

# THE FORUM

## GAZETTE

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## Intimidation by Numbers

A.S. Narang

What happened in Rajya Sabha on February 23 is by now well known and much talked. On that day in an unprecedented development in the history of the Indian Parliament, the Rajya Sabha Chairman, Mr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, offered to resign from his post following an hour long clash with members of the Congress(I), on whether a matter pertaining to a State Governor could be raised in the house.

It all started with Telugu Desam leader Mr. P. Upendra, seeking to make a special mention of the issue of reported extravagant expenditure by the Andhra Pradesh Governor with prior permission from the chair and the ruling party members objecting to it with all the force at their command, despite the Chairman justifying his decision in permitting the issue to be raised.

### Ministers in Lead.

It was the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Mr. M.M. Jacob, himself who led the Congress (I), members in defying the Chairman's ruling. He was followed by many other members of the Council of Ministers, including Mr. Chidambaram, Mr. H.R. Bhardwaj and Congress (I) deputy leader in Rajya Sabha Mr. N.K.P. Salve.

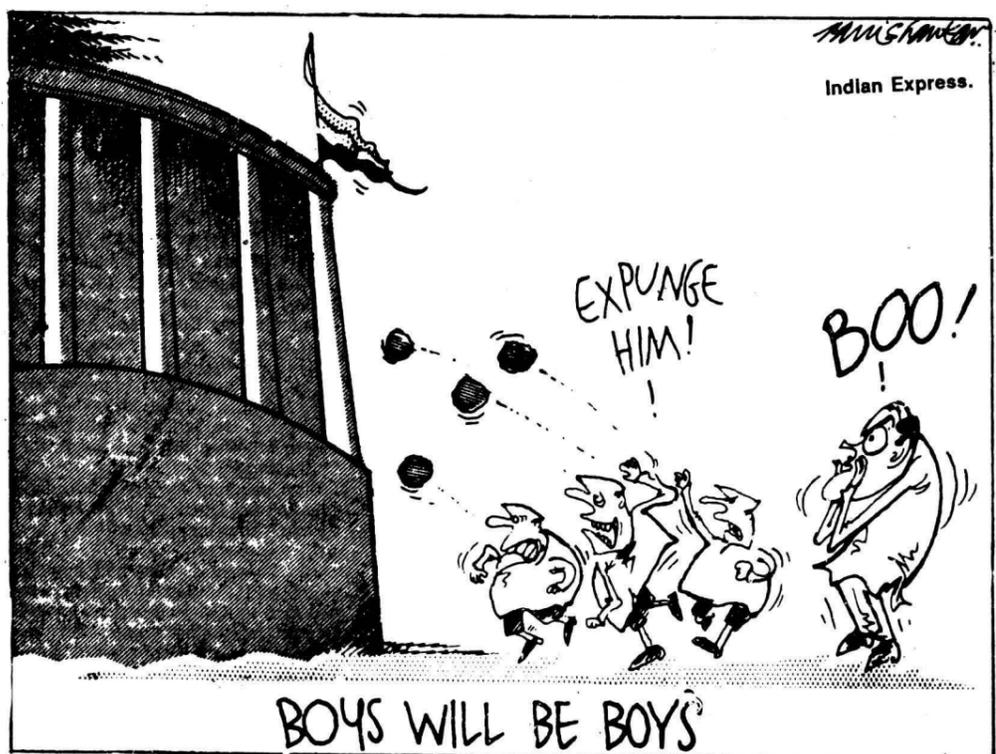
The Prime Minister, who sat through the major part of the debate, did not intervene even as the controversial debate progressed amid shouts and counter shouts by both the sides. In fact when the Chairman refused to

budge from his ruling, a number of members were seen rushing to the Prime Minister for short consultation. Soon the ruling party members grew more and more defiant. At this stage Prime Minister left the House.

### Brute Majority

More than any thing else perhaps this behaviour of Prime Minister and his Ministers made Dr. Sharma to observe that the Congress(I) with a majority in both Houses was a better judge of what was in the interest of the party and its leader. If the Congress(I) decided that he was not fit to occupy the chair he would go out. The Chairman was also apparently irked by the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, Ms. Pratibha Patil rushing to the chair in an attempt to relieve him from the chair. He declined and asked her to resume her seat.

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## Despondency in Punjab

K.S. Khosla

Three factors are responsible for the current wave of despondency in the political and administrative circles in Punjab over the unending Punjab problem.

The Prime Minister's recent statement in reply to a reporter's question relating to the declaration of Punjab as a 'notified area' and his endorsement of Acharya Sushil Muni's initiative on Punjab that he had "no time to waste on these things" has come as a big damper particularly when it is read with his earlier statement that resolution of the problem depended on 'luck' too. The Prime Minister also said that Punjab was not ready as yet for elections. In other words, he ruled out a solution through the ballot box. This gives a strong indication that President's rule will be extended at least for another year after May 11 by amending the Constitution.

The Prime Minister had revived hopes of a solution when he welcomed a suggestion to hold an all parties meet-

ing and later the Acharya's initiative but his having no time to waste on "these things" had dashed all hopes. Political observers here have noted with regret the sarcasm in the words "these things" as if the Punjab problem is of insignificant importance and a casual affair particularly when about 300 persons have been killed in the first two months of this year.

### No Time

The Prime Minister's remarks that he had no time to waste were in reply to a question whether the Acharya's initiative was calculated to keep Mr. Parkash Singh Badal out of power. Great hopes were revived in early December last when Mr. Badal was released from detention. It was thought that he might unite the two Akali Dals, choose a path of reconciliation and form a government to find a solution. But these hopes too have been dashed to the ground with Mr. Badal insisting on acceptance

of his five demands first and his unwillingness to condemn the killings by terrorists. If the Centre had sent him a signal that he could become Chief Minister again with its covert support, Mr. Badal has in turn sent a signal that he does not want to become another Barnala (Mr. Surjit Singh Barnala, former Akali Chief Minister).

### U.A.D. Rallies

The mass rally organised by the Unified Akali Dal under the leadership of Mr. Badal at Ludhiana on February 21 last has shown beyond doubt that Mr.

Badal can mobilise Sikh masses. His peaceful and non-violent 'dharanas' against "repression", whether one agrees with his demands or not, have injected new life into the political life in the State. This is highly creditable particularly in view of the earlier mass contact drives launched by the Congress (I) and the Left parties, the CPI and CPM. These drives however worthy the cause, were not successful judging from the gathering Mr. Badal was able to attract at Ludhiana and his earlier 'dharanas'. What is worth noting is that Mr. Badal was able to attract

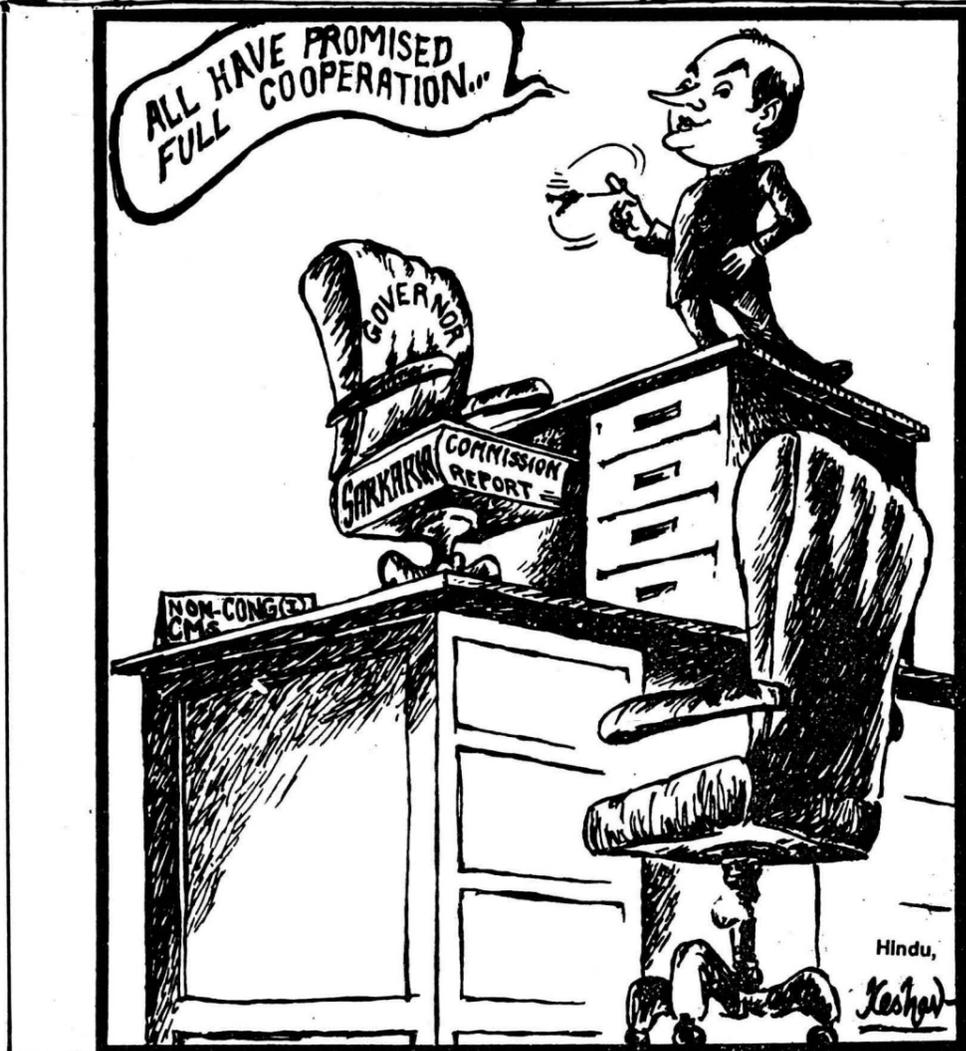
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The question is can we afford to repeat Northern Ireland in Punjab and wait indefinitely for a solution. No clear answer to the question is available as all the political parties and even the leader writers are groping in the dark. Some of them are so despondent that they are praying for a Messiah to turn up to salvage the situation. One writer wishes Guru Gobind Singh or Krishan Avtar to turn up. Such is the extent of despair.

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**Cartoons of the Fortnight**



**Sound and Fury**

The reshuffle is a reflection of instability in the central government and is not going to solve any problem  
-Jyoti Basu

It is time we got rid of the Congressmen who are corrupt or have a bad image  
-Rajiv Gandhi in a letter to former Gujarat chief minister Hitendra Desai.

If the intention is to brush up his government's image, Mr Gandhi should start with himself  
-The Times, London

Now the whole country has been placed at the disposal of Mr (Bindeshwari) Dubey. It is like posting a doctor who has made a mess in a primary health centre... in charge of a civil hospital  
-Vishwanath Pratap Singh in Lucknow

If I were the Prime Minister, I would have asked for a mid-term poll right away to take advantage of the woeful state of the Opposition.  
-Ram Jethmalani, eminent lawyer and politician

The win has given a message to those opposition leaders and CMs who say "Rajiv hatao".  
-Santosh Mohan Deb, Union Minister of state of communications, on the Congress(I)'s victory in Tripura

I should have had him (Santosh Mohan Deb) arrested for his recent activities in Tripura. His place is in jail.  
-Nripen Chakaraborty former Tripura chief minister.

What we have not achieved in 40 years of Independence, we will gain in 40 days.  
-Mahendra Singh Tikait, leader to the Bharatiya Kisan union on the recently-launched farmers' agitation

You can't have introspection in public  
-Rajiv Gandhi explaining why the proceedings at the district magistrates' workshop were held in camera

I don't think the Indians would have come of their own accord. But they could have helped the terrorists...which is worse. So I invited them  
-J.R. Jayewardene, defending the IPKF presence on BBC.

The (Ershad) government is shamelessly trying to institutionalise voterless voting  
-Sheikh Hasina Wajed on the recent local body elections in Bangladesh.

Mr Jyoti Basu can be a master of Marxism but he does not understand terrorism that well.  
-Subash Ghisingh, GNLF chief

West Bengal seems to be heading for President's Rule  
-Priya Ranjan Das Munshi, Union minister of state for commerce

The Constitution-makers could not have imagined that in times to come even taxes would be imposed by (the issue of) ordinance.  
-L.K. Advani, BJP president

The image of the judge as an impartial unbiased person is fading. Today, for example, if someone told you that Justice Desai can be 'approached', you would not rule out the possibility  
-Justice D.A. Desai, Chairman, Law Commission, in Sunday.

Who's he?...I haven't heard of him, you see. So how can I pass a comment?  
-Mahendra Singh Tikait on Rajiv Gandhi in Current

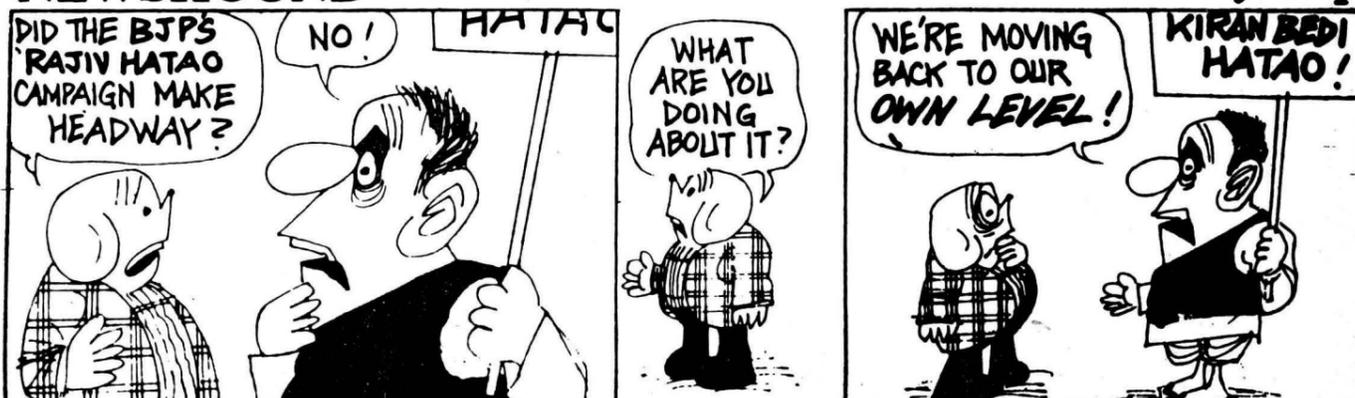
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**NEWSHOUND**



**By Rap**

**KIRAN BEDI HATAO!**

**WE'RE MOVING BACK TO OUR OWN LEVEL!**

# Towards Economic Disaster

The Budget for 1988-89 is as usual a subject of animated discussion. There are people who praise it, there are others who blame it for being too soft. In fact, one newspaper gave the heading "Soft all the Way".

Being soft or hard is no so important. What is important is will it help the economy to be solvent? The official assumption is that if the monsoon is favourable this year, the country would be over the hump. The decisions taken so far are calculated to help agriculture. What can not be planned for is how the monsoon will behave this year. If it is not, it is always open to the government to make mid-term changes. This seems to be the general approach.

How valid is it? The answer is that it is not entirely invalid. If the monsoon is favourable, the situation would certainly improve on the agricultural front. If farm production rises, surely it will relieve pressure on the price situation. To that extent, inflation may not be as much of a menace as it is feared. At the current rate of inflation, it has already crossed 10 per cent. It was stated in Parliament that, under the Janata regime, inflation went up to 20 per cent and the cause for it was the drought that year. If the drought this year has led only to a rate of inflation of 10 per cent, the percentage is not all that unsettling.

As an argument in a debate, this can be said and is being said. But the reality on the ground is more unsettling than the figures indicate. Though inflation is a general feature of almost all economies except in the communist world and though in India too inflation has been at work for several decades, the general understanding is that if inflation is 4-5 per cent per year, even the salaried class is able to adjust. But the moment it goes beyond that, it works havoc. Currently we are living through that phase and it is causing unhappiness all around.

To be able to cope with inflation is more or less a precondition for good government. Unfortunately, the situation in this regard is far from satisfactory. Most reactions to the budget are critical of the failure to contain inflation. As far as the official policy is concerned, it seems to be preoccupied with making the economic policies more and more acceptable so that there is not much public resistance. That is why the budget is being described as a soft budget. Somebody said it is the softest budget in a whole decade. Another comment is that it seems to be a preparation for a mid-term poll. Whatever the truth, the hard realities are not being faced. This much can be said without any fear of contradiction:

The plain fact is that the government is living beyond its means. As in the case of an individual, if the budget is not balanced, year after year, a stage comes when the individual becomes bankrupt. Something of that kind seems to be happening. More than one sixth of the revenue is not coming from taxes as it normally should. It is coming from the market borrowings instead. This, in turn, will lead to what they call a growing debt trap. The quantum of public debt is increasing every year and in consequence it is the future rather than the present which is being imperilled.

As if that was not bad enough, the expenditure on general administration is not being controlled as it should be. Even in regard to defence, all kinds of questions are being raised; whether we are not spending beyond our means, for instance. In that case, there is at least the justification of security considerations. In the case of general administration even that is absent. The official figure of the deficit given is more than seven thousand crores for the year. According to the Editor of the Economic Times, and he should know what he is talking about, the real deficit is four times of that. He applies the simple yardstick of the difference between revenue income and expenditure.

There is so much to be said on this subject but it should not be necessary to do so. The important thing to underline is that political mismanagement apart, economic mismanagement is going to create a situation which will make things difficult for everybody.

The monsoon is always an uncertain factor. Therefore, one cannot plan on that basis beyond a point. Planning has to be on the basis of what is known and what is certain. The only thing certain today is that the prices are rising and those are not being contained. To some extent, it is happening for unavoidable reasons, but to quite an extent, the reasons are totally avoidable. A decision to economise cannot be evaded by the country. Not to read the danger signals would be an act of irresponsibility and the consequences would be nothing but economic disaster. It is time that we stop short of disaster, otherwise what will happen is too painful to contemplate.

# How To Isolate The Terrorists

By Prem Shankar Jha

Students of recent history will recognise the features that have been described in the previous article. Punjab is turning slowly into a colony of the rest of India. Life is normal but only if one is not a political activist. Economic activity flourishes but even moderate political opposition is discouraged. The rule of law is gradually being replaced by the rule of the police.

This is not being done by design. If anything, both the Punjab Governor, Mr Siddhartha Shankar Ray, and the Police Chief, Mr. Ribeiro, are bending over backwards to prevent it. The police, for instance, have done their best not to kill innocents or even those who have committed acts of violence but have not yet become hardened killers. In a large number of such cases the police have put the criminals in the "custody" of their families or the village. But colonisation is taking place nonetheless because the gradual withdrawal of political and even civic rights is implicit in the use of force.

## Police Action

Police action is thus furthering the process of homogenisation—that coming out of political and social diversity—which is an essential prerequisite for a successful insurgency. Since it began more than five years ago the militants campaign and the government's response have wiped out a good deal of the original pluralism of politics in the state. The BJP has all but disappeared. The Congress has lost nearly all the Sikh votes in Punjab and it is now heavily dependent on the Hindu voters who have transferred their allegiance en masse from the BJP.

Among the Sikhs too political differences are being worn away. The Akali Dal-L is a shadow of its former self. The UAD is succumbing to pressures to endorse the violence unleashed by the terrorists and those of its leaders like Captain Amrinder Singh who still take an uncompromising stand against the killings are in imminent danger of losing their political relevance. Only the terrorists have grown stronger for they now enjoy a fairly widespread, if implicit sanction to kill and terrorise fellow Sikhs in order to impose "unity" on the "Panth".

If the Centre seriously wishes to isolate the terrorists it must forge a political strategy that seeks to end the alienation of the Sikhs of Punjab from the Centre and restores pluralism, first among the Sikhs and then in Punjab as a whole. The essential starting point of such a strategy is the announcement by the Punjab government of a

unilateral moratorium on police action coupled with an invitation to the terrorists to give up violence. Only this can remove the popular sanctions that the terrorists now enjoy for their killing sprees. The moment the government implements such a moratorium every moderate Sikh religious or political leader from Mr. Barnala to Darshan Singh Ragl will find his hand strengthened. The terrorists will then come under severe pressure to stop their campaign of murder.

Even after five years of mounting violence we still do not know enough about the terrorists' minds to predict how they will react. Most Sikhs in Punjab have convinced themselves that they have been wronged repeatedly by the Central government and that the militants, however misguided, are fighting for Sikh rights and for saving the Sikh Panth. Whether this perception is correct or not, is beside the point. But if the terrorists share it, the ending of police pressure on them will bring immediate results.

The killing will almost certainly go down but it probably will not stop. This is so because the die-hard secessionists will feel their goals threatened and then hold on to the Sikh youth slipping. Thus some more atrocities like the massacre of Hindu bus passengers and the murder of moderate Sikh leaders cannot be ruled out even after the moratorium is declared (witness what the LTTE did in Sri Lanka after the July 29 agreement).

But if the Central Government is able to weather the storm that will break in the rest of India and not postpone the process of normalisation or worse still bow to the inevitable demand to "send in the army" then the secessionists will suffer their first major tactical defeat in five years.

If the implementation of the moratorium leads to a significant decline in violence the Centre can follow it up in say a month, with various unilateral actions that will redress specifically Sikh grievances and halt the hardening of the "siege" mentality that now grips most Sikhs in Punjab. Foremost among these must be the release of the Jodhpur detainees and the strengthening of the two committees set up under the auspices of the Mishra commission to inquire into charges against individuals and Delhi police arising out of the November 1984 riots.

If all of these measures are implemented within a short time span, they will almost certainly split the terrorists down the middle. The divisions between them are well known and it is only the unrelenting pressure of the police that has made them close ranks in recent months. Mr. Gandhi will do well to remember that this is precisely what Mrs Corazon Aquino's offer of an amnesty and her invitation to join the political process did to the New Peoples' Army in the Philippines. It was only the nervousness of the Philippines Army and its wavering loyalty to the democratic regime that gave the ideologues in the NPA a change to regain control of the movement.

## New Government

The above steps can be followed by the reconvening of the now suspended Punjab legislature and the formation of a new government. Whether this can be done or not will depend on the capacity of the Akali Dal-L and the UAD to submerge their differences in the interest of the State and their own political future. But if they fail the Centre will have one final card left to play. This is to dissolve the assembly and hold another election. And instead of holding talk directly with "the boys" it can ask them to participate in the electoral process itself. This cannot be done today because the AISSF and the militants can combine and turn an election into a referendum on Khalistan. In the present state of disaffection no one can predict and outcome.

But once normality has returned, the level of violence has decreased and most of those who are now under detention in Central or Punjab jails have been released, the call for Khalistan, even if it is made, will 'lose its appeal'.

The strategy outlined above is not free of risks. Asking the police to stop chasing terrorists when their own lives are under threat will not be popular and may prove demoralising, particularly if the terrorists continue to kill so-called informers. Again, releasing those who have been in jail for years in daily contact with diehard militants and secessionists could touch off a new wave of violence. But continuing on the present course will be suicidal.

(Courtesy Times of India)

# Intimidation

Continued from page

## Bid to Expunge

In the afternoon when the Chairman Dr. S.D. Sharma, came back to find a chastened Treasury bench and a quite gleeful opposition, the debate swung to what should be said about the day's "unfortunate" happenings rather than what had been said.

The leader of the House, Mr. N.D. Tiwari, read out a short note that fell short of clear apology. After describing the fracas in the morning as unfortunate he requested that the whole matter be expunged in a spirit of "forgive and forget". This proved a red rag to the opposition who were otherwise prepared to let the matter rest, at least on the floor of the House. But none of them could agree to the government's attempt to "black out" an event which was not only unprecedented in the country's parliamentary history but also showed up the Congress (I) in a poor light. Finally chair had not agreed to expunge its remarks from the proceedings and these now form the record.

## The trend.

What does all this mean? Commentators and observers have expressed their concern on the episode. Not only generally hostile press but the sympathetic part of the press had no choice but to speak in unequivocal terms. The Telegraph in its editorial expressed, "what the members of the ruling party did in the Rajya Sabha is, to use the mildest adjective, shocking. The younger members of the party, led by the Union Minister for home affairs, not only betrayed their utter immaturity but also did democracy a great disservice."

The Times of India in its editorial on February 25 observed, "Mr. Rajiv Gandhi cannot disown responsibility for the shameful behaviour of Congress ministers and MP's in the Rajya Sabha...." It further points, "But even if in their excitement and intoxication with power they had, to begin with, convinced themselves that they would succeed in brobeeting him, they should have seen light when he refused to be pushed around."

The Tribune editorial expressed, "As sense of shame is, of course alien to a certain type of politician the nation has bred in the past two decades but the vanishing species of optimists in the country had thought that we still had a few fathoms to go before we hit the bottom of unparliamentary conduct. The nation had reckoned without the Congress MP's. Accustomed as they had been to acquiescent presiding officers in the past, the ruling party members threw all norms to the winds in questioning a ruling of the chairman of the house, none other than the vice-President of the Republic,

and not allowing him to conduct the proceedings. That this debasing spectacle went on in the presence of the Prime Minister lent an alarming dimension to the issue".

In addition veteran Congress leaders like Kamapati Tripathi and C. Subramanian have expressed their anguish in the open. But the ruling party has not bothered to express its regrets leave apart an apology by the PM as has been advised by senior leaders and press.

## Institutional Decay

This shows the steps towards the complete decay of the entire institutional order that was adopted and built by the founding fathers of Indian Constitution and early national leaders. From 1970s the offices of President and Governor had been made systematically subservient, the independence and probity of the judiciary has been undermined. Worst the process of party functioning has been completely throttled.

In 1975 during the monsoon session both houses of parliament had approved the emergency proclamation in forty eight hours. Before that not only a number of opposition members but also one or two from Congress party itself were arrested. The British Parliament, of course, had fought the battle against intimidation of its members by arrest some centuries earlier, specifically against James I. But by the time Indian parliament's committee on privileges had need to search British precedents, those had been narrowed and did not protect against criminal arrest or preventive detention. Even so, the preventive deten-

tion of a single M.P in 1952, upon quite plausible grounds that he was inciting communal passions, stirred the Lok Sabha to an enquiry. To day M.P.'s know that they can be arrested on any flimsy ground.

## Anti-defection Law

The Anti defection law enacted by the present government reportedly on moral ground, in fact has killed the conscience of MPs and instilled a sense of fear among them. In an interview to Indian Express on the eve of the budget session of Parliament Mr. S.L. Shakhder the former Secretary-general of Lok Sabha observed that in the past the ruling party always had a core which constituted the conscience of Parliament. It was this minority that ensured accountability of the executive to Parliament, but was totally absent today. This qualitative change had taken place because members now have been legally deprived of their consciences.

This obviously erodes people's faith in Parliamentary institutions. Confrontation replaces the normal process of competitions and conflicts are increasingly expressed in not just violent ways but in forms of violence that have very deep scars. For the government it is very easy to give it the name of law and order but people know that this is ever increasing dissatisfaction. This is the time for the scores of honest but silent members of the ruling party to heed to the advice of Rajni Kothari where he says "Duty to the nation has been the term that has been much misused in their party. It was time it was restored to its proper place and leaders of the Congress (I) at various levels - as well as those sitting on the fence for some reason exercised it for the good of society."

# Despondency in Punjab

Continued from page 1

a large gathering in spite of government's instructions to the police not to allow trucks and tractors to go to the venue of the meeting for "security reasons" and his peaceful and non-violent stance in the face of advocacy of violence by the terrorists and his ex-communication from the community by the militants. As a political pundit has already observed, Mr. Badal is the best bet under the circumstances. He has given a new turn to politics in the bullet-ridden State - that of non-violence. Mr. Badal is only following the glorious tradition of the Akalis non-violent struggle for gurdwara reform movement in the twenties and that of Mahatma Gandhi. One can fault him for not criticising the terrorists but his efforts to revive

political activity in the State on non-violent lines must be encouraged because non-violence is the only hope left to take the people out of the surrounding darkness and helplessness all around. If he succeeds in taking the Sikh masses on the non-violent path, that in itself will be a big achievement.

## Masterly Inaction

The Center's masterly inaction or its having no time to waste on "these things" leads us to the second cause of despondency in the State, i.e., the low morale of the police particularly after the killing of two senior police officials and the recent spurt in the activities of the terrorists.

The earlier optimism, even bravado on the part of some, has not yet given way to pessimism but there is certainly a growing realisation that a solution is not going to come out of the barrel of a gun nor is 'bullet-for-bullet' policy going to succeed. Everyone in the State, including the hawks, are talking these days of putting in what they call the "political inputs." Even the Governor, Mr. S.S. Ray, who is credited with wiping out the Naxalities in West Bengal and the police chief, Mr. J.F. Rebeiro, who dealt with successfully with the dons of the underworld in Bombay, have sent feelers to the Centre to take political initiative. A police action alone was not enough as it is was a social-cum-religious-cum economic-cum-political problem.

Mr. Rebeiro denies that there is any despondency of lowering of morale in the police force. He told a local English daily that steps were being taken to remove the weaknesses in the police set-up in Amritsar district where most of the action is.

The Additional Director General of Police, Mr. K.S. Gill, had been sent to Amritsar and he personally led CRPF patrol parties. Further, night patrolling by CRPF had been resumed. The irony is that the same newspapers correspondent in Amritsar sent a report the next day to say that senior CRPF and police officials were feeling despondent and finding it difficult to carry on the fight against terrorism in the absence of a clear

cut policy. They complained to the CRPF Inspector General of Police, Mr. Joginder Singh, that they felt frustrated for want of political direction. The field officers wanted the government to "stop functioning on a day-to-day basis."

## Tired Rebeiro

On top of this, there are reports that Mr. Rebeiro the super cop, feels tired and wants to quit after May 11 when his one year extension expires. Mr. Rebeiro has denied these vehemently and says that he is no quitter. But the former ebullience is no longer there. This is the third factor of despondency. Mr. Rebeiro says that they are fighting "a classical war" against terrorism and there are "ups and downs" in such a battle. He compares the problem in Punjab to that in Northern Ireland. The mere fact that he compares it with Northern Ireland means that he sees no victory in the near future.

The question is can we afford to repeat Northern Ireland in Punjab and wait indefinitely for a solution. No clear answer to the question is available as all the political parties and even the leader writers are groping the dark. Some of them are so despondent that they are praying for a Messiah to turn up and salvage the situation. One writes wishes Guru Gobind Singh Krishan Avtar to turn up. Such is the extent of despair.

## PUBLIC MEETING

### To Discuss PUNJAB CRISIS

On

Saturday 12 March 1988

at 5 P.M.

at

Sapru House Barakhamba Road  
New Delhi

### Speakers

Prof. Darshan Singh  
Sh. Ram Jethmalani  
Sh. Inder Gujral  
Lt. Gen. J.S. Aurora (Retd.)  
and others

All are Requested to Join

The Sikh Forum  
3-Masjid Road, Jangpura  
New Delhi-110014

# Politics Must Command

K.P. Karunakaran

*Only the policies of the government with a political perspective can solve the problems in Punjab and consequently that of maintaining the territorial integrity of India*

The enormous nature of the problem facing India is not fully grasped by those who are at the helm of affairs in the country. Or if they have comprehended it, they have tactically not stated it. Nor have they given expression to the clear cut policies which will tackle these problems. When faced with a situation like that of Punjab, no government can dogmatically stick to a blue print as the line of action. The ultimate policy can arise only as from the action and interaction of different political forces including that of the central government. But a basic political approach must be there. President Lincoln fought a civil war in the United States not primarily for the freedom of the slaves, but for not allowing the Southern states to get out of the U.S. Of course, the abolition of slavery also became an issue. The Indian Government will also have to take very firm steps to maintain the integrity of the country.

This will have to be stated explicitly by the political leaders. Many of the demands of the Sikhs in relation to Chandigarh, exchange of territories between Punjab and Haryana and the allocation of water of the rivers can be settled in a spirit of conciliation and with negotiations between different parties. But it should also be made clear to the extremists that India's territorial integrity is beyond negotiations. It should also be made clear that a situation should not be created in Punjab which will make the non-Sikhs to migrate to other states. A backlash of such a development can put the lives and properties of the Sikhs in danger in other states as hostages. They must live as full and free citizens as any others.

## Basic Approach

This basic approach of the central government should emerge from the fact that politics must be at command at New Delhi. Even the apostle of nonviolence, like Gandhi, knew the game of power. In his own words, he functioned as the commander-in-chief. That is why he got rid of Nariman, Khare and Subas Bose. Mao Tse-Tung used to say that a revolution is not a picnic, dinner party or wedding reception. It is a game of power, both capturing and consolidating power. When Jaya Prakash Narayan was leading the agitation

against Indira Gandhi's declaration of emergency, it was a fashion for his followers to say that they were not politically motivated. Whether they were or not, they were not politically competent. That is why the Janata experiment failed and failed miserably.

Now there is again a tendency to underrate politics. Under Mrs. Gandhi's Rule, it was the Secretary of the Ministry who was often sent to Punjab for consultation and conversations with political leaders. Again now, there is a tendency to glorify the role of one police official or administrative official. Of course, these officials have an important part to play as far as the day-to-day operational tasks are concerned. But the basic policy is important. And this must be determined by a political approach.

There should be limits to the power of the Sikh priests also. Nothing succeeds like success. If Barnala's atonement can strengthen his position, it may be tactically welcomed. But nothing fails like failure also. What he has done was to use a double-edged weapon. It is too easy to assess its ultimate effects of that weapon.

There is no doubt that the Sikh extremist who shot Barnala's colleague in Banada was not convinced of the genuine nature of Barnala's atonement. Unfortunately such events may take place in the near future.

## Managerial Efficiency

One often hears of the importance of managerial efficiency. But let us not forget that one must first have a correct policy. Only then it can be implemented efficiently. The decision of the government to form an advisory panel on Punjab is to be welcomed. But it should be made more representative than it is. One Marxist Party Leader should be included in it. The A.D.M.K. and Telugu Desam must also have share. The situation in Punjab must be tackled on a war footing and the Congress Party must associate all major parties with the basic policies. Only then it can be implemented efficiently. The managerial tools are a means to an end, and not an end by themselves.

The question of using the army in Punjab is often raised in discussions. As can be expected the Akali leadership, like any state and local leadership, is against the use of army. The chief of Army and the Chief of the Police are not enthusiastic about the army being called upon to maintain law and order. And in a democratic system, no one will welcome it. But a situation may develop, when it cannot be ruled out. There are important matters of policy which must be made clear to the public. The proposal to declare Amritsar and the bordering areas as centrally administration areas is to be preferred to the taking over the entire Punjab by

the army. But each one of these will depend upon situation to situation. The sense of direction of the administrative steps to be taken must depend upon a policy based on a political perspective.

## Perspective

This perspective is based on the understanding that India cannot afford any cessation of any part from the country. If Punjab is lost, Himachal

and Kashmir will be cut off from India. When once the disintegration begins, no one knows where it will end. So the basic policy should preserve India's integrity.

But political decentralization is not a step towards disintegration. It will be the basis of solid unity. In a multi-linguistic multi-religious and a multicultural society like that of India, political decentralisation and not administrative unity is the basis of political unity

## LETTERS

Sir,

On 4.2.88, at about 4 A.M., after dropping passenger at Indra Gandhi Airport No. 2 (International) when I reached crossing of new Gurgaon Road (By-pass) and Airport road, my taxi No. DLT-4596 ran out of petrol. With very difficulty, I pushed the taxi to the nearest Petrol pump (which is opened for 24 hours) and requested for petrol but the staff said they don't have petrol. I asked them that they just gave petrol a two wheeler scooter and a car which I saw myself when I was pushing my taxi to bring it to petrol pump, they said "may be but now petrol is finished." I explained the matter to Police Check Post Staff. They too requested them to give petrol but they did not listen the police also. So I lodged complain with Police Check Post against above mentioned petrol pump. A photostat copy of the complaint is attached herewith.

Later, I pushed out my taxi from petrol pump towards airport and stopped at a little distance. After shortwhile I realised other motorists are being supplied petrol from

the same petrol pump. I came back (without taxi) and protested to petrol pump staff. They said "Sardoron Ko raat ke Wakat Petrol nahin diya jata, jo karna hai kar lo". I again approached the Police Checkpost. When they came, petrol was being supplied to taxi No. DLT-5486. The driver of Taxi No. DLT-5486 Sh. Snat Ram has signed to certify that at 4.30 A.M. on 4.2.80 he got petrol. Photostat copy of the mater as written by Police personal and signed by Sh. Sant Ram is also attached.

I am discriminated being a sikh and also refused for petrol which are against law. Most humbly I request to take suitable action for dictatorial behaviour of the staff of above mentioned petrol pump.

Yours faithfully

(JASWANT SINGH)  
Ex-Serviceman and Driver  
Taxi No. DLT-4596  
Jangpura Extn., New Delhi



Members of the Asom Gana Parishad led by the Assam Home Minister, Mr. Bhriku Kumar Phukan, and the AGP vice-president and Assam Transport Minister, Mr. L. C. Rajkhowat, on a dharna at the Boat Club demanding speedy implementation of the Assam accord.

## Seventh Plan growth target not attainable

India is unlikely to achieve the targetted annual average growth of five per cent in the Seventh Plan (1985-90) if the performance in the first three years is any indication.

According to the quick estimates released by the Central Statistical Organisation today, the growth rate in gross national product (GNP) was only 4.1 per cent in 1986-87 against 4.5 to 5 per cent anticipated in the economic survey of 1986-87.

The rise in GNP was only 4.9 per cent in 1985-86 in the revised figures with 1980-81 as the base year. The economic survey of 1986-87 had placed the same at 5.1 per cent passed on the then quick estimates for that year.

In the current year ending March 1988, the drought has disrupted the economy and the Planning Commission is presuming at best a rise of about two per cent in GNP.

Thus the average annual growth in GNP works out to 3.666 per cent during the first three years totalling 11.4 per cent and unless the economy registers higher growth of about seven per cent in each of the next two years the Seventh Plan target would not be reached.

Contrary to earlier assumptions about the economy having entered a high growth path from the Sixth Plan (1980-85) onwards, the rate of growth of the last three years has put the economy back to the long-term growth trend of 3.5 per cent in earlier decades.

According to the quick estimates, gross domestic product (GDP) at factor cost at 1980-81 prices in 1986-87 is estimated to have risen by four per cent to Rs. 1,62,326 crores from Rs. 1,56,083 crores in 1985-86.

At current prices, the GDP in 1986-87 is estimated at Rs. 2,60,584 crores against Rs. 2,33,305 crores in 1985-86, showing an increase of 11.7 per cent during the year.

At constant prices (1980-81), the total national income (i.e. net national product at factor cost) in 1986-87 is estimated at Rs. 1,43,935 crores against Rs. 1,38,611 crores in 1985-86, showing a rise of 3.8 per cent during the year. This growth rate is slightly lower than that of GDP, mainly because of higher consumption of fixed capital.

### Mining Sector

The mining sector showed a rise of 11.8 per cent in net value added mainly due to increase in the value of output in petroleum and natural gas (13.0 per cent), coal (9.3 per cent), and iron ore (10.8 per cent).

The manufacturing sectors showed a slightly higher growth of 9.3 per cent against 9.2 per cent in the previous year. The rise in electricity, gas and water supply was also higher at 11.9 per cent in 1986-87 against 8.9 per cent in 1985-86.

In public administration and defence, a higher growth of 11.6 per cent in 1986-87 was observed against 6.2 per cent in 1985-86, which is mainly on account of payment of enhanced salary and wages as a result of partial implementation of the fourth pay commission's recommendations. On the whole, the services sector showed an increase of 6.8 per cent.

The per capita income, in real terms, is estimated at Rs. 1,869 for 1986-87 against Rs. 1,836 for 1985-86, registering an increase of 1.8 per cent during 1986-87.

The per capita income at current prices works out to Rs. 2,975 in 1986-87 against Rs. 2,721 during the previous year.

Gross domestic savings during 1986-87 amounted to Rs. 63,413 crores against Rs. 57,630 crores in 1985-86, constituting 21.7 per cent of gross domestic product at market prices against 22 per cent in the previous year.

The saving of the public sector, on the other hand, showed a fall of 7.2 per cent.

### Net savings

The net domestic saving during 1986-87 also increased from Rs. 31,190 crores in 1985-86 to Rs. 33,293 crores in 1986-87, constituting 12.7 per cent of net domestic product against 13.3 per cent in the previous year.

Whereas net saving of the household sector has gone up by 14.3 per cent from Rs. 33,098 crores in 1985-86 to Rs. 37,846 crores in 1986-87, the net saving of the private corporate sector declined from Rs. 1,303 crores in 1985-86 to Rs. 881 crores.

## Computer Reaches Tribal Schools

Biligiri Rangana Betta (BR Hills) is a tribal area near Mysore, in Karnataka. This Eastern Ghats mountain ranges is ancestral home of the forest tribe Soligas.

Vivekananda Girijana Kalyana Kendra is a voluntary organisation working among Soligas. They have been working for last five years and have tried to organise them. They run a school for tribal children at BR Hills. This school was selected as one of five centers by the State Council for science and technology to install a computer for children in the tribal school.

The Kendra discussed the merits and demerits of taking the computer. Some members feared that the introduction of computer may lead to loss of creativity among the children. However, after hectic discussion the organisation decided to get the computer. They thought that it will at least help the tribal children to understand and to deal with this new gadget. Moreover they were getting it free of cost. So they decided to add this gadget as an asset to tribal school.

After the installation of the computer the tribal children below the age of 15 years were taught the basics of operating. Out of fifty students, 30 students took keen interest in learning. The school teacher Ramachar remarked "The children had to learn some basics of English language to give orders to computers. They learnt this quickly. Now they are interested in solving problems and playing games. They have tried to codify tribal folk songs into computer." The computer firm sent some trainers to this tribal school. These trainers said "These tribal children are as good as urban children in learning to work with computers. They are constantly asking questions and work late in the night to solve problems".

The school has got some taped programme for school children, specially on plants and forests. These become teaching aid for students. The children are interested in such programmes as they are able to relate their immediate surrounding, especially their knowledge about forests. These children have overcome their initial inhibition and they are at ease with this gadget.

### The Problems

However, there are some problems to operate this gadget in these hill area. First of all the state is facing acute power shortage. For most of the school hours there is no power to operate the computer. So, they cannot use it for teaching purposes. The power comes only during night and the children have to work long. Thus, for most of the time this modern gadget remains unused in this school.

But there are some obvious advantages. In coming years the new generation of Soliga tribals have to face the onslaught of dominating 'civilised' world. It is very essential for them to be prepared to face this onslaught and be strong enough to save their indigenous culture. So this kind of exposures to gadgets of modern society may increase their self-confidence to deal with new things. At the same time it is very essential to see that the tribals do preserve their cultural identity from the civilised world. Otherwise they will be people who become alienated from their own homeland.

But there are some basic questions which reveal the futility of such mythical attempts of government to take the people to next century. These tribals find it hard to earn a living due to the forest policy. Their tribal schools do not have a proper roof over the buildings. The children suffer from malnutri-

tion and meeting their basic needs satisfactorily is still a dream for them. It is in such a situation the government advocates introduction of computers

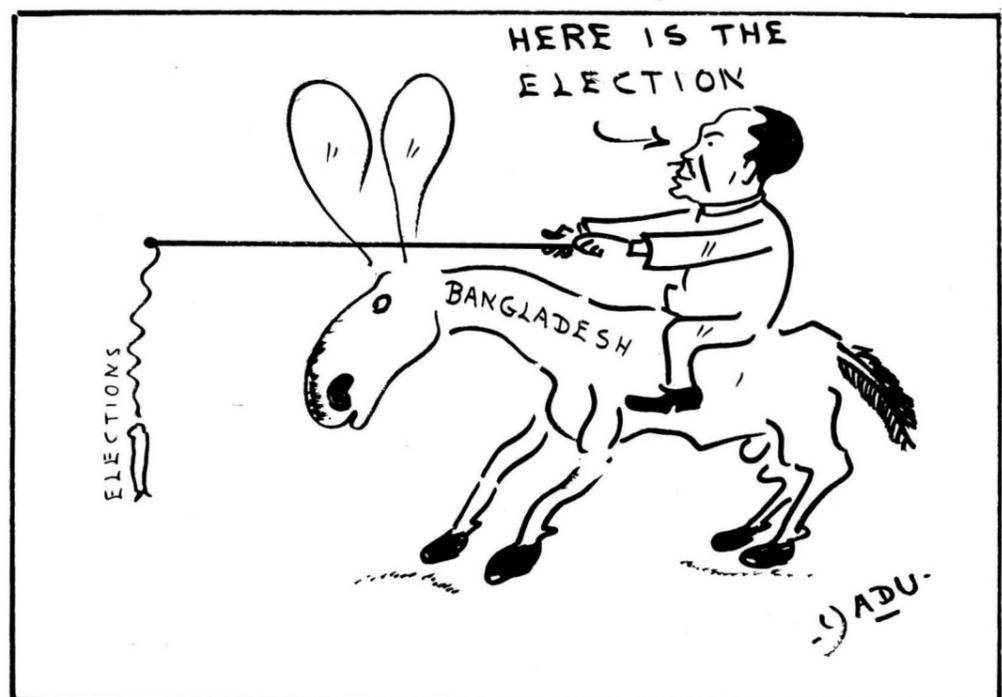
The burning problem of Soligas in BR Hills is the threat to their survival. The tribal population is about 4000 people and that of non-tribals is a meagre 200. The total revenue land available in the forest area is 1,800 acres. Of these 1200 acres is owned by three parties. They own the best coffee estates. Out of remaining 600 acres, 330 acres is owned by non-tribals. Tribals are left with only 200 acres of land to cultivate. Out of the total number of 4000 Soligas many are landless labourers.

### Refugees in own land.

These landless tribals are driven into forest area for cultivation by their circumstances. However, the forest officials drive them away destroying their crops, uprooting their huts. The Soligas have become refugees in their own land. They are not in a position to earn their basic needs to satisfy their hunger.

Earlier they used to collect tubers from forest to satisfy their hunger. Now the forest laws prohibit them from taking forest produce. The forest policy of planting teak and silver oak monoculture plantations have reduced the availability of tribal people's staple food from forests.

The state as well as central government is not interested in solving the land distribution problem or the forest related problem. But they dole out 'aid' in the form of computers. These tribals need practical help in acquiring some land so that they can grow food, and humanitarian policy to co-exist with forests. Negotiation of these basic issues and providing a computer will in no way help tribals to enter the twenty first century (N.F.S. INDIA).



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## Meaning of Sarkaria Commission

Kuldip Nayar

**T**he Sarkaria Commission, to which the Anandpur Sahib resolution was referred, has been wishy-washy in its attitude. It concedes that the resolution pleads for stronger states, "for corporate identities of different communities, as much as for national unity and integrity of the country." But when it comes to specific recommendations, the commission shies away.

Having said that the Anandpur Sahib resolution is "in a sense a plea for fulfilling even at this belated stage the assurance given by Jawaharlal Nehru and other national leaders of the Independence struggle to the Sikhs and other minorities that they would be in their corporate being co-sharers in the political sovereignty of free

Sahib resolution or such other declarations. The question is not as to how the Union remains strong but how its limbs feel weak. Without transfer of real powers, they will not be able to work for the welfare of the people; who live in the states and give shape to the overall concept of the Union. The commission's verdict of leaving things as they are is not going to help.

The problem which the people are facing in the country is that of distant administration. They have no power over those who govern them; the people normally have a say only once in five years when the general elections are held. Regional sentiments are coming to the fore because the Centre is too powerful an entity to accept the

**The Sarkaria Commission has missed the point in the Anandpur Sahib resolution or such other declarations. The question is not as to how the Union remains strong but how its limbs feel weak. Without transfer of real powers, they will not be able to work for the welfare of the people; who live in the states and give shape to the overall concept of the Union. The commission's verdict of leaving things as they are is not going to help.**

india." The commission leaves the matter at that. It does not say how to ensure the implementation of what it advocates.

Again after conceding that "a basic change in the organisation of political power is a must if the nation is to resolve the crises in which it finds itself today," the commission does not get to the logical conclusion that the Centre must be divested of some powers and that certain subjects on the central list should be transferred to the state list. The commission pins all hopes on consultations between the Centre and the states, without suggesting any constitutional remedies for stalling the Centre from poaching in the concurrent list.

Some people may raise the point that the Anandpur Sahib resolution goes too far when it leaves with the Centre only five subjects: external affairs, defence, railways, communications and currency. In fact, in 1978, West Bengal's communist government went as far as to submit a memorandum on the subject to the Janata government at the Centre. Even the Opposition conclaves have, from time to time, highlighted "the unbridled powers" enjoyed by New Delhi. However, the commission merely paraphrases such demands in favourable light and fails to go beyond hopes and wishes.

The Sarkaria Commission has missed the point in the Anandpur

states as partners. The various violent incidents and agitations are an expression of neglect and disillusionment. Indeed the Sarkaria Commission has thought of only geographical unity and not of emotional unity, without which the different areas are not strung together. In fact, the principle of decentralisation is applicable in case of the states as well. Power should go right up to grassroots' levels so that the people can feel the presence of their rulers.

It seems that the Sarkaria Commission got scared of the prevailing atmosphere in the country. The same thing had happened in December 1946, when the framers of the Indian Constitution wanted India to be a federation of states but modified the objective after partition. At that time, Nehru had promised that the various territories constituting independent India shall possess and retain the status of autonomous units together with residuary powers."

Subsequently, the emphasis was shifted from the strength of the units to the necessary to maintain the unity of the country even at the cost of sacrificing to some extent, the autonomy of the states. In order to emphasise this necessity of maintaining the unity of the country, the new clause of "fraternity" was added in the preamble as one of the objectives of the Constitution - assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation. But this has not been of any consequence.

On the one hand, the Sarkaria Commission quotes, in support of its argument, an assurance by Maulana Azad, the veteran leader of the Indian freedom movement, that "decentralisation of power in a federal government would also help allay the fears of the minorities." But on the other hand it confines itself to repeating clichés like, "The working of the Constitution of India in the last 38 years has

demonstrated that its scheme and provisions were basically sound and that no structural changes were called for." The functioning of New Delhi so far does not hold such a promise.

I am afraid that the Sarkaria Commission's report will strengthen those who are raising the slogan of "Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan". Forces working for a federal structure with a great deal of auto-

nomy for its constituent units will feel despondent, if not defeated. Persistent demands and protestations, for the last 35 years, led to the nomination of the Sarkaria Commission; many more struggles will have to be launched for a more equitable distribution of powers between the Centre and the states. This is surely something to worry about.

## How Well-off is the Punjab Farmer-I

By Bharat Dogra

**T**here is a lot of interest in the economic condition of the farmers of Punjab, and understandably so. After all, isn't Punjab supposed to be the model of agricultural development in India, in the sense that it is in this state that the maximum progress in implementing the government's strategy of agricultural development has been made. Whether one looks at the area under HYVs, the area under irrigation, per hectare fertiliser use or per hectare crop yield, by all these criteria Punjab is the number one agricultural state in India. So from the point of view of the viability or wisdom of the agricultural technology or agricultural development strategy the government is implementing, it is interesting and important to know the condition of Punjab farmers - the farmers who have travelled the farthest on this path of development. How well-off are they? What are their returns from the expensive farming methods they have adopted?

If someone travels to Punjab villages with a view to finding out the answers to these questions, he would of course be able to talk to several farmers who will tell him in detail how much they spend and how much they earn, but still reaching a simple conclusion on the economic well-being of farmers will not be an easy task. Not only will the calculations differ from area to area and within an area among small and big farmers but even two farmers of similar land holdings living only a short distance from each other may reveal a different picture.

### In the field

**R**ecently I visited Bilaspur village of Faridkot district, a village which has seen

a very significant rise in productivity in the green revolution years. I talked to a group of farmers and most of them were of the view that despite the increase in productivity, the overall economic conditions of the farmers has not improved much and their returns are not adequate.

The rough calculations of the expenses, yields and returns from one year's crop rotation of wheat and rice - the most common crop rotation of this area - went something like this -

Quite clearly several questions can be raised about such a calculation. And the purpose behind presenting such a simple calculation is not to attempt any accuracy - it is only to give an idea of how the farmers see their economic returns or how they like to present it when questioned about it

### Complex Reality

**T**he complex reality may depart from this calculation in numerous ways, only some of which are being pointed out here. A farmer who owns his personal tractor will save ploughing or land preparation costs to a substantial extent, in addition he may hire out his tractor to other, but he will also be hindered by the cost of paying back the instalments of the price of the tractor. At the time of serious epidemics or introduction of a new, particularly susceptible crop variety the cost on pesticides may increase. Depending on the better availability of electricity, the costs of irrigation may go down significantly, also in the case where good canal irrigation is available, while for some irrigation costs may be even higher because they have to obtain water from the tubewells of

others. The availability of ground water differs from place to place. In the case of labour, some farmers may have one or more permanent labourers. Labour costs, particularly harvesting may also depend on whether migrant workers are available or whether combine harvester is used.

In addition there is also the important consideration of working capital - does the farmer rely for this on his own earnings (including that of a family member engaged in non-farm work), or does he rely for this on the relatively cheaper institutional credit, or having defaulted on payments to institutional sources, he has to rely on private sources which lend money at a much higher rate?

But it is interesting to see that while according to the simple calculations of the group of farmers I met the annual returns per acre of land are no more than Rs. 1000 to Rs. 1500 at the same time they also admitted that when one acre of land is leased to another farmer on annual contract basis, a payment of Rs. 3000 is made. And a lot of land is regularly leased out on this basis. Hence the question arises that if anyone cultivating the land earns only about Rs. 1500, then why should a payment of Rs. 3000 per acre is made year after year by those leasing in land - after all they have to earn more than Rs. 3000 if they have to justify spending their labour, time, managerial skills etc. on this land? The farmers I talked to had no clear answer to this question, giving uncertain replies like that is why several farmers regret after leasing in land. Such replies, of course do not explain how land continues to be taken on contract at the rate of Rs. 3000 per acre per year. (To be concluded)



# The Concept of Civil Liberties

Ram Manohar Lohia

(This article is a part of Dr. Lohia's booklet entitled "The Struggle for Civil Liberties" published in 1936 by the Foreign Department of the All India Congress Committee and the foreword to this booklet was written by Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Congress President-Ed.)

In order to arrive at an understanding of what civil liberties are, it is necessary to go into their conceptual extent, origins, present state and contemplated actions to maintain them. An enquiry under these four heads: What is the number and types of civil liberties? How did they arise? How and why are they attacked today? Why and how should they be defended? will yield us the concept of civil liberties.

What is the number and types of civil liberties? We have only to string together the epochal statements to state-builders and the basic doctrines of organic laws and court decisions. These doctrines and statements have related to various types of civil liberties. At the head of them all stand liberty of person and movement and the sanctity of dwellings. "The aim of the State is the conservation of natural rights of man; these rights are liberty, property, security and resistance to oppression," lays down an article of French Constitution of 1789. No one shall be arrested and detained or imprisoned without due processes of law. Such processes have gradually come to include an open trial by jury, whose predominant element is drawn out of the same class of men as the accused. Everyone shall be secure in his house, which will not be broken into and searched unless on charge of a definite and specified act of lawlessness. No restrictions shall be imposed on the freedom of a citizen to move about in the country and to obtain passports in order to travel abroad.

In this age of great mass efforts and people's awakening, the liberties of opinion and assembly are as important as those of person and dwellings. The standard in regard to freedom of expression by speech or press in the American dictum that no opinion, whatever its revolutionary import, may be punished unless it is accompanied by an overt act of revolt. The standard in regard to freedom of assembly and processions is the English doctrine that, unless serious obstruction to traffic can be proved, the police or the executive may not take any action. These doctrines imply the abolition of

sedition laws and of censorship over press, books, post and radio. Ban orders on meetings and processions are also impermissible. Equal rights shall be granted to everyone to hold meetings in public halls and such areas in every town and village as are traditionally used for purposes of assembly.

## Types

Together with the two types of civil liberties relating to person and opinion, the freedom of association and organisation has been steadily acquiring a unique significance. In order that larger masses of men may translate their keen interest in State affairs and economic management into organised effort to remove existing evils, they must in no event be robbed of their precious freedom to organise and strike and picket. The executive might often pretend and advertise the fear that such strikes or organisations will eventually lead to breaches of peace and the spread of a revolutionary mentality and, thus, seek to interfere with this precious freedom. Such attempts have to be resisted and exposed and, short of an overt act, the freedom to organise and strike should not be allowed to be tampered with.

"Law is an expression of the general will" was laid down in an article of the 1789 French Constitution. State authority is to originate from the will of the people and thus democratic control over the Government is considered as an important type of civil liberties. The Government may not act secretly nor without the previous permission of a democratically elected assembly. In some form or the other the civil liberties unions of the world have accepted democratic control over the Government and even the republican form as one of their agitational planks.

## Minorities Rights

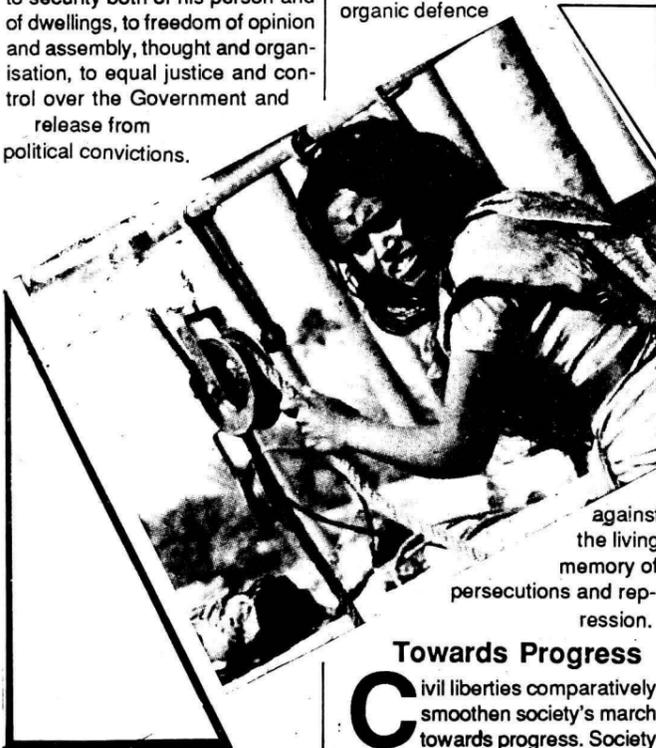
The rights of racial minorities come within the extent and scope of a civil liberties agitation. The persecution of racial minorities is obviously a reflection

of unequal laws as also unequal dispensation of justice and is therefore an attack on the civil liberties of a section of citizens. Thus, the Civil Liberties Union of America lays especial emphasis on the protection of Negroes and the British and French Unions on that of the colonial peoples.

Freedom of conscience and thought and education is properly speaking a part of liberty of opinion. This freedom must, however, be especially emphasised in so far as all interference takes place within the precincts of governmental or semi-governmental institutions. If a professor or a teacher is dismissed from his job for expressing opinions unsavoury to the administration and denominational or communal institutions are encouraged by the government, the liberties of free conscience and education are directly attacked without serious possibilities of appeal.

The demand for the release of political prisoners is yet another aspect of civil liberties. Most convictions are based on a legal and judicial system, which is too heavily weighted in favour of the government as against the citizen. A fight against this system would obviously entail protection of its victims and, therefore, the release of political prisoners is a demand of civil liberties. Pending such release, the rights of prisoners in relation to food, accommodation, punishments intellectual provisions and the like have to be fought for.

The conceptual extent of civil liberties is now clear. It embraces the rights of the citizen in regard to security both of his person and of dwellings, to freedom of opinion and assembly, thought and organisation, to equal justice and control over the Government and release from political convictions.

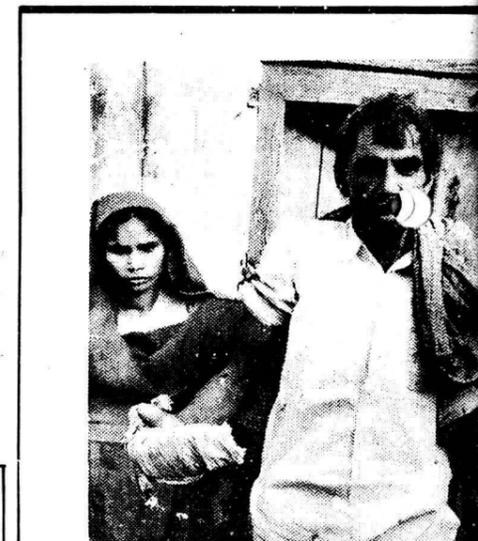


Bundu, a rickshaw puller, showing his brother Rajabpur village near Meerut following

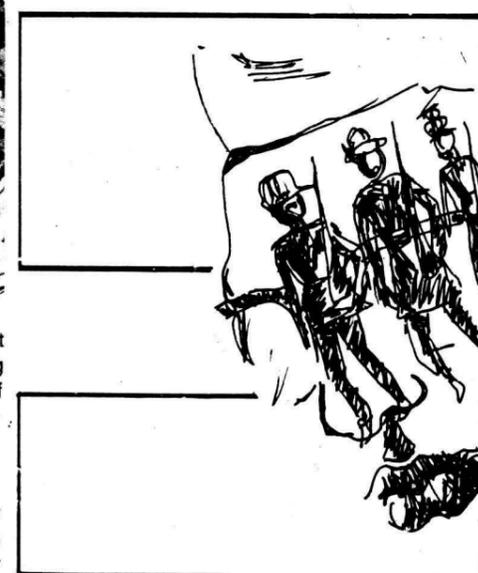
## The Origin

How did they arise? The concept of civil liberties is an outcome of the struggle that the citizen has eternally waged against his State. Throughout history, the State and its laws have given rise to manifold types of abuses. Whether it was an oppressive tax system or a blood-thirsty landed aristocracy, the citizen groaned and attempted to resist. Wars and cultural stagnation were forced on him and he sought to end them. In his efforts, however, to end oppression and existing evils, he was met with stern repression. The authority in whom Statepower was vested did not brook the defiance, which was naturally involved in the struggle against abuses and evils. The wrath of the State fell down on the citizen who tried to be critical. He suffered long and solitary confinements, quite often death, and his most precious possessions were snatched away from him. He, therefore, stood in need of a minimum basis of safety from where he could launch attacks on the abuses and evils of his times. The rights of the citizen in opposition of the Government, as enshrined in the organic and ordinary law of different lands, are an expression of such a minimum basis of safety. If a regime of civil liberties prevails, resistance to oppression is not attended with frightfully consequences.

It is instructive to recall the occasions of the American and French Constitutions and the English Bills of Rights. In each case, much oppression and many social and financial abuses had preceded. Bastilles of one type or the other had been built to frighten people into submission and acceptance of condition as they obtained. When finally the peoples had gathered sufficient strength to smash the State and its economic and social laws, they overthrew the Bastilles. On the ruins of the Bastilles was reared the imposing structure of civil liberties. It was an organic defence



Bundu, a rickshaw puller, showing his brother Rajabpur village near Meerut following



against the living memory of persecutions and repression.

## Towards Progress

Civil liberties comparatively smoothen society's march towards progress. Society



is being eternally pulled between reaction and progress and, often, degenerates into a state of stagnation. In this pull, the State has more often been controlled by forces of stagnation and reaction. There are, of course, brief interludes when former rebels, in the initial stages of their power, have used the State as an agency of progress. Soon, however the rebels acquire a distaste and hatred of all changes and the powerful machine of the State is directed against the progressive efforts of the dispossessed. Lest the State should turn into a terrible obstruction to progress and continually block it by its repression, its supreme authority over the citizens stands in the need of description and curtailment.

The entire scheme of citizens' rights is an outcome of the effort to describe and curtail State authority. In this manner, orderly social progress becomes possible and society is not continually faced with the choice between tyranny and revolution. The concept of civil liberties is thus essentially a liberal concept which acts as a shock-absorber of the cruel impact between State tyranny and mass revolts. It enables society's march towards progress to proceed on orderly lines. If a citizen chooses to be critical of the world in which he lives, society permits him to question and test and experiment without fear of serious reprisals.

ARK TIMES



on hand, hurt during the PAC's operations in job violence

Why are civil liberties attacked today? The answer is obvious. A titanic struggle is going on before our eyes between the forces of status quo and reaction and those of progress. Whether in the colonies or among the masses in imperialist countries, banners of criticism and revolt have been raised against the prevailing economic and political system. This system has meant progressive deterioration in employment and living conditions and cultural attainments and is ever resulting in humiliations for the colonial peoples and barbaric wars. The whole world is a vast question mark and old social structures are being tested and found wanting. The colonial peoples and oppressed masses all over the

world are thinking out an alternative Society and are propagating and organising and striking for its acceptance. And so the State is weighting the struggle in favour of the existing society and answers the cry for alternatives with stern arrests and bans.

It is instructive to remember that it is the national freedom movement in the colonies and the socialist and communist parties of the world that are the worst sufferers. They suffer because they are voicing the demand for alternatives of the colonials and peasants and labourers of the world. Against them are pitted the powers of status quo, the force of finance and imperialist capital and landed aristocracy. The Government throw overboard the concept of civil liberties and go out of the pale of their described and limited authority. And so attacks on the civil liberties of citizens have become a permanent instrument of finance capital and landed aristocracy.

It is desirable here to go into the stray enquiries, made for some time past in our country, that assume the function of civil liberties as being divided into a religious or a political or an economic scope. It is obvious that such enquiries rest on a misconception. There are no religious or political or economic civil liberties as such. The question of civil liberties arises only when the constituted authority of the State fails to safeguard them to its citizens either by acts of commission or, less often, through those of omission. Civil liberties are violated when the State either itself attacks the various freedoms of opinion and association of its citizens or permits private gangsterdom to do so. The basic factor in all such State and private violence is the fear or criticism and revolt against the existing system of laws and government.

**Violations**

How are Civil Liberties violated? In the first instance, laws of detention, house-searches, sedition, censor and association and codes of criminal procedure practically all over the world militate against the fundamental guarantees of civil liberties. These laws and codes are either frankly repressive or deliberately vague. In either case they deliver the citizen to the caprices of the Executive. Secondly, the executive and judicial administrations of the world are trying increasingly to conquer every inch of territory that they had to concede to liberty and justice. This they do in all manner of ways. Justice is severely and often faultily applied; imprisonment and heavy sentences out of all proportion to the offence have become very usual. The executive issues edicts which could not be defended in a properly constituted court of law and, otherwise, seeks to corrupt and frighten public opinion by State subsidies, propagandist scares and secret action. Thirdly, in the dark chambers of

the police, shielded from public eye, excesses are done and third degree methods use. Often, the police stretches the law much beyond its proper scope. Illegal detention and forced statements and, threats of drastic action are usual. Fourthly, private violence in the employ of the State or of vested interests is permitted and encouraged. This is particularly done in the villages. In their total effect, the four types of violations restrict the right of the citizen to hold meetings and form associations and propagate thought through books, newspapers and radio. The citizen becomes an easy prey to dismissal from his job, police-torture, detention and heavy sentences.

**Defence**

How should civil liberties be defended? The Civil Liberties Unions of the world have developed an efficient mechanism of branches and local correspondents who throw the searchlight of publicity on legal, judicial, executive, police and private excesses and prepare dossiers of each individual case. Action is taken on each individual report. Interventions on behalf of the victims are made with the authorities. With the voluntary aid of prominent speakers, writers, solicitors and public men, the national headquarters develop mass campaigns against specific laws, for individual affairs, for public enquiries and free trial and for release of detenus and political prisoners. They also organise legal defence. The publicity apparatus of special press releases, brochures and other publications is evolved.

Why should civil liberties be defended? The question is obviously absurd and yet it is not seldom asked. Why should we defend your civil liberties; would you, were you in power, safeguard these to us? Again, the advice is often given to those, whose civil liberties are violated, to slow down their agitation against the existing order or, even, to stop it. It is easy to see the implications of both the rhetoric and the advice. Both amount to an acceptance of the status quo and a falling in line with the force of social reaction. Only the hard-bolled reactionary will not shrink before such a prospect. Whoever believes in orderly social progress, and the front extends in normal-times from the conservatives over the liberals to the radicals, lines up in a joint defence of civil liberties.

There is another type of argument, met with among a section of radicals, that seriously whittles down the importance of any special defence of civil liberties. It is asserted that there is not much use of fighting for civil liberties, for, ultimately it is a question of political power. Suppression and repression will willy-nilly take place, so long as criticism or an organised action against the existing order are attempted. The ultimate guarantee of civil liberties, therefore, lies in the overthrow of the

existing State. The argument that civil liberties can finally be protected only under a different regime is true enough but there is a serious flaw in the deduction that it is not much use fighting for civil liberties.

The special front of civil liberties maintains the backbone of the people. The spirit of opposition against injustice is kept intact. The individual gets strength from the knowledge that his resistance to police or executive oppression will awaken common interest. Again, such a common interest serves to convulse the conscience of the people against encroachment on their liberties. The people are taught to be vigilant and, so they clear the road to progress.

The fight for civil liberties also lays bare political and social abuses which are the fountain-head of all suppression. As in the American fight for civil liberties in the countryside, facts of economic and political management, which would have otherwise remained unknown come out in the open. An enquiry into a case of violation of civil liberties is simultaneously and enquiry into the particular abuse against which the individual had fought and for which the wrath of the State and other interest had descended upon him. Thus, the fight for civil liberties awakens the social conscience of the people. We may not also forget that the front of civil liberties is more broad

based and inclusive than that of freedom and progress. Among the ranks of freedom and progress, there may be differences of opinion on other matters but they will all unite on an issue of civil liberties. Their ranks are further strengthened by the inflow of such as have not yet turned into hard-boiled reactionaries. Such a broad-based and inclusive front is a great moulder of public opinion and can also exercise much pressure on the State.

It is also incorrect to say, that, till the final objective of State power is achieved, nothing can be done towards the safeguarding of civil liberties. Such an argument assumes that the existing state-power can do whatever it likes until it is fully defeated. That may be a legal fiction and to a very large extent true, but even the State shrinks from doing certain things lest they should recoil on its head. To restrict, therefore, the factual authority of the State, all manners of trenches should be dug and citadels fortified in defence of people's freedom. The agitation for civil liberties is even such a trench and a citadel. In most cases, it may only stiffen public opinion but, in some, the state shall have to bend. There have been cases where previous orders to the Executive or subordinate officials were revoked and release of political prisoners effected in response to an insistent public demand.

**Call for new stress on human rights**

Bangalore, February 24. The former chief Justice of India, Mr. P.N. Bagwati, has called for a complementary programme of education to develop new thinking about human rights among the people.

Inaugurating the judicial colloquium on "domestic application of international human rights norms organised at Bangalore by the Commonwealth Secretariat, Mr. Bhagwati said social movements should be accelerated to protect human rights. He also said lawyers and judges have to play a vital role in the promotion and enforcement of human rights. The judges should follow various strategies and desymbolise the constitutional and legal perceptions in regard to human rights by activist, goal-oriented approach, he said.

He said the language of human rights carried a great rhetorical force and said that the basic need for promotion of human rights was the conversion of the rhetoric into a reality.

He said that specific human rights should be positivised and particularised so that they might form the basic consideration. Later importance was given to social and economic rights. These two formed a linkage and without one the other could not be achieved.

**Unlawful Custody**

He said that unlawful custody and keeping the undertrials after the period of detention constituted human rights violation. He criticised the police for keeping the people in unlawful custody.

He said that the personality and clean image of judges helped a lot in promotion of human rights "when a judge acts without fear or favour. People will respect him," he said. The chief justice of Pakistan Mr. Muhammed Halim, the justice Mr. R Ramanathan from Sri Lanka and other judges and justices from various countries participated in the colloquium.

Certain human rights act as a restraint on the power of the state and such restraint was necessary because of the possibility of misuse of power or excess of power on the part of the state which is inherent in the legitimate possession of monopoly force within the system. Thus the state acted as both the friend and enemy of human rights, he said.

If the state failed to carry out its constitutional or legal obligations with respect to human rights, then the state must be forced to enforce them by an active judiciary, Mr. Bhagwati said.

# The Water and the Bridge

Maheep Singh

**W**HEN THE TRAIN left Lahore, my heart suddenly trembled. We were now going towards the area where many years ago lakhs of people had been consumed in the vast conflagration and lakhs of people carried the scars even today. I felt as if our train were entering some long, dark cavern and we were yielding to the darkness.

There were about three hundred of us—all pilgrims. There were many women and children too among us. Our pilgrimage had taken us to every gurdwara in Lahore. We had been welcomed so enthusiastically that now our pilgrimage to Panja Sahib did not seem to hold any possible danger. Yet, who could say when the animal in man would wake and go beyond the merely possible.

While thinking all this I looked at my mother. She was gazing out, her elbow resting on the window the palm of her hand supporting her chin. The wheat crop had been harvested and the fields could be seen stretching out into the distance. She sat there with expressionless eyes. I felt as if this land had overwhelmed her very heart. Then I glanced towards the other passengers. Even they were in the grip of a profound quiet. It was difficult to fathom the cause of this sudden melancholy overcoming everybody.

"Mother, you must be quite familiar with this route," I said interrupting her reverie. "You must have passed this way many times."

She looked at me and smiled in the way she had begun to smile after having lost everything. "I remember each and every station of this line" she said, "But today this region looks so alien. I am traveling this way now after many years. When I travelled before, there would be a strange sense of delight once we passed Lahore and approached our station Serai Alamgir. I could see each and every face in my mind's eye. So many people used to be there at the station."

For mother, old memories were revived. But since father had set up his business in U.P., all of us, brothers and sisters, were born outside Punjab, I remember that my father would come to Punjab only about once a year, while mother would come two or three times. As far as I remember my younger sister used to accompany her most of the time.

In the days when Punjab had been torn apart by the savage butchery, mother had decided to go to there again. Everyone in the family opposed it as if her going like this was indeed like her jumping into fire. But all of us, including father, knew that it was not

easy to dissuade mother once she was determined. She laughed away everybody's objections and came back in about twenty days' time. She had booked most of our luggage from our village home and home and had even brought along her spinning wheel and the wooden curd-churner.

Then the whole of Punjab was on fire. Houses, Villages and cities were engulfed in that conflagration. When it was over, it seemed that the plains and the fertile lands stretching upto Peshawar had cracked somewhere between Amritsar and Lahore, and the region on the other side had perhaps moved still farther—one did not know how far. We all forgot that on the other side of the abyss was our village which was connected to the world by a pucca road and had a canal crossing it towards the rear and that the river Jhelum leaped and danced like a maiden, meandering on its ecstatic way. Now I was going with my mother to that side which was so much ours yesterday and so alien today.

I was looking through the pages of a book when mother asked, "Does this train halt at Serai?"

I fidgeted for a while and finally said, "Yes, perhaps, but it will reach there at the dead of night when we shall be fast asleep. We shall not even know when the train passes that station. And moreover who do we know there whom we can call our own?"

Mother's face wore an annoyed expression, "For you, there was nothing there even before."

My answer had hurt my mother. I kept quiet and once again busied myself in the book.

It grew dark. Mother took out something to eat from a cloth bag. One of my maternal uncles was also with us. The three of us ate, and prepared to asleep. My uncle started snoring within minutes. I also relaxed but mother kept sitting, as vigilant as before.

After some time, I woke up to find that mother was staring fixedly as before at the darkness outside. I looked at my watch. I was ten-thirty. I said, "Mother, why don't you also lie down for some time, please?"

She nodded and stretched herself out on the seat. In that half wakeful state I had a dream. I do not remember it exactly but in that nightmare I felt some sort of anxiety something wet, something red seemed to be whirling all around me and I felt as if my feet were splashing through in that thick, red liquid. I suddenly woke up, frightened. Mother was shaking my shoulder. Her hands were trembling, she seemed anxious and gripped by some strange excitement.

"What is it?"

"What is this noise outside?"

I looked out. Our train had halted at a small wayside station. There was only the faint dim light of the lamp posts on the platform, and there was a strange noise. I was frightened. All those stories that I had heard about how, years ago, bloodthirsty crowds had stopped trains and massacred the passengers, flashed through my mind instantly. My uncle had also woken up.

"What is the matter?"

Only then did I hear. Somebody from the crowd was shouting.

"Anybody in this train belonging to Serai?"

"What station is this?" I asked mother.

"Serai, our station," she replied.

Again the voice asked, "anybody from Serai?"

I looked at mother. There wasn't the slightest hint of fear on her face.

"Ask them what is the matter."

I learned out of the window. Many people were moving to and fro and shouting, Anybody from Serai?

I called out to a man who was passing by, "What is the matter?"

"Does anybody from among you belong to this village?" my mother said a little eagerly.

"Are you from Serai?" he asked with emphasis.

"Yes."

Immediately, word was passed around. Many people collected in front of our compartment. Then there was chorus of voices.

"Yes, we are from Serai," my mother said loudly, "from this very village."

There was a kind of uproar in the background. A voice asked "Whose wife are you?"

Mother looked at me. I replied, "My father's name is Sardar Moola Singh. She is my mother."

"You are Moola Singh's son?" Many voices repeated simultan-

ceously, "And you are his wife, sister-in-law of Ravel Singh? Is everybody well?" And many hands stretched towards us. The men began enquiring about the health of our relatives and gave us small cloth bags which contained gifts from the people in the village. Unable to speak, mother and I took these cloth bags and placed them on the seat. In no time our seats were heaped with these bags.

I was wonderstruck. Mother was adjusting her "dupatta" over her head and was folding her hands together again and again. Her lips quivered with pleasure. She could hardly speak and it seemed as if tears would trickle down any minute.

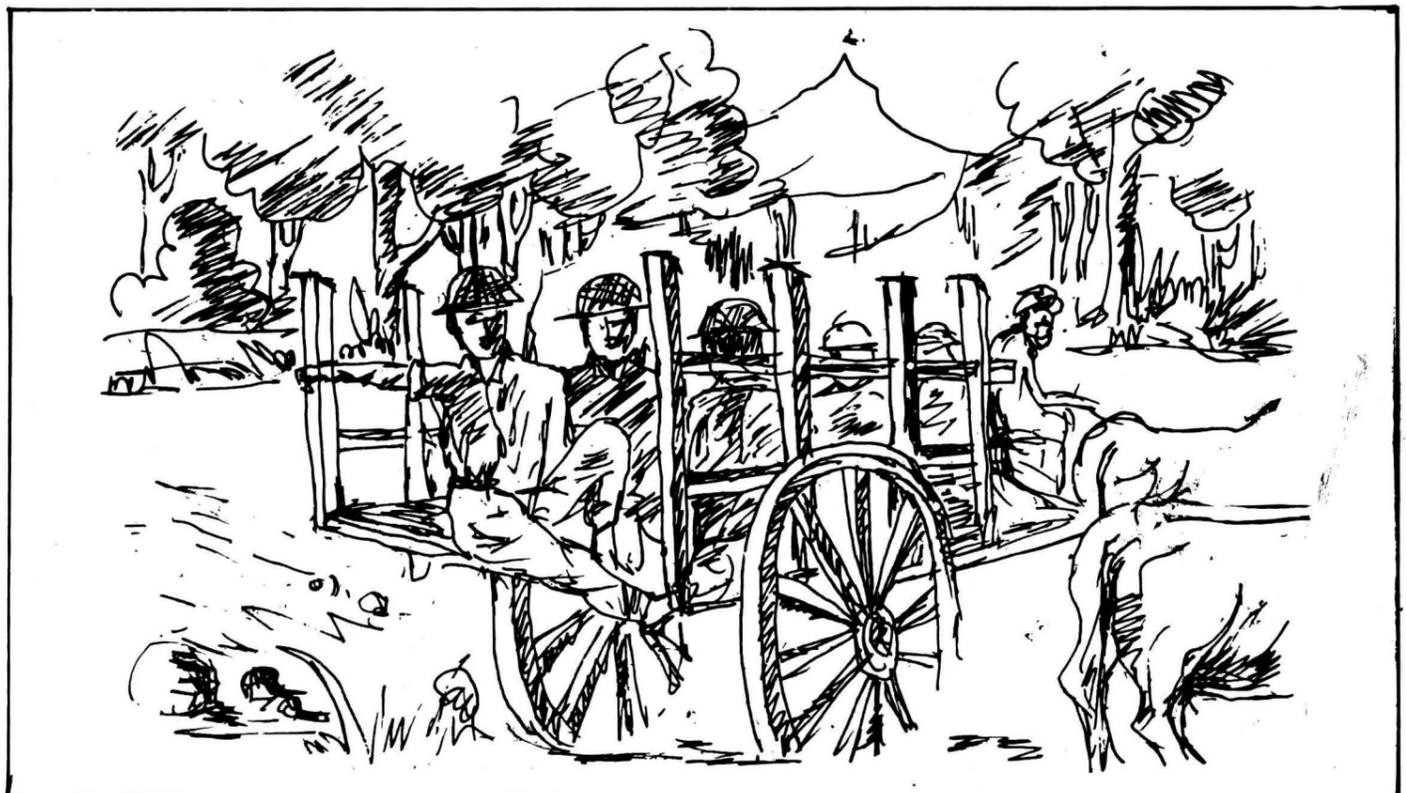
The guard showed the green signal and brought out the whistle from his pocket, but three or four persons surrounded him. "Mister, let the train stop a few more minutes. Don't you see, this lady belongs to our village?" And one of them brought down his hand holding up the green light.

"Sister, how is Sardarji? Why haven't you brought him along for Panja Sahib's darshan?" an elderly Muslim asked.

Mother covered her head even more with her dupatta and could hardly say, "Sardarji is no longer alive."

"What? Sardar Moola Singh passed away? What was ailing him?" Mother remained silent. I answered, "He developed an ulcer of the stomach. One day it burst suddenly and the next day he died."

"He was a very noble man. heaven be with him." one of them said by way of condolence. For a



few moments everyone was silent.

"Sister, you must come here with your children," someone said and many repeated after him, "Sister, you people must come back now." There was a chorus of voices from the platform: Come back "Return"

I heard my uncle glowering behind me, "Rogues, first they killed and drove us out, now they say that we should return. Villains."

But the people standing on the platform hadn't heard him. They kept on repeating, "Sister, you should return here with your children. Sister, tell us when you will be coming? You must be remembering your village, don't you? Sister, do come back....."

Mother couldn't speak. She could only fold her hands in great- ing and adjust her "dupatta" on her head from time to time. In the distance, the guard was showing the green light and blew on his whistle. The engine hissed and roared and started moving out of the station. The crowd also started walking along side our compartment.

"All right sister, salaam Sallam, son; give our salaam to Sardar

Ravel Singh, our salaam to everybody."

Mother's hands were folded. Some words, surcharged with emotion, escaped her lips. The train gradually picked up speed. Both of us sat with our heads out of the window, our hands folded. The crowd waved and shouted from where they stood.

The train drew out of the station. I pushed the cloth bags aside and looked at mother, expecting her to say something.

Tears were trickling down her cheeks and she wiped them with the end of her dupatta again and again, but the dam had burst and the water flowed unchecked.

Our train had reached the bridge over the Jhelum. The roar and the clatter of the train reverberated in the stillness of the night. I looked through the window at the bridge outside. I had heard that it was a very strong structure of steel and concrete.

My eyes slid down to the pitch below the iron rails. Through I couldn't see anything, I knew there was water there—the clear, gushing water of the Jhelum—which flowed below the steel and concrete columns of the bridge.

Democracy and on Authoritarianism. First part contains essays on State and Government with reference to state and nation-building. It attempts both to theorize the concept of State in Developmental perspective and analyse the political institutions both formal and informal, governmental and non-governmental in India.

In theoretical terms Kothari finds that there is as yet no adequate theory on the growth and decline of democracy in multicultural societies. The closer democracy gets to the roots of such societies, the more pulverised it becomes and more alienated the operating elite becomes, as well as less able to deal with multiple polarities and increased demands from the grass roots. Ironically, the more the socio-economic assumptions of democracy become realisable the less the system is able to aggregate demands in a meaningful manner, leading it to a politics of postures instead of politics of performance - in reality, a politics of deceit - forcing it to take recourse to authoritarian shortcuts and when this does not work, to the sheer politics of survival. (P.17.)

In this in addition to the role of state and its power structure Kothari also suggests that contributing further to the culture of populism and an exaggerated emphasis on the centre of the system has been the political elections and by introducing institutional changes at the village level. But what has emerged is the vebering and fragmentation of Congress consensus. For this Kothari brings about three conclusions; First, the greatest failure of the Congress lay in instituting building, in developing a hierarchy of cadres committed to the Congress and its programme, and in building autonomous organisational structures and loyalties that cut across the particularistic clusters of patronage and influence.

Secondly, it is clear that there is a close relationship between strength of consensus and levels of performance. And here too the Congress Party's failures after the first few years became glaring. Once, its preoccupation with holding power and holding together its own constituents began to overwhelm its concern with public problems and their amelioration, the Congress ceased to be the party of hope, partly in the eyes of the masses, but mainly in the eyes of the political elite itself.

Thirdly, there is change in the structural basis of authority through which the consensus articulated stance of the opposition in India. There has been an increasing tendency of the Opposition to subordinate other goals to the simple aim of displacing those who happen to be in power. As a result while there is considerable consensus on fundamentals, there is great structural and organisational fluidity, with a consequent erosion of political authority and a decline of its "majesty" (p. 31).

The second part deals with Democracy, its relevance and role in the Third World, adoption in India, process of institution building and imerging phenomenon which include centralisation and communalism. In India democratic political institutions were considered a new possibility for peaceful reform. The strategy was to convert the superior number of the poor into a political weapon and thereby use the advantage the democratic process offered for ushering in social and economic justice.

Nehru preferred the reconciliation approach arguing that the inter-connected problems of economic backwardness and political inertia could be solved by raising mass consciousness through by the Congress has to be carried further. The dilemma of the decline of the Congress system of authority lies in the fact that the change to a new system is more symbolic than real, as all the disadvantages of the Congress from the point of view of nation-building - factionalism, reliance on personalised support, particularistic and parochial basis of organisation, and loose coalitional net-work of power are likely to continue, and probably get magnified.

The third part deals with the existing and emerging trends in the decay of democracy. It is sug-

gested that there have been emerging a highly centralised and narrowly confined elite that has established itself in power, lost touch with the people and become insensitive and non-productive. The decay is marked by personality based politics, corruption in administration and cynical manipulation of issue and people. Sound political principles good administration and propriety have disappeared rapidly. On the strength of the loyalty to the man at the top, leaders behave like stars in the states. Since political culture had got debased, confrontation has replaced the normal process of competition and political as well as social violence has increased.

The need Rajni Kothari points out is that any new thinking that is now undertaken must at once deal with deepening the democratic roots of the political process and defining the content of democracy in a manner that directly relates to the problems of the people, to the task of achieving a just social order, and to the conflicts that are inherent in achieving the same.

To all those who think so the volume presents a stimulating material to know the trends, to analyse the processes and to take initiatives for alternatives.

A.S. Narang

## Book Review

STATE against DEMOCRACY : In search of Humane Governance by Rajni Kothari, Delhi Ajanta Publications 1.U.B., Jawahar Nagar, Bungalow Road, Delhi 110 007, pp.308, Price hard bound Rs. 200.00, paperback Rs. 100.00.

Indian nationalism identified with anti-colonialism during the British rules, after independence had to dedicate itself to the quite different task of nation building. But the difficulty here was that the leadership like in other new states was in a hurry. In this content, democracy in India, as originally conceived and institutionalised and subsequently operated in the political system is the most outstanding deviant case from the stereotype Parliamentary Democracies of the Western Vintage.

In India democracy was not introduced to meet the needs of a market society. Here its role was not just to manage the affairs of an established system but it was to transform and develop a semifeudal society.

Thus, the Indian experiment of a predominately parliamentary democracy, superimposed on a highly centralised federal structure, in its effort to realise the goals of social and economic revolution through the apparently irreconcilable mechanisms of planning for economic development and democratic decentralisation had to carve out a category of its own, offering a new direction and model for the future.

The real test of democracy, therefore lies, not merely in its concern for safeguards, but even

more in its success in peacefully resolving social conflicts and recurring collective participation in a common national endeavour. Today the general impression is that the hopes of the framers of the Indian leadership who wanted to create a friction free and flourishing society in India has been belied. In fact the ruling class in India has shed the heritage of the independence movement and, instead of promoting national unity social peace and economic progress, has developed discernible anti-social features.

For all those who feel concerned with the decline and decay of democratic institutions and are desirous to contribute in its rejuvenation and revitalisation it is important to understand the causes and modes-operendi behind the decay, its implications for the future and ways that can be found out. Rajni Kothari one of the human concerned democrats and dissenter in India undertakes this task in the book under review both in an involved as well as objective manner.

The volume brings together some of the more recent writings of Rajni Kothari during his 'intellectual as activist' phase - a phase marked by a search for new theoretical insights and understandings into the humane predicament. It also includes a few of his earlier writings on State and democracy in which the issues that have since been raised more sharply were first posed.

The essays have been divided in three parts. On state, on

# STATE against DEMOCRACY

In Search of Humane Governance

Rajni Kothari

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# Diamond Industry in Gujrat and Child Labour

Gaurang Jani

In this report at Gaurang Jani describes the diamond cutting and polishing industry in Surat and also the condition of workers employed in this industry, with special reference to child workers who, according to his estimate comprise about 15 per cent of the workers of this industry in Surat.

Surat is the second biggest city of the Gujarat State having a population of almost one million. The growth of the diamond industry in this city is recent but phenomenal. Thousands of migrant workers, from other parts of the State, are involved in this industry. Before two decades, there were 100 units employing 500 persons in diamond cutting industry. The 1981 estimate suggests that there are 5,000 units giving jobs to more than 40,000 diamond cutters, locally called *Hiraghasu*. But today, through observations and other sources, one can very well say that more than one lakh workers are engaged in this industry. Besides Surat, Palanpur, Bhavnagar, Ahmedabad and Navsari are also centres of Diamond cutting industry in Gujarat.

Diamond cutting and Polishing is a small scale industry. A lathe machine is required for 'shaping' diamonds and a Ghanti (Chukki) for polishing. To operate the lathe machine as well as the Ghanti an electric motor (Half H.P.) is a must. A rough diamond is processed at four stages. These four stages are 'shaping' of diamonds on the lathe machine, and Mathala (head), Pathel (facets) and Talia (Bottom) polishing on the Ghanti for this, four workers sit around a 3'x3' Ghanti for polishing the diamonds. Diamond cutting and polishing work requires microscopic work; therefore one, 'tube light' is a must for each Ghanti. The tube light is at the level of 3 feet height over the workers' heads. All such types of work require continuous sitting on the floor. usually four workers work on each Ghanti while other workers work on lathe machines.

## No Rules and Regulations

My visits to several units revealed that between 5 and 60 workers work per unit. But the average number of workers per unit is around 15 persons. The astonishing feature of diamond cutting units in Surat is that many of them are not registered under 'The States Shops and Establishment Act' or under 'The Factory Act', which means that legally they do not exist and therefore, no rules and regulations are even followed by these delinquent units. As is to be expected, they do not keep any records about the child workers they

employ.

More than fifty percent of the employers as well as the employees associated with this industry are migrants mainly from the Saurashtra region of Gujarat, Particularly from the villages of Bhavnagar and Amreli districts.

Diamond cutting units in Surat City are mainly located on Varchha road, in Mahidharpara, Rampura, Lal Darwaja and Katargam areas. But 'Varachha' areas is called 'Mini Saurashtra' because thousands of diamond cutters, their family members, owners of the units, shop-keepers, artisans, doctors, belonging to Saurashtra region are settled here.

Diamond cutting and polishing work requires skilled workers. But skill can be easily acquired even by a ten year old child within three to four months of rigorous training. Being a migrant and having an agricultural background, the city environment is strange to a child. This restricts his mobility and helps him to concentrate on the work only. Due to these reasons good number of children are employed in this industry. In fact, many of the adult workers started their career as a child diamond cutter. In this industry more than 70 percent workers are under 25 years and more than 90 percent are under 30 years of age.

## Number of Children

One can only guess the number of children (below 14) working in these units as no registers of the employees are kept by the employers nor any systematic sample surveys of this are available. A study by K.M. Desai (1986) found one child worker per every 29 adult workers, that is, about 3 percent. Another study by Pathak notes this figures to be less than one percent. But my observation of more than 30 units reflects roughly 15 percent child workers in this industry. For instance, in one unit I observed 40 workers, I found that 8 of them were below the age of 14. In another unit, out of 24 workers, five workers were children.

This report is based on 20 children working in different diamond cutting units. All 20 children interviewed were between the age of 10 and 14. Except two from Mehsana districts of North Gujarat, the other were from Bhavnagar and Amreli Districts of the Saurashtra region. All of them had primary education in their native villages.

Out of 20 children, 15 children had their family land ranging between 10 to 70 bighas, while five children's parents were landless.

The question is why do these people migrate? what motivates them to come from such a long distance to Surat? Constant droughts, acute shortage of water, lack of adequate irrigation facilities and lack of other job opportunities, forced them to leave their native villages. Bhavnagar and Amreli Districts often faced the problems of droughts. As kishorbhal Kachchi (13) a child worker originally from a village Lunidhar of Amreli district said, "We have 70 bighas of land but due to continuous drought since last 3 years in my village, the entire land is waste land. For this reason, my father sent me here, so that I can earn some income and send to my father". Further, two children migrated to Surat because their family land was submerged in a dam construction.

## Caste & Village Linkages

It is due to strong caste and village linkages that they are brought here. The child workers in this industry come to Surat with one of their family members, generally an elder brother or an influential member of the caste or the village. In course of time, a child worker learns skill of diamond cutting and polishing under the supervision and help of his family members or relatives who are engaged in diamond cutting. The learning period usually is of three to four months. During the training period the child worker is not paid anything and if any damage is done to a diamond by a child worker, it is solely the responsibility of the trainer.

Conditions prevalent at the work place for diamond cutters are utterly poor. Usually the size of the room varies from 15'x10' to 40'x20'. In one such 15' x 10' size room, four Ghantis were installed. In such a small sized room, 18 workers were working along with one supervisor. Out of 18 persons, three were children. Except one small window, it did not have any facility for air circulation. Direct sunlight never come into the room. Lack of proper ventilation, toilet facilities and sunlight lead to congestion and un-hygienic conditions. There is a 'Matandi Complex' in Varachha Road area. This complex is a three storeyed building having various diamond cutting units. Here 5,000 workers are working. For these 5,000 workers, there are only six latrines and six water taps. There is no provision of a bath-room or an open wash place. Thus, because of the lack of latrines and urinals, the child workers tend to suppress the desire for urination leading to urinary infection.

## Sheer Exploitation

Due to shortage of housing and high rate of rent in Surat City, a number of workers sleep at work place. Out of 20 children interviewed, nine were sleeping at work place, six were not taking regular bath due to lack of water facilities. Housing condition as well as work place condition of child worker is most un-hygienic and resemble slum areas of any city. It is a breeding ground of several diseases. It is difficult to collect information about their health from the respondents as they are reluctant to talk about it. However, by contacting four medical practitioners, I could gather some information regarding their health. Discussion with doctors suggest that skin diseases, T.B., urinary infection, viral infection and headache due to eye strain are common, among the child workers.

Among the 20 children interviewed, no case of accident at work place was reported. But the Doctor reported that many a time children's knee get cut while working near the Saran a sort of wheel moving with high velocity. When a child sits near the Saran and works, there are possibilities of the wheel grinding against his knee or the lower clothes getting caught between the wheel and the base. This results in a deep cut on his knee. Such cases do happen in this industry.

Mostly, they have to be admitted in the hospital. Lawlessness in diamond cutting industry creates lots of problems for child workers. Factory inspectors hardly visit and they are often bribed by the owners. So, the question about working hours, medical aid, rest rooms and other welfare measures hardly arise.

The working hours of the child worker are the same as that of the adult workers. They

have to work right from 7.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. In between they are given an hour's recess at noon. so he had to work 12 hours a day. The wages are paid on piece-rate basis. The payment is in cash per month. The rates are Rs. 1.30 to Rs. 3.50 per piece. There are different rates for four different processes. There are no uniform wage rates and different employers pay different wage rates. For example, for shaping work the range of payment is from Rs. 1.30 to Rs. 1.70 per piece; for 'Top' work, the range varies from Rs. 1.50 to Rs. 2.00 per piece. The payment for 'bottom' and 'Facet' work, is relatively higher as they require greater skill. The wages for 'bottom'-work varies from Rs. 1.75 to Rs. 2.25 per piece while the rate of 'facet' work varies from Rs. 2.00 to Rs. 3.50 per piece.

The earning of a child worker per day varies accordingly to the type of work related to the above four aspects. However, all the four types taken together, their average earning ranges from Rs. 15.00 to Rs. 25.00 per day. One weekly holiday and one month diwali holidays are given to the workers including child workers. We must remember, however, that no payment is made for the week ends, Diwali Holidays or absence even due to sickness.

Under this situation, steady and continuous income is not possible. As a result, to compensate for the holiday loss in payment the child worker works for 15 hours a day a few weeks before Diwali holidays, preferring to sleep at the work place. On an average, a child worker gets around Rs. 400/- to Rs. 550/- per month and an adult worker gets about Rs. 600/- to Rs. 900/- per month. This much earning is possible only when he works regularly for 26 days a month.

(N.F.S. INDIA)



# Women and Access to Land and Other Productive Resources

Susheela Kaushik

In the Sixth Five Year Plan, the government took a decision to provide joint titles to husband and wife when land was to be transferred to the landless, be it for agriculture or homesteads. This decision was a consequence of the frequent demands made by peasant women themselves and a realization on the part of the government that women contributed to agriculture and therefore had an equal right as men, to have their rights recorded.

The failure to abide by the decision over the last Plan is creating difficulties in implementing the new policy thrust of the Seventh Plan. The latter says that in all anti-poverty programmes such as IRDP and NREP etc. a minimum of 30% of the beneficiaries must be women. Evidence is mounting from various states that banks are reluctant to give credit to women as they do not own any assets and are therefore not seen as independent economic entities.

## Decreasing Self-Employment

Various studies, as also field observations by concerned researchers, indicate that self-employment of women in land is sharply decreasing. The impact of land tenurial system, agrarian reform programmes and rural development schemes has been identified as the crucial cause for such decline. Women's access to land and other productive resources is, thus, both a matter of legal issues as well as economic concern. It also impinges on women's role and status within the family power relations and the familial decision making process.

It thus becomes important to see whether women in India possessed access to productive resources, and how, when and by what process did they lose their rights of access to land as well as to other related productive resources. There is thus a need to unearth and demonstrate the historical and other data on women's access to land. This, apart from highlighting the factors for the deterioration in the status of women, will also help in understanding the contribution and participation of women in the peasant society - over the ages. It will further help in generating public opinion in favour of the poor agricultural women gaining this access to resources in contemporary India. This might also result in focussing the attention of policy makers, to moulding, sharpening and strengthening their policy

thrusts and policy implementation.

A preliminary investigation reveals wide variations in land ownership patterns in both the medieval and colonial periods. In medieval times, for instance, land could have come under the proprietary possession of women either through land grants or through inheritance. The control of land came about only as some form of royal grant or by right of conquest. However, the agrarian policies worked to permanent attachment between nobles and land.

## Real Difficulty

Real difficulty in understanding distribution of land arises when we think in terms of exclusive control over land by one party or another. In early medieval times in the same piece of land the peasant had inferior rights while the landlord had superior rights. One may possess land, labour, oxen, other animals and agricultural implements but we need to know how effective was this control over the means of production. There is evidence of varying degrees of control over land and not exclusive rights of either landlords or peasants. The multiple hierarchical

graded rights and interests may be inferred from the Gupta land sale transactions. The later medieval land grants show an increasing tendency to establish the superior rights of the landlord or beneficiary at the cost of both the king and peasantry.

It thus appears that the transition from communal to private ownership affects women adversely. Under communal ownership gender differences, if any, would be related to the sexual division of labour or a specialisation of functions. Such specialisation may be a source for development of higher occupational skills. Also rights at this stage are primarily of use and of crops - not ownership of land but right of occupation for limited periods. It is possible that over generations this right of occupation might become semi-prominent.

This has been noticed in areas of shifting cultivation where some families tend to go back to the same plots at the end of each shifting cycle. The pristine form of communal ownership apparently goes with a certain level of production, e.g. shifting cultivation, food gathering, hunting, pasture etc. Such models of ownership undergo transformation with

changes in the level of production, e.g. transition to settled agriculture/plantation from hunting to pastoralism, from pastoralism to agriculture etc.

Some historical documentation of the shifts in patterns of gender rights through various stages appears to be thus necessary. Communal ownership is a rather loose term, we should perhaps try to define whether it refers to a community as a whole or a clan. It may be possible to construct a historical scale of progression from communal (the whole community) to plan/lineage (perhaps corporate ownership of the South Asian variety - *Mitakshara* of the patrilineal variety and *Taravad* of the matrilineal variety - would fall within lineage ownership) to household to individual. Some comparison between patrilineal and matrilineal groups at each of these stages may help to identify at what stage women's rights of access/ownership/control began to disappear. Another question to be probed is under what circumstances the recording of ownership replaces custom and convention and thereby the gender disparities in such recording begin to appear.

## Process of Change

To what extent do these processes - of changing levels of production leading to changing forms of rights and the emergence and deepening of hierarchy affect (a) the sexual division of labour; (b) women's control over the fruits of their labour; (c) control over surplus and (d) power over women's lives and labour (is it true that in the case of matrilineal groups in Kerala, the abandonment of corporate ownership in the 20th century in favour of individual ownership, have affected women most adversely)?

It is further clear that to understand the nature of land rights, one has to be sure of the particular social formation being referred to - within a specific geographical region and a given time span. Further the regulatory mechanism of the state is significant in shaping the nature of land relations. This exercise would enable us to see the dialectical relationship between social politics and social reality. *Continued on page 14*



# Women and Access to Land

Continued from page 13

The British made changes in the laws of property and one consequence of this is seen in the increase in Muslim family endowments in British times. In fact British rule brought about two major changes: (a) a highly developed notion of private property that land could be bought inherited, sold or seized for debts, mortgaged etc. and (b) the Anglo-Indian courts took literally the Qur'anic demand that property be divided by inheritance. The courts enforced these rules strictly, perhaps more rigidly than Muslims ever had.

We need to examine further that extent to which British through their judicial system interfered or intervened in laws of the people. Many Wakfs were overturned by courts on grounds that they were thinly disguised attempts to presume the family's wealth. Or they were ruled null and void if they did not substantially support some public, religious or charitable purpose.

## Legal System

The legal system was thus a major institution which affected the pattern of landholding. The new concepts and definitions of property raised innumerable problems both for the rulers and the ruled. Inheritance, marriage, rights to succession, religious endowments had always been included under Hindu or Muslim personal law, governed by the religious customs of the two communities. However, as they are all so closely related to property, the sphere of personal law was also affected by the British intervention. A cross section of legal cases highlight the complexities of adjusting the multiple traditional systems of customary law to the new system of the law courts. What emerged was something new and alien, leaving little scope for change or growth.

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Thus another area of investigation would be on the role of law, its interpreters and its enforcers. While law can be a powerful instrument for development, codification of law has also been found occasionally to adversely affect women's rights. So a need to analyse the role of the state in creating new structures and in introducing disabilities and disparities that did not exist custom. Interpretation plays an enormous role in the application of law. In the Indian case some historians argue that commentators writing generations after the original formulation of Hindu law eroded and destroyed woman's rights or people's rights.

## The Rights

If distinction be made such as rights to own, to use, to alienate, to gift, to sell, inherit etc. or to will property, then we find that under customary usage, a wide variety of rights were enjoyed by women. In Hindu communities, women could enjoy full proprietary rights (heritability, transferability) only if their deceased husbands so willed it. Further information is required on the conditions under

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which women proprietors also had the power to appoint their heirs or successors.

Preliminary attempts to examine the land rights of women - both Hindus and Muslims, point to a complex pattern. Attempts need to be initiated in various regions too to arrive at a comparative picture. A critically important issue is the people's awareness of their rights. Is there a gender difference in this awareness? There is distinctly a difference between women's awareness of their customary rights as compared to their awareness of statutory rights. Who is responsible for such differences in awareness? To what extent do recorded titles match people's, particularly women's and even community's awareness or perception of their rights?

In this context, another area of enquiry which could provide insights into these processes is of agrarian conflicts/struggles/movements. It is common knowledge that peasant women were seriously involved in such struggles. What were/are the key issues behind such conflicts? How did/do women perceive such issues or their importance to their

own lives? To what degree are women affected by such movements/tension and consequent changes, e.g. in agrarian reform/legislation/repression?

There are then certain other related areas which can be taken up. These may include investigation of managerial roles played by women with regard to agricultural land and other property. What is their role in conservation, improvement or extension? The situation of women and particularly women farmers can be difficult when men migrate to seek employment in towns and other countries. It should be interesting to know the exact nature of women's right of access to and control over produce (which will be connected with ownership) and control over labour. In some countries the rights of widows and unmarried daughters are protected but those of divorces, separated deserted and remarried women are denied. What is the range of variations in this area and what are the explanations for such variations? There are also the customs of giving land to girls, in dowry, in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, their

rationale, impact on women's rights and mode of production need to be analysed.

If change in levels of production affects models of rights/ownerships it is imperative to look at the impact of new technology, new crops and new demands on control, use and access to such technology. What is the impact on women's rights of access and con-

trol, of land consolidation, cooperativisation or collectivisation of agriculture?

## Codified Religion

Lastly, the role of codified religion, e.g. Islam, Christianity and its interrelation with local customs of communities which embrace such religions need to be investigated. We have found wide variations of this impact in India. In Lacshadives Islam has not destroyed matrilineal customs, but in the Khasi and Garo hills, the penetration of Christianity has certainly resulted in patriarchal authority and ideology, and ownership on matrilineal groups.

Policy implications of this investigation could be very complex. Enforcing land policies is the business of the bureaucracy, local councils and local authorities.

Experience of research in rural areas indicates that the resistance to attempts to change women's subordinate status is strongest in local power structures. In such areas decentralisation of power to local bodies to enforce land rights of women may prove totally ineffective. Also, the various policies for agrarian reform and eradication of poverty tend to treat the household as the basic unit and the contact point. If male headship of household is assumed than it is doubtful if women's rights can ever be improved through such policies. It may be mentioned here that there has been no attempt to introduce a participatory approach in dealing with the household since intra-household disparities and inequalities in access to, resource and power are now well known, it is perhaps necessary to think in terms of how a more participatory approach could be evolved.

## WOMEN THEMSELVES CAN PREVENT INJUSTICE

Shri Bansi Lal Chauhan, Executive Councillor (Health) said here that women themselves are self sufficient to prevent injustice being done by the society and they should come forward to face and raise their voice against any kind of torture. He was addressing the annual meeting of Nari Raksha Samiti, Delhi.

In his address Shri Chauhan said that men and women are equally responsible of the evils like dowery, bride burnings and other inhuman behaviour of the women. It requires joint approach to uproot these evils from the society. Law and statutory power alone can not make free evil society unless community participation is involved, he added.

Shri Chauhan expressed concern over the incidences when educated, beautiful and ediquetted girls have to decide to end their

lives as their parents are not in a position to afford dowery. The house ruins where women is discarded and the country may ruin if proper respect of women in society is not given, he added.

Delhi Administration has introduced various welfare programmes to such women who have been neglected and not got the justice from the society. Free lodging and boarding facilities are being provided to these women by the centres and Nari Niketans to make themselves sufficient and self reliant, he said.

Smt. Tajdar Babar, Dy. Chairman, Metropolitan Council who is the convener of the meeting presided over the function and said parents should behave their female members like son and equal opportunity be provided to them.

The Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao presenting the Kalinga Prize for 1987 for popularisation of science, to Dr. Marcel Roche, Permanent delegate of Venezuela to UNESCO, in New Delhi on February 12, 1988.



# Asian Security

Continued from page 16

The general principles, which must form a basis for Asian security have been formulated time and again. Thus, we can name the widely known Panch Shila Principles elaborated by India and China in 1954, as well as the ten principles put forward at the Bandung conference of Afro-Asian countries. Subsequently, these principles were detailed, supplemented, and filled with a new concrete content. Today the overwhelming majority of the countries of Asia and other continents accept a number of these principles as indisputable guidelines. They include, first and foremost: peaceful co-existence, mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs, the rejection of the use of force or threat of force, the solution of controversial issues by peaceful means.

## Proposals

On the basis of these principles the non-aligned movement, as well as a number of peace-loving states, put forward a number of valuable proposals which, if they are appropriately summarised on an international level, can serve as a sort of programme for ensuring security in Asia. These proposals include the elimination of the seats of military conflicts on the Asian continent, the freezing of the levels of military activities of the great powers in the Indian and Pacific oceans, the implementations of confidence-building measures in these regions, the rejection of external support for subversive antigovernment groupings, the taking of measures to prevent the great powers from setting up new military bases in Asia, and the dismantling of the existing bases (in accordance with paragraph II, section 3 of the Declaration of the first non-aligned summit held in Belgrade).

Special prominence should be given to the proposals relating to the denuclearization of the Asian mainland and the oceans which wash it. This means that all the Asian states should join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, that they should adopt the three well-known non-nuclear principles, and close their ports to nuclear-armed ships. Related to this question is also the demand that the great powers stop all nuclear tests in the Asian-Pacific region, and undertake the commitment not to use nuclear weapons against countries of the region which observe a non-nuclear status. The proposal that the Asian countries reject all forms of participation in programmes for the militarisation of outer space has acquired special importance in recent times. In this connection the Declaration of the first non-aligned summit (sec-

tion 3, paragraph 17) laid special emphasis on the necessity to use space exclusively for peaceful aims.

## Implementation

The implementation of the above-mentioned concrete measures is a practical road towards such forms of ensuring Asian security as the creation of nuclear-free zones and zones of peace. Various non-aligned states have time and again supported the idea of the creation of such zones. A case in point is the 1971 UN General Assembly resolution on declaring the Indian Ocean a zone of peace. This resolution was adopted on the initiative of the non-aligned states. The 40 the non-aligned summit in Algeria (1973) declared in its decision that the creation of peace zones on the basis of the principles of the UN Charter can lessen tensions to a considerable degree, put an end to the foreign military presence, and contributed to the peaceful co-operation of the states concerned. Acting in accordance with this decision, the foreign ministers' conference of the non-aligned states, held in Lima (Peru) in 1975, recommended the setting up in the southern part of the Pacific Ocean of a zone of peace and peaceful co-operation in order to make this area of the ocean free from the use of force. The holding of the necessary consultations between the countries of the area was suggested as a desirable measure aimed at the implementation of this proposal; while the creation of a peace zone was assessed as a practical contribution to the strengthening of international peace and security. In recent years there has been some progress in the implementation of these ideas. The South Pacific forum of 13 states, held in Avarua in 1985, unanimously passed a decision to declare this region a nuclear-free zone. The ASEAN countries have stepped up their activities aimed at turning South-East Asia into a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality (ZOPFAN). According to Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, the foreign minister of Indonesia, the main component of this zone is to be a nuclear-free zone. There is much similarity between this idea and the proposal of the countries of Indochina to turn South-East Asia into a zone of peace, good-neighbourliness and co-operation.

However, neither a large number, nor a large variety of ideas aimed at ensuring security in Asia can by itself guarantee success. A force must be found (a group of countries, an international body or an individual state) capable of translating this ideals into reality.

# No national cause served by

## accord with Sri Lanka :

V.P. Singh

**M**ADRAS, Feb. 18 The Sri Lankan Tamils issue dominated a students' meeting addressed here by the Jan Morcha leader, Mr. V.P. Singh, at Periyar Thidal.

Describing it as part of the "rash of accords" that the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi had signed, Mr. V.P. Singh questioned the wisdom of the government of India signing the agreement which should have been between the Tamil groups and the island Government, "I see no national cause is being served by this agreement and why should Indian jawans or people of Indian origin lose their lives for nothing?" he asked.

Mr. Singh wondered how could the Prime Minister claim that the agreement had the support of the LTTE leader, Mr. Prabhakaran, at least initially. "If my oral orders within the Government warrant a Thakkar Natarajan Commission, how could he (PM) take Prabhakaran's oral word. Where is his consent to the agreement? How can India jeopardise the Tamils interests by agreeing to a referendum on the merger of the Northern and Eastern provinces? Will we agree to a referendum on Kashmir?"

## Directionless

**H**e said the country was directionless and people found "unfit as Chief Ministers," were selected to administer the country. "The Congress(I) has reached a stage when meetings and decisions have to be taken at 3 a.m. because it is so shaky and members do not know if the late night decision will hold till the morning."

Mr. Singh said Centre-State relations were steadily deteriorating and the Prime Minister had described some Opposition-ruled State Governments as "anti-

national". The recent appointment of Governors without consulting the Chief Ministers came soon after the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission, underlining the need for prior consultation were made public.

He said "the Indian flag is on sale in the international market" and it was up to students to save and protect it. Youth including women and workers constituted the main productive force and all of them were in bondage. The Jan Morcha was started to liberate them.

## "National Shame":

**M**r. Singh said the Bofors issue was a national shame and any government worth its name would have got at the list of persons or companies bribed. "Why should the company pay so much if the parties did not have influence on decision making?"

As Defence Minister, he did not want to make any compromise on the German submarine deal when it was brought to his attention that a seven per cent commission was involved. "The same information reached the Prime Minister also. Why has he not taken any action till now," he asked.

Mr. Arun Nehru said there was a crisis of faith in the Government and a credibility gap. Within six months of being elected to power with the biggest majority in Congress history, the Prime Minister lost the people's confidence by succumbing to short-term gains and interests. There was a rash of accords none of which could be implemented.

Mr. Nehru said the sad confusion in Tamil Nadu now was also a ploy of the Congress(I) which

wanted to capture power in the State.

Referring to corruption in high places, he said he wanted to know if there was a different set of rules for the Bacchan brothers and for the rest of the country.

Mr. Arif Mohammed Khan said the crisis was not only political but had deep moral overtones. There was widespread discontent as the Government had failed to honour its election promises. The Indo-Sri Lankan agreement reflected the pathetic situation in both countries.

## Priest turns groom :

**T**he Karnataka Minister and Janata leader, Mr. M. Raghupathy, said the agreement with Sri Lanka was hastily signed to divert the country's attention from the Bofors scandal. The IPKF should be withdrawn from the island since it had not brought peace to the people "Instead of performing the marriage, the priest (Inia) made himself the groom by signing the agreement," he added.

Mr. Jagaveerapandian said Tamil Nadu would stand by Mr. V.P. Singh in his crusade against corruption. The Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement was a let-down of Tamil interests.

Mr. Sakthivel of the Madras Law College, who presided, said Mr. Singh was leading a battle to save the country and people. He was championing the cause of farmers and the rural poor and exposing corruption. S. Joan Smilie of the Ethiraj College, welcomed the Jan Morcha leaders.

Mr. V.C. Shukla and the Congress(s) leader, Mr. K.P. Unnikrishnan, were present at the meeting.



Mr. V. P. Singh, Jan Morcha leader, is greeted on arrival at Periyar Thidal where he addressed a gathering of students.

View point

FORUM  
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# The Concept of Asian Security

R.K.

**A**sia is the gaint among the continents—so large that on the map, Europe appears as hardly more than one of its several great peninsulas. It has one-third of the land area of the globe. From north to south it extends more than 5000 miles from well above the arctic Circle to below the Equator, if we include the Indonesian chain of islands; and from east to west it extends for more than 5500 miles. Its coastline is some 35000 miles in length.

The continent of Asia may be regarded as consisting of five major areas: (i) Soviet Asia; (ii) the far East or East Asia; (iii) South-East Asia; (iv) South Asia and (v) South to think of Asia as divided into two inharmonious parts : Communist Asia and non-communist Asia".

The vast majority of the people of Asia are landless agricultural workers living at the starvation level, illiterate, inarticulate sunk in the age old poverty, torpor superstition and disease. Birth rates are still appallingly high and life expectancy quite low. Asian people are engaged in a bitter struggle for survival. Most of the people are peasants in a relatively low stage of agrarian economy subject to all the vagaries of nature and the oppression of landlords, money-lenders and feudal masters.

These and many other problems are serious enough to be dealt with rationally and scientifically with the full cooperation of native leaders, other governments and international agencies.

## Impact of West

**F**rom the 16th century to the earlier part of the 20th century, the impact of the West upon these ancient-lands has been tremendous and — it should be confessed—generally unfortunate for the Asian themselves, while christian missionaries were trying to save the soul of the people, and often their bodies as well, officials and traders from the west were extorting what wealth they could, with little concern for the welfare of the inhabitants.

The power equilibrium which prevailed throughout most of Asia at the turn of the century, had been shattered beyond repairs. Possibly the fundamental cause was the growing national consciousness of the Asian peoples, and the growing weakness of the colonial powers. In his address of a joint session of the US Congress on May 17, 1956, President Sukarno of Indonesia declared : "Nationalism may be on out otu data doctrine in many in this world; for us of Asia and Africa, it is the mainstream of our efforts". "Nationalism thus in Asia was an increasingly

potent force which led to the rise of many new states in the post war period, from Israel to the Republic of Phillipines and has stimulated independence movements in nearly all colonial areas.

Over the past three decades, the relative positions and influence in Asia of the US and the USSR and Great Britain, has undergone profound changes.

Politically as well as racially, culturally and geographically Asia is a remarkably diversified area. Most of the new nations which emerged soon after the World War II began with the administrative and governmental set-up adopting various forms of democratic institutions. Since 1958 the erosion of democracy in the new states of Asia has assumed almost landslide dimensions.

## Confrontations

**A**ccording to thomas A Rusch, "Asia is now and will continue to be veritable cauldron of confrontations .... Asia is faced with the prospect of not just one major confrontation that could lead to war.... but, five encompassing the worlds and Asia's foremost powers. these are : (1) a clash between the national and ideological interest of the Soviet Union and Communist China; (ii) the Sino-Indian conflict; (iii) the US-Soviet competition over allies influence and strategic position in Asia; (iv) the Sino-US confrontation from Korea to Kashmir and (v) the Indo-Pak confrontation over national survival and predominance in South-Asia. Besides, there are other confrontations involving North Vs South Korea, Irna Vs Iraq, Nationalist Vs Communist China and so forth throughout Asia." There is thus hardly an area or a country on this continent or its priphery that is not involved today in a major or minor conflict that may lead to the insecurity of the Asian people.

The problems of Asian security constantly focus the attention of the states of this region, primarily those who are members of the non-aligned movement. Already 25 years ago the first non-aligned summit in Belgrade, formulating the aims of the conference in its Declaration, stressed the question of a more effective implementation of the programme of strengthening peace and security. Since then the unrestrained development nuclear armaments has brought about a qualitatively new situation. The fourth section of the Belgrade Declaration pointed out that war would lead if not to the destruction of the world, then to previously unheard of devastation. Today this formula can be expressed much more simply : war will lead to the destruction of the world, to the

annihilation of Mankind. That is why for the peoples of all continents, including Asia, the problem of international security has become even more crucial than in the days of the formation of the non-aligned movement. Consequently, today the approach to the solution of this problem must be more effective and have a broader basis.

## International Security

**A** large number of ideas and proposals were put forward over the past twenty

odd years relating to the problems of international security, including security in the Asian Pacific region. Herein, despite their diversity it is possible to define two main approaches which served as guidelines for their authors. The first is the nuclear umbrella concept. According to this concept, the developing countries in general, and the states of the Asian-Pacific region especially must seek protection against the impending danger under the lofty patronage of one of the superpowers, And for this they must be ready to pay any price demanded by the protector.

The second is a diametrically opposite approach which was formulated in the final communique of the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference (1955) in the section on promoting general peace and cooperation. This concept, which is in full conformity with such internationally recognised documents as the UN Charter, was further developed in the decisions of subsequent non-aligned summit and other international forums, as well as in the initiatives of separate states, both large and small.

Continued on page 15

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