

freedom first

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HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

M. R. Masani

NOW that the official celebrations on August 15, with all their pomp and glitter, have passed and the crowds that came to see the lights have gone home it should be possible for thinking people to take a little time off to consider just what it was that was being celebrated.

One does not, of course, have to go to the other extreme and agree with Mr. E. M. S. Namboodiripad who explained his refusal to join in observing the occasion by alleging that "these celebrations sought to give official recognition to the betrayal perpetrated by new selfish men who rose to power in the name of untold sacrifices undergone by thousands of martyrs and lakhs of freedom fighters" in order to appreciate the scepticism with which a large number of people have watched what Djilas would describe as the "New Class" of exploiters in New Delhi rejoicing on their good fortune and their opportunities.

All India Radio, as was to be expected, did its best but its behaviour, characteristic of a Government monopoly, showed up the current limitations on freedom of expression even on the part of the Founding Fathers of the Republic and Constitution. Mr. H. V. Kamath, a Socialist leader and himself a former member of the Indian Civil Service, has told of his own "happy anniversary" experience in a letter to the Press. When he was approached by All India Radio to answer three questions put to him as one who was present as a Member of the Constituent Assembly in the Central Hall of Parliament on 14th August, 1947, he agreed to do so on condition that his replies were not edited or tampered with. When he was told a little later that Delhi was not in a position to give any such assurance, he on his part regretted his inability to cooperate, adding that he preferred "no talk" to a "doctored" one. Mr. Kamath has, with a dry sense of humour, asked for two cheers for "the right vouchsafed to you, me and every other citizen by the Central Government to speak freely on A.I.R., subject only to a minor restriction—its prior approval!"

My own experience as another of the midwives of

our Constitution was much less painful and even a little amusing. On 14th June, I was approached by All India Radio in Bombay to answer the same questions which had been put to Mr. Kamath. I was told that my answers should take about ten minutes. When sending in my answers a day prior to their recording I wrote on 11th July to A.I.R. and stipulated that I expected that these answers would be broadcast in the same terms as they were given without any deletions to which I was not a party in advance. As it happened, the recording only took seven minutes. A few days later, A.I.R. Bombay were informed by Delhi that since time would not permit my comments being given seven minutes, A.I.R. Delhi would decide what part of my answers they would relay.

Being an old hand at this game, I promptly declined to anything of mine being broadcast on these terms, but asked Bombay to inform Delhi that I was quite prepared for as short a say being given to me as was found necessary so long as the choice of the extracts would be mine.

Finally, I was asked to choose 150 words—around one and a half minutes! This I did and I concede

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gratefully that these words were faithfully relayed. Jai Hind!

The local officials of A.I.R. only did their duty, but why, in the first instance, were they and I asked for a ten minute recording? Was it the intention of Delhi to pick and choose what should be relayed out of what Mr. Kamath or I had to say?

The reader of *Freedom First* will, however, be more privileged than the listeners of A.I.R. Below, he will find the full text of A.I.R.'s questions and my replies, with what was actually relayed by A.I.R. shown in italics.

The reader will no doubt enjoy the irony of the episode which resulted in my words as broadcast being much more severe an indictment of our Government's failures during the last twenty-five years than I had originally intended.

The Editor's Answers to AIR Questions

Q. What greatness did you envisage for free India and what hopes and dreams did you have on that midnight of 14th August, 1947, when Jawaharlal Nehru talked of a 'Tryst with Destiny'? Have any of your dreams been realised?

A. *Naturally, when power was transferred to Indian hands on 14th August, 1947, we dreamt all kind of dreams about how, now that we were masters in our own homes, we would do great things for our country. Among those objectives were, undoubtedly, the lessening of poverty, and putting to work of the large number of unemployed in the country, and stopping the rising prices and cost of living which the War years had marked.*

In my little book, *Our India*, published in 1940, and during my visit to prison in 1942 in *Quit India* days, I had dreamt my own dreams about the manner in which we would harness the manpower, the good earth and the wonderful underground material resources which this country possesses and how we would make our country something to be proud of.

Dreams Frustrated?

Can there be any doubt that almost all these dreams have been frustrated? Poverty today in India is not less than it was when the British left in so far as some 30 or 40 per cent of the people are concerned. Inequalities and disparities in the standards of life of various sections have widened as a result of following what are described as 'socialist' policies. In the last ten years, galloping inflation has resulted in sharply rising prices and increasing misery for the people. We seem to have missed our 'tryst with destiny'.

Indeed, it would be honest to confess that many poor people, who have been the hardest hit, even feel that things were not so bad when the British were

here. What a humiliating and galling thought this is!

As Rajaji has put it, this is the Silver Jubilee of the achievement of Indian and Pakistani freedom but without jubilation in either camp.

Q. What stands out most vividly in your memory of that midnight ceremony in the Central Hall of Parliament?

A. I was present at the midnight ceremony at the Central Hall of Parliament but I must confess even then there was no great rejoicing or exultation in my heart. This was because I was opposed to our securing Independence at the price of the unity of the country. Gandhiji was opposed to the transfer of power being accepted at the cost of the country being divided into two new States of India and Pakistan. I happened to share that view. I felt it would have been better if the British were to remain in power for two or three years longer so that the matter could be thrashed out and India could be free and united. I was, therefore, not very happy at the manner in which Lord Mountbatten persuaded Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel on the one hand and Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan on the other to accept partition and to allow Britain to withdraw at such short notice. The massacres that took place on both sides of the border as a result of this hasty withdrawal strengthened my regret at what had happened.

But Where Was Gandhiji?

The other thing that stands out vividly in my memory of this historic occasion is the absence from the scene of Mahatma Gandhi who should naturally have been there and in the centre of the picture. The fact that he was away in Bengal trying to restore communal harmony was itself an indication to me that this was not something about which one could sincerely rejoice.

Q. What in your opinion is the greatest achievement of our country, during its first twenty-five years of freedom?

A. It is difficult to pick out one particular achievement as being the greatest of all during the last twenty-five years. I would like to pick out two of them. The first is the maintenance of the democratic dialogue and the Rule of Law. The credit for this must undoubtedly go to Jawaharlal Nehru, who resisted the temptation to touch the Constitution and smash whatever little Opposition there was to him. I should know, because I had opposed Jawaharlal Nehru's domestic and foreign policies right from 1950 onwards and I can testify to the fact that Jawaharlal Nehru desisted from resorting to police power or dictatorial methods to fight his opponents. It is a tribute to him that right up to this day the democratic dialogue has proceeded and the Courts of Law are respected. There are threats to both these embodied in the recently enacted 24th and 25th

Between You & Me and The Lamp Post



Swadeshi Curtain

SLOWLY but surely, a curtain is sought to be lowered on India's contacts with the world at large—or at least with that part of it which does not enjoy the blessings of communism.

To the 'P' form, exchange restrictions on travel, the barring of the import of American films, the denial of visas to a large number of students and research scholars from the U.S.A. against which even the *New York Times* has editorially registered its protest, and the threatened Bill to keep out "foreign money" except of course what flows in to the "comrades" from Russia and Eastern European countries, is now to be added one more barrier to intellectual cooperation and contact.

A recent PTI message from Delhi announces that "the Union Government is seriously thinking of withdrawing from the Berne Convention and the Universal Copyright Convention." It is to be hoped that there is no sound basis for this alarming report. If true, it means that India will no longer respect the rights of authors in other parts of the world to earn royalties on their literary works and that Indian publishers and booksellers can print these authors' works without so much as a "by your leave."

Does our government really wish to sanction such piracy? Normally, we would have discounted such a

report but after the Union Government's own acts of highway robbery in regard to the rights of the shareholders of the General Insurance companies and the India Iron & Steel Company and its proclaimed desire to expropriate small farmers in respect of their "surplus" lands over the ceilings they propose to lower, can one any longer treat such a report lightly? It is to be hoped that Indian authors, the All-India PEN Centre, the Indian Committee For Cultural Freedom and other organisations which stand for the rights of authors and for international cooperation will raise their voices in protest.

The Soviet Spiv

LAST month, we published an article on "Corruption In The Soviet Union", a phenomenon well-known to students of Soviet affairs about which surprisingly little has appeared in the columns of the Indian press.

We are happy, therefore, to note an exception during

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Amendments to the Constitution, which seem to me to strike at the Fundamental Rights of the Citizen and the supremacy of the judiciary. There are similar threats to the freedom of the press which, it is hoped, will also be resisted.

The second great achievement of the last quarter of a century is the maintenance of what I would describe as the non-denominational character of our national life which is often wrongly described as 'secular democracy'. There is nothing secular about us. We are a deeply religious people—whatever religion we may profess. Secularism is anti-religious and to be deprecated. But we have managed to keep alive the spirit of coexistence between people of different religions, races and linguistic minorities. By and large, the Minorities have been given security and an opportunity to play their part in the development of the country. For this achievement also we should be happy.

IN THIS ISSUE

The editor tells of the fun and games he had with All India Radio, appropriately enough, over the celebration of the 25th anniversary of our Independence. His balance sheet of the past 25 years which AIR could not find the time to relay is made available to readers of *Freedom First*.

A. G. Noorani has some revealing things to say about the changes in Aligarh University and the way in which Dr. A. J. Faridi found himself holding the baby deposited in his arms by our smart Prime Minister.

Geeta Doctor reviews student journals.

F. A. Mechery, a professor of political science and a Keralite, points out how the sound and fury caused by the crisis in higher education in Kerala, now partly resolved, confuses the real issues at stake.

The problem of using English in the Indian theatre is discussed by Zarin Minocher-Homji, who directed "Silence, the Court is in Session" (*Freedom First* 236 January)

THE HARD PRESSED STUDENTS

Geeta Doctor

A LONG with Cancer cures, air pollution and the final phase of the war in Viet Nam, there is no topic so dear to the heart of Sunday paper editors as 'The Student Problem'. Almost everyone seems to have something to say on the subject except the person most concerned, the student himself. One begins to wonder whether the species has finally regressed into a state of noble savage capable of expressing itself only in barbaric howls and primitive assaults on the authority or whether there does exist somewhere an intelligent but mute minority capable of but not being able to express its opinion.

In 1971, Bombay University students had a sit-in to protest that they were not allowed the freedom of speech. Of course it is ironic to note that this upheaval which was hailed as the first step in a new era of student activism, should have been inspired more by the unsatisfactory dimensions of the samosas in the Xavier's College canteen rather than by any newly awakened revolutionary insight. Great events it would seem have small beginnings. The happenings of 1970-71 have only now taken shape in the form of a new paper which calls itself, *The Movement*. Describing itself as 'a student operated enterprise' the first issue of *Movement* is filled with enough sense of direction and purpose to make one hope that at last a student maga-

zine has emerged which in both form and content is far ahead of the normal run of such ventures.

In the first place it is rare enough to come across college magazines run entirely by students. Whether this is a result of that debilitating ailment known as apathy which is said to afflict a majority of students or whether this is because the authorities concerned are unwilling to allow their skeletons to be displayed for the entertainment of the general public, is a debatable matter. The fact remains that few colleges have student magazines at all and those that do make certain that these do not become a source of embarrassment to the Establishment.

Not being affiliated to any one college, *Movement* does not suffer from these inhibitions. In the first issue a definite attempt has been made to focus on the problems of Bombay University as a whole and to represent the views of the student community in regard to matters both educational and social as they affect them. Even while raising a number of provocative issues the monthly publication has restrained itself from taking a They -vs- Us attitude which has contributed greatly in making their criticism seem fully justified and constructive. Such an attitude one would imagine is indispensable if there is ever to be a rapprochement between the university authorities and the

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the last month in the form of a well documented article published by the *Economic Times* on July 26 entitled "The Problem of 'Tolkachi'", who turns out to be none else but our familiar friend the British spiv or his Indian counterpart, the black-marketeer and the pedlar of licences, permits and quotas.

The writer in the *Economic Times* quotes *Pravda*, which has recently taken note of the important role played by the "fixer" without whom the planned economy obviously cannot function. *Pravda* incidentally complains that "their methods have become more and more sophisticated."

And, pray, why not? Are the Russian 'tolkachis' not entitled to resort to imitation, that sincerest form of flattery, of a regime which shows its own "sophistication" by sending dissidents not to prisons but to lunatic asylums?

Charu Follows Nagarwala

"SHOT while trying to escape" is the traditional alibi of the police and jail authorities throughout

the world, particularly in authoritarian regimes, when prisoners die in custody in somewhat mysterious circumstances. Are we in India now evolving our own *swadeshi* formula by attributing such providential deaths to heart failure?

This question arises by reason of the death of the Naxalite leader, Charu Mazumdar, following on the passing away not so long ago of Mr. Nagarwala. The story of the mystifying manner in which the Bengal authorities sought for several hours to keep Mazumdar's death 'hush-hush' has been told in some detail in the Calcutta press.

One does not have to agree with the Bihar Socialist leader, Mr. Karpoori Thakur's *ex-parte* judgement that the Naxalite leader "was murdered." There is, however, enough in the circumstances to justify an independent inquiry demanded by Mr. E. M. S. Namboodiripad and Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, such as was unfortunately denied in the case of Mr. Nagarwala.

student community both of whom should realize that since they cannot do without each other the best thing would be to tackle their problems on a basis of mutual respect.

In spite of seeking to represent the views of the entire student community from the vantage points of different colleges, *Movement* does not quite overcome a distinctly Xavierite bias, which is not surprising since both the editors are from that institution. One cannot also help getting the feeling that Managing Editor Aspi Chinoy who master minded the events of '70-71 is inclined to date anything of importance from that period onwards, everything else having occurred in the dark ages B.C. (Before Chinoy). Apart from this one can only congratulate the editors on having made their first issue thought provoking yet lively, with an excellent get-up and good printing. The humour with its school boyish pre-occupation with 'cloakrooms' and the picture of a youth grimacing at the thought of eating 'muck' may not be of the most sophisticated kind, but then tastes do vary.

'Literary Menu'

It is not entirely accidental that one of the first demands that *Movement* makes should be for every college to have a student magazine free of censorship. Not all student papers have had to suffer the fate that befell the first Elphinstonian effort at producing an independent paper, though most do appear to be afflicted by a schizoid quality in their anxiety to make their views acceptable to both the students and the authorities. Most papers seem unable to decide whether they ought to instruct or entertain, and no better examples of this dilemma can be provided than by the college magazines of Sophia College and Elphinstone, *The Sophiascope* and *The Elph* respectively.

The Sophiascope goes in for clean healthy fun of the type suitable for nicely bred Convent girls. At the age of eight or nine one could imagine such angelic creatures giggling immoderately at some of the jokes in *Sophiascope*, as for example the 'Literary Menu' which featured 'Petrarchian Rice Mould' washed down with 'Shakespeare Scotch Whisky'. Since however Sophia girls are considerably older and definitely not so naive one wonders how they react to their magazine. Perhaps its best quality is that it does not pretend to be anything other than what it tries to be, a magazine that reports on all the activities of the college with genuine pride and enthusiasm liberally laced with hip hip hoorays and the sort of contentment that little Jack Horner felt when he pulled out his plum.

Like *Sophiascope*, *Elph* is a cyclostyled paper which inevitably means that its readers will have to put up

with all the inconveniences inherent in that media, of sketches that are sketchy to the point of obscurity, of lines that have a tendency to meander completely out of sight and thick yellowish sheets that have been hastily stapled together. Probably the only consolation that the editors, who are forced to function within these limitations, can have is that the students are so starved for reading material that they will buy anything.



This proved to be the most common reason for buying a paper like *Elph* which in its anxiety to preserve an elevated tone affects such a pompous manner that even its editors have found it difficult to continue after three issues. It is surprising how almost all the writers in that magazine manage to adopt a circumlocutory style which make their articles extremely long and completely unreadable. This may be just as well since the editorial policy believes in adhering to some selected theme such as 'Education' or 'Religion' in each issue, which only means that the contributors have to find devious ways of saying the same thing. In the issue on education for example, one article demands for a "revaluation of the educational structure keeping in mind the needs of a backward economy such as India's," while the next proposes to conduct an "inquiry into the nature of the relationship between the educational system and the socio-economic whole" and so it goes on in the same dreary fashion, generously filled with quotations from Socrates, St Exupéry, Marx and other notables who can always be counted

upon to give an intellectual flip to the most mundane topic. Indeed originality does not seem to be the strong point of the contributors to *Elph*, for not only are there strong rumours that some of the articles have been lifted out of foreign magazines, but even the impassioned poems that are interspersed between the heavy pieces have a borrowed sound about them.

Probably the only encouraging factor about *Elph* is that it exists at all in view of the fate suffered by its predecessor in the field, the prophetically named *Experiment* which blew up in its first attempt, giving its authors' initiative a crippling blow and a sudden and uneasy notoriety. Started by a quartet of brash young inter-arts students, *Experiment* with its breezy promise to be a monthly discovery of 'Life and love beyond the crumbling walls of the Elphinstone' meant to be read by 'as many students as possible' could not have had a more different aim than that of *Elph* which sternly reminds its readers not to 'confuse democracy with the service of the majority' and thus indulge in any frivolities.

Unfortunately for the editors of *Experiment*, the college authorities who had assented to the idea of a college magazine in a half-hearted manner while the first issue was being written, edited and cyclostyled entirely at the initiative of the four writers, professed to be profoundly shocked when faced by the results

of their labour. *Experiment* contained among other things a short story on abortion, a poem with references to homosexuality and some mildly dubious jokes against the Establishment. *Experiment*, it was declared, contained the seeds of depravity! It was unthinkable that such a magazine should be allowed to exist and rumours were that there would be a public burning of all the copies!

Even in retrospect, the opposition to and the summary extinction of the paper seems unjust and totally unnecessary. It would be hypocritical to pretend that students have never come across words like abortion or homosexuality when these are the most common topics for discussion in almost every book or periodical. It is surely not a crime for a student magazine to cater to student interests even if these do not always coincide with the views of the Establishment. At any rate in the case of *Experiment*, it would have been far wiser to moderate the enthusiasm of the students rather than suppress it altogether. As it is with the only too well known burdens of the educational system, there are few avenues along which a student can express himself, and unless the authorities are realistic enough to provide him with some outlets, it is quite likely that they will only succeed in producing a future generation of morons.



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THE P.M., Dr. FARIDI & ALIGARH

A. G. Noorani

THE Aligarh Muslim University (Amendment) Act, 1972, is generally discussed from three aspects—the constitutional, the legal-cum-administrative, and the political. Is the University an educational institution established by the Muslim minority and, therefore, entitled to the fundamental right to autonomous administration, as embodied in Article 30 of the Constitution? How does the Act affect the University's autonomy? Last, but not least, there is the political aspect—the treatment of the Muslim minority by the State.

Prof. J. G. Tiwari has made an extremely able contribution to the debate in the March-June 1972 issue of his journal *Indian Communist* (Journal of Research in Indian Communist Affairs Rs. 1.25). He is also the Journal's editor (2/40, Janakpuri, Marris Road, Aligarh). Prof. Tiwari does not discuss the constitutional aspect. But his is one of the most detailed analysis of the Act that has appeared and he discusses the political aspect from a new angle which is summed up in the title of this particular issue of the Journal—"Communists Take Over Aligarh Muslim University."

The Act, he writes, "gives a new and a very significant turn to that conflict which, since the early fifties, has been raging between Communists led among others by the present Education Minister on the one hand, and, on the other, anti-Communist Islamic forces with a slight admixture of liberal democratic elements".

After giving a brief resume of Aligarh's recent history, he refers to the tragedy of 1965 when the assault on the Vice-Chancellor was exploited by Uncle Tom Chagla to suspend the University's Constitution and virtually take over its administration. "After a short spell of rule by an I.C.S. man from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under Nehru, the Vice-Chancellorship passed on to Dr. Alim, one of the oldest associates of the C.P.I. and the founder of the communist cell in the university. With this, events moved fast. Communists began to have major say in appointments particularly in the newly set-up departments and institutions such as the medical college; visits from the Russian Embassy became frequent, meetings began to be arranged for them in Kennedy Hall, an American gift; visits of Communist teachers to the Soviet Union became more frequent; a Communist-led student union, the Student Federation, started holding meetings openly in university theatres and, in the name of social services, centres for leftist propaganda were set up in the town with the collaboration of non-university CPI cadres. On the other hand, teachers belonging to the opposite camp, though numerically much larger, felt suffocated and talked in whispers about commu-

nist aggrandisement in the campus. This simmering discontent very often crystallized itself into a demand for restoration of democracy on the campus. Suffice it to say that the Communists could make little headway in Aligarh. The "new wave" of collaboration with the Congress suited them. With the appointment of a "leftist" like Dr. Nurul Husain as Education Minister, their job became easy.

Whose Baby?

The Amendment Act is his baby. The Muslims denounce it as an infringement of their rights as a minority. But men like Mr. Prem Bhasin and Prof. Tiwari do well to draw attention to its other undemocratic aspects. Prof. Tiwari sums up the total effect of the Act: "Briefly speaking the position is like this: Out of 230 members there is not a single elected representative of the staff or students. Only ten members are elected. Only 31 teachers find place in these bodies by virtue of seniority, 15 in Court, 15 in the Academic Council and one in the Executive Council, which alone out of the three matters. As against this, there are 90 members, nominated by exercise of the unbridled discretionary powers of either the Vice-Chancellor or Executive Council, his puppet organisation. Fourteen of these are in the Executive Council, 53 in the Academic Council and 33 in the Court. From this brief analytical survey emerges the fact that in the functioning of the newly constituted university nothing important would take place without the discretion of an individual who himself is a nominee of the Ministry of Education. He is the Vice-Chancellor, a virtual dictator whose unbounded and unbridled discretion would sway all over the campus. Thus whatever democracy existed in the university prior to the present Act has been butchered with a ruthlessness characteristic of highly undemocratic regimes".

Thus what the Communists could not secure at the campus of Aligarh itself, they won in the corridors of power in New Delhi. But the issue is not confined to Aligarh. Witness, Delhi University. Prof. Tiwari trenchantly criticizes the Muslims for their "infantile political perception" in allowing themselves to be fooled by the false promise of respect for minority educational institutions embodied in the manifesto of the Congress(R).

The Muslims are culpable on another and graver score. They treated Aligarh's future as an exclusively Muslim affair, ignoring the fact that its survival as a Muslim University is a matter of concern to many, many non-Muslims. Thus, they parleyed with the

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rulers, supported them, and neglected the non-Muslim intelligentsia.

Double Cross

The Government of India's breach of faith is known; but, thanks to the inefficiency and archaic publicity methods of the Muslim politicians, few know the gravity of the breach, the enormity of Delhi's betrayal. Contrast the publicity which some smaller bodies are able to get to sell their concoctions. Only a couple of dailies published the Muslim Majlis leader, Dr. A. J. Faridi's press statement of July 4 and he has cared little to publicise his catalogue of assurances, which lies at the heart of the matter. The significance of the breach of these many assurances is of wider significance than even the problem of Aligarh. It touches the very vitals of our public life. It brings out the amoral atmosphere of today. I make no apology for quoting the tabulations of the Prime Minister's assurances before the 1971 Lok Sabha elections which Dr. Faridi has set out in his statement:

"A Summary of our Pre-election talks with the leaders of the Congress Party, including Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi is given below. A detailed note was sent to Mr. D. P. Misra and through him to the P.M. on April 7th, 1972. Mr. Misra acknowledged the receipt through a mutual friend, but no receipt has been received from the Prime Minister's office. Mr. Misra has not so far denied any of the facts given below. Moreover in my Presidential address of May 6th, 1972, I reiterated the assurances given to me by the Con-

gress leaders. Copies of this document were sent to all concerned. None of the facts mentioned therein have been contradicted by any Congressman.

"I give below a datewise summary of the talks. *December 30, 1970:* At 6 a.m. I had talks with Mr. Chandra Jit Yadav M.P. and Mr. Kedar Nath M.P., lasting about two hours at Meena Bagh, New Delhi. They asked me for the exact terms on which Muslim Majlis would support the Congress(R) at the 1971 Lok Sabha Elections. After the discussion an eight point programme was agreed, which was typed and given to Mr. Chandra Jit Yadav who promised to deliver it to the P.M., Mr. U. S. Dixit and to Mr. D. P. Misra. It contained items regarding (1) the status of Urdu, (2) Economic issues concerning Muslims, (3) Constitution of Minority Councils, (4) Aligarh Muslim University, (5) School text books, (6) Parliamentary constituencies, (7) Rajya Sabha elections and (8) certain miscellaneous items. *December 31, 1971:* At the residence of Mr. D. P. Misra, 11, Race Course, New Delhi. Mr. D. P. Misra said that he agreed with each one of the points, but asked me to keep them confidential for the time being and also promised to speak to the P.M. about them. *January 3, 1971:* Mr. D. P. Misra sent a messenger to Lucknow to ask me to go over to Delhi to talk with the P.M. and therefore I went there. *January 4th, 1971:* At 10 a.m. Mrs. Subhadra Joshi came to see me and I gave her a copy of the above-mentioned programme. At 1.00 p.m. the Prime Minister arrived at the residence of Mr. D. P. Misra. She had my 8 point programme in her hand

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bag. She brought the paper out and we discussed each point in detail. She suggested another meeting as I had requested Mr. D. P. Misra to include as many items as was possible in the election Manifesto.

"January 15th, 1971: Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed Sahab, Mufti Atiqur Rahman and Mr. Younus Saleem came to Lucknow and brought with them a copy of the draft Congress Manifesto. At 6 p.m. I went to Bakshi Sahab's room at Carlton Hotel and immediately after reading it I rejected the draft. Fresh three points on which all of us agreed were added, typed and handed to Bakshi Sahab. They left for Delhi the same night.

"January 22, 1971: 9 a.m. at the residence of Sardar Jogendra Singh M.P. (Electric Lane). Sri H. N. Bahuguna and myself discussed the current affairs. 10 p.m. Mr. Bahuguna came to take me to the Prime Minister's residence for final talks which lasted for about 45 minutes. Mr. H. N. Bahuguna and Mr. U. S. Dixit sat outside the room. It was mutually agreed to add the following paragraphs in the Congress Election Manifesto, and Mr. Bahuguna wrote them down: (Paras 51 to 58 are set out of which these two are pertinent).

54. Secularism is one of the basic tenets of our Constitution. In accordance with this Constitutional imperative the Congress will strive to ensure that all minorities have full freedom to establish, manage and run educational and other institutions.
55. The Congress will strive to ensure the democratic functioning and protect the autonomous character of educational institutions including those established at the instance of and for the benefit of minorities.

The P.M. specifically stated that paras 54 and 55 referred to Aligarh Muslim University. At the P.M.'s suggestion the name of A.M.U. was not mentioned as that would excite the opponents and if the name of one minority institution was mentioned it would be unfair to delete the others viz. Christian College etc. The words 'injustice to Urdu' were also added in paragraphs 53 and 56. The P.M. also remarked that there would be no difficulty in establishing an Urdu University in U.P. The formation of Minority Councils was accepted in principle. Some other points were also discussed. I returned to Western Court at about midnight. January 24, 1971: I met Pandit Kamlapati Tripathi at Sardar Jogendra Singh's residence. He knew all about our talks and assured me 'that all the promises would be fulfilled as they were gentlemen's agreement'. January 25, 1971: Mr. H. N. Bahuguna showed me at 1 p.m. the cyclostyled copy of the Congress Election Manifesto to confirm that all the newly added paras were there and in the correct form agreed to between us. The manifesto was later on released to the press. June 6, 1971: I met the P.M. in her office at

4 p.m. and requested her to fulfil her pre-election promises. She gave a patient hearing and asked me to speak to the Chief Minister of U.P. about the same. Regarding Aligarh Muslim University she said that the Home Minister was looking into the matter. Oct. 31/Nov. 1 & 2, 1971: A deputation of Muslim Majlis met Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, Mr. Moinul Haq Chowdhry, Mr. S. S. Ray and Mr. Noorul Hassan, because the P.M. had entrusted the drafting of the Bill to these Ministers of the Union Government. They did not even remotely hint that the Bill would take the shape and form in which it has been adopted." (italics mine) Thus did Mrs. Gandhi secure Muslim support.

There are two opinions about Dr. A. J. Faridi's politics and his political judgment. Opinion, however, is undivided as to the personal integrity of this utterly selfless if politically misguided man. But we have more than his bare word. We have the circumstantial evidence, the detailed and specific character of his catalogue of assurances, and the absence of rebuttal by the persons named.

The Rulers realised, Chief Justice Hidayatullah remarked in the Privy Purse Case, that "princes were not the only people in whose words trust should not be placed". The Muslims have realised it now. In the amoral politics of today no pledge is allowed to stand in the path to power and yet greater power; be it a pledge to a trusting minority, or, for that matter, to the Party's presidential candidate.

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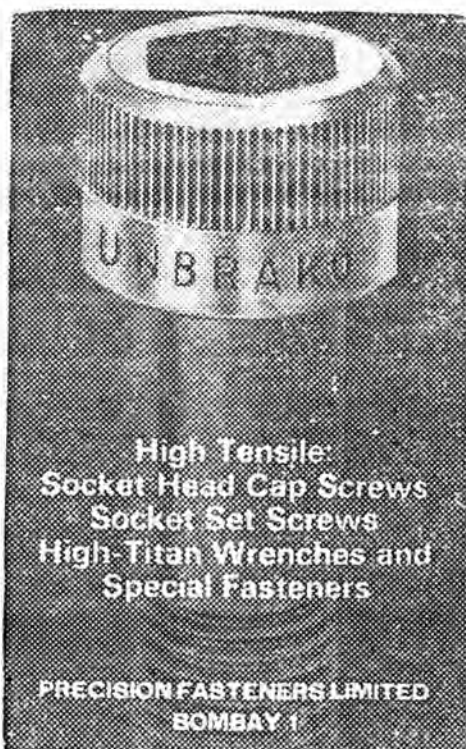
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MINAT/PP 102-1

KERALA: POLITICS vs. EDUCATION

F. A. Mechery

EDUCATION", said a thinker, "makes people easy to lead, but difficult to drive, easy to govern, but impossible to enslave." But looking at the state of higher education in Kerala one wonders whether it is not the other way round. The current agitation is but one manifestation of a malady that has been afflicting education for quite some time and had made itself felt in diverse ways.

Education has been left for a quarter of a century entirely to shape itself under various pressures and considerations, except the academic in almost all parts of the country; want of planning in respect of its objectives, absence of co-ordination of standards and a general indifference towards its unpleasant consequences brought about an unfortunate state of affairs whose effects will be manifested in different places. In Kerala the crisis has assumed the form of a struggle between private managements and the government. It is but a passing phase. The problem will remain in its many dimensions even after the crisis has blown over.

The Background

Kerala has always been far head of the other states in respect of literacy. School education has been entirely free for over a decade and even before the fees were low and in the process of gradual elimination. A near universal education was under way. But in the particular political climate in the state this widespread education provided not the foundations for future development but the infrastructure for agitational politics.

Higher education in the state is overwhelmingly in the hands of the private agencies which run 119 colleges in the state; the government runs only 14. There is no gain-saying of the fact that many of the private institutions have maintained a high standard of discipline and instruction—a fact which is also confirmed by the rush for admissions in those institutions in spite of higher fees. The colleges are of various types, Arts, Science, Commerce, Engineering, Teachers' Training and others and graduate as well as post-graduate courses are conducted by them. Eighty-five per cent of the students have to depend on these institutions for education up to the highest levels.

The higher fees charged by the private institutions have been under fire earlier. It is obvious that on the basis of fees charged in government colleges the institutions will not be financially viable. Also, the enforcement of the grades for teachers, belated as they were, increased the burdens of the managements. Capitation fees and other unfair prac-

tices supplemented the income. It was incredible that a young institution could grow with only the permitted revenue. Illegal practices were thus condoned as they bridged the "credibility gap." The agitation for fee unification and against other practices had its ebb and flow according to the fortunes of the political parties in the highly fluid state politics.

Actually the difference in rates of fees is not very alarming. According to one estimate the difference is only Rs. 12/- for the pre-degree, Rs. 20/- for the degree and Rs. 80/- for the post-graduate classes per year. But there is no uniformity among private colleges themselves. Further, laboratory fees for Science courses are also higher in the private institutions, again, considerably higher at the post-graduate level. On the whole even with a fee unification, the pre-degree colleges will be profitable ventures, the degree colleges will mostly break even and the institutions with post-graduate facilities might not be viable units, post-graduate faculties being expensive, and accommodating only a few students.

The current struggle has taken its toll of working days from the academic year. But that is nothing new. The examinations for the academic year 1971-72 due in March-April 1972 were held in the state in June-July 1972 only, the postponement being necessitated by loss of working days due to strikes. In one academic year the students, the office staff and the teaching staff went on strike by turns on different issues. The strikes affected most colleges. All returned to work their demands fully or partly satisfied, but the students were the losers all the same, in terms of instructions, and time for preparation. Examinations were postponed often on their demands, but always at their expense. On the one hand, employment opportunities, meagre as they are, did not wait for their time. On the other, admissions of students from Kerala into institutions of higher learning all over the country (where there is a quota system for the States) were delayed to their detriment; where there was open competition, nothing remained for them. Student wings of almost every political party, very active in most institutions, waited for their next chance. So the years rolled by.

Politics Enters in a Big Way

Each agitation is closely watched and assessed by the interested forces. As the current agitation began the taking of positions was prompt and quick. The Secretary of the Nair Service Society warned the state government that the latter

could take over the N.S.S. colleges only "over the dead bodies of tens of thousands of Nairs who have built up these institutions." The Christians were organised too and put forward the constitutional right of minorities. The Kerala Congress supported the managements. The Ruling Congress staked its all in the struggle against the private managements. The President of the Pradesh Congress (O) came out to organise a steering committee of "democratic minded" parties to chalk out a programme of agitation to defeat the move "to nationalise education under the garb of fee unification." The Muslim League with its own axe to grind made a lot of uneasiness to its major coalition partner (Congress R.). The Marxist leader Mr. Nambudiripad said that the ruling coalition was coming to a crisis and that if the ministry fell "there is no question of the Marxist party forming a ministry of its own or supporting another ministry until after a fresh election." The political moves continue and soon the real issues are vitiated.

If the issue is seen from the academic point of view the solution is not difficult. The role of well conducted private educational institutions cannot be overlooked. Apart from the fundamental right of the minorities to run their own institutions, such undertakings can stand out from the dull uniformity of a state imposed education. Autonomy of such institutions to the maximum possible extent is the hallmark of liberal education. Needless to say, the strict enforcement of the rules is not a curtailment of such autonomy. It cannot be left to the goodwill of the managements to do justice according to their rights. Enough controls must be introduced whether it be in the appointment of teachers or the admission of students. It is no secret that many institutions (not all, we may say in fairness) extract anything between Rs. 2,000 and Rs. 12,000 for appointments. This is punishable under the existing laws. Then why do the managements escape?

Post-graduate teaching, an expensive item with the private managements, must be done only at the Universities or in selected post-graduate centres. This is academically sound: at least at this level of education there should be the intellectual exchange between the scholars, that explosive contact between minds from different schools of thought, that collective seeking of wisdom which can be fostered only among those living together for the purpose. University education developed from such a point of view. Universities became centres of learning, arenas of intellectual challenge, a meeting place of several brilliant minds: from there came the ideas and movements that transformed the world. But with the proliferation of colleges in every town and village "university education" has become provincialised—colleges are little more than schools at

a higher order, let us not say, coaching classes for the present. Post-graduate education can have better abodes where the scholars will seek wisdom instead of merely collecting information.

That, incidentally, will relieve the private institutions of considerable financial burdens. But the basic attitude towards fees must undergo a change. The demand has already been raised in some quarters for the abolition of fees in the pre-degree class. This only shows that a college education is not seen as anything different from a school education. The latter is of a general nature necessary for all for obtaining the basic equipment to get along in life. But the former is an investment, a preparation for a better career, one expects to get the returns from that investment and as such his expenses for his own future plans are not to be passed on to the taxpayer.

Higher education to be meaningful must have its standards constantly on the ascendancy keeping pace with the expansion of the horizons of knowledge. It must be selective, and open to those who take it as a mission and a challenge, who possess the required attitudes and equipments. There is no room for mass production there—it is selective specialisation. Cheapening the whole affair quantitatively, economically and otherwise and seeking street solutions to academic questions is dangerous for knowledge keeps exploding and waits for none.

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ENGLISH AND THE INDIAN THEATRE

Zarin N. Minocher-Homji

THE art of the theatre constitutes several components, not the least of which is language. Serious, meaningful theatre does include elements of spectacle, music, dance, costume and several other details of production. And yet none of these could exist were it not for the script which is the prime cause for the existence of any production, be it an elaborate one or a simple, low-budget one. Probably the greatest source of enjoyment in the theatre is hearing good dialogue—in other words, the language used by the playwright to put forward his ideas and views on his chosen theme.

It is no use denying the fact that all great plays have literary qualities and it is the language which determines, among other things, whether a play is great literature or not. This problem of the language used in a play brings us to a discussion of Indian plays in English—either written originally in English or translated from one of the several Indian languages into English. How often while watching an Indian play in English has one felt that a wrong note was being struck somewhere. There is the persistent feeling that something is lacking, something missing that prevents the play from achieving the heights or giving complete and unqualified aesthetic pleasure.

I presume the main reason for this feeling of dissatisfaction is that one is aware of the falsity of the language in the mouths of these characters. The simple, uneducated villager, or the city manual labourer, or the illiterate domestic servant, or the traditional old grandmother or aunt—none of these men and women, or others like them, are ever likely to express themselves in English and it is because of this awareness that one hears the false note ringing again and again.

Forked Tongue: Is the Indian playwright writing in English restricted then to writing about that narrow class of Indians who would be likely to express themselves naturally in the English language, for whom English is almost a mother-tongue? Would the play in that case not have something lacking and be credible, in other words, become totally convincing and be effective theatre? There is, on the other hand, that peculiar brand of English some of us Indians speak and the playwright could use that idiom, but the result would only be farcical since it would be used for nothing except a caricature. One could hardly expect the playwright to use that idiom to convey serious profound thoughts and hope to evade a comic effect.

An argument that can be advanced against this thesis is that European plays are translated into English constantly and that there seems to be nothing lacking there. It is only because one is not aware of

the effect the play has in the original language. Besides, the language in that case can evoke similar connotations and similar feelings since there is the similarity of cultures and traditions. Ideas and values are therefore immediately communicable without loss of too many of the finer shades of meaning. In other words, one can find the right idiom to communicate the thoughts of the playwright.

Arriving at the right idiom for any play is one of the greatest struggles a playwright has to face even when writing in his own language about characters he is very familiar with. How much more of an impossible struggle does it then become for the Indian playwright writing in English and making his Indian characters speak a language they are never to speak in the real world.

One would like to see many more new plays being turned out in English and since the spoken word is of prime importance in the theatre it would be worth their while if Indian playwrights concentrated on the problem and found that precise idiom that will make an Indian play in English tick and become truly great in the theatre.

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—Tennyson.

I am not concerned whether we can trust Pakistan President Bhutto or not. But I am concerned whether we can trust ourselves or not.

—Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in
Indian Express, August 1.

The stamina which separates the politician from the dilettante.

—*The Economist*, July 15.

The South Vietnamese have less to fear from Hanoi than from the election of Senator George McGovern.

—*The Economist*, July 15.

This man's ideas aren't liberal. This man's ideas are crazy.

—George Meany on McGovern, *Time*, July 24.

In fact, no Government in the world has taken greater precautions to ensure that real economic power is concentrated in their own hands.

—J. R. D. Tata in Statement to Shareholders of
Tata Iron & Steel Company.

The average people of America—those who are sick and tired of high taxes and foreign aid to countries that spit on us and want to see us lose in Vietnam.

—Governor George Wallace in
The Economist, July 15.

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The best thing to mix with liquor is common sense.

—Advertisement of Licensed Beverage Industries,
Inc. in *U.S. News & World Report*, August 7.

It is the Soviet Union these days that seems to be determined to repeat all the U.S. mistakes of past years in dealing with allies who don't measure up.

—*U.S. News & World Report*, August 7.

Every leader is an individual response to a collective demand.

—Leon Trotsky quoted in *Encounter*, April 1972.

Evidently you cannot have both higher wages and low prices.

—Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at Congress
Parliamentary Party meeting quoted in
Sunday Standard, July 30.

If those West Europeans who spend any time at all thinking about the problems of defence had the vote in November, most of them would be voting for Mr. Nixon, and that probably includes most members of Europe's Social Democratic Parties.

—*The Economist*, July 29.

As Chile's problems deepen, anti-Allende jokes increase. One has him expropriating the Sahara Desert. After a month, all the wells have gone dry; after two months, all the camels have died; after six months, Allende has begun to import sand.

—*Time*, August 7.

Diplomacy is remembering a lady's birthday but forgetting her age.

—Ambassador Keating in *Time*, August 7.

When their radio plays patriotic songs it is time for Egyptians to get worried.

—*The Economist*, August 5.

Nice guys don't win ball games.

—Sargent Shriver quoted in *US News &
World Report*, August 21.