publicity either in terms of the space allotted in the newspapers or the prominence given to stories when published.

Mr. Jha argues that a similar blackening of Mr. V. Krishnamurthy is now taking place with all the evidence presented being from the one side with his lawyers not being in any position to offer a defence. In the case of Mr. Krishnamurthy it is the blackening of the reputation of a man who had an enviable record of public service, almost doing the impossible turning thoroughly sick public sector units into profitable ventures. Jha points out that neither in the US nor the UK these sensational expose "would have been published without, at the very least, an accompanying rejoinder from Mr. Krishnamurthy's lawyers. But cross checking out news stories, particularly when they can blight the very lives of individuals is not alas, the custom in even the elite newspapers of our very free press."

In 1985 it served the purpose of the then Finance Minister Mr. V.P. Singh to keep in detention Mr. S.L. Kiroloskar an

eighty-five year old industrialist, for no other purpose than to give the image of a Minister in shining armour fighting corrupt businessmen. Jha reminds us that it may serve the purpose of political masters to use the CBI and the other investigating agencies as cat's paws in feeding news to the press; this will serve immediate interests but will, in the long run, destroy "not only the credibility of these instruments of the state but of the democratic system" itself.

In a letter published in *The Times of India* Mr. Nani Palkhivala writes "The truth is that Mr. (Harshad) Mehta is a crook, but no greater (only much brainier) than a hundred others who partook of the same illicit feast... Equality dictates that the fraud of a clever new entrant to the giant jungle should be treated as no more horrendous than that of the hundred and more sophisticated practioners. The ferocity of the campaign against Mr. Mehta is well calculated to divert attention from the inexplicable softness towards others in high places."

No Perestroika Here!

According to an *Indian Express* report, the Government of West Bengal has discontinued with the convention of supplying cashew nuts and *sandesh* at cabinet meetings — a sign of the near bankruptcy of the government! For the past four years the unpaid bill for tea distributed in the Writer's Building (obviously during cabinet meetings and, perhaps, at ministers' meetings) had mounted to Rs. 15 lakhs and only a part of it has been settled. The government is thinking of cutting telephone bills and the use of office cars! One

solution under consideration is to declare a five day week, for "lessening office expenditure". A wag is supposed to have quipped why not declare a thirty days off?

The Left Front government which once threatened to finish up a 'private financial company for its alleged "unethical" practices in mopping up the savings of lower income investors' now, unedifyingly, has gone hat in hand to its *bete noire* Peerless (the financial company in question), to borrow Rs. 120 crores at an interest of 23%! And half of it is to pay the salaries of its Parkinsonian bureaucracy receiving bloated salaries and allowances. Earlier the West Bengal Government had borrowed from private agencies to the tune of Rs. 1200 crores. Shades of the *ancien regime*!

Pandering to populist measures is perhaps part of the explanation. There are 40 public sector units owned by the state and except for one or two most steadily lose on their enterprises. As the state government was siphoning off central subventions the Centre has stopped the subventions. Moreover, the state is unable to match the grants from the Centre which it is theoretically supposed to do.

From being a State that once led the country in manufacturing industries, West Bengal has been gradually reduced to a trading-State finding it difficult to collect even sales tax and other items of revenue. Not surprisingly most, if not all, development projects have come to a stop.

The reason for this severe financial crunch is of course the collectivist and populist measures inspired by the moth-eaten theories of socialism.

Kerala, the other State dominated by the Communists, is no better. Its outlay on salaries, pensions and interest on loans totals upto 81.98% of its revenue. There is no Peerless to loan money; it has to depend upon the fat cooperative sector (cooperative banks are the most flourishing here compared to their counterparts in other states) and, ofcourse that perennial milch cow, the public sector.

Till last year Kerala could take an advance from the Reserve Bank of India and somehow juggle its balance sheet. This is no longer possible as RBI is no

longer prepared to bail out the state government's finances. Not surprisingly the State had to face the unsavoury experience of stopping treasury payments for two days in June.

Experts appointed to save the situation have advised sensible measures, such as the pruning or rationalising education and public health expenditure. Of course the government will not adhere to this advice. Kerala's education system is one of the more deplorable examples of education attainments where literacy camouflages itself as education. As free education has ruined standards so has free medical service with hospitals without "medicines, cotton, spirit, syringes and even oxygen." Another gargantuan feeder is the food subsidy which gobbles up Rs. 100 crores annually.

Interestingly, the percentage in the State's budget set apart for irrigation is 3.24, on public works 2.84, housing and urban developments 1.56!

The East European scene has changed but our local Bourbons will learn nothing!

Compared to West Bengal and Kerala, the state budgets of Rajasthan, Orissa and Karnataka can be described as comfortable!

RS

AN APPEAL

When putting together old issues of *Freedom First* we discovered to our dismay that the following 26 issues are missing.

Should you, as a long time reader have preserved any are all of these issues do lend them to us. We promise to return them after making copies for our records.

Missing Issues

Nos. 207, 244, 260 to 277, 284 to 289

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'Stray Incidents' Did You Say, Mr. Home Minister?

S.V. Raju

Union Home Minister, S.B. Chavan told *The Times of India* correspondent in New Delhi on September 27 that "India would not tolerate Amnesty's idea that there was no rule of law in India. While not denying that 'stray incidents' take place, he said the central issue is whether such incidents are taken note of and if punitive action was taken by the appropriate authority. Mr. Chavan said he was satisfied that this was happening in India."

Mr. Chavan went on to reaffirm that "Amnesty International would not be permitted to tour India to investigate alleged violations of human rights." He went on to have a dig at civil rights organisations in India like the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL). "Our friends", said the Home Minister "have been providing information (to Amnesty). The importance attached to their information will definitely be reduced once the (Human Rights) Commission begins its work."

The report revealed that "legislation to establish the national human rights commission would probably be introduced in parliament in the monsoon session of 1993."

What Mr. Chavan was saying was:

- a. That the rule of law was very much prevalent in India;
- b. that where there were 'stray' cases of violation of the rule of law these were investigated (presumably departmentally) and action taken against the officers concerned;
- c. that information passed on to Amnesty International by Indian human rights organisations like the PUCL were undependable;
- d. that once the National Human Rights Commission is legislated into existence, organisations like the PUCL will become redundant; meanwhile
- e. Amnesty International has no business poking its nose into Indian affairs, as its none of Amnesty's

business.

Rule of Law

That India is a democracy holding free elections once every five years (or more often when its politicians decide to behave irresponsibly) is not denied — not even by Amnesty. That the Indian press is generally free is also accepted. That we have a parliament where (among other things) there is the institution of a leader of the opposition who is not a ruling party clone is also accepted. But the question is do these (admittedly essential) trappings of a democracy go to prove there is rule of law prevalent in India?

For 40 of the 45 years since Indian independence we have been ruled by a single party — The Indian National Congress. The Congress, in the name of socialism (a marxist variant really of the Nehru variety) spawned a huge bureaucracy. This bureaucracy which includes the police and other law enforcement agencies, developed a cozy relationship with its political masters. This relationship can best be described in ordinary language as 'You scratch my back and I scratch yours'.

In such an arrangement ruling party politicians misuse the police for their party and personal ends and also interfere in such matters as promotions and transfers. The police, apart from misusing their positions to enrich themselves act in an arbitrary manner without caring in the slightest for legal procedures and such small matters as the rights of citizens. If there was some kind of rule of law evident it was kind courtesy the police and not as a matter of right.

Therefore, Mr. Home Minister, while we do have the concept of the rule of law implicit in our system of democratic governance, in practice however much arbitrariness goes on. And it is this that has resulted in the people generally not considering policemen as friends of the people but as those to be feared even by the law abiding.

On August 4, Mr. Vijay Tendulkar the distinguished playwright filed a public interest petition before the Division Bench of the Bombay High Court asking the Court to set up an independent machinery to investigate complaints against the police.

It was submitted in the Petition that, contrary to the provisions of the law, officers and personnel of the police indulge in numerous acts of lawlessness and violence, which it is their statutory duty to prevent.

Four illustrative cases of such acts by the police all in Bombay city were given in the petition. These pertained to Rajiv Agrawal, who was beaten and kicked in a police station because he attempted to prevent the wrongful arrest of a taxi driver (see *Freedom First*, No. 413); B.L. Miranda, whose house was broken into and who was threatened with a gun by a police officer; Baburao Jadhav, who was assaulted and illegally arrested by the police at a police station where he had gone to make a complaint about the behaviour of the police; and Dilip D'Souza, who was threatened with a gun and who was sought to be dragged to the office of the Assistant Commissioner of Police while taking photographs of birds on the terrace of his own building.

Mr. Vijay Tendulkar submitted that this trend of lawlessness and assault by the police was subversive of the entire machinery and scheme of law and order and also had the effect of destroying public confidence and faith in the police. He therefore submitted that the Court should direct the Respondents to establish an independent body to investigate complaints against the police, to ensure that such complaints are disposed of within a specified period and to provide that the reports of this body should be made public. It was further submitted that the Respondents be

directed to make provision for adequate compensation for the victims of such acts, to provide that the perpetrators of such outrages should bear at least part of this compensation, and to take steps within a prescribed time to prosecute police personnel involved in such acts.

The petition has been admitted on the ground that the question required to be considered.

Some more 'stray' incidents for the Home Minister's information:

Crude Cops

It is now axiomatic that the city's police force has scaled new heights of brutalisation.

However, there's nothing better than being convinced by the evidence of one's own eyes. A colleague had recently gone to Rafi Kidwai police station in connection with a matter unrelated to journalism, when he witnessed a barbaric display of police "power".

A driver of a prominent transport company, who seemed to have spent the night in Bachanalian revelry, wanted to report the theft of one carton from his truck. Initially, a constable gently chided him and expressed the opinion that the driver himself had sold off the carton in question. Naturally, the driver vigorously denied the allegation and a wee bit unconvincingly asked *Aisa kyon karoonga, saheb* (why should I do so saheb)?

At this, a sub-inspector named Bhaskar Dere, intervened: with his fists. After landing a mighty slap on the stunned driver's face, he unleashed a barrage of left-right combinations which would have done puglist Manohar Pingle proud. Reducing the hapless complainant to pulp, the brutal sub-inspector, business at hand having been completed, jumped on an Enfield motorcycle and roared away (*The Times of India*, August 10).

The CBI's 'Handlers'

One of the senior vice-presidents of the Andhra Bank Financial Services Ltd. Mr. Tharian Chacko has lodged a complaint with the Bangalore police alleging he was severely assaulted by officers of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) while he was being interrogated in connection with the bank scam.

Mr. Chacko was repeatedly threatened with dire consequences by the CBI SP Reddy who asked him to reveal

the names of senior officials in ABFSL who might have received kickbacks.

Mr. Reddy then asked inspectors Prabhakaran and E. Narayanan to "handle him". They took him to the ground floor and repeatedly assaulted him while seeking information on the kickbacks. Mr. Chacko was allowed to go home around 10 p.m. after being ordered to report back in the CBI office around 9.30 a.m. on Saturday morning with the information they were seeking.

A mortally afraid and bruised Chacko sought the help of his uncle J.E. George, an IPS officer, who took him to the R.T. Nagar police station to file a complaint against Mr. Reddy and the two inspectors.

The deputy commissioner of police (west), Mr. K.C. Ramamurthy, summoned Mr. Reddy, who came to the police station accompanied by CBI deputy superintendent Desai, who apologised orally for the misconduct.

The Case of the Lucknow Jailer

"The deputy jailer of Lucknow district jail N.N. Shrivastava who had been arrested under TADA for his alleged connivance in a recent jail break by four militants has charged that the senior superintendent of police of Lucknow had not only tortured him and his two sons but threatened to torture women folk of his family also in order to extract a false confession.

In letters written to the UP Chief Minister and senior State officials from jail Shrivastava claimed that after being subjected to repeated electric shocks the SSP Mr. S.K. Misra had threatened that his wife and daughter would be humiliated inside the police lockup if he did not parrot the version prepared by the SSP.

Shrivastava claimed that he continued to resist continuous physical torture but broke down when police officials mercilessly beat his two sons Subodh and Sarveshand and told him that his wife and unmarried daughter would be subjected to worse atrocities in front of him (*Indian Express*, August 30).

The Cowboy Cops of Tilak Nagar

On September 9, gun-toting policemen threatened a middle class family at their residence in Vidya Vihar, a Bombay suburb, to break open the door if it was not opened to them. The

frightened family did not open the doors thinking they were being threatened by robbers.

"It started around 5.20 a.m. when Ms. Nagarajan heard the rattling sound of the iron grill door at the entrance. When she opened the wooden door at the entrance of the ground floor flat and peeped outside, she noticed a tall, dark, hefty man wearing a jacket with a sten gun in hand standing on the steps.

The policemen then flashed torches inside the room and one of her sons could see a policeman in uniform. He told his mother that there were policemen outside and not robbers.

Mrs. Nagarajan then allowed the policemen, numbering more than 15, to come into her house. On entering, policemen asked the family members to display their belongings kept in the cupboards, boxes and bags.

The policemen took the youths to the Tilak Nagar police station. One of them was released immediately while another was released in the afternoon after interrogation. Mrs. Nagarajan said the area DCP, Mr. Khemkar, when contacted on phone, described the incident as an "unfortunate one" to her.

When asked whether he expressed any regrets on behalf of the police, Mr. Khemkar said there was no need" (*Indian Express*, September 11).

The above are not from the PUCL or the PUDR or any of the Home Minister's "friends" to whom he referred in his press interview with *The Times of India* correspondent, but from *The Times of India* and the *Indian Express* and these are 'stray' incidents between August 10 and September 11.

As for the Home Minister's reference to the National Human Rights Commission, the detailed terms of reference are not yet clear. We shall know when the purposal is introduced in parliament. Meanwhile the comment we offer at the stage is that this Commission is another name for the Minorities Commission which it is likely to replace. And the 'human rights' it is likely to consider will in all probability be at the 'marco' level and not individual cases.

And finally, in this age of globalisation and rapid communication, both audio and visual, to say we will not let Amnesty International into India is silly if not idiotic.

Dadabhai Naoroji

Grand Old Man of India

Jamshed N. Guzder

Dadabhai would have been a practising priest, considering that his own father was a poor Parsi priest trying to eke out a living in Bombay in those days. But nature and destiny ordained otherwise, partly because of the fact that Dadabhai's father, Naoroji, died when he was only four years old. Since the responsibility for bringing him up, including his education, was left to his mother, she sent him to the Native Education Society School, where he impressed his teachers with his intelligence and forcefulness from those very early days.

After school, he entered the Elphinstone Institute, where all the professors were highly educated Englishmen. It was here that he got an opportunity to acquaint himself with the great literature of the world, mostly English, but also Firdous's Shah-Namah, the great Iranian Epic.

Early Promise

From a very early age he showed promise of brilliance. At the age of 15 he received Clare's Scholarship awarded to scholars. He was a shining light of the Elphinstone Institute and the pride of his professors. In fact, one of the English professors, Prof. Orlebar, called him "The Promise of India." The prophecy certainly came true, as can be seen from the subsequent events in his career.

There are many firsts in Dadabhai's life. In fact, he became the first Indian Professor at the Elphinstone Institute and he was the first to strive in his own way for the intellectual uplift of the public of India.

Among the other firsts to his credit were: The first Indian to be elected to the British Parliament; the first Indian to be appointed on the Royal Commission, and, above all, the first Indian to ask for "self government" for his country.

His conduct and achievements at this early age so impressed Sir Erskine Perry, who was then the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Bombay and



"... in all he did, in all he suffered and in all he taught, he was the Prophet Zoroaster's religion personified, because he was the man more than anybody else of pure thought, of pure speech and pure deeds."

President of the Board of Education, that Sir Erskine suggested that Dadabhai be sent to London to qualify as a Barrister. Here again, destiny played a part and things turned out otherwise. Instead he was appointed Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy at the early age of 20.

Promoting Female Education

This brilliant and forward looking man, at the early age of 24, created a revolution in education on 4th August, 1849, when the foundation for female education was laid in Bombay. At that time, female education was practically nil and girls were not sent to school due to the orthodox sentiments then prevailing. Dadabhai and other members of the Society had the courage and determination to go from door to door to persuade parents to allow their daughters to learn the three Rs.

While Dadabhai's efforts were wel-

comed by a few, other parents were indignant that he should make such a proposal and threatened to throw him out of the house. Nonetheless, despite this discouragement, an experimental school was opened, and this great man, with a few dedicated educationists, came forward to teach free those girls who approached him to learn. In a very short time 44 Parsi and 24 Hindu girls volunteered as students to avail themselves of the teaching, thanks to the encouragement from Jagannath Shankar Sheth, who was a member of the Board of Education and who offered his cottage to be used as a school. Mr. K.N. Cama of the Cama family supported the cause and volunteered a sum of money to improve the school and pay the teachers.

In London — as a Manager

Prior to 1855, there was not a single Indian mercantile firm in England. All business was done by Europeans. However, the Cama brothers set up the first Indian company in England with their Head Office in London and a branch at Liverpool. They looked around for a person of high integrity and education to manage the company. They decided that Dadabhai was the right person and he agreed to take over as the Manager, after a great deal of reluctance.

He did so because he felt that this would give him an opportunity to initiate a connection between England and India. It would also give him an opportunity to advise Indian students in England who were competing for the Indian Civil Service. He coined the slogan "India for Indians" as far back as 140 years ago.

You may be surprised to hear that even as far back as 1856, in the University College, London, there was a subject called "Gujarati" and Dadabhai was appointed professor for this subject. He taught at University College for 10 years, during which period he founded the London Zoroastrian Association

in 1861. He was its first President which he continued to be until 1907.

Return to India

There are many significant things that Dadabhai achieved during this time, both in England and when he returned to India, especially his association with the Maharaja of Baroda — how he helped him and subsequently became the Dewan of Baroda, which position he finally resigned.

On 26th July, 1875, in his 50th year, he was elected to the Bombay Municipal Corporation from the same constituency in which he was born. Here again, he made his mark and because of his knowledge of finance, his proficiency in mathematics and his skill in marshalling statistics, he proved of great value to the Corporation, and after a period of only three months he was elected a Member of the Town Council.

A Founder of the Indian National Congress

Dadabhai was one of the moving spirits and a founder of the Indian National Congress, and he attended the first Congress session which was held in Bombay in 1885.

In 1886, he again proceeded to England. He had a desire to contest the elections to the British Parliament so that he could endeavour to discuss the cause of India. Dadabhai contested from the Holborn constituency as a Liberal, but was defeated. But being the man that he was, this defeat only strengthened his resolve to succeed.

In between, in 1886, Dadabhai was requested to attend the 2nd session of the Indian National Congress at Calcutta, where he was elected President. As President, he strove hard and succeeded in bringing together rival groups within the Congress, including Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mahadeo Govind Ranade, whose quarrel could have split the Congress during its infancy.

Dadabhai went back to England and was nominated, once again, as a Liberal candidate. The Tories were highly critical of this and Lord Salisbury, who was then Prime Minister of England, in his famous Edinburgh election speech called Dadabhai a "black man."

Member of Finsbury

Contrary to all expectations and in keeping with the British sense of fair play, these words caused a sensation all over England, and gained more publicity for Dadabhai, improved his reputation and standing, and got him a great deal of support. It is said that even Queen Victoria was upset that one of her patriotic Indian subjects should have been so insulted by the Prime Minister. As a result of all this, Dadabhai was elected to the British House of Commons in 1892 the first Indian to enter the House of Commons a hundred years ago.

His dream had come true. His wish fulfilled. He had reached the zenith of his fame. His reputation and moral character were such that on entering Parliament and being asked to take oath on the Bible, he absolutely refused saying that he was not a Christian. Parliament deferred to his sentiments and allowed him to take the oath in the name of God, which he did, holding in his hand a small book of Avesta which he had taken with him.

Here again, in Parliament, Dadabhai devoted his time to his favourite subject — improving the condition of his country, India. He made many speeches in Parliament on this and wrote a book called "Poverty and Un-British Rule in India." He demanded that a Royal Commission be instituted to look into his charges. So effective was Dadabhai's campaign, that the British Parliament did constitute this Commission. In fact he was appointed a Member of this Commission.

Guiding Gandhi in South Africa

In the midst of all this he did not forget the plight of the Indians in South Africa where Mahatma Gandhi was carrying on the herculean task of fighting for their rights. Gandhiji was in direct contact with Dadabhai by carrying on regular correspondence with him and seeking his advice. In one of Gandhiji's letters to Dadabhai he wrote: "I am yet inexperienced and young and therefore prone to make mistakes." He said that the responsibility that he had undertaken was out of proportion to his ability. However, he said that just as Dadabhai was fighting for the rights of Indians in India, he was fighting for the rights of Indians in South Africa, and in this he requested Dadabhai to kindly

guide and advise him and make suggestions, which suggestions, Gandhiji said, he would follow as advice coming from a father to a son.

In 1916, when he was 91, the Bombay University conferred on Dadabhai, along with Pherozeshah Mehta, the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws. The British Government offered him a knighthood, which he refused.

Dadabhai passed away peacefully on 30th June, 1917. After his body was consigned to the Tower of Silence, that eminent personality, Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, paid a glowing tribute to his memory:

"If we take stock of his life and his example, may I not say with perfect justice and trust that in his career, in all he did, in all he suffered and in all he taught, he was the prophet Zoroaster's religion personified, because he was the man more than anybody else of pure thought, of pure speech and pure deeds."

MR. J.N. GUZDER is a leading businessman and a Trustee of the Parsi Punchayat in Bombay.

Perhaps the last public function that Ranade performed was the unveiling of a portrait of Dadabhai Naoroji on November 24, 1900. On that occasion, he described Dadabhai as the best product of British education and added that in learning and industry, especially industry, Dadabhai had no equal. "Englishmen should feel proud of Dadabhai as a unique figure in Indian History" was one of his observations on the occasion. Ranade utilised the opportunity for the last time to affirm his political faith. He said: "The era of British conquest was followed by that of consolidation. Then came the era of reconciliation and reconstruction. On what lines should the work of reconstruction be carried on by the younger generation? These are laid down in Dadabhai's own words. The people of India should regard the existence and continuance of British dominion in that part of Asia as an unquestionable fact. That is the new foundation of the whole edifice. But there is another aspect of the problem. By reason of the conquest and of the consolidation, the people of India should be raised to a place of equality among the other nations of the earth."

In Mahadev Govind Ranade
— A Biography by TV Parvate

Dadabhai — The Secular Nationalist

Adi Doctor

The secular nationalism of Dadabhai Naoroji saw the state as a collectivity of persons, recognised by each other as having rights and possessing certain institutions for the maintenance of those rights.

The nationalism of the liberals stands in sharp contrast to the religious-spiritual nationalism of Dayanand Saraswati, Lokmanya Tilak or Sri Aurobindo. The religio-spiritual nationalists perceived the nation as a great divine and maternal power, a *shakti* to be revered and worshipped. In his essay, "The Ideal of the Karmayogin", Sri Aurobindo warns his countrymen against subjecting their minds to European ideas or looking at life from the material standpoint. "Materially you are nothing, spiritually you are everything", asserts Aurobindo and then goes on to exhort his countrymen thus: "First become Indians. Recover the patrimony of your forefathers. Recover the Aryan thought, the Aryan discipline the Aryan character, the Aryan life. Recover the Vedanta, the Gita, the Yoga..."

Not only did spiritual nationalism seek to give the state a mystic aura by establishing a "*Dharmarajya*" based on "*swa-dharma* and *raj-dharma*" (Tilak), and viewed patriotism as "a religious *sadhana*" (Aurobindo), it also tended to see the state and society as organic and having a soul of its own. As a consequence, the religio-spiritual nationalists tended to undermine individual rights and laid greater emphasis on the collectivity.

In contrast, the secular nationalism of Dadabhai Naoroji saw the state simply as a collectivity of persons, recognised by each other as having rights and possessing certain institutions for the maintenance of those rights. This is why in Dadabhai's writings we see no attempt to glorify the state, but instead find him constantly speaking of the "pledged rights" of citizens.

Father of Indian Constitutionalism

In common with other liberals, Dadabhai's patriotism made him seek improvement through the British connection. He regarded the Queen's Proclamation as the constitution; and whatever the cause Dadabhai was fighting for — whether he was pressing for the Indianization of the civil service or for *swaraj* (demand for more self-government), he always spoke in terms of the rights which the British sovereign had pledged to give to her subjects in the Proclamation. It was because of this habit of Dadabhai to link up every demand with the various royal proclamations and solemn pledges held out by British statesmen to India, that he can be called the father of constitutionalism in India.

His concern for the rights of citizens and insistence on fair play by the government can be seen in numerous instances. Shortly after the old system of nomination was given up in favour of recruitment by examination to civil services in 1855, all of a sudden the India Office announced a reduction in the age limit from 23 years, thereby depriving young Wadia, the very first Indian student, the opportunity to appear for the examination. Dadabhai took up the cause of young Wadia in right earnest and strongly protested to the Secretary of State for India, Lord Stanley, stating that the change in age limit should have been notified beforehand. He sought to get the question raised in the House of Commons and continued his correspondence until he got an assurance from the Secretary of State that no further changes in the Civil Service Regulations would at any time be made without due publicity being given to



them.

Later when Dadabhai took up the issue of holding simultaneous examinations in India and England for the ICS, he made it a point, in all his correspondence with the India Council, to remind them of the pledges and the Proclamations. Though initially the majority was against him, Dadabhai persevered, until, in 1893, the House of Commons by a majority declared itself in favour of simultaneous examinations. Likewise in 1896, Dadabhai opened correspondence with the war office and the Admiralty urging them to remove the exclusion of Indians from examinations for admission to the army and navy since these were contrary to the Queen's Proclamations of 1858 and 1859.

Towards Representative Government

As a nationalist Dadabhai was very eager that the Indian subjects share the same democratic way of life as the

British. In his speech delivered at the first session of the Congress in 1885, Dadabhai hailed Britain as "the parent of free representative government" and pressed for the setting up of Legislative Councils in India in these words: "We, as her subjects and children are entitled to inherit the great blessing of freedom and representation". By 1906 Dadabhai, having become increasingly impatient with British tardiness in meeting India's demands for self-government, began demanding full self-governing legislatures like those of the colonies of Australia and Canada.

British Loot of India

Dadabhai's nationalism sought to unite Indians on a secular economic platform. The greater part of his life he spent in endeavouring to awaken his countrymen to what he perceived as "the drain of India's wealth" by Great Britain. Being plundered by her rulers, argued Dadabhai, was nothing new to India. The Mughals and Marathas may have plundered India, he said, but their wealth remained within India. Individual subjects suffered but the country as a whole did not, since the loss of one countryman was the gain of another.

In the case of the British, Dadabhai lamented, the loot was taken out of the country and spent abroad. Native rulers may have taxed heavily but the economic effects were not disastrous as the tax collected was spent in India; but in the case of the British the proceeds were sent out of India. Dadabhai saw the British as even worse than Muslim invaders like Nadir Shah, because, whereas in the case of Nadir Shah the loss was temporary since the man went away with his booty leaving the country to "recuperate and become rich and prosperous again", in the case of the British the invasion was continuous and "the plunder goes right on with no intermission and actually increases and the impoverished Indian nation has no opportunity to recuperate."

Dadabhai painstakingly tabulated the sources of the drain of wealth from India viz. an annual drain of two hundred million rupees under the head of salaries paid to British employees in the army, civil services, railways etc, which not only resulted in the loss of wealth but also work; payments made to British officials in the form of pensions and furlough allowances; the expenditure incurred in England by the

Secretary of State for India, popularly known as "home charges"; and lastly Dadabhai charged the British with bringing back to India a large part of the drained wealth as fresh capital, thereby securing for themselves not only a monopoly of all trade and industries, but also siphoning away profits earned, back to England. Before the Welby Commission in 1895, and repeatedly thereafter, Dadabhai emphasised the fact that the drain deprived India of its potential capital and provided England with additional productive capital at the expense of India.

As a way to end the drain Dadabhai suggested that firstly, Indians should themselves be allowed to develop the resources of their country and also to draw upon British capital; and, secondly that financial relations between Great Britain and India must be investigated and restructured on a just and moral basis. Items charged on the Indian revenues, for instance, must be met by the British Exchequer. Dadabhai also suggested a "*swadeshi*" movement to stop the incessant drain. He admitted that India needed British capital, but it should be managed by Indians. Whereas India needed British capital, bemoaned Dadabhai, what it got was the British invasion that ate up both the capital and the produce.

Secular Nationalism

It must be noted that the Drain Theory was responsible for gradually changing the attitude of Dadabhai towards the British India Government and even shaking his faith in constitutional methods in dealing with the British. Dadabhai spent his whole life trying to educate Indians about the drain and in the process did succeed in rousing a distinctly nationalist response. Lokmanya Tilak acknowledges this when he pays tribute to Dadabhai for being the first to give the call for *swaraj* and *swadeshi*.

Dadabhai considered one of the essential prerequisites for the general attainment of *swaraj* or self-government to be a thorough political union among the Indian people of all creeds and castes. He wanted the people to sink all differences of race and religion and work with "co-operation and union" in the field of politics. He worked hard to dispel the erroneous notion among certain Muslim leaders that the Congress

Gandhi on Dadabhai

It was on September 4, 1888, that I sailed from Bombay for London with three letters of introduction, the most precious being for the G.O.M. of India, Dadabhai Naoroji. The writer was a Maharashtrian doctor, a friend of the family. The worthy doctor told me the G.O.M. did not know him personally, in fact he had never even had the *darshan* of the G.O.M. "But," said the doctor, "what does it matter? Everyone knows him and adores him as India's great son and champion. He has exiled himself for us. I claim to know him by his service of India. You will see that my letter will serve you just as well as I had known him personally. The fact is, you need no introduction to him. Your being an Indian is sufficient introduction. But you are a youngster, untravelled and timid. This letter will give you courage enough to go to the G.O.M. and all will be smooth sailing for you." And so it was. When I reached London, I soon found that Indian students had free access to the G.O.M. at all hours of the day. Indeed, he was in the place of father to every one of them, no matter to which province or religion they belonged. He was there to advise and guide them in their difficulties. I have always been a hero-worshipper. And so Dadabhai became real Dada to me. The relationship took the deepest root in South Africa, for he was my constant adviser and inspiration. Hardly a week passed without a letter from me to him describing the condition of Indians in South Africa. And I will remember that whenever there was a reply to be expected, it came without fail in his own handwriting, in his inimitably simple style. I never received a typed letter from him. And during my visits to England from South Africa I found that he had for office a garret perhaps eight feet by six feet. There was hardly room in it for another chair. His desk, his chair, and the file of papers filled the room. I saw that he wrote his letters in copying ink and press-copied them himself.

The story of a life so noble and yet so simple needs no introduction from me or anybody else. May it be an inspiration to the reader even as Dadabhai living was to me!

October 19, 1938

M.K. GANDHI

Text of Mahatma Gandhi's Foreword to Mr. R.P. Masani's well-known biography "Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India"

demand to transfer power to a native parliament would mean substituting British-raj by Hindu-raj. Dadabhai encouraged Muslim leaders like Tyabji and Bhimji to tour the country in order to counter such anti-Congress propaganda and to enlist support for the Congress. Likewise he condemned the opinion expressed by some Parsi leaders that the community would do well to dissociate itself from the Congress, the Hindus and the Muslims. Such an attitude, asserted Dadabhai, would prove suicidal for the community. "If we break with the Indians", he wrote in a letter to Dinshaw Wacha dated 20th December 1888, "our fate will be that of the crow in peacock feathers. The English will in no time pluck out those feathers". However, Dadabhai's fears were unfounded because no less than 36 Parsi delegates turned up to attend the All India Congress meet.

Dadabhai was equally eager to enlist the support of the princely states to the Congress and its cause. In a letter to Allan O. Hume, dated 5th January 1888 Dadabhai argued "we must carry the native princes completely with us." He himself undertook tours of princely

states like Kathiawar, Cutch, Junagadh, Gondal and extensively lectured to the people about the aims and objectives of the Congress. His biographer Masani has observed that thanks to his sincere and ardently patriotic speeches he was able "for the first time in history... to rouse a distinctly national feeling in India."

Dadabhai believed there were enough political and economic issues awaiting redressal; and agitating for the redress of these ills was sufficient ground for uniting the diverse Indian people. Dadabhai's whole life was spent in the attempt to bring about this unity. So particular was Dadabhai to ensure and preserve this unity that he would have no truck with religious and social reforms if these were going to split the Congress. Describing the Congress as a "gathering of all classes", he asked, how could this gathering of all classes discuss the social reforms needed in each individual class? In short, Dadabhai was keen to build an exclusive secular platform on which to unite the people. If social reforms were inti-

mately linked with religious sentiments, "let class Congresses discuss them" Dadabhai argued. The Congress he felt, should focus or concentrate only on a secular or political-economic platform viz. the violation by the British of solemn pledged rights, and their drain of wealth from India. What Dadabhai found true of our country a century ago is equally true of it today. Today too there are enough secular (political-economic) issues which can unite our people. Only we need a contemporary Dadabhai Naoroji to generate secular nationalism once again.

References:

R.P. Masani's biography "Dadabhai Naoroji, the Grand Old Man of India", George Allen, London, 1939, is by far still the best biographical account of Dadabhai's life and work. It contains many personal letters Dadabhai wrote to Wacha, Malbari, Hume and others.

Dadabhai's own major published works are "Poverty and Un-British Rule in India" and his "Speeches and Writings" edited by C.L. Parekh, Caxton Printing Press, Bombay.

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Dadabhai in the House of Commons

Even before the founding of the Indian National Congress, nationalist leaders in India were interested in involving the then imminent parliamentary elections of 1885 with Indian problems. Candidates who were known to be favourable to the cause of India were supported by the Indian people publicly. Two such names were those of John Bright and Lal Mohan Ghose. A delegation was sent from India to England (consisting of Narayan Chandavarkar, Manmohan Ghose and Ramaswamy Mudaliar) to give publicity to the cause of India and to promote candidates who were favourable to India. It was interesting that in the elections not one of those friendly to India was elected and those claiming to be experts on India and who were anti-Indian were returned to Parliament! There were proposals made that Dadabhai himself should stand for elections to the British House of Commons (*Indian Mirror*, September 1885).

It was paradoxical that the British Parliament was generally indifferent to Indian matters. Yet this was the supreme law-making body for Indians. Dadabhai put this very well in the Congress session of 1886:

"All the most fundamental questions on which hinge the entire form and character of the administration are decided by Parliament. No matter what it is, legislative councils or the services — nothing can be reformed until Parliament moves and enacts modifications of the existing Acts. Not one single genuine Indian voice is there in Parliament to tell at least what the native view is on any question. This was most forcibly urged upon me by English gentlemen, who are in Parliament themselves, they said they always felt it to be a great defect in Parliament, that it did not contain one single genuine representative of the people of India."

Dadabhai tried to set right this shortcoming. And the story of his brief three-year stint is best told by V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, himself a great liberal and who has written most memorably on Dadabhai's parliamentary contribution. The following is excerpted from his book 'Thumb-nail Sketches' published in 1946..

The next episode in Dadabhai's life to which we come is his heroic candidature for Parliament. He laboured at this for seven or eight long years. At first he failed in his efforts to get into Holborn; then he tried Central Finsbury. Here after five years of struggle he did succeed in becoming a member of Parliament... Now it would take me long to tell the story of the efforts that he made to achieve this unique honour, but one little incident should be mentioned. In the year 1888 Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister, spoke at Edinburgh and there he had to explain to his audience, consisting largely of Tories, how the successful Tory candidate, had lost a considerable number of votes as compared with the Conservative triumph upon the previous occasion. Then he made use of a remarkable expression. It was meant to condemn Dadabhai, but in reality it helped him... This is what Lord Salisbury said:

'It was undoubtedly a smaller majority than Colonel Duncan obtained; but then Colonel Duncan was opposed by a black man; and however great the progress of mankind has been, and however far we have advanced in overcoming prejudices, I doubt if we have yet got to that point of view where a British constituency would elect a black man.'

The audience shouted "shame", and cheered the speaker, little dreaming

that the mud flung at the eminent Indian was to bespatter the noble Lord himself, to his consternation.

'I am speaking roughly', continued Lord Salisbury, amidst laughter and cries of "hear, hear"; 'and using language in its colloquial sense, because I imagine the colour is not exactly black, but, at all events, he was a man of another race.'

But the words 'black man' offended the finer part of the British population, and at public meetings thereafter Lord Salisbury was belaboured without mercy for having so grossly abused an equal subject of Her Majesty. It is said that Her Majesty herself was displeased with the petulance which Lord Salisbury had displayed. As he was then Prime Minister the offence was particularly unpardonable. One of the first men who took him to task was Lord Morley... Gladstone followed quickly. He also chastised the Prime Minister in public. He said that he had given great offence to millions of people in the country. Now many another man of less note also blamed Lord Salisbury.

Let me here make reference to an honourable feature in English public life. Lord Salisbury, having made this indiscretion, did not publicly admit his fault, but made amends for it in an indirect manner. Two years later, when the first members of the Imperial Institute had to be appointed, he offered a seat to Dadabhai Naoroji, and Dadabhai

accepted it gratefully. Now that shows you how in English public life there is a code of honour, that if an offence has been offered, amends should follow, indirectly at least, if not directly. But although this was at that time regarded as an offence, it greatly helped Dadabhai, for the English people chivalrously drew to his side in great numbers, and when his next candidature was announced for Central Finsbury, the support for him grew in intensity and in volume until in the year 1892 he was actually elected. The jubilation in liberal circles was very great, for he appeared as a Gladstonian Liberal, and in India the ovations to Central Finsbury and the great name of Dadabhai were on an unprecedented scale. During this candidature it is said that Dadabhai worked as if he had the energy of five or six men, visiting individual homes, speaking four or five times every day, interviewing people and answering letters and communications and replying to protests in newspapers and delivering at the same time his customary lectures on the duties of England towards India. How he appeared in those days is very interesting. There is a description in a newspaper from which I quote. I make no apology for it because it is a very vivid portrait.

'If Mr. Naoroji had changed his name to Mr. Brown or Mr. Jones no one would

know him to be a Parsee. But Naoroji is a puzzler for the British elector — he has the appearance and the manner of a cultivated English gentleman, his face a shade or two off colour, perhaps, but certainly not darker than many an Australian, tanned from long exposure to tropical suns. If physiognomy be any indication of intellectual merits, Mr. Naoroji is shrewd and penetrating, with a large leaven of benevolence. His ample beard and moustache are plentifully sprinkled with white. He wears a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles, which he frequently adjusts when he makes a point. He sometimes looks over his glasses with a humorous smile and gay twinkle in his bright eyes which speak volumes for his keen sense of fun. The regulation frock coat fits him like a glove, and a better platform figure it would be difficult to find. Mr. Naoroji's personality pleased the large audience before whom he was making his real political debut... Mr. Naoroji is an admirable speaker, with a strong voice, capable of many inflections from the deeply earnest to the piping playful, with command over the indignant and ironical, and his mastery of our language is marvellous in its fitness and its fluency.

Now in the result Dadabhai got only three votes over his adversary; it was a small majority, but it was still a success and he had become M.P. People in England are generally unable to pronounce our names, Indian names. They are not very good at learning our language; our names simply break their teeth so that instead of saying Naoroji, they began to call him 'Narrow Majority'.

I have no time to linger over the admirable work that he did in Parliament. Suffice it to say that he missed no occasion for bringing forward the grievances of India and advocating its claims in the most emphatic manner. It is impossible to give an account of all his work. Only a few episodes could be mentioned. In 1893 i.e. the year after he became M.P. there occurred a remarkable success over which India lost her head, as it were. 'Simultaneous examinations' was one of Dadabhai's great subjects. He held that in order to fulfil Queen Victoria's proclamation of equality of Indians with the British people, the examinations for the Indian Civil Service, which admitted people to the highest administrative

posts, should be held both in India and in England at the same time, that the standard should be the same and that Indians should therefore have full opportunities of entering their own highest services. This proposition, though it sounds so reasonable nowadays, was at that time resisted by the British people, who held the monopoly. In the year 1893 Dadabhai induced a certain friend of his, named Herbert Paul, to bring forward a resolution declaring that the justice of the case required the examination for the civil services of India to be held at the same time in both the countries. Luckily Herbert Paul won the ballot, but all the work was done by Dadabhai. He himself made an excellent speech in seconding the resolution and Wedderburn followed ably in defence of it. Now at that time Parliament was in one of its careless moods. Members did not attend in great numbers. Nobody cared for Indian topics. In those days an Indian topic was a by-word for clearing the house. When the subject was India, people walked out as if they had nothing to do with it. It was a notorious gibe at the way Great Britain performed her solemn trust in the East. There were only 162 who were present in the House. The vote could be justly described as a snatch vote. The House was taken unawares. There was a small majority on our side: eighty-four votes on our side and seventy-six on the other. Dadabhai and his friends threw up their caps in joy and all India, as I said, lost its head completely. Everywhere in the country meetings were held thanking Herbert Paul, Dadabhai and Wedderburn for their manly fight on behalf of India and hoping that simultaneous examinations would be introduced the next year. But a resolution in the House of Commons is not binding on the executive Government, a fact which was not well understood in India at that time. The House of Commons may well pass a resolution but the executive need not care for it; that is the constitutional position; and when the resolution was communicated to the Government of India with the request that they should see their way if possible to carry out the resolution, the Government of India put forward a hundred reasons why it could not be done; and it was not done. The disappointment was keenly felt and amongst the people who felt it very

keenly was Dadabhai himself. In the same year he came to Lahore to preside a second time over the Indian National Congress. It is said that on this occasion he received all along the way from Bombay to Lahore and from Lahore back to Bombay immense ovations at every station rivalling those that any Viceroy had ever or that any Maharajah could have in his own territory. That was because not only had he succeeded in becoming an M.P. but he had succeeded in getting this resolution passed.

Soon followed that great event in the history of our finance, the appointment of the Welby Commission to enquire into the financial relations between the two countries. Much discontent had prevailed at the iniquitous way in which England imposed burdens on India and it was felt that serious attempts should be made to redress this injustice. But the matter was by no means so easy to negotiate. Finally the Government of England, goaded to some extent by the frequency and the virulence of Dadabhai's attacks, appointed a Royal Commission presided over by Lord Welby. It is to that Commission that Gokhale went to give evidence, along with G. Subrahmanya Ayyar from Madras, Surendranath Banerjee from Bengal, Sir Dinshaw Wacha from Bombay. And Dadabhai, although he was appointed a member of the Commission, offered himself for examination as a witness, for there was no one to come within miles of him for mastery of the necessary facts and figures. He went into the box himself and was subjected to a very severe cross-examination by his European colleagues. I need not say, however, that he stood the trial with exceeding credit. Like some other Royal Commissions, this one on India ended in nothing.

V.S. SRINIVASA SASTRI

We should pay for official Europeans bleeding us, and non-official European exploiting our land and labour and natural resources...! In short, we should pay for a destructive and dishonourable system of government violating Acts of Parliament and the most solemn pledges that ever a people gave to another

From a letter Dadabhai wrote to an American disputant quoted by the Rt. Hon. V.S. Srinivasa Sastri.

The Masani Viewpoint

The 'Quit India' Hypocrisy

Having participated in the Quit India underground campaign after the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi along with my friends, Jayaprakash Narayan and Achyut Patwardhan, I did not find the hypocritical functions organised by those in authority and their vapid exhortations, very edifying.

It seems to me that none of them was activated by the spirit of "do or die".

I was, therefore, delighted when I read the truth being told by Captain Lakshmi of the Indian National Army who let the truth out while rejecting the award which was offered to her.

She quite rightly said: "I have no right to take any awards or accept any felicitation as the independence we have achieved is false."

At a function to honour women freedom fighters in Bombay on the 8th of August, Captain Lakshmi rightly observed "Freedom is not to achieve the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, communal disharmony and resurgence of casteism and communalism."

"What has happened to our independence, our society and our tradition?" she asked.

Thank god someone told the truth at last. It was like a breath of fresh air in a fetid atmosphere.

Saddam Hussein Must Go

If I were Saddam Hussein, I would not be at all worried about the half-hearted manner in which I was being handled by the United States. He has always got away with it and has been allowed to do so.

First of all the ceasefire in the war against Iraq was declared too early. As General Schwarzkopf observed they should have got into Baghdad and finished Saddam once and for all.

The Swiss Press Review quite rightly observes "The temporary resolution of the issue of entry to the

Ministry of Agriculture in Baghdad solves nothing. The row about who climbed down is unseemly – but on balance it seems to have been the United States. Iraqi conditions about the nationalities of those to be involved in the inspection were accepted. The head of the inspection team, Mr. Rolf Ekeus of Sweden, said that he had simply chosen his best inspectors. But it is obviously no coincidence that the American and British members of the old team were dropped.

"Everything that has happened in Iraq since the Gulf war proves that the Iraqi dictator has no intention of obeying United Nations instructions unless he is actually forced to do so. Increasingly, he is ignoring UN threats because he does not believe in them. The situation is similar to that which led to the Gulf war, with Iraq insisting that Kuwait is a province of Iraq.

Iran's Persecution of the Baha'is

I am glad that thanks to the efforts of Ms. Shirin Panthaki, who represents the Indian Liberal Group on the Liberal International, its Executive Committee has adopted a resolution on the persecution of the Baha'is in Iran. The following is an extract:

"The Liberal International

"Recalling its commitment to the elimination of religious intolerance in all parts of the world,

"Concerned by the systematic campaign of persecution in Iran, since 1979, directed against the 3,00,000 members of the Baha'i community (the largest non-Muslim religious minority in Iran) and the accompanying violations of their fundamental human rights;

"Strongly condemns the summary execution of Mr. Bahman Samandari, solely on the grounds of his religious belief, on 18th March 1992, and the circumstances of secrecy and deception which sur-

rounded it;

"Expresses its profound concern for the safety of all members of this community, both as individuals and collectively, as well as its hope that this execution does not herald a return to genocidal persecutions of the 1980s;

"Strongly urges the Iranian Government to grant the Baha'i community recognition and protection of rights as a religious minority".

In Support of a Jharkhand State

I am very much for the right of the Adivasis in Bihar to have their own State of Jharkhand. When I stood as an Independent candidate for election to the Indian parliament in 1957 I was elected largely with Adivasi support.

I was told that if I wore khaddar or a Gandhi cap the Adivasi people would regard me as "Diku" (Dacoit) and they would not vote for me. I was therefore compelled to conduct my campaign wearing a felt-hat and dressed in grey flannel trousers. All I had to do was to drink rice wine at public meetings and do a square dance (Samba) round the campfire hand in hand with Adivasi girls. This was probably the only constituency in India with its own ground rules. The Adivasis of the Jharkhand area hate the caste Hindus of Bihar symbolised by Mr. Laloo Prasad Yadav and if the Adivasi people of Bihar are struggling for their own state, I wish them well in their efforts.

Dr. John Marsh

I lost a very good friend recently in Dr. John Marsh. He loved India and visited it nearly twenty times since his first visit in the fifties. I knew him as the Director of the Industrial Welfare Society and the British Management Association in England. It is good to know that he was surrounded at the end by his children and grandchildren, whom he loved.

I Am a Savage and I Do Not Understand...

Excerpted from Chief Seattle's letter to the President of the United States, (1854). Chief Seattle ceded his lands in Washington by a treaty in 1855.

We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters; the deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadows, the body heat of the pony, and man — all belong to the same family.

So, when the Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land, he asks much of us. The Great Chief sends word he will reserve us a place so that we can live comfortably to ourselves.

If we sell you land, you must remember that it is sacred, and you must teach your children that it is sacred and that each ghostly reflection in the clear water of the lakes tells of events and memories in the life of my people.

The water's murmur is the voice of my father's father.

The rivers are our brothers, they quench our thirst. The rivers carry our canoes, and feed our children. If we sell you our land, you must remember, and teach your children, that the rivers are our brothers, and yours, and you must henceforth give the rivers the kindness you would give any brother.

We know that the white man does not understand our ways. One portion of land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs.

The earth is not his brother, but his enemy, and when he has conquered it, he moves on.

He leaves his father's graves behind, and he does not care. He kidnaps the earth from his children, and he does not care.

His father's grave and his children's birthright, are forgotten. He treats his mother, the earth, and his brother, the sky, as things to be bought, plundered, sold like sheep or bright beads.

His appetite will devour the earth and leave behind only a desert.

I do not know. Our ways are different from your ways.

The sight of your cities pains the eyes of the red man. But perhaps it is because the red man is a savage and does not understand.

There is no quiet place in the white man's cities. No place to hear the unfurling of leaves in spring, or the rustle of an insect's wings.

But perhaps it is because I am a savage and do not understand.

The air is precious to the red man, for all things share the same breath — the beast, the tree, the man, they all share the same breath.

The white man does not seem to notice the air he breathes. Like a man dying for many days, he is numb to the stench.

But if we sell you our land, you must remember that the air is precious to us, that the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports. The wind that gave our grandfather his first breath also receives his last sigh.

And if we sell you our land, you must keep it apart and sacred, as a place where even the white man can go to taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow's flowers.

So we will consider your offer to buy our land. If we decide to accept, I will make one condition: the white man must treat the beasts of this land as his brother.

I am a savage and I do not understand any other way.

I have seen a thousand rotting buffaloes on the prairie, left by the white man who shot them from a passing train.

I am a savage and I do not understand how the smoking iron horse can be more important than the buffalo that we kill only to stay alive.

What is man without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, man would die from a great loneliness of spirit.

For whatever happens to the beast, soon happens to man. All things are connected.

You must teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of your grandfathers. So that they will respect the land, tell your children that the earth is rich with the lives of our kin.

Teach your children what we have taught our children, that the earth is our mother.

Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves.

This we know: the earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know.

All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected.

Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life: he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

Even the white man, whose God walks and talks with him as friend to friend, cannot be exempt from the common destiny.

We may be brothers after all.

We shall see.

One thing we know, which the white man may one day discover — our God is the same God.

You may think now that you own Him as you wish to own our land, but you cannot. He is the God of man, and His compassion is equal for the red man and the white.

This earth is precious to Him, and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its Creator.

The whites too shall pass; perhaps sooner than all other tribes. Contaminate your bed, and you will one night suffocate in your own waste.

But in your perishing you will shine brightly, fired by the strength of the God who brought you to this land and for some special purpose gave you dominion over this land and over the red man.

That destiny is a mystery to us, for we do not understand when the buffalo are all slaughtered, the wild horses are tamed, the secret corners of the forest heavy with scent of many men, and the view of the ripe hills blotted by talking wires.

Where is the thicket? Gone.

Where is the eagle? Gone.

The end of living and the beginning of survival.

The Narmada River: What's Next?

The Narmada River project, if our experience with projects on the Missouri and Arkansas rivers is any guide, should be stopped. I would wager that the effect of sedimentation on the life of the reservoir has not been taken properly into account. On a project as vast as this one is, by the time the last canal has been built at least 50 years will have elapsed.

On the Missouri river, sediment storage was provided for 100 years at each reservoir before the active storage would be threatened. 50 years have elapsed since the first dam was completed and sediment has begun to accumulate on schedule. A side effect was to reduce the flow of sediment in the Mississippi river. The result was to reduce accretion of sediment in the delta and slow subsidence of the land surface. We are losing marshes and low lands here, in Louisiana, at the rate of about 20 sq. miles a year. So not only will the reservoir silt up, the productive delta and fisheries of the river will be destroyed by subsidence of the land.

The following is a report in the Geotimes on the Narmada project which would interest Freedom First readers.

Raphael Kazmann
Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

One of the largest water-resources projects ever attempted has just been subject to the scrutiny of the first-ever independent assessment of a project supported by the World Bank, largely as a result of heated controversy surrounding environmental and human-rights impacts. The report of the independent review was delivered to Lewis Preston, president of the World Bank, and released to the media June 18.

The design for the Sardar Sarovar Projects, on the Narmada River in northwest India, consists of a dam 535 feet high and 3,970 feet long; 47,000 miles of irrigation canals and distributaries; and 4.7 million acre feet live storage capacity. It would provide 1450 megawatts installed power capacity; would irrigate a 4.4 million acre area; and would serve 40 million people with drinking water.

The projects have been in planning since 1961, with major work beginning in 1987 and expected completion in 1997. The Sardar Sarovar complex is one of the first on the Narmada River in a plan that calls for the construction of 30 "major," 135 "medium," and 3,000 "minor" ventures over the next fifty years.

However, Bradford Morse, chairman of the independent review, former US congressman, and former head of UN Development Program, stated that "We think the Sardar Sarovar Projects are flawed, that the resettlement and rehabilitation of those displaced by the Projects is not possible under prevailing circumstances, and the environmental impacts of the Projects have not been

properly considered or adequately addressed." The review began in September 1991, at the request of then president of the World Bank, Barber Conable. Thomas Berger, a noted Canadian authority on human rights and environmental issues served as deputy chairman of the review.

"The history of the environmental aspects of Sardar Sarovar is a history of non-compliance (non-compliance with established guidelines for human rights and environmental considerations established by the World Bank and the government of India itself)".

The Projects were to provide irrigation and drinking water to the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan and hydroelectric power to the states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra. Central to the scheme are the dam and a main canal 280 miles long. With a total of 47,000 miles of branch canals and distributaries, and a capacity of 40,000 cubic feet per second, it is the largest irrigation scheme in the world. At least 240,000 people will be affected by the projects – 100,000 by submergence of their villages and 140,000 by

the canal. Upon completion, the dam would cause some or all of the lands of 245 villages in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra to be submerged.

The main deficiencies cited in the review concern the failure of the resettlement and rehabilitation program to address the needs of people affected by the Projects, and the subordination of environmental concerns to engineering and construction demands. The review team noted that the World Bank and India "share responsibility for the situation that has developed."

Regarding the environmental issues, in a letter to Preston that accompanied the report the review team said: "The history of the environmental aspects of Sardar Sarovar is a history of non-compliance (non-compliance with established guidelines for human rights and environmental considerations established by the World Bank and the government of India itself). There is no comprehensive impact statement. The nature and magnitude of environmental problems and solutions remains elusive.... To complete our work, we have had to assemble basic ecological information to establish likely effects of the Projects upstream, downstream, and in the command area. This work should have been done by others before the Projects were approved.... The design and operation of a multi-purpose project like the Sardar Sarovar Projects depends on the hydrology of the river. Understanding impacts, therefore, begins with an understanding of the hydrology and the nature of the changes that will be caused by the engineering works.

The review found that based on the hydrology and water-management information they had available, Sardar Sarovar will not work as intended – whether or not related upstream projects are built. These problems have to do with sequence and timing of stream flows and the capacity of the dam and canal to store and divert water. Therefore, the review team reports that the effects upstream, downstream, and in the command area will be different from what has been thus far assumed.

A hydrologic issue that the review panel says has been completely ignored is the backwater effect of sedimentation upstream of the dam. Their analysis shows this could mean a rapid continuing, and cumulative rise in water level in the river above the reservoir – which would mean extensive flooding of densely populated farmland.

The panel also found that no assessment of downstream impact had been done. They report that the effects on the geomorphology of the lower reaches of the river and its estuary, and on the fishery and people living there, are unknown. They report, however, that they collected enough data to be satisfied that the impacts would be serious. For example, the hilsa fishery, the largest on the west coast and which supports thousands of people, would likely be annihilated, and currently proposed mitigation measures are not adequate.

Lack of environmental assessment applies not only to the river, according to the review panel, but also to the command area, where they warn of "serious problems with waterlogging and salinity. Assumptions used in design of the canal and irrigation network, and on the development of mitigative measures, are questionable."

In the end, the panel suggested to the World Bank that the wisest course of action would be for the bank to look at its role in Sardar Sarovar and to "step back from the Projects and consider them afresh." India and its states will likely have to do the same and consider the full human and environmental costs of the Sardar Sarovar Projects.

Geotimes, August 1992

Narmada Action Alert

The World Bank-commissioned independent review of the Sardar Sarovar Projects (SSP) released its report on 18 June, 1992. The findings and recommendations clearly vindicate the stand of the *Narmada Bachao Andolan*.

The main findings and conclusions of the Morse Report, (a 400 page document) are summarised as follows.

- The Sardar Sarovar Projects are fundamentally flawed.
- Resettlement and rehabilitation are impossible. The complete extent of displacement is not certain even today. Nor does a policy or plan exist which can ensure just and proper rehabilitation for the oustees. This cannot be ensured merely by a few remedial measures.
- Injustice has been done to those affected by the Kevadia Colony ('62 onwards) and the SSP canal, as they are still not considered as project-affected people. They must be completely and justly rehabilitated and compensated.
- Environmental issues have not been adequately assessed, or addressed. The environmental measures laid down are not working properly, nor can they now do so.
- There have been gross violations of the World Bank credit agreements, its principles, policies and guide-lines, as well as the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal Award and indeed the laws, procedures and guidelines of the Government of India itself.
- *There are good reasons to believe that the project will not perform as planned.*
- Large areas of the irrigation command will be degraded due to waterlogging and soil salinisation. Preventive and ameliorative measures have still not been planned! At this late stage there are indications that these measures may not be possible at all. This information has not been made known to the people in the command area.
- *Even if the dam is built, there is no certainty that the benefits will reach the drought prone areas of Kutch and Saurashtra.*
- Even though drinking water is supposed to have been the most important benefit from the project, there are no plans for drinking water in place even today!
- The SSP is related to the Narmada Sagar Dam and other projects in the valley, and it is necessary that a holistic, integrated, plan of the whole basin be made, before any further aid is considered by the Bank.
- The violations of the Tribunal Award and the Bank's own principles and guidelines have grossly violated human rights to which both the Bank and India are committed.
- Because of this, the Government should stop work on the dam, and then complete all the necessary studies *including alternatives to the project*.
- The Bank must immediately step back from the project and look at it afresh. Whatever the Bank decides to do must be with the full participation of the people concerned.

In spite of this damning indictment, the initial response of the Bank has been disturbing. While 'accepting' the Morse Committee findings, the Bank has said that "continued funding of the project is justified." What else could we expect from a moneylender?

International pressure is being brought to bear on the Bank. Following the Japanese example, Germany and Sweden are on the verge of announcing their decision to withdraw funding support! Our supporters are active in the USA, Holland, Finland and the UK and we hope these countries will also follow suit soon.

It is now important that we pressurise our own government to acknowledge the seriousness of the Morse Report and put a stop to the project. In anticipation the people of the valley have already begun to intensify their struggle once more.

YOUR ACTIVE SUPPORT AND SOLIDARITY IS CRITICAL AT THIS POINT. HERE IS WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1. Share the findings of the report as abridged above with as many people as possible. You can get a more detailed version from: Himanshu Thakkar, Narmada Bachao Andolan, c/o 'Parivartan' Nimbalkar Chambers, Jambubet, Dandia Bazar Baroda 390 001. (Please enclose a self-address, stamped envelope).
2. Write letters, and get others – individuals, organisations, eminent people – to write to the World Bank demanding complete withdrawal from the project. Address correspondence to: Lewis Preston, President, World Bank, c/o World Bank Office, Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110 003.
3. Write, and get others to write, letters to the Prime Minister, the Water Resources Minister and the Chief Ministers of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh to immediately stop all work on the Narmada project.
4. Ask your MP or MLA to raise questions on this issue in Parliament and State Assembly concerned. You can help them prepare the questions. Above all, do not remain a silent spectator to the destruction of India.

Medha Patkar

SOURCE: *Sanctuary*

Sustainable Development

The Voice of the Disinherited

B.D. Sharma

We, the residents of this small village republic, Dhorkatta, Bastar, deep in the luxuriant sub-tropical forests of the Indian sub-continent, wish to invite the attention of your august assembly (the Earth Summit, Rio, Brazil) to some vital issues concerning "the future viability and integrity of the Earth as a hospitable home of human and other forms of life," the main theme of your deliberations at Rio...

You should know that in our villages we have stopped, totally, the commercial exploitation of our forests. The government of our country, of course, may not appreciate the spirit behind our decision. They have, in fact, taken it to be defiance of the law. For the forests formally belong to the state. We are, accordingly, treated as intruders in our own abodes where we have been living through the ages. Consequently, according to the law, we cannot even dig for roots and tubers, pluck fruits, or even breathe freely the nectar of earth. We cannot pick bamboo to cover our huts, or cut a pole to mend our plough. "That will destroy the forests," they say. And when magnificent tall trees of all varieties are mercilessly felled and carted away, leaving the earth naked and bare, we are told that is scientific management. That such acts are performed in the service of the nation. The little sparrow and owl meanwhile desperately flutter about searching for a place to perch. But even the hollow trunks of dried trees have not been spared!

The perception of national economy which the state today represents is not the perception of the people for whom forest, land and water together comprise a primary life-support system. The legal fiction of the state's suzerainty over natural resources was created during the colonial era and has been continued and even reinforced after independence, in the name of development. This is not acceptable to us. It is a denial of the very right to life with dignity — the essence of a free democratic society...

The rich countries are justifiably keen that natural tropical forests be preserved. We too feel the same way, but

for different reasons. You require 'sinks' for the carbon dioxide emitted by your automobiles which are vital for your 'civilization on wheels'. Moreover, you demand a prior, if not exclusive, claim on that sink, for only then can you maintain your momentum. So we hear about a queer proposal for the declaration of our forests as 'global commons'. Forests as wilderness would be ideal for this purpose, though you would not mind our enjoying usufructory rights. But our paddy fields will be out of place, for they produce CO² and thus compete with your cars for that sink. So your basic position as far as we can see is identical to that of our governments. In both cases the people themselves are dispensable, be the cause that of the national economy, or the global combine. In truth, the two are virtually one as the modern sector of our country, for all practical purposes, is a mere extension of the western economic system. Of late, in fact, even the thin veneer of national identity has been blown away by the gusty winds of globalisation...

In the name of preservation of forests, our ancestors were mercilessly driven out. And what followed in the name of scientific management was catastrophic. Luxuriant natural forests which sustained us were replaced by teak, which does not even provide us shade in summer. Then came eucalyptus under which not even grass can grow! After that, it was the turn of vast plantations of pine, which would burn like a torch in high summer. But each of these decisions was proclaimed as the right way. And to question such projects was blasphemous. Tragically for us, the estate-managers never recognised that the true worth of magni-

ficent sal, *Shorea robusta*, was far, far greater than the cash recovered from a dead log. The sal is *Kalpavriksha*, the tree that fulfills all desires. Once sal vanished from our forests the struggle of forest dwellers became reduced to physical survival — the evening meal. You see the irony. You worry about how your cars and airconditioners can continue to operate for a hundred, or a thousand years. Our concern is the next meal that has to be procured at any cost. How can these two perceptions ever meet unless you see things from our end of the world and set your own perspectives in order...

On the face of it your endeavour might well sound laudable, but consider the hackneyed prescriptions you have chosen to tackle poverty — management of capital, technology and resource flows. There are two reasons why this framework does not sit well with us. Nor, incidentally, can it help you in the long run. Let's first take the economic frame. Be clear that the phenomenon you are talking about has little to do with poverty. The issue is one of deprivation and denial. You seem ignorant of the fact that we have been robbed of not only our resources, but the great wealth of our life-sustaining skills acquired over millennia. Seen from your horizon, ordinary people are ignorant. Even despised.

Why are we despised? Because we live closer to nature, we do not don many clothes, nor do we have much use for your kind of energy options. We are, therefore, 'poor' in your book. And since you, with missionary zeal, wish to 'eradicate poverty' we must be enabled to acquire more commodities. con-

sume more. Is this not why the Czars of your economic system incessantly bombard us with visuals of the glittering life? Making our simple ways look ridiculous by contrast to your own may well whip up new demands and expand your markets, but can you seriously suggest this to be the way to eradicate poverty? Such approaches have been directly responsible for the phenomenal inequality we see around us today. These are also the very reasons that the ecology of vast portions of the globe have been so terribly fractured...

Those who have crossed the Rubicon of consumerism must point out at this stage that the Summit-debate seems poised to miss the main point. You are no doubt talking about the quality of life, but within the consumerist paradigm of development and bounded inescapably by an economic framework. Other aspects of life have not even been brought up. We do not blame you for this lapse for as leaders of the 'modern' economic world, you have no experience of the 'real life'. In a bid to make the system produce more, for that is what decides its competitiveness in the market and its ranking in the world, all that is human has been squeezed out, bit by tiny bit. Human concerns and relationships are dispensable, or at best market-convertible...

Look again at your world. The community has already been sacrificed on the altar of productivity. The family now is the last impediment in the way of achieving 'perfect rationality' and highest levels of productivity. But even here solutions were at hand. Within the family you dispensed with the burden of dead wood by packing your elders, where necessary to a senior citizens' home. Now only the nucleus of husband-wife remains, at best. But this too appears to be haunted. Why should a man and a woman remain tied by emotional bonds for life? They too must subjugate themselves to the dictates of the economic system, each one serving the system at points most suited to it. Thus, marriage must break. Living together is good enough for sex. And sex, of course, can be rationally negotiated in a free market...

But let us, for the moment, set aside human concerns and relations. Instead,

let us consider the implications of this market-substitution which the economic system is coercing the rest of us to emulate as a lifestyle model. Given the proclamations of your scientists and even some of your world leaders, you obviously admit that we are poised on the brink — even before one in five people (who command four-fifths of the earth's resources) have been able to attain the desired standard of life. How much further must we continue to tread the same lethal path before the final collapse? This is the question the Earth Summit must ponder. Can you really not see the catastrophe you have set into motion? Having 'co-opted' our own elite, you state that poverty alleviation is now your objective. This is the mirage we are condemned to chasing in vain endlessly. Meanwhile you content yourself in tinkering with buttons, watching us follow in your footsteps even as a void engulfs us and our communities and families shatter. The writings is on the wall. The omnipotent, ominipresent, market is turning living breathing men and women into commodities-in-trade.

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The basic question then even before those who represent privileged groups at the Summit, is how long and how far can you afford to ignore and barter away the human face of existence...

Time is of the essence friends. We the disinherited of the Earth, particularly in India, wish to make our position clear. The tide of 'development' which started rising with the industrial revolution and gained huge momentum during the colonial phase of human history, has now run its full course. The allocation of benefits and costs of this development have been oppressively unfair and iniquitous. The more profitable and amenable activities at every stage have been reserved for themselves by the captains of development — the *Brahmins* (the highest caste) of the new order. The drudgery and the sloth was passed over to the *shudras*, (outcasts) comprising the rest. Thus, the creation of a Third World was a precondition of your model. And a Fourth World is in the making, now that the Third World countries have accepted your prescription for their economies. This is the cold logic that must sit in the many minds that deliberate ways and means to save the world. The tide, thus,

has reached the furthest shore and has begun to turn menacingly inward. The machine must now feed on itself.

We in Dhorkatta, Bastar, Madhya Pradesh, India are a fragment of this newly created Fourth World. As a logical unfolding of your paradigm, the modern economy of our country, a mere extension of the western system, has misappropriated our resources. On the principle that you cannot make an omelette without cracking an egg, our little world must disintegrate. It cannot be allowed, of course, to stake any claim to the fruit enjoyed by the estate managers. We either get absorbed in the more powerful system, to the extent possible, or get exhumed and expelled. The logic, if accepted, will not remain circumscribed to one area like ours. It will inform all the disinherited of the Third World and also the deprived of the First and the Second Worlds. The prevailing conditions in the erstwhile Eastern Bloc and among the non-white minorities in the U.S. and Europe are clear pointers in this direction.

We cannot possibly accept these inevitable consequences of your paradigm as our ordained fate. We do not believe in any iron laws of history, or of economics — free, planned or mixed in any hue. Man is the maker of history and can chart his own path. Accordingly, after careful consideration, we have rejected outright your paradigm and its associated lifestyle. It is not only socially unjust, but ecologically unsustainable, besides being devoid of human concerns.

A new paradigm — ecologically viable, socially equitable and rich in human content — is the historical need of our time. You at the Summit have missed the human element totally and considered the social issue only superficially... The quality of life cannot be measured by how much we consume or how much energy we utilise. It must, instead, be defined in terms of personal accomplishment of individuals, and the richness of inter-personal relationships within the family and community. A precondition naturally is the fulfillment of basic physical needs for a reasonable living. Accepting this should be the first decisive step towards dismantling the unbearable burden created in the name of so-called development at the cost of Earth's fragile ecology. Obviously, human concerns and relationships

are non-negotiable. The scope of market, on the other hand, must be circumscribed to the bare minimum. Some areas of life such as enjoyment of leisure must be out of bounds for market, in the interest of a sane society recreating conditions for absorbing dialogue and spontaneous laughter.

Contrary to what the ignorant believe of us, we heartily celebrate advances in science and the expanding horizons of man's universe. But we reject technological regimes built up with an eye on centralisation of economic and political power. Technology in such hands has 'deskilled' humans and pushed us from the centre to the periphery of the stage. While drudgery can and should be erased through harnessing of technology, it must be remembered that honest physical labour is an essential condition of human life and happiness... We reject the production system which has depleted even our non-renewable capi-

tal resource-base (subsoil water) for frivolous, temporary, gains. By casting this heavy burden on ecology such resources have been rendered out of the reach of ordinary people, for ever. Thus, not only do we reject the perceptions and the paradigm, but also the legal framework of the estate-managers which seeks to legitimise wanton destruction of natural resources and predate even on tomorrow's children of nature.

It should be clear that we are not for the negation of life and progress. What we insist on is that development must have a human face, or else it is tantamount to destruction. Towards this end we wish to announce that a beginning has already been made here in our small corner of the globe. We are clear about our goals, our rights and our responsibilities. We are establishign vil-

lage republics (*Nate-na-raj*) in the true spirit of democracy, equity and fraternity following Gandhian tenets to the extent possible. Our village-republics are not islands in the wilderness, but they encompass even the smallest amongst the every-expanding circles of the human canvass. We believe that life and vivacity in its totality can be perceived, experienced and realised only in the microcosms of community and family. It is the community and community alone — not the formal state — which can save the earth for humankind and other forms of life.

Dr. B.D. Sharma is an accomplished mathematician, a Gandhian by conviction and one of India's foremost thinkers on the subject of sustainable development.

Excerpted from his article in the *Sanctuary Magazine*.

Sustainable Economic Growth The Real Issue at Rio

The real issue at Rio is sustainable economic growth. All environmental subjects are included in these three words. Sustainable economic growth implies not only growth which is permanent but also growth which respects the necessary criteria for man's continual presence on this earth. This is why the Rio Conference has been nicknamed the Earth Summit.

The east-west conflict has now ended, and conventional wisdom now sees it as having been replaced by a north-south conflict. This is not true, however, since north-south differences are economic rather than political. There is a general — and genuine — wish to bridge them through elaborating policies which address the major concerns of both sides. The east-west conflict was concerned with ruling the world; the north-south conflict is about conserving it.

This effort to conserve is an ongoing process. Experience tells us that progress on economic issue does not come through the trappings of summit conferences. Whether Rio is seen as a

success or a failure, the process will continue after everyone has gone home. Its real success will be gauged not on the publicised meetings of politicians — who come together pretty frequently anyway — but on the meetings between experts on every conceivable facet of economic growth and the environment. Rio's main value is as a symposium behind the scenes, given maximum publicity by the struttings, alarms and excursions on the stage.

There have been other attempts by the United Nations to organise such mammoth symposia in the past, although not quite on this scale. The Rio Conference may also be seen as a meeting held to celebrate the end of the Cold War, since it is the first such meeting which has been able to proceed without bedevilment by the political axes ground in the context of the east-west conflict. Experts on both the theoretical and the practical subjects covered within sustainable economic development will be able to carry on their work without bothering about how politicians in Washington and Moscow

view their work. Old-style ideology is out.

However, ideology is not altogether out. Attempts are being made to bring back the ideological factor clad anew. The new buzz word, an attempt to make the north-south conflict political, is eco-imperialism — sometimes even eco-colonialism. The word has an interesting history, and it is of course closely bound up with communism. It probably has little future in the wake of communism's demise.

It was a main tenet of modern Marxism that, once the former colonial countries became independent, colonialism would be continued by other means — mainly through the financial clout of the former colonial countries. The United States, though a former colony itself, was dubbed the leading "neo"-colonial state, and the newly independent countries were to be saved from this new type of colonialism by Moscow. Long before the actual end of communism, this was seen in most places as an elaborate hoax: neo-colonialism was in fact cured by the

transferral of dozens of poor countries from western imperialism to communist imperialism.

The concept of eco-imperialism is an attempt to take the place of communism in an arm-twisting operation against the north (as the west is now called). It is unlikely to work. The industrial countries are fully aware that sustainable economic development in the third world can only take place through a concerted effort of financial assistance, and within limits consent have already been made for such transfer. But the arrangements still have to be made, and this is where some third world countries have attempted to bring an ideological element into the Rio equation.

The original form of neo-colonialism was called "aid with strings". After independence the west was expected to provide vast amounts of financial assistance without any supervision as to the use to which the money would be put. Any attempt to exercise such supervision was defined as neo-colonialism — an attempt to continue colonialism by other means. This concept was supported by world communism and was the subject of a worldwide propaganda campaign orchestrated in Moscow. In fact, however, the money went into the pockets of dictators and corrupt new upper classes. It was the main element which made corruption an unbelievable scale endemic in so many newly independent countries. This unlimited aid is now seen — with hindsight — as one of the main reasons why it proved so difficult to implant democratic ideas in the newly independent countries.

With the decline and now the demise of communism, aid has once more been provided with strings. In the last few years, it has gradually become practice that regimes with bad human rights records and those unprepared to engage in a democratic process will not be provided with new aid — and existing aid will be sharply reduced. Broadly speaking, the same is true with regard to aid provided for environmental purposes. The proponents of the idea of eco-imperialism are asking for vast amounts of aid from the north with a minimum of supervision, influence or control. This is the origin of much of the bitterness which has been poisoning the Rio Conference.

The north has of course learned its

The Eco-Dogmatists

Paul Johnson

With the decline of millenarian politics, the credulous young, and many of their crazed elders have found in eco-dogma a new substitute faith. In earlier epochs they would have turned missionary and taught the natives to clothe their nakedness; or paraded the streets with placards saying "Repent: the End is Nigh". Today, by anthropomorphising the Earth and virtually deifying "endangered" animals — 1,500 Nepalese were recently dispossessed of lands their ancestors had tilled for centuries to make way for three white rhinos — they have invented a modern kind of paganism, for which TV, obsessed by sentimental nature-footage, provides a vociferous pulpit. It is a heady, secular form of fundamentalism.

Eco-dogma has also come as a beneficent relief to innumerable self-righteous busybodies suffering withdrawal symptoms from Marxism. Until the last 1980s the ecolobbies and the Marxists joined forces in identifying capitalism as the prime source of global pollution and waste of resources. The collapse of communism and the removal of its censorship has revealed for all to see that the failed collectivist slum-states have been the biggest polluters in history. It is, by contrast, the free-enterprise system with its self-correcting mechanisms, its ability to build strict ecological requirements into its price structure, that enables these problems to be tackled successfully.

London, to quote one small but important example, has had no killer-fog since the early 1950s, thanks to the Clean Air Act, and all over the advanced capitalist world people are enjoying better air, water and hygiene, and resources are being used more efficiently, precisely because of improved industrial technology. This has been achieved *pari passu* with pushing up production and productivity. Indeed, it is the increased wealth that enables us to raise standards of industrial behaviour.

If many countries remain poor, and are ravaging their flora and fauna, it is primarily because they are run by rapacious oligarchies of professional politicians and military, and operate bankrupt "command economies". Handing over the West's cash in the name of a spurious ecological morality will help these regimes to survive, and so perpetuate the evil.

The advanced countries have nothing to be ashamed of. The colonial empires some of them ran were custodians rather than the spendthrift independent states that have replaced them. The first conservation plan to protect endangered species dated from 1822, being put into force in the British territory of Cape Colony.

No one now wants to restore these empires. But if diversity of plants and animals, and the elimination of poverty and overpopulation, are the aims, they are more likely to be secured by fundamental political changes, allowing democracy, enterprise and the rule of law to flourish than by dollops of Western cash.

Excerpted from *The Pioneer*, June 12, 1992

lesson and will not give in. First it filled the pockets of corrupt new classes; then it lent money to insecure borrowers on conditions which would never have been acceptable in any domestic market. The latter happened in the affluent 80s, and the countries of the south must be made aware that the lesson has been learned and will be applied in the recession-plagued 90s. No longer are northern countries awash with available funds. Sustainable growth has been endangered in the north as well as in the south, and in that shady

area between north and south — the former east bloc — the requirement for northern funds is just as great as in the south. There too the environmental factor is of vast importance

Well, of course, any little trick is worth trying. It's legal after all, as your gentleman tax-dodger likes to say. But eco-imperialism is not likely to be a buzz word very long. It will be very much a minor irritant to those who are trying to get on with the real work of bringing about sustainable economic growth.

Swiss Press Review

Ecology — The Statist Pollution

Jal Khambata

Environmentalists are the new torch-bearers of communism. They campaign for state ownership and state control of resources, ignoring their collapse in the Soviet Union and in many East European countries. They also ignore the fact of how the state ownership of natural resources like air, water and forests have only led to their faster degradation, whether in India or in any other part of the world, as compared to privately owned resources.

The Earth Summit at Rio signifies the triumph of the socialist ideal of state ownership and control right in the land of capitalism — in America. The tragedy is that America is being coaxed not only to slap state controls on its people but also to finance similar controls in other countries. This is how Americans have paid for the spread of socialism in the past. The switch from "economy" to "ecology" prevents one from connecting the new crusade with the results of the controlled economies.

No Incentive to Improve

Alarmed by propaganda, people become highly emotional where environmental issues are concerned and fall for images not based on scientific evidence. The result is a tremendous awareness but without a proper understanding of the issues involved. If socialism could not deliver a better life through state ownership of all means of production, neither can state ownership of the environmental resources do the trick.

When the state holds any resource on behalf of the people as common property, nobody has any incentive to protect it.

A house owner has more interest in maintaining his own property; he cannot have the same interest in maintaining any public property. Take the case of public parks. You do not pay the full price for using them hence you have little incentive to use them carefully.

Forests are depleting because there is no accountability, no profit motive to maintain them. It is a different story with private orchards. If a paper mill owns a forest, it will be in the owners' interest to maintain the forest so as to ensure a continuous supply of wood. However, if the forest is on lease from the government, the owners will have no interest in maintaining it because the next year or after a few years they can take another forest on lease to carry on their

business.

Those shedding tears over water pollution can see the difference between a private well and a public well. Britain solved the river pollution problem by selling fishing rights. Those owning the rights saw to it that their fish catch was not diminished by the polluters. Some African countries gave ownership of elephants to people and this stopped destructive poaching. Wild animals are vanishing because there is no private ownership of these animals or of the forests they live in. It is not so with domestic animals. Farmers who own them take care to inoculate them and feed them. That is why the cattle population has gone up from 2.3 billion to four billion in just 30 years.

Environmentalists' Inconsistency

See how the anti-change mentality of environmentalists perceived this increase in the number of domestic animals. The same man who is worried that some species face extinction tells up that the increase in domestic animals will wreak havoc on the earth's fragile ecosystem. He points out that these additional animals consume an increasing quantity of energy, produce more wastes which contaminate the earth and contribute significantly to global warming by emitting methane, a greenhouse gas. He points out that forests were being cut down to provide fodder to these animals and that more than one-third of the world's grain goes to feeding these animals while 12 out of every 100 people go hungry. It is the same mindset which worries about the population explosion one day and livestock increase the next day.

The environmentalists borrow communist jargon to blame the profit motive for ecological degradation. Dr. Jo Kwong, a Ph.D. in Natural Resources Management engaged in exploding the myths surrounding environmental

issues in America, points out that private ownership has actually prevented the rapid depletion of natural resources. She says that private enterprise actually provides a built-in price system that prevents rapid resource depletion and shortages. When prices go up, we use less of that resource, find substitutes or change our life style which helps conservation. However, if prices are fixed by the government, they no longer signal information about resource availability until supplies disappear overnight causing painful shortages.

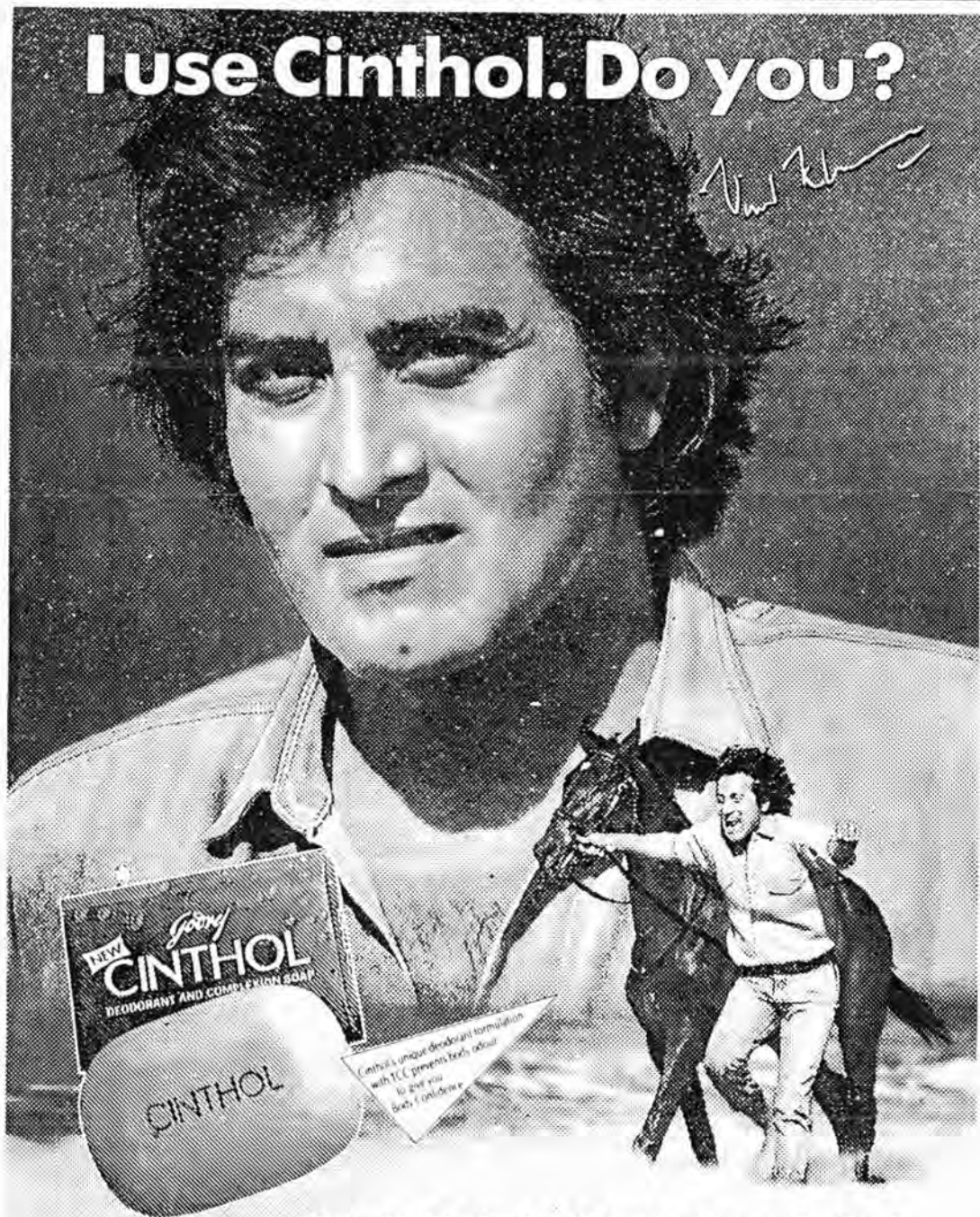
Economic Growth Improves Environment

Dr. Jo tells those who blame multinational corporations (MNCs) for emphasising profits and not conservation and environmental protection that rational business practices drive them towards, and not away from, environmental conservation. She explains that the MNCs prosper by keeping tabs on the prices of everything that goes into production. If a particular resource is in short supply, it costs higher. No sense using or 'wasting' a higher-priced resource. If no substitute is available, the MNCs begin a search for appropriate alternative products and processes to keep the prices of their products most competitive. They would have no such incentive to conserve or search for alternatives if the natural resources come free.

Developing countries, including India, are asking America and other industrialized countries to compensate them for the environmental degradation caused by the latter's tremendous economic growth. Dr. Jo points out that economic growth has improved environment instead of degrading it. Otherwise, why and how do industrialized nations have cleaner air, cleaner water and healthier populations, she asks. She points out that those in poor coun-

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tries struggling for food and shelter cannot even focus on environment. In contrast, the industrialized countries have money to invest in environment problems and to develop cleaner technology.

Dr. Julian Simon, an American economist fighting the doomsayers whose conjectures were fielded at the Rio summit as scientific studies, asserts that shortages which push up the prices of natural resources are actually good in the long run. They lead to a search for new ways to satisfy demand and the results are innovative substitutes.

The Myth of Population Explosion

Dr. Simon, who is also a crusader against the myth of population explosion, asserts that human beings create

more than they destroy. "Humankind has evolved into creators and problem-solvers to an extent that people's constructive behavior has outweighed their destructive behavior, as evidenced by our increasing life expectancy and richness of consumption." In his latest book, "Population Matters", Dr. Simon explodes the fallacy that natural resources are there just to be plucked or picked up. Oil is a natural resource but the fact is that it remains unavailable until human minds and hands act. He says: "The ultimate resource is people, who will exert their will and imagination for their own benefit, and inevitably, for the benefit of us all."

However, the vested interests who gathered at Rio will continue to side with the doomsayers as they have no trust in any

kind of optimism. Among these vested interests are media men who thrive on sensationalism. Among them are members of the scientific community who have a vested interest in creating a scare to get support for research. Among them are environmentalists who have set up institutions in India and all over the world to grab government grants and foreign grants for presenting their conjectures as research. Among them are political groups who work for more government intervention in the economy. They pose a new challenge to capitalism.

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Walking the Tight Rope in Rio — The Indian dilemma

Shyam Chainani

While the South can blame the North for its unsustainable life style, the North can equally point to the South's abysmal record in tackling urban environmental problems — all of its own making — and in recklessly following the high rise anti-conservation path which the West is now abandoning. At least in India there are policy initiatives to curb excessive urbanisation and centralisation, and to preserve man made heritage etc. If these policy initiatives are present in Rio, they are not visible to the naked eye. Perhaps India has something to teach Latin America and the Mediterranean countries.

Coming to the conference proper, nothing can highlight the weakness of the environment movement more than the fact that the Global Forum — the alternative non-Government Earth Summit — with 15000 odd participants representing hundreds of organisations from more than 150 countries — is threatened with bankruptcy due to a \$ 2 million shortfall and a threat (partially implemented) from contractors to shut off services to Flamengo Park where most of the Global Forum's activities take place.

The British have a group of non-governmental organisations (NGO's) who meet here all day every day to ensure that their Government does not stray too far from the path of environmental rectitude at Rio. Americans staged a demonstration in front of the Meridian Hotel on the famous Copacabana Beach to try and pressure President Bush to sign the Biodiversity convention; Americans and others have been urged to phone the White House and jam the switchboards demanding positive American action on a series of global issues. The Indian NGOs don't even know who others have come, leave alone where they are staying.

The official Indian position, as forcefully articulated by Environment Minister Kamal Nath on 5th June — (in a speech reportedly altered at the very last moment — ironically by last minute addition to the Indian delegation Mani Shankar Aiyar — to reflect a hardening of India's position) reiterates the familiar clichés including that "removal of poverty is the only viable environmental strategy for the world as a whole". It goes on to rub salt into the wounds of Indian environmentalists by stating that

India "has a panoply of instruments, legal and administrative to check environmental degradation... the Forest Department... has been transformed into an agency of transformation..." and further that India follows "development strategies that are in harmony with the imperatives of environmental conservation".

But perhaps all this is only for the record; one sincerely hopes so.

More substantially, Kamal Nath reiterated the Indian (and the South) position by reaffirming that global warming cannot be forestalled by stipulating benchmarks below which developing countries must hold their emission levels. On biodiversity, he stated that while genetic resources had been collected from the South (with no payment made to them), these living resources are now sought to be patented and sold back to the original (Southern) countries of origin at exorbitant prices.

Less widely known is the Indian (and South) position that developed countries contribute their share to the reparation of environmental damage caused by the unsustainable life styles

of the developed countries. Reiterated also was the proposal for the Planet Protection Fund proposed by Rajiv Gandhi in Belgrade in September 1989. This proposes that on the pattern of contributions to the United Nations, all UN member states should contribute a certain percentage of their GDP to the Planet Protection Fund to be set up under UN aegis (as opposed to the Global Environmental Facility which is administered by the World Bank). A contribution of 0.1% of GDP by member states would result in a corpus of \$ 18 billion.

Dealing with the argument that forest protection is a global concern, Kamal Nath states venemously that oil is also a global concern — but nobody has suggested global management of the World's oil resources.

Regarding forests, Kamal Nath states that India does not view its forests as 'sinks' for carbon dioxide emissions, but as community resources which are sources for fuel, fodder and forest procedure for millions of the poorest of our poor.

The Indian position is that the USA is in no position to lecture us on environment — being the world's biggest polluter and especially since it is going soft on the climate change convention and

refusing to sign the biodiversity convention. This view appears to be widely shared in Rio where even staunch US allies are taking stands independent of the US and where the US is (at least in environmental circles) being viewed as the bad boy.

India does have at least one genuine problem in Rio. She cannot afford to be seen as siding with the North. On the other hand, she cannot go along with Mahathir's Malaysia who — in a show of national muscle flexing — expressed his determination to continue timber felling; nor can she go along with Brazil which wishes to clear large portions of the virgin Amazon forests in the sacred name of 'development'. How Kamal Nath manages to walk this tight rope will be a test of his skill.

And, while these neat diplomatic games in elegant hotel and conference rooms go on in Rio, while environment ministers jockey for short term economic gains and pat themselves on the back for their environmental performance, every day the world's population increases by a quarter of a million, over 10,000 tonnes of non-biodegradable oils are spewed into the oceans, over 500 sq. kms. of land become wasteland and over 65 million tonnes of top soil are lost forever.

While the Indian delegation to Rio prides itself on India's environmental track record, its state governments and its own central ministries vehemently oppose and often shoot down environment friendly legislation and its Union Ministry of Environment & Forests chooses to continue the environmental free for all by obstinately refusing to sign its own draft notification which would make environmental assessments mandatory.

All this in spite of Rio?

MR. SHYAM CHAINANI is the Honorary Secretary of the Bombay Environmental and Action Group. This was written during the Rio meet. Mr. Chainani participated in the non-official summit of NGOs.

After the Earth Summit

The huge meeting in Rio which has now ended brought together representatives of 178 nations. There were so many speeches, promises and disputes that it was very difficult indeed for anyone to hear what the others were saying. The environment cannot be changed by a meeting, however big, and only history can tell us whether the conference was a success or a failure.

In our opinion, however, it was a success. When the smoke has cleared, the enormous number of individual meetings which took place in Rio will start to bear fruit. As a result of these meetings, the agreements which were signed will slowly give place to tougher measures — which will probably be drawn up and signed without the bands playing.

The concept of sustainable development has now been generally understood for the first time as meaning progress without destruction — or the maximum economic development compatible with the minimum environmental destruction. This depends more on motivation than on money. Where progress and determination are apparent, the financial means will be more easily available after than before the Rio conference. Where corruption and inefficiency are to the fore — as they have been in many past schemes to promote economic development — money will not be available.

This may seem theoretical. But theory has to come before practice. In the past the development assistance programmes which have worked best were those which were well thought out beforehand. Very often they were small projects, based on the motivation of individuals. They mostly depended on the small things of life which do not often come to the notice of our politicians. Many of them were fully sustainable long before that word was brought in as the answer to environmental destruction. The Rio conference was called so that people involved in such enterprises all over the world could come together to compare experiences and confront the future. And, to the surprise of many, it seems that they did that.

Swiss Press Review

It has been said that in classical Greek tragedy, the choice is not between good and evil but between two kinds of good or right.

Now that the much-advertised Earth Conference in Rio de Janeiro, is over, it is possible to say that the real issue there was not between a wicked United States and progressive Third World countries but between development and growth on the one side and the preservation of rain forests in less developed countries, on the other.

There is a lot to be said on both sides and perhaps the way it has ended, is all to the good. But was it necessary to waste so much public money on the kind of large delegations that went from India and the so-called less developed countries for a jaunt? Could not this money have been used to a better purpose in the cause of environment about which we have all suddenly become so conscious?

Minoo Masani

How Markets Protect the Environment

Swaminathan S. Anklesaria Aiyar

From the time of Malthus, many intellectuals have warned that the appetite of a growing human population for goods is rising so fast that the world is bound to run out of resources. The Club of Rome, in a celebrated thesis in the early 1970s, drew attention to the scarcity of every commodity, notably oil, which was mirrored in skyrocketing commodity prices. It warned that the human race must cut its consumption or perish. The same thesis is being repeated by Green groups at Rio.

Yet the most casual look at the history of the world since Malthus shows that this theory is plain nonsense. In the last hundred years, which have witnessed an unprecedented increase in commodity consumption, the price of commodities has fallen in real terms, not risen. Two decades after the Club of Rome thesis, the world has increased its total consumption greatly, yet instead of scarcity the world is witnessing a glut of every commodity, which is reflected in slumping commodity prices. This is especially true of non-renewable resources like copper, tin, iron ore and oil, and has badly hit Third World exporters. Such non-renewable resources were supposed to run out within a few decades of the Club of Rome's dire predictions.

Yet today there is not only a glut, but the ratio of reserves to annual production has improved for every commodity. What was supposed to be unsustainably high consumption has proved to be, from the viewpoint of Third World exporters, pathetically inadequate consumption.

Why have Greens and critics of consumerism proved so wildly wrong? The answer is that they have not understood the remarkable role of price changes in the marketplace as a means for saving the environment.

The fallacy of the Club of Rome and other prophets of doom is their assumption that human consumption patterns are fixed. In fact, history shows that consumption depends acutely on price changes. As long as a commodity is cheap, it makes no sense to conserve its use, so consumers will become prodigal and wasteful. But if the commodity becomes scarce and its price shoots up, people automatically find innovative ways to cut their consumption. Companies find it worthwhile to increase exploration and find new mineral reserves.

Even more dramatic is the response of technology. Inventions do not just happen. They are the result of massive research efforts, and armies of scientists will tackle an issue only when scarcity has made it worth focussing on. Scarcity and high prices make it profitable to find techniques of conservation and invent substitutes.

The rise in commodity prices in the early '70s spurred a great technological effort into reducing the use of non-renewables, and of recycling them wherever possible. Energy-efficient motors, boilers, engines and process equipment became the norm, and the amount of energy used per unit of GNP dropped dramatically in all the rich countries.

Even Third World countries were major gainers, since the

machinery they imported was not energy-saving. Note that this conservation was not and could not have been brought about by the exhortations of Greens to stop consuming goods. It was brought about by the reaction of markets to scarcity. The end result was that people could enjoy higher living standards even while reducing their consumption of materials. This was made possible by producing more efficiently, not by producing less.

The amount of tin needed in tin-plating has been slashed by new techniques to make thinner and thinner coatings. Innovations have cut the amount of steel needed in cars, the amount of copper needed in motors, the amount of zinc needed in galvanising. The energy needed to recycle copper and zinc scrap has been slashed by new technology, so that the world makes do with more recycling and much less copper and zinc ore than before. The ghost of Malthus has been banished, and scarcity has given way to a glut.

Of course, this glut will, after some time, lead to an increase in consumption and waste. But that in turn, will mean higher prices, which will then spur a further cycle of technology and conservation. In short, the laws of economics are the best guarantee that the world will not run out of resources. Efficient markets will achieve conservation far more effectively and efficiently than the exhortations of Greens.

The real problem is that for some times there are no markets and hence no prices. In these areas resources can be destroyed forever. There is no market for the use of the atmosphere, the seas, or many forests and rivers. People can usually use these natural resources free of cost. This inevitably encourages overuse — the laws of economics do not automatically penalise high consumption in these areas since these laws cannot operate in the absence of markets.

This explains why we have a glut of copper and iron-ore but we are ruining our forests through overfelling, ruining coastal areas through overfishing, razing our pastures through overgrazing, eroding the ozone layer and spewing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. In some of these cases, markets can be created. For instance, forests can be made the property of a village, which will then have an economic incentive to maintain them and respond to scarcity by growing more and better trees. In other cases, like the ozone layer, no markets can be created and only regulations will work.

So Greens have a vital role to play in highlighting problems in areas where markets do not exist, and governments have a key role in regulating the use of non-marketable resources. But we all know from bitter experience that the administrative capacity of governments is very limited. So it is comforting to know that in regard to mineral resources we have other automatic market mechanisms to save the planet, which do not depend on the dubious efficacy of *netas* and *babus*.

COURTESY: Swaminathan S. Anklesaria Aiyar and *The Times of India*.

Achyut Patwardhan

A Repentant Socialist

Mr. Achyut Patwardhan, one of the founders of the Congress Socialist Party, who later renounced socialism for reasons he explained in the following interview he gave to Mr. Sumant Bankeshwar, died at Varanasi on August 5. He was 87.

Way back in September, 1984, at the request of my friend, Minoo Masani, I interviewed Achyut Patwardhan for Freedom First.

Even before I could start, the Gandhian told me, "I would like to say a few words before you ask me your questions. I retired from politics long ago. I do not make good copy. I cannot understand why Minoo has picked me up from the dustbin of history and asked you to interview me."

"I am a non-person now and my views do not carry weight. Minoo has a strong sense of loyalty towards his old friends. I stopped giving interviews to the press long ago. However, out of my high regard for Minoo, I have acceded to his request. Now carry on."

Sumant Bankeshwar (SB): *I am told that you were a confirmed Marxist. Will you please enlighten me on your transition from Marxism to Gandhism?*

Achyut Patwardhan (AP): No, you are mistaken. I was never a Marxist. I was not a Gandhian either. I was a reluctant socialist. I was also a reluctant politician. I would not like to be called even an ex-politician.

I joined the freedom movement because I then believed that paradise would descend over our country once the British quit and our poverty would disappear. I was proved wrong. I then thought that only socialism could solve all our problems and drive out our poverty. I was proved wrong here too.

I have thus been cheated twice and would not like to be cheated again. I, therefore, would not like to worship at the shrine of another false God.

I reluctantly continued to be a member of the Congress Socialist Party at the annual session of the Indian National Congress in Lahore. My socialist friends asked me not to take socialism seriously. They said that it was just an answer to our communists to show that

we were no less keen than they were about socialism and that socialism was not the monopoly of Marxists.

It is true that I believed in the socialisation of our natural resources for the benefit of our people. I also held the view that the allocation of natural resources should be utilised in the larger interests of our masses. Subsequently, we discovered many things which went wrong in the Soviet Union.

I continue to believe that our natural resources should be utilised for the benefit of our masses, but this job should be entrusted to a planning commission of experts independent of the government. The Planning Commission should be retrieved from the octopus hold of the government.

I had once preferred state capitalism to private capitalism. I did not then realise that state ownership of all means of production had its own inherent dangers. The state is, after all, run by a political party. The interests of the state have now come to mean the interests of the ruling party. To be more precise, the interests of the ruling party just mean the interests of the ruling clique. The gangsters and the mafia who control the party create compelling situations for the government.

The mere change in the pattern of ownership of the means of production is not going to solve our problems. Similarly the mere replacement of the ruling party by another party is not going to solve our problems either. The miserable performance of all our State-run industries has completely disillusioned me and made me reconsider my earlier views about socialism. It is in this context that I said the other day that I was a repentant socialist.

As a socialist, I had propagated a number of half-truths, although innocently, which did damage to our national interests. I therefore owe an apology to our people whom I had fooled by my



innocent convictions. This does not mean that I have discovered new merits in private capitalism. I do not hold a devil's brief for the capitalist class in India or elsewhere.

SB: *All the developed countries in the non-communist world have moved away from the disastrous path of socialism and prospered. May I have your comments?*

AP: Yes, you are partly right. But free enterprise is no longer free in these countries. It is regulated by the government, which is playing an increasing role in taming capitalism.

In our time, we thought that ideology played an important role in changing the social structure of our society. We now find today that technology changes the social structure of our society faster than any ideology, and ideology is lagging behind in the race. Therefore, the factor that is forcing change is not ideology, but technology.

The millions of peasant-proprietors are the backbone of a country's economy. The state has to subserve its interests to their welfare. Our very freedom depends upon them. Wherever the state has taken over agriculture from their hands, it has ended in disaster. The examples of communist Russia

and China are before us. Facts are more important than opinions.

SB: *May I have your comments on the nationalisation of banks?*

AP: I was once in favour of nationalisation of banks. I thought that the credit resources of a country should not be used only from the criterion of their profitability, but in accordance with the priorities set by our Planning Commission. But our actual experience shows us that the party in power is using the government's credit agencies to further its own interests at the cost of even healthy industrial concerns. I had not anticipated that the noble ideal of nationalisation of banks would be completely distorted by the party in power to its advantage. I also did not realise then that this kind of total distortion was implicit in the logic of state controlling the credit resources.

SB: *May I have your comments on the mass loan melas held recently by the nationalised banks?*

AP: I think it is a most unscrupulous misuse of the credit system. Whether a state is democratic or totalitarian, a state agency is a diabolic and mischievous agency. The problem today is how to tame state power, political power and political parties controlled by gangsters.

SB: *There is an increasing tendency among our political parties to select their leader by 'consensus'. Is not this 'consensus' a fraud and a sham as it just means the voice of a Big Brother and nothing else?*

AP: You don't need me to certify your statement, as history has proved it amply. The manner in which the Janata parliamentary party leader was 'elected', rather selected, by the so-called consensus led to its disaster. I care for facts, and facts are more important than anybody's opinion. There is no doubt that 'consensus' is a device to sidestep or bypass an election.

This exclusive interview to *Freedom First* was published in the September 1984 issue of *Freedom First* then a 16-page monthly.

ACHYUT PATWARDHAN

Achyut Patwardhan was a dear friend and an old colleague of mine. We were together in the Congress Socialist Party and resigned together against Jayaprakash Narayan's — support to the communist Left Front.

Later, we worked with Jayaprakash Narayan as his colleagues in the Quit India Movement. During that period I was sent to Delhi to explain the stand of the underground movement to Mr. Williams Philips, who was President Roosevelt's Envoy in India while Achyut went underground totally involved in the Quit India movement.

Achyut had a spiritual side to his nature. He was a Theosophist and a great devotee of Mr. J. Krishnamurthy.

One more good person of my generation has passed away.

Minoo Masani

Vice-President K.R. Narayanan

It is fitting and appropriate in the centenary year of the J.N. Tata Endowment that Mr. K.R. Narayanan, a Tata Scholar (1945) has been elected India's Vice-President.

He came from a tiny village near Kottayam in Travancore, one among the millions of Indians of the villages of India, born in an under-privileged section of society, monetarily and otherwise, with the quality of mind his only asset.

Such was his calibre that he passed his B.A. (English Literature) with a First Class First followed by a Master's in English Literature from the University of Travancore.

After post-graduation Mr. Narayanan tried his hand at teaching followed by a stint in journalism, as a reporter for *The Hindu* and later *The Times of India*.

Mr. Narayanan was selected a Tata Scholar in 1945 for higher studies at the London School of Economics (LSE) where he distinguished himself, obtaining a B.Sc. (Economics and Politics) with First Class Honours.

In the 40s when only the rich and the influential could send their sons for higher studies abroad, the Tata Scholarship gave him the timely assistance which entirely changed his life.

During his studies at the LSE he was noticed by Harold Laski who was so impressed with the young man that when he finished his studies he wrote a personal letter to Nehru introducing him to the Prime Minister as a very talented youngster. Nehru interviewed him and promptly appointed him to the Indian Foreign Service.

A series of postings took him to Burma where he also met his wife. Narayanan was not only a diplomat, but a Chinese scholar, a litterateur and an educationist.

The pinnacle of his career came with two Ambassadorial appointments, the first to China and the second to the United States of America where he distinguished himself.

On his retirement from the foreign service he was appointed Vice-Chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru University. When his term concluded he plunged into politics and was elected to Parliament from Ottapalam in Kerala and held various portfolios in the central government including Planning, External Affairs and Atomic Energy.

His achievements in every field of activity in which he has been involved — diplomacy, the academic world, politics, government — are impressive. Above all he has a reputation for being spotless as far as personal integrity and probity are concerned.

In his dreams for building a new India Jamsetji said a hundred years ago: "What advances a nation... is to lift up the best and most gifted so as to make them of the greatest service to the country." Hence the Tata Endowment.

None could have exemplified Jamsetji's lofty ideal more eloquently than K.R. Narayanan — the village boy who has risen to the august office of the Vice-President of India.

Contributed by Mr. Dinshah K. Malegamvala, Director, J.N. TATA ENDOWMENT FOR THE HIGHER EDUCATION OF INDIANS, Bombay

Panchsheel and Realpolitik – Strange Bedfellows?

Lionel Fernandes

If we want a more equitable international order, we must create a more equitable national order in the first place. If we want human rights and political accountability to be upheld on a global scale we must make sure that we promote these within the national community in the first place.

Most discourses on foreign policy would tend to view idealism and realism, roughly termed as Panchsheel and realpolitik in the above caption, as mutually incompatible at worst and as strange bedfellows at best. But does foreign policy in general and Indian foreign policy in particular, with which this article is principally concerned, have to involve a zero sum game between Panchsheel and realpolitik? Not really. A close look at the Five Principles embodied in the Panchsheel doctrine reveals that what is set down is a very matter-of-fact set of rules governing relations among nations. There is nothing mystical about them. They are norms of practical dealings in the area of foreign policy and are to that extent no less realistic than idealistic. Realism and idealism, whether in domestic or foreign affairs, are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary and mutually supportive. Action without a guiding norm is blind and irrational, and to that extent unrealistic while a mere norm or principle that is not implementable at some point and in some manner, is sterile and thus fails even as an ideal.

By the two-fold criteria of Panchsheel and realpolitik, how has India's foreign policy performed to date and how is it to measure up to the challenges of the contemporary post-Cold War world?

Need for the Right Blend

It could be argued that India's foreign policy during the Nehru era was largely one of Panchsheel, even though realpolitik was present to a lesser extent, while the converse holds true of the post-Nehru era. This may perhaps be an oversimplification, but there are elements of truth in this way of putting it. During the Nehru era, India was economically and militarily weak while its moral and diplomatic international postures were relatively stronger. After

Nehru, India's moral and diplomatic stature seems to have paradoxically diminished even while its economic and military might have grown. This fact shows that economic and military capabilities do not automatically get translated into diplomatic clout in the absence of an appropriate blend of Panchsheel and realpolitik in a nation's foreign policy postures.

It is not that realpolitik was absent in the Nehru period. Nehru resorted to it in the cases of the liberation of Goa and the so-called "forward policy" on the Sino-Indian border. In the former case, he was successful, while in the latter he failed dismally. But for the most part, Nehru resorted to diplomatic initiatives couched in idealistic formulations, whether on the question of disarmament, the pacific settlement of disputes, anti-racism and anti-apartheid, de-colonisation, or developmental issues. The policy of non-alignment, which was in reality a pragmatic stance taken during the years of the Cold War, was likewise couched in idealist jargon and in moral terms. In the post-Nehru period, and especially after 1971, when India emerged as the dominant power of South Asia, Indian foreign policy has been more assertive in terms of realpolitik, as seen in the intervention in the Bangladesh war, the Siachen glacier dispute, the annexation of Sikkim, the trade and transit dispute with Nepal, the Farakka barrage dispute with Bangladesh, the intervention in Sri Lanka and the commando operation in the Maldives. Panchsheel has not however been wholly absent as in the case of the solution to the trade and transit dispute between India and Nepal, the leasing of Teen Bigha to Bangladesh, the withdrawal of the Indian Peace Keeping Force from Sri Lanka, and the cooperative, if still largely symbolic, actions undertaken under the aegis of the South Asian Association for

Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

It is contended here that India's foreign policy has been more successful on those occasions when realpolitik was not pursued at the cost of Panchsheel but in tandem with it. In other words, India's foreign policy has shown better results when idealism has been suitably blended with realism. Too much of Panchsheel tends to breed scepticism while too much of realpolitik generates cynicism in international affairs. Scepticism is a state of mind that harbours lingering doubts about claims being made and postures (especially moral ones) being struck, while cynicism is a brazen disregard of all norms and values that should normally guide behavioural patterns and mutual expectations. Every foreign policy posture needs to be subjected to a cost-benefit analysis in the light of certain humane and rational rules of international conduct. Only then can idealism and realism be happily matched. This is not easy to achieve on all occasions, but the effort needs to be made. Any attempt to shortcircuit universally accepted norms is to be resisted as it may promise short-term benefits but is bound to be counter-productive in the long term.

Towards an Indo-centric Policy

Where does India's foreign policy stand in the contemporary world scenario? Today much is being made of the end of the Cold War. But the Cold War was central to the Western camp vis-a-vis the former Eastern camp. It was never central to India and therefore its demise need not mean as much to us as it may mean to the former arch rivals. But we have the unfortunate tendency to see and define ourselves within the parameters set by the West and these are Euro-centric or Atlanto-centric. We need to see things in an Indo-centric perspective. Our perspec-

tives should naturally radiate outwards to the rest of the world from where we are situated geopolitically. Our foreign policy will be reoriented accordingly. We need to give up the urge to collect certificates and testimonials from the West in order to set our own agenda. Our centre of gravity as it were, both in domestic and foreign affairs, has to be located within ourselves. This is not to make isolationist chauvinism the bed-rock of our foreign policy but to assert a modicum of self-respect without which a credible foreign policy is not feasible. If we do not take ourselves seriously, others will not either.

We must start from the premise that the end of the Cold War is a belated vindication of India's policy of non-alignment evolved over the years. It is however more a negative vindication than a positive one. Negative in the sense that it has lowered the global political temperature that had on more than one occasion reached flashpoint. It has not yet manifested itself fully as a positive vindication in so far as much of the Non-aligned agenda on which India's foreign policy has been based remains to be implemented. Items on

the agenda such as promoting a more just and peaceful world have been only partially realised in the process of decolonisation, the arms reduction processes and the increasing emphasis being placed on North-South issues.

We Must Practise What We Preach

However, global issues cannot be the immediate concern of any country's foreign policy, and that applies to India as well. The immediate concern is national policy focussed on national issues. Transnational relationships can only be an outgrowth of national concerns and not the other way round. National policy can be conceived of as a series of concentric circles of which the innermost is the area of local concerns, followed by that of national, regional and international concerns. India's capacity to change the world is extremely limited but its capacity to set about changing itself is considerable. Whatever India prescribes to others it must first set about implementing itself if it sincerely believes in it as inherently desirable and feasible.

If we want a more equitable international order, we must create a more

equitable national order in the first place. If we believe that the United Nations should be strengthened in its peace-making and peace-keeping role, we should come up with specific proposals to make it more effective and more truly responsive to the realities and needs of the contemporary world. Further, we cannot afford to maintain a dualistic policy vis-a-vis the UN, advocating its active role everywhere else in the world while studiously excluding it from any role in a matter in which India may be involved, as for example the Kashmir dispute. If we want human rights and political accountability to be upheld on a global scale, we must make sure that we promote these within the national community in the first place. Our foreign policy will then carry conviction with the rest of the international community as a reflection of our national resolve and our national priorities.

A foreign policy based on the sound principles of international equity and international morality is not to be dismissed as utopian. On the contrary, it is the only viable policy in the long term. Indeed it is short term expediency that

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He is cool

He is a winner
No, not always

He commands
He rebels

He is unchanging
He is impulsive

Demanding
Daring
Discreet

A devil
A dilemma
A dream





is utopian as it invariably fails to deliver the goods and queers the pitch in international relations. There is no substitute for a foreign policy based on a disciplined and humane rationality that informs a behavioural pattern that is both fair and firm. If India preaches good neighbourliness to other countries around the globe, it should first implement the same policy in its own neighbourhood. If the former super-power rivals could wind down the Cold War, there is no reason why India and Pakistan cannot compose their differences. This will result in a peace dividend for both countries, both of which are riven by internal cleavages and have a developmental backlog. If the most intractable problems like the re-unification of Germany, the dismantling of apartheid and the Palestinian question has either been resolved or are in the process of being resolved, there is no reason why the Kashmir issue should be permanently deadlocked.

India can do with a judicious blend of unilateralism, bilateralism, multilateralism and internationalism in articulating and implementing its foreign policy. Unilateralism is to be resorted to in setting its own house in order socio-economically and politically so that a beneficial spin-off for foreign policy is available from an enlightened domestic policy. Bilateralism should be the preferred method to address contentious issues with our immediate neighbours e.g. the Kashmir dispute, the Sino-Indian border, Farakka, J-1976. Multilateralism can be used to tackle problems involving the entire region of South Asia, preferably under the aegis of SAARC; and in this endeavour, a leaf could be taken from the book of groupings like the European Community, the Association of South East Asian

Nations and the recently concluded North America Free Trade Agreement. Finally, internationalism or globalism would be the broadest foreign policy orientation where matters of world-wide import are involved. Such matters concern disarmament in both nuclear and conventional weapons, the reform of the United Nations, protecting the environment, safeguarding human rights and promoting all-round development. A well calibrated and fine-tuned foreign policy on the above lines should bid fair to make India a constructive player in international affairs in a manner that does justice to its size and potential.

Need For More Imaginative Thinking

Of late, India seems to have got bogged down in certain stereotyped foreign policy formulations. Take the question of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In this matter, it has lost the initiative to Pakistan whose five-power initiative seems to have caught the imagination of the major powers and of other significant sections of the world community. India meanwhile continues to trot out the same hackneyed argument of the discriminatory nature of the NPT. We need to come out with a more imaginative and constructive diplomatic initiative. Why can we not, for example, indicate our willingness to consider signing the NPT on the basis of the following proposals:

- a) There should be a total ban on the use of nuclear weapons under any circumstance;
- b) All further production and testing of nuclear weapons must be halted;
- c) All existing nuclear weapons must be withdrawn to the respective territories and territorial waters of the nuclear powers and should be confined to designated zones under U.N. custody;

- d) All nuclear facilities everywhere must be put under fullscope safeguards;
- e) A realistic timetable should be drawn up by the U.N. for the progressive destruction of all existing stockpiles world-wide;
- f) Immediate steps be taken for the creation of a credible U.N. rapid deployment force for peace enforcement anywhere in the world at short notice.

A Fresh Look at National Sovereignty and National Boundaries

In our foreign policy thinking, we need to take a fresh look at national sovereignty and national boundaries at a time when these are becoming a little less sacrosanct and immutable than they were once deemed to be. The trend towards regionalisation and globalisation and the formation of wider federations of more manageable political units point to the need for re-defining sub-national, national, trans-national and supra-national entities in a manner that safeguards local identities and interests even while aggregating these within a globalised framework. May be we should redefine our Centre-State relations and work towards a Confederation of the States of the sub-continent within a "South Asian Confederation" or a "United States of Hindustan". May be then seemingly intractable problems like Kashmir will be solved in a more realistic manner to the mutual benefit of India and her neighbours. For this, realpolitik will have to march in tandem with Panchsheel.

DR. LIONEL FERNANDES is lecturer in the Department of Civics and Politics, University of Bombay.

NAM — Two Views



R.K. Laxman in *The Times of India*



We must oppose any move to wind up NAM. I fail to understand why anyone should grudge us our annual holiday...

S. Jha in *Indian Express*

Debate

The Meaning of Democracy

Recently I re-read the series on "The Meaning of Democracy."* It became apparent to me that what the author meant by 'democracy' is simply 'good government' and not its traditional meaning—Government of the people. Good government does not require that people be literate or that all able persons should have a vote. Even a monarch can provide good government — we still praise Lord Rama for his *Ram Rajya* (The ideal government). History has provided many instances of good government, the British *Raj* among them.

However, the problem is to ensure good government and, at the same time, prevent the arbitrary use of power. Democracy has evolved over the centuries as a means of ensuring this and it does require the people to be literate, conscious of their rights, willing to pay any price to preserve those rights and the power to force the government to desist from misuse of power. This power takes the form of the right to vote. To this extent the author was wrong in contending that democracy does not require literacy or voting rights, etc.

Y.D. Altekar

Pune, India

* 'The Meaning of Democracy' by Raphael Kazmann serialised in *Freedom First* (Issues No. 401, 402 and 403 — 1989)

Mr. Kazmann replies:

I welcome Mr. Altekar's comments, but must plead "not guilty" to his charge.

The problem faced by every society is the continuation of good, favorable leadership. Hereditary leadership has been tried; as long as the ruler is competent and observes the injunctions, "don't lie", "don't steal", and "don't murder", society is well served. But, by the laws of averages and genetics an incompetent man of bad character will sooner or later inherit the leadership and will violate the injunctions so that he can become wealthy,

more powerful, etc. It doesn't take more than two consecutive vicious leaders to ruin a country — this has been demonstrated time and again in the historical record.

Democracy, which includes the franchise, presents a method of selecting leaders that can avoid the pitfalls of hereditary rule. I have never said that an illiterate, incompetent electorate can practice democracy successfully. It can be both literate and incompetent (as in the former Soviet Union) as well as enfranchised and it will be unsuccessful in creating a viable democracy. Literacy and the vote, while technically important, are far from sufficient. Adherence to the basic democratic principles that I set forth in the essay is essential and competence is equally essential. The counting of votes, votes by ignorant people (literate or illiterate) does not a democracy make. We must not confuse democracy with "majoritarianism" (which is majority rule, regardless of the issue and/or moral principles). It is undemocratic to take a vote in the bazaar to determine whether or not brain surgery is warranted on a sick child (most people polled have no personal interest in the outcome and are not doctors, so they are incompetent and their opinions should be ignored). On the basis that the majority can do no wrong (majoritarianism), such a vote is reasonable and the results must be abided by.

There is no doubt that Mr. Altekar is correct in believing that people must be willing to pay any price to preserve their freedom and prevent the government from becoming a tyranny. It is here that the quest of people for their immortality, biological or spiritual, manifests itself through individuals sacrificing their lives and fortunes for freedom and democracy. When these sacrifices are not made, freedom is lost and the citizens are enslaved by their government through a myriad of taxes and regulations. Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom.

Raphael Kazmann

Baton Rouge, USA

Who Shaves the Barber?

In one respect, perhaps it is the quality of leadership that is at the root of the country's problems. An Indira Gandhi, devoted only to her own and her sons' cause; a Morarji Desai remembered only for his lads; a Charan Singh blinded by ambition; a Rajiv Gandhi unencumbered by a single intellectual thought; and not knowing most of the time whether he was coming or going; a V.P. Singh unable to see beyond at least UP; if not Allahabad; a Chandra Shekhar with his inability to distinguish between good politics and flawed morality and finally a Narasimha Rao, overdoing the consensus thing to avoid unpleasant decisions. Such indeed could be the nature of India's present predicament.

And so the inexorable inference: there is not just a crisis of governance but leadership as well. People want to be led, and when they are not, they lose respect for authority. In India, this process has been accelerating for some time now, for a variety of reasons. Perhaps the most important of these is the widespread perception that the Indian state is being manipulated by a set of modern brigands out to aggrandise themselves. Politicians, policemen, pedants, the press, everyone virtually, is party to the delegitimising of lawfully constituted authority. This is probably the most intractable problem that faces the country today. Solving it is not easy because those who can solve it have a vested interest in not allowing it to be solved. In breaking the law lies the key to riches, dominance and power.

It is a variant of Russell's paradox all over again. There is a village in which the barber shaves everyone who does not shave himself. So who shaves the barber? Until India solves this paradox, it will lurch on from one crisis to another, prime ministerial appeals for moratoria notwithstanding. In other words, there is an urgent need for those who make laws and those who enforce them to observe the law themselves. All too often these classes are seen as being above the law with the result that no one, in the end, not even the regular offender, seems to be under it.

Excerpt from an editorial in *The Economic Times* August 17

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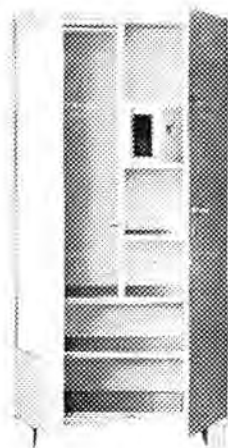
The workmanship — even a fussy person like me can't help but admire it. There are no gaps which means

insects can't come in. There is plenty of storage space too. What's more, the adjustable shelves allow me to reorganise the storage space according to my needs.

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Africa and Shelley

An Ambience of Cosmic Unison

Padma Srinivasan

This article has been written to honour the memory of England's distinguished Romantic poet Shelley, in the bi-centenary of his birth this year as well as to emphasize the relevance of his social philosophy for our sadly embattled world.

What do the traditional people of the vast continent of Africa, with their ancient cultures and thought-ways have in common with the English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley? At first sight, nothing at all. But when one sinks into the level where thought deepens into feeling, when one reaches the 'source of untaught things', one finds that there is an ambience that is common to them both. Both have been aware of the subtle mantle of consciousness that unites the entire universe. Here is a very primal awareness. From it sprang every African folk tale, proverb, sculpture, custom and song. Africa is a world apart.

On the other hand is our poet, a child of European culture, and of Greek philosophy. Shelley belonged to a very different world; yet he dwelt among the untrodden ways between poetry and metaphysics. He was ever in that aerial realm from whose essences the beings and shapes of our dusty earth draw their energies. He was — every inch of him — a poet. It was poetry that came to him easily, not prose. And it came to him lightly, as on the wings of a breeze and awakened him to song. He says to himself, and truly, 'I am formed... to apprehend minute and remote distinctions of feeling, whether relative to external nature or the living beings which surround us, and to communicate the conceptions which result from considering either the moral or the material universe as a whole'. There is a pulsating harmony that binds us all. Shelley felt it. Africa knew it and lived it every hour, through the passing centuries. Every animal and tree and man participates in it. To hurt another is truly to hurt oneself. The horrors of torture and death inflicted on animals and people disturb the harmony, peace and love which unite the sensate world.

Through untold centuries, before the coming of the white man to their land,



the common people of Africa lived and moved and had their being within this sense of cosmic oneness. The African felt the gossamer web of life that bound him to every wild thing around. He felt a kinship with the mountains and the rivers and the sky. He had every care for the very trees and the land and all its creatures. He feared at every turn lest he upset the great Harmony of Nature and of Life.

The African cherished harmonious relations within the family, the clan, the tribe, with the urban generations with the spirit of the dead, with the spirits of Nature and with divine beings.

As a poet and artist Shelly adored harmony and order. And in order he sees the principle of Beauty.

Here is a sense of cosmic unison that one seeks with little hope in the so-called civilized world. After a long search one is likely to find it among the poets — but only the true ones who are also seers. And these are few, indeed. A true poet is fired by a vision of universal harmony and order. Shelley tells us that to be a poet is 'to apprehend the true and the beautiful, in a word, the good which exists in the relation, subsisting, first between existence and perception, and secondly between perception and expression'. True poets see this Harmony, this indestructible Order of the cosmos, and express it in their poetry. Poets are not prophets in the gross sense of that term. Indeed, as Shelley confides in us: 'A poet participates in the eternal, in the infinite, and the one.' And Shelley, himself, was 'a poet in the highest sense of that mysterious word'. A poet like Shelley can awaken the feelings that lie asleep within us so that we can behold the beauty of true virtue.

The devotion to Harmony which is present both in the Shelleyan and the African vision of life encompasses not only truth and beauty but also goodness. Any upsetting of the balance and order of the Universe can come about with inharmonious thoughts, words and deeds. The African cherished harmonious relations within the family, the clan, the tribe, with the unborn generations, with the spirits of the dead, with the spirits of Nature and with divine beings. The upsetting of the balance was not merely inconvenience; it often led inevitably to immorality. Disease in a man's body was also a result of the upsetting of physical and psychic balance. Harmony is unity, oneness, co-operation, balance, beauty, goodness and truth. Here is a deep vision in which animals, plants and men and the forms and elements around reveal their unity. It is an intuitive vision. And from it emerges a great wisdom. Shelley, too, nursed such a wis-

dom, born of intuition. There was always something moral and spiritual in his idea of beauty. He never thought of aesthetics as something different from ethics. The poet was at once the prophet. He was often fired with a passion for a better world.

As a poet and artist, Shelley adored harmony and order. And in order he sees the principle of Beauty. Beauty expressed itself through order in sensuous forms as well as in civic institutions. Whenever social institutions failed to reflect the inner harmony, the inner moral deficiencies and moral order, they were defective. Shelley attacked society because of its defective institutions, and because these in turn were the cause of moral evils. Even if they did not cause them, they perpetuated them. Shelley saw the annals of civilization as a continuous struggle between the spirit of freedom and the spirit of tyranny. Societies sway between the tyranny of force and the tyranny of fraud. Yet the

poet in Shelley yearned for the triumph of Universal goodness upon earth.

Shelley was not interested at all in the idea of morality in the narrow, everyday, sense of the term. He cared nought for concrete systems of ethics or orthodox religion. He was an atheist in the highest sense of the term. The essence of morality did not lie in the rigid application of some arbitrary code of conduct to human behaviour. Rather did he see it in an ordered and harmonious condition of the soul.

Like the peoples of sunburnt Africa, the fairchild of English poesy felt the eternal order and rhythm of the universe. And it is the function of poetry to express this order and rhythm, and to be a poet is to apprehend the true and the beautiful. In this vision of cosmic unison the immutable order of things, as perceived, is Truth; as expressed in art, it is Beauty; as reflected in conduct, it is Goodness. It is the same indestructible order that manifests itself as a

poem or a law or an institution. Shelley spoke of a poem as 'the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth'. Thus, poets who embody this eternal, unchanging order 'are not only the authors of language and of music, of dance, and architecture, and statuary, and painting; they are the institutors of laws, and the founders of civil society, and the inventors of the arts of life, and the teachers' of what is called religion.

No other writer or critic, artist or visionary, has defended Poetry as stoutly as Shelley has, or expressed so lucidly, the transforming power of poetry, which can go forth to restore harmony and order in the world. More than ever does our ruthless and rude world need now this philosophy which emanates from old Africa and Shelley. And it is by the power of poetry that it can be redeemed.

DR. PADMA SRINIVASAN, is a Reader in the Centre for East African Studies, University of Bombay.

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FROM THE FOREIGN PRESS

Peace Games in Barcelona

The Olympic Games were always a pain – until Barcelona. This first Olympiad of the post-cold war era has shown what fair competition can really mean. No longer are medals an extension of politics – as if a political system could be considered triumphant because of the prowess of its athletes. The first political games were in Berlin in 1936, when nazi Germany tried to show the world that theirs was the regime which could produce the superman. They turned out to be the last games before the cataclysm, and by the time the next Olympiad was held in London in 1948 the nazi superman had gone to his death and taken millions with him.

The countries which then produced the most brilliant competitors – the Soviet Union and East Germany – have now also shuffled off the scene, exposing themselves as hollow shells. But not before they too had produced their own version of the cataclysm. It is now estimated that alongside the four million human beings who perished in the Gulag another million were killed by firing squad during the 70 years of the Soviet Union. Now only China practises political patronage of sportspeople. But even this is limited and lies in the shadow of Tienanmen Square.

The Barcelona Olympics will go down as the first real games of peace

seen by most people alive today. No longer do we have to reflect on the paradox of beauty emerging from the belly of the beast. The result has been a wider scattering of medals amongst the nations of the earth than ever before (although the misnamed "Unified Team" from the ex-Soviet Union still got more than any other). Small countries like Switzerland have never been bothered by the fact that their athletes brought home so few Olympic medals. They do get the odd one from time to time, and when this happens people yell their joy. But they do not need such confirmation of their national maturity. This goes for many small countries the world over, not only at the heart of Europe.

Running The World

Strengthening the Hands of the UN Secretary General

It is being rumoured that Boutros Ghali, the new personification of the UN, has ended his honeymoon and is already heading for divorce, i.e. the exit. The truth is that his honeymoon at the UN did not last for even 24 hours, for the day he took over from Javier Perez De Cuellar he made it clear that he had arrived with a new broom in his hands.

Nor is it true that those who put his name forward and those who elected him thought they had chosen another quiet secretary general in the image of Perez de Cuellar. The United Nations was – still is? – to be the pivot of the new world order. It must have a man of dynamism at its head, or else it will always be seen – as Saddam Hussein likes to proclaim it – as a tool of the one remaining super-power, the United States. But for the moment it is a shuffling bear of an organisation, encrusted with special interest groups and obsolescent working methods. Nothing can be done without a massive sweep-out.

Boutros Ghali's first act was to streamline the secretariat, to get rid of

large areas of bureaucracy by merging the economic and social offices into a single department, thinning out drastically as he went along. He was supported in this by countries which appreciate efficient administration, i.e. much of the Western world. This is why Boutros Ghali gave the fleeting impression that he intended to work mainly with western support.

Boutros Ghali does not particularly want to be liked either by the west or by other section of the world's governors. It was not by flattering people that he got to the top of the Egyptian foreign ministry and stayed there for so many years. Nor was it through flattery that he was able to take Sadat and Begin by the hand and bring them to Camp David. Boutros Ghali is certainly a supreme diplomat, but he does not possess the shady diplomatic attribute, that desire to please by bringing people together for a little while with promises that ultimately fail. He impresses by the depth of his knowledge, his sheer ability to run a travelling show – which is what the United Nations will have to be if it is to meet the challenge of today's uncertain world.

Even though the honeymoon never took place, Boutros Ghali's grasp of real

issues was bound to come up against the hidebound prejudices of ordinary politicians before too much water had passed under the bridges of the beautiful old cities of Europe where so many of them live and hold their courts. Rumour has it that Boutros Ghali refused to let his envoy, former US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, take part in Lord Carrington's London talks on Yugoslavia because the UN had not been offered the joint chairmanship.

And so what? The European Community has declared its interest in solving the Yugoslav problem because it is a European one, but it has lamentably failed to do so. Its members have not been able to agree on a single facet of policy towards Yugoslavia. Abuse was hurled at Germany at the beginning of the year because it declared its intention of recognising the individual members of the Yugoslav federation, and then its partners reluctantly followed. Now they are blaming Germany again because they say Bosnia-Herzegovina would never have become a theatre of war if it had not been recognised. There is little logic and no principle in such postures. Germany did what appeared then and now to be an elementary sign of encouragement to peoples fighting

for their freedom. And while some EC countries are sniping at Germany they ignore the fact that the Germans have been giving unlimited shelter to the refugees from this most dreadful conflict. It has not been amply publicised that Germany has taken in more than 200,000 of these unfortunate people and is ready to receive more; the only countries which have matched this in relation to their size are Austria and Hungary (with 50,000 each), Sweden (44,000) and Switzerland (30,000). Germany's EC partners are nowhere to be seen.

The European Community's purpose is to promote integration amongst its members and not to solve problems outside its borders. Why should it even attempt to do so when such action creates obvious and disgraceful disarray in its ranks? And why should it be so hesitant about recognising the supremacy of the United Nations in acting to bring peace to Yugoslavia? That is the purpose of the United Nations, and Boutros Ghali is the man who has been designated to implement it. It is the United Nations Organisation, not the European Community, which exists – in those ringing words dating from 1945 –

"to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

So it is hardly surprising that Boutros Ghali finds it demeaning that the world organisation should be asked by the European Community to help in bringing peace to Yugoslavia only when all else has failed. The secretary general is not enthusiastic about being on the receiving end of instructions from a Europeans – only conference held in London about what the United Nations should do to solve the crisis.

It is true, as the secretary general says, that the European Community has been making immense fuss about Yugoslavia and none at all about the desperate holocaust which is taking place in Somalia. The point that Boutros Ghali is trying to make – in characteristically dramatic terms – is that a choice should not be made amongst these problems, but that all of them must be dealt with, and at once, and together.

The only organisation which can do this is the United Nations, and the world body should be given every support in terms of human and financial resources

and in terms of diplomatic support. It must be universally recognised as the senior organisation for peacekeeping throughout the world – not a junior partner expected to take orders from a regional rich men's club like the European Community.

Secretary General Boutros Ghali has been rubbing some Europeans the wrong way. A number of western leaders want to hold centre-stage and are not used to seeing the United Nations as more than a convenient roof organisation. But if peace is ever to break out after the cold war it can only be via a strengthened United Nations and a strong and respected secretary general.

There is a whiff of Munich in the air. A desire for "peace in our time" at any price. A world eager to go about its business, looking neither right nor left. Avoiding the hard choices. The new world order needs a new ethic, a new sense of solidarity, expressed in a new United Nations Organisation. With a new secretary general ready to rise to the occasion.

Swiss Press Review

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Is Nothing Sacred?

Salman Rushdie

Salman Rushdie – in hiding for a year (now 3 years) since the late Ayatollah Khomeini condemned him to death over his novel *The Satanic Verses* – was unable to deliver his Herbert Read lecture in person.

Instead the lecture was delivered on his behalf by Harold Pinter, the playwright.

The lecture, entitled 'Is Nothing Sacred?', addressed the role of the novel and the world of the True Believer, with only glancing references to *The Satanic Verses*, the death threats to Mr Rushdie, or the campaign to prevent a paperback edition.

(Though delivered over two years ago we do not recall the lecture receiving much notice in the Indian Press. In the belief that *Freedom First* readers would be interested we reproduce the following excerpt published in *The Guardian Weekly*, February 18, 1990.

Between religion and literature, as between politics and literature, there is a linguistically-based dispute. But it is not a dispute of simple opposites. Because whereas religion seeks to privilege one language above all others, one set of values above all others, one text above all others, the novel has always been *about* the way in which different languages, values and narratives quarrel, and about the shifting relations between them, which are relations of power. The novel does not seek to establish a privileged language, but it insists upon the freedom to portray and analyse the struggle between the different contestants for such privileges.

Carlos Fuentes has called the novel "a privileged arena". By this he does not mean that it is the kind of holy space which one must put off one's shoes to enter; it is not an arena to revere; it claims no special rights *except the right to be the stage upon which the great debates of society can be conducted*. "The novel," Fuentes writes, "is born from the very fact that we do not understand one another, because unitary, orthodox language has broken down. Quixote and Sancho, the Shandy brothers, Mr and Mrs Karenin; their novels are the comedy (or the drama) of their misunderstandings. Impose a unitary language: you kill the novel, but you also kill the society." He then poses the question I have been asking myself throughout my life as a writer: *can the religious mentality survive outside of religious dogma and hierarchy?* Which is to say: can art be the third principle that mediates between the material and spiritual worlds; might it by "swallowing" both worlds, offer us something new, something that might even be called a secular definition of transcendence? I

Literature is the one place in any society where, within the secrecy of our own heads, we can hear voices talking about everything in every possible way. The reason for ensuring that privileged arena is preserved is not that writers want the absolute freedom to say and do whatever they please.

believe it can. I believe it must. And I believe that, at its best, it does.

What I mean by transcendence is that flight of the human spirit outside the confines of its material, physical existence which all of us, secular or religious, experience on at least a few occasions. Birth is a moment of transcendence which we spend our lives trying to understand. The exaltation of the act of love, the experience of joy and very possibly the moment of death are other such moments. The soaring quality of transcendence, the sense of being more than oneself, of being in some way joined to the whole of life, is by its nature short-lived. Not even the visionary or mystical experience ever lasts very long. It is for art to capture that experience, to offer it to, in the case of literature, its readers; to be, for a secular, materialist culture, some sort of replacement for what the love of god offers in the world of faith.

It is important that we understand how profoundly we all feel the needs that religion, down the ages, has satisfied. I would suggest these needs are of three types: firstly, the need to be given an articulation of our half-glimpsed knowledge of exaltation, of awe, of wonder; life is an awesome experience, and religion helps us understand why life so often makes us feel small, by telling us what we are *smaller than*; and, contrariwise, because we also have a sense of being special, of being *chosen*, religion helps us by telling us what we have been chosen by, and what for. Secondly, we need answers to the unanswerable: how did we get here? How did "here" get here in the first place? Is this, this brief life, all there is? How can it be? What would be the point of that? And, thirdly, we need codes to live by, "rules for every damn thing". The idea of god is at once a repository for our awestruck wonderment at life and an answer to the great questions of existence, and a rule-book, too. The soul needs all these explanations, but explanations of the heart.

It is also important to understand how often the language of secular, rationalist materialism has failed to answer these needs. As we witness the death of communism in central Europe, we cannot fail to observe the deep religious spirit with which so many of the makers of these revolutions are imbued, and we must concede that it is not only a particular political ideology that has failed, but the idea that men and women could ever define themselves in terms that exclude their spiritual needs.

It seems obvious, but relevant, to point out that in all the countries now moving towards freedom, art was repressed as viciously as was religion.

That the Czech revolution began in the theatres and is led by a writer is proof that people's spiritual needs, more than their material needs, have driven the commissars from power.

What appears plain is that it will be a very long time before the peoples of Europe will accept any ideology that claims to have a complete, totalised explanation of the world. Religious faith, profound as it is, must surely remain a private matter. This rejection of totalised explanations is the modern condition. And this is where the novel, created to discuss the fragmentation of truth, comes in.

The film director Luis Bunuel used to say: "I would give my life for a man who is looking for the truth. But I would gladly kill a man who thinks he has found the truth." (This is what we used to call a joke, before killing people for their ideas returned to the agenda.) The elevation of the quest for the Grail over the Grail itself, the acceptance that all that is solid *has* melted into air, that reality and morality are not givens but imperfect human constructs, is the point from which fiction begins.

Imagine this. You wake up one morning and find yourself in a large, rambling house. As you wander through it you realise it is so enormous that you will never know it all. In the house are people you know, family members, friends, lovers, colleagues; also many strangers. The house is full of activity: conflicts and seductions, celebrations and wakes. At some point you realise there is no way out. You find that you can accept this. The house is not what you'd have chosen, it's in fairly bad condition, the corridors are often full of bullies, but it will have to do. Then one day you enter an unimportant-looking little room. The room is empty, but there are voices in it, voices that seem to be whispering just to you. You recognise some of the voices, others are completely unknown to you. The voices are talking about the house, about everyone in it, about everything that is happening and has happened and should happen. Some of them speak exclusively in obscenities. Some are bitchy. Some are loving. Some are funny. Some are sad. The most interesting voices are all these things at once. You begin to go to the room more and more often. Slowly you realise that most of

the people in the house use such rooms sometimes. Yet the rooms are all discreetly positioned and unimportant-looking.

Now imagine that you wake up one morning and you are still in the large house, but all the voice-rooms have disappeared. It is as if they have been wiped out. Now there is nowhere in the whole house where you can go to hear voices talking about everything in every possible way. There is nowhere to go for the voices that can be funny one minute and sad the next, that can sound raucous and melodic in the course of the same sentence. Now you remember: there is no way out of this house. You look into the eyes of the people in the corridors family, lovers, friends, colleagues, strangers, bullies, priests. You see the same thing in everybody's eyes. How do we get out of here? It becomes clear that the house is a prison. People scream, and pound the walls. Men arrive with guns. The house begins to shake. You do not wake up. You are already awake.

Literature is the one place in any society where, within the secrecy of our own heads, *we can hear voices talking about everything in every possible way*. The reason for ensuring that that privileged arena is preserved is not that writers want the absolute freedom to say and do what ever they please. It is that we, all of us, readers and writers and citizens and generals and godmen, need that little, unimportant-looking room. We do not need to call it sacred, but we do need to remember that it is necessary.

"Everybody knows," wrote Saul Bellow in 'The Adventures Of Augie March', "there is no fineness or accuracy of suppression. If you hold down one thing, you hold down the adjoining." Wherever in the world the little room of literature has been closed, sooner or later the walls have come tumbling town.

Extracted from Salma. 1 Rushdie's Herbert Read Memorial Lecture, delivered on his behalf by Harold Pinter, at the Institute of Contemporary Arts.

Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.

— Reinhold Niebuhr

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BOOK REVIEWS

Imperfect, but Still a Democracy Free India: 45 Years After

INDIA'S DEMOCRACY — AN ANALYSIS OF CHANGING STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS edited by Atul Kohli; Orient Longman, New Delhi; 1991; pp. 334; Rs. 110

India's Democracy
An Analysis of Changing
State-Society Relations

Edited by Atul Kohli

India's success in maintaining democratic institutions for over four decades in the face of mass poverty, runaway population growth and a strife-ridden, backward society has always excited the curiosity of social scientists. The large number of books on this subject, written by both Indian and foreign scholars, testify to this. This book under review is a valuable addition to this corpus. It brings together eight papers presented at a conference on "India's Democracy" held at the Princeton University (USA) in March 1985. The book was first published in 1988 and this second edition carries an epilogue covering developments during Rajiv Gandhi's prime ministership.

In the editorial introduction, Atul Kohli (Assistant Professor of Politics & International Affairs at Princeton University) outlines the theoretical framework of the book. After examining several theories of democracy, Kohli formulates a synthetic perspective to adequately capture the specifics of Indian

democracy. This perspective stresses the relative autonomy of the state from society without denying the latter a significant role in shaping political structures and processes. The task of empirical analysis within such a state-society perspective is to judge the relative importance and precise mix of the competing variables.

The first three essays deal with the institutional aspects of India's democracy — leadership, the party system and the military. In his essay — "Political Leadership in India: Dimensions and Limits" — Henry Hart (Professor Emeritus of Political Science, University of Wisconsin, Madison) seeks to assess the quality of leadership in the post-Independence period. He examines the leaders' performance in maintaining institutions solving problems, integrating the nation; as also the strategies of winning candidates and securing power.

He finds that key state institutions have steadily deteriorated due to mismanagement by political leaders. Thus, constant political interference for narrow personal and partisan ends has reduced the police force to a corrupt, brutal, factionalised and communal agency, incapable of coping with the ever-increasing threats to law and order.

While institutional structures have weakened, the virtual eclipse of conciliar decision-making has left top leaders in a state of isolation. This has severely damaged their capacity to diagnose and resolve problems. The failure of Nehru's China policy and of Mrs. Gandhi's *Garibi Hatao* programme proves that this is true of even strong and popular leaders.

The leadership's performance in containing fissiparous tendencies has also declined as the spirit of pluralism and accommodation has given way to centralism and ham-handedness.

This should be evident from a comparison of the Centre's successful neutralisation of Tamil nationalism in the

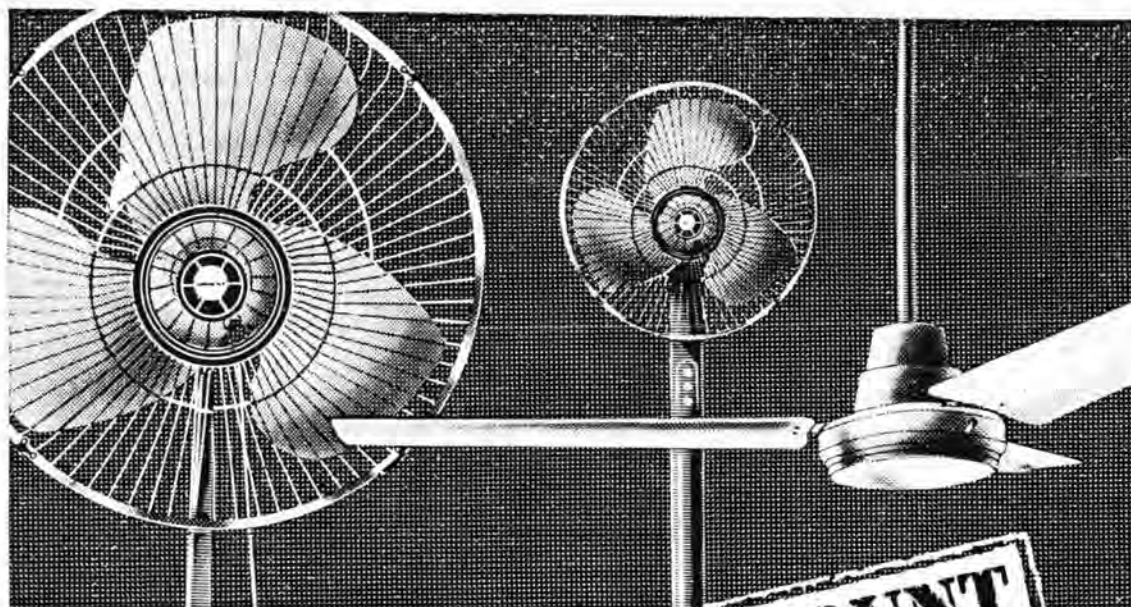
Atul Kohli

Atul Kohli is Assistant Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University. His publications include *The State and Poverty in India: The Politics of Reform* (Cambridge University Press, 1987) and an edited volume, *The State and Development in the Third World* (Princeton University Press, 1986). He is currently writing a book tentatively entitled, *Erosion of Authority in India: A Study of Political Change*. He is the Review Article Editor of *World Politics*.

1960s, and its current inability to defuse the ongoing crisis in Punjab. Elections have lost their vital democratic functions of giving mandates and of testing and training leaders, due to the practice of nominating pliant politicians to positions of power, which has become common since Mrs. Gandhi's time. The institutional route to power — gradual climbing, through party and government posts — is increasingly being replaced by dynastic succession and charismatic appeals to voters.

Prof. Hart makes the following suggestions to resolve the leadership crisis facing the country: a reconstruction of the institutions of politics and government, economic liberalisation to lighten the burdens of the state machinery and a national service programme for the youth, to foster a new generation of leaders.

This is a somewhat unoriginal but competent treatment of a familiar theme. However, it fails to give an adequately nuanced account of the chang-



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ing social bases, career profiles and political orientations of successive generations of leaders. Hence it has an air of distance and woodenness.

James Manor (Professor & Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex) examines the decay of the party system in his essay — "Parties and the Party System." He divides India's party politics into four phases. During the first phase from 1947 to 1967 a "dominant party system" prevailed. It was characterised by free competition among several parties, with the Indian National Congress enjoying a dominant position. The strength of the Congress lay in its internally differentiated structure, responsiveness to opposition parties and a capacity to accommodate diverse interests.

The 1967 elections in which the Congress lost power in six states and its subsequent split in 1969 marked the beginning of the second phase. The Congress lost its dominance and the party system became more competitive, especially at the state level. One unsavoury consequence of this greater fluidity was the politics of defection. Despite its victory in the 1971 election, the Congress was greatly weakened by Mrs. Gandhi's confrontationist attitude to the Opposition and her tendency to centralise power within the party and encourage factionalism. The Emergency (1975-77) dealt a further blow to the party.

Reviewed by Mangesh Kulkarni

The victory of the Janata Party in the 1977 election marked the inauguration of the third phase. The Janata experiment which lasted till 1979 proved both the rewards and fragility of opposition unity. Its failure brought the Congress back to power in the 1980 election. This phase witnessed the declining credibility of parties as effective instruments of governance and the turning away of people to non-party forms of organisation and mobilisation as in Assam and Punjab.

The return of the Congress to power did not stem but further aggravated its organisational decline. A new and dis-

concerting development was the calculated move of Mrs. Gandhi towards a Hindu chauvinist position as an electoral strategy. It had disastrous consequences in Punjab and Kashmir. The assassination of Mrs. Gandhi and the victory of the Congress under Rajiv Gandhi's leadership in the subsequent election in 1984 heralded a new phase. Rajiv's talk of re-vitalising and cleansing the party created a brief euphoria. Prof. Manor evinces cautious optimism. Later developments have justified the caution.

The author has adequately captured the changing political dynamics of the party system and especially of the Congress. However, his division of party politics into four phases is not entirely convincing. Thus, it is not clear why 1984 should be regarded as heralding a major change. In retrospect, the period from 1980 to 1989 shows a continuous pattern broken in the latter year through the onset of the first minority government at the Centre.

In his essay — "The Military and Indian Democracy" — Stephen Cohen (Professor of Political Science, University of Illinois) examines the continuity and change in the political role of the armed forces. Considering the proneness of Third World countries to military rule, the political neutrality of the military in India, remains a major achievement. This can be traced both to the British legacy and the policy framework created by Nehru.

Unfortunately, developments in the post-Nehru phase have greatly weakened the conditions necessary for keeping the military aloof from politics. The increasing use of the army to curb civil disorder, arbitrary political interference in top appointments and the alienation of the Sikhs (especially after Operation Bluestar) are the most striking of the adverse trends. They bode ill at a time when the officer corps shows unprecedented vulnerability to the lure of corruption and to political pressures. The overall decline of the political system makes matters worse.

On the credit side, the structure of the civil-military system is fundamentally sound and the military openly dis-misses the idea of governing India's complex and sprawling polity. Prof. Cohen's *obiter dictum* about a switch-over to the presidential system increas-

ing the likelihood of the politicisation of the military, is noteworthy. On the whole, this is an informative and balanced, if slightly prolix, analysis of an important topic which has not received the kind of scholarly scrutiny it deserves at the hands of Indian political scientists.

The next two essays delineate the changing contours of ethnic politics in Assam and Punjab, within a broad, national context. Jyotirindra Das Gupta (Professor of Political Science, University of California, Berkeley) focuses on the developmental implications of ethnic mobilisation in his essay — "Ethnicity, Democracy and Development in India — Assam in a General Perspective". He points out that contrary to conventional wisdom, the process of development sharpens ethnic cleavages. In a multi-ethnic country like India which has followed a state led path of development, this generates ethnic movements demanding a larger share of the economic pie from the government. The answer lies in satisfying these demands without unduly straining the national resources.

Such an 'inclusionary' strategy was used by the centre in dealing with the movements for regional autonomy in the 1950s and the 1960s. The resulting linguistic reorganisation of states facilitated overall national integration as also empowerment of non-Brahmin caste groups and economic development in the newly formed states. The switch-over to an 'exclusionary' strategy in the next decade exacerbated ethnic tensions in several parts of the country. Assam is a case in point.

The neglect of the long-standing demands of the native Assamese for control of the state's natural resources, special assistance for poverty eradication and greater representation in the administration generated a militant movement in the late 1970s under the leadership of the All Assam Students Union and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad. Its immediate target was the Muslim immigrants from Bangladesh. The centre's policy of 'divide and rule' culminated in the Nellie massacre and the Pyrrhic victory of the Congress in the 1983 state election. The Assam accord signed by Rajiv Gandhi in 1985 and the subsequent electoral success of the Assam Gana Parishad signalled a belated return to the 'inclu-

sionary' strategy.

Prof. Das Gupta's distinction between the 'inclusionary' and 'exclusionary' strategies, though valid, is unoriginal. His assertion of a positive correlation between the reorganisation of states and development, needs substantiation. His reservations regarding the economic costs of the 'inclusionary' strategy and its tendency to incite sub-regional ethnic tension (recent developments in Assam amply bear this out) seem more convincing.

In his essay — "The Punjab Crisis and the Unity of India" — Paul Brass (Professor of Political Science & South Asian Studies, University of Washington) echoes the 'inclusionary'/'exclusionary' dichotomy. He argues that in the first two decades after Independence — ethnic demands were accommodated successfully in keeping with a set of 'unwritten rules'. Thus, only the secular, non-secessionist and reasonable demands of a group were conceded with due regard to the competing demands of other groups.

The abandoning of these rules, together with the centralisation of power and arbitrary intervention in state politics since 1970 caused some old, unresolved demands and new ones to combine in an explosive fashion. This is precisely what happened in Punjab. When the Sikh movement for autonomy gained momentum in 1960-61 Nehru and the state Congress leader Kairon strengthened the moderate and secular movement leader Sant Fateh Singh against his extremist rival Master Tara Singh. Kairon enjoyed considerable leeway. Eventually the Punjabi Suba was conceded in 1966. The 'unwritten rules' were observed in this period.

Developments in the early 1980s saw a reversal of this pattern. Sant Bhindranwale — a revivalist preacher — was supported by the Congress to undercut the Akali Dal. The Home Minister, Zail Singh, also used Bhindranwale as a counterweight to his factional rival Darbara Singh who was the Chief Minister of Punjab. Zail Singh and Sanjay Gandhi condoned his criminal activities. They belatedly realised their folly when he took sanctuary in the Golden Temple and began to support terrorist groups demanding a sovereign state of Khalistan.

During the 1982-83 negotiations

with the Akali Dal, Mrs. Gandhi conceded their religious demands and not the secular ones (relating to problems left unresolved in 1966) such as the transfer of Chandigarh. The tragic consequences — Operation Bluestar and Mrs. Gandhi's assassination — are well-known. It was only in the ill-fated Rajiv-Longowal accord of 1985 that the secular demands were incorporated.

Though the ground covered by Prof. Brass, as well as his analysis are familiar, what one admires is his fine-grained portrayal of the intricacies of party and factional politics leading up to the current crisis in the beleaguered state of Punjab.

The last three essays examine various aspects of the role played by class, caste and tribal formations in Indian politics. In a tightly argued essay "Dominant Proprietary Classes and India's Democracy" Pranab Bardhan (Professor of Economics, University of California, Berkeley) explains the correlation of class forces underlying Indian democracy. He views the industrial capitalists, rich farmers, white-collar workers and professionals as almost equally strong 'dominant proprietary classes.'

These classes have maintained democratic processes as they enable them to maintain their tacit coalition through mutual adjustment and strategic alliances with large lower class/ethnic groups. The Congress system in particular provided a resilient mechanism to this coalition for conflict management and transactional negotiations. However, this mechanism broke down in the 1970s and the economic costs of the coalition's ruling strategy began to mount.

The proliferation of subsidies and grants to placate alliance partners, the brokerage fees charged by political middlemen and the increasing cost of containing the restive lower classes cut into the 'surplus' available for public capital formation. Public sector inefficiency, political instability and a crisis of legitimacy were the results. The ruling coalition's authoritarian strategy, manifested in the Emergency, could not cope with the situation. The new economic policy seeking to increase productivity through the dismantling of many of the old patronage structures is the currently favourite solution.

Prof. Bardhan's insightful, if some-

what overschematic essay lays bare the class dynamics of Indian politics. His emphasis on the far from immaculate conception of the new economic policy and the roadblocks it faces — opposition of the agrarian lobby and the spectre of unemployment — is particularly apt.

Francine Frankel (Professor of Political Science & South Asian Studies, University of Pennsylvania) takes up the vexed issue of reservations for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in her essay — "Middle Classes and Castes in Indian Politics: Prospects for Political Accommodation." The OBCs, who occupied an intermediate position between the 'twice-born' Forward Castes (FCs) and the untouchables in the traditional caste hierarchy began to pose a challenge to the socio-political domination of the FCs only in the early decades of this century. Reservations in educational institutions and government services have served as a major weapon in their ongoing struggle.

The author traces the contrasting patterns of OBC politics in the South (Tamil Nadu & Andhra Pradesh) and the North (U.P. and Bihar). Traditionally, Brahmins, who constituted only 3% of the population were the only sizeable 'twice-born' caste group in the South. Their share of landed property was relatively low. However, during the British period they went to the cities, took up English education and began to domi-

The demands made by India's various socio-economic groups are likely to increase as democracy continues to spread throughout a rigid hierarchical society. Yet effective democratic government requires that citizen activism be channeled through coherent institutions, and it is far from certain that institutional development will be able to keep up with the proliferation of popular demands.

ATUL KOHLI in 'Indian Democracy: Stress and Resilience', *Journal of Democracy*, January 1992

nate the professions and government services.

This, together with the Brahmin's blatant assertion of status superiority began to irk the upper strata of the OBCs such as the Vellalas in Madras Presidency. They took the lead in organising the OBCs to press for reservations by forming the Justice Party in 1916. The success of this initiative and the setting up of a similar, more broad-based party (Dravida Kazhagam) by Naicker in 1944 generated a momentum which culminated in the political hegemony of the successor parties — DMK and AIDMK — in Tamil Nadu after 1967. In Andhra Pradesh the OBCs have secured political representation and reservations through the Congress and the Telugu Desam.

The southern pattern of mobilisation has primarily benefited the OBC elites. It has in no way challenged the deep-rooted structures of economic dominance which oppress the OBC masses. In the absence of basic reforms, such as altering the pattern of land ownership, the masses have had to survive on the crumbs of populist welfare measures.

OBC mobilisation was hampered in the North due to the greater diversity and proportion (20% in UP and 14% in Bihar) of the FCs (Brahmins, Thakurs, Bhumihars, Rajputs) and the latter's stranglehold on landed property. The OBCs were weak, divided and dependent on the FCs. This situation continued even after Independence as the dominant party — the Congress — was controlled by the FCs. However, the abolition of Zamindari in the 1950s strengthened the OBCs and they began to organise.

The defeat of the Congress in 1967 created an opening for the political assertion of the OBCs, which culminated in the victory of the pro-OBC Janata Party in 1977. They secured reservations in both U.P. and Bihar in this period. Though the return of the Congress in 1980 was a set-back, the Mandal Commission Report submitted in the same year (recommending 27% reservations for OBCs in the Central government) created the possibility of a pan-Indian OBC mobilisation against upper caste hegemony.

The author views the realisation of this possibility as the beginning of far-reaching changes in the distribution of

power and status prevailing in the country. In view of her own convincing demonstration of the manner in which the route of reservations has led to populist cooptation in the South and considering the tortuous course of the struggle over the implementation of the Mandal Commission Report, this optimism seems misplaced.

Ghanshyam Shah (Director, Centre for Social Studies, Surat) analyses a variety of mass movements in his essay — "Grass-Roots Mobilization in Indian Politics." These movements result from the inability of the existing institutional structure to articulate the demands of the numerous oppressed strata. The author divides them into two categories: ethnic and economic. The first category includes struggles launched by OBCs, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

The OBCs and SCs resorted first to sanskritisation and then to political mobilisation centering on the demand for reservations to improve their position. The relative success of the latter strategy must be weighed against its woefully limited contribution to the uplift of the OBC/SC masses. The STs have expressed their alienation and anger against exploitation through secessionist movements in the North-East (eg Nagaland) and movements for autonomy as in the 'Jharkhand' region. These have been contained through a combination of repression and appeasement.

Agricultural labourers and small farmers constitute a large majority of the rural poor. They suffer exploitation at the hands of the affluent landed elites. Their struggle for land, higher wages and an end to exploitation was supported by the Communist Party in the 1940s and the Naxalites in the 1960s. Neither could sustain the militancy or make long-lasting changes on a significant scale. The state has responded through repression, cosmetic land reforms and rural development programmes. The agrarian sub-proletariat remains high and dry.

The cause of this under-class and of other marginalised groups such as forest-dwellers and traditional fishermen has been taken up by a large number of grass-roots 'action groups' in the

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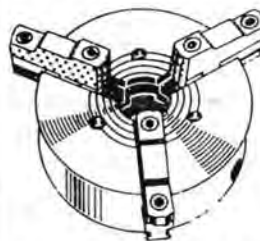


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1970s and the 1980s. They have supported the U.P. forest-dwellers 'Chipko andolan' against the excessive commercial felling of trees and the fishermen's struggle against mechanised fishing by big business in Goa and Kerala. However, even these non-party groups have proved vulnerable to the overall ruling class strategy of suppression and cooptation.

By adopting a 'loose' definition of grass-roots mobilisation, Prof. Shah casts his net wide to capture disparate strands of mass politics. The result is a certain lack of analytical rigour and depth. But the depressing picture of the subaltern predicament which emerges from this essay should have a salutary effect on the starry-eyed champions of India's march towards globalisation and capitalist affluence.

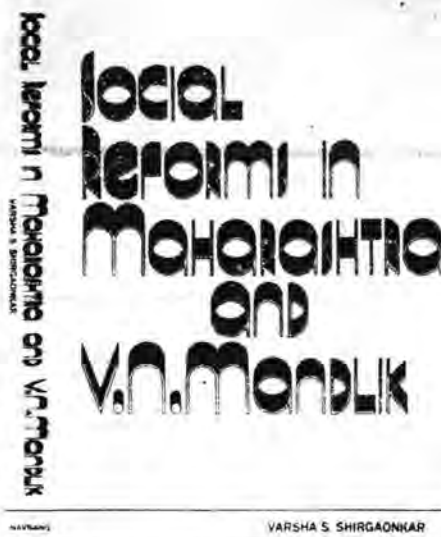
In the last two chapters, the editor draws together the various threads of the individual contributions and examines certain significant political developments in the late 1980s. The major conclusion to which the book leads is that the combination of de-institutionalisation and the increasing demands made by mobilised groups on the state has brought about a crisis of democratic governability in India. Events since the book was first published — the growing menace of terrorism in Punjab and Kashmir, the Ayodhya dispute and the spreading tentacles of the Hindu chauvinist BJP, the violent Mandal agitations, discord over the New Economic Policy and succession of minority governments at the Centre — amply confirm this diagnosis.

Though slightly dated and not without gaps (there is no independent discussion of communication and the women's movement does not even find a mention) the book serves as a useful introduction to important aspects of the state-society interaction and its implications for democratic politics in India. As such, it may be of particular interest to political scientists, sociologists, journalists and social activists.

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An Advocate of Gradual Reform

SOCIAL REFORMS IN MAHARASHTRA AND MR. V.N. MANDLIK by Dr. Varsha Shirgaonkar; Navrang, New Delhi; 1989; pp.157; Rs.150



Mr. V.N. Mandlik (1833-89) was an important social and political leader of 19th century Maharashtra, in many respects a precursor of the extremist leader Lokamanya Tilak. He forcefully expressed his views on contemporary social, educational, economic and political issues. But students of modern Indian history have neglected his contributions.

The book is divided into eight chapters including an appraisal. Mr. Mandlik was essentially a conservative who did not want sudden changes. He did not approve those reformers who wanted to plan society on rational foundations instead of allowing it evolve naturally, unconsciously, drawing nourishment from the deep roots of tradition.

Mandlik was typical of the Maharashtrian reformation movement and adopted the moderate path of reform. All of them worked on the line of least social resistance and were no iconoclasts. But even among them V.N. Mandlik was a conservative and

opposed many well-meaning reforms because he had apprehensions that reforms would cause anarchy.

Mr. Mandlik, like his younger contemporaries took to modern education after receiving some exposure to traditional instruction. Subsequently he joined the educational service. Later he passed the High Court Pleaders examination and began his legal practice in Bombay. During this period he wrote a number of articles on different subjects and started his own newspaper *Native Opinion* to educate Indians on social, political and economic matters and provide them with a platform to publish their own views on important issues. In 1874, he was nominated to the Bombay Legislative Council which he served till 1884. In 1884 Lord Ripon nominated him to the Imperial Council. During this period his scholarly achievements were recognised and along with Bhau Daji Lad he laid the foundations of historical and Indological researches in India.

Steering a middle course between reform and orthodoxy, Mandlik defended the Hindu faith against the Christian onslaught. While not opposed to social reforms he wanted to reform Hinduism without harming Hindus. He supported female education but was no supporter of the Age of Consent bill. He opposed Malbari's efforts and gave ridiculous reasons in his dread of sudden social change. He opposed Rakhmabai's stand against her husband (wanting separation) on the ground that this would disturb the sacred institution of marriage among the Hindus. He was of the view that an alien government should not enact laws in matters social and religious.

An ardent and staunch nationalist, his speeches and writings showed his deep love for his country. For securing the rights of the Indians he advocated constitutional agitation through well-organised political associations and

Reviewed by
Ashok Chausalkar

Varsha Shirgaonkar

Dr (Mrs) Varsha Shirgaonkar teaches in the Department of History, Ramnarain Ruia College, Bombay. Her doctoral dissertation was on "Conservatism in Maharashtra: Vishvanath Narayan Mandlik".

She contributes to the Quarterly Journals published by the Mythic Society (Bangalore) and the Bharat Itihas Samshodhan Mandal (Pune).

Dr. Shirgaonkar's field of interest is nineteenth century Maharashtra.

duced for the betterment of the cultivators. Mandlik also opposed the Indian Factories Act 1881 which put restrictions on child labour. He thought that its passage would hurt the growing cotton industry. He even saw a Manchester hand behind this bill. Thus Mandlik was a nationalist who opposed the drain of Indian wealth abroad yet he was oblivious of the plight of peasants and workers who suffered under the new forces released by colonial rule.

Mandlik was a great supporter of Lord Ripon and his local self government proposals. He showed a marked preference for the Western democratic system of government and took part in the civic affairs of Bombay city. He was a Justice of the Peace of the Bombay Municipal Corporation and often resented the wasteful expenditure of municipal finances. He was prophetic in condemning the commencement of the Backbay works as the beginning of

the ruin of Bombay, physically, morally, and above all politically. These works he thought would disturb the ecological balance of Bombay. In 1879, he was elected Chairman of the Bombay Municipal Corporation and played an important role in the civic affairs of the city. Mandlik had great faith in village panchayats. He held that municipal feelings were deeply rooted in Indian minds and that the village communities were little republics and were the most abiding of Indian institutions. He was an advocate of local autonomy.

Dr Varsha Shirgaonkar has done a great service by putting together the different strands in the social and political ideas of V.N. Mandlik. She has a good command over the subject and her critical comments enhance the value of the work.

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played a key-role in reviving and revitalising the Bombay Association in 1867. He was also a prominent member of the Bombay branch of the East India Association founded by Dadabhai. He also worked in the Bombay Presidency Association. He was sympathetic to freedom movements in the different parts of the world. He took part in the activities of the Congress party but by and large he was apathetic to it, because it tried to bypass his friend Mr. S.N. Banerjee. It is rightly pointed by Dr. Shirgaonkar that Mandlik might not have liked Hume's paternalistic attitude towards Indians and the 'safety valve' theory of the origin of the Congress. Had he lived longer he would perhaps have joined the ranks of the extremists.

Mandlik wrote many articles and papers on India's economic affairs. He held the view that the root cause of India's poverty and backwardness was the drain of her wealth by her colonial masters. Therefore, he advocated the cause of *Swadeshi*. He supported the rights of *Khats* and hence he opposed the bill that sought to regulate the *Khoti* system. Dr. Shirgaonkar has rightly pointed out that apart from his social conservatism, his feudalistic interest also played a key role in his opposition. As a matter of fact, the bill was intro-

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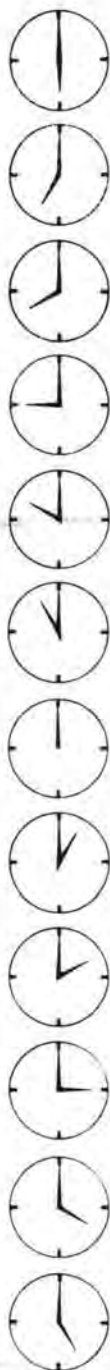
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