

A LIBERAL QUARTERLY

Freedom First

October-December 2002 Number 455

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Freedom First

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Freedom First speaks for the silent majority - the majority that wants to be left in peace to pursue its goal of improving its quality of life, but has been suffering in silence, the indignities heaped on it by insensitive governments who have abrogated to themselves the right to decide what is good for the people. In the process, the whole country has been turned into a cesspool of corruption. Public morality and character have reached an all-time low.

Freedom First affirms that much of the unrest and ferment in our society is a direct result of excessive State intervention in the day-to-day lives of our people. While the people's initiative has been stifled, the economy is in shambles. The Journal believes that while India needs a strong government that ensures the rule of law what India does not need is a meddling government - the system so far that has led to impoverishment, insecurity and instability.

Freedom First therefore stands for minimum government and maximum freedom, tempered by a sense of individual responsibility, in which the people's genius has a fair opportunity to develop and grow.

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Freedom First

A LIBERAL QUARTERLY
50TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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We dedicate this
Commemorative Volume

marking the

Fiftieth Anniversary of **Freedom First**

and the

First National Convention of

the Indian Liberal Group

To

India's Liberals

who pioneered the freedom struggle and to

Liberals in free India

who have sought to

keep alive

the right of the Individual to

freedom and dignity.

Between Ourselves

We have pleasure in presenting you with, what we consider is, a collector's item: A selection of articles from *Freedom First*, published in the last fifty years. We were actually planning a 200-page 50th anniversary issue. We had to reduce it to less than half that number because of the niggardly response to our appeal for advertising support. To the few who responded our grateful thanks.

Our grateful thanks also to Dr. Mary Thomas, this issue's Guest Editor, who went through every page of *Freedom First* beginning June 1952 and ending July 2002. She selected articles twice the number seen in the following pages. To her our sincere regrets in not being able to publish all that she would have liked us to.

To Mr. Narendra Kotak and his team at Shubham Print & Web our sincere thanks for burning the midnight oil in producing this issue.

And to Mr. Gadgil and his team at Kaiser-E-Hind Private Ltd. for re-scheduling their work to print this issue in time.

If we are of the superstitious kind we would say that the Bollywood cover story is jinxed. It was first planned for October 2001 but had to be put off when the September 11 tragedy intervened. This time it is not a tragedy but an occasion for celebration that compelled us to put the Bollywood story back on the shelf. The occasion: Celebrating the First National Convention of the Indian Liberal Group. As the only Liberal Quarterly in the country, we could not keep away and so we decided to join the celebrations at Hyderabad where the Convention takes place on December 6 and 7, 2002. We present this special 50th anniversary issue to the delegates with our greetings and congratulations, mindful of the fact that this is the first Liberal Convention being held in 75 years. The last one was in 1925 under the banner of the Indian Liberal Federation and the presidency of the Rt.Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastry.

Our next Cover Feature

IN FREE INDIA - ONLY POLITICIANS, NO STATESMEN. ONLY NETAS NO LEADERS

You can send your contribution by email (preferred) at freedom@vsnl.com or on a floppy disk (Word 95) or by fax 022 2284 3416. And if none of this is possible, by ordinary post.

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Editor

A Commemorative Volume to mark a Double Event

The Fiftieth Anniversary

The First National Convention

of

of the

Freedom First



Hyderabad, December 6-7, 2002.

Fifty Years of *Freedom First*

The Second World War was followed by the 'Cold War'. The contest between the two superpowers the United States and the Soviet Union was a struggle between a free society and a closed one. Between democracy (in the real meaning of the word – I mention this in parenthesis because the communist countries called their regimes "Peoples" Democracies) and totalitarianism. It manifested itself in almost every field of human endeavour. One of which was in the realm of ideas. And it is in this area that Minoo Masani along with Jayaprakash Narayan, A.D.Gorwala, Purshottamdas Tricumdas and a whole host of eminent Indians joined issue with the international communist movement of which the Indian communists were a part.

Freedom First, a monthly of 16 pages took on the task of educating the people of India on the real nature of communism and the virtues of an open society. The little journal kept at this task for the next 33 years until the collapse of the Soviet Union. In 1985 *Freedom First* turned itself into a quarterly journal espousing the cause of Liberalism.

Whether tirelessly carrying on its crusade against communism or as a Liberal journal attempting to instill the values of individual freedom and limited government, *Freedom First* never minced words or sought to be 'politically correct'.

It was imperative to have such a movement creating an atmosphere of freedom in every part of life – creating an open society where people could feel free to bring their concerns and anxieties and debate over them. Their allegiance would be only to the liberties of the mind. The movement for cultural freedom draws its inspiration from India's glorious traditions. This is how *Freedom First* emerged as an organ of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom (ICCF), and later of the Democratic Research Service (DRS). With the disintegration of the Soviet Union and, as a consequence of the international communist conspiracy itself, DRS was disbanded and *Freedom First* reverted as the organ of the ICCF. Starting out fifty years ago as a monthly journal of twelve pages it grew in size to sixteen pages in 1958 and to a quarterly publication since 1985.

Freedom First is a kaleidoscope through which

the world comes alive to the reader in all its hues and shades leaving nothing significant. It is a treat to the student of art, literature as well as to historians, statesmen, political activists, social workers to the young and old alike. It has always been critical of governments and individuals who are corrupt and authoritarian. It has also acknowledged the courage and dedication of persons small and big who have risked their lives to uphold the values and principles they hold dear.

Freedom First fought collectivist thinking and dictatorship of any kind both at home and abroad. During the emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi it kept freedom alive and became part of the Press she could not whip. It remained critical of Nehru's foreign policy of neutralism and his prevarication when the Soviet Union's Red Army invaded Czechoslovakia and Hungary and the invasion of Tibet by China. It invariably took up the cause of people who were oppressed in any part of the world. The journal brought to focus issues on nuclear tests, environment, corruption in government, education, Kashmir, Centre-State relations, communalism, the rights of minorities among others.

The journal was brought out under the guidance of versatile editors belonging to differing ideological persuasions but united in their love of freedom. These included Dinkar Sakrikar, a socialist, Mr. V. B. Karnik the eminent trade unionist who edited the journal for well over a decade and was a pillar of strength to the journal as Secretary of the DRS till his demise in 1989, Nissim Ezekiel the poet and, of course Minoo Masani. It is refreshing to read the regular features that have earned a reputation for high standards such as its book reviews, debate and analysis of current issues, Masani's column 'Between You and Me and the Lamp Post', With Many Voices and feedback columns from the readers. The youth of to-day will find it a unique experience to go through the pages of *Freedom First* written by a galaxy of men and women who provoke and inspire by their dedication and commitment to causes, their courage of conviction, sheer simplicity and goodness by which they enrich the society they live in – a fast dwindling species!

Mary Thomas
Guest Editor

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The Universality of Human Values

M. R. Masani

In the Presidential Address delivered a few days back at the Annual Meeting of the British Association by Professor A. V. Hill, he took a step further the familiar proposition that Science has put in Man's hand more power than he has the wisdom to use. Dealing in particular with the problem of food and population, which is most acute in countries like India, Professor Hill asked whether Human Rights extended to unlimited reproduction with a consequent obligation falling on those more prudent. This is a question to which I, for one, would hesitate to venture an answer more specific than that given by Mahatma Gandhi in a wider context, namely, that each right carries with it a corresponding obligation. Certainly, all in India who ponder that country's massive problems realize that the most serious attention needs to be devoted to the rectification through an all-sided approach, of the prevailing unbalance between production and population. An International Conference on Planned Population, which is due to meet in Bombay later this year and in which Dr. Margaret Sanger and other pioneers in the field will participate, is only one of the many signs that we in India are not altogether unaware of the pressing problem by drawing pointed attention to which Professor Hill performed a public service.

As Professor Hill himself went on to state, the problem he raised is not confined to India nor to food. The wider question of what is the purpose of human life on earth is involved. The scientist is only the expert witness; the entire community is the judge; and to help in expressing that moral judgement is, according to Professor Hill, the "compelling duty of a good citizen".

One thing is clear, as indeed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations recognizes, and this is that Human Rights must be universally recognized and applied. If any attempt were to be made to restrict them to any narrower circle, they would cease to be human and indeed in some measure become exploitative. Obviously as this may sound, there is reason to believe that the universality of Human Values needs to be constantly re-asserted.

In the *New Fabian Essays*, alongside of much that is reasonable and humane, Mr. R. H. S. Crossman propounds a thesis that calls for analysis. Having made it clear that he regards totalitarian Communism as a reactionary force which the peoples of the Atlantic community must resist, Mr. Crossman proceeds to the assumption that, to quote his own words, "the coolie in Malaya, or for that matter the tribesman in Nigeria does not want *either* liberty, equality and fraternity *or* the dictatorship of the proletariat. He is below the level of such political aspirations," says Mr. Crossman. He then asks his readers to join him in accepting "both intellectually and emotionally the fact that Communism outside Europe is still a liberative force". We are then brought to a remarkable conclusion: "The American isolationist," writes Mr. Crossman, "who reacts so violently against the gigantic bill of rearmament and foreign aid, is nearer the tradition of Americanism than the New Deal prophets of America's world-wide responsibilities." Americans should, therefore, be encouraged, says Mr. Crossman, "to take the risk in Asia and Africa of leaving unfilled the 'political vacuum' left by the dismantling of the old European empires ... We are opposed" writes Mr. Crossman, "to Russian expansion but also to American victory."

Whatever the motivation of this line of thought may be, its implications are unfortunately hard to mistake. First, that Human Values are different for the peoples of Western Europe and North America on the one hand and for the peoples of the underdeveloped countries of Asia and Africa on the other. Secondly, that the claims of bread and freedom are antithetical and should in the case of the underdeveloped countries be resolved in favour of bread. Thirdly, that the West should write off these countries and these peoples and do nothing to protect them from being taken over by Communist expansion and aggression.

Here then, from a leading spokesman of "left" wing Socialism in the West comes a strange echo of Rudyard Kipling "East is East and West is West"; East of Suez, "there ain't no Ten Commandments"; and what

is reaction and tyranny for the European and American is liberation and progress for the "lesser breeds without the law".

Is there perchance any truth in this assertion that the masses of illiterate and underprivileged people in Asia and Africa are just empty stomachs and hungry food? The facts testify precisely to the contrary. While it may be true that some left wing intellectuals in India, as elsewhere, are obsessed with the desirability of the Soviet Model Five-Year Plans and of what Lewis Mumford has called "giantism", the common people in India are much more attached to such things as their traditional way of life, their religions and their places of worship, their families and their homes, their cattle and their farms. While the Communist Party of India has attracted a section of the English speaking intelligentsia and is today more entrenched among its ranks that it is among classes less privileged, the Indian masses on the other hand have, by their unique response over three decades to Mahatma Gandhi shown that the man who evokes a response in their hearts is the one who talks to them of non-material values like God, Love, Truth, Human Brotherhood and the Equality of the untouchable Harijan and the proud Brahmin.

Gandhi represents the complete antithesis to the Communist and has been recognized as such in the Moscow press and radio over three decades. The Communist swears by dialectical materialism – matter is the essence, the mind a by-product; Gandhi preaches the supremacy of spirit, of mind over matter. To the Communist, the end justifies the means; to Gandhi the means are everything – means and ends are like the seed and the tree; and so Gandhi pronounced Soviet Communism to be "repugnant to India". Stalin preaches the need to hate the class and national enemy; Gandhi the need to love all. Communism seeks to centralize and collectivize everything; Gandhi preaches the need to decentralize and distribute power both politically and economically. The Communist glorifies the State; Gandhi, conscious of the distinction drawn by Reinhold Niebuhr between Moral Man and Immoral Society, stresses the individual as an end in himself. Identifying himself with the lowliest in the scale of Caste – the Harijan or untouchable – Gandhi recalls the words of Him who said: "As long as you did it to one of *these my least brethren*, you did it to me".

Those who today work for the lowliest of our

people cannot escape the spirit of Gandhi. Only last month Jayaprakash Narayan wrote: "For many years I have worshipped at the shrine of the goddess Dialectical Materialism, which seemed to me intellectually more satisfying than any other philosophy. But while the main quest of philosophy remains unsatisfied, it has become patent to me that materialism of any sort robs man of the means to be truly human ... It is clearer today than ever that social reconstruction is impossible without human reconstruction ... Only when materialism is transcended does individual man come into his own and become an end in himself," concludes Jayaprakash. It is obvious then that for India the only genuine, the only Indian social revolution is the one that Gandhi commenced.

I have felt it essential to stress the universality of human values so rudely questioned by Mr. Crossman because it is only too likely that his assumptions are not confined to the Bevanites in Britain and that they might indeed be shared by many men and women of goodwill in the United States. Let us put bread into the hungry mouths of the Asian masses, let us fill their empty stomachs, and we shall save Asia from Communism.

Now, this line of thought is, in my view, fundamentally fallacious. Man does not live by bread alone – not even the brown or yellow or black man. Empty minds and souls provide as good a breeding ground for Communism as empty stomachs. Czechoslovakia did not go under the Iron Curtain because its people were groaning in starvation in the months that preceded the *coup d'etat* of February 1948. The model housing of Socialist Vienna provided no deterrent to Dolfuss and then to Hitler. How mistaken have been proved those prophets who foretold that once Iran lost the revenues that came to her from oil and felt the pinch, she would be brought to her senses. It would seem then that the lesson that Peter Drucker taught in his book *The End of Economic Man* is all too easily forgotten.

What decides whether a people will adhere to Democracy or succumb to Communism is primarily whether or not they believe in another ideology superior to Communism, whether or not they have the will to resist, and whether or not they possess the leadership that will guide them to do so.

Asia is today asserting not only its right to economic prosperity and progress but even more to

equality of status in the world family, to self-respect and dignity, to racial equality and the end of discrimination.

Surveys of opinion among industrial workers made in America in recent years have shown that in listing the priorities among incentives the American worker is inclined to place wages somewhere near the bottom of the list. It is the non-material incentives that take priority. This is true of our worker in India.

If I have stressed non-material values and incentives as against material ones, it is not that I am insensible to the value that material things and their possession have in providing a fuller life and greater dignity to the human being. Nor is this to be construed as a plea that the United States should go slow on economic aid to the under-developed countries. On the contrary, I have been one of those in India who were for the acceptance of United States economic aid even before it became generally acceptable. Nor am I suggesting that America should stop rearming for the collective security of the free world against totalitarian aggression. On the contrary, I know that, to the extent that America rearms and reasserts the strength of the free world, she defends us who are militarily weaker, whether we know it or not. I do, however, urge the need to follow up economic and military co-operation on the ideological plane.

Mr. Arthur Goodfriend in his significant book *The Only War We Seek*, makes a similar plea. Writes Mr. Goodfriend: "They (the Chinese Communists) reached the people by means of education and political indoctrination. We tried too often to win them with charity ... We can, as we did in China, keep mum about the shameful record of Russian Communism. Or we can attack the soft underbelly of Communism by reciting its record on the values most precious to Asians and others – religion, the family, national independence and the ownership of the land ... Unless we are prepared to face the problem, the United States and the free world may be betrayed into a grievous error. The governments of underdeveloped peoples may rally to our side – but behind this façade the people may remain aloof and even antagonistic". Thus Mr. Goodfriend.

There is no country in the world today so well placed to lead the social revolution in Asia as the United States of America. Professor M. A. Lineberger on the basis of his own personal experience in the Far East, presents us with a paradox, "The Americans believe

in spiritual things," writes Professor Lineberger, "but they try to buy them by material means – by dollars, by gifts, by aid. The Communists believe in material things, but they offer people something to join, something to do, something to fight. We Americans offer property; the Communists offer a reason to being alive ... People who join the Communist side feel that they are needed, that the Communists want them. You could not join the American side, if you were an Asian. There isn't anything to join". How very true.

Neither militarily, nor ideologically, nor morally, can one part of humanity afford to write off any other. If it was true in the time of Abraham Lincoln that no nation could be half slave and half free, it is equally true today in this shrinking world that we cannot have a world that is half slave and half free. More than ever is it true today that as the English poet, John Donne, wrote: "No man is an Island, intire of it self; every man is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine, if a Clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well as if a Mannor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the Bell tolls; it tolls for thee".

[Freedom First November 1952]

Kudos from Professor N. G. Ranga

Let me congratulate you and the Democratic Research Service for having continued to publish the *Freedom First* for all these 200 issues. You are entirely justified in claiming "for over 16 years the *Freedom First* has held aloft the banner of freedom and democracy". I think it was in 1951 that the Democratic Research Service published in a book-form the speeches made by me in Parliament and by Mr. Masani, Dr. Kunzru, Shyamaprasad Mukherjee and P. Y. Deshpande, criticising the policies of Nehru over Tibet. From that time, it has gone on warning our people against the wrong policies of Nehru and Congress Government in international affairs.

You have served not only the cause of democracy but also independent trade unionism for these decades and we are grateful to you. I wish all success to *Freedom First* and also to Liberalism. We are all beholden to that tradition. It may interest you to learn that whenever I have to explain to foreigners when I am abroad, what our party's name means, I tell them that it means Freedom First.

N. G. Ranga, M.P.
Niddubrolu, January 15.

Freedom First February 1969

True Freedom

C. Rajagopalachari

Culture is not just art or literature or dancing or music or painting as it prevails among a people. It is the pattern of behaviour generally accepted by a people. Culture is very far from freedom.

When Mr. Ka. Naa. Subramaniam asked me to accept this invitation, I hesitated because I did not know exactly what the whole thing was about. I made enquiries and accepted the honour; but, yet I must confess that I did not quite understand my position in this respect. Then I communicated with Mr. Minoo Masani, my old colleague and friend, and asked him to tell me what I was to do in this conference. I gave him a *carte blanche* even to write out my speech. He did not do that, but sent me a volume of papers which has been presented at the conference of this organization in 1951. I read among the papers a most illuminating paper from Sir Rustom Masani, his father and an old respected friend of mine. What Sir Rustom Masani had said in that paper set me thinking about what culture is and what freedom is and what we are all about in this organization. If I say anything of use or to the purpose on this occasion, it is entirely traceable to the inspiration derived from a reading of that paper.

Culture is not just art or literature or dancing or music or painting as it prevails among a people. It is the pattern of behaviour generally accepted by a people. Culture is very far from freedom. No man of culture feels free. He imposes on himself all sorts of restraints. So then, the culture of a people is the pattern of restraints which that people have as a whole, after trial and error through generations, settled down to accept, in the interest of social order and happiness. There is joy and pride in the acceptance of such restraints and no resentment or pain. In that sense there is freedom in culture as an essential part. It is this which distinguishes culture from State-regulation. 'State-regulation' began as a protest against the anarchy created by indiscriminate individual freedom and the greed and competition that resulted from it. The practice of State-regulation has resulted in the discovery of several evils in the remedy worse than the disease. In the cycle of human progress the slogan of 'freedom' has therefore been raised as

a counter to excessive State-regulation. The one comes from Moscow and the other from America. But neither the slogan of 'freedom' nor the slogan of 'State-regulation' can solve the difficulties of humanity. The right slogan is 'self-control' and that is the message of Indian philosophy and the culture that can be claimed by India as its own.

Every culture is based on and bound up with a definite idea. The culture of Greece was bound up with the sense of beauty. The culture of Rome was developed round the sense of order and law. The culture of India is build round the central idea of self-control. The way of life, the pattern of behaviour accepted as correct and esteemed by the people of India as worthy, by the common folk as well as by the enlightened, is the way of self-control as laid down in the Upanishads and the Bhagwat Gita and emphasized in recent times, with the whole force of a political revolution behind it, by Mahatma Gandhi.

Therefore before we discuss culture on the Indian background, it is necessary to dwell on the essentials of it even if it may seem we are using the occasion for a religious discourse. The first two verses of Isa Vasya Upanishad put it down in simple and brief language:

God pervades everything in this world.
*Isaavaasyamidam sarvam yatkincha
Jagatyam jagat.*

Dedicate everything to Him while doing the things you do and enjoying the things you possess. Do not entertain covetous desires.

*Tena tyaktena bhunjiitha maa gridha:
Kasyaswidhanam.*

Life involves necessarily activity and work. Work involves necessarily some evil or other, particularly

attachment to the fruits of activity. If one must work, as one must live, there is no other way to escape the contamination of evil, except by dedication of all activities to the all-pervading Supreme Spirit.

*Kurvanneveha Karmani
Jjiivishetchatam Samaah.
Evam thvayi nanyathetosti
Nakarma lipyate nare.*

Whatever you do, do it as an act of dedication to God, be it small or be it big, whether it is a trivial business or is a thing of great and general importance. This is how Brother Lawrence is said to have lived. Even when cooking or scrubbing the floor or cleaning the vessels, he did his work in company with his God. He worked and he laughed with God by his side.

There is a soul in the body that function in the material world. He who denies the soul and identifies it with the body and thus kills his own soul will find the world all dark and without any light to guide his steps.

*Asuryaa naama te' lokaa andhena
Tamasaavritaah
Taanste' pre'tyaabhi gachchanti
Ye' ke' chaatmahano' janaah.*

Why? Because their minds are led by desires and will wander into evil and grief. The soul can conquer the wandering mind and senses. It can control the senses and prevent their attachment to sensuous pleasures which leads men to ruin. All that one thinks to be other than oneself moving or unmoving, near or far should be seen and realized to be part of oneself. The sense of separation from those around you should be overcome.

*Yastu sarvaani Bhuutanyaatmanyevaa
Nupac, yati
Sarvabhute' shu chaatmaanam
Tato' na vijugupsate'*

What I have explained is a rendering of the first six verses of the Isa Vasya Upanishad and it is also the teaching of the Gita. The Upanishad proceeds to explain that by the result of the life and discipline taught therein, one will attain equanimity and reach knowledge and the power of enjoying all that comes to one to the best advantage. You will thereby, says the Upanishad, properly enjoy the things of enjoyment for years and years, that is, in the right way and not leading to pain

and grief.

*Yaathatathyatah arthaan vyadadhaat
Saasvatiibhya:
Samaabhya:*

All Indian culture is bound up with this doctrine of self-control based on a recognition of the existence and the functioning of a soul within and pervading the material casement.

Civilisation in modern times has developed into and identified itself with man's control over his environment, man's control over nature. In the pursuit of this objective civilization has forgotten the prime requisite for happiness, viz. control over oneself. We have learnt very greatly how to control ourselves. Control over nature and man's environment has extended beyond all expectations and has in recent years spread out to a dangerous field, viz. to the obtaining of psychological power over the minds of men and women. Humanity is reduced to the condition of material nature and the rulers of the world have developed a technique to control the minds of men and women even as they have succeeded in controlling material nature. The attempt to control the minds of men and women as if they were raw material like coal and iron took shape in Hitlerism and Communism.

If civilization means happiness this must not be permitted. If men and women are reduced to something like coal and iron, where are moral values, the weights and measures by which we judge progress and civilization? Moral values cannot be allowed to become the play thing of psychological technique.

The culture of a people is essentially the prevailing pattern of joyous restraint accepted by the people. If this is so, what then does freedom of culture for which your organization stands mean? Does your conception of freedom contradict self-restraint? I think not. I consider the slogan of your organization means only this – that restraint should be developed from within in accordance with truth to replace the restraints that are imposed by the State. Truth is another name for moral values. Truth should not be sacrificed at the altar of other objectives. It is to this I think you give the name of cultural freedom. Freedom does not mean licence, absence of self-restraint. No one can be free of the restraints by moral values; nothing can claim liberation from the shackles of truth, the chains imposed by moral values.

Now Hitler claimed when he was in power, and the Communists claim that truth is not an inviolable temple. Their activities past and present are based on the conviction that truth is just what we agree to be truth and nothing more permanent than that. This cannot be accepted. When you stand for freedom of culture, I presume you claim that no direction should be given to culture in disregard of the respect that is due to truth, that is, in disregard of moral values.

Now there are some who argue that truth continually grows; that it is not static; that it is ever a matter for further research and therefore there is no sense in talking about the absolute essentiality of regard for truth or for moral values. I agree that truth is not entirely disclosed to man, but there is such a thing as an unalterable desire to seek the truth and unqualified respect for what we for the time being believe to be the truth. The opposite approach is that we do not know the ultimate truth and therefore what the ruling party has decided to be good for the people is the truth.

What I most dislike in Communism is the deterioration it works in moral values and the respect for truth. When regulations lose the life-giving governance of moral values and when indoctrination is deemed lawful and proper, in order that some objective may be reached, then there is loss of freedom, which your organization and all of us deplore. And this is what happens when communism is allowed to rule. This is what we have in mind when we say that freedom is lost in communist-ruled countries. God is dethroned in those countries as the first necessary step to dethrone truth and in order that nothing may stand in the way of whatever the ruling party decides, on such data as are accepted by them, as good for the people. In fact, "the people" is a phrase that has with the communists replaced moral values. Of all the slogans that I dislike, I dislike most this misleading slogan of "the people". It is sought to replace every moral value, everything sacred. Even justice in judicial matters is, according to the communists, justice, only when an indoctrinated crowd shouts it. The party that has got hold of power makes the people what they are, if not in one generation, in two or three. And this was sought to be done secretly before, but it is openly done now. In fact it is acclaimed to be lawful education. The difference between culture as we understand it and culture as developed in communist countries consists in this - that we respect truth and have regard for moral values, which are deemed inviolable.

It may be that everything is relative and we have to be content with truth as we know it or believe it to be. But it is something to love what we regard as truth. It is disgusting altogether to shape life not caring for moral values. You know that a child grows. It will be in course of time quite different from what it is now. But you love it with all your heart. You do not stint in your love or in your attention because the child will grow into a big man later on. Truth grows, but we must love it at all stages and not regard it as an illusion. I consider that this is the meaning of the slogan of freedom by which this organization swears.

But for my own part, I would love it that instead of making 'freedom' the banner of our struggle against communism, we set up self-control, that is, the restraint of our activities based on moral values as our battle-standard. Not freedom which may deteriorate into licence and anarchy, not State-regulation which may deteriorate into tyranny, but 'self-control' is the right slogan. As against the culture of unrestrained liberty which is the slogan on one side and the culture of all-round State-regulation which is the slogan on the other side, India stands for self-control, which is neither freedom nor regulation from outside. This is what Gandhi stood for, what the Bhagwat Gita preached and what was solemnly voiced forth in the ancient Upanishads. This alone will save the world from anarchy as well as from the slavery of totalitarianism. To cultivate self-control, faith in the Divine rule is an indispensable pre-requisite condition of mind; without it, we may talk of self-control, but it is not possible. It is only when based on faith in Divine rule that self-control will be a joy and a fulfillment and progressively increase, instead of being pain and travail and remaining so all the time.

The culture of India is based on and bound up with self-control. It is the characteristic fundamental of Indian thought. It is this alone that can establish true freedom not to be confused with the free play of individual ambitions. It is self-restraint, control from within that makes art artistic, beauty beautiful and order orderly and enjoyable.

(Inaugural Address to the Annual Conference of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom)

[Freedom First October 1953]

The Neuroses of the Indian Intelligentsia

Sampurnanand

The fact that Buddha and Mahavira went about preaching against the Vedas and all they stood for is proof of the freedom of thought which was such an important feature of the society of those days.

In adopting as the theme of my address this morning "The Neuroses of the Indian Intelligentsia", I am afraid I have taken on too wide a canvas. In the first place, the subject of my discourse seems to suffer from the fallacy of begging the question. Without wasting time, however, on an academic discussion as to whether there is any ground for believing that the intelligentsia does, as a matter of fact, suffer from any universal malaise, I shall simply proceed on the assumption that it is so. I may, here and there, make references to conditions outside India. It must be understood, however, that whatever observations I might make in this connection cannot possibly refer to countries situated behind what is called the Iron Curtain. It is not that the intelligentsia in those lands is whole in mind but that the disease is different.

At the outset, I should like to emphasize that my personal experience is confined to my own country; it may be that in applying this experience to conditions elsewhere I may be making very wide generalizations not fully warranted by the facts. But, in spite of the wide spaces that separate us, so intimate and growing is the intellectual and cultural contact between India and the West, particularly the English-speaking nations of the West, that there is every reason to believe that I shall not err very far in assuming that what I find in India finds its counterpart, to a large extent, elsewhere as well.

The intelligentsia do not constitute a caste or even an economic class. It may not, therefore, be easy to define the term, but surely one characteristic feature of every member of the fraternity should be the capacity to take a rational view of things. A rational view of things implies the acceptance of reasoning as a valid source of knowledge. It is quite another matter that in certain cases people may not find themselves in agreement about the premises: it is also a fact that, in certain matters, those pertaining to religion, for example, even some of the most rational of men may not be prepared

to accept reason as the final touchstone of truth. Nonetheless, the intelligentsia, as a class, is distinguished by its logical approach to the problems of life: it is willing to weigh evidence and to revise its opinions, if need be. It is not guided by *a priori* judgement and is willing to hear all sides before coming to a decision. It is, above all, willing to allow the expression of opinions contrary to those held by the majority of its class for the time being, because it recognizes that this is the only way in which knowledge can grow: वादे जायते तत्त्वबोधः

This does not mean that the intelligentsia, as such, stands for anarchy and licence. A page from ancient Indian history can profitably be studied in this connection. There were certain principles which were considered essential for what may be called the Hindu way of life. They were comprised under the term Varnashrama Dharma, a set of rules defining the norm of conduct for the citizen. They lay down the duties of the individual in various stages of his life as an individual and as a member of society. But beyond this, there was no attempt at canalizing the activities of the intellect. All forms of belief and non-belief ranging from the unadulterated materialism of Charvaka to the atheism of Kapila and, further on, to the absolute monism of Vedanta, were tolerated. Anyone was free to express and propagate any opinion. Had it been otherwise, heterodox schools of thought would not have been allowed to flourish unscathed. The fact that Buddha and Mahavira went about preaching against the Vedas and all they stood for is proof of the freedom of thought which was such an important feature of the society of those days.

Such freedom does not exist, and its necessity is not recognized, in the countries dominated by the Red Star. There can be no room for any independent philosophic thought in those lands; all that a person calling himself a philosopher has to do is to interpret the gospels revealed to mankind by Marx and Engels.

One would not, perhaps, mind very much if such restrictions were confined to the region of speculation alone. Unfortunately, they are not. Science, psychology, history, literature and sociology all feel the whip. Facts yielded by research are stubborn, but the scholar and the writer must interpret them so as to make them fit into the framework of communism. Many a scientist, historian and literary critic has had to eat humble pie and grovel in the dust before the gods who run the Party machine to atone for what they were pleased to call his deviationism from the straight path of Marxism. The penance of some was accepted while others were simply snuffed out and thrown into oblivion for ever. And this baleful light has now begun to shine on China as well.

Such an atmosphere can never be wholesome. It breeds fear and uneasiness. Young men and women brought up in such a milieu know no other religion than communism. They are inspired by evangelical fervour to convert the whole world to their way of thinking; whoever will not be converted must be liberated, nonetheless, even if the liberation involves his physical death. This fanaticism is understandable, even if one does not consider it desirable. But it is strengthened from another source. Even the highly regimented mind of the communist intellectual is bound to be upset at times by inconvenient facts which refuse to fit into the pattern which he has been taught to regard with religious awe. He knows that even the expression of an honest doubt will lead him into serious trouble. There is an unresolvable conflict, the makings of a serious neurosis. And the only way he can preserve some semblance of sanity is by plunging madly into action, by lashing savagely at everyone who seems not to accept the theory and practice which his own mind now refuses to accept as wholly valid. Action is his only means of escape from his own thoughts. There is every reason to believe that the Indian communist has borrowed lavishly the neurosis, along with the ideology, of his mentors from abroad.

The neurosis from which the Indian intelligentsia, and to a greater or less degree, the intelligentsia of many other civilized countries suffers is of a different nature, although it also seeks expression through the familiar technique of escapism. Much of the indiscipline, for instance, which has earned so much notoriety for the Indian student is, I believe, a direct consequence of his neurotic mentality. In his subconscious effort to escape from himself he takes refuge in activity, the wilder the better.

To my mind, the first component of the malaise from which the Indian intellectual suffers is utter uncertainty and instability. Political independence has been achieved in an age when the forces of communism and democracy are drawn up against each other in preparation for a mighty war of extermination and, in between the two, there are any number of warring groups owing allegiance to an infinite variety of shades of pink faith. India is destined to be one of the important battlegrounds of these ideologies and the men who profess them. His education and the bringing up of those who are the present leaders of society align the young Indian with the protagonists of democracy, but the call of communism is no less insistent. He is treated every day to tales of achievements of communist countries. India frequently sends out goodwill missions. These are composed generally, either of colourless individuals or of persons whose mission in life is to decry India and praise her communist neighbours. Little wonder, he feels increasingly drawn towards communism, but cannot, at the same time, divest himself wholly of his weakness for democracy.

The economic situation seems to be equally hopeless. Money may be plentiful but purchasing power has shrunk inordinately low. Unemployment stares large numbers in the face and the fatuous resolutions passed by bodies like the Congress Working Committee and the Planning Commission have no message of hope to convey to those sliding helplessly down towards slow death by semi-starvation. The social process is no less gloomy. Old bonds are getting loose. The joint family system, for example, is breaking up. The impact of the West has given rise to new ideas, many of which are accepted without analysis. New social legislation is being rushed through, not because there is any pressing demand from a considerable section of people but because it is felt that its non-existence on the Statute Book will brand us as an inferior people in the eyes of the West. But whatever its genesis, it cannot fail to set up painful strains tending to disrupt the even tenor of life. The growing chasm between the physiological and the economic ages of marriage also produces hysteria, melancholia and a hundred other nervous disorders.

Is it to be wondered at that, buffeted about by so many warring forces, the Indian intellectual's mind is in a state of chronic uncertainty and frustration? He finds it difficult to retain his self-respect or self-confidence, and this generates fear. The only way, I

repeat, in which he can retain some shred of sanity is to avoid facing facts, to avoid thinking, to engage in some kind of activity all the time. A person who feels that he has not been treated fairly by society cannot be blamed if he finds satisfaction in activities that give him a sense of meting out well-deserved retribution. No one wants deliberately to injure the interests of his own country, but we have only to listen to the terms in which large sections of our intellectuals discuss schemes sponsored by the government. It almost appears that they take a malicious pleasure if such schemes go awry, even if such failure spells a costly loss to the nation.

Such a frame of mind is not wholesome. Honest doubt is no doubt better than half the creeds and there is a place in society even for the cynic, but the prospect of a whole nation, or what comes to the same thing, its intellectual elite, turning cynic cannot be contemplated with equanimity. The best efforts at nation-building will founder on this rock. It must be realized that there is solid truth in Sri Krishna's words: संशयात्मा विनश्यति "The man who is perpetually beset with doubts is destroyed".

Utter lack of faith is the culmination of the Indian intellectual's neurosis. The Sanskrit word for faith is श्रद्धा, which is derived from श्रद्, meaning truth. One can have faith only in that which one holds to be irrevocably true. An object in which one can repose faith is like a shield and a sheet-anchor: it gives fortitude to face a thousand onslaughts of an adverse fate and inspires with courage and hope not only to meet, but to shape, the future. If the object of one's faith were somehow shown not to deserve trust, a void would be created which would make life miserable.

There is nothing abnormal about the trials and tribulations through which India is passing. Any country, similarly placed, might have to face them during the period of transition. What makes our burden so heavy is that we are not spiritually equipped to bear it. There is no faith and no object of faith. Along with the breaking up of social and economic fabric, old values are also losing their hold and new ones have not replaced them. Religion has become a mummery and old traditions, taking the memory back through a thousand years of the nation's history, embodying its hopes and aspirations, its ideals and its experiences, are being brushed aside with a contemptuous shrug. Spiritual vacuity has become almost a badge of intellectual superiority.

The fault does not lie with the younger members of the intelligentsia. They are the victims of a strange conspiracy. The blame must be put squarely on other shoulders.

There are the Universities, for example. Whatever their achievements in the purely intellectual field – and I do not belittle them – they have failed us miserably on what might be called the cultural front. There has been no effort, so far as I am aware, to initiate a new movement of thought, to evolve a new ideology, to work for the shaping of a new culture, a new religion if you will, which shall conserve all that is best in the old, assimilate all that is good in the new and present a frame-work within which the soul of the nation, anchored firmly to its spiritual moorings, shall find the fullest opportunity for self-expression and expansion. The Universities do not seem to be aware of this obligation to society. There are courses in Indian culture and sociology in some of them, but they might as well be courses in Sumerian culture or the culture of Pre-Montezuma Peru. There is no attempt to link up the past with the present and make it a living stepping-stone to the future. The subjects comprised under the various faculties of Arts and Sciences are taught with more or less efficiency and there is some attempt at carrying on research as well, but there is no attempt to coordinate knowledge, no effort to look to the needs of the whole man, no conscious search for means to develop the full personality, to create a balanced individual. It is not at all surprising, therefore that the atmosphere of our Universities is charged with cynicism and irreverence.

There is another source which has failed us in this hour of need. If Russia, after her great revolution, was not engulfed in a great spiritual chaos, the reason was firstly that the philosophy of Marx was there to fill the void and secondly because she had the good fortune to have at the helm of affairs a Lenin with a Gorki to assist him. The result was that, while the country was fed on Marxism, its culture was not torn up by the roots. Even though bourgeois, the old art and literature were given their rightful place in the development of the new. Russia's rulers had strong cultural affinities with the people; they were, therefore, eminently fitted to lead them.

We are in an entirely different position. The man who knew the Indian people intimately because his heart-strings beat in unison with theirs, who could speak in a language pulsating through and through with our

traditions and age-long ideals, is no more. He was cruelly snatched away from us. The leadership that remains is not attuned to the Indian mind. There is a vast cultural chasm that separates it from the masses. The customs, the songs, the folk-tales that appeal to the multitude repel the national leadership. It is one thing to tolerate, as one tolerates the play-acting of children, the foibles of one's unenlightened countrymen, it is another to enter into their spirit and discern the heart throbs that lie buried beneath the crust. It is true, everyone speaks of Indian culture, claiming that no one other than himself understands what the word means. We patronize Ustads and send Indian singers and dancers abroad to carry the message of Indian culture to far-off lands. But our appreciation of these things is purely intellectual, if it exists at all. There is no real effort to develop dance and music, as it has been developing all through the ages, because it does not really appeal to our leadership. The same is true of literature. The men who go abroad carry with them only the corpse of a dead tradition, much as one might take along with him some of the stones and pieces of terra-cotta, reminiscent of an art that died a thousand years ago.

A Radhakrishnan tours the world and speaks to it about the Vedantic conception of life and everyone of us swears by the Mahatma and his message. But all this is more or less for foreign consumption. It has little effect on life at home. Our Constitution has no doubt its great points: it has, one may admit, the virtues inherent in all the constitutions upon which it has drawn so liberally, but it has a singular individuality of its own in one respect: one shall search it in vain for the faintest trace of Vedanta or Gandhism – the two are really not antagonistic conceptions – or any other ideological basis. There is no suggestion that its authors had the faintest idea of what the goal of life and endeavour should be. It is not possible, therefore, so far as the constitution is concerned, to give any direction to life, to the system of education which prepares a man to live his life fruitfully. There is no ideal to which one may aspire, for which one may sacrifice one's self.

True, there is the concept of the Welfare State. It is, unfortunately, too prosaic. An ideal should be something that lifts a man above himself, that is really impersonal. The Welfare State cannot be impersonal, because one expects to share in the welfare. Men, as a rule, do not sacrifice themselves for such a thing. Food and clothes and houses, roads and hospitals and schools, are all good things, but they are such obvious expansions in degree of the necessary, but humdrum,

details of every day life that it is difficult for them to assume that air of holiness which an ideal must possess.

Our leaders do not seem to realize this. It is true that the Welfare State can materialize best through cooperation. Indian thought has likened us, and all else that is in the universe, to the component parts of one organic whole, the Virat, and told us परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ - You will gain the highest good by serving one another. But then the term has come to us from the West, where the mind has been fed for several generations on the philosophy wrongly borrowed from biology of a perpetual struggle for existence, in which only the fittest, namely, the most ruthless and ego-centred, survive. Such a philosophy seems to be so true to the facts of life that no appeals for cooperation can wholly remove it from the mind. And there is no room in such a struggle for sacrifice. The utmost one can concede is that one's self-interest must be enlightened.

There is another concept that is often put forward as a crowning triumph of our statesmanship, the concept of the Secular State. I can only say that the main idea behind this term is as old as Indian history. The empires of Asoka, of the Guptas, and of Akbar were secular in all essentials. The ruler professed a religion which was also patronized by the State, but the sole criterion for appointment to places of trust and responsibility was talent. It would be sheer presumption to say that Britain is not a secular State in the real sense of the term because it has a State religion. In India, however, the bugbear of communalism has made secularism almost synonymous with anti-religion. In any case, all reference to Hindustan is looked upon with suspicion. We talk about Indian culture and refer to its composite nature. This is perfectly correct, but at the same time, we cannot forget that the main current of this culture, fed by a hundred tributaries as it has been, started on its humanizing mission when the first Vedic Rishi chanted his Sama on the banks of the Saraswati.

I speak of its humanizing mission, because the great lesson of tolerance was brought home to mankind when the Rishi uttered the words: एकं सत् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति - The Absolute Existence is one, the wise call it by many names. Could there be a better method of teaching men to make cooperation, rather than competition, the rule of life than telling them that they are all inseparable units in the cosmic body of Virat?

The Upanishad tells us कुरुर्वेदेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेत् शतं समा सत् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति : – One should live one's life engaged in action – and then says explicitly त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा : – enjoy through renunciation. What wiser code of conduct could one have? Do you not help to life a man out of despondency, by reminding him that he is not a bond-slave to a blind fate but a shaper of his own destiny, one of the अमृतस्य पुत्रा : – sons of Immortality, one with God himself in essence?

I have no intention to preach Hinduism here but, at the same time cannot help pointing out that some of the finest elements of Indian thought have received their inspiration from sources which have no other name than Hindu. We could well base our culture of tomorrow on these elements which are the warp and woof of our nation's life. They have to be brought to the fore-conscious and once again made potent forces. An appeal in these terms will evoke warm response and endow our live with the inspiration of a living mission. They envisage the building up of a new humanity, practicing tolerance and goodwill, each carrying for all and all for each, in which men shall love their neighbours as themselves because everyone will have the conviction that in reality his neighbour is none other than himself. This message will not be confined to one race or religious sect or country or political dispensation. इमां वापचं कल्याणीं भावयानि जनेभ्यः : Carry these words of good cheer to all men.

We who are looked upon as the leaders of the people speak to them in a language borrowed from the West, because we know no other. There is, moreover, the fear, groundless but nonetheless potent, that to speak rich in associations gathered in forty centuries of usage is to open the flood-gates to Hindu communalism. The result is what might have been expected.

The Young intellectual who takes his cue from us has learnt just enough to despise what comes from

the past. Religion is to him a silly mumbo-jumbo and the intellectual life of those days a record of superstitions and extortionate priest-craft. But the mind cannot feed on distrust and contempt alone: we have not given him anything positive to fill the void we have thus thoughtlessly created. This is his malady. He cannot get much enlightenment from abroad, because, it seems, the West is itself in a state of ideological flux. The old *laissez-faire* is crumbling in the realm of the spirit, no less than in the field of economics. Forceful regimentation along the lines that might appeal to a political party will be harmful in the extreme, but it is being increasingly felt that the denial of the claim of the spirit, the Higher ego, in man for the sake of material prosperity has been disastrous. Without a definite conception of the goal of human endeavour, even the quest for knowledge becomes a dangerous weapon. One can see before one's eyes how the most powerful nations, in which there has been the fullest opportunity for intellectual development are hurtling down the path that will lead to the destruction of civilization, if not of the human race itself. The West, therefore, which is itself in the grip of a tremendous nervous strain, is not in a position to guide anyone to mental balance.

We have to set our house in order ourselves. Our leadership must take an active part in shaping the cultural life of the people. This is the only way to life the Indian intellectual out of the abyss of imperialism, frustration, cynicism and utter lack of faith in which he finds himself at present. Then only will the intelligentsia be able to pull its weight in the all-round development of the nation and of humanity.

(Presidential Address to the Second Annual Conference of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom).

DR. SAMPURNANAND was a leading member of the old Indian National Congress, highly respected for his learning and erudition. He was a Chief Minister of U.P.

[Freedom First October 1953]

Bankruptcy of Ideas

India, boasting of the highest savings rates in the world, more than a millennium's tradition of agriculture, trade and industry has today joined the ragged ranks of despotic, destitute socialist countries. This denouement takes place amid the loud collapse of the idea that we are a nation. The beggaring of the country and its drowning in blood are the backdrop of the end, by mindless assassination of the dynasty that had ruled India practically uninterrupted since Independence.

– Tanmay Datta.

[Freedom First, July-September 1991]

**When a patriot succeeds,
the timid join him because it costs
nothing to be a patriot.**



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The Art of Non-Conforming

Malcolm Muggeridge

It has been said that, under Malcolm Muggeridge, "Punch is being jerked into reality, the only basis for humour". His earlier journalistic assignments were with the Manchester Guardian and the Daily Telegraph ...

Originally an educationist, Mr. Muggeridge came to India to teach English literature in Travancore and later revisited the country as one of the editors of the "Statesman".

He is "a man who has laughed a lot, seen the world, measured and analysed affairs from Washington to Tokyo, with stops at Moscow and Calcutta".

Mr. Muggeridge is a member of the International Executive of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, and "Freedom First" is proud to have secured the exclusive rights for publication in India of this article, which was originally published in "Vogue" magazine in the U.S.

If I were to write, as I have sometimes thought I might, the Confessions of a Non-Conforming Man, they would begin with an assertion that the mid-twentieth century, far from being a period of enlightenment, has been notable for credulity and servility to a quite exceptional degree. It would be necessary, I should go on, to go back at least to the Dark Ages to find a generation of men so given over to destruction, superstition, and every variety of obscurantism. Over large parts of the world the institution of slavery has been re-established in a particularly cruel and callous form. At the same time, huge areas, formerly dependencies of Britain and other West European countries, are rapidly and evidently falling into chaos and ruin. Two atrocious wars have laid waste and impoverished Western civilization, whose leaders have been constantly outwitted, and whose assets, moral as well as material, have been recklessly squandered. At the same time, amidst these horrors, and confronted at every turn with evidence of his ineptitude, Twentieth Century Man has continued to pin his hopes on the untenable and obsolete doctrine of progress, convinced, apparently, that in him the life process has attained its apogee. So ludicrous a spectacle has rarely, if ever, been seen on earth.

Questioning, thus, the basic assumptions of the age, the Non-Conforming Man cannot but find its pretensions particularly derisory. Ironically, ignorance seems to grow with education, and freedom seems to decay to the accompaniment of protestations of devotion to its cause. Charlatanny, he observes, flourishes as perhaps never before, and decay of belief in a deity, or in any transcendental concept whatsoever, leaves, not a vacuum, but a capacity and a readiness to believe

in anything, however nonsensical. He notes that established pundits, in such circumstances, grow ever more reckless in their assertions, and dictatorships even more unbridled in the cruelties and lies whereby they maintain themselves in existence. Nor can he hide a smile when, for instance, the absurd Webbs are sanctified for detecting a "new civilization" in the Kremlin's cruel empire; when a new dawn is seen in the eerie light which atomic explosions cast into the sky; when the outworn and outmoded conclusions of a Karl Marx provide a dogma, and the partial, and often superficial, conclusions of a Sigmund Freud have, like Marx's in the field of history and economics, been furbished up into a philosophy of life which they were in no wise fitted, nor, indeed, in Freud's case intended, to become; above all, when, while mental homes, slave labour camps, and psychoanalysts' waiting rooms alike fill to overflowing, politicians of all parties and exponents of all ideologies vie with one another in proclaiming the coming to pass of the most forward-looking, peace-loving, humane, prosperous and enlightened era the world has ever known. Civilisation presupposes the integrity and inviolability of each separate human being, and it is contemporary neobarbarisms like Fascism, Nazism, and Communism, which have sought to destroy the individual in favour of the collectivity. Institutional Christianity, even when least practiced, has clung to the concept of separate souls, all infinitely and equally precious in the eyes of a Creator, who has numbered the hairs on each head, and who knows when each sparrow falls to the ground. By contrast, the materialists, the power-worshippers, the demon-demagogues of our time, insist that the individual men and women are no account, and have no destiny of their own to work out apart from mankind's.

Against such a trend, the impulse not to conform constitutes a kind of resistance movement, whose practitioners, as the claims of collectivism augment, are liable to be forced to become *masuisards*, living cautiously on the fringes of society, and only occasionally and discreetly disclosing their true attitude of mind. Yet how important, how necessary they are; without them, collective assumptions may pass unchallenged, and there may be no one to puncture the pretensions of established authority.

The Gadarene swine raced as a herd for the cliff over which they were to hurl themselves to annihilation, but Bunyan's Pilgrim proceeded alone, or at most with one companion, along the difficult way from the City of Destruction to the Delectable Mountains. The basic failure of our time, future historians may well decide, has lain in the too ready acceptance of current orthodoxies, whether through fear of being suspected of rebelliousness and consequently punished, or just as a result of succumbing to mass persuasion. The independent, non-conforming mind is visibly becoming rarer. Conformity is more and more the order of the day, inevitably bringing with it that subservience to prevailing fashions of thought, values and behaviour, which prepares the way for – to use the sombre expression originated by Belloc more than four decades ago – the Servile State.

To a civilized and free mind, any enforced orthodoxy must be abhorrent. It is inconceivable that the last word should ever be said about anything, or that history should ever reach any sort of finality. Non-conforming is a recognition that Man and all his works are inherently imperfect, and therefore susceptible to criticism, if not ridicule. It is tremendously invigorating, adding a quite special spice to life. As a habit of mind, it is greatly to be recommended.

We know from the past that mass or mob judgements have nearly always been mistaken. As Hitler and other demagogues have abundantly shown, unhappily the democratic process can be perverted to bring about its opposite – enslavement – by means of substituting collective judgements for the summation of individual judgements on which true democracy must ever rest. True democracy, in fact, *requires* a non-conforming citizenry. Its worst and most dangerous allergy is the impulse to conform. The greatest and most enduring achievements have been due to individual skills and insight. Why, then, should we suppose it to be otherwise today? Shakespeare, rightly,

always made the mob ignoble, cruel and unstable. His mobs laud a Coriolanus or a Caesar one moment, and shout for his blood the next. On Golgotha, likewise, the mob easily forgot the first Palm Sunday, and called for the release of Barrabas, obediently echoing the cry: "Crucify him!" In such circumstances, the temptation to conform is very great indeed. Even one of the Apostles, Saint Peter, succumbed to it.

Nor is it only on dramatic occasions that this temptation presents itself. In, for instance, matters of taste it is constantly operative – whether to follow inertly a prevailing popular fashion, or, what is even more insidious, to go along with some dreary little avant-garde coterie, irrespective of one's personal judgement or predilection. Yet what exhilaration, what a sense of life's salty tang, when the decision not to conform is taken! What a wonderful sense of freedom on becoming released from the necessity of repeating, let alone believing, the vast rubric of the Century of the Common Man. It is like driving monotonously along a turnpike road, mile after weary mile, and then suddenly realizing that all around are expansions of delicious and varied countryside to which access is readily available.

Jonathan Swift, a Non-Conforming Man, if ever there was one, devised his own epitaph, which was to be set forth on black marble, "in large letters, deeply cut and strongly gilded". It was to say to any traveller who visited his tomb in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, that Swift was now lying where "his furious indignation can no longer lacerate his heart" (*ubi Saeva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit*), and that the traveller should seek to "imitate, if he can, this strenuous defender of manly liberty" (*imitare si poteris strenuumpro virili liberate vindicem*). The words are immensely touching when one thinks of their writer's splendid attainments, and of the many disappointments which befell him. By the time the epitaph came to be used, his furious indignation had become unsupportable. In his last few years, poor Swift was mad. It is a danger which besets the non-conforming temperament, liable, as it is, to set up internal stresses and strains. In the same way that slum children, removed to the English countryside to get them away from the blitz, moaned and groaned for the pavements, the noise, the teeming squalor of the streets whence they had come, so individual morale can collapse in withdrawal from that spiritual slum, the collectivity.

Another danger of a like nature is exemplified in the character of Don Quixote, whose creator, Cervantes, like ourselves, lived in a period of deep social

change calculated to disconcert and bewilder. Don Quixote made the fatal error of taking flight from reality. His refusal to conform with a zeitgeist, and an environment to him both incomprehensible and distasteful, led him to withdraw into a past, which he deluded himself into believing was still extant. Absurdly accoutered in rusty armour, and mounted on his scraggy nag, Rosinante, he rode forth into his own fantasy, with disastrous consequences for himself and for others. It is not difficult to think of his equivalents, today – those leanfaced humanitarians, for instance, who munch nuts and still believe, with Rousseau, despite all the evidence to the contrary, that human beings are naturally good, and have only to be left to their own devices to create an earthly paradise.

If, however, the Non-Conforming Man may become enrage, as in the case of Swift, or fall into undue eccentricity, as with Don Quixote, or even into despair and madness, at his best he exemplifies true sanity. A good example is Paulinus, who, aware that the Roman civilization had collapsed, chose to tend a particular shrine, to keep alive one clear lamp amidst gathering darkness. His serenity when his world was falling to pieces around him finds expression in his writings, and is a source of comfort and inspiration still. This is non-conforming at its very best – a refusal to be swept along by contemporary follies and vain hopes; likewise a refusal to surrender to the terror and hopelessness generated when human societies and institutions take on unfamiliar shapes, and emit strange sounds, like furniture in a child's bedroom when the light has been put out. A Non-Conforming Man today is in a very similar case to Paulinus. He, too, has seen the treasures of civilization sacked, and, what is worse,

perverted, and the barbarian sweep forward in a seemingly irresistible rush; he, too, has come to doubt the applicability to contemporary circumstances of the values, belief and loyalties which guided the conduct of his forbears; he, too, has been disconcerted and appalled by the apparently limitless capacity of his contemporaries to be deluded, and to content themselves with bread and circuses when their very existence is threatened. And he, too, must choose his shrine, must light his lamp, and keep it burning.

There is one last aspect of non-conforming which, naturally, appeals to me personally. Non-conforming is the basis, the very fount of all humour. A totally conformist society never laughs – laughter itself being a kind of criticism, an expression of the immense disparity between human aspiration and human performance. As such, it is intolerable to all orthodoxy-enforcers, from Torquemada to Stalin.

The circus clown is made to look different from his fellow-performers. He falls over, he stands on his head, he grimaces and rides absurd bicycles. Yet what would be a circus without him? How especially the children would miss him, however, daring the trapeze artists, however majestic the lion-tamer! It is worth noting, too, that Shakespeare's fools are given some of his most sagacious and poetic lines. The non-conforming Fool proved, in the end, King Lear's most tender, understanding, and faithful friend, when all the conformists had abandoned him to his fate.

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[Freedom First September 1954]

Will Durant's Advice to Youth

Make friends with great poets. Acquaint yourselves with the world's supreme art – Egyptian, Indian, Greek and Roman architecture and sculpture, Arabic mosques and decoration, the Gothic cathedrals and the renaissance paintings. Study the great statesman from Hammurabi and Moses to Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt and Nehru. Sit for a while at the feet of great thinkers – Confucius, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Marcus Aurelius, Francis Bacon, Spinoza, Newton, Kant, Schopenhauer, Darwin, Nietzsche, Einstein. Enjoy the great prose writers – Isaiah, Jeremiah, the authors of the Proverbs and the Psalms, Demosthenes and Cicero, Rabelais and Montaigne, Milton and Swift, Voltaire and Rousseau, Hugo and Balzac, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, Emerson and Anatole France. Follow man's odyssey with great historians – Herodotus, Thucydides, Tacitus, Gibbon, Froude and Taine. Walk humbly with the great saints – Buddha, Jesus, Augustine, Francis of Assisi, Gandhi. I shall not hold you educated unless you make many of these geniuses your friends. Cultivate them, and you will be molded by the company you keep.

RESEARCH SHOWS
THAT MORE PEOPLE
IN WEST BENGAL ARE
STILL UNASHAMEDLY
INCLINED TOWARDS
THE TRUTH.



AND THAT'S THE TRUTH.

*Source: IRS

The Statesman has 6,50,000* readers in West Bengal as compared to the 6,37,000 of its nearest competitor. In this state, truth still pays.

The Statesman
Why settle for less?

Our Dedication

Nicolas Nabokov

Civilisation is one and we have together to study the various aspects of it and preserve the verities of the civilization, yet always recognizing the total and complete freedom of the creative mind responsible only to its conscience for its beliefs.

The other day, when driving through the Deccan plain, I thought of how much in many ways India resembles the plains of Southern Russia and how much also the kindly, generous people of India with their open faces, with their open looks, with their interest in things human and in human beings all over the world, resembled those Russian people whom I have known in my childhood, the peasants of our village, the townsmen of our very small village town, the boatsmen who were toiling and taking the boats down the river. Sometimes even the shouts in India made me think of the shouts in Russia. I remember my country as an open country; as an open field which was waiting for a shower to come and sow the grain. You know the showers that came and the grain that they sowed.

I left my country long ago and somewhere in India I touched again the soul of my country. It made me feel doubly frightened and doubly aware of how dangerous an open soul is in our times – what dangers surround it, what can happen to it, how difficult it is to keep an open soul, an open mind, an open face, a smiling eye. I therefore take this occasion to warn India to stay away from the fate to which the people of Russia have been subjected and are still being subjected. I am sorry to speak here in this way after other people have spoken here in another way. I speak out of my conscience. I cannot speak otherwise.

It is all tied up so closely in my mind that instead of sitting quietly and writing music and teaching nice American boys and girls the rules of music, I skit around the world, sit in an office in Paris, organize conference, speak about things I do not know much of, and discuss matters with economists and scientists. It is all partly and greatly related to the mind of man in the 20th century, where we are suddenly faced with the negation of all that which in the 19th century, people took for granted – the freedom of the mind, the freedom of thought and the freedom of creation.

It occurred to me that the other day in Japan I said that some nations blow up the bomb for war and other nations blow up the bomb for peace. And a Japanese stood up and asked me whether I could name the nations. I did not know what to say. The thing is that we are surrounded by dangers and sometimes we do not know these dangers.

I remember so well the face of a Czech statesman, an easy-going, sweet man, Masaryk. I know that face. I know how that man believed that really nothing bad could happen and it was barely three months before the man was thrown out of the window or forced to commit suicide.

What a strange time we are living in, what a curious time, of mirage and wishful thinking, believing that things might straighten themselves, even without our giving a single knock at the door. What a strange time, when masses of people in Germany believed until the last moment that Hitlerism was a good thing. The Jews in Berlin were saying that Hitler was a good man in 1932. Why am I speaking this way? It is simply because I believe that in our time everybody is surrounded by dangers. The dangers spring not only from the totalitarian way of life of the totalitarian power. The dangers flow from a fear to study a question to the bottom and look things into their face as they are and not as they seem to be. How many people do not want to see things as they are and try to see things as they would like them to be?

We should stand on our opinions, on opinions formed on knowledge and on a clear facing of the facts as they are. Ours is not a mass movement and here we should never be misunderstood. We are not a movement of large masses like a labour union. We are much more a band of people who respect each other's beliefs and who claim the right to be a dissenter when it is necessary to be a dissenter. To be a dissenter is not necessarily a good thing. But in conformist

societies it is a necessity. Our work cannot only be negative; it militates against the very spirit of man. Our work should be concerned with the positive advancement of our civilization. And here we cannot speak of Western or Eastern civilization. The time is passed for such distinctions. Civilisation is one and we have together to study the various aspects of it and preserve the verities of the civilization, yet always recognizing the total and complete freedom of the creative mind responsible only to its conscience for its beliefs. You will say to me: But are we not doing this? And I will answer no. If we had been doing it, we would not have tyranny in the world. So long as tyranny exists, we are a necessity, our organization is a necessity. This I believe, to this I am dedicated and, I believe, all of you who come here are dedicated too.

How do we go about our cultural affairs? I think the only and best way to go is to keep alive, in the smallest community and in the largest, free discussion, free study of specific problems in various fields of the mind. These groups, by studying problems, by providing a very thorough research upon them, can influence very much, can eradicate misconceptions, can help the establishment of true and solid facts. I give you my theme, music. It is a shame and a scandal that Western musicians do not know the practically anything about the music of India. It is a shame and a scandal that

many of us in the West still complacently regard the music of your country as a kind of exotic affair. I am aghast at the amount of misconceptions that exist in the world. It is as if we were living on fifteen different planets. We have got to learn about each other. And only then can we compare and judge.

The independent thinking is dwindling. I wish I could properly convey to you the importance of what we are doing. How important it is and how necessary it is to have meetings like the one we had in the afternoon, exchanging opinions with excellent minds in an atmosphere of complete freedom. The ICCF is not a mass movement. The ICCF is not a political movement. It is a movement dedicated to a free culture. We are dedicated to the idea of freedom. We are a movement dedicated to the mind of man, to its free development unfettered by politics or any other consideration.

(Inaugural Speech delivered at the Third Annual General Meeting of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom held in Bombay on December 17 and 18, 1955. Mr. Nabokov, the Secretary General of the Congress for Cultural Freedom and a music critic and compose of high repute was born in Russia, which he had to leave early in life as a result of the revolution).

[Freedom First February 1956]

National Minorities

People would get on better together if they stopped talking about national minorities, George Orwell used to say that we are defined by the words we use, particularly in politics, and minority is not a nice word. It is not nice for the simple reason that it implies comparison with a majority - and such comparison is unnecessary and superfluous.

I would like to take the Swiss example, Switzerland is made up of three main language groups - German, French and Italian. The German language is spoken by more than two-thirds of the population. It is by far the largest of the three groups, and the Italian speakers make up by far the small group. But they are all equal. The three languages have equal rights, as do those who speak them.

This avoids any suggestion of comparison. There is never any feeling that any language group is a less valuable component of the country than any other. There is no suggestion that one of them is a minority to be considered over and against a majority.

Though there are countries of many different sizes, they are all sovereign and have equal rights. They all, for example, have one vote in the United Nations General Assembly, and they may all be elected to the Security Council. No one would suggest that Fiji or Haiti has less rights as members of the international community than India or Nigeria because the latter are much bigger and more populous.

So it should be with ethnic, language or any other groups within a country. A tribe with ten members is as valuable a part of society as one with 100,000 members. Neither one of the them should be as described as either a minority or a majority.

Ian Tickle

[Freedom First, April June 1993]

Philosophy of Freedom

M. B. Shah

The main problem facing mankind today is freedom versus totalitarianism. All other problems and issues are either subordinate to this problem or merge in it.

The function of philosophy is to find out the fundamental postulates from which a particular system of thought or values is derived.

The task of the philosophy of freedom is to explain the basis on which the value of freedom is founded.

In nature itself there is neither freedom nor bondage. Freedom is a human value.

The primary urge of every living organism is to exist, grow, develop and perpetuate its species. In order to satisfy this primary urge, the living organism has to act on its surrounding environment. In the sub-human animal world, this urge leads to mechanical adaptation to the environment. However, as man has a better organized neural system endowing him with the powers of memory, reflection and transmission of his experiences to his like species, the primary urge expresses itself in conscious action and reaction to his environment. In course of this action and reaction on the environment, man gathers experiences and knowledge of his surrounding nature. This knowledge becomes a powerful lever in man's further progress. However, man as an individual is powerless to struggle against the mighty forces of nature. Hence, his co-operation with other human beings which ultimately results in the development of society and all its various organizations, political, economic, social, cultural, spiritual and the like.

With the help of these organizations growing up in the course of the satisfaction of his primary urge, man embarks upon the attainment of freedom. Freedom can be defined as "the progressive disappearance of all restrictions on the unfolding of the potentialities of the individuals as human beings and not as cogs in the wheels of a mechanized social organism". (M. N. Roy in the *Principles of Radical Democracy*). Functionally, freedom means "the conditions necessary and sufficient for the formation of a purpose, its translation into effective action through organized

cultural instrumentalities and the full enjoyment of the results of such activity". (Bronislaw Malinowsky in *Freedom and Civilisation*).

Freedom has two sides, one positive and another negative. Negative freedom is freedom from the forces crushing man's assertion of individuation from the rest of the nature including the human society. Positive freedom is one which creates the necessary conditions and affords proper opportunities for "the realization of his individual self, i.e. the expression of his intellectual, emotional and sensuous potentialities". (Erich Fromm in *The Fear of Freedom*).

In the course of his struggle for the satisfaction of his primary urges, man has to struggle against nature to secure his physical requirements like food, shelter, clothing, etc. The overpowering of natural forces has been attained to a very large extent and man has now come of age with the help of scientific knowledge and technological advancements. Likewise, in the course of history, man progressively liberated himself from the controlling forces of church, state and social slavery. With the ushering in of the industrial revolution, a powerful ideology of liberalism and economic *laissez faire* made man a completely individualistic person to care for himself.

However, this very process of individuation from the original ties working for his security and oneness with nature and society made him also an atomized individual to make his way wherever he could single-handedly.

With the Declaration of the Rights of Man in the great French Revolution, man's inherent dignity was asserted. Democracy, the greatest invention of man's genius, was ushered in and put on a practical experimental plane. However, in practice, it turned out that democracy was working in the social and economic frames which were not conducive to the assertion of human dignity and realization of the best potentialities in man. Man was not considered as an end in himself

to be respected and cultivated but an economic entity driven by his animal passions and selfishness. In these circumstances, the ideals of fraternity, equality and liberty were negated in practice and man became a lonely and powerless creature at the mercy of uncontrollable economic and social forces. Man of flesh and blood ceased to be an entity, an end in itself. Instead of security and co-operation of society, man became isolated from society and a dichotomy was created between man and society. The issues were posed like man versus society, freedom versus organization, etc. instead of man in society, freedom with organization and the like. Thus all the values of man like love, brotherhood, creativity, etc. were nullified in practice.

Individual man not endowed with the biological superior capacities to make room for himself by elbowing out others and also man with principles and scruples was relegated to the devil's care as good-for-nothing. The result was man's loss of confidence in the utility of freedom and democracy, the loss of confidence in himself and in society. Ultimately, helplessness, resignation, frustration, destructiveness, submissiveness and such other anti-human and anti-social characters took hold of man. Man became afraid of his own freedom and was prepared to surrender the same in search of security though it may be an illusory one. Man preferred to be either a slave, master or an automation rather than a free, spontaneous, creative, acting and loving person.

In this situation of frustration, resignation, submission and destructiveness all sorts of totalitarian and authoritarian ideologies like fascism, nazism, nihilism and communism drawing their inspiration from extra-human forces possessed man. All these movements exhibited and exhibit the symptoms of the sickness of society and the spiritual and cultural crises of mankind. They all promised panaceas and liberation from anxiety, isolation, frustration, resignation. In the search of security from this burden, man surrendered his freedom and self to these authoritarian and totalitarian ideologies. After the defeat in the last world war, fascism and nazism have been weakened to a very large extent, though they are not completely annihilated. However, on account of the combination of certain factors, communism has come out as a nightmare to the free world. It has expanded its control over vast areas and populations. And with the resources at its command, it is threatening other parts of the free world.

Therefore, the main problem facing mankind today is freedom versus totalitarianism. All other problems and issues are either subordinate to this problem or merge in it.

However, if totalitarian onslaughts are to be fought out, democracy will have to orient itself to positive freedom and will have to overhaul its social, economic, cultural and spiritual set up with a view to give full scope for the assertion of the human self, i.e. for the full realization of emotional, intellectual and sensuous potentialities of human beings. Its new set up will be of a kind in which man's individualism is integrated with society on a higher level of co-operation, equality, liberty, creativity and love as between free men. The economic-man will have to end and a new rational and moral man will have to rise to take his place. The whole social set up will be based on the principle that he is the measure of all values. All collective endeavours will be measured in terms of the actual benefit conferred on constituent units. The position of the individual will be the measure of the progressive and liberating significance of any collective effort or social organization.

As Erich Fromm states in his *Fear of Freedom*, "The victory of freedom is possible only if democracy develops into a society in which the individual, his growth and happiness, is the aim and purpose of culture, in which life does not need any justification in success or anything else, and in which the individual is not subordinated to or manipulated by any power outside himself, be it the state or the economic machine; finally, a society in which his conscience and ideals are not the internalization of external demands, but are really *his* and express the aims that result from the peculiarity of his self. These aims could not be fully realized in any previous period of modern history; they had to remain largely ideological aims, because the material basis for the development of genuine individualism was lacking. Capitalism has created this premise. The problem of production is solved in principle at least – and we can visualize a future of abundance, in which the fight for economic privileges is no longer necessitated by economic scarcity. The problem we are confronted with today is that of the organization of social and economic forces, so that man – as a member of organized society – may become the master of these forces and cease to be their slave"

Mr. M. B. Shah was a rationalist and a businessman.

[Freedom First December 1955]

Philosophy of Freedom

Adam Adil

It should be clearly understood that economic freedom is not the necessary condition of political freedom.

Man in every age has craved for freedom. The idea of freedom is his highest aspiration. He raves to be free in every sphere of life and to him a sacrifice is too great for the achievement of freedom. In fact, the ideal of freedom has invested in man an eternal spirit of self-sacrifice, and Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, in *Discovery of India* remarks rightly "because of that much may be forgiven to man, and it is impossible to lose hope for him". It is in the nature of things that man needs freedom for development of his personality and in the absence of freedom his spirit contracts and decays.

Political freedom constitutes the most important aspect of the general content of freedom. It was natural that thinkers and philosophers from Plato and Aristotle downwards to Locke, Mill, Voltaire and Laski have thought about political authority and political obligation; and poets like Dante, Wordsworth, Byron, Tagore, Iqbal and others have not only written and sung of political freedom, but have taken part in political revolutions for realizing it.

Though often in history reactionary movements constituting the very negation of freedom have risen and violently shaken the world, the advancing march of the torch of freedom has proved an eternal process and rendered the spirit of man immortal and deathless. In our times, fascism arose with menacing ambitions. It clashed against the spirit of man who held fast to the ideal of freedom, took a toll of several million lives, but was vanquished and finally vanished as an ephemeral mirage. Today, totalitarian communism has reared its head. It too must pass although it threatens to overwhelm the whole world. Perhaps humanity will once again be called upon to offer still greater sacrifice in order to bring about the annihilation of totalitarian communism. The spirit of man with its ideal of human freedom shall survive with greater resplendence.

The concept of human freedom is essentially the

concept of the freedom of the individual. In the words of Spencer "there is nothing higher than the individual in the world's history". Obviously, to deny freedom to the individual is to deny the values of the individual; hence it is a crime against humanity. The freedom of the individual thus constitutes the fundamental basis of any progressive political thought, though it is generally agreed that in a complex social structure individual freedom has to be limited within certain disciplines to ensure real personal freedom and systematize the development of human personality.

The English Revolution of seventeenth century as well as the French and American Revolutions of eighteenth century were aimed at freeing the human personality of all the chains which were fettering it to the point of death. John Locke and Rousseau had prepared the philosophical background for those Revolutions. Locke's was a matter of fact treatment of the political problems while Rousseau had adopted an abstract and logical approach to them. The existence of civil society, Locke thought, was a matter of convenience, and to him the stabilization of parliamentary authority was the best method of safeguarding the liberty of the people against the onslaughts of arbitrary rule. Although, some times Rousseau appeared obtruse whenever he touched the questions about the protection of liberty from the incursions of absolutism, he set forth most clearly the thesis that only in civil society, dominated by a sense of original social contract, does man rise above the level of an instinctive life of animals.

In short, political philosophers have built the fundamental idea that the political community exists primarily for the betterment of the lives of individuals composing it; and that it must develop into people's sovereignty which is the only guarantee of the freedom of all; and that if it does not so develop it must forfeit the confidence of the people and ultimately collapse into tyranny and chaos.

Apart from some shining examples of individual freedom in ancient India and some other parts of Asia, for the first time in modern epoch the English and the Dutch took a mighty leap towards freedom from arbitrary rule. They were followed by America in 1788 and France in 1789, when the sovereignty of people in both the countries asserted itself successfully against the forces that constituted the denial of freedom. The general effect of the success of the French Revolution was overwhelming throughout the Western as well as South Eastern Europe. Not only the liberation of the individual became a bye-word, but was considered to be a reality emerging from the process of history. Such were the hopes of thinking minds in Europe at a time when the arbitrary rule was overthrown in France. And Wordsworth could sing: "Bliss was it in that dawn to live; and to be young was very heaven".

But with the advance of the nineteenth century it was realized that the dreams of the social thinkers of the time of the English Revolution of the Seventeenth Century and the American and the French Revolutions of the eighteenth century had not been fulfilled completely. Hence new social theories which sought to establish that popular sovereignty, such as the representative government and the rule of the law were not themselves enough to secure the real freedom of the individual. The torch bearers of the French Revolution in 1848 and of the Chartist movement in England demanded that "the political liberty should mean something more than the freedom of those who owned the capital to exploit those who did not own it". This demand has become increasingly formidable since then. This meant that political freedom should be concomitant with economic freedom such as the "freedom from want" and "freedom from exploitation".

But certain leftist parties, particularly the Communists have tried to stress only the economic freedom to the exclusion of political freedom, and wherever they have come into power they have denied political freedom altogether. Even their slogan of

economic freedom is a pretence. Actually, people under Communist rule are neither politically free nor economically freed.

The communist threat to political freedom has made it once again imperative to stress that political freedom constitutes a value by itself independently of economic freedom, although both kinds of freedom should be simultaneously realized to render the lives of individuals rich and abundant.

It should be clearly understood that economic freedom is not the necessary condition of political freedom. The moment economic freedom is regarded the condition of political freedom, it sets in motion the tendency of suppressing the political freedom in the name of economic freedom as it has happened in Communist countries. Hugh Gaitskell, the leader of the British Labour Party, was right when he once stated "some of the most enthusiastic supporters of "economic freedom" have argued that it is not merely desirable because of its economic effects but also a necessary condition of political freedom. They claim that, although the two types of freedom are conceptually different they are in practice related. I regard this doctrine as nonsense – and dangerous nonsense at that!".

Care should also be taken that human freedom expressed through democratic practice should not lead to what is generally termed "the tyranny of the majority", denying the grace of living to a minority which adheres to a particular political or economic point of view. Mill and Renon, therefore, laid greatest stress on this "grace of living" for each and all being regarded as an essential ingredient of freedom. In a democratic society political minority should always enjoy the right of growing into the majority. Then alone democracy and freedom can be full and perfect.

MR. ADAM ADIL, a freedom fighter, was *Freedom First* editor and a democratic socialist.

[*Freedom First* July 1957]

It is amazing how prime ministers, like old married couples, become indistinguishable from each other. It is not just the balding pate and pouting visage I am thinking of, but the host of astrologers and *pujaris* who continue to flock to 7 Race Course Road irrespective of the change of guard.

Sheela Ready in the *Asian Age*
21st August, 1996.

[Many Voices, *Freedom First*, September 1996]

Towards A Fuller Democracy

Jayaprakash Narayan

There is something in the human spirit that refuses to be suppressed or oppressed for all times. And therefore I am an optimist. I believe in the future of democracy, in the future of human freedom and human dignity.

In the past few weeks I have been speaking about parliamentary democracy and there has been some controversy in which even the Prime Minister has taken part. I am a critic of parliamentary democracy and I am anxious to see it replaced by a better form of democracy. But let me clear at the outset the misunderstanding that I am an opponent of democracy because I am a critic of parliamentary democracy. It is far, far away from my mind to lend any support to any form of authoritarianism or totalitarianism.

I think that totalitarianism is a crime against man. It is an insult to man to deny him freedom and democracy. It is in the very nature of man that he should work for freedom. There is something in the human spirit that refuses to be suppressed or oppressed for all times. And therefore I am an optimist. I believe in the future of democracy, in the future of human freedom and human dignity. I should also like to make it clear that I have no doubt that of all the different forms of democracy, democratic political organisations that history has known so far, parliamentary democracy is the best in spite of its shortcomings. But that does not mean that we should shut our eyes to its defects, should not try to remove them and improve upon what we have today.

First of all, parliamentary democracy is not full democracy. It is inadequate democracy. What do I mean by the statement? There have been many definitions of democracy, some scholastic, some academic, some scientific. But I should like to take the popular definition which Abraham Lincoln gave: democracy is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Now it is possible to conceive that a parliamentary democratic government is a government for the people. It may even be a government of the people in the sense that it is elected. But I think you would agree that no example of parliamentary democracy exists today or has existed before which would satisfy the third part of the definition, namely, government by

the people. It may be a government with the consent of the people, but it is not a government by the people.

There is another aspect of this system of parliamentary democracy. Under such a system political parties are formed and the parliamentary democratic system becomes inevitably a party system. Either we have a two-party system which we have more or less in the English-speaking countries, or we have a multi-party system which we have in Western Europe, particularly in France and Germany.

The idea of one-party system is foreign to parliamentary democracy. There must be at least two parties – one in government and one in opposition – or more than two parties. Political parties no doubt rise from the people. No doubt, they have their own following among the people, but yet they are not the people. Every political party claims to represent the interests of the people better than every other political party. Out of this party system we get party machines which are highly organized, highly centralized – party machines which have their own funds and their own means of propaganda. The people are given the opportunity to elect their representatives but as a result of the working of the party system these choices which are given to the people become very much limited. When there are highly organized parties with funds, highly publicized leaders and so on, it is very difficult for independents to win elections and in all organized parliamentary democratic systems the number of independents fighting elections is very small. The choice of the people in the selection of their representatives is limited by the virtue of the fact that political parties which are organized set up candidates and the people merely have to select from them. As a result, elections for a poor country like ours have become very costly and everyone is conscious of it. But yet no solution is found. No doubt, there are certain fixed limits to the expenditure which a candidate might incur. But all know that the rule is observed more in breach than in practice. When elections become so

expensive, is it possible for the people to exercise their choice in the selection of their representatives? Parties with large funds organize and manage elections and win the people's votes. Has a poor candidate any chance of winning an election under these conditions? Has a poor man's party any chance? These are serious defects which it is necessary for us to consider.

Let us take another aspect of this. The theory is that a voter is expected to express his opinion on the issues that are placed before him at the time of elections. Is it possible for ordinary voters in any country to be able to express their opinion intelligently on all the complicated issues that are placed before them? And when we come to our own country with the backward electorate that we have – most of them illiterate, most of them are such that they have not travelled beyond their district – is it possible for such persons to express their opinion on international affairs? Is it possible for them to give an intelligent answer? We must take all this into consideration and find what system would suit our conditions better.

I think even in highly advanced countries every voter who is called upon to exercise his vote is not in a position to express his views intelligently. When I was studying in the U.S., an American University conducted a sample survey and it was found that 17% of the citizens did not know who their President was. I am talking of the twenties, many years ago. I am sure the Americans have advanced since then; but at that time, 17% of them, according to the sample survey, didn't know the name of the President. If you ask citizens of India who their President is, I don't know what the percentage will be. At an examination held in Kanpur for subordinate civil service a question was asked: who is Dr. Rajendra Prasad? And you would be surprised to read the answers – some made him an eminent physician, some made him Commander-in-Chief somewhere, and so on and so forth.

The party system has other glaring defects which you all are acquainted. You have heard of the Tamany Hall. Every country has its own Tamany Hall. I am sure that Bombay city has its own Tamany Hall, a few political bosses manipulating corruption and all kinds of nepotism. When you have this party system, you are not so much concerned with what is right and who is right; you are only concerned with what strength your own party has. I have seen it happening in the political field in our country – one political party boss is expelled from his party for defalcation of money and other political

parties are waiting to embrace him with open arms because he happens to be a person of some ability.

We have a welfare state. What do we find? We find in the world a trend towards more and more centralization, more and more power for the State, for the Government. In the Welfare State as well as in the Socialist State or in the Communist State, the trend is the same. People are becoming irresponsible in the sense that they are not prepared to shoulder the responsibility of citizenship themselves, the responsibility of community life. They are content to cast their votes, they are content with throwing their votes to whoever they wish and then be satisfied with that. They have performed their duties as a citizen and therefore nothing remains for them to do, the rest is for the State to do.

Now I should like to ask you whether in a centralized order of society democracy has much of a chance. Pandit Nehru or Mr. Macmillan or Mr. Eisenhower may be a democrat and a good democrat at heart. But the whole of the social organization is such that power is concentrated at a few centres. How could it be possible, in spite of their best feelings, for democrats to function as democrats or to give their people a democratic way of life? As all of you know the trend is more and more towards statism.

Apart from the welfarism, socialism or communism, it is commonly believed today that science itself is working for centralization, i.e. the inevitable result of scientific developments would be more and more centralization. Society would become more and more complex, technology would become more and more complex, requiring more and more centralization and, therefore, in this scientific age the question is asked whether democracy can really function? The vital decisions in a centralized society are taken by a few people, decisions which affect the lives of millions of people. Would you call that democracy? This is called the age of planning in a democratic context, or of democratic planning. What democracy do we have in the planning of our country? The Planning Commission has its committees, has its experts to prepare plans that are placed before the country, some discussions are held, some people write learned articles. In the Development Council there is some discussion, some minor changes are made and then there is the national plan. Thus science and socialist planning, all these are taking us towards this over-centralisation of life – the trend of development which is inimical to the trend of democratic planning.

You will ask then what is to be done? I shall like all of you friends to think about it. What is to be done? There is one attitude of mind which resigns itself to the so-called forces of society. There are these social forces at work; there is no use swimming against the current, pitting ourselves against the trend of events – all these things are going to happen and let us try to save of democracy as much as possible. The other view is that there are certain objectives, certain aims and values in life which one is not prepared to compromise. Each one is prepared to fight for them in the extremest circumstances. Such an attitude of mind is a revolutionary attitude. It does not accept things, it fights against them.

Democracy is a way of life, is a habit of life, is an attitude towards life. Democracy embraces the whole of life. You cannot bring about changes in the political structure and leave the economic structure as it is and hope by those political changes to create a better democratic system. The whole of life, the whole of social life must be transformed to make it more and more democratic.

The picture of human society today is such that every man is more or less at war with every other man. We hear a lot today about the cold war, the cold war may in the end prove to be more harmful than other forms of war. But are you aware that we have in society, in our daily lives, a perpetual cold war going on? I am at war with you. You are at war with me. That is how life is organized. I do not think that socialism or communism has made much difference to it. Today the basis of our life is our own individual self-interest. Our selfish interest is the motivating force. The individual self-interest naturally embraces the interest of the family – a small family of the individual. We are trying to do all that we can for ourselves – for our little family. I do not think that as long as this cold war is going on it will be possible for us to enlarge the frontiers of democracy very much.

When man is at war with man, there has to be some institution, some force, some coercive power to keep people under reasonable control. Those who are using their coercive power may come from various classes or groups. They may have various interests. That is a different matter. A picture of full democracy can only be realized, a full democracy can only be possible when we have transformed the very basis of our lives. Instead of living for ourselves or for our little family, if we begin to live for our neighbours, for our

fellow human beings, for the society at large, then and then only the fullest possible development of democracy can be possible.

I am pleading not only for an economic change, a social change or a political change, but a change in the entire outlook on life, in the fundamental value of life. You might say it is not possible, it is against human nature. Well if you say that, I can only reply that I do not accept that view, even though I may be in the minority of one. I do not think that there is any compulsion in human nature which makes the individual look to his own self-interest. I grant that there is a natural biological urge of self-preservation and these various interests that we have – whether they are social interests, political interests, class interests or whatever they are – they have their roots in that biological urge of self-preservation. I won't deny that. But I would still like to plead and like to convince everyone that the individual self-interest can be really fulfilled only in a society in which the individual has come to realize that his self-interest is identical with the larger interest.

If you win at the cost of another, the moral law is bound to catch up and wreak vengeance – and therefore you see empires fallings, wealths disappearing and all sorts of things. That is the way of life today. The Americans may be at the top of the world, the Russians may be at the top of the world; but in this way of life which is organized on this particular basis there is absolute certainty that they will not be at the top for all times. Great empires have come and gone. There is complete assurance of everyone's success when everyone thinks that his success and the success of others are identical, when this cold war between man and man, between groups of men – whether they are classes, races, associations, trade unions, or nations – has ceased.

I think this age of science has made it more possible than ever before for this kind of a revolution to take place successfully; it has brought the human race together, it has brought education to a large number of people than ever before; it has opened the minds of people to scientific truths. This age of science has made it possible for everyone of us to appreciate that if the cold war did not end, no matter what was done, some sort of shooting war is bound to emerge and that would be the destruction of the race. How it is to be stopped is for everyone of us to think about. We should begin with our own lives if we believe in democracy. We have everyone of us neighbours. We can practice



THERE'S A

I should know it! Even after years, my Storwel looks stunning. I'm sure they use

LOT MORE

superior steel, which is specially protected against rust. And what superb

TO A GODREJ

construction! No gaps for pests. Adjustable shelves - so I can create the storage space I need. And a Godrej lock, so I needn't

S T O R W E L

worry. In fact, with so much value for money, I've decided my second cupboard will also be a Godrej Storwel. There are so many

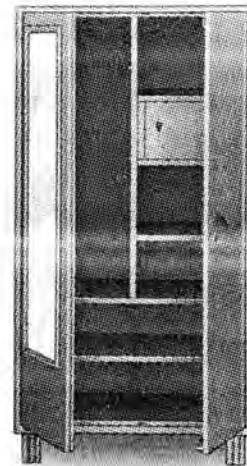
THAN JUST

models and colours. I'm sure to find one right for me. And so will you!

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GOOD LOOKS OUTSIDE. GREAT VALUE INSIDE.



WCA 1992

this idea with our neighbours, in our neighbourhood.

This is a change in the inside of us – the inner change that is necessary for the development of democracy, for the development of a society in which coercion, outward coercion, has been reduced to the minimum. A fully democratic society is a society in which there is no outward coercion. Suppose it is an ideal dream – the State will never wither away, the stateless society is only an ideal to be worked for; suppose we do not arrive at it; but to the extent to which we are able to make progress, democracy has progressed. Therefore Gandhiji said (it was not his saying, he merely repeated it), "That Government was the best which governed the least". Today all of us want the Government to govern most, and we want freedom also – these are two inconsistent things. I shall like to place before you a view of social organisation which is very much different from the present picture.

We have the food problem in India, a very serious problem, perhaps the most important problem in the country. The people must be fed before we have steel mills, before we have anything else. But whose task is it today? Whose job is it today to solve the problem? It is the job of Shri Rajendra Prasad and the Government of India. It is the job of Shri Yashwantrao Chavan and his Government in the Bombay State. That is the picture that we have today. The fundamental problem of life which touches each individual is to be solved at the top by a few people. We have a picture of society in which the individual is at the centre, then around him is the family. The family is the rock-bottom on which social life is based. If the family is destroyed, I don't think there will be human culture or civilization. The individual and his family around him, and after that – what do we have today? The great society. The individual with his family is plunged into this vast ocean. The individual is frightened of this ocean. He is in search of security and in that search of security any rogue that comes along is able to win him over to his side. Any dictator comes along and promises to give him security and food, and he follows him. The frightened individual is not in a position even to look after the primary needs of his life.

We say the next group around the family should be a community. In human history, ninety nine per cent of the people have lived in small communities. Man is a small community animal. In Bombay city, we are lost and it is a jungle where in the same chawl, in the same tenement house, in the same apartment house,

one neighbour does not know the other. Human beings were not meant to live like this. Man is a social animal; he must have a community. That community is the natural community for the human being which is small enough, in which everyone is able to know everyone, everyone is recognized by everyone else – a face-to-face direct community, as sociologists would call it. That should be the community, the next social organization around the family. You might say, well we have these communities today. In India, eighty per cent of our people are living in villages which are small communities of this nature. But it is not enough to have this small community. Something else should go with it and that is very important. This primary community, next to the family group, must be so organized that the primary needs of the people living in those communities are satisfied within that community, satisfied as far as possible. The picture that emerges out of this social philosophy or this sociology would be a picture of agro-industrial communities. The members of the community produce their own food, their own clothing, their own shelter, are able to look after their primary education and primary health services.

It is not an immediate community in which human beings are living today, but a distant community or distant centres which are responsible for giving employment, for giving clothing, for giving food. When this kind of thing happens it is inevitably a top-heavy organization. It is bound to lead to restriction of democracy. So the individual, then around him the family and around him this primary community – this should be the picture. There may be certain needs of this community which cannot be fulfilled within the community itself; there will be other communities of this kind around this community – all those should form a still wider circle of communities. You might call it Taluka Community, you might call it District Community, though a District may be too large. Say, this primary community has a little rivulet flowing nearby and it wants to dam this in order to irrigate the land. The man-power that is available and the resources that are available in the primary community are not enough for the task, so a hundred communities may join together and put up the dam. There may be still other needs which even a hundred or a thousand of these primary communities cannot fulfill. For that a still wider circle of communities may be necessary. In this way from the bottom you go on building up.

Between these conceptions, between what I have placed before you and what we have today, there is a

world of difference. What I have just now told is the picture of a new society as visualized by Gandhiji. He said that at the innermost circle, or at the lowest level, the people should exercise the utmost power and at the highest level the least power. As you go along, we have the primary needs – we must have food, we must have clothing, we must have shelter, these things we must have before we have the railways, the postal services, or the aeroplanes and what not – for these primary needs the primary community itself, or the members of the communities around, are responsible in this system and they exercise the utmost power in that regard. As you go along upwards and reach Delhi, Delhi in this conception has very little power. It may have some powers of defence, currency and may be one or two other powers – a situation very much different from what we have today. Under the present system also we have a Parliament, a State Assembly, and then District Boards and Village Panchayats. But the whole Gandhian conception has been turned upside down. The Parliament has the utmost power and the Village Panchayat has nominal powers, farcical powers. This is a travesty of democracy.

We have a movement going on in the country today for the abolition of cold war between man and man. Bhoodan has now developed into Gramdan. Gramdan means a village collectively owns all the land of the village. Individual ownership has ceased to exist not by compulsion, force or legislation, but people have voluntarily agreed to pool their lands together, and say all this land belongs to us. And what has happened? All kinds of conflicts have disappeared. Land is the chief source of livelihood in the village and when land becomes communized, then the cold war gets completely abolished or at least ninety percent of it is abolished.

It is possible to develop a community which is fully cooperative. And there in a village, it is possible for villagers to plan for their food, to plan for their clothing, for their employment, for the type of machines and technology that they need. It is possible for such a village to manage its affairs without the intrusion of political parties. They will follow the principle of unanimity. In taking decisions whenever there are differences of opinion, no decisions are taken. As everyone is not working for his own interest, there is no tug of war; the idea is to think and to plan for the development of the community as a whole and, therefore, though difference of opinion are bound to exist, it is possible for those differences to be compromised. The tendency would be to find ways of agreement.

When a group of Quakers meet and if a difference of opinion occurs, they have a quiet time. For twenty minutes or thirty minutes they sit quietly and some solution is worked out. If not, they meet again a month later or six months later. You have such societies in Europe – they are not very many, they are few. But I look upon them as the outposts of Sarvodaya. They are independent, they have nothing to do with Gramdan. They grew out of the soil of Europe itself. In France they call themselves communities of work. These communities take their decisions unanimously, hold elections unanimously. When such a system is created, parties will have no place. And if in all the villages of India, if we have partyless system working, it will bring about a revolution in the political structure of the country. The Constitution and everything will have to be changed with this building from below. Without a revolution, inner and outward revolution, it will certainly not work; but at least at the lower level it can work. Such a democracy is nearer to the people. It is like the direct democracy that was practiced in Athens. All citizens gathered in the market place. Discussions were held. Decisions were taken by the people as a whole. In that way, whole village assemblies can meet and take decisions, decisions not about trifles – not about levying a tax on bullock carts or about putting up a lamp here or there and things of that nature, but real vital questions about food, about clothing, shelter and education and, if you please, about employment.

It is possible for the community to try and plan for these things. It is possible for them to plan for regional cooperation and that way they can go up. You might say that, well, all those small communities will become isolationist, they will begin to think of their own interests, and not the interests of others. Without that inner change, there is every fear and every danger of these communities disrupting the entire life of the nation or the life of the world. But with the inner change, when the conflict of interests goes away, there is no reason to suppose that a particular village, which has organized its life on this basis, will think of its own interests as independent from the interests of other communities. The interests of one village community and the interests of other village communities are not in conflict.

I should also like to plead for the reorganization of our economic and political life on the basis of what may be called vertical decentralization. Today, the State performs so many functions. The original function of the state was to look after the five percent of the people who are non-conformists, who are law-breakers, to look

after law and order. Now the conception has developed into a Welfare State, a socialist State, or a total State. There is no reason to believe that only the State can run railways, that only the State can run post offices, that only the State can run life insurance, steel mills, etc. True, they should not be run for private profit because that conflicts immediately with the fundamental idea that I have placed before you. But can't they be run by other agencies, by the people, and at the same time, be independent of the State? Why can't we have autonomous bodies running our railways? Instead of one autonomous body, why can't we have six or ten? Cannot the people throw up new and different kinds of organizations to manage their business? Things have to be administered, there is no doubt. But why the Government alone should administer these? Why is it necessary for the Government to run the educational system or the health system? Why can't the people do it? After all, where does the money come from? Money comes from the people. Where do the officers, experts, teachers and doctors come from? Is there a factory in Delhi which manufactures doctors and teachers? They all come from the people. Then why must we go to one centre and have everything run from that centre? I am not pleading for the preservation of the village as it is. The village as it is must go. But the village must be preserved in one sense – in the sense that it is a small community; it must be developed not only as an agrarian community but, as I said, agro-industrial community and these primary communities should not be very large. We are all products of culture, but we are also products of nature.

The Sarvodaya order of society is not a national order of society. Nationalism has no place in the Sarvodaya picture of society. No kind of parochialism has any place in that society. They are outdated ideas. The citizen who lives in Sarvodaya society is a world citizen. But if we conceive of the world order as being maintained by the World Government functioning from, shall we say, New York, Moscow, Geneva or from wherever it is, a World Government functioning from the centre and planning for the whole world, can you imagine what kind of an oppressive world community that would be? I don't think it would be acceptable. A world order is possible only when we have this structure which I have placed before you. When the utmost of the needs are satisfied at the lower levels, and a few things are left for the top, only when the world order sits lightly on the individual, will it be possible for the individual to accept it.

Friends, I have placed before you a few tentative ideas about the development of democracy not only in the Indian context but in the context of the world. Of course, it is not given to us, it is not possible for us to think in terms of the whole world today. We may think, but as far as practicing is concerned, we can do it only in our homes. I hope that all of you will give very serious thought to these ideas. I hope that all of us will be able to put our hands together to create a democratic order of society in our country which might become a model for the rest of the world.

(Substance of a lecture delivered in Bombay on March 11, 1958 under the auspices of the Democratic Research Service, then the publishers of *Freedom First*)

[*Freedom First* June 1958]

Time for Good Citizenship

Now that the elections are over, the public can expect the political parties to turn their backs on them. Issues which vitally touch the life of the common people such as primary education, good roads and other infrastructure facilities, water supply, public health services, a responsive and honest administration, efficient public distribution system for weaker sections, were mostly ignored by political parties during the election, and may once again get low priority in their pursuit of power.

The lack of vision and corruption, as also incompetence of politicians, ably supported by an equally venal and tardy bureaucracy have earned the country the rank of the eighth most corrupt nation of the world, while it remains as one of the poorest.

Instead of looking up to politicians and bureaucrats, it is time to try another solution – form the end of citizens, particularly the educated ones with the advantage of a full stomach. Every citizen can strive as a producer to give one's best, whatever be one's avocation or profession, as a *consumer* fight for one's right of choice, value for money and above all accountability of vendor of goods, and services; and, as a social being, give a part of one's money, talent and time for enhancing the quality of life for the less privileged through innumerable avenues of public service.

The salvation for the country can only be through service and sacrifice. There is no substitute for good citizenship.

M. R. Pai

[*Freedom First*, April-June 1998]

Universal Declaration of Human Values

Abe Solomon

Introduction

The adoption of the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948, was an historic event. It was the successful culmination of the efforts of H. G. Wells in the 1940s for the diffusion worldwide of a declaration of "The Rights of Man" for the world citizen. The "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" is the most important and far-reaching of all U.N. declarations and a source of inspiration for national and international efforts to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The basic philosophy and concept of humankind on which the Declaration is based is stated succinctly in Article 1 of the Declaration which reads: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood".

Unfortunately, the human rights that this Declaration spells out are largely violated by governments and people all over the world. They are, no doubt, many and complex reasons – social, political, economic – for this state of affairs. But the failure to uphold and implement these human rights is mainly because the basic human values on which these rights

are founded have not been clarified and universally accepted and internalized by the people. Besides, in many countries, the traditional values, social relationships, and modes of thinking, which are a part of the ethos of these countries, are in conflict with the values that form the basis of the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights". In these countries, there is a need for social and cultural change, which is the task of the human rights and liberal movements in those countries to bring about.

It is evident that the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" is founded on secular humanist values. It is only when a majority of the people all over the world intellectually and emotionally accept these values that the human rights mentioned in the Declaration can become a reality. It is, therefore, necessary to have a Declaration stating that the basic human values on which the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" is founded.

The development of human, moral and ethical values is the criterion of social and cultural progress. It is only when a majority of the people in the world become committed intellectually and emotionally to the basic human values of freedom, truth, reason, and compassion that we can hope for a free, just and peaceful world.

DRAFT DECLARATION

PREAMBLE

Whereas, the realization in practice of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights depends on the intellectual and emotional acceptance by the people of the universal human values on which these rights are founded,

Whereas, disregard and contempt for human values have resulted in barbarous acts that have outraged the conscience of humanity,

Whereas, it is essential to promote the development and acceptance of basic human values by the peoples of all nations to usher in a world order based on freedom, truth, reason and compassion,

Whereas, the people of the United Nations have in the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirmed their faith in the dignity and worth of the human person and have determined to promote social and cultural progress in peace and harmony, and

Whereas, the common understanding and acceptance of these universal human values is of the greatest importance for the realization of this pledge,

Now therefore the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Values as a common ideal of attainment for all peoples

and all nations, to the end that every individual and every section of society, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these values and make all efforts, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition among the peoples of the world.

ARTICLES

Article 1:

Source of Values: Dignity of the human person as an autonomous agent endowed with reason is the ultimate source of all values.

Article 2 :

Reason: Reason is an essential human faculty in promoting the progress of humankind enabling human beings to have a worldview that motivates their thoughts and actions. Cultivation of rational thinking is, therefore, an intrinsic human value.

Article 3 :

Critical Intelligence: The essential nature of human beings is to question, examine, and understand. It is necessary to subject all beliefs to the scrutiny of reason and critical intelligence, in order to eliminate error. An unexamined belief is not worth having.

Article 4 :

Truth: The aim of all rational thought is the discovery of truth. Truth consists of beliefs about reality resulting from rational thinking and experience. Quest for truth is, therefore, a supreme human value.

Article 5 :

Tolerance: Tolerance of differing ideas and viewpoints is essential for the discovery of truth. Absence of tolerance leads to denial of freedom and the suppression of creativity. Tolerance is, therefore, a basic human value.

Article 6 :

Creativity: All social progress is the result of human

creativity. Rooted in the individuality of a human being, creativity can flourish only in an atmosphere of freedom.

Article 7 :

Freedom: Respect for the dignity of the human person demands that the freedom of every human being ought to be ensured in all spheres of life, consistent with the freedom of all.

Article 8 :

Equality: Respect for the human person implies that all human beings shall be treated as equal in dignity and rights irrespective of race, nationality, belief or non-belief, colour, gender, age or sexual orientation.

Article 9 :

Justice: The principle of justice which dictates equal consideration for the well-being of every individual shall inform all social institutions and relations between individuals.

Article 10 :

Humankind and Nature: Man being a part of nature necessitates his living in harmony with it. Concern for all life and the quality of the environment ought to guide all human activities.

Article 11 :

Universal Culture: It should be the aim of all human endeavour to evolve a universal culture based on freedom, truth, reason, and compassion.

MR. ABE SOLOMON is the President of the Indian Secular Society.

Freedom First October-December 1997



apocalypse now?

It's not as though we have anywhere else to go. She is our only home. If she dies, we die.

Already, we have stripped her of her forests. Polluted her air and water. Blasted a gaping hole in her delicate protective atmosphere.

If we continue to live the way we do now, then by the year 2025, about 75% of her rain forests will be wiped out. Over 50,000 species will be extinct. 40% of her fertile land will be barren. Her rivers and seas will turn toxic. Her weather patterns will spin out of control.

But if enough concerned, aware people act now, there is still hope. And what is called for is not heroic but rather very simple.

Check your equipment and your processes regularly. Recycle waste products. Use technology that's environmentally sustainable. On an even more basic level, don't leave a tap running when you're not using it. Don't leave lights on when there's no one in the room. Write on both sides of a sheet of paper. Check your vehicle regularly. Recycle old plastic bags. Pool your car.

Such simple things, we can all do them. We can all teach our children to do them.

Start today. Because tomorrow, we may not have a planet left to save.



TATA ENGINEERING

Vehicles that deliver on emission norms ahead of legislation. Manufacturing processes and design that preserve the environment. A harmonious co-existence with ecology. All part of TATA Engineering's drive towards a healthier planet.

Our Trade Unions

Will They Face the Challenge of the Eighties?

V. B. Karnik

A significant change must take place in the role that unions play. In the Eighties, they cannot be merely combative organizations, constantly engaged in struggle for securing petty concessions.

A new decade has begun, the decade of the Eighties. The challenges that trade unions will have to face are not likely to be qualitatively different from those faced earlier, but they will be more pressing and complicated. They will acquire that character because the economic situation is likely to be increasingly difficult and the problem of unemployment to weigh upon trade unions very heavily.

Trade unions grow when the economy grows, not only statistically but at a rate higher than that of population. Growth must be able to provide for at least a slight improvement in the conditions of the people, and for employment opportunities to absorb not only the new entrants into the labour force but also a fair percentage of those who are already unemployed. Care will have to be taken moreover that the new wealth that is created is not monopolized by those who are better off but is widely distributed amongst those at the bottom. There is little prospect of the economy growing at that rate in the eighties and much less prospect of widening the employment opportunities and equitable distribution of newly created national wealth.

There are indications that the burdens on workers and other toiling millions will increase since vast sums will be needed for developmental expenses. They are likely to be raised through fresh taxation and deficit financing. Both will hit workers hard. Prices will increase, scarcities will appear, and living conditions will be harder than what they are at present. Growing population and unemployment will make things still harder.

These conditions will place trade unions on the horns of a dilemma regarding the policy to be adopted. Will it be a policy of constant struggle and confrontation against the Government and employers, without worrying about the results? It may appear heroic, but will prove self-defeating in the end. It will antagonize society, isolate

the unions and provide an opportunity to the Government to damn them as anti-national and anti-social. Constant strikes hamper production, create bottlenecks and slow down industrial progress. Workers do not like unending strife. They leave unions following that course and flock to others working in a different way.

Or will it be a more prudent policy of securing as much as possible through negotiations and co-operation, building up strength, widening the bases and winning the support of public opinion? Will it pay more attention to changing socio-economic policies than to winning a concession here or a concession there. There will be little glamour in this cautious, painstaking course of action, but it will secure more benefits to the workers and do no damage to public interest. Strikes are not excluded, but they will be resorted to only when absolutely necessary and only after exhausting all other means.

Trade unions can follow this course effectively only if they extend their organization to unorganized workers in cities and also to agricultural labourers and artisans in rural areas. That will give them a strength which cannot be ignored. They must at the same time get involved in rural development and all associated activities. This will be a departure from the beaten track of trade union work, but it will be necessary if trade unions are not to be swept away by the rising tide of poverty and unemployment.

Workers and their trade unions are under attack at present because they ask more and more for those who are already much better off than agricultural labourers, the rural poor and unorganized workers. Some critics go to the extent of calling farmers a privileged class. This criticism is far from truth. Industrial workers in cities by and large, are only a little better off than their brethren in villages. And the little additional benefit

that they enjoy as the producers of vast wealth they usually share with their poorer brothers, cousins and other relatives. An unemployed relative or two usually stays with an industrial worker, and from month to month he has to remit funds to the village for the support of his parents or his wife and children who cannot live with him for lack of accommodation. The criticism, however untrue, is likely to become louder and fiercer in the present decade. Trade unions can justify their demand for improvement of the conditions of industrial workers only by combining it with an equally strong demand for the improvement of the conditions of all poor people. And a mere demand is not enough. It must be accompanied by active efforts to organize the poor in cities and villages.

A significant change must take place in the role that unions play. In the Eighties, they cannot be merely combative organizations, constantly engaged in struggle for securing petty concessions. They will have to be more constructive in their approach. They will have to widen their horizons so as to include in it not merely their members but also the large masses of unorganized workers and the poor in the villages. They must also be prepared to shoulder responsibilities so that the policies that they advocate are properly implemented. This will bring about a qualitative change in the outlook and functioning of trade unions.

Trade unions should now shift their emphasis from monetary to long term non-monetary demands such as housing, education, particularly technical and vocational, old-age pensions, promotions, etc. They should also demand a larger voice in the determination of the terms and conditions of employment and in the management of the undertakings. They will, of course, have to equip themselves for discharging these new responsibilities. The unions will also realize that patient negotiations and reasonable arguments, accompanied by pressure of public opinion, are more useful for gaining their demands than strikes and demonstrations.

Long-term demands of workers and amelioration of the conditions of the masses can be best secured through legislation and through governmental actions and policies. The movement must, therefore, turn its attention to politics, to larger issues facing the country. It should try to influence the actions and policies of the Government. This can be done without joining any political party and without losing its independence and autonomy. The movement will stultify itself if it fails

to perform this wider role. It must take an active interest in the plans for economic development, and in all actions of the Government in the social and economic fields. The age is long past when it could confine itself to collective bargaining over wages and allowances. It must enter the wider field of social and political life, and seek to influence it in the interest of a better deal for industrial workers and the producing masses as a whole.

Trade unions must adopt a positive, and not a negative or oppositional attitude towards the Government. Opposition, even a fight, may become inevitable when the Government does anything which is against the interests of workers. But it can do, particularly in a democracy, many things, which is of advantage to workers and others. Those must be actively supported, and constant pressure must be exerted on the Government in order that it may follow that path more vigorously. This can be done only if there is an attitude of critical co-operation, critical in the sense of readiness to criticize whenever necessary.

The Eighties will pose similar challenges to employers and the Government. Their response to those challenges must be helpful if worker's responses are to prove useful and rewarding. Employers must give up their hostility to trade unions and must accept them as equal partners in building up enterprises. They must hold constant consultations with unions and should not ordinarily introduce any changes without securing their consent. Disputes, wherever they occur, should be settled in negotiations across the table, and resort to an external authority should be an exception rather than the rule. Workers' demands for higher wages, dearness allowance or bonus should be regarded as legitimate, and all efforts should be made to settle them as early as possible. Apart from wages and fair conditions of work, workers should be treated with respect, and their dignity as human beings should be preserved.

Government has two roles, one as an employer and the other as the sovereign authority. As an employer, it cannot claim any privileges not available to other employers. On the other hand, it has the responsibility of behaving like a model employer and of setting standards for others to follow. It should, in particular, set up high standard in the matter of labour-management and co-operation.

As a sovereign authority, the eighties will prove

a very difficult period for the Government, whatever its colour. For the economic development that is taken in hand, huge investments and heavy mobilization of resources are needed. Benefits will not be available immediately. The task cannot be accomplished in a democracy without enlisting the co-operation of all sections of the people.

The co-operation of the trade union will be crucial in that respect. It can offer not only its own co-operation, but can also secure the co-operation of millions of others. This can be enlisted only through a meaningful dialogue with the movement. The dialogue must be continuous and must embrace all sections of the movement. It must taken into confidence and consulted from time to time on all issues of social and economy policy.

There is a good example of such a dialogue in Great Britain. Some years back there was the Social contract. It gave some good results, but later fell into disuse. Another effort was made later and it resulted in an agreement between the British Government and the British Trade Union Congress. A similar agreement was arrived at recently between the AFL-CIO and the U.S. Government. It is called the National Accord. Here is something that authorities in India can copy with advantage. There will be many other challenges, but they will generally be of the same kind as faced earlier. They will be such as inter-union rivalries, democratic functioning of unions and others. They will have to be tackled properly, taking care at the same time to reduce tensions rather than to intensify them.

Inter-union rivalries have plagued the movement since long. They are responsible for many work stoppages, and also for some violence and other anti-

social activities. The point to be noted, however, is that unions are not the only guilty party. The main offender is the Government. It has failed so far to provide an expeditious machinery for evaluating the claims of rival unions, and for granting the status of a recognized body to a representative union. Secret ballot is the best way to ascertain the support enjoyed by a union.

Recognition of a representative union (the representative character being determined by a secret ballot open to all employees) as the sole collective bargaining agent and bonafide collective bargaining with it should be the basis of the industrial relations system all over the country. Recognised unions should enjoy the rights of check-off the union shop. That will put an end to inter-union rivalries and enable trade unions to grow as strong and responsible organizations. The movement would be well advised to secure the enactment of a law to provide for it as one of the main objectives of its work in the decade. It must also ensure that unions forming it function in a democratic manner.

It is difficult to foresee all the challenges that the new decade will pose. The situation is fluid and it may change in many directions. International developments may force a big change; internal developments may also, under some circumstances, knock the bottom out of the basic assumption of this argument. However, apart from these contingencies, trade unions would be well-advised to follow the path of conciliation and co-operation, to avoid the alternative path of constant conflict.

MR. V. B. KARNIK, an eminent Trade Unionist was closely associated with *Freedom First* and was its editor for well over a decade.

[*Freedom First* April 1980]

WE SUPPORT

We at *Freedom First* fully endorse and support the following statement issued by Bittu Sahgal, Tariq Ansari, Bal Mundkar and four others (*The Times of India*, August 18).

"In a time characterised by a dismal lack of integrity in public life, individuals such as Mr. J.B. D'Souza and Mr Dilip Thakore emerge as lone warriors. They have chosen to appeal for justice and the restoration of democratic principles when most of us prefer to turn a blind eye to the dilemmas that beset our society and country. But it seems we have no time for these old-fashioned values today. As a result of the general lowering of ideals, we are caught off guard by the rare individual whose standards are unusually high.

"Yet, if we fail to rally round a person who wears courage of his convictions boldly, we are undermining the quality of our own lives by helping to erode the basic values by which any civilised society lives. Considering Mr. D'Souza and Mr. Thakore have taken an issues that affects us all, the very least we can give them is our public support"

[*Freedom First*, October-December 1993]

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The Evolution of the Liberal Idea

Otto Count Lambsdorff

In Europe we have a number of liberal parties with a wide spectrum of political views. There is hardly (because we are individualists) one Liberal who shares 100% the views of a fellow Liberal and that is true of Liberal parties as well. If, for instance, we take a look at the Swiss or the Dutch Liberal Party and at the same time we deal with British Liberals we will find a relatively wide divergence of views that practical problems impose on them: from economic policy to education, not to speak of European security.

The Individualism of Liberals

Political Liberalism in Europe, over the last 100 years, has always lived with the danger of splits within Liberal parties. In Germany before and after World War I, we had two Liberal parties with the result that Liberalism virtually had no political influence at all. In recent years, the Free Democratic Party, the liberal political party has survived two splits since 1949. In both cases those who left and formed a new party finally ended up in political obscurity but that has to do with the special German aspect of our electoral law that the party which does not collect 5% of the general vote gets no seat in Parliament. If you have 4.9% you have zero seats. If you have 5% in a general election in Germany you have 25 to 27 seats in Parliament.

This rule was introduced in the Federal Republic after our bad experience between 1918 and 1933 when we had 136 parties running for Parliament and almost as many in the German Parliament with the consequence that we always found what we call a negative coalition able to topple a government but not a positive coalition based on agreement on certain fundamental political ideas. This tendency to split and to disagree certainly has much to do with the strong individualism of liberals.

Liberals stand not only for political freedom but for personal freedom as well. That makes it difficult for all of us, and I don't think one can exclude any liberal

party from that consequence or insight. It makes it difficult for all of them to accept majority decisions. But we have to see that if we want to exercise influence and if we want to play a political role then we must follow the democratic rule of discussion and decision by majority. Otherwise liberals cannot play a role in politics. Without that kind of discipline which we have to learn and certainly some of our liberal friends in my own country and in other countries have to learn, we cannot do what I feel is our duty as liberals, namely, to create a platform not just for theoretical discussions but to try to bring liberal ideas and fundamental liberal aspects into day-to-day politics and participate in political decision-making.

A Liberal Achievement

A question which is very often asked is, does Political Liberalism have a function in 20th century Europe, the United States and in Canada? I would like to state one major and, I think historic success which liberals have fought for and gained, namely constitutional rights in our political society. Without liberalism in the 19th century what we have now reached and believe in, would not have been accomplished. That is certainly to the credit of the political liberalism of our grandfathers and great grandfathers. At the same time it is responsible for the present weakness of political liberalism because none, neither conservatives nor socialists doubt that constitutional rights have to be secure and cannot be denied.

That leads to the question - what do the liberals want to do these days? Are liberals necessary? My answer is we know that we do have many liberal-minded people in conservative and socialist parties who are in agreement with us whether in matters of education, human rights or constitutional rights. This has, in fact, been a point of discussion in my country that these liberal-minded people in other parties would not have any liberal-minded influence in their parties if there had

not been a Liberal political organisation. Liberal this time with a capital 'L'.

The Free Market Economy

This is equally true in my own field of economic policy. Basically liberals all over the world favour a free market economy with slight disagreements but no basic disagreement. Curiously enough, this position is described in British and US papers as conservative economic policy. Everyone who stands for a free economy, for non-intervention, for non-protectionism is called a conservative in the economic sense. The truth is that conservatives and conservative parties did not have any substantial economic theory or economic policy of their own. They had to adopt the liberal policy. And the free market economy is basically a liberal idea, developed by liberals introduced by liberals and defended by liberals.

We in Germany describe the free market economy as the social market economy because we do not deny the social responsibility of a free market economy system, because we do not advocate *laissez faire* of the second half of the 19th century. I feel that this is basically a liberal idea, a basic liberal truth. Perhaps I should add that the basic idea of a free economy in the liberal view is of course efficiency, full employment, the well-being of people and the attempt to overcome poverty. But there is, in my view, more behind it. In the long run, only in a free economy can you live as free men. In my view, without a free economy, you will, in the long run, not live in a free society.

OTTO COUNT LAMBSDORFF is head of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, devoted to the promotion of Liberalism and Liberal values worldwide.

[Freedom First, July 1986]



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"I Am A Repentant Socialist"

Achyut Patwardhan

I had once preferred State Capitalism to Private Capitalism. I did not then realize that state ownership of all means of production had its own inherent dangers. The state is after all run by a political party.

Achyut Patwardhan: 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: I am told that you were once a confirmed Marxist. Will you please enlighten me of your transition from Marxism to Gandhism?

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 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 been thus cheated twice and would not like to be cheated again. 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 at Lahore. My socialist friends wanted 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 the Marxists.

It is true that I believed in the socialization of our natural resources for the benefit of our people. I also held the view that the allocation of natural resources should be utilized 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 utilized 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 realize 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 means the interests of the ruling clique. The gangsters 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 on them. Wherever the state has taken over agriculture from their hands, it has ended in disaster. The examples of Russia and China are before us. Facts are more important than opinions.

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

AP: I was once in favour of nationalization 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 nationalization of banks would be completely distorted by the party in power to its advantage. I also did not realize 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 nationalized 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.

Mr. Achyut Patwardhan was a member of the Congress Socialist Party, and after independence, closely associated with Jayaprakash Narayan in the socialist movement.

(This was an exclusive interview with Achyut Patwardhan, the well-known freedom fighter, by Sumant Bankeshwar).

[Freedom First September 1984]



In all walks of life, the remuneration of people is always fixed by someone else. The remuneration of the employee is fixed by the employer ... Even the emoluments of the President of the Republic and the judges of the Supreme Court and the ministers themselves are not fixed by themselves... There is no reason why we (Members of Parliament) should treat ourselves apart from all others who are elected to serve...

MPs draw perquisites of about Rs.28,000 tax free for producing a lot of hot air and yet they have the impertinence to raise taxes on the income of honourable and hard working engineers, technicians, chemists, managers, calling them exploiters and enemies of the people. If they are exploiters, so are Members of Parliament.

Minoo Masani

In the course of his interventions in the Lok Sabha on 5 August, 1969 and 10 March 1970 and published by him in his *Memoirs Against the Tide*.

World Communism Today

Philip Spratt

The spectre which a century ago haunted Europe has today become a very material danger to the whole world, and it has never seemed more menacing than in 1960. In the past few months its campaign of expansion has won a series of gains and has had to suffer very few reverses.

However, these events should be viewed in the perspective of a struggle which is likely to last for generations. In such a long view, communism can claim to march in step with history, in the sense that industrialism and the consequent vast increase in population push mankind powerfully towards regimentation and the subordination of the individual to society. Communism has set itself up – at least until the State begins to “wither away” – as the whole hearted champion of this trend. It also gains from it the tactical advantages of a centralized organization over scattered individuals.

Despite swelling populations, industrialism increases prosperity – at least it has done so hitherto – and therefore makes universal education possible; and this brings a trend towards social and economic equality. Communism has gained greatly by claiming to be the sole champion of this trend also, but there is increasing evidence that its claim is invalid. The world contains hundreds of different social systems, many of which are less egalitarian than communism, but the better specimens among the non-communist societies are more egalitarian than communism, and also freer.

It can be said, indeed, after forty years of experience, that the claim of communism to have solved all human problems is fairly definitely disproved. The system sets itself in many ways against human nature as we know it, and it has yet to show that it can remake human nature, as it claims to do, to suit its requirements. The system itself, on the other hand, is incapable of adaptation to human needs: it operates within a very narrow range of choices. In spite

therefore, of forty years of indoctrination, and recently of improved material conditions, there is much skepticism and dissatisfaction in Russia, especially among intellectuals.

Nor have the communist dogmas about man under non-communist systems stood the test of experience. They had a certain plausibility in past generations; but we now have before us unquestionably better systems which appear to be stable and also capable of far-reaching adaptation to changing needs. The dramatic picture of the old society inexorably destined to self-destruction and in the process giving birth to the new is unrecognizable in the real world.

But all this does not alter the fact that communism has certain short-term advantages, which may well enable it to achieve its goal of world conquest. Power grows out of the barrel of a gun, says Mao Tse-tung. If the free countries as a group fail to maintain military parity, nothing can compensate for its loss. The free countries, though probably still strong enough, seem to be losing ground, through the rapid advance of Russian military technology, the arming and drilling of the masses of China, and the weakening of the opposing alliances.

It is often said that the modern “absolute” weapons have made the old conceptions of national power out of date. This seems to be but a half-truth. Those weapons can be used only in the last resort, and it is quite doubtful if they will ever be used. Even the threat to use them has lost much of its force. Accordingly the power of a nation for many purposes is not so very different from what it was before the advent of the absolute weapons. Certainly the conventional arms have not lost all their political weight, nor have industrial capacity or population strength.

Evidently the Russo-Chinese bloc is a formidable force, even though for some time yet China will remain

technologically backward. The existing alliances at scattered points round its periphery have seemed adequate to contain it only because of America's superiority in nuclear weapons. As that advantage diminishes, some more substantial force will be required. On the west, this could be provided by an effective union of the free European states, which would have a population and industrial output greater than Russia's. Encouraged by America, they are moving towards union, though with much hesitation.

Unhappily no comparable development is in sight in the east. If India and Pakistan effected a military alliance and were linked with Japan, the three most powerful, other than China, of the Asian countries could form an adequate counterweight to China, and if supported by America would balance any likely development of her power. But for the present this is crying for the moon. India is strongly opposed – officially at least – to any plan of the kind, and Japan seems to be moving away from her defensive reliance on America.

As in the past, the communist countries keep up a world-wide propaganda campaign and undoubtedly spend a great deal on it. Much of their diplomatic, cultural and other activity is also intended mainly as propaganda. The effect of it all must be considerable, but mere propaganda, especially if it is largely false, passes through three phases. When a people are still primitive, propaganda of any kind has little effect on them. Then when they have developed political consciousness they swallow almost anything they are told. Finally, they acquire some sophistication, and the effectiveness of propaganda declines again. Not much of the world is now at the primitive level. Many of the backward and ex-colonial countries are still at the second level, the phase of maximum gullibility. However, ours is a highly political age, and people are learning fast. Probably communist propaganda in general has now entered a phase of diminishing returns.

To achieve real impact, propaganda must be combined with diplomacy. Since Stalin's death, Russian diplomacy has become more flexible, profiting by many differences among the free countries. In particular, it has induced a number of the backward, colonial and ex-colonial, countries to support it or to be neutral. Latterly it has begun to give some of these countries economic aid.

However, whether by good luck or intelligent

anticipation, this campaign has been partly neutralized by a great movement of withdrawal of the principal colonial powers from the colonies, and the beginning of systematic economic aid to them from the capitalist countries. Moreover, Russia has come up against a number of difficult choices, especially in her effort to penetrate the Middle East. Finally, China has begun to take independent action in accordance with a policy appreciably different from Russia's, and has reawakened suspicions which Russia's blandishments had largely dispelled.

An ounce of power is worth a ton of propaganda. Communists have always been concerned to make people believe that their triumph is inevitable, and have been far less worried whether it appears desirable. Now that they really wield very great power, their campaign of expansion consists more in threats than in promises. This was very much the case in Stalin's last years. Khrushchev has increased the element of enticement and for some time Mao did so too, but latterly he has gone back to something like Stalin's methods.

Some have suspected that the difference in tactics between Russia and China is a mere show, covering an agreed division of labour in promoting the world revolution. If so, it has been worked out in a most artistic manner. Fairly outspoken diatribes have appeared in the press in both countries. Such a thing seems altogether too risky. It is a genuine difference of opinion, and there are important divergences on domestic affairs too.

Some broad causes of this most gratifying dispute can be discerned. Since Stalin's death the Russian dictator has been in a comparatively weak position. He has had to restrain the terror and rule largely by humouring the public. The public for their part are now educated and probably impatient of being treated like children. Hence Khrushchev has had to allow substantial relaxations at home, and to put up at least a convincing show of a *détente* abroad, accompanied, however, by frequent claims of successes – in India, Iraq, Guinea, Cuba – to maintain the somewhat tepid enthusiasm of the public for world conquest. In China, on the other hand, the dictator is still triumphant and self-assertive and inclined to meet opposition, at home and abroad, by violence rather than conciliation. There is good reason to believe that the official claims of economic progress are greatly exaggerated, and that the people are suffering intensely. But to a man in the mood of the Chinese dictator this supplies only an additional

stimulus to militancy. He is opposed to any international relaxation, and behaves as a successful communist is naturally inclined to do, making little distinction between imperialists, social democrats and feudalists; America, India and Nepal. All enemies are to be buried.

The difference should not be exaggerated. Since 1955 at least, China's bellicosity has been exercised mainly at the expense of countries which are not America's allies, and always so as to avoid any great risk of American retaliation. Russia has claimed to want a *détente*, but has broken it repeatedly by war-like gestures; and when she has worked to "reduce tension", it has evidently been for the purpose of weakening the NATO alliance or inducing America to stop nuclear weapons test. Still there was a difference between Russia and Chinese policies, and it remains even after the collapse of the "summit". In fact the dramatic change of Khrushchev's policy in the middle of May has amounted to little except louder denunciation of America.

The important difference is that Russia supports the attempts of communists abroad to attain power by peaceful means, whereas China opposes such attempts and supports revolutions. The policy of occupying border areas in Indo-China, Burma, India and Nepal is carried out in pursuance of the policy of supporting revolution in those countries; it is intended to encourage the communists and intimidate their opponents.

The communist party of India has before it two possible policies. It may present itself as a respectable national party, allaying fears by carefully playing the parliamentary game, aiming to complete the work of modernization and socialization begun by the Congress, and destined, with its superior discipline and morale, to take the place of the Congress when the time comes. Or it may set about to exploit the numerous divisions, of class, caste, language, etc. which open so temptingly before it, and reduce the country to chaos in order to climb to power on the ruins. Either policy would have good prospects of success. It might even be the best way to pursue the one for some time and then go over to the other. But it is foolish to combine or alternate the two, at least for the present.

Happily, that is what the C.P.I. has done. Before 1949 Moscow compelled the party to combine or alternate incompatible policies. Now Moscow seems to have made up its mind in favour of respectability, but luckily for us all, Peking has appeared on the scene

as the permanent champion of direct action. India is equidistant from the two communist capitals; Moscow is older, but Peking is Asian. The C.P.I. must be pulled with equal force in both directions. It is striking that the Chinese invasion has not greatly changed the situation in the party. Thus the old ambiguity of policy remains, and uncomfortable though it is when the party turns left, it is best in the long run that this alternation should continue, since it condemns the party to impotence.

MR. PHILIP SPRATT was one of the founders of the CPI. Arrested in the Meerut Conspiracy Case, he gave up Communism and turned out to be a well known author and an associate of Rajaji.

[*Freedom First* September 1960]

On Re-writing History

The re-writing of history to suit particular causes has so far been associated mainly with Russia. As far as we are aware no attempts have been made in India to write history with particular objects in view. At worst, historians have been guilty of suppressing facts unpalatable to them, and giving prominence to others which support their own theories. This is a human failing, and nothing much can be done about it.

Dr. P. V. Kane's address at the History Congress at Waltair on December 29, 1953, should open our eyes to a great danger that exists in this country. Politics is our national pastime and political propaganda has often made use of history as a medium. Dr. Kane referred to the report of the Zakir Hussain Committee on basic national education which contains an unusual suggestion. The report stated that as the Indian nation has adopted non-violence as a method preferable to violence, Indian children should be taught the superiority of non-violence over violence in the context of history. Dr. Kane rightly observes that no Indian history based on principles stated above, can be written, particularly for the period from about 1200 to 1920 AD and it would be better not to teach any history at all rather than one which is so obviously tailored to political ends. Fortunately, no history books of this type have yet been written and we hope that any attempt to do so will be strongly discouraged by everybody concerned.

Comment in *Freedom First*,
February 1954



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మీ కోసం

ఒక వేదక ఉంటు. అదే...

“ప్రజలతో ముఖ్యమంత్రి”

రాష్ట్ర వ్యాప్తంగా విరాటంకంగా కొనసాగుతున్న
“ప్రజలతో ముఖ్యమంత్రి” కార్యక్రమం ఎన్నో సామాజిక
సమస్యలను పరిష్కరించింది. 1997 ఏప్రిల్ లో ప్రారంభమైన ఈ కార్యక్రమంలో
ఎంతోమంది ప్రజలు స్వయంగా ముఖ్యమంత్రితో టెలిఫోన్ లో మాట్లాడి సమస్యలను
పరిష్కరించుకోవడం విశేషం. ఈ వినూత్న కార్యక్రమంలో ప్రజలు విలువైన
సమయాన్ని వివేకవంతంతో వినియోగించుకోవాలి. సామాజిక సమస్యలతో
పాటు, అభివృద్ధి పథకాలపై ప్రశ్నలు అడగాలి.
పరిష్కారాన్ని అందుకోవాలి.

ఒక ప్రత్యేక అంశం మీ అందరి కోసం డూరదర్శన్లో
పులి సోమవారం సా॥ గం. 6.25 ని.లకు
ఆలస్యమెందుకు...

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కృష్ణాజిల్లా సహకార కేంద్రబ్యాంక్ లిమిటెడ్

హెడ్ ఆఫీసు: మచిలీపట్నం తీజనల్ ఆఫీసు: విజయవాడ

ఇతర బ్యాంకులకన్నా
ఎక్కువ వడ్డీ ఇస్తున్న బ్యాంక్



గత ఐదు సంవత్సరాలుగా
జాతీయస్థాయిలో అత్యుత్తమ ప్రతిభా
పురస్కారము పొందిన బ్యాంక్

తే. 01-04-2002 నుండి డిపాజిట్లపై వడ్డీరేట్లు

ఫోన్:

223530

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| 1. సేవింగ్స్ డిపాజిట్లపై | - 4.50% |
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- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
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6. వ్యాపారస్తులకు క్యాష్ క్రెడిట్, ఓవర్ డ్రాఫ్ట్ మరియు పరిశ్రమల స్థాపనకు రుణ సదుపాయము అందించు బ్యాంకు.
7. జిల్లా అభివృద్ధి ప్రణాళికలో అత్యధిక రుణములను అందజేస్తున్న ఏకైక బ్యాంక్.
8. గీనియర్ సిటిజన్స్ కు 1/2% హెచ్చు వడ్డీ.

జె. మల్లయ్య

జనరల్ మేనేజర్

తొండపు దశరథ జనార్ధనరావు

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Shri J. R. Pushpa Raju*

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- 35,445 Scavengers were rehabilitated with an outlay of Rs.70 crores.
- 12,425 Jogins were rehabilitated with an outlay of Rs.16 crores.

Highlights of Action Plan - 2002-03

- Total outlay Rs.180.75 crores
- Physical target 112040 beneficiaries

Fund allocation of schemes

• Self employment	13874	Beneficiaries	Rs. 78.52 crores
• Vulnerable groups (Scavengers, Jogins, Flayers & Tanners, Bonded Labour)	19298	"	Rs. 38.60 crores
• Minor Irrigation	38620	"	Rs. 21.90 crores
• Land purchase	5100	"	Rs. 20.40 crores
• Micro Credit	15675	"	Rs. 7.84 crores
• Training Programmes	4401	"	Rs. 5.36 crores
• Land Development	7946	"	Rs. 3.97 crores
• Horticulture	7000	"	Rs. 3.22 crores
• Others	126	"	Rs. 94.20 crores
Total	112040		Rs.180.75 crores

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Hon'ble Minister for Health, Medical & Family Welfare

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- ✦ మాస్టర్ ప్లానులో స్థలము ఇతర ఉపయోగముగా ఉంటే ప్రభుత్వము వారు భూ ఉపయోగము మార్పును ఆమోదిస్తేనే లేఅవుట్ ఆమోదించబడును. ఇందుకై రుసుము చెల్లించవలసి వస్తుంది.
- ✦ ప్లాటునకు నిబంధనల ప్రకారము కావలసిన వెడల్పుతో రోడ్డు లేకపోవుట వలన ఆ ప్లాటు కొనుగోలుదారులు ప్లాటులో కొంతభాగము రోడ్డు వెడల్పు చేయుటకు నష్టపోవలసి వస్తుంది.
- ✦ అనధికార లే అవుట్లలో కన్వర్షన్ ఛార్జీలు, రోడ్డు వేయుటకు అగు వ్యయము మరియు ప్లాటులో 10 % భాగం స్థలము ఖరీదును కూడా ప్లాటు కొనుగోలుదారే భరించవలసి ఉంటుంది.
- ✦ గృహ నిర్మాణ నిమిత్తము లోన్ సౌకర్యము లభించదు. కావున ఉదాచే ఆమోదించబడిన లే అవుట్లలోని ప్లాటునే కొనండి.

పూర్తి సమాచారమునకై

ఉడా గైడెన్స్ సెల్ను సంప్రదించండి

ఫోన్ నం.573936

డా॥ జె. సురేష్బాబు, I.A.S., ఉపాధ్యక్షులు

In the Grip of a Frightening Mindset

Nagindas Sanghavi

During the last six weeks, Gujarat has hogged the headlines in the national and international press all for the wrong reasons. So much has been written by so many from such a variety of angles and view points, that there hardly anything left unsaid about the horrendous events in that unfortunate State suffering from a series of calamities natural and man made. But all these projections are an exercise in futility because there are no words that can accurately and graphically convey what one has seen or felt about the happenings that would leave even the most insensitive person stunned. The cold figures are shocking enough – over 800 killed, 30,000 houses, shops and cabins burnt and/or looted, 3000 vehicles smashed and more than 1.07,000 refugees – uprooted and rendered homeless. But even this horrifying statistics pale into insignificance when viewed against the diabolical mind set that to day holds its sway all over Gujarat.

Communal Epidemic

Those who condemn the burnings and the killings of the innocents do not reflect or represent the psyche that has emerged to hold the majority community in its grip. Apart from a miniscule minority almost all the Hindus in Gujarat, not only support, the terrible vendetta for Godhra, but even justify it as a necessary cleansing for an alien community of traitors. It is quite surprising, even shocking to hear such views from the most unexpected quarters, from the people least expected to be affected by the communal virus, from nice, sober mild mannered businessmen, academics, journalists and even government officials including the policemen on duty. Six thousand Home Guards called in to help curb the violence had to be sent back when they were found abetting the rioters.

Those who are not sufficiently acquainted with the Gujarat of today are overwhelmed by the upsurge and seek to explain it away by barking up the wrong tree. Those who deplore the intense communal hatreds in Gandhi's Gujarat have their perceptions outdated at least by three decades. They overlook the disquieting

fact that though Gandhi did belong to Gujarat, Gujarat no longer belongs to Gandhi and probably never did. Gujarat has long back shifted its loyalties away from Gandhi and, at least from 1969, Gujarat has been marked out as "a communal riot pro zone" in the records of the Union Home ministry. There is a fairly long track record of communal riots, which erupt from trivial reasons and sometimes from no reasons at all.

Nurturing Hatred

These riots have left bitter memories and latent antagonisms. It is a vicious circle in which the riots nurture the hatreds and the hatreds fuel the riots. It should not be forgotten that when Advani took out his infamous Rathayatra, he chose Somnath from Gujarat as his starting point and the Gujarat VHP proudly claims that in the demolition of the Babri mosque [1992], the largest contingent of the *Karsevaks* was contributed by Gujarat.

Gujarat was the first State and it is still the only State where BJP has captured power on its own and in spite of the smashing reverses suffered by the party in the Municipal and the Panchayat elections, the BJP in Gujarat is still a power to reckon with. Internal feuds, the administrative and political inefficiency of BJP leaders in the State induced unprecedented instability in the State [five governments in seven years] and Mr. Modi was sent in to arrest the rot. The events have played into his hands and even the most hostile press has to concede that were elections held in the near future, Mr. Modi would lead the party to a convincing victory.

Mr. Narendra Modi

But he has overreached himself and is deprived of such victory. His name is to day the most accursed one in all non-*Hindutva* quarters. He has been accused of unleashing the communal carnage to achieve his purpose. He is denounced as a fascist with a pogrom of genocide of the minority communities, of aiding and abetting if not instigating the devilish fury of the mob by forcing the administration into an 'im-mobilisme.' Police Commissioner Pandey pleaded with the Chief Minister

for a free hand to deal with the miscreants. When he (the Chief Minister) acted at all, it was for punishing the conscientious police officers for curbing the anti-social elements amongst the rioters. Such officers were transferred to more innocuous posts. Some of the transfers were so blatantly unjust that even the Police Commissioner had to enter a protest against the orders. Modi did discriminate between the victims of violence in matters of compensation and he could hardly conceal his glee when he characterized the riots as a natural 'reaction equal and opposite.' Mr. Modi is known for his arrogance and his self righteousness; his alignment with the forces of hard core *Hindutva* was never in doubt. His sympathies are too obvious and some of his closest friends are suspected of organizing and leading the mobs on their prowl.

Modi has entrusted the judicial inquiry to a retired Judge who is uncomfortably close to the accused groups. Mr. Modi has been denounced as the single largest obstacle to the restoration of peace in Gujarat and the opposition parties are baying for his blood in the Parliament.

Economic Impact

The National Human Rights Commission and the Minorities Commission have commented adversely on the doings of his government and the European Union has now added its very powerful voice by declaring the Gujarat events as comparable to the events in the Germany of the thirties. Powerful voices from U S have warned about the drying up of investments not only for Gujarat but for India as a whole. There is a move afoot to haul up Modi and his government before the European tribunals and the report of the British High Commissioner is said to have gone against him. The ministry of External Affairs has registered a mild protest by saying that India "does not appreciate" such comments in public. India must realize that globalisation of economy involves globalisation of interests and it is within the ambit of their power to impose a ban on the goods exported by or from Gujarat as blood tainted goods. It may be recalled that India was expelled from the international conference at Rabat in 1969 for the Ahmedabad riots.

But even the Devil must be given his due. More than eight hundred deaths deserves strongest condemnation but for a community five million strong, it certainly cannot, by any stretch of imagination be described as planning and executing genocide. Mr. Narendra Modi or even his colleagues might be

harbouring dreams of an authoritarian fascist regime but Gujarat is not India and they have neither the strength nor the will to subvert the Constitution – a protective bulwark for the minority rights in India.

Epicentre: Ahmedabad

Underlying much of the raucous controversies is the changing patterns of the Gujarat riots which ought to be analyzed on the basis of geography and periodicity. It is interesting to note that large areas in Gujarat are left untouched by the fury, which is concentrated in the city of Ahmedabad. Out of 107000 refugees more than 75000 are in the city itself and Ahmedabad accounts for more than 50% of the total deaths so far. Ahmedabad and to some extent Vadodara appear to be the most vulnerable storm centers. Most of Saurashtra, almost the entire Kutch and most of South Gujarat are left almost untouched. This geo-graphical configuration requires a deeper and more incisive analysis to reveal the real character of the events, with its sociological, economic and criminal inter-relations and interactions.

The Godhra incident is a class by itself. But there is also a periodic graph. The riots erupted on 28th February and raged for nearly four days, and it is in this first phase that the most horrible crimes have been committed and the most severe damage to lives and properties of the minority community has been inflicted. It was largely one sided. The administration and the police were hamstrung and the minorities suffered the most terrible damage in terms of men and properties. Then there was a lull lasting for a week or ten days and it is this lull that has enabled the Chief Minister to boast of having quelled the disturbances within 72 hours. The riots spread into nearby towns in central and north Gujarat.

Minorities' Retaliation

During the renewed carnage after 15th March, in the city of Ahmedabad and Vadodara, the minority had started retaliating and the crowds on both sides often fought pitched battles. The police and the administration stung by the widespread denunciation of its inertia has been roused into a flutter of activities. But they seem to have concentrated on the lumpen elements from the minority community which had taken the field during this third phase. This is the reason why the Minority Commission of India has demanded the break-up figures of those killed in police firings and post mortem reports. The National Human Rights Commission has suggested that all the major carnages ought to be investigated by

the C.B.I indirectly casting doubts on the impartiality of the Judicial Commission appointed by the Gujarat government. Even the Prime Minister visiting Gujarat with obvious reluctance, advised Modi to uphold *Rajdharma*, which insists on impartiality, fairness and equity for all citizens irrespective of their creed or community.

Criminalisation of Society

These events spanning six weeks have revealed a frightening face of Gujarat society where brutalisation and lumpenisation have engulfed even the middle and upper middle class of educated and socially respected families. Women and even children from such families have participated in looting shops and police have recovered stolen goods from them. Such criminalisation is bound to eat into the vitals of that society making Gujarat a bane of Indian civilization.

Ghettoisation

The events in Gujarat are terrible and the long term consequences of this trauma are bound to sadden all those who love Gujarat and those who love India. One result has already started showing. The government of Gujarat straining under the heavy financial burden of maintaining 92 refugee camps is using every means both fair and foul to push the refugees back to their homes. But they have refused to return to the mixed localities arguing that their lives would be in danger in future riots. They now insist on being settled in their own separate and safe localities. The process of ghettoisation that has been going on for a long time has now been accelerated and the Hindus and Muslims of Gujarat would by and large live, work, study and think separately. The ghettos have always been the undoing of plural societies and it is a matter of deep regret that a society as mixed and as plural as Gujarat would now begin to break up into its constituent parts. The call for a social and economic boycott of the Muslims as demanded by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad will only hasten the process.

Export Quality Terrorists

Secondly Gujarat would emerge as the breeding ground for Muslim terrorist groups. The victims of riots who have lost everything, seen their family members killed, maimed or raped, who have no property and no hope of a decent life left would turn desperados and be an easy target for the recruiting agencies for terrorist activities in Gujarat or elsewhere. *The Week* has already

reported one Salma Khan envisaging such a career for her young son. The Prime Minister's amazing statement about Muslims creating trouble wherever they live is bound to further exacerbate such feelings. Mr. Vajpayee must be aware that terrorists have no particular religion. We have had Christian terrorists in north east India, Hindu terrorists in Assam and Bihar and of course, in Sri Lanka. Khalistanis were Sikhs and terrorists in Kashmir are Muslims. We have been blaming Pakistan and ISI for exporting terror. Now with Gujarat, we would need them no longer and with the business acumen of Gujaratis we may have home grown, export quality terrorists. The set back suffered by the Gujarat economy is the least damaging part of the riots but it will push the graph of poverty and hunger upwards and create a hungry mob ready for anything. The fury in Ahmedabad can be partly explained by the ruin of the textile industry and failure of the city to develop proper alternative sources of employment.

Role of the Gujarati Press

It is a matter of some confusion as to why the best sections of the Gujarat society have been the vociferous supporters of this terrible carnage. The Press in Gujarat has done its best by spreading rumours, by biased and unbalanced reporting and by inciting editorials. Gujarat unfortunately has no press worth its name. The entire press world is dominated by two giants from Ahmedabad with their local editions in all the major and in not so major urban centers. There is not much to be said about their quality and their approach. Their weight and their tactics have almost destroyed or silenced alternative sources of information and interpretation.

Non-Resident Indians

But the more perplexing part is the role of the Gujaratis who have settled in progressive and modern democracies of the West. The Non-Resident Indians as they are called are the most obscurantist sections of the Gujarati community. They have been the staunchest supporters and financiers of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. This is rather surprising because with their exposure to modernity and to the democratic values, they ought to be on the side of the progressive forces. But then this also happened in the case of Sikh terrorist groups which were also nourished from abroad.

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Communalism : A Symptom of Fascism

Dilip Simeon

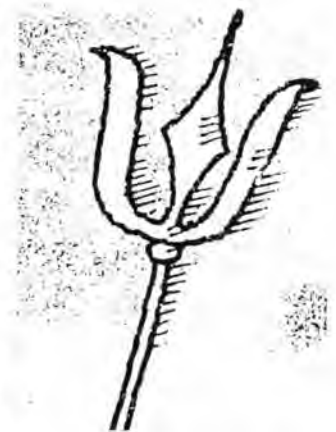
Communalism is the Indian form of fascist populism and racist nationalism. In place of humanistic rationality and tolerant patriotism, it substitutes religious frenzy, emotionalism, irrationality and concepts of nationality based on bogus entities such as communally defined interests.

In the first week of November '86, sometime on the morning of the second anniversary of the anti-Sikh pogrom of 1984, a curious gathering could be observed at the memorial to the Unknown Soldier at India Gate, New Delhi. A few score widows, orphans and other relatives of the victims of that carnage were harangued on the theme of national integration by an assortment of opposition politicians, who asked the crowd to take an oath of loyalty to the nation. Although the subject of justice for the victims was raised, it was apparent, (as it has been, for some time) that the parties represented there were not likely to bend their energies furiously in that direction and that their statements on this score were mere sops to the emotions of their listeners. This little event symbolizes the hypocrisy, opportunism, and moral bankruptcy of important sections of political leadership in India today. Here were completely innocent people, vote banks of the Congress for the most part, bearing no responsibility whatever for the 'Punjab tangle', with no interest in either Chandigarh or river waters, suddenly hurled into a cauldron of agony and humiliation because they were conveniently available hate-objects for certain communally inspired criminals. Today, they continue to be manipulated by politician, none of whom has any strategy for coping with communalism, save the sanctimonious recitation of banal slogans.

Such is the perversion of our social conscience that even the concept of innocence has been communalized. Many highly literate people, for instance, would smell in the above paragraph, nothing short of a brief for 'Khalistani' terrorism: In truth, the Indian polity faces a crucial litmus test for all its liberal democratic pretensions. If sections of the state and politicians can instigate mass murder on a scale unprecedented since Partition, and thereafter conspire to throw a veil of silence over the whole event and pretend as if the current bout of terror in the country is merely a law and order

problem then we must conclude that the attitudes of our policy and opinion makers are characterized not only by communalism but by the grossest stupidity and self-deception as well.

Let us cast a quick glance at the several manifestations of current communal attitudes. Thus, today it appears axiomatic that while Sikh and Muslim 'fundamentalism' are anti-national, Hindu communalism is synonymous with nationalism. Those who talk of Khalistan and Pakistan are traitors, but those who demand Hindu Rashtra are patriots. Since Hindu Rashtra is not the philosophy of all Hindus, any more than Khalistan and Pakistan motivates all Sikhs and Muslims, how is that Hindu communalism is allowed to gain currency as a nationalist ideology and spread hatred and contempt for millions of Indian citizens? To take another example, is it not well-known that Sikh fundamentalism was encouraged by various 'respectable' parties in order to outdo the Akalis — themselves adept at making a lucrative business of the SGPC and Sikhism? Or that the Bombay Shiv Sena acquired popularity by whipping up hatred against South Indians, was strengthened by overt and covert alliances with the BJP and the Congress and now has changed its tune to *Hindu Rashtravad* and 'Practical Socialism'? (shades of Hitler and Mussolini here). Do we remember the former Chief Minister of the Punjab who made the claim that a couple of horses in his possession were the descendants of the steed of Gurm Gobind? Or the Chief Minister of Maharashtra who acted out a ridiculous farce over the



recovery of the fictitious 'Sword of Chhatrapati Shivaji' from the British Museum? Major national parties have been involved in the Ram Janmabhumi episode. (One might well ask the actors of *that* drama why a place sacred to both Hindus and Muslims could not have become a symbol of love and amity – quite apart from the question of how any place can be identified as the birthplace of a mythical figure 900,000 years ago, as has been claimed). Imagine the possibilities of a global movement for the recovery of the Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya, razed to the ground in the Brahmanical reaction against Buddhism more than a millennium ago, upon which spot the reconstructed edifice is now run by Brahmin pandits. Just this year, a day before Muharram, a prominent national daily published on its front page, under banner headlines, a photo of the Mathura *Idgah*, with the ridiculous claim that this was erected over the birthplace of Lord Krishna. We are often blind to the implications of favourite public stances. When reservations for 'lower' castes are attacked on ground of 'merit', does this not imply, even if obliquely, that 'merit' resides in the upper castes? Do the critics of reservations, campaign with the same zeal for an equitable education for the children of the so-called untouchables? For that matter, does it lie in the mouth of the VHP and the RSS to bemoan the fate of Muslim women when they remain strangely silent about the legal and social plight of Hindu women, even when they are burnt alive for dowry? To go a step further, is it not a time honoured tradition in India that the perpetrators of communal outrages are beyond the reach of law? How then can the Indian literati raise a hue and cry for a uniform civil code when they know that *in practice* there is not even a uniform criminal code in existence?

The list could go on endlessly, but the matter of the Mishra Commission of Inquiry into the events of November 1984 is a crowning example of communalism in high places. To begin with, its mandate required it merely to investigate the allegation of conspiracy, leaving aside the far more important question of identifying and punishing the guilty. But by setting it up as part of an agreement with the avowedly communal Akali Dal demonstrated that the seniormost political leaders of India are ignorant of their own prejudices. If all citizens of India have equal rights under the Constitution, and if murder is punishable under the Penal Code regardless of the religion of the victim, how could the Government have behaved as if the constitutional rights of thousands of Delhi residents were the political property of the Akali Dal just because they wore turbans? Thirdly, the Mishra Commission excluded

from its deliberations the PUCL and PUDR, the very organizations which had raised the issue of culpability in the first place. The judge saw fit, however, to allow a lawyer representing the Arya Samaj to participate, along with the representatives of three fictitious organizations whose aim turned out to be the production of bogus evidence on mass produced affidavits purporting to assert the 'spontaneity' of the massacre; and the intimidation of witnesses.

Finally, the Government has chosen to suppress the Report although inspired 'leaks' have somehow convinced certain politicians that they have been 'exonerated'. The whole process has reeked of political and judicial malfeasance, and has broadcast the message that victims of communal outrages have no constitutional or human rights in India. It has fanned the flames of separatist sentiment in the Punjab and elsewhere by convincing lakhs of citizens that they will be deprived of justice because of their faith. And all that the opposition can think of doing is to make widows and orphans swear oaths of allegiance to the nation.

The symptoms are apparent, but how does one diagnose the disease? It is impossible, within the limited space available on this occasion, to tackle this question thoroughly, so I will merely share my confusion with readers very briefly, with commitment to continue the debate in these columns (if the editors see fit) or elsewhere.

Among some secularists there exists the notion that communalism is a 'false consciousness' – a bad idea, as it were. The suffix 'ism', apparently, buttresses such a misconception. However, can we treat 'socialism' and 'republicanism' as if they were mere doctrines? After all, these words represent social movements as well as political philosophies. Apartheid, thus, is an example of a form of communalism empowered as a social system. Although there is no such thing as a spontaneously existing 'Hindu', 'Muslim' or 'Sikh' political interest, there do exist political projects and movements working to *create* such interests. The 'community', as defined by communalists is a pseudo-universalist coalition, a category sought to be imposed on the far more basic entities known as the 'biradaries'. The communal project in India has had notable successes, including Partition and the stable existence of Hindu Rashtravadi organisations.

Another fallacy is that communalism is historically the antithesis of nationalism. At work here

is a misunderstanding of nationalism which is rarely as virtuous an outlook as we might like it to be. Nationalism in Germany, for example, was social-democratic before 1848, Prussian-autocratic in the latter half of the nineteenth century, liberal democratic in the aftermath of the First World War, and racist-imperialist in Hitler's interpretation. Diverse forms of nationalism are produced by different social groups and political trends. Hindu *Rashtravad*, for example, long predated the appearance decades before the Muslim League was born. It represented the sentiments of a section of the revivalist upper-cast literati and performed the function of dividing the residing tide of peasant based 'low' caste, non-Brahmin and social-democratic movements within the groundswell of Indian nationalism. Bankim Chattopadhyaya was a prominent ideologue of this trend, and Bal Gangadhar Tilak an equally well-known practitioner. The former changed from being a critic of Brahmanism in the 1870's (in the book entitled '*Samya*') into one of the founders of the doctrine of Hindu *Rashtra* in his famous '*Anandamath*' (published in 1883). The latter, whose Brahmanical elitism and conservatism are well documented, invented the Shivaji and Ganapati festivals with the express intent of fusing together revivalist and patriotic sentiments under his leadership. The nationalism of the ulema (Muslim 'priests') of the Deoband seminary (established 1867), was equally revivalist and rooted in notions of religious exclusivity. Thus, late nineteenth century 'extremism', as well as the patriotism of the Arya Samajis, Khilafatists, Tilakites, Akalis and Muslim Leaguers, all represented the inextricable link between nationalism and proto-communal attitudes. And all of these trends did not necessarily imply geo-political separation; the Deoband tradition, for example, bitterly opposed the Pakistan movement and some of its leaders even referred to Jinnah as not the 'Quaid', but the Kafir-I-Azam. But ideologically they were all equally communal – they sought to identify Indians in terms of their own purist and elitist conceptions, and then to control these entities for political ends.

It is important to remember that classical Indian traditions contain not only Brahmanical orthodoxy but also the 'shramanic' (ascetic) trends and movements. Buddhism and Jainism, certain Bhakti cults, the philosophies of Nanak, Kabir, Tukaram and the Sufis, all represent this other current, which in their origins stressed the vernacular over the Sanskrit, universalism over casteism, faith in the goodness and power of the Absolute, howsoever defined, over blind superstition.

These movements were almost always quelled or co-opted, but their existence demonstrates that all that is Indian was never purely Brahmanic. The tension between priestly, state-oriented orthodoxy and shramanic heterodoxy carried over into the Indo-Islamic traditions as well – the legalistic ulema were noted for their antipathy towards the sufi mystics. In more recent times, the non-Brahmin and Satyashodak movements of Madras and Maharashtra (EVR Naicker and Jyotirao Phule), the radical peasants movements in various parts of the country, the social-democratic currents within the Congress during the national movement, and the socialism of Bhagat Singh all serve to remind us that the Indian people were capable of persisting with the shramanic tradition. When we speak of revivalism, therefore, we must keep in mind that there were many different things to revive, and that the choices made by the stalwarts of the national movement were not accidental. Hindu *Rashtravad* sought to revive the Brahmanic tradition and construct a political monolith (the Hindu Nation) by assimilating long-dead heterodoxies into itself – Tilak could equate past Indian greatness with the Sanatan Dharma and the Dark Ages with the rise of Buddhism, and simultaneously claim that Buddhism was but 'reformed' Hinduism. Thus a dominant stream of Indian nationalism created a myth of the 'Hindu' past, and sought to interpret this past not in the language of Kabir, Nanak, Tukaram, Chaitanya or the Sufis, but in terms of Brahmanical orthodoxy and the Aryan theory of race (the same set of ideas which inspired racist philosophers like Gobineau in the late nineteenth century, and the Nazi attitudes in the twentieth). This is why for many Indian intellectuals patriotism went hand in hand with social conservatism in matters concerning women, caste, society, education, etc.

The term 'Hindu communalism', is, strictly speaking, a misnomer. It presupposes the existence of an entity which some authoritarian politicians seek to create. It would make more sense to call it Brahmanical fascism. This does not imply that all Brahmins are fascists, any more than locating anti-semitism in the classical Catholic tradition implies that all Christians are haters of Jews. The term can be used politically rather than sociologically. Brahmanism has always been associated with myth-making, superstition, ritual, knowledge-brokerage, and sycophancy towards power-structures. These features remain in the various hues of communal politics. That the communalists made themselves extremely useful to the colonial state can

be thoroughly demonstrated, though perhaps not in this article. But just in passing, when next Mr. Shourie castigates the communists for their role in 1942, someone could remind him that 'Veer' Savarkar, that same year, was calling upon all patriotic Hindus to join the colonial armed forces so as to learn the skills needed for the construction of Hindu Rashtra. (See his speech to the All India Hindu Mahasabha Session, Kanpur, 1942). So blinded has Brahmanism in modern times been by its own jealous elitism, that it is congenitally incapable of seeing that Akhand Bharat and Hindu Rashtra are mutually exclusive concepts, and that interpreting the neutral terms of liberal democracy (such as 'rule of majorities') in communal categories was bound to instigate separatism among large sections of the Indian population. Engrossed in its own ritualistic loyalties and doctrines, the Left contributed to the confusion by collapsing together the communal and the 'nationalities' question in 1942, possibly the worst ideological disaster in its chequered history. The Congress was unable to resist the tide because of the pervasiveness of communal attitudes within its own ranks. Partition was thus as much occasioned by Brahmanical fascism and the popularity of its language among the politically privileged sections of the population (remember that adult suffrage did not exist prior to Independence) as the schemings of a retreating British Empire and the recalcitrance of the Muslim League.

Communalism is the Indian form of fascist populism and racist nationalism. In place of humanistic

rationality and a tolerant patriotism, it substitutes religious frenzy, emotionalism, irrationality and concepts of nationality based on bogus entities such as the communally defined 'interests'. It locates an internal enemy (just as Hitler located the Jews) and makes it the target of mass hatred bordering on genocidal mania. The instigators of such hatred then become the proprietors of militant communal organizations. It legitimizes the murder of innocent people as part of a notion of retributive justice, and formalizes the links between politicians and criminals. And it uses democratic institutions and civil liberties to capture fragments of state power with the aim of subverting and destroying democracy itself. Communalists of all brands are patriarchal, suffer from militaristic delusions, and propagate illiberal social attitudes.

A society and a state in crisis can easily turn to communal movements and ideologies to reconstruct itself in an authoritarian mould. This is especially so in a country where fascism has been flaunting itself as patriotism for the better part of the century. The tragic fate of democracy in the so-called Muslim homeland, Pakistan, should teach us a lesson. A new, social-democratic form of nationalism, based upon the age-old shramatic and syncretic traditions of the Indian people and the urge for a more egalitarian society is the only antidote for the nightmare of Partition.

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Every citizen of India is entitled to protection and the due process of law. When incidents occur between two citizens of India, even though they may be of different communities, the guilty individuals should be punished. The crimes of the individuals should not be allowed to be deemed to be the offence of any denomination or community. The family, friends and other members of the offender's community should enjoy complete protection from fear and mob violence. Any government official, minister or lesser politician found failing in his duty, in the discharge of this responsibility, should be dealt with severely.

C. Rajagopalachari
Swarajya, June 24, 1961

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Are the Minorities Too Much With Us?

Aloo J. Dastur

Minorities are a little too much with us. The Constituent Assembly was exercised about them and an elaborate section on rights was incorporated into the Constitution of India. Successive Prime Ministers have been concerned not only about the religious communities but language minorities too. A further dimension was added when Nehru appointed the Kaka Kalekar Commission to enquire into the question of social and economic backwardness. The Commission identified 2399 castes/classes. Mrs. Indira Gandhi appointed the Backward Classes Commission under the chairmanship of B.P. Mandal to look into social, economic and educational backwardness and it, in its turn listed 3437 castes/classes. Thus within less than 25 years the number increased by almost 1400.

Minorities and other Commissions

Morarji Desai appointed the Minorities Commission and Indira Gandhi on her return to power while continuing with it also appointed a high power Panel on Minorities, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and weaker sections. As if all these Commissions and panels on a national scale were not enough a few states have appointed their own minority commissions – Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat each has its own Minorities Board. Add to this the National Integration Council and the picture of over-concern for minorities and backward classes is complete.

To what purpose these Commissions and Committees? Our faith in them is pathetic. They have succeeded in whetting minority appetites, 'not satisfying them. Some past and present members of the Minorities Commission have been advocating its replacement by a Human Rights Commission. It is a legitimate sequence, but the commission as such has yet a significant role to play. One of its functions is to conduct research on avoiding minority discrimination. This in itself is not enough. What it needs to tackle is the minority psyche.



The modern democratic state has come to accept the fact that minorities are as much its citizens as the majority; that they are born as free and equal citizens and have the same rights to life liberty and the pursuit of happiness.



We have merely been dealing with superficial issue, not tried to go into the depths. We have talked about integration and pursued policies and programmes that keep us partitioned into several minorities.

Majority and Minority Obligations

No discussion on the minorities can ignore the majority and here the majority are Hindus. The overt concern about minorities has caused a backlash among the Hindus. They have begun to feel a threat to their numbers. They believe that they have been losing by conversion to other religions. Always split into castes, Commissions and Committees have now split them further into the socially, economically and educationally backward categories. To safeguard 'their' rights against the raucous claims of the minorities and perhaps to meet the challenge of the ecumenical spread of the Christians and Muslims, the *Hindu Parishad*. There is also the *Virat Hindu Sabha* and recently, amidst great joy and enthusiasm, we witnessed the *Ekatmata Yatra*.

The most recent and shocking is the claim of the Ramakrishna Mission that it is a minority institution and should enjoy the facilities provided for such institutions. Can anything be more grotesque? The claim makes a caricature of all the nobility of thought and greatness of beliefs such which Swami Vivekananda spread here and abroad and which came to be crystallized in the Mission.

As far as one can see, the Hindus being 84 per cent of the humanity that is India, need not, cannot, be apprehensive of their future. The ultra conservative among those oppose family planning in the irrational belief that Muslims and Catholics both who are opposed on religious grounds to family planning will multiply and demographically over-whelm them.

At another level, a complex issue arises. How do we judge or identify minorities – is it only the overall numbers in the country taken as a whole? What of the

Hindus in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh? Minorities in their respective states, are they entitled to enjoy the facilities of minority rights? These questions were put to the Minority Commission, but no answers are forthcoming. Yet, with minority consciousness deepening there is just a possibility that we can put off answers only at our peril.

The majority of the virtue of being the majority has its own obligations and responsibilities. It is not by imitating recalcitrant minorities in their irrationality or obscurantism that it discharges its duties but by inculcating a sense of confidence in the minorities that they too belong here; that they have a place in the Indian Sun. This puts the majority on trial. It must cultivate a broader outlook, a sense of generosity towards the minorities with whom it shares deprivations, poverty and unemployment. Such awareness should make the poor and the disinherited come together in the common cause of the removal of degradation from individual and group life.

It is astonishing that the minorities have increasingly sought to keep themselves apart and aloof. This is true especially of the Muslims who watched with dismay their own desertion by leaders they had trusted and who went to pastures new. The rump that was left behind did not measure up to lead them in the changed circumstances; it chose to move in the narrow murky groove of Muslim separatism. Nor did the ruling party instill confidence in them. Rather it chose to utilize them as electoral tools. So it is with the scheduled castes who are another vote bank. Both have responded well by supporting the Congress at election time except in 1977 when they plumped in a big way for the Janata Party.

Uniform Civil Code

In another direction the Congress leadership has served the minorities ill. Article 44 lays down that the state shall strive for a Uniform Civil Code. Here is a reform long overdue. The position of women in different personal laws varies, but whatever may be the original injunctions about equality and equal rights among men and women the position in our own day is invidious; women suffer legal disabilities. Nehru at the time of the first general election in 1951-1952, had boldly stated "my Government will stand or fall by the Hindu Bill Code".

After obtaining a massive majority from the electorate his Government neither stood nor fell by the Hindu Code Bill, Nehru beat a partial retreat against

the riding tide of Hindu orthodoxy even within his own party and made changes in traditional Hindu Law through the Hindu Marriage and Divorce Act and the Succession and Inheritance Act. It was well-known that there were differences between the President and Prime Minister on the issue and the Prime Minister had his way. The Hindu woman was the beneficiary. She came into her own right. She was no longer only a daughter, wife or mother. Nehru had affirmed in Parliament that the honour and dignity of the Hindu Woman were dear to his heart.

Lost Opportunities

What of the honour and dignity of Muslim women? Was the Prime Minister indifferent towards them? Not quite, but there was no political or moral compulsion to do anything about it. When the Hindu Bills were being discussed in Parliament several members including some Congress members urged the introduction of a Uniform Civil Code. The Prime Minister shied away. He was sensitive to Muslim reaction and orthodoxy. Towards the end of his career he thought of doing something about it but then Vice President Zakir Hussain told him to let the community decide and Nehru yielded. Two opportunities had been stepped by; a third came with the emergency when there were strident calls from the ruling party to declare the supremacy of the Directive Principles over Fundamental Rights. When a massive amendment to the Constitution was brought forth in Parliament there was no mention of Article 44 – the State shall strive to introduce a Uniform Civil Code. Once again politics prevailed over moral duty.

We might consider the injunction that since it touches the Muslims, *they* should decide on the Uniform Civil Code. Here the legitimate question is *who* among the Muslims? A few self-styled, self-appointed leaders? Will Muslim men decide or will Muslim women have any say? There are pertinent questions. While the form want the status quo to continue the latter are prepared and ready for change. Educated Muslim women are certainly for reform. They realize the indignity of being a second or third wife. They are sensitive to the plight of wives discarded in the spoken divorce – *talaq* – and their miseries. The amendment of Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code is a great boon to these unfortunate women and judicial pronouncements are bringing some succour to these hapless women and their children. The recent Shah Banu case and the Supreme Court judgement have rubbed Muslim orthodoxy in the raw.

The obscurantists are being encouraged by the government's non-committal attitude to their actions. A few *Jamats* have usurped to themselves the state's

authority to punish their followers. A few months ago the Beema Palli *Jamat* in Kerala sentenced a woman to 101 lashes for alleged adultery and consumption of liquor. There is a common code in the country. Adoption of such power by any religious group constitutes a parallel authority which no state should tolerate. Similarly among Dawoodi Bohras the obnoxious practice of social ostracism prevails. The Head Priest claims the right to call for a social boycott of an individual or a family and gullible followers accept the verdict. Reformers and rationalists among them are the unfortunate victims. Can any government particularly one led by a modern young man and imbued with the scientific temper accept such ignominy and disregard of the prevailing laws?

Enlightened Muslims themselves are advocating a Uniform Civil Code. Badruddin Tyabji, a administrator and diplomat put forth an unchallengeable argument:

"So far as the question of considering the revision of the provisions of Muslim personal law as an evolutionary process and not as something fixed and immutable is concerned, I am whole heartedly in favour of it.

The objective of having a Common Civil Code, as I see it is not to steam-roller Indian society, and least of all, its diverse religious and cultural traditions and ethos into an amorphous grey pulp. It is rather to help them to survive and flourish, by eliminating causes of discord and conflict between the whole country and all its inhabitants, regardless of age, sex and environment and leading to a better life that is opening out to us in the new material era of life on this planet."

Recognising that waiting for a consensus to be reached within the Muslim community is asking for the moon, Mr. Tyabji makes an interesting suggestion for advancing towards this objective in a less direct way by placing before the public "an ideal set or code of laws and regulations to which they would be at complete liberty to subscribe, or if they so choose, to abstain from and continue to be governed by their existing laws and codes. The Civil Marriage Act is a good example of such legislation; whoever wishes to take advantage of its provisions is at liberty to do so. There is no compulsion either way. Why should such a Common Civil Code not be drafted with the active participation and guidance of all those who see and feel the need for it?

Justice for Muslim Women

Another suggestion, not his, is that since marriage among Muslims is a contract, the woman's status and rightful share in Mehr should be clearly stated at the

time of marriage. This will safeguard the women and her rights. Perhaps only the educated can take advantage here. The vast majority in our land are not even literate enough to know what a contract is or what rights they can claim. This argument equally hold true for the optional Civil Code, now being talked about.

Talaq is an obnoxious and iniquitous practice and a modern government worthy of its name and secularism should ban it. The victims are too many and it is just and fair that our courts are taking a liberal view and favouring woman by upholding their right to maintenance. It is only proper that Muslim women should in law be brought on par with other women. But it is a long way to go and women themselves will ultimately have to push the pace.

In different parts of the country small but significant groups are coming together to mould public opinion. The Muslim Satyashadak Mandal of Poona is doing excellent work among the Muslims, though it does not have any big names to throw about. It is educating Muslim men and women in loyalty to the country, in seeking to follow rational paths and do away with anti-social practices. In Kerala, the Travancore Muslim Women's Association is a body of highly educated women. It again is working for the benefit of Muslim women. The most recent is *Anjuman-e-Taraqqi-Pausaud-Muslimeen*, a newly found organization to bring progressive Muslims on a common platform. They seem to have got their priorities right. They desire to reach out to Muslims at the Taluka level and educate them on the socio-economic problems facing the community.

Racial, religious or linguistic minorities everywhere must accept that they are permanent minorities. This realization is not a realization of doom. On the contrary, the modern, democratic state, has come to accept the fact that minorities are as much its citizens as the majority; that they are born as free and equal citizens and have the same rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. For political and employment purposes, for education and training, all citizens are equal and can have hopes and ambitions consistent with their abilities. The minority's consciousness of being of being discriminated against, has to be treated with care and understanding. Justice must not only be done, it must be known to be done. Minorities on their part, must not sulk but decide to take their proper place in the community to which they belong and the nation to which they own their loyalty.

DR. ALOO J. DASTUR was a member of the Minorities Commission.

[*Freedom First*, January 1987]

Whatever.

Whenever.

Wherever.

At AFL, we move anything and everything to anywhere.
Now tell us what, when and where.



Where movement is a science

Religious Values and Human Society

His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Whether you believe in God or not does not matter so much ... You must lead a good life ... A good motivation is what is needed; compassion without dogmatism, without complicated philosophy, just understanding that others are human brothers and sisters and respecting their rights and human dignity.

In one way — in material terms — this present generation has reached a high level of development. Yet at the same time, we human beings are facing many problems. Some are due to external events or causes, such as natural disasters. These we cannot avoid. However, many problems are created by our own mental defects; we suffer due to an internal lack. I call these problems unnecessary ones, for if we adopt a right mental attitude, these man-made problems need not arise.

Often they are due to differences in ideology, and unfortunately different religious faiths are also sometimes involved. Hence it is very important that we have a right attitude. There are many different philosophies, but what is of basic importance is compassion, love for others, concern for others' suffering, and reduction of selfishness. I feel that compassionate thought is the most precious thing there is. It is something that only we human beings can develop. And if we have a good heart, a warm heart, warm feelings, we will be happy and satisfied ourselves, and our friends will experience a friendly and peaceful atmosphere as well. This can be experienced nation to nation, country to country, continent to continent.

The basic principle is compassion, love for others. Underlying all is the valid feeling of "I", and on a conventional level, there is an I — "I want this", "I do not want that". We experience this feeling naturally, and naturally we want happiness — "I want happiness", "I do not want suffering". Not only is it natural, it is right. It needs no further justification; it is a natural feeling validated simply by the fact that we naturally and correctly want happiness and do not want suffering

Based on that feeling, we have the right to obtain

happiness and the right to get rid of suffering. Further, just as I myself have this feeling and this right, so others equally have the same feeling and the same right. The difference is that when you say "I", you are speaking of just one single person, one soul. Others are limitless. Thus, one should visualize the following: On one side imagine your own I which so far has just concentrated on selfish aims. On the other side imagine others — limitless, infinite beings. You yourself are a third person, in the middle, looking at those on either side. As far as the feeling of wanting happiness and not wanting suffering the two sides are equal

absolutely the same. Also with regard to the right to obtain happiness they are exactly the same. However, no matter how important the selfishly motivated person is, he or she is only a single person; no matter how poor the others are, they are limitless, infinite. The unbiased third person naturally can see that the many are more important than the one. Through this, we can experience, can feel, that the majority — the other limitless beings — are more important than the single person "I".

Thus, the question is: Should everyone be used for my attainment of happiness, or should I be used to gain happiness for others? If I am used for these infinite beings, it is right. If others are used for this single I, it is absolutely wrong. Even if you can use these others, you will not be happy, whereas if this one single one contributes, serves as much as he or she can, that is a source of great joy. It is in terms of this attitude that real compassion and love for others can be developed.

Compassion which is based on such reasoning and feelings can be extended even to one's enemies.



Our ordinary sense of love and compassion is actually very much involved with attachment. For your own wife or husband, your parents, your children, you have a feeling of compassion and love. But because it is in fact related with attachment, it cannot include your enemies. Again it is centered on a selfish motivation – because these are my mother, my father, my children, I love them. In contrast to this is a clear recognition of the importance and rights of others. If compassion is developed from that viewpoint, it will reach even to enemies.

In order to develop such a motivation of compassion, we must have tolerance, patience. In the practice of tolerance, one's enemy is the best teacher. Your enemy can teach you tolerance whereas your teachers or parents cannot. Thus from this viewpoint, an enemy is actually very helpful – the best of friends, the best of teachers.

In my own experience, the period of greatest gain in knowledge and experience is the most difficult period in one's life. If you go along in an easy way, with everything okay, you feel something is just fine. Then one day you encounter problems, you feel depressed and hopeless. Through a difficult period you can learn, you can develop inner strength, determination, and courage to face the problem. Who gives you this chance? Your enemy.

This does not mean that you obey or bow down to your enemy. In fact, sometimes, according to the enemy's attitude, you may have to react strongly – but, deep down, calmness and compassion must not be lost. This is possible. Some people may think, "Now the Dalai Lama is talking nonsense", but I am not. If you practice this, if you test it in your own experience, you can feel it yourself.

The development of love and compassion is basic, and I usually say that this is a main message of religion. When we speak of religion, we need not refer to deeper philosophical issues. Compassion is the real essence of religion. If you try to implement, to practice, compassion, then as a Buddhist, even if you do not place much emphasis on the Buddha, it is all right. For a Christian, if you try to practice this love, there is no need for much emphasis on other philosophical matters. I say this in a friendly way. The important thing is that in your daily life you practice the essential things, and on that level there is hardly any difference between Buddhism, Christianity, or any

other religion. All religions emphasise betterment, improving human beings, a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood, love – these things are common. Thus, if you consider the essence of religion, there is not much difference.

I myself feel and also tell other Buddhists that the question of nirvana will come later. There is not much hurry. But if in day to day life you lead a good life, honestly, with love, with compassion, with less selfishness, then automatically it will lead to nirvana. Opposite to this, if we talk about nirvana, talk about philosophy, but do not bother much about day to day practice, then you may reach a strange nirvana but will not reach the correct nirvana because your daily practice is nothing.

We must implement these good teachings in daily life. Whether you believe in God or not does not matter so much, whether you believe in Buddha or not does not matter so much; as a Buddhist, whether you believe in reincarnation or not does not matter so much. You must lead a good life. And a good life does not mean just good food, good clothes, good shelter. These are not sufficient. A good motivation is what is needed; compassion without dogmatism, without complicated philosophy; just understanding that others are human brothers and sisters and respecting their rights and human dignity. That we humans can help each other is one of our unique human capacities. We must share in other peoples' suffering; even if you cannot help with money, to show concern, to give moral support and express sympathy are themselves valuable. This is what should be the basis of activities; whether one calls it religion or not does not matter.

In the current world atmosphere, some people may think that religion is for those who remain in remote places and is not much needed in the areas of business or politics. My answer to this is "No!" For, as I have just said, in my simple religion, love is the key motivation. Except for certain minor ones, all actions – all larger and deliberate actions – come with motivation. In politics, if you have a good motivation and with that motivation seek to better human society, such a politician is a right and honest politician. Politics itself is not bad. We say, "Dirty politics", but this is not right. Politics is necessary as an instrument to solve human problems, the problems of human society. It itself is not bad; it is necessary. However, if politics are practiced by bad persons, out of cunning and lacking the right motivation, then of course, it becomes bad.

This is true not only of politics but in all areas, including religion – if I speak of religion with a bad motivation, that preaching becomes bad. But you cannot say religion is bad; you cannot say "Dirty religion".

Thus motivation is very important, and thus my simple religion is love, respect for others, honesty; teachings that cover not only religion but also the fields of politics, economics, business, science, law, medicine – everywhere. With proper motivation these can help humanity; without it they go the other way. Without good motivation, science and technology, instead of helping, bring more fear and threaten global destruction. Compassionate thought is very important for humankind.

At the present moment, if you look more deeply into society, you see that people are not happy as might first seem. For example, when I first land in a new country, everything is very beautiful. When I meet new people, everything is very nice, no complaints at all. But then day by day I listen, I hear peoples' problems, and it is clear that everywhere there are many problems. Deep down there is unrest. Due to this inner feelings of unrest, people feel isolated, they get depressed, have mental uneasiness, mental suffering. This is the general atmosphere. Real justice and honesty are impossible within cunning feelings. Wanting to benefit others but deep down having a selfish motivation is again impossible. If you talk about peace, love, justice, etc.,

but then when things are actually affecting you, forget all about them and, if necessary, suppress others or even make war, this is a clear sign that something is lacking.

This troubled atmosphere is our current reality. It is very bad, but it is reality. People may feel that the opposite of this, the internal transformation about which I have been speaking, is merely idealistic and not related with our situation here on earth. My feeling, however, is that if this present atmosphere in which everything depends on money and power and there is not much concern about the real value of love continues, if human society loses the value of justice, the value of compassion, the value of honesty, we will in the next generation or farther in the future face great difficulties and more suffering. Thus, although to bring about inner change is difficult, it is absolutely worthwhile to try. This is my firm belief. What is important is that we try our best. Whether we succeed or not is a different question. Even if we could not achieve what we seek within this life, it is all right; at least we will have made the attempt to form a better human society on the basis of love – true love – and less selfishness.

COURTESY: *Kindness, Clarity and Insight*, Snow Lion Publications, Ithaca, New York.

[*Freedom First* January 1989]

The Indian subcontinent has already suffered enough at the hands of those who for political reasons have sought to create new forms of polarisation. The worst such body blow was dealt by Partition, especially to Bengal, Punjab and the NWFP. Pakistan's experience shows, however, that attempting to supplant ethnicity with, in their case, religion as the base of nationalism was not a conspicuous success.

The antidote of this process is not the BJP's hyper-nationalism, or the VHP's religious chauvinism, for that only deepens the fracture in ethnic identities and compounds the danger to the integrity of the country. It lies in strengthening ethnic identity, in consciously fostering pride in one's language, culture, and religion even while learning to respect the richness of the other ethnic cultures of this wonderfully variegated country.

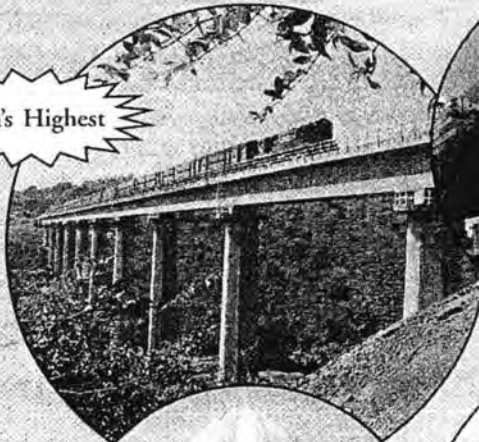
Unfortunately ethnic loyalty has been treated with a barely concealed mistrust by the elite in India. Every step towards cultural homogenisation, whether through mega serials like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, or through MTV is welcome. Bangalore, Muzaffarnagar and Dehra Dun are warnings that something infinitely more dangerous may lie down this road.

Prem Shankar Jha, *Business Standard*, October 21

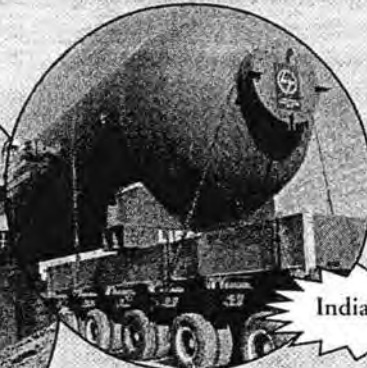
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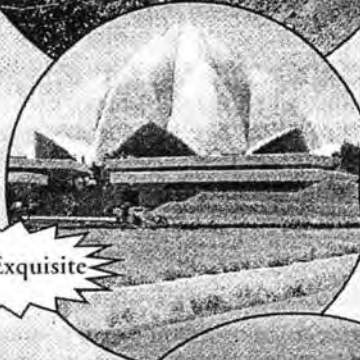
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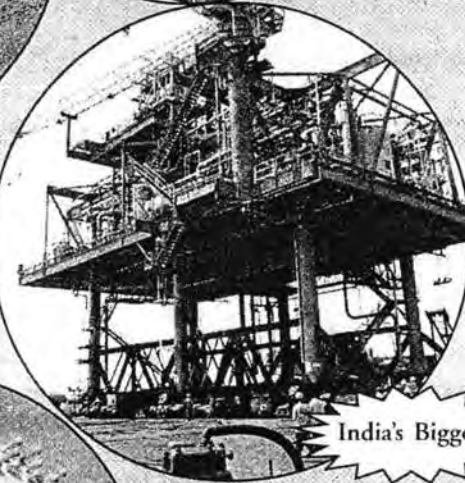
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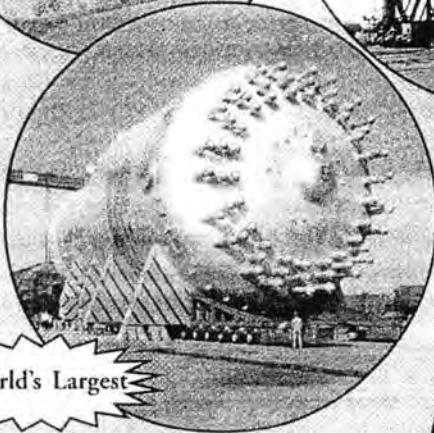
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Too Many People, Too Little Health Care, Too Many Illiterates

Indumati Parikh

What is freedom? Did any of our freedom fighters define freedom?

What is freedom? Did any of our freedom fighters define freedom? Freedom was never defined nor understood by the common men and women of this country because we belonged to a hierarchical culture where freedom was unknown. Freedom was within the community, within the caste, within the religion. This was all the freedom that we understood. By and large, the modern meaning of freedom was never understood even, I am sorry to say, by most of our freedom fighters. Our slogan was let the Britishers go away and everything would be fine. I was not a freedom fighter but I still fight for my freedom and for the freedom of my people. And that fight is going to be a life long one. Freedom is not achieved at one point. It is a continuous process and you have to constantly, continuously achieve that freedom and enjoy it. That is how I feel.

The Real Meaning of Freedom

I have got the highest respect for Gandhiji but he did not describe what *Ram Rajya* was. His *Gram Swaraj* or self-sufficient village is not possible in this modern world. Then somebody wanted socialism and someone else wanted communism. But these terms were never defined in terms of what they meant to the life of the people. As a person who deals at the grassroot level this is important to me. It was M. N. Roy who said that freedom is the continuous removal of impediments to the development of human beings i.e. you keep removing the impediments, becoming more and more free. That is why I said that freedom is not achieved at one single moment but is a continuous process.

Have our freedom fighters ever bothered about how to deal with this hierarchical society? Most of our problems, I would say, are economic, socio-cultural and only then political. For the common man and woman, politics has become the politics of *goondas*. Have we tried to change our socio-cultural ethos? Have we tried to change the attitude of people towards what freedom is, how they could achieve it by their own efforts. We have never involved people in anything we are doing.

And this involvement is absolutely necessary – right from planning to implementation. We sit in Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta or Madras and we make big plans. We then give these plans to government officers to implement them and then blame them when the plans fail. Why do these plans fail? Because those who implement them are not good enough. Have we trained them? Have we motivate them? Have we told the people what it means to their lives? Because, unless you touch the life of a person, it is not possible for them to be motivated to do something. And that is exactly what I mean.

Why So Many Illiterates

Why do we have so many illiterates? Because literacy has no meaning in the everyday life of the poor man. Government programmes for literacy unless combined with income generation will not be effective. That is my personal experience. And that is why we have 71% women as illiterates though the government's figures put it at 56%. The difference arises because they have not added to that those who began but did not complete their primary education. These dropouts lapse into illiteracy in two or three years. That has been my experience in the literacy programmes I have conducted. You teach a woman for a year, she starts reading, and when she starts writing her name we leave her alone and within four or five years, she is back again in the literacy class.

The Sham of Rural Schools

The same is the case with rural schools. Have any of you visited a rural school? On one of my surprise visits to one of these rural schools, not a single girl was present in the class though there were 29 girls on the rolls. When I questioned the teacher, I was informed that they (the girls) were probably helping their mothers. One teacher was very honest. He said: "Bai, if you had told me you were coming, I would have asked the girls to come to school to be present during your visit!" This is a common feature in all rural schools. And then we have one room, one teacher and four classes. Most of the rural schools are like that. If you

go to municipal schools in Bombay, there is an unwritten law that no student should be failed before the 4th standard. The other day, in my institution, a girl was reading something. I asked her what it was she was reading. She showed me the book. I asked her in which standard she was, and she said 4th. So I told her to read something. She didn't know what she was reading.

There is something seriously wrong with our education system even after 50 years of freedom. This is because we have not paid any attention to primary education. In our people's plan, we have mentioned that education and cultural development of the people is the basic foundation of a people's state. If we want people to take part in that state and if we want them to be knowledgeable, then we have to educate them.

The Population Problem

Let's look at the population problem. In 1951, we accepted population control as official policy. Yet from 1951 to 1991, we have more than doubled. Our population control policy has been a complete failure. Why? Because we failed to view it as a socio-cultural problem. It cannot be solved by laws or by economic reforms. We are well aware of people in high places having 9 or even 10 children. Those of you who have some knowledge of slums may know that those living in these slums imitate the elite. If we have a President who has nine children, how can we tell the poor man in the slums, that he must have not more than two.

The basic fact is women's education has been completely neglected. The number of women is going down in this country. At the beginning of this century, there were 971 women to 1000 men. Now it is 927. It has been a continuous fall. Why? Because of the continuing neglect of women. Every one of us learnt our first lessons at our mother's feet. And that person is the most ignorant in this country. How do you expect all of us to be cultured when we are learning from an ignorant person? What is her status in the family, her status in the world, her status in the country? 30% reservation for women in local self governing institutions is just on paper. I have seen that 30% who have been elected, what status do they have in society, in the panchayats? Even as *Sarpanchs*, they have no status. There is a man who is ruling from behind. I know this first hand as I often go to slums and to rural areas.

Women's Education

We did a survey in 1969 of women's education in Bombay's slums and we found that women who go

from illiteracy to even primary level education have fewer children. The number of children born to educated women goes down and child survival increases. And child survival is a very crucial factor. Once the child survives the woman does not want more children. And this I learnt from a very poor woman. She told me: 'Bai if you have two children, they will survive, but I will have to have eight for two to survive'. Yes. We have reduced infant mortality. But the progress is very slow and statistics do not reflect the real situation. In Kerala, the literacy rate among women is very high. It is almost 90%. So women's illiteracy percentage comes down in national statistics because of one of two states. Infant mortality comes down because Goa and Kerala have low infant mortality rates. What about Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan (the BIMARU States) – 22% women's literacy in these states. And the infant mortality rate is 110.

Then there is the socio-cultural issue – everybody wanting a son. Even the most elite people want a son who can do the last rites. You can burn a woman alive. You can burn a child for not bringing dowry, but you cannot let her perform a dead man's rites. This is the height of hypocrisy.

Phule and Ranade

This fight for freedom began many years before in Maharashtra. Phule in his book *Satya Dharma Katha* has given thirty three points which are practically what we are demanding today, including human rights, equality of gender, etc. Ranade when he wrote about these issues listed thirty two points. Ranade's list includes even kindergarten schools.

We haven't really gone back into recent history to understand what some of our social reformers wanted to change. Ranade started alongside the Congress, the Sarvajanik Sabha. And the sessions of these two organizations would take place together, i.e. the political and social issues were taken together. Then came the dominance of political parties. The Sarvajanik Sabha's *mandap* was burnt and the Sabha practically went into wilderness. So we pushed the social revolution part completely into the background and went ahead to have just political freedom.

Real Democracy

We have accepted democracy – meaning thereby individual freedom, individual development, individual vote. In such a system there can be no place for a

hierarchical society. Where is the freedom for women, where is the freedom for the *shudra*. I am tempted to quote Manu because he has bracketed women and the *shudra* together. There has been some kind of social revolution among the *shudras* but unfortunately there are *Brahmins* among *shudras* now. And they are ruling, not the ordinary *shudras*.

So taking into consideration this social reality unless we accept that social revolution must precede any other revolution, we will continue to find that we have progressed at all even after another fifty years. Our caste system is breaking down not because we are consciously doing it but because the Britishers, because of the railways, because of education, because of the employment policy. We are not doing anything consciously to really change our attitude to life. And then most of our people are fatalistic in their attitudes – leaving things to fate.

Need for Social Revolution

That is why I say that unless we go in a big way in seeking a social revolution, in educating our people, we are not going to change. Changing the caste structure, changing the attitude of the people towards life; changing their attitudes to get them to take destiny in their own hands instead of leaving it to fate means education. In 1942, the people's plan said that education and cultural development, would bring down the numbers of the population – not laws. At the Cairo Conference, it was clearly the consensus that development is the best contraceptive. I remember Roy saying in 1937 that India needed a social revolution first and only thereafter a political one. And he was a firebrand politician.

Health Care

Take health care. Who bothers? We have accepted the *Alma Ata* definition of health care that is promotive, preventive and curative or the wellbeing of a person – physical, mental and social. This covers everything. And we medicos who are working in the field must de-mystify medicine. Dr. David Werner wrote the book '*Where There Is No Doctor*'. This book has been translated in 98 languages and has been used as a Bible for people's education. Promotive health is health education. Through health education we can bring about considerable social change. We need to educate people on how a child is conceived, what is the reproductive system, and how we can stop conception. Let us not give them slogans like 'two or three are enough'. By doing so, we are putting the cart before the horse.

The same thing happened during the fight for freedom. We gave them slogans like 'Quit India', 'Let the Britishers go and everything will be fine'. This did not happen. Everything did not become fine. Even the middle-class do not know what freedom is. It was an act of Parliament that gave us our independence. We got independence, not our freedom. We got a chance to rule ourselves and we have made a mess of it. The basic lives of the ordinary people have not changed. And unless we do something to change their basic lives we will continue to have too many people and too little health care.

I have visited many primary health care centres. They are poorly manned and poorly equipped. They are hardly used because people don't know how to use them. We have not explained to people about preventive and promotive health. Go to the *adivasi* areas – they do not know anything about such matters. Numerous political movements have taken place. But not movements that have meaning in their everyday lives. Have we taught these *adivasis* basic facts about nutrition? Nutrition plays a very important part in the development of the brain. If you have malnutrition in the first four or five years then only 80% of the brain develops. And then we complain that 80% of our people are not intelligent. How can you expect them to be intelligent if they don't know the basic facts about proper food. In some *adivasi* areas, even today, people do not know how to eat vegetables.

Non-Formal Education & Appropriate Technology

The basic fact is we are not educating people, we are not teaching them on how to better their lives and we are not giving them confidence that could shape their destiny. By education, I do not mean putting everybody in school. I am talking about non-formal education which every one of us can impart. And then there is the question of appropriate technology. Technology that could be used by anybody and understood by anybody. To begin with start treating the illiterate and ignorant as human beings, treat them with dignity and equal to you. People have enough intelligence to understand. I speak from personal experience.

DR. INDUMATI PARIKH, a general medical practitioner for 40 years, is active in the field of integrated human development. She is president of the Centre for the Study of Social Change.

(Freedom First July-September 1997)



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The Crisis in Higher Education

V. V. John

Our students are restive because our colleges and universities have little to offer by way of a challenge and thus absorb their intellectual and moral energies.

The ills of our education have been studied time and again. In innumerable reports are contained recommendations designed to remedy every ill, and to achieve every objective. Perhaps we have arrived at the position of the educator who was pictured in a cartoon in an American magazine sometime ago. It showed the academic rather ruefully lamenting, "We have all the answers, but we have forgotten the questions".

The questions, however, are clear. They relate to the basic objectives of education, particularly the higher learning. These are: to impart a certain quality of the mind and to impart productive skills. The quality of the mind includes the sharpening of the tools of reason and deepening and refining sensibility.

These may be dismissed as outdated concepts relating to liberal education, and aimed at producing an elite. They may be considered irrelevant in an egalitarian society which is committed to the ideal of social justice. It might be considered even more irrelevant in a poor country where the primary need is not so much to cultivate the graces of the mind as to increase material production. Both experience and reflection would, however, show that the pursuit of productive skills without the cultivation of a quality of the mind such as higher education aims at, will prove self-defeating. All vocational training, which is purely vocational, has within it the seeds of frustration. A technologist who is only a technologist might not even prove to be a good technologist.

One of the causes of current troubles in the universities is supposed to be the swelling enrolment. Far too many young people come into college and university, and they are not intellectually equipped for benefiting from higher education. Hence standards fall. The remedy proposed is selective admission to universities.

It is wrong to suppose that formerly we had selective admission on the basis of intellectual competence. Those who went to college were those whose parents could afford the expense. What we achieved therefore was not the production of an intellectual elite but the giving of an intellectual basis to pure privilege. By casting the net more widely, the universities could discover talent in areas to which higher education was not formerly available.

The unpleasant fact cannot, however, be ignored that with swelling enrolments in the colleges, there has been a fall in academic standards. Considering that our standards of higher education were never very high, the present decline constitutes a major crisis in higher education. But it may not be correct to diagnose the malady in terms of mere swelling enrolments. It would be wrong to suppose that the students that come today from high school are incapable of responding to the challenges of genuine learning. The fact seems to be that there are few in the colleges who are able to offer these challenges, or to assist the students in responding to them. In plain language, the failure of higher education is not a failure of the teaching community. Far too many persons who have very little to offer by way of scholarship are on the faculties of colleges and universities.

The Gajendragadkar Committee Report devotes most of its space to determining the size of university bodies and their composition. Responding to a ubiquitous clamour, the report commends the wisdom of student participation in decision-making in the university. Considering the quality of the decisions that are being made in the universities now, one cannot imagine that student participation will make them any worse. Besides, the educative value of such participation should also be recognized. But one would not rate this among the more urgent problems in higher education.

Student Participation

Student participation in decision making could come about for one or two reasons. One is that since students are at the receiving end of the educator's exertions, their reactions are relevant in any programme of improving the quality of education. The other reason is that decision-makers are so afraid of the student rabble that their participation in decision-making could be a form of orderly surrender. Decision-making, however, is only a means to an end. The end is to promote the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge and, ultimately, the improvement of the quality of life. As it happens, feats of organisation and administration occupy far too much space in the calculations of the custodians of the higher learning. Once accent shifts from power to learning, decision-making will become a function of the entire academic community, which ideally should be a continuum where too rigid distinctions between who is teaching and who is learning would be impossible.

Our students are restive because our colleges and universities have little to offer by way of a challenge and thus absorb their intellectual and moral energies. The closure of the universities for long periods does not make any difference to the intellectual life of the community. Those young people who play truant and cut their classes have no feeling that they are missing anything. Our student unrest cannot be tackled except by making the work in the class-room more exciting and significant than it is today.

The search for consensus and the compulsions of democratic procedure minimize the chances of new ideas being accepted. It is wise to remember that almost all progressive ideas began as notes of dissent, or minority opinions. If the will of the majority had prevailed all the time, the world would not have changed very much in the last 5,000 years. The first anthropoid who

suggested the use of tools must have been denounced for making an unmanly and indecent suggestion. As Charles Kotter put it, "There have been only a few thought cultivators in the history of the world. It has been said that except for about 1500 of these thinkers living in the last 3000 years, we might still be living in caves". One of the functions of the university is to give dissent a chance to express itself, and to give new ideas an opportunity to be seriously considered. Ideas are unlike power. They often come from inconspicuous quarters. One of the reasons for student participation in decision-making is the need for the search for new ideas, rather than the need for seeking the consent of the governed.

One of the reasons why large numbers fail in our examinations is that the standards expected are low. This may seem a paradox, for, if standards are low, shouldn't all be able to pass? How is that standards are low and yet large numbers fail? The examinees have now found that there is hardly any difference in intellectual quality between those who pass and those who fail in examinations. If the standards are low, they provide an inadequate challenge to the young mind, and this encourages indolence. Examiners try to examine the illusion of high standards by failing a large number. If, on the other hand, standards were more exerting, the response to the challenge would also be of high quality. This point is proved by the phenomenon that in most examinations where the requirements are high, the failure rate is low. This is not entirely due to circumstance that such examinations are taken only by the more competent. Academic competence is itself not a fixed quality. The proper environment and effort could produce such competence among large numbers of students who are now considered to be incompetent.

MR. V. V. JOHN was an eminent educationist and former Vice Chancellor of Rajasthan University.

[*Freedom First*, June 1972]

Will Democracy Survive in India?

If we wish to maintain democracy not merely in form, but also in fact, what must we do? The first thing in my judgement we must do is to hold fast the constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives. It means we must abandon the blood methods of revolution. It means that we must abandon the method of civil disobedience, non-cooperation and *satyagraha*. When there was no way left for constitutional methods of achieving economic and social objectives, there was a great deal of justification for unconstitutional methods. But where constitutional methods are open, there can be no justification for unconstitutional methods. These methods are nothing but the Grammar of Anarchy and the sooner they are abandoned, the better for us

B. R. Ambedkar

Mr. Red Tape

L. K. Jha

**To every proposal, he has an objection. For every solution,
he can find a difficulty.**

I do not know if you have had the good fortune of not meeting Mr. Red Tape. Most people have come across him in one form or another. And who can escape the filling of forms? When a child is born, when he goes to school, when as a grown-up he applies for a job, when he wants to build a house, when he wants to claim his pension, when he dies, and indeed even after his death, forms have to be filled up. And where there is a form, there is a Mr. Red Tape.

Mr. Red Tape is a creature of somewhat strange habits. He moves in grooves, he sits on files, he sleeps over reminders and, occasionally, he has been known to eat his own words. He would be a fascination addition to any zoo, but that is not where he lives. His favourite haunt is a Government Office. However laughable his ways may be, Mr. Red Tape provokes not laughter but tears.

There are many stories told about the antics of Mr. Red Tape. It is said that in a certain Government Office, there was a large accumulation of old documents and files, dating back decades, documents to which no one but white ants and rats paid any attention. The space which these documents occupied began to squeeze out the people working in that office and the head of that office had a bright revolutionary idea. If the old documents were burnt, so much space would become free. So he wrote to the Head of his Department in the far off State capital, seeking his permission to do so. After three years and nineteen reminders during which the people working in that office were all but suffocated, the sanction came. Yes, the documents could be destroyed, but three copies of each of them should first be made for future reference!

What annoys and worries people about Mr. Red Tape is not oddities of this kind, but his whole outlook and approach to the problems which are brought to him. To every proposal, he has an objection. For every solution, he can find a difficulty.

However annoying a character he may seem in office, if you meet Mr. Red Tape in private life, you will find that he is quite a likeable normal human being. In fairness to him, therefore, one should ask what it is that causes his transformation and makes him behave the way he does.

One day, I had the good fortune of catching him in a relaxed mood at home. His daughter, aged ten, wanted him to help her write an essay on the life of Tilak. So, he was glad to be interrupted. In the course of our conversation, I asked him, as tactfully as I could, how it was that he who was obviously so human at home became so inhuman in office. To my surprise, his usually placid face showed signs of animation. There was a gleam in his eye instead of the glassy stares with which he froze visitors to his office.

'What choice have I got', he asked. 'I am not judged by the results I achieve, but by my adherence to rules. I won't be blamed if I do nothing, but I will be taken to task if I make a single mistake. What does it matter if a battle is lost, if trains collide, or buildings collapse, so long as I have acted according to the rules? It is far better that refugees should wait indefinitely for the relief which is due to them than to run the risk of paying more than their due to anyone. Sins of commission are easier to detect than sins of omission.'

'This must be trying', I said. 'How do you manage to function at all?'

'That is very simple', he replied. 'If someone asks me a question, the first thing I ask myself is whether it is within my competence to give him a reply. This is never easy for anyone to know. So, I start consulting everybody else who might possibly be concerned or interested. Before they give me any answer, they ask me a number of questions. I fling them back at the poor chap who approached me first. If he still perseveres and comes back with answers I pass them back to

my colleagues. If they can find no flaw in the answers, they take a decision. And usually, the decision is to put the matter up to the officers above them. And so the game goes on. Do you think I like it? When I retire, the very rules and procedures which I apply will result in my pension being held up for months and even years. And when it is sanctioned, I shall have to prove by producing certificates on prescribed forms that I am alive and also that I was alive in each of the intervening months during which my pension was under consideration!

As he paused for breath, I managed to ask him another question: 'Is there no way out?' I asked. 'Can nothing be done to make things easier and simpler?'

There was a sudden change in his manner. He

looked at me with a suspicious eye, wondering whether he had talked more freely than he should have and whether he had infringed Government Servants' Conduct Rules in any manner. After a brief pause in which the gleam went out of his eye, he said: 'That is a question which you must address to someone in the Department of Administrative Reforms. It will be for them to consult others, examine the matter at the appropriate level and given an answer in suitable terms in due course to your query'.

MR. L. K. JHA, ICS (Retd.) was the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, Chairman of the Administrative Reforms Commission and Economic Advisor to the Prime Minister.

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The Indian State Vs. Its Citizens

An Unequal Contest

J. B. D'Souza

Some of us believe in an 'Asian' concept of human rights, which holds that economic development has to precede the full flowering of human rights.

Others have the delusion that the security forces need to be ruthless, unquestioned and unbridled, if they are to keep the country safe.

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighbourhood he lives in, the school or college he attends, the factory, farm or office where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere." That was Eleanor Roosevelt, chairing the UN Human Rights Commission in 1948.

Of the violence within the home – the wife beating, the child abuse, the cruelty practiced on domestic servants – there is no measure. We know only that it happens everywhere, all the time. There is very little remedy, legal or societal. It hides behind closed doors.

Bonded & Child Labour

Far more openly and shamelessly practiced in India are bonded labour and child labour, official denials notwithstanding. A recent study on south Asia reported the shocking fact that one in every three Indian children under 16 is forced into child labour. (Yet our governments happily adopt and report impossible school enrolment figures: The proportion of boys enrolled in primary school officially exceeds 100% everywhere except in Haryana and Kerala; our governments are not ashamed of proclaiming this ridiculous figure. For girls the official ratio is 93%). Millions of Indians lose their rights well before they reach adolescence. Millions live in bondage and misery all their working lives. For all these millions, rights are costly irrelevancies; their struggle is for survival.

And there are the millions whose rights are suppressed by a cruel caste system, a system of which

the excesses were outlawed by the Constitution we adopted in 1950, but which has lived on to this day. It may now be again sharpening its instruments of oppression, even if the days are gone when a Mahar has to lie prostrate on the ground if a Brahmin passed by.

Violations by State Agencies

To these societal assaults in human rights we have in these fifty years of so-called freedom added a persistent barrage from the security forces – the army, the para-military forces and the police. Violations by the State agencies are much more severe, more intense. They are perpetrated illegally as well as under cover, or colour, of law. And there is no redress; the transgressor is the very agency we taxpayers pay to protect us.

Let's look first at the transgression that have the colour of law. Almost since the dawn of our independence our statute book has contained draconian provisions for detention without trial. Nehru had the Preventive Detention Act, although before 1947 he had himself castigated the British government for its resort to savage laws of this kind. Its recent *avatar*, TADA, could get you 6 months in jail for an innocent utterance, such as questioning our government's stance on Kashmir. A Punjab High Court judge who had lectured in support of civil liberties was arrested, handcuffed, and made to stand for hours in the scorching sun of a Chandigarh summer. And while he stood there the police burgled – not just searched – his home. TADA made a confession to a policeman admissible in evidence overturning one of the cherished principles of Indian jurisprudence. Worse still, it introduced there a directive incentive to torture of prisoners, a device our police pounded on with alacrity.

Misuse of TADA

TADA was enacted to deal with terrorism in the Punjab, but it soon became a handy instrument of political tyranny that our governments applied to 22 States, imprisoning 50,000 Indians. And which State do you think contributed most prisoners to that total? It was Gujarat, the home state of that arch-terrorist Mahatma Gandhi; Gujarat, where terrorism was virtually unknown. Yet Gujarat jailed 19,000 persons under TADA!

TADA may have gone, but its spirit survives, and hundreds of citizens arrested before it lapsed still languish in jail.

The cover of law imposes further hardships and human rights violations on thousands of under-trial prisoners. A poor man accused of trying to kill a former CM of Maharashtra was finally acquitted a few weeks ago, seventeen years after he entered jail. Who bothered about this innocent man's rights for seventeen years? Will his accusers be brought to trial?

Violations by Security Forces

Turn now to the totally illegal violations that take place every day, at the hands of the police, the army, and the other security forces. In coping with insurgency in the north-east and Kashmir, the army has not been as virtuous as its generals claim it to be, even if it cannot take the entire credit for alienating the people of these two areas from the rest of us Indians.

In Manipur on 16th February last year the 57th Mountain Division arrested one Kanjugam Singh, suspected of links with insurgents. On the 19th he was delivered to the police, who sent him to hospital. He died the next day.

In March 1996 one Andrabi, a Kashmiri journalist who had campaigned for human rights was arrested by a unit of the 35th Rastriya Rifles. Less than a fortnight later his body was found. No explanation was forthcoming, nor was it safe to demand one.

Some years earlier, also in Kashmir, Mohammed Hanif Baggu was picked up from his home by the 25th Madras Regiment. He was beaten, hung upside down from ceiling and dumped in a ditch.

These are only three out of a large number of cases that stand out in my memory, and not even three swallows make a summer. In fact, the army's

onslaughts on human rights are better concealed than those perpetrated by the police, because they are confined to limited areas of the country in which insurgency is particularly visible and media candour is actively deterred, as Andrabi's case shows. The army is also careful to turn its victims over to the police after it has "dealt" with them.

Police Atrocities

The police are everywhere, and so are they atrocities. Just about a month ago the sight of two railway policemen thrashing a poor woman hawker at Andheri station in Bombay roused commuters into a violent protest. In retaliation the railway police came out in force to lathi-charge the protesters. The resulting stampede killed a woman commuter.

About a year ago a 14 year old was arrested in Tamil Nadu on a false charge of stealing a bicycle. That evening, his decapitated body was found on the tract of a nearby railway station.

This list could go on and on. But apart from such scattered excesses, excesses. Bombay witnessed during the 1992-93 riots systematic attacks on innocent people by very police whom we pay to protect us. The Srikrishna Commission has named a number of police officers for prosecution, chief among them R. D. Tyagi, then Joint Commissioner of Police. For his pains Tyagi was promoted to be Commissioner!

Even in normal times, our police are every ready to arrest people they don't like, on the slightest of pretexts. And once arrested you are in deep trouble. You are available to satisfy the sexual or sadistic instincts of your interrogators, available for assault, rape, torture and even murder. Last year the number of custodial deaths in India was 888, up from 303 in 1996. Maharashtra led the States in this shameful tally; its score was 200. It led also in custodial rapes, testimony to the virility of the Maharashtra policemen. "In the name of custodial interrogation a reign of terror is set loose, and people are harassed" – wise words from none other than Mr. Tyagi, the same Tyagi, nor retired.

Police "Encounters"

Perhaps the worst form of assault by the State of human rights is its repeated use of "encounters". Bombay's Police Commissioner recently told a meeting that in encounters the police shoot only in self-defence. On the platform with him another speaker cited 99 police

encounters in which 135 people were killed, but not one policeman was even injured. Someone was lying.

What makes our security forces so ready to resort to their own terrorism, to trample freely on our rights, is the virtual immunity they enjoy. Just try to register a complaint against a misbehaving policeman at a police station. You face a blank wall. You are lucky if you are not yourself charged with some crime and locked up. And the police strenuously resist enquiries into their misconduct, on the spurious ground that the force would be demoralized. What an exalted state of morale must pervade the police if it cannot survive a revelation of the truth!

Saddest of all is the apathy of the middle classes to such excesses, which mostly hurt the poor. Some of us believe in an 'Asian' concept of human rights,

which holds that economic development has to precede the full flowering of human rights. Others have the delusion that the security forces need to be ruthless, unquestioned and unbridled, if they are to keep the country safe. Again and again one remembers Niemoller, speaking of Germany. In the thirties: 'First they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out-because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the Communists and I did not speak out-because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out-because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me – and there was no one left to speak out for me'.

MR. J. B. D'SOUZA is a civil servant (since retired). Held senior position including that of Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra and Municipal Corporation of Greater Bombay. He is active in a voluntary agency engaged in promoting low income housing.

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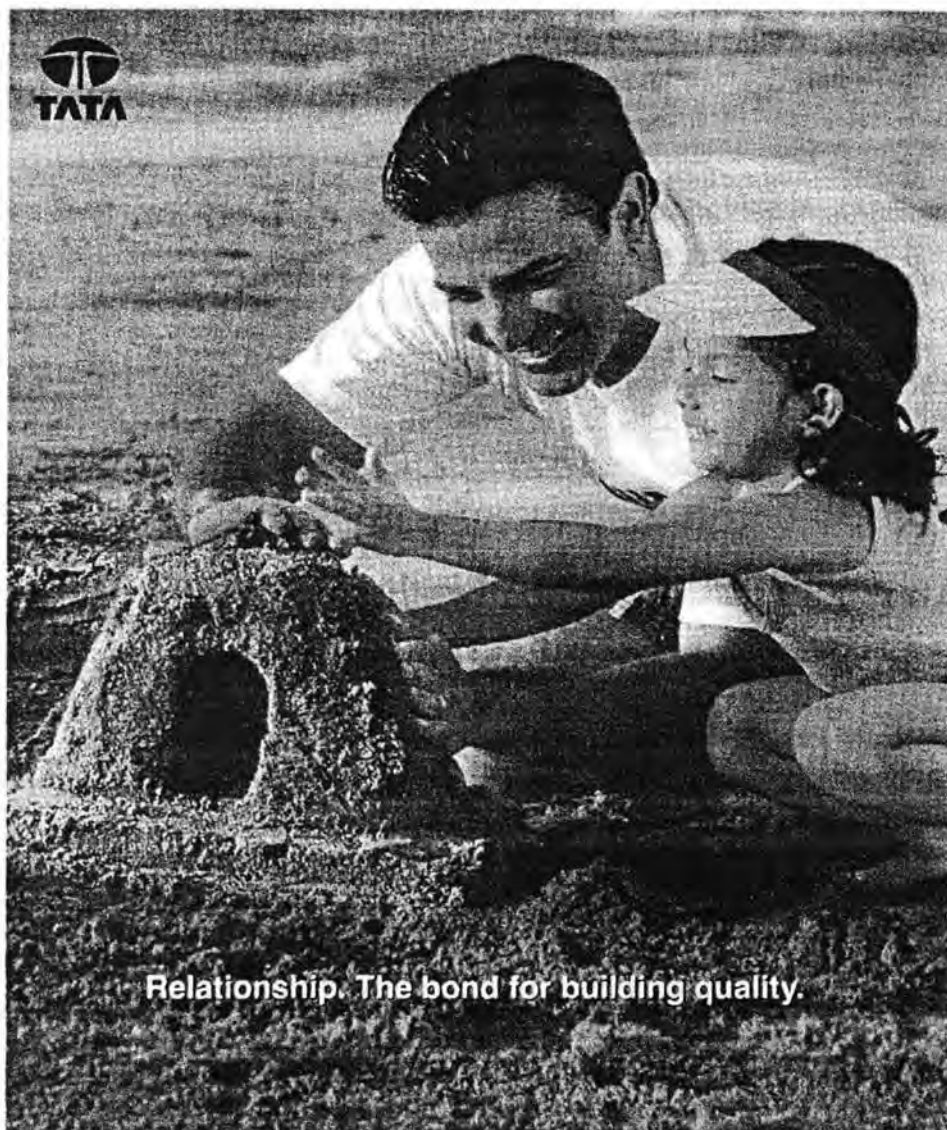
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Two Freedom Struggles

Usha Mehta

One lesson to be learnt from the two struggles is that preserving freedom is as important as winning it.

The declaration of Emergency on June 26, 1975, came as a rude shock to many a freedom fighter who cried out almost in anguish, "This is certainly not the freedom we fought for!" After getting over the initial sense of bewilderment, their minds went back to the stirring times of the historic Quit India struggle, when the Mahatma had given the call "Do or Die".

As in 1942, with the declaration of Emergency, the press was gagged and the voice of the people muzzled; meetings and processions were banned and leaders of the nation and many party workers arrested.

The Quit India Movement

So far as the Quit India movement was concerned, it was unique and unprecedented; far from being a revolt of an oppressed minority against a tyrannical majority, it was a spontaneous upsurge of the whole people – a people's revolution. For the first time since the great revolt of 1857, a vast number of people rose to challenge the British Raj without arms or ammunition but with the firm resolve to march forward on the path of freedom. Explaining this the late Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia said in one of his speeches: "This is no movement: It is a revolution. In a movement, there is victory or defeat; in a revolution, there is victory or death as there is no going back in it".

The call was irresistible. If the Government was ready for tyranny and severe repression, people in their turn were ready for utmost suffering and sacrifice. Thus all sections of society, rich and poor, young and old, men and women, students and teachers, workers and peasants came forward to contribute their mite to the sacrificial fire lit by their leaders at the Gowalia Tank maidan in Bombay.*

1942 and 1975

Though in 1975 people were more fear-stricken than in 1942, and resistance took some time to build up, it would be wrong to conclude that they approved

of the Government or were reluctant to retaliate. Small groups dominated by teachers, students and lawyers functioned in most of the major towns and cities, tried to collect funds for the prisoners and their families and bring out secret news bulletins containing news from overseas journals and newspapers which were critical of the Emergency. In 1942, the major problem that faced us in organizing an underground radio-station was that of finances. When we were almost at our wits end an old auntie of mine put us at ease by offering to put all her "Stridhan" including her precious jewellery at our disposal saying "at this sacred moment, no sacrifice is too great for the country". During the emergency, there were several families which gave monthly instalments for the prisoners' families. An old businessman, more than 80 years old, used to come on the first of every month to deliver a sealed packet to us in the office of the PUCL (People's Union for Civil Liberties). On some of us volunteering to go to him, his reply reminding us of the reply of our auntie in 1942 was: "This visit of mine to your office, far from being a routine visit, is a pilgrimage for me. So, please do not stop me from coming here. Even if I die I will have the satisfaction of dying in the cause of preserving our hard-won freedom, freedom for which I with innumerable other countrymen have contributed our mite. For me this is the second battle for Freedom".

In 1942, appealing to the Government servants not to keep aloof from the movement, Dr. Lohia asked: "Would you like to become good residents of free India which is going to come into being soon or would you like to be enemies of India for ever?" In response not only did loyal government servants resign their posts but one highly placed officer in the Air Force came to him and assured: "The Air Force ought to have plunged into fire in the very beginning, however, we did not know our duty then. Now we do. You can, therefore, rest assured, the Air Force will be with you when you give the next call."

The Role of the PUCL

In December 1976, we of the PUCL in Bombay

* Now known as the 'August Kranti' maidan.

were busy planning programmes for students and workers for Republic Day. We had to hold frequent meetings. Not only were contributions from trade-unions and student organizations pouring in but many ingenious suggestions were discussed and detailed instructions worked out. Each time a police officer somehow managed to smuggle himself in at the time of our meetings. Once he came with the intention to arrest all of us. He, however, arrived just a minute too late. All the other members had left and I was just leaving. He put several questions about the meeting and our preparations. I replied to all of them without giving any clue about our programme for Republic Day. He knew we were planning to print badges and wanted to know the details about their design and distribution. I said the design was left to the artists, and the distribution pattern to the local groups but promised to give him a badge as soon as it was ready. Almost with tears in his eyes, he said: "I came with an order to arrest you and your colleagues. I am going back with the resolve to assist you and your work". He was apologetic about the work he was doing. On being told that we knew he had a family to support and that circumstances compelled him to do his duty, he interrupted saying "It is not I but you and your colleagues who are doing your duty towards the country in this darkest hour of its history. I am merely doing my job. My fullest sympathies are with you, with JP and with leaders of the PUCL. I promise you that I shall give you prior warning as soon as I smell some danger to you or your organization".

Underground Activities

In accordance with Mahatma Gandhi's advice to young men to act as citizens of an independent country and to work as live news bulletins, students and youths brought out underground new-bulletins and distributed them freely among the people during the emergency. As in 1942 and the earlier struggles, during the emergency too there was no dearth of underground literature. *Satya Samachar*, *Satya Vani*, *Lok Kranti*, *Lok Jagran*, *Sadhana*, *Satya Bapta*, *Marshall*, *Darpan*, and several others in many regional languages carried the message of resistance all over the country. That their aim was, whether in 1942 or 1975-76, not to spread violence and anarchy but to assert their rights, fight the dictator and preserve democracy, is clear from a statement which a leader in 1942 declared: "The Ganges will flow with blood but it will be the blood not of the Britisher but of the Indian soldier fighting for the motherland". Similarly *Satya Samachar* explained its policy thus: "In this venture, the emphasis will always

be on truth. Our self-imposed code will forbid incitement to violence, to communal passions and to anti-social behaviour; we shall scrupulously avoid character-assassination and tendentious writing. Our constant endeavour will be to remind people that a personal dictatorship is working to perpetuate itself and that they have to fight it. Today's fighter will command tomorrow – not for power but for justice not for politics but for ethics". The slogan given by Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan "*Hamla chahe jaisa hoga, hath hamara nahi uthega*". However grave the provocation, we shall not raise our hand also underscores the moral basis of the fight.

The difference between 1942 and 1975

One marked difference between the underground literature of 1942 and that during the emergency was the coverage given in the foreign press to India and the attempts at resistance as also to efforts made by formal and informal international organizations like 'Friend of India', Amnesty International and others to see that the rights of the Indian people were restored and at least the health of the prisoners preserved.

The horror stories of the British regime emanating from General Dyer's dogged determination to destroy everyone including innocent women and even babies in arms at Jallianwala Bagh or the brutal atrocities, including the rape of innumerable innocent women at Ashti and Chimur in 1942, were disgusting and heart-rending. It was a general belief that no civil government would ever think of taking recourse to such leonine violence or ruthless repression. Similarly the cases of torture and inhuman atrocities including rape and ill-treatment of pregnant women in different jails of the country during the emergency reign of terror reported in the underground pamphlet *Torture of Political Prisoners*, not merely came as a rude shock to liberty loving people but made them hang down their heads in shame.

One lesson to be learnt from the two struggles is that preserving freedom is as important as winning it and that all those who cherish freedom and justice have to make a firm resolve not to fall a prey to the evil designs of autocrats or surrender to despots but carry on a relentless struggle without rest or respite.

DR. USHA MEHTA was a prominent freedom-fighter and a Gandhian.

[Freedom First January 1979]

India's Ballot Box Revolution

S. P. Aiyar

What the Sixth General Election has achieved is without parallel in the history of democracy for the people have expressed themselves and passed a judgment on the rulers after a period of emergency

The country has emerged from one of those political experience which, in the perspective of History, account for the great tides of changes in human affairs and, by any test, the ballot-box has produced a revolution in Indian politics. A revolution, it has rightly been said, constitutes a drastic reallocation of power and this is precisely what has happened. The thirty-year old monopoly of the Congress has ended and the tenacious myth of its invincibility dissolved. The significance of this is not lessened by the fact that the scene of the great change is north India and not the states in the South. As yet, no satisfactory explanation has been offered for the dramatic contrast in the political choice of the people in the north and in the south of this sub-continent; obviously there can be no overarching theory of political behaviour in all the Southern States and local factors must be taken into account.

Rule of Caprice

What the Sixth General Election has achieved is without parallel in the history of democracy for the people have expressed themselves and passed a judgment on the rulers after a period of emergency during which a coterie of men surrounding the prime minister had sought to make the country into a prison-house for the freeplay of their impulse. True, the scene of their operations was in the north, east, west and the south largely escaped the rigour of the mechanism of terror which had been set up. But the suppression was everywhere, a pall of fear fell over the country and the people had been governed not so much by the rule of law as by caprice. Writing during the high noon of the emergency, a contributor to *The New Statesman* who understandably preferred to remain anonymous, expressed the view that no one could ever be so naïve as to imagine that the emergency, and the system of government it had given rise to would end in the foreseeable future. It was the general belief that the emergency had come to stay and the media men had worked feverishly to give it an air of legitimacy. When

the election was announced on January 18, the emergency was "relaxed" but not lifted and all evidence seems to support the view that it was the intention of the Congress to continue with it and "consolidate" the gains after it had secured a fresh mandate by the people, ultimately, the emergency was "lifted" not by Mrs. Gandhi but by the people of India, especially of Rae Bareilly.

The election results exploded with a surprise and leading newspapermen the world over were pathetically striving for the right words to describe this most extraordinary event in the Asian scene. The words they seized upon were intended to capture the element of high drama; "earthquake" and "volcano" were freely used and in India, "wave" and "hurricane" were employed. These expressions, to my mind, are not only inadequate but are also apt to be misleading because they give us no clue to the nature of the phenomenon or the forces underlying it.

Democracy Versus Dictatorship

India's ballot-box revolution has a significance for our own political development as well as that of other developing countries. Unlike previous elections, the exercise of the franchise this time has a certain epic dimension and as in all epics there is a main theme as well as its sub-plots; its ennobling characters as well as its despicable villains. The sub-plots and the activities of the villains will undoubtedly become clear when the separate official investigations are carried out and the results made known to the public. However, these are linked up with main theme of democracy versus dictatorship – one of the principal strands in the manifesto of the Janata Party.

The Economist has recently observed that "Never again will anyone be able to claim that democracy is unsuited to any developing country or that the poor and the hungry do not value their rights. India shot down these condescending dogmas ... along with Mrs. Gandhi

and her Congress Party." It is true that ordinary men and women who have been denied the advantage of formal education cannot understand the abstract arguments of freedom and equality as expressed by political and constitutional pandits; equally true that the harsh realities of the underdeveloped world make survival more important for people than political battles. What is forgotten, however, is the fact that human beings will rebel against injustice and any threat to their dharma or way of life. Why did Mrs. Gandhi lose in her own constituency with so big a margin despite the fact that it had been carefully nursed for many years and had many benefits bestowed upon it? Why is it that practically every one closely associated with her and having a reputation for highhandedness was defeated at the polls? Why is it that the normal inducements offered to poor voters in cash or kind or the variety of pre-election sweeteners promised by State Governments had little or no effect in many prestigious constituencies? The election has shown beyond the shadow of doubt that the voter, urban as well as rural, literate as well as illiterate, could not be deflected from his decision to vote in the way he wanted. There was widespread fear that the election would be rigged and rumours afloat in Bombay suggested that whatever the electorate did the result would be a victory for the Congress. Yet this did not happen and is the greatest achievement of this revolution through the ballot-box. It has given rise to a tremendous confidence in the power of the vote and the secrecy of the ballot-box. The result was a powerful demonstration of *Jana Shakti* and the power of the people. The Constitution of India spoke of "We, the People" but this was generally taken to be no more than a rhetoric of the eighteenth century; the election demonstrated the reality of popular sovereignty.

Any evaluation of the historic significance of our recent political experience must acknowledge with pride the work of the Election Commission and the Returning Officers who brought to bear on their work the spirit indispensable for a free election. What Vinod Malhotra, the Returning Officer at Rae Bareilly, did when confronted by a petition for a repoll presented by Makhanlal Fotedar, Mrs. Gandhi's Election Agent, and the timely intervention of P. B. Dutt, the Election Commission's observer, indicate that the spirit of freedom had not been snuffed out.

Divine Right Delusions?

What destroyed the Congress image was its

hubris, its belief that it was its historical destiny to rule India and provide the stability which its leaders believed could not be provided by an other political party. What gave credence to this belief was the splintered nature of the opposition in the country's political development. For more than a decade, Indian political scientists following their Western masters propounded the theory that having a party like the Congress, representing a broad consensus in a dominant position, was the best thing that India could have. It followed logically that although the country could have other political parties they could only function in opposition and exert pressure on the ruling party. This was at best a rationalization of an historical accident and at the worst a subtle variation of a Divine Right Theory. The notion that only one party has a monopoly of political wisdom to rule this large country was not only out of tune with the realities of a plural society but it also carried within it the implication that opposition is irrelevant to a country like ours. Mr. Barooah was only explicitly stating what was in the minds of most Congressmen when he boldly declared that the opposition was irrelevant. In a similar strain, Mrs. Gandhi declared during the emergency that the opposition had been vanquished but not destroyed. Uma Vasudev's almost fulsome biography of Mrs. Gandhi clearly mentions that many years ago – long before she became minister – she had gone to the extent of saying that to make the foundation of the country strong it was better not to have opposition parties. This is a dangerous doctrine. The election has not only destroyed it but also created a situation in which people can hope to have an alternative government. Mr. Y. B. Chavan recently warned the Janata Government that if the Congress with its long history could have its parliamentary majority reduced from 352 to a 153, it would not take much time to reduce the Janata Party's majority 270 to 70. He was right and this is a clear indication that the principle of alternative government is now a reality. It is significant that it did not occur to him to make a similar statement after the 1971 election.

Volatile Loyalties

In the current euphoria one is likely to forget that political loyalties are extremely volatile; so is the mood of the people. For the moment, the Janata Party has roused high expectations – political as well as economic. Its manifesto has promised the implementation of political charter, including the full restoration of civil liberties and the rule of law. The restrictions on the freedom of the Press are being rapidly removed and

the relationship between Parliament and the Judiciary will be restored to the form envisaged by the frames of the Constitution. Parliament is once again becoming the vital centre of our political system and there is every hope that new conventions will develop between government and opposition. Congress leaders have shown a restraint in their pronouncements and a willingness to cooperate with the government within the framework of the Congress policy. One can also expect the government and opposition to function as integral parts of democracy and play the game according to the rules.

In the post-election period, the relations between the Union Government and the States, particularly those in the South, can be expected to have their strains but much depends on the new government's capacity to build up an image of impartiality. Most important of all, the earlier promises on the question of language will have to be kept. The Janata Party leaders may have to temper their utterances and explore every possibility for harmonizing relationships with Congress governments in the South.

Most important of all, the new government will be judged by the effectiveness of its economic programmes, its capacity to create jobs in urban as well as rural areas, keeping prices of essential commodities from rising, stimulate industrial and

agricultural production and inspire confidence in the economy. In this endeavour, policies can not differ fundamentally from those of the Congress although the emphasis might well change. One of the major casualties of the recent election might well be a disastrous setback for family planning for the words themselves have come to acquire an unsavoury connotation in the public mind. Unfortunately, the Union Minister for Health and Family Planning has been indulging in a form of demagoguery on this matter. The failure to control the population would mean pushing more and more people below the poverty line, and given the return to a liberal democratic system, conflicts and pressures will build up rapidly and the opposition can once again exploit such a situation. Indian society cannot change overnight and the soil is ever fertile for the demagogue. There was a time when we believed that a totalitarian system was not possible in India. But we came very close to it. We must not delude ourselves a second time by saying that it will not happen again. The ballot box can bring about a political revolution by changing the structure of power but it cannot by itself produce a social and economic transformation.

Dr. S. P. Aiyar, a political scientist was an author and Head of the Department of Civics and Politics, University of Bombay.

[*Freedom First* June 1977]

Towards a New Culture

With the waning of imperialism, we have to seek a principle of political union that does not depend on force. It is already evident that a loose federation or a confederal polity provides that alternative principle of union. One other lesson of history provides to be carefully noted. In each stage of evolution, the major aim should be to retain the essential gains of the earlier stage and to combine them with the new requirements of mankind. Recent experience provides eloquent testimony to this truth. An attempt to make a leap to a higher stage without due attention to consolidating earlier gains is apt to be tragically expensive in terms of both material and moral resources. The protection of the dignity of the individual, removal of poverty and social insecurity, the search for peace and the imperative need to overcome ecological imbalance combine to set new social and economic objectives for the future. It is in this context that concepts of freedom and welfare will have to be reviewed and widened. Perhaps even more basic is a deepening of the concept of peace. To live in harmony with men and with nature must become an essential part of our post-modern conception of a sustainable society and economy. Thus, as the twentieth century draws to a close, the new perspectives for a crisis free transition becomes increasingly clear: The world has to move in the direction of a confederal polity, a decentralised and sustainable economy and an ethics of non-violence.

Amlan Datta, *Freedom First*, January-March 1992



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Dilemma of Mr. Nehru

B. K. Desai

Mr. Nehru today thus finds himself trapped in the vicious logic of his own foreign policy. Initially he set out to interpret China to the world, but now he admits that his own understanding of China was far from correct.

Mr. Nehru is a sad man today. Recent events in Tibet and the Chinese incursions across India's northern frontier have deflated his high-sounding creed of Panchsheel and non-alignment. They have profoundly shaken the public confidence in the wisdom of his foreign policy and have raised grave doubts in the public mind about the ability and willingness of his Government to defend India's territorial integrity against the Chinese invader from the north. Almost for the first time Mr. Nehru has to face angry criticism in Parliament from his admirers and critics alike for his mishandling of the problem of India's border security and for holding back from Parliament facts of Chinese aggression during the last few years. More sorrowful than this, he has been obliged to give up his dream and hope and face the hard logic of events. Until now he tried to play the role of the great mediator and pacificator between the East and the West attempting to steer India along the middle road. He tried his best to save India from being drawn into the vortex of cold war by his policy of neutralism, but today he finds himself being forcibly drawn into it by the Chinese communists. He is now forced to recognize, though reluctantly, that the real threat to India's security is the expansionist ambition of the Chinese communists. "We should be prepared for any eventuality", he warned the Lok Sabha on August 28 last. "What we have to face today", he repeated his warning later in Parliament, "is a great and powerful nation which is aggressive". Thus by admitting that China today poses a serious threat to India, Mr. Nehru, by implication, has to confess the failure of his foreign policy.

Mr. Nehru has none but himself to blame for this tragic debacle. If India's foreign policy today is in shambles, it is mainly because it was based on a wrong understanding and judgement of international developments. The friendship between India and China has been an important element in India's foreign policy, it has been a sort of article of faith with Mr. Nehru. But this friendship from the very beginning was a one-

way traffic. India yielded to China on every point at issue, even sacrificing her self-interest in many cases, in order to humour the Chinese communists, while the latter stubbornly insisted on having their pound of flesh in each and every issue concerning them. This policy of friendship was, in fact, a policy of appeasement on India's part and it was based on an unrealistic and superficial assessment of the Chinese revolution. In the initial stages of the formulation of its China policy, the Government of India failed to note the basic fact of the Chinese revolution, that is, the new Chinese rulers were communists first and last and as such were bent on expanding their frontiers. Instead, the attitude of the Indian Government and leaders towards China was suffused with a kind of poetic glow regarding the ancient bonds of friendship between India and China. The Chinese communists from the very beginning showed their expansionist character in three different directions – in Korea, in Indo-China and in Tibet. But the Indian Government steadfastly refused to believe that the Chinese communists were expansionists as such. It tried to find excuses for Chinese activities which it considered as mere aberrations to be attributed to the initial enthusiasm of the Chinese and to Chinese fear of Western imperialists. When the Chinese communists invaded Tibet in 1950, Mr. Nehru, for example, stated that the "apprehension in Peking that the U.S.A. was bent on destruction of the new regime in China was rightly or wrongly very real", and he wondered whether their apprehensions "might not have influenced the Chinese decision to move into Tibet" (*Times of India*, October 31, 1950).

Indian leaders not only connived at and condoned aggressive behaviour of the Chinese, but they even took it upon themselves to convince the outside world of China's peaceful intentions. Mr. Nehru time and again made statements in India as well as abroad that China had no desire to expand and affirmed definitely that there was no external danger to India from China. India also considered it as her mission to

serve as a bridge – a mediator – between China and the non-communist world. Speaking in Parliament on December 6, 1950, Mr. Nehru stated: "India has a rather special responsibility with regard to China because apart from the countries of the Soviet group, India is the only country which could find out through its Ambassador what the reaction of the Chinese Government is to developing events". Similarly in October 1954, Mr. Nehru, while on a visit to China, said that the purpose of his talks with the Chinese leaders was "to improve China's relations with the outside world, including nations unfriendly to China". Mr. Nehru's mission was to "interpret" China to the outside world. And how did he interpret China? "I am convinced", Mr. Nehru asserted after his return from China, "that China, entirely for its own sake, wants peace, wants time to develop itself and thinks in terms of three or four five-year plans", (*Hindu*, November 14, 1954). Chinese foreign policy, Mr. Nehru announced, was "normal", but she only "used strong words" in relation to certain States or problems which affected her. This was Mr. Nehru's portrait of China for the benefit of the outside world. He tried to portray Chinese leaders in his own image and play the role of a persuasive salesman of China in the international world.

This superficial and rosy view of China naturally led Mr. Nehru to believe that he, in turn, could persuade the Chinese communists to be peaceful by making them adherents of the Panchsheel. The Chinese rulers without hesitation endorsed the five principles of peaceful co-existence as it gave them much needed respectability in the Asian eyes, and helped them to dress up their aggressive aims in the robes of peace. But the magic of Panchsheel could not convert Chinese communists to the peaceful and non-violent creed. Within three months of signifying their adherence to the Panchsheel, Chinese communists violated India's frontier at Bara Hoti in August 1954. Since then there has been a steady aggravation of Chinese hostile activities along India's northern frontier. There have been more than ten border violations by the Chinese communists since August 1954. Thus, instead of taming the Chinese dragon, the Panchsheel only whetted its ambition for further expansion. Five years after the signing of the Panchsheel Agreement with China, on May 23, 1959, the Indian Foreign Secretary was constrained to inform the Chinese Ambassador in Delhi: "it appears that according to them (the Chinese Government) Panchsheel may or may not be applied according to convenience or circumstances". This has forced Mr. Nehru to admit that the term peaceful co-existence does not mean the

same thing to China as it does to India. "I wonder", he confessed, "whether the Government of India and the Government of China, when they speak to each other and use the same words, mean the same thing". He has thus realized to his grief that there can be no common language between communists and non-communists and that the term peaceful co-existence comes from the infected lexicon of Newspeak of the communists in which dictatorship is called democracy, war is called peace, aggression is called liberation and freedom is called slavery. But, then, this warning was sounded even in 1950 by many a discriminating critic, but Mr. Nehru at that time chose to treat them with scorn.

Mr. Nehru today thus finds himself trapped in the vicious logic of his own foreign policy. Initially he set out to interpret China to the world, but now he admits that his own understanding of China was far from correct. "I cannot often enough follow the Chinese line of thought", he confessed in his speech in Parliament. Similarly in 1954 he felt no compunction in sacrificing the independence of Tibet at the altar of Sino-Indian friendship. He justified India's approval of the Chinese conquest of Tibet by upholding the Chinese claim to sovereignty over Tibet. But this has again placed him in a quandary. He now admits that the recent revolt in Tibet was a national uprising, but still he has to stick to his position that Tibet is a part of China and, therefore, whatever might happen in Tibet, it is an internal affair of China. He feels strongly about the suppression of the Tibetan revolt by Chinese communists, but because of his position, he cannot condemn Chinese action in Tibet. India's past commitments to China have vitiated his policy, and he too feels uneasy about it. He still wants to maintain friendly relations with China which forbids him from calling a spade a spade, and at the same time he feels impelled to express India's sympathy for the Tibetan people who are groaning under the yoke of Chinese imperialism. "That might appear to be something contradictory", he himself admitted to Parliament, "and it does in the present context slightly contradict each other. That is the difficulty of the situation".

But, then the Chinese communists are doing no more than to teach Mr. Nehru a lesson in consistency. They are now using the same logic by which he justified Chinese conquest of Tibet in 1954. Mr. Nehru, in 1954, took a purely legalistic stand that China had sovereign rights in Tibet and avoided to face political and moral implications of his position. The Chinese communists

today are employing the same logic to justify their claims to Indian territory. The McMahon line, they argue, was never ratified by the Chinese Central Government and, therefore, no validity in the Chinese eyes. This has again bedeviled Mr. Nehru's position. He refused to concede Tibet's sovereign status in the past and this naturally annuls the validity of the McMahon Line from the legal stand point. The Dalai Lama was, therefore, quite justified when he recently pointed out that India's claim that the McMahon Line was its frontier would become untenable if it did not recognize the sovereign status of Tibet. But, instead of admitting his own mistakes, Mr. Nehru preferred to warn the Dalai Lama not to indulge in controversial political statements!

Herein lies the main rub. Mr. Nehru realizes his dilemma and even openly admits it. But still he refuses to think things out to their logical conclusion. He is unable to resolve the dilemma as he is fettered by his past commitments which he cannot go back upon. He now realizes, though belatedly, that communist China is an imperialist power, but he would not side with the Tibetan people in their demand for independence. He admits that "in the final analysis, the Chinese have valued India's friendship only to a very low extent", but he still wants to salvage as much of it as possible from the wreck. "It is difficult to feel friendly", he confesses, "when our people have not been treated even courteously and when we receive communications from the Chinese Government which are singularly lacking even in ordinary politeness". He also admits that not much reliance can now be placed on the Chinese professions of friendship and peace, but he sees no alternative. "If there is a lack of faith and confidence", he asked, "then where are we?" He similarly sees that "gradually, step by step, Chinese policy has become more and more rigid". But again he is puzzled: "why I cannot say". He confesses his failure to fathom the meaning of the Chinese attitude and behaviour.

This is the root cause of Mr. Nehru's dilemma. He sees the Chinese giant threatening India in an "aggressive, violent and insulting manner", to use his own words, but he refuses to trace the mainsprings of the Chinese aggressive ambition. He still clings tenuously to his thesis that it is not communism as such, but rather Chinese imperialism and aggression that threaten India. "I would beg of this House", he pleaded in Parliament, "not to put this issue in the category of communism and anti-communism". He does not want to face up to the logic of events as it undermines his whole position of non-alignment and

neutralism. He, therefore, again tries to seek refuge in plausible excuses for Chinese action. India's stand on the recent events in Tibet and her grant of asylum to the Dalai Lama must have affected the Chinese mind, he now argues. "It is due to that and not the logic and reasonableness of the Chinese position in regard to our frontiers that they have taken up this rigid attitude". But this does not explain the Chinese border incursions in Ladakh and other areas which took place even before the outbreak of the recent Tibetan uprising. "There appears to be a lack of understanding or recognition in China", he stated, "of the revolution in India and to that perhaps is due not only some of their misunderstandings but many of their approaches to India". This is really the cause of the whole trouble. The Chinese and other communists would not recognize the revolution in India, until she is "liberated" and joins the so-called socialist camp. Till then the Indian Government, to them, is a bourgeois government dominated by Western imperialists. Their main aim, therefore, is to "liberate" India and install the local communists in power. This is the meaning of the rigid Chinese attitude towards India. By refusing to admit this, Mr. Nehru is only accentuating his dilemma.

MR. B. K. DESAI was Secretary of the Democratic Research Service, then publishers of *Freedom First*.

[*Freedom First* October 1959]



"Prayed through prayers"
The photo which raised the ire of the Chinese Consul



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The Roof Has Fallen

Piloo Mody

For the purpose of appeasing and currying favour with the Chinese, we have sold the Tibetan people to their Han conquerors, and presented to the world the ludicrous picture of sponsoring at the United Nations the cause of these communist aggressors.

The roof of the world has fallen, and the world goes on much the same – unconcerned, indifferent, unfettered. We remember reading vaguely that China invaded Tibet some nine years ago; we may recall some intellectual discussion about Indian protests to China – greatly confused by communist propaganda and intermittent visits of the Chinese Prime Minister Chou En-lai, with distant echoes of Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai. But time heals our indignation, and distance eases our conscience, and it becomes as remote as the price of cheese in China. Then one day we hear of the dramatic escape of the Dalai Lama. Our hearts warm up, and then cool, at his indifferent reception. The God king is put in deep freeze, and no one cares for the steady and silent flow of Tibetan refugees into India, except when one occasionally sees an old Tibetan heirloom, or a money purse at a curio shop, pawned before its sweat is dry, to buy a meal under our hospitality.

At the risk of being called a war monger – a term of abuse that comes very easily – I must state that there should be no compromise, where the lives of millions of people are peddled at international conference tables without any reference to them at all.

To procrastinate issues to avoid immediate trouble and unpleasantness is the bane of international relations. The British were primarily responsible for perpetuating the concept of Tibetan autonomy under Chinese suzerainty, long after the concept of suzerainty no longer applied in the context of relations between nations. Suzerainty is a rather vague idea of a country, recognizing as superior the head or King of another country. But it has no significance in the era of republics. If this is true, Tibet should have been an independent country since 1911. Perhaps the revolutionary government of China at the time would have felt browbeaten by the British, but certainly that situation was infinitely preferable to what has happened in Tibet today. However, it is not fair for us to sit in

judgement on the motives that inspire the foreign affairs of other countries. We must, however, each one of us, feel responsible for our own foreign affairs, conducted by our representative, the foreign affairs minister.

In this particular aspect, I am not very proud of the record of our government. For the purpose of appeasing and currying favour with the Chinese, we have sold the Tibetan people to their Han conquerors, and presented to the world the ludicrous picture of sponsoring at the United Nations the cause of these communist aggressors.

From 1947 to 1949, India lost a valuable opportunity to recognize Tibet as an independent country, and enhance our relations which had started since 1935. Instead we kept singing the old imperialist tune of autonomy and suzerainty. And we flew with sputnik haste to recognize the Chinese communists in January 1950.

This crude and savage recourse to political expediency, this indecent haste to recognize, aid and abet the violent, fascistic government of a country, was a negation of the most precious deals on which we fought our freedom.

Two days after we recognized the communists in China, they proclaimed the 'liberation' of Tibet. There ended all hopes of Tibetan autonomy. Any negotiations that they carried out with the Tibetans, or any assurances that they gave to friendly nations about Tibetan autonomy, were only eyewash and propaganda stalling for time. They invaded Tibet when a Tibetan mission was on its way to Peking to negotiate an agreement – highly reminiscent of the Ribentrop mission to Russian when Hitler invaded that country.

India's protest to Peking was answered by calling Tibet a 'domestic problem of China'. From hereon, Tibet was lost to China.

It is not claimed that India could have stemmed the events in Tibet, but it must be stated to our discredit that our subsequent behaviour was not worthy of our high ideals or good intentions. When in November 1950, Tibet complained to the United Nations about Chinese aggression, it was India that did not support it. In fact, we were instrumental in suppressing it, relying on the assurances of the Chinese Prime Minister. That we should rely on these assurances baffles our imagination and abuses our intellect. What is there so important, or so sacred, in preserving friendly relations with a country, whose political philosophy recognizes no friends and whose leaders have resorted to every barbaric means to acquire power?

In 1951 China annexed Tibet and in 1954, India and China signed an agreement about Tibet recognizing Tibet as the "Tibet region of China", incorporating for the first time the much talked about Panchsheel. The principles of Panchsheel – our fundamental approach to international relations, the international projection of our sainted philosophy of non-violence, the corner stone of our Foreign Policy, was laid by our shameful surrender of our sacred duties and obligations to the Tibetan People.

The cause of Tibetan independence has suffered at several hands throughout this century and reads like a story of lost opportunities.

The British could have recognized Tibet as a free country at any time between 1911 and 1947. The Tibetans could have established foreign legations at any time during the same period. The Indian Government could have pushed Tibetan independence between 1947 and 1949. Again in 1950, 1954 and 1959, our Government could have taken a stronger line of action on the autonomous position of Tibet. Instead, we first accepted Chinese suzerainty, then we accepted Chinese sovereignty, then we accepted Tibet being called the "Tibet area of China" and finally we have taken the stand that Tibet is an "internal affair of the Chinese". Let us hope that we do not some day start talking of the "Indian regions of China".

The basic fallacies in our thinking arise out of confusing political legalities with the desirability of socially accepted political norms, justifying the *mélange* with a readily adjustable conscience. On this basis, any crime against human nature can be justified – apartheid in South Africa, colonial empires, economic exploitation

of under-developed countries and communist domestic tyrannies.

In each case, the anxiety is to employ political expedients like the balance of power and the fear of conflict to maintain a status quo.

If we are to have peace in our time, let us have a just and fair peace. It is all very well for the great nations of this world to talk glibly of peace, pointing out the horrors of wars, after they have feathered their nests with colonies, satellites or economic empires. The conscienceless barter of nationalities and races of the so-called under-developed peoples of the world will weigh heavily on the 'civilised' conscience of the great powers. To rule out war without eradicating injustice is to ask half the people of the world to accept slavery.

Churchill was reluctant to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire in the interests of the British people. But in 1954 we in India have willingly presided over the colonization of Tibet against our own self-interest. Now we have a hostile, unreasonable, unpredictable enemy on our northern borders, and the independence of the Himalayan Kingdoms of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan are not worth the paper on which they have been proclaimed. History is likely to repeat itself, if we do not sit up and realize that the price of peace can become too high.

At this late stage, we should consider every means possible to bring about moral redress by a stimulation of world opinion through special conferences convened for the purpose, and actively sponsoring the issue at the United Nations. This procedure would be of particular benefit to the under-developed countries of Asia and Africa, who are still unaware of the means and methods of international communism.

The roof of the world has fallen to a ruthless communist aggressor. Let us take a simple lesson from our humble peasant – when his roof falls, he does not sit and watch, he immediately borrows help and money to put it right.

MR. PILOO MODY was a member of the Lok Sabha and President of the Swatantra Party.

[Freedom First April 1960]

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Help Needed - Indians of Character

Louella Lobo Prabhu

Politicians can live, ostentatiously, or modestly whatever happen to be their chosen lifestyle. But to see ex-playboys, whisky drinkers, and natty-dressers, pose as khadi-clad teetotalers ringed with an atmosphere of connubial bliss, is sheer hypocrisy. It will not wash with those who knew them in the pre-political avatar. And it places on them, the needless strain or pretence. A politician is required to be a decent, efficient man; not necessarily a candidate for elevation to the pantheon of saints.

A look through the matrimonial columns of our daily newspapers – the qualities men seek in their brides or vice versa – shows than an advertisement dwells openly on physical characteristics, property available and job (in a woman's advertisement no doubt a synonym for dowry). There is a reference to character and compatibility, perhaps, in one out of a hundred such advertisements. A frivolous opening, perhaps, to a serious subject. Yet in its own way, an illustration of the "value system" in which the mystic East is said to excel the materialistic West.

An Eastern Theoretician Before Machiavelli

This leads back to the value systems from which flow the mighty and clear stream of Western political thought. Chanakya, India's first political thinker, wrote of statecraft with a realistic eye on intrigue and the handling of opponents, almost as if his eyes could envisage the power politics of India today. His Western equivalent was Niccolo Machiavelli, who also wrote of the "treasons, stratagems and spoils" that should be practised by a leader to retain office. His model was Cesare Borgia, and his treatise was no doubt an apt formulation picked up from the political norms of the time.

The river of Western political thought, with a value-based emphasis on character, had indeed come a long way since its fresh and beautiful fountainhead, as enunciated by Plato in *The Dialogues* especially those which deal with the formation of 'Guardians' who will rule the State. There is a curious analogy here, between Plato and early Hinduism, for he also postulates a thesis which is somewhat like the Brahmanical justification for caste, the differentiation of functions in the body being made to correspond with their owner's proper tasks

in society. The head and neck, with which he equates the 'Guardians' corresponds to the rationale of Brahmanism; the fighting or working arms of the man to the military and trading classes (*Kshatriyas* and *Sudras*); the feet to the "helots" – the Greek version of our untouchables, who performed these menial but most necessary chores, without which, as Ayn Rand posited in *Atlas Shrugged*, society itself could come to a standstill. Indeed, the Pyramids of Egypt; the lesser known but grandiose monuments of the Incas, and possibly the great landmarks of Rome, were all built by slaves. Even Greece, the home of the world's first participatory democracy, excluded women and helots from the popular vote.

Character Arises in Participatory Polities

Nonetheless, it was the theory in Plato's *Republic*, and the practice of outstanding 'Guardians' like Pericles, which generally set the high moral tone characterizing Greek public life, together with the Aristotelian dictum, "nothing in excess", that in the Marathon Games, for example, the prize was no more than a laurel wreath, after the most strenuous of training and the most arduous of physical efforts. There does not seem to have been a great difference between the life-styles of the ruler, and the ruled. Two possible apocryphal stores of the time illustrate the value placed upon character: One philosopher, (somewhat like Lot in the Bible) combed the streets of Athens in broad daylight, seeking to find "a man of character". Another philosopher, habituated to ruminating in the bathtub, when visited by the Emperor Alexander, who asked if he wanted anything, merely demanded that the Emperor did not darken daylight filtering into his room.

Republican Rome did practise the austere Greek

beliefs in plain-living and high thinking. Imperial Rome deviated from them, and its decline came, not only because the empire straddled too vast an area for proper administration, but because the ruling coterie had become effete. Alaric, the Gothic leader, visiting Rome, and observing its wonderful buildings, and high life-style, muttered: "The thicker the grass, the more easily known!". In history, it has regularly happened that when society functions with a yawning gap between the rulers and ruled; when the rulers display little character, they are overthrown by newcomers, at that stage in their development, when the ruler and ruled function as comrades in arms, and not as classes in two different stratospheres. This comes through very clearly in a book and film version of *The Mongols*.

A tentative conclusion which may be derived from this historical background, is that some sort of national character seems to emerge, when the polity of nations is a participatory one. This is true, even when it is not fully but proportionately representative, as was the Athenian Agora, and Republican Rome, wherein only every free Roman citizen had a part in the decision-making process.

Character in Ancient India

About India, our early indications of her polity are fairly sketchy. Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, were city-States. But without extant writings, such as the Code of Hammurabi, their methods of governance are unknown. The incursion of the Aryans, might have brought in a rough and ready tribal system in the early stages. The early Vedas appear to indicate that women were neither excluded from learning, nor from the decision-making process. However, the progress to monarchy throws less light on the 'character' of the people. It is possible that their ethos and values reflected those of their kings. This is why the empires of Vikramaditya and Ashoka, like the Arthurian legends, remain golden ages, bordering more on the realm of fantasy, than reality. The writings of foreign travelers, Fa-Hien, Hiuen Tsang, later Ibn Batuta, Tavernier and others, survive as our best sources, not necessarily of imperial rule, but of the mores, manners and ethos of the common people, in the times when foreign travelers observed and commented upon them. On the whole, the collective impact of these writings, seems to show a fairly principled society, in which at least certain kings had a *noblesse oblige* concept, of their reciprocal duty to their subjects.

India Finds her National Identity

India itself, as an ethnic entity, surfaced only

when the polity had to meet an external threat, first from the Muslims, later, from the 'whiteskins' who came to trade, but stayed to conquer and rule. Early Muslim invasions, were essentially those of raiding parties, coming to loot and leave. Muslims became a part of India, when Babar elected to remain in India and founded the Mughal kingdom, which gave definitive shape to the multi-racial and multi-religious character of Mughal India. The rather amorphous picture of common citizens and their character took on more definite outlines with the Mutiny (now the 'First War of Indian Independence') in 1857. Whether under a Hindu or a Muslim ruler, subjects practising both religions rallied to fight their common enemy. Thereafter, the spread of British liberal thought, made available through Macaulay's "Minute on Education" brought to the forefront of national life, men of good education with a fairly affluent background and a commitment to the cause of nationalism. Gandhi was the catalyst who ignited the continuing struggle for Independence, constitutionally, if possible, and by methods like peaceful non-violent cooperation, whenever techniques were needed to change the political picture. The faceless Indian who braved lathis during the march to Dandi, and bullets in Jallianwala Bagh, was a person of character, arising from the fact that he was committed to a cause bigger than his self-interest and the needs of his family: the two mainsprings of human activity under normal conditions. That their leaders then, were people of substance who sacrificed wealth and public position to join the struggle, was a decisive factor in shaping the character of the average Indian then.

Did Independence Come Too Soon?

Gandhi had rightly envisaged that having won freedom, the Congress should not function as a political party but as a social service organization. The transition from self-sacrifice to self-interest, can be verified in many books, but comes through vividly on-screen, in Attenborough's '*Gandhi*'. It is only when Independence was in sight, that Hindu and Muslim leaders who had worked like brothers since Gandhi's days in Durban, suddenly decide that partition was necessary.

Gandhi did succeed in stopping fearful riots in Noakhali and, had he been given time, would have been able to win Independence for India as a single nation, notwithstanding the fact that at the Round Table Conferences, the British pointedly tried to distinguish between "Hindu India, Muslim India, and Princely India". Independent India did not think it impossible to persuade or compel the accession of "Princely India". Why then

did the leaders think they could not control common Muslims, when they felt perfectly competent to deal with Muslim rulers of big States, capable of resting accession with fair sized armies? In the very act of winning Independence, the first quality of Indian character which slipped, was secular tolerance between Hindus and Muslims. Their mutual relations since Mughal times were obviously reasonably good, as Muslims continued to remain in a minority, despite their pre-eminence as rulers, who could, if they chose, have made many more forced conversions. Recent writings on Aurangzeb – supposedly the arch Muslim fanatic – prove that even he was no majority-baiter, after all!

National Character Debased by the Cult of Personality

If secular tolerance was the first casualty of Independence, the second was the cult of personality. Compared with those who followed him, Nehru was a giant, and a democrat. However, even he allowed private friendships to over-ride clear public duty, as in the case of Kairon and Menon, where he dilly-dallied greatly about meting out the punishments they deserved. Even though such loyalty is an attractive quality in the life of a private man, the honest public man being in the position of Plato's Guardian is one who must pay the price of his office, by having no personal friends, relations, or emotional attachments, interfere with his public duties.

It was also this "great democrat" who first introduced the concept of a hereditary dynasty in a democratic set-up via the Kamaraj Plan. The brief interlude provided by Shastri and the victors of 1977 have since proved an aberration in the line of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty. Nehru did not live to see the havoc his daughter would wreak on democratic institutions; damage much greater than the depredations by Mohammed of Ghazni on the Somnath temple. She destroyed something infinitely more valuable, every tradition of the Westminster model her father had adopted; and the Constitution which was the loving compilation of experts, incorporating the best in the Constitution of other lands.

The Nemesis of Nepotism

Sanjay Gandhi was responsible for her defeat in 1977, and it is not impossible, that it was Rajiv's advice on Operation Bluestar, which may have caused her death. Even Morarji Desai, supposedly the most righteous and moral of men, could not control the questionable financial transactions of his son Kanti. Jagjivan Ram's

political career declined from an eclipse brought about by the well-photographed libido of his son. Ramakrishna Hegde, darling of the national media, has also faced many problems arising from his son's allegedly shady business dealings – as yet unproved – but certainly generators of bad publicity, for a man projecting himself as the national alternative to the Prime Minister.

Plato was right, that the guardians of the State should cut off family ties – at least in the Indian context to the extent that married daughters attaining the age of majority and sons earning an independent livelihood, do not operate from the official residence of a political functionary. Indian character has suffered, because these bad examples at the top go all the way to the bottom. It is perceived that "anything goes" provided the misdeed is matched by muscle and financial or political clout. It is not surprising, that no parent rests idle in seeking influence from any possible source, to procure some prestigious appointment, or educational seat for a son or daughter minus the necessary qualifications. Nepotism is accepted as a fact of life. The honest man in government is perceived as one who takes under-the-table money, but does deliver the goods. Complaints of corruption only surface when the person allegedly taking the money fails to do the promised job. Let it be mentioned here that the bribe-giver is no less guilty than the bribe-taker, and if he is defrauded he deserves what he gets. If people as a whole resisted a bribe demand for legitimate work done by a government official, and do not as a class suborn officials from whom they want illegal favours, the atmosphere in government offices and legislatures would be cleansed with a breath of fresh air.

Elections – The Source of Corruption

However, since we get the government we deserve, the pollution in public life starts with the selection of electoral candidates, many with criminal records (e.g. Mr. Chandrashekar's bosom pal, a member of the Bihar legislature, known by popular repute as a 'Coal-Mafia Don', who came from prison, under heavy police-guard, to cast his vote in the recent Rajya Sabha Poll!). The second cause of pollution in national character, arising from a fiction of the electoral process, is the non-accountability for huge sums of money spent. Even the official maximum permissible limits of expenditure, under the law, are such that no honest man could afford them. Unofficial expenditure by parties and candidates can only come from those who finance parties and candidates, much in excess of the pitiful sums permitted by law. Obviously, this is a *quid pro*

quo – Favours done, for favours to be received. The only difference is, that in the Congress-I at any rate, kickbacks on foreign deals have obviated the need to tap local entrepreneurs for hefty handouts.

The perception that a legislator can be “bought” before or after an election arises from the enormous patronage wielded by government, not only in the matter of permits and licences, but virtually any other appointment, in the ever-rising tally of activities taken over by government. Posts in government service command a high premium, even when salaries were not so generously enhanced as they are today. This was both because government service offered status and security, as also patronage. Security may now be less secure than before – with transfers used by ministers as an important weapon in the “spoils” system. Nevertheless, a bad transfer, not dismissal or suspension, is the usual penalty of an office who does not shirk the constitutional duty of “aid and advice” in writing, to the minister concerned.

General Decline in Public Institutions

If national character has fallen in politics, it has fallen in other spheres of public life which are meant to prove safety valves against the excesses of the Legislature and the Executive. It is no doubt a happy thing that we have not sunk to the level of a Communist or Banana Dictatorship, in having a totally controlled media. However, Radio and the increasingly important sector of T.V. are State-controlled, and so directed, as to intensify the culture of sycophancy-for-survival, which is a highlight of our national character. Even the Press, can be purchased by a combination of carrot-and-stick measures, whose application can often be gauged, by the flipflops done by papers and editors, about personalities and issues. Reading pre and post Emergency writings by famous journalists is an amusing experience of total *volte face*, except that the issue is too grave and too sad. Reading newspapers reporting on a particular event is also an illuminating exercise. One ‘daily’, can find a political meeting overcrowded, and another one, find it thin. It is generally an accepted dictum that reporting should be factual, and only the editorial page may properly present a point of view. These days, however, we have a feature called news-analysis in which presumably the paper’s star columnist, mixes both factual news and comments blatantly based on the paper’s particular slant.

The upper echelons of the Judiciary, like the Press (with all its defects) do represent a last outpost of principled persons committed to impartial justice.

These are definitely and lawfully in the ranks of the few judges surviving, from before Mrs. Indira Gandhi’s time. With honourable exceptions of course – Justice Lentin readily comes to mind. We have seen the spectacle of Supreme Court judges singing paens of praise to the Prime Minister, along with a humble floral offering at an airport lineup. We can see Courts notoriously dilatory in certain matters while in others act with lightening speed as in the N.T. Rama Rao case – whatever the misdemeanours he may or may not have committed. But what has happened to the enquiries against Ajitabh Bachchan?

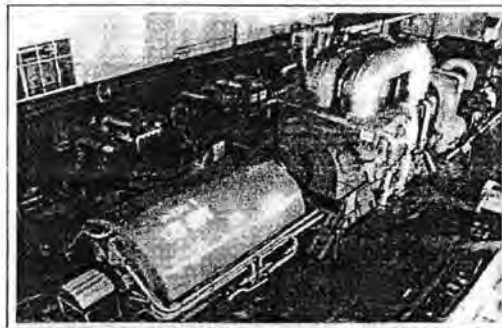
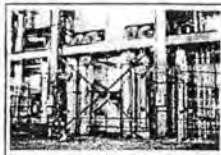
High Living And Low Thinking

Cynicism and the feeling anything goes and the embrace of a vulgar consumer culture is also a fast developing national disease. It was amusing to hear the Prime Minister criticize very properly the populist schemes of bankrupt State governments unable to finance even their basic requirement of administration and development. However, Mr. Gandhi has never come out against the loan *melas* organized by his Minister which serve as handouts chiefly for his party and its supporters. A two hour stopover by the Prime Minister in a single village cost the Exchequer Rs.2 crores and his travel extravaganza would shame even the U.S. President and the Sultan of Brunei! No one requires politicians to live perfectly Gandhian lives. They need modest affluence and comfort to do their work, as they are only men, not saints. But one dis-service Gandhi has done, was to set up a model of conduct (pretty close to that of Plato’s Guardians) which may not be necessary, in India after Independence. However, trapped by the image of Gandhism which is always in the collective sub-conscious, most politicians suffer from split-personalities. They sport views and a life style which they think will satisfy the public, while privately indulging in vulgar consumerism, womanizing, and every other vice to suit themselves if they can do so, without being found out. This leads to a kind of schizophrenia. Politicians can live, ostentatiously, or modestly whatever happen to be their chosen lifestyle – if that is or was their usual *modus vivendi*. But to see ex-playboys, whisky drinkers, and natty dressers, pose as Khadi clad teetotalers ringed with an atmosphere of connubial bliss, is sheer hypocrisy. It will not wash, with those who knew them in the pre-political-office *avatar*. And it places on them, the needless strain of pretence. A politician is required to be a decent, efficient man. Not necessarily a candidate for elevation to the pantheon of saints.

MS. LOUELLA LOBO PRABHU is Associate Editor of *Insight*.

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Proximates :

Water	5.2 g
Energy	566 kcal
Protein	18.22 g
Total lipid (fat)	46.92 g
Ash	2.54 g

Minerals :

Calcium Ca	37 mg
Iron, Fe	6.68 mg
Magnesium Mg	292 mg
Phosphorus, P	593 mg
Potassium, K	660 mg
Sodium, Na	12 mg
Zinc, Zn	5.78 mg
Copper, Cu	2.195 mg
Manganese, Mn	1.655 mg
Selenium, Se	19.9 mg

Vitamins :

Vitamin C,	0.5 mg
Total ascorbic acid	
Thiamin	0.423 mg
Riboflavin	0.058 mg
Niacin	1.062 mg
Pantothenic acid	0.864 mg
Vitamin B-6	0.417 mg
Folate	25 mcg
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Methionine	0.362 g
Cystine	0.393 g
Phenylalanine	0.951 g
Tyrosine	0.508 g
Valine	1.094 g
Arginine	2.123 g
Histidine	0.456 g
Alanine	0.837 g
Aspartic acid	1.795 g
Glutamic acid	4.506 g
Glycine	0.937 g
Proline	0.812 g
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