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IS NAIPAUL GUILTY?

K. S. VENKATESWARAN

V. S. NAIPAUL has seldom been out of the news. In the West, notably in England where he has made his home, the media have in recent years accorded him a coverage that has been the envy of most expatriate writers. Literary commentators on both sides of the Atlantic have been watching every move of his with an avidity that has far surpassed the normal, and not without reason.

In India, too, Naipaul has commanded considerable media attention, though of an entirely different kind. Here in the land of his ancestors, the predominant reaction that his writings and pronouncements have evoked has been one of shocked outrage. It is difficult to imagine any contemporary writer (with the possible exception of Nirad Chaudhuri) who has been showered with greater abuse, scorn and contempt by the Indian literary establishment than Naipaul.

All for the wrong reasons, though. Take the recent rash of vituperative articles that have surfaced in our popular press following Naipaul's remarks on India in his BBC interview with Bernard Levin. Dripping as much with self-righteousness as with venom,

each of these articles contains an elaborate, often tortuously contrived critique of Naipaul's "flawed psyche" his "pathological" aversion to third world cultures, his "obsession" with "abstracted, sanitized Brahminic purity", and so on. But, by a curious coincidence, none of these brilliant pieces of passionate prose—not one of them, it is worth repeating—contains as much as a shred of evidence to disprove the essential validity of Naipaul's hypothesis.

Which is hardly surprising. For, though the highly subjective realm of Naipaul's perception could be the subject of endless debate, his fidelity to facts is wholly beyond question. Can even the most bitter critic of Naipaul deny, for example, that graciousness, civility and generosity of spirit (among other qualities) are at a heavy discount in Indian society today? Or—at a more mundane level—that Indians, by and large, have not exactly been known for their commitment to or insistence on basic cleanliness and hygiene?

The truth, alas, has proved so uncomfortable to the purveyors of self-delusion in our media that whenever Naipaul has taken upon himself the painful task of draw-

ing attention to it, he has been greeted with increasingly intemperate attacks of the most nauseating kind. More often than not, the hysteria is accompanied by pseudo-psychological explanations on the factors that have allegedly contributed to shaping the tone and tenor of his work. One critic referred knowledgeably, for instance, to "the genetic stigma of being a descendent of an indentured labourer", while another pointed out "the suppurating psychological wounds inflicted by colonialism" on Naipaul as being responsible for his largely unflattering views on modern India.

All of which leads one to wonder if it is not sheer envy that lies at the root of our literary establishment's antipathy to Naipaul. Disinterested appreciation of genius, to adapt the words of Swift, is hardly a quality to be expected of these little men; but is it so difficult for the rest of us, educated Indians, to realise that, by his periodic castigations of our many shortcomings and lapses, Naipaul is merely imploring us to turn the searchlight inwards, and in doing so rendering a signal service for which he deserves our everlasting gratitude, not censure?

THE ISLE OF SERENDIP

MINOO MASANI

IF YOU turn to the Oxford dictionary you will find that serendipity is described as "the faculty of making happy and unexpected discoveries by accident". This word was coined after the beautiful and happy island which gloried in its ancient name of Serendip. Alas, that lovely isle has been the scene of brutal violence between Sinhalese and Tamils during the last few weeks.

The best account I have found of what happened is by Anthony Mascarenhas, who has already established his creditability by his earlier reports on India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, in *The Sunday Times* of July 31. According to Mr. Mascarenhas; "For more than three years they (the Sinhalese) have been straining at the bit as their colleagues and policemen were gunned down by Tamil terrorists, and while President Junius Jayewardene, aged 76, tried to negotiate a political settlement which took in the main grievances of the Tamils. Jayewardene was well disposed to do so . . . In these circumstances, every concession Jayewardene made to the Tamils did not satisfy the hardcore separatists hell-bent on the partition of Sri Lanka".

These facts are corroborated by several other observers. *The Times* reported on July 26 that "tension had been simmering during the past few weeks as a result of increased attacks by an outlawed guerilla movement fighting for a separate state for Tamils". On July 27 *The Guardian* wrote: "For the last three weeks the terrorists have rekindled the campaign in their stronghold, the Northern province of Jaffna".

It was precisely President Jayewardene's reluctance to stamp severely on the Tamil "Tigers" that explains the ferocity of the Sinhalese reaction. *The Guardian* warned editorially on August 1: "President Jayewardene may stand accused of playing into the hands of the separatist guerillas, the Tamil Tigers."

Mrs. Urmila Phadnis in her two articles in *The Indian Express* on August 11 and 12 further corroborates: "Ironical though it may seem, during the Jayewardene regime, a number of measures to assuage the Tamil sense of grievance were adopted like, for instance, granting Tamil the status of an associate national language, greater autonomy in district administration and deletion of certain provisions in admission to the universities which were perceived by the minority community as discriminatory. . . . Yet it is a known fact that terrorist leaders have found refuge in Madras and have used it as a base for their activities."

The climax came on July 23 when the Tamil "Tigers", who stand for the partition of Lanka, ambushed an entire convoy of soldiers of the Lanka army, killing 13 Lankan soldiers. On the following day, the 24th, the Sinhalese back-lash started. By the end of a fortnight not less than 350 Tamils and Sinhalese, the majority undoubtedly Tamils, had been killed.

It is quite clear that the original aggression came from the Tamil side. That does not condone the Sinhalese violence against innocent men and women, for two wrongs do not make a right. But it is good to get our facts right.

Now let us turn to the Indian reaction to these events. In place of some sympathy and appreciation of President Jayewardene's difficult situation, caught as he has been between Tamil and Sinhalese extremism, this humane and mature statesman, whom I have had the privilege of knowing for several decades now, has been subjected to a hysterical campaign of vilification and calumny. A Member of Parliament distinguished himself by calling him a "modern Ravana", and his effigy has been repeatedly burnt in Madras. There have been honourable exceptions like Mr. Morarji Desai and Mr. Ram Jethmalani, but, by and large, our politicians have revelled in an orgy of racism and demagogy. The worst offender has been Mr. Karunanidhi whose courage, as I have known from personal experience in the past, is not his strong point. He has bravely demanded an invasion of Sri Lanka by the Indian Army and the partition of the Island on the lines of Cyprus. Others in Tamil Nadu have demanded a "Bangladesh solution". "Genocide, say MPs" is one of the headlines of a report of a parliamentary discussion. The Lanka Embassy and Consulates have been surrounded by angry mobs. Chauvinism and war-mongering of a despicable character has been very much in evidence.

It can be claimed with pride that the English language press in India have refused to join in this ballyhoo. On the contrary *The Indian Express* deserves kudos for two editorials, one on July 27 from which I quote hereunder:

"Mrs. Gandhi went further in stating in Madras last Saturday, that the line taken by the External Affairs Ministry had been appreciated by Mr. M. G. Ramachandran and many others in Tamil Nadu. This was clearly a gaffe as it would suggest that the Government of India is playing to the Tamil Nadu gallery. Indeed, it may even appear that the timing of the latest Indian

communication was influenced by Mrs. Gandhi's visit to Madras and by the exigencies of the approaching general election. Sri Lanka is apprehensive that any sign of Indian interest might only encourage extremist Tamil elements. The Sinhalese are in an overwhelming majority but suffer a minority complex on account of the fear that the local Tamils are backed by their fellow-Tamils across the water. It would be doubly unfortunate were the latest turn in events to entrench this fear. India must reassure Colombo that its basic attitude of friendship remains unchanged."

And again on August 9:

"There are three things that Mrs. Gandhi should tell Mr. Jayewardene. First, she should reiterate that India has absolutely no desire to interfere in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka and that it is committed to the unity and integrity of the island, although it cannot be unaffected by the fate of its Tamils. Secondly, that it is willing to render whatever further assistance it can in the tasks of relief and rehabilitation and economic reconstruction. The unity of Sri Lanka is in India's own highest interest, but unity will only be viable if there is a union of hearts and minds between the two principal communities, Sinhalese and Tamils. This is the third message India could pass on in the light of its own experience of similar ethnic problems".

But for a major lapse, the Government of India can also be complimented for refusing to be rushed off its feet. It has repeatedly turned down calls for military intervention, pointing out quite correctly that a request for such help has to originate from the Government of Lanka. Right. But was it right for New Delhi to have given credence to a canard that the Government of Lanka had asked for military assistance from the U.K., U.S.A., Pakistan and Bangladesh? The U.S.A., Pakistan and Bangladesh have categorically denied receiving any such request. The canard about the U.K. is explained by the London *Economist* of July 23 which reports that President Jayewardene had told their correspondent as far back as July 17 that he had asked Britain for "expertise and assistance" to deal with the situation. Even the alleged originator of the story, Mr. Steward Slavin, has in an interview with *The Sunday Observer* (Bombay) of August 7 flatly said: "I did not file this story. Somebody did but I cannot tell you who it was."

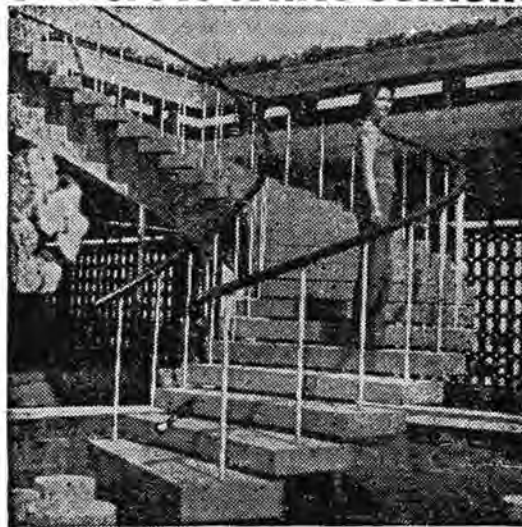
Yet, on the strength of this canard, New Delhi struck an imperialist posture and shouted: "Hands off Lanka!" to other friendly countries. What is this Munroe Doctrine we are now asserting? Even sup-

posing the Government of Lanka had asked for military assistance to deal with a leftist military *coup d'etat* by some of the Sinhalese soldiery, what was wrong with it? From whom did we in India ask for military assistance in 1962 but the U.K. and the U.S.A.?

Once again, as in most crises, our double standard of morality has come to the fore. It is true that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi could not stop thousands of people being massacred in Assam, but how dare President Jayewardene allow 350 people, Tamils and Sinhalese, to be killed, though he has admitted that for a short time his own armed forces were not under his own control and he had ordered rioters to be shot at sight! The U.S.A. should not have issued a visa to Mr. Chauhan, who allegedly advocated separatism from India and the establishment of Khalistan, but India of course can shelter and lionise Tamil terrorists and secessionists in Madras with impunity!

(Courtesy: *The Statesman*)

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How Reagan could start rolling back the Russians

BRIAN CROZIER

WELCOMING delegates of the new International Democrat Union to London, Mrs. Thatcher repudiated Yuri Andropov's view that "the future belongs to socialism" with these words: "We know different. The future belongs to the free democracies, and that is the march of history."

Stirring though these words are, I wish I could share the Prime Minister's optimism. On a world scale, the facts of recent history point, unfortunately, in the opposite direction.

Since "detente" began in the 1970s, the following territories have been added to the Soviet empire, or at the least, removed from the western sphere; Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia (Kampuchea); South Yemen; Ethiopia; Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau; Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Grenada and Surinam; and Seychelles. Nor is the list complete.

Not once, since Lenin set up the Comintern in 1919 to carry Soviet-style communism to all countries of the world, has any country dropped communism after coming under communist rule. (China and Yugoslavia left the Soviet orbit but stayed communist.)

Unless this process is reversed *soon*, the outlook for the democracies is unpromising. It is not enough to prevent yet another communist victory here and there, as the Americans are trying to do in El Salvador, and as they failed to do in Vietnam. For the process to be reversed, "lost" countries will have to be liberated.

The late John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State under President Eisenhower, liked the term "rollback", by which he meant getting the Russians out of Eastern Europe. He dropped it when the Hungarians were crushed in 1956.

The concept, though not the term, is enjoying a quiet revival in Washington. Some time ago, White House spokesmen were dropping hints that President Kennedy's pledge to Krushchev in 1962 to leave Fidel Castro alone if the Soviet missiles were removed was not regarded as binding by the Reagan administration.

Then there is the business of American aid to anti-communist guerrillas operating from Honduras, and to the government of El Salvador.

It is no longer taken for granted in Washington that any member of what Brezhnev called the "Socialist Commonwealth" is necessarily out of bounds forever, while any non-communist regime is fair game for the Active Measures specialists of the KGB.

Are we, then, witnessing the first timid signs that a rollback, mark II, is on the way?

I believe we are. In the Palace of Westminster a year ago, President Reagan called for a campaign to promote democratic institutions in communist countries, in the light of the crisis of the Soviet system.

In October, Secretary of State George Shultz called a two-day conference in Washington to implement the President's call. The US, he said, would not seek to foment violent unrest in communist countries but considered it a responsibility "both moral and strategic", to meet the call for help from those seeking to bring about change.

The enormous impact of the Pope's visit to Poland showed yet again how precarious Moscow's hold over its East European empire has become. The time has not come, however, for any systematic American or western attempt to aid those wanting change in that area. The dangers are too great. The same is probably true of Cuba.

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(Approved by I A T A)

In the list given earlier, however, four countries stand out as qualifying for low-risk or no-risk intervention: Angola (to be precise, the Cabinda enclave), the Seychelles, Grenada and Surinam. In all four, the men in power have no legitimacy other than force. In all four there are groups of individuals seeking change and worthy of support.

The main difference between the Cabinda enclave and the other outposts of the Soviet empire is that this strip of land to the north of Angola proper is not a sovereign country but constitutionally a part of Angola. Without Cabinda's oil, the communist regime in Angola would be in even worse economic straits than it already is.

With government forces and Cubans guarding the oil installations, most of the territory is controlled by a resistance movement called FLEC (Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave) whose able political leader, Francisco Lubota, I talked to in London recently. The resistance does not just want a change of regime in Angola; it wants independence for Cabinda.

The Seychelles, with a population of 62,000, are a particularly tragic case. A coup in 1977 ousted the duly elected government of James Mancham, now in exile in London with some of his former colleagues. The islands are now rapidly being turned into the standard totalitarian "paradise".

In Grenada, new air and naval installations can only be for Soviet use. Since a coup in 1979, the island has been a Cuban colony.

The former Dutch colony of Surinam, in northern South America, had its coup in 1980 and is now firmly set on a "socialist" course.

If such outposts are left to their devices, it will be hard to take recent declarations of the Reagan administration seriously. If freedom cannot be brought to Grenada or the Seychelles, what hope for Poland, Afghanistan or the Soviet Union itself?

In the past, where the will existed, the means have quite often been found to prevent the emergence of regimes that would be damaging to western interests, or even to remove undesirable rulers.

In 1954, for instance, American action removed a pro-communist president in Guatemala. The previous year, effective action put the exiled Shah of Iran back on his throne. There was no such will in 1978, greatly to the detriment of the Iranian people and the West.

In 1979, a highly effective French operation bloodlessly deposed the Central African tyrant, "Emperor" Bokassa.

Nine years earlier, an equally successful operation placed the enlightened Sultan Qaboos on his throne in strategically crucial Oman.

These examples clearly show what can be done where the will exists. Mrs. Thatcher's and President Reagan's ringing words could well be prophetic, but only if opportunities are not neglected.

(Courtesy: *The Times*)

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SECULARISM: A DISSENTING VIEW

M. B. SHAH

IN HIS column "As I See It" appearing in the June issue of *Freedom First*, Minoo Masani has expressed the opinion that "secularism" is a Marxist jargon imposed on Indian political thinking by Jawaharlal Nehru at the behest of the crypto-communist Krishna Menon, and that it has harmfully replaced "Sarva Dharma Samabhava". Masani has gone on to exhort India to advance from the cult of Karl Marx to the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi.

As a student of history Masani should know that secularism is a concept as old as mankind itself, while Marxism can be dated from 1848 when the Communist Manifesto exploded on the world.

In contemporary India, secularism has a special relevance, necessity and utility to counteract obscurantism, fake mysticism, other-worldliness, fatalism and escapism preached by various religions and to inculcate scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry, reform and excellence.

What is paraded, tolerated, followed, commercialised and politicised as religion in this country has nothing to do with the essence of religion. The practice of this type of religion is not only an opiate for the people, but also poisonous for our democratic policy. It has led to the partition of the country, with all the attendant blood-bath, and, what is worse, claimed as its victim its greatest proponent, Mahatma Gandhi. In India religion has become sectarian and it has encouraged primitive tribalism besides serving as a rallying cry for the disintegration of this country. A communal riot a day after independence is the gift of religion.

Religion, if anything, is an individual and personal affair. Its acceptance or non-acceptance depends on the cultural development of man. However, it has, over the years, played havoc with our polity. Secularism is the only antidote for such religious lunacy.

Actually, it is not religion that is important. It is religiousness that matters. And there need not be an absolute causal relationship between religion and religiousness. Religiousness is holiness, i.e., the cultivation and practice of values which lead to an harmony between nature, life, society and self. Such values can be legitimately derived from modern scientific knowledge which is more coherent, logical and realistic and divorced from blind faith.

Secularism is not opposed, but more conducive to

the utmost development of religiousness in man and society. What secularism does is to pull back man from his torpor, helplessness and other-worldliness and inspire him to make efforts to return to worldly reality and improve his life by getting rid of false notions, prejudices and vested interests in self and society. Commercialised religion, impervious to reason and common sense, ties man to a spiritual dead-weight, is the most dreadful and exploitative vested interest, and is the root-cause of the present troubles of India, and indeed of mankind. Vinoba Bhave therefore opined that the age of religion is over and spirituality must seek ascendancy.

Rationalism as a way of thinking and reasoning is challenging the basic presuppositions of all religions and other cults and creeds which have outlived their purpose and are moribund and harmful to the self and society. Secularism is a social aspect of rationalism. Secularism is based on scientific temper, outlook and knowledge.

As regards preference for Gandhism over Marxism, obviously, no one who possesses an open and critical mind can be enamoured of Karl Marx. His thinking is slipshod and is dated. The Marxist experiment has miserably misfired. Marx also cannot be exonerated from blame for the creation of communist totalitarianism. However, having lost faith in Karl Marx, one need not embrace Gandhiji like a frightened child.

Dr. R. C. Majumdar, the astute historian, once described Gandhiji as a "magnificent failure". Everything Gandhiji believed in, preached and practised was negated in his own lifetime, and he died in great agony by the futility and failure of his life's mission. His illusions have crippled our nation for a long time since. And who was the Judas of this modern Christ? His own political heirs. *Sarkari Sants* and parasitic and power-hungry Gandhians are the legacy of Gandhiji.

* * * * *

THE WISDOM OF CONFUCIUS

Mr. Masani comments:

In my contribution in the June issue of *Freedom First*, I had welcomed the clarification by my friend

Mr. Ramkrishna Bajaj between a secular state and one that is equally benevolent towards all religions. I had gone on to point out that neither the Indian people nor our Constitution are secular.

Mr. Shah in his article basically makes two points. The first is one made by Lenin that "religion is the opium of the people". Secondly, Mr. Shah attempts to give a new meaning to the word "secular", which is contrary to what the dictionary gives, by saying that "Secularism is not opposed but more conducive to the utmost development of religiousness in man and society".

Insofar as the first point is concerned, Mr. Shah is of course perfectly entitled to his view, though I must point out that the great thinker Solzhenitsyn, in his recent Templeton Address in London, and my friend Jayaprakash Narayan much earlier, in the September 1962 issue of *Freedom First*, take a contrary view. J.P. had written:

"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 become

truly human. In a material civilisation man has no rational incentive to be good. It may be that in the kingdom of dialectical materialism, fear makes men conform, and the Party takes the place of God. But when that God himself turns vicious, to be vicious becomes a universal code. I feel convinced, therefore, that man must go beyond the material to find the incentives to goodness. As a corollary, I feel further that the task of social reconstruction cannot succeed under the inspiration of a materialistic philosophy".

Insofar as the second point is concerned, I still insist that secularism is basically against religion. The Janata Government tried to mitigate the mischief of the 42nd Amendment which had inserted the word "secular" in the preamble of our Constitution by giving the word a positive meaning in the 45th Amendment which reads:

"The expression 'republic' as qualified by the expression 'secular' means a republic in which there is equal respect for all religions. . . ." It is not without significance that this plea to give the word "secular" a specifically Indian meaning failed to get through the Rajya Sabha because of opposition from the Congress (I) Party.



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I am glad to note that recently that experienced and perceptive journalist, Mr. M. V. Kamath, found it necessary to contribute an article in *The Indian Express* of July 10 on "The Myth of Secularism" in the course of which he observes:

"The term 'secular' means being anti-religion and few in India are 'secular' unless they are avowed Communists or avowed 'intellectuals' who are ashamed to describe themselves as Hindus or Jains or whatever. Their number, really, is miniscule. The more 'ordinary' the Indian, the more honest he is in admitting his faith. . . .

"The concept is now coming apart at its seams—and it is about time it did. . . .

"Behind the mask of secularism lies cynicism, hatred and anger. And we will not be able to deal with them until we tear off that mask. . . .

"For 'secularism' has helped us fudge our identity and breed hypocrisy among politicians. . . .

"As in business, so in politics, in the long run, honesty still remains the best policy."

Let us then be guided by the advice given by Confucius long ago that "calling things by their proper names is the beginning of wisdom".

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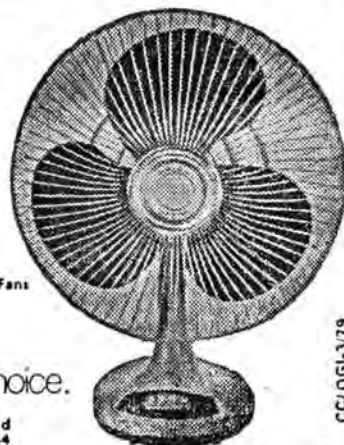
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BOOK REVIEW

IMPERILLED FRONTIERS: India's North Eastern Borderland; by Nari Rustomji; Oxford University Press; 1983 Pp. 160; Rs. 80.

IMPERILLED FRONTIERS by Nari Rustomji is the third of a trilogy, focussing attention on India's suppurative problems in the North Eastern Region. That the Region is strategically vital, a point driven brutally home in 1962, is reason enough for a thorough exegesis of the problems afflicting the North Eastern States of Nagaland, Meghalaya, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Mr. Rustomji has impeccable credentials for this task, having been the Advisor to the Governor of the North Eastern Frontiers, thus, spending the major part of his administrative career with the hill people.

Mr. Rustomji's analysis contrasts the "success story" of Arunachal Pradesh (where the author and Verrier Elwin were personally involved) with the failures experienced in the others, to illumine the central issue of culture and change, which, he believes, is the key to unravelling the miasma of the North East. However, this contention itself is controversial. The competing Marxist stance claims, predictably, that the North East is experiencing its renewal through class conflict. Impoverished tribals resort to armed struggle against the parasitic migrants and the Government, as a response to exploitation. Thus, it is claimed, "cultural aggression" is just a veneer masking power structure that is oppressive and predatory. Whilst

the Marxist hypothesis is attractive, it is insufficient; few would claim that economic issues are irrelevant, (not even Mr. Rustomji) but one can contend that they do not constitute the root of the problem. Mr. Rustomji's excursus into tribal culture and the Region's history yields information that justifies the non-Marxist hypothesis substantially, but to expect the Marxist to admit that causes other than economic can be at the root of social problems is to destroy the Marxist paradigm without a fighting chance.

The book is thus an exercise in political sociology with a light autobiographical touch; eminently welcome of course, both, in the interest of readability and in view of the author's own contribution to the Region's destinies. The value of readability might be deemed particularly important, as the central thesis of the book, developed earlier by Singer, Schumacher *et al.*, is well known to sociologists and development economists. However, the concepts lie buried in abstruse jargon in erudite journals inaccessible to the administrator or to any one else who may matter. Thus, the author hopes *Imperilled Frontiers* to be an accessible, empirical study of the principles that operate when a tradition modernises. He has admirably succeeded in this regard.

Although the states in question have between them a multiplicity of tribes, each with a distinctive culture and tradition, tribal attempts to safeguard their identities in the face of "modernisation" betray a regularity that inspires analysis. Mr. Rustomji's thesis is that

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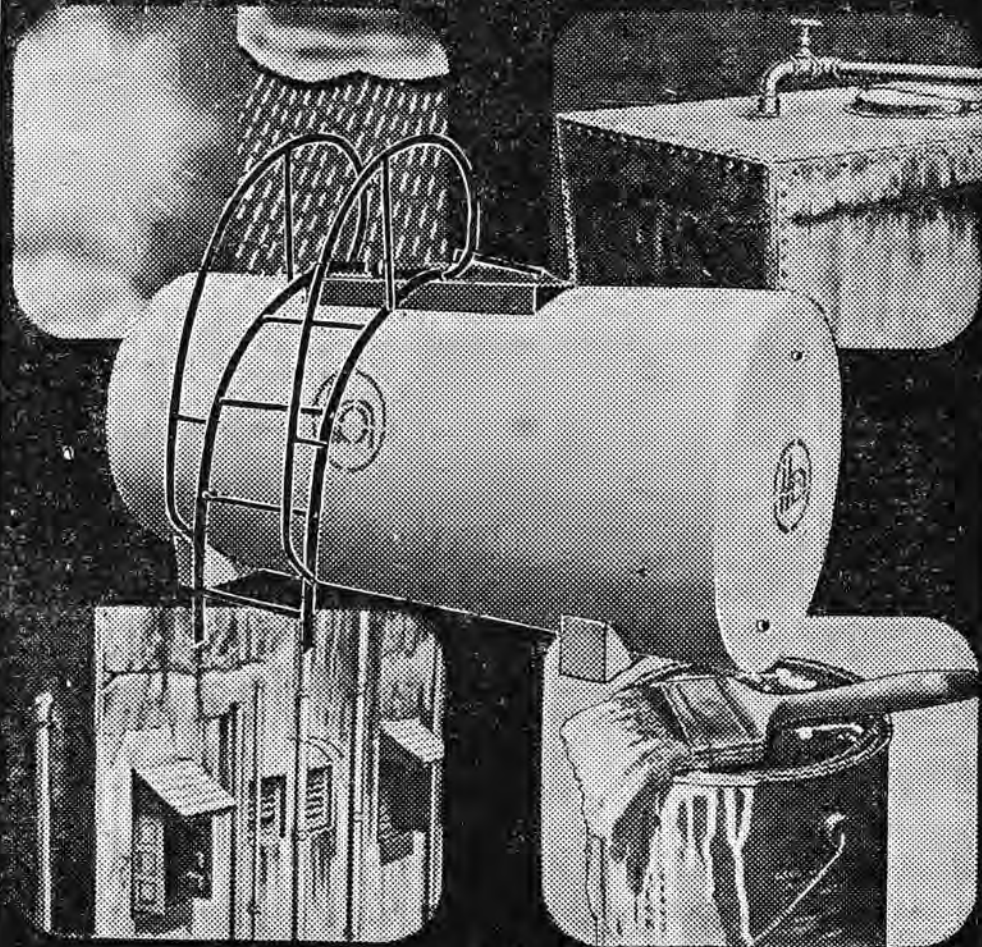
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the sedition in the North East is an extreme attempt at survival in the face of cultural aggression, understood in its widest sense. Such cultural aggression is the product of a rabid ethnocentrism which held that "upliftment" of the tribes was essential to ensure their integration into the "mainstream of the nation's culture". Such logic, short yet inexorable, proceeded to prescribe heavy financial infusion and investment as the price for securing the benefits of "civilisation". What was not foreseen is that investment is never, necessarily, equal to absorption and, therefore, may turn out regressive.

The regressive effect of spotted investment was the legitimisation of big Government intervention, with an influx of alien administrators and bursers, in an area historically having a record of minimal administration and non-interference. Regulatory Government, alien personnel and imprudent investment were seen with characteristic tribal suspicion, as they served to cut the communities from their roots, destroying their value systems and traditional beliefs. Moreover, they subverted the economic ecology of the Region by replacing the contented tribal self-sufficiency with a dangerous social and economic dependence. Thus, economic

strain seems consequent to cultural strain and not *vice versa* as the Marxist would suppose.

The resulting immiserisation, ironically, caused all the way with good intentions, was the result of "an inadequate appreciation of Man's instinctive resentment against interference in his inherited and accustomed way of life, however crude and uncivilised it may appear to others." Soon enough it led to the outburst where "rational considerations ceased to operate, where the crudest barbarities of primitive ages are revived in a desperate struggle for the heart and lifeblood of the community."

Jawaharlal Nehru had prefigured Mr. Rustomji's critique in 1947 when he observed, "I am alarmed when I see how anxious people are to shape others according to their own image or likeness, and to impose on them their particular way of living. . . I am not at all sure which is the better way of living, the tribal or our own. In some respects, I am quite certain theirs is better. Therefore, it is grossly impertinent on our part to approach them with an air of superiority, to tell them how to behave or what to do and what not to do. There is no point in trying to make them a second rate copy of ourselves."

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The failure to understand tribal violence as defensive in nature led to massive retaliation by the law and order machinery, only exacerbating the problem. Mr. Rustomji is highly critical of the application of Armed Forces in a manner that violated all local sensitivities and was disrespectful of local mores. Further his description confirms a long standing fear that the Indian Army's counter-insurgency teams have failed to assimilate the lessons of all such experiences from Borneo to Vietnam. Winning the hearts and minds of the tribals is the time honoured method of combating insurgency and must be combined with a commitment to providing a genuine feeling of security. The Army, instead, used direct combat as a substitute for involving local people in their own protection, without attempting to let them operate or assist in the home defence role as guides, informers, and interpreters. Using measures that make life unbearable only legitimises a guerilla cause and that is exactly what the Indian Army, unwittingly, proceeded to do.

The eviction of villagers from traditional inhabitation and their resettlement in new areas guarded by Army troops has sound military logic, but it fails to understand the fanatical tribal attachment to land and the consequent radical disruption of land use leading to scarcities of food and services, land usurpation and, in good time, even greater social problems.

In retrospect, the Indian Government's biased and unenlightened policy got further complicated by covert external interference, parochial loyalties, corruption and irredentism breeding upon the original problem. Today, the situation has been further transformed into a slinging match between the RSS and the CPM, new elements in an already explosive situation. Such a scenario is masterfully depicted in Rustomji's analysis of the Naga problem, covering almost a third of the book and illuminating the dangers of inept and ignorant administration. Marx had remarked that "the road to hell is paved with good intentions", and *Imperilled Frontiers* is a timely elucidation of what an inadvertent failure to recognise local sensitivities, appreciate indigenous cultures and playing for short term political mileage can lead to. The author's sensitive and remarkably fair handling of issues like the role of Christian Missionaries, as well as his critical sympathy for authorities caught in a tragedy, inadvertently of their own making, depicts a sterling sense of balance which is worth deep appreciation.

In sum, it is an excellent example of a perennial dialectic—that of order and change, but this one turns out refreshingly alive because it is depicted with a touch both accurate and human.

Ashley J. Tellis

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WITH MANY VOICES

When Kim Il Sung has finished his Collected Works, let him try the Collected Works of Montaigne, where he will find the last word on the subject: "Sit we on never so high a stool, we sit but upon our own tails".

—Bernard Levin in *The Times*, June 27.

Our policy is not based on trust, or on a Soviet change of heart.

—Mr. George Shultz quoted in *The Herald Tribune*,
June 17.

If I lived in Britain I would give my support to the Conservative party but not join it. Economists should not join any party. By staying out of government I have avoided the corruption which inevitably comes with politics. An economist should never abandon his principles.

—Professor Hayek quoted in *The Times*, July 7.

From my experience of Indian railways I suggest that they find someone who has bought a ticket, and give him a prize.

—James Cameron in *The Guardian*, June 21.

To defend onself one must also be ready to die.

—Solzhenitsyn quoted in *The Herald Tribune*, June 27.

Oh, to be in Westminster, now that a new Parliament is here.

—*The Observer*, April 3.

Nothing is so irresistible, it has been said, as an idea whose time has come. Yet nothing can so easily be resisted as an idea whose time is past.

—Geoffrey Smith in *The Times*, July 15.

The weak who know how to use their weakness are strong. This is the secret of women, and of under-developed countries.

—M. Couve de Murville quoted by Katharine Whitehorn in *The Observer*, June 21.