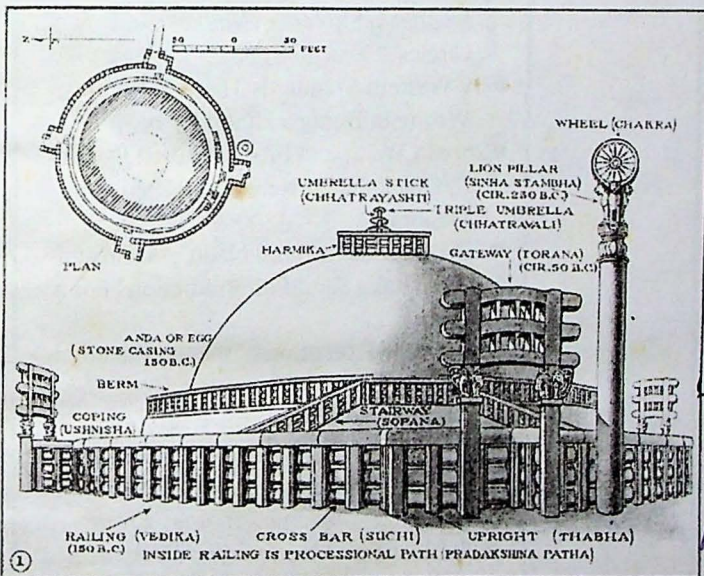


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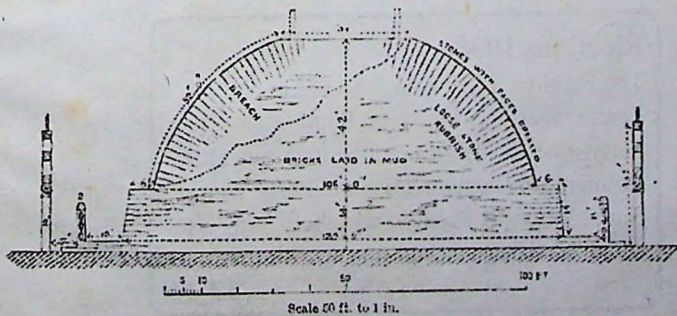
# STUPA AT SANCHI



A. Sanchi Stupa I, third to first century B.C.



B. Diagram of Great Stupa at Sanchi.



C. Section of Great Stupa at Sanchi.

# MANKIND

FDR. EDR. RAMMANOHAR LOHIA

Vol. 3, No. 7, April 1998

Rs. 25/-

## 12th Lok Sabha Elections 1998

## India's 59 Monopoly Houses

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Founder Editor: Rammanohar Lohia

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# AN OPENING STATEMENT :

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Exe. Edr.

## TEN DEGREE CANAL

One of the last secretive acts performed by the colonial government of India was the signing of a peace treaty with Siam. It is a strange and fascinating document.

"A peace treaty between H. M. Government and the Government of India on the one hand, and the kingdom of Siam on the other, the first instrument bringing the state of war with an enemy country to an end, was signed on Jan 1, 1946, at Government House, Singapore. The signatories were, for Great Britain, Mr. Maberly Denning, political advisor to Lord Louis Mountbatten; for Government of India, Mr. M. S. Aney; and for Siam, Prince Viwat Anajai Jayint, Lt. Gen. Phya Abhai Songgram, and Nai Serm Vinichayakul. The treaty contained 24 articles.

"Art. 1 : Siam repudiates all measures taken in pursuance of the declaration of war on the British Empire on Jan 25, 1942.

"Art. 7 : Siam undertakes to construct no canal linking the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Siam (i.e. across the Kra Isthmus) without British consent." (*Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 1946-48, Vol. VI, p. 7695)

We do not know whether our Ministry of External Affairs is even aware of Art. 7 of the above Indo-Thai Treaty of 1946. Probably not ! Because our MEA usually wears neo-colonial blinkers ! We hope that someone in Delhi will pick up this issue of *Mankind* and pay heed to what we have to say on the subject in our larger national interest !

Why was British imperialism so concerned about preventing a canal from being dug through the Isthmus of Kra, which narrows to its slenderest at about the Ten Degree North Latitude ? The region belongs to Thailand between the

Thai-Myanmar border to the northwest and the Thai-Malaysian border to the Southeast. Its a narrow strip of land lying between the Andaman Sea of the Bay of Bengal in the West, and the South China Sea of the Bay of Thailand to the East.

The Isthmus of Kra narrows down to just about 60-70 miles at this point. From this point, Singapore harbour is about 750 miles distance for ships passing through the Straits of Malacca, lying between the Malaysian mainland and the island of Sumatra, which belongs to Indonesia. Ships would come up the same distance along the east coast of Malaya between the mainland and the Island of Borneo, on which are located the rest of Malaysian territories (Sarawak and Sabah), and the tiny Sultanate of Brunei (The Sultan of Brunei is probably the richest man on earth, whose little kingdom is run by the oil cartel Burmah-Shell.)

Obviously, British Imperialism signed this treaty in order to preserve its vast commercial interests in Singapore, Penang, Kuala Lumpur, and generally, in Sumatra and Borneo.

At the moment, Sumatra and Borneo, both belong to Indonesia (the northern coastline of Borneo is a part of Malaysia, as described above).

**But why are we bound by British Imperial interests ?** Why should we not encourage Thailand to go ahead and build this important waterway, which will save annually, trillions of dollars to Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Taiwanese, Philippino, Vietnamese, Cambodian and Thai shipping lines. Every super tanker passing through this Ten Degree Canal would save a 1,500-mile detour, up and down the Malaysian peninsula and ships moving through the Ten Degree Channel that separates the Andaman Islands from the Nicobar Islands would cut through

the Isthmus and reach the South China Sea and vice-versa.

In recent years, there was a lot of speculation in the newspapers about developing the Andaman and Nicobar Islands as Free Ports to attract NRIs from Singapore and Hong Kong.

I believe that the government of India should vigorously pursue the TEN DEGREE CANAL PROJECT, either alone or in close cooperation with the governments of Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the Persian Gulf Emirates and possibly also the governments of Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka.

All our east coast parts including Haldia, Paradeep, Vishakapatnam, Chennai, Tuticorin, etc. would receive a tremendous boost; Port Blair and Car Nicobar would hum with activity; and even Chittagong, Yangon and Trincomalee would be benefited.

The possible opposition from ASEAN would be divided, since Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore may not like the idea too much. But Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Philippines would benefit because of appreciable reduction in shipping costs.

The imperialist powers of Europe and America may not like the idea much because the strategic importance of Thailand would shoot up.

In the long run, the northern states of the mainland Malaya might find it more convenient to ship through the Ten Degree Canal and even Sarawak, Sabah and Brunei may discover the new alignment of shipping lanes accruing to their advantage.

The maximum benefits would probably go to Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan and Philippines, at the eastern end, and the OPEC consortium and the Indian Sub-Continent at the western end.

This itself may be frowned upon by the G-7, minus Japan, and the OCED powers (excluding South Korea).

However, *Mankind* believes that humanity all over the world would be benefited to a considerable extent by the lowering of fuel costs and shortening of shipping lanes.

Will the West allow the Ten Degree Canal to be ever constructed ? ■

## I DENOUNCE PINOCHET WITH PERSONAL ANIMUS !

In another place in this issue, we have indicted the cowardly attempt by General Pinochet, the Butcher of Chile, to acquire immunity for his crimes against the people of Chile by becoming a senator for life.

I never met Pinochet, though I interviewed the man he murdered, Salvador Allende, for about two hours in December 1965. Allende's niece, Isabella was present at the time that I met Allende. Both were sensitive and brilliant intellectuals of the highest calibre. He had recently lost the 1964 presidential elections in which he had stood as the joint candidate of the United Socialist and Communist Parties of Chile. He had been defeated by Eduardo Frie, though actually, Allende had received a majority of the male votes.

Isabella was a very pretty, rather beautiful woman. Intelligent, with a wide brow and sparkling eyes, her face will remain etched in my memory. She gave me an autographed photo of her uncle, which was a gift which I had not solicited. I was slightly amused at the time, but I remembered the gesture, and when finally Allende won the presidential election in October 1970, at his fourth attempt, I sent a telegram to him from Bombay to which he replied telegraphically in Spanish. I got the telegram translated with the help of Dharmveer Bharati, the then editor of *Dharmyug*, for whose journal, I used to write a column, *Kaal Ki Pratidhwaniyan* ("Echoes of Our Times").

I believe he got someone from the St. Xavier's College, Bombay, to do the actual translation.

I haven't kept in touch with Isabella, who has turned out to be a very

fine novelist and film scriptwriter. I think she is now living in Paris.

I had decided to go to Chile, entirely for eccentric geographical reasons. I had found out that Santiago was the capital of a country that was farthest away from Bombay, and this made me determined to reach it.

On the way there, via Central Asia, Europe, Africa, Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina, I picked up from Rome a useful introductory note from Renato Sandri, an Italian Communist M.P. (actually, Renato hailed from the same region as Ignazio Silone, a region vividly described in Ignazio's great little novel, *Fontamara*, one of my favourite novels of those days).

With the help of Renato, I met a most fascinating group of brilliant intellectuals in Chile, including Salvador and Isabella, but most memorable of all, a sensitive set of architects.

I was made an honorary member of the Architects' Cell of the Santiago Branch of the Socialist-Communist Party of Chile. I had a wonderful time in Chile. *Mankind* readers will perhaps recollect that in an early issue of the revived *Mankind*, I have published a letter of greeting from Sonja and Pedro Iribarne, extending a warm welcome to *Mankind*.

That was Pedro Junior. He and his wife Sonja were both architects and members of the radical Left Movement. One of their daughters, Red Paulette, inherited their political radicalism and was for a short time imprisoned before going into exile. I exchanged a few letters with her, though when I was the houseguest of the Iribarnes in Santiago, she was just a child.

As I have written, I have never met

Pinochet, though I spent a day or two at a military base near Santiago where I had been invited by a distant relation of either Sonja or Pedro Junior.

There was a Pedro Senior too, who was a member of our Architects' Cell, whose wife Elena was also an architect and it was Pedro Senior and Elena who had made me leave my modest hotel in Santiago and move to the guestroom in the home of Pedro Junior and Sonja.

There are many many things that I want to write about my trip to Chile and about Pinochet's criminal behaviour and persecution of my friends of the radical Left in that country.

All that will have to wait for another occasion.

However, I would like to record here the amazement and delight I felt when I saw the southern sky on a pass across the Los Andes, when I was being taken by Pedro Senior and Elena from Santiago to Valparaiso.

Oh ! what an unforgettable, shimmering, scintillating delight it was ! I had never imagined anything like it ! I am not a bird, and therefore cannot navigate myself with the help of the stars, which apparently is the secret of their annual intercontinental migrations ! But I know that all of us born in the Northern Hemisphere carry an imprint of the starry skies. How and when we acquire this photoplate mental impression, I do not know. But I am sure all of us have it. I was not surprised to see the Milky Way and the stars and the constellations along its broad swathe in Leningrad, Stockholm, Gothenburg or Denmark. It was all so familiar and hardly worth paying much attention !

However, the starry sky visible from the pass in Los Andes will forever remain imprinted in my memory ! Unforgettable ! Unsurpassable ! Indelible ! ■

day, he was on national T.V., heavily plugging for Capital Account Convertibility.

Why is he so keen ? As D. R. Pendse writes in, "*Capital Account Convertibility of Rupee Can Wait*" (26.5.97)

" We already allow inflows of foreign currency for capital account transactions with full repatriation, such as buying real estate, buying shares and other financial assets etc. In that sense

## MADHU DANDAVATE AS LAPDOG OF INDIAN BIG BUSINESS

I do not know why socialist reformists develop an overwhelming urge to get fondled by the rich comprador elite of our country. They give up the socialist ideals that they held dear in their young days, and begin to wag their tails furiously in order to invite the attentions of the plump and soft perfumed wives of our *nouveau-riche*.

What is it that attracts them ?

I find the heavily made up and garishly lipsticked, bejewelled, waddling wives and daughters of Harvard graduates and Oxbridge alumni to be very repulsive. These jetsetters, both male and female, disgust me almost beyond words.

Now look at Dandavate ! the other

the rupee is partially CAC already. "

That is, the foreigners are already enjoying full convertibility of the rupee, albeit, one-sidedly. What Dandavate and Chidambaram now want is that Indian Nationals should now be free to hold money in foreign accounts (openly, not by the surreptitious *hawala* route, which they had enjoyed all along), but freely and officially, buying and selling real estate, shares and bonds, in foreign countries, using their bank balances in rupees as and when they like.

This may be a legitimate, fair demand of reciprocity for Indian capitalists, but why is Dandavate, the so-called socialist so agitated about realising it? Why cannot the Indian capitalists continue along the illegal *hawala* way? Of course, the official way would be cheaper for the Indian capitalists, but why is Dandavate concerned with the cost effectiveness for the filthy rich?

As Pendse puts it: "We have known our own '*Hawala*' market too, which is active, efficient and trusted by those who use it. Practically any amount of rupees can be exchanged for practically any foreign currency. No questions asked; no forms to be filled in; no declarations; no documents. Just like buying postage stamps. So, for the patrons of the *Hawala* market rupee is already fully convertible on current account as well as on capital account ..... many industrialists and their associations plead for the CAC. Why? They would probably like to buy shares of foreign companies, or land and property for their foreign operations. If so, why don't they plead for permission to do just that, instead of pleading for CAC? If you are thirsty, ask for a glass of water ..... IMF would of course, love to see currencies of as many countries as possible to be CAC." (*Ibid*)

I think it all boils down to a question of national taste and preference. In England, the socialist and labour leaders prefer to be kissed by Duchesses'. Generally on the cheeks, but quite often, "full on the lips"!

In India, the preference of Dandavate and of PSPers like him, is for getting fondled as lapdogs.

Our comprador capitalists, on their part, would like to fondle ex-PSPers, and also have a second string to the bow, CAC in addition to *hawala*. Further, they would like to cover-up their tracks and avoid, not only double taxation, but also single taxation within India.

Dandavate has recently laboured very hard on drafting the Ninth Plan. He richly deserves a respite. Let him get fondled and cuddled by rich, fat ladies! Let Pramila Dandavate raise a hue and cry, if she wants to! ■

## CURRENCY BOARD JUGGLERY ! SWADESHI SHIVERS IN NAUKERSHAHI CIRCLES !

In recent months, a rescue package is being worked out for Indonesia. No rescue package would be necessary, had Indonesia not been previously ruined by the IMF and Mr. Soros, the two spearheads through which US interests have sought to control Indonesia.

First, let us understand the overall parameters.

The Drain of Wealth and Capital is proceeding apace from the Third World. We have twice published figures to demonstrate that in the '90s, the Third World of poor countries is paying out aid to the rich at the rate of \$50 bln. annually (See, *MK* back covers, Jul-Aug '97 and November '97).

At the same time, trade restrictions have been placed on exports from the Third World, especially exports of labour, which together cost the poor countries \$500 bln. annually. (See *MK*, back cover, September 1997).

Under these overall conditions of relentless and rapid Drain of Wealth from the developing countries, it is impossible to visualise any true industrial or technological growth in the Third World. In fact, only a series of ever-deepening crises can alone be their fate.

Therefore, Indonesia will not be allowed to escape. It must go under. In fact, its head will be held under water by the WB, IMF and WTO, until the country is asphyxiated.

The Currency Board concept is pure bourgeois legerdemain. Great economic and management experts are writing about the CBs as though they were alien creatures who had fixed tasks and procedures.

This is simply fetishism! In practice, any currency board can be devised which will operate under any set of rules. These rules can be varied, from time to time, by the authorities concerned. There is nothing immovable or impossible under any currency board. It is for the authority which sets up the CB, to decide what the Board can do or cannot do, and what will be the rules under which it will function.

Anyway, let us understand what Mr. S. Venkitaramanan, former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, who was deeply involved in the Harshad Mehta security scam, has to say about the CBs:

"The best way to understand the concept of currency boards is to transpose

it to India. In a currency board, the volume of the currency should be backed 100 per cent by the forex reserves. Anyone who produces a rupee to the currency board should be able to get the equivalent foreign exchange. If the forex reserves do not prove adequate to meet the demand, the currency board has no option but to cut back on the currency issue.

"In India, the total currency issued is, in fact, higher than the forex reserves — Rs. 1,50,000 crore against reserves worth around Rs. 1,08,000 crore at current exchange rates. To make the adjustment, a pure CB will have to create a currency crunch and contract the economy. The Indian currency board will have to say, 'This is the new mantra, you will have to grin and bear the pain.' Alternatively the rupee value will have to go down sharply so that the volume of currency can have the full backing of forex reserves, at the new exchange rate.

"Currency boards have had a chequered history. When the British empire ended, most colonies opted for the central bank as better alternative. Exceptions, of course, were Hong Kong and Singapore. Singapore went on to an alternative form of currency control blended with a central bank, viz., the Monetary Authority of Singapore. Hong Kong did abandon the currency board for a time but reverted to the idea in-1983

when it linked the Hong Kong currency to the US dollar at the rate of 7.8 HK dollars to 1 US dollar. The HK dollar has been stable at this rate for the last 15 years.

“ The success of Hong Kong’s system came about mainly because of its special features. First and foremost, Hong Kong has had a high level of reserves, nearly a hundred billion US dollars, which is substantially higher than the currency in circulation. Secondly, Hong Kong has a history of no foreign debt. Thirdly its fiscal situation is very strong — a fiscal surplus fund that boasts of an accumulated balance of US dollars 40 to 50 billion. “ (*Times of India*, 22.2.98)

So what about Indonesia ?

The overall parameters have already been spelt out above. The Third World is being drained of over \$50 bln. annually. Therefore, no real industrial or technological progress by Indonesia is conceivable.

Within this overarching context, we can study the data provided by the 1997 *World Development Report* of the World Bank. Table 15, *Exports and Imports of Merchandise*, and Table 16, *Balance of Payments*, demonstrate that Indonesia enjoyed in 1980, a visible trade surplus of \$11.1 bln., which was more than halved by 1995, when the surplus was reduced to \$4.5 bln. Despite this happy position with regard to visible trade, the drain of resources from Indonesia continued to rise at an alarming rate. In 1980 the net invisible outflow was nearly \$12 bln. which more than tripled in 1995 to \$39 bln.

## BY WESTERN STANDARDS THERE IS NOTHING WRONG IN BEING A HINDU PARTY

The bogie of secularism is playing havoc in Indian politics. It is being vigorously promoted by the Congress and the two Communist parties, who were all promoters of India’s Partition in 1947, that resulted in the killing of six lakhs in Imperial police promoted communal riots and in creation of 1.8 crores of refugees, the largest such single event known to world history.

Gandhi promoted the Khilafat Movement for restoration of the status and privileges of the Muslim *Khalifa* of

The exchange rate in Indonesia, prior to the crisis, was \$1=2326 rupiah (*Manorama Yearbook*, 1998, p.192)

It had declined to 17,500 rupiah. to the dollar in recent weeks. At the moment it is around rupiah 12,500.

Suharto was brought into power through a military coup arranged by the CIA, in 1965. Suharto’s first term, as President, began, however, in 1968. Just two days ago he has been (re-elected) for a seventh continuous term in office. Suharto’s twin great achievements during his 33-year rule has been that of,

- Murdering of several lakhs of communists, socialists and leftists as “terrorists and guerillas”,
- And the borrowing by his family and friends from the Indonesian banking system of \$8 bln. as reported by NBC on 10.3.98, on which sum of Non-Performing Assets, as they call it in India, Suharto’s cronies are unable/unwilling to pay interest charges or instalment repayments.

Via the currency board, Suharto is trying to achieve a stable exchange rate of 5000 rupiah to the dollar. That is, Suharto has accepted a devaluation of over 100 per cent !

The USA and the IMF are forcing Suharto to accept a rate of about 10,000 rupiahs to the dollar. In the course of the next few weeks, it is likely that a compromise will be struck at something around 7,500 rupiah to the dollar. After all, Suharto is an old and dear friend of the USA. The capricious Frankensteinian creation will be accommodated, and he

Turkey in 1921-24.

The Congress and the Communist parties have partnered Muslim communal forces in almost every central and state elections for the last 50 years.

Article 370 of the Constitution, granting a special status to Kashmir, is a patently communal provision which provides for inequality amongst states and is, therefore, obviously invalid.

Pakistan, the illegitimate child of British Imperialism, has been allowed to get away with horrible ethnic cleansing,

will accommodate his old masters !

Now what about the lessons for India ? It seems that a fresh breeze of sense is being wafted across the brains of our hidebound *naukershahs*. S. Venkitaraman, a confirmed *naukershah* and a scam-tainted bureaucrat, is being compelled to write :

“ Maybe we need to revisit the earlier policies of encouraging self-reliance without abandoning efficiency. A strategy for better management of BoP will involve many aspects of the economy. It will, above all, demand a sustained commitment at the highest level to encourage exports.

“ Quick-fix solutions like currency boards cannot be a substitute for realistic action on the ground. They ignore the practical problems faced by an open democracy like India. We should guard ourselves against becoming pawns in doctrinal disputes between divergent gurus.

“ Ironic as it may appear, what we need is a home-grown ‘*swadeshi*’ solution to our problems on the external front. “ (*Times of India*, 22.2.98)

For a retired Governor of the RBI, and for a man who put in 30 years of deadening service in the Finance Ministry, it seems to be a season of spring rain.

“ April is the cruelest month, breeding Lilacs out of dead land, mixing Memory and desire, stirring Dull roots with spring rain, sending *Swadeshi* shivers down *naukershahi* spines. ” ■

within Pakistan and in Pak-held Azad Kashmir. Thousands of temples and gurudwaras have been destroyed in Pakistan and even in Indian-held Kashmir valley.

A special status with greater autonomy than autonomy is being advocated for Kashmir by the Congress and the Communist parties at the behest of the neo-colonial powers of the world, led by USA and UK. The official language of Kashmir is Urdu, and the demand for Kashmir autonomy has nothing to do with the promotion of Kashmiri culture or language.

In its entire history, Great Britain has never been a secular power. The royal family of England has been



simultaneously head of the state and of the Anglican church from the 16th century. Similarly, the Shinto religion was unified in the person of the Japanese head of state till McArthur's occupation of Japan after the end of World War II.

Secularism has nothing to do with the scientific temper, as the examples of England and Japan proved. These two countries carried out the First Industrial Revolutions in Europe and Asia respectively.

Christian Democratic parties have ruled in almost all European countries since 1945, either singly or as members of coalitions. Every European and American statesman proclaims his fervent faith in Christianity at every opportunity. They deliver Messages to the Nation at every Christmas. They televise their participation in church services with great fanfare and without the slightest sense of shame.

*Mankind* views all religions as unscientific absurdities.

## SHOULD WE SPEND FIRST A TRILLION DOLLARS TO CRACK THE H. Neanderthalensis GENOME ?

We have always maintained that there is something fundamentally wrong with the White, Christian, Neo-colonial, Free Market Crusaders of Euro-America! The Jonsboro massacre of four little girls and their teacher by two boys of age 13 and 11 is a horrible deed that sends shivers down our spines. What would be the reason, real reason, deep down ? **There has to be one !**

Is the Christian religion at fault ? We do not think so. Christianity, of whatever denomination, is like all religions, a set of obfuscating tenets, unreasoning, faith-based and simply absurd !

Other atrocities have been committed in the name of many other religions !

Is it minority class rule by capitalists that has carried things to the extreme, the lunatic fringe in Free Market America, especially Free Gun Market America to perpetuate such senseless acts of violence, like the Oklahoma bombing of a public facility, like the serial killings by the Uni-bomber,

Therefore, what is wrong with BJP's proclamation of *Hinduva* ? Why are we nationalist and socialist revolutionaries fighting shy of confronting openly Hindu comprador elitist forces and ideologies ?

Atheism is a basic creed of all revolutionaries, including Thomas Paine and the great French revolutionaries of 1789-94, of the Indian *Charvakas* and *Lokayats*, and of the *Dravida* Movement of 1920s to the present.

Why should religion not be the refuge of all property interests ? Why should not the Indian capitalist class, compradorised as it may be, *naukershahi*-led as it might be, why should not this class, whose B-Team is the current BJP government in power at the Centre, why should not this government resort to religious obscurantism in order to defend its indefensible class interests ?

Indian socialist and nationalist revolutionaries should be confident of

their ideological moorings and mount multiple relentless attacks upon conservatism and status quoism in every field of politics and culture !

We do not respect religion ! We respect only the religious feelings of the brainwashed poor ! But our respect for their feelings is merely a starting point for their re-education and for the instilling of the scientific temper amongst them. We do not make atheism a pre-condition for their joining the revolutionary struggle, but we do believe that at the end of the road, the masses will have to break out of the webs of lies and falsehoods breathed into them by the religious obscurantists, who are the professional propagandists of the propertied elite.

After all, we will not be able to build an egalitarian society in India without breaking the hold of the bourgeois ideology upon the Indian people ! ■

fantastic even to contemplate !

What is exactly wrong with the White Christian Capitalist Community of the West ?

Clinton is now touring six countries of Africa and has just admitted that the Euro-Americans promoted the genocidal massacres in Rwanda-Burundi by not disarming the refugee camps and by not supporting in time the efforts of Laurent Kabila to pacify the Congo-Zaire region !

Clinton was shown on TV screens, hand on Mandela's shoulders, visiting the Apartheidist prison of Robben Island, where Mandela was imprisoned and tortured for 18 out of total 27 years that he was incarcerated ! This was the regime that received American help for years and years ! Till just the other day ! The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Bishop Desmond Tutu has been hearing for the last two years, the most horrifying confessions of crimes committed by Whites !

Three Swiss banks, the biggest, have just announced the creation of a fund of billions of dollars to compensate the Jewish victims of the Holocaust, for the money looted from them, a crime confessed to after 50 years, only because of the threatened business sanctions

against them by USA !

Look at the kind of lunatic, convulsive, pop music and dance that these Westerners enjoy ! They sing like Bryan Adams, whilst wooing little white Canadian girls, that they would like to become the latter's tampons !

Look at Yugoslavia ! Till just a few years ago it was a Federation of Six Republics ! Ethnic cleansing of the filthiest possible sort has been in progress over there for the last four years ! Mass graves are regularly found dotting the countryside ! Till yesterday the burials were located in Bosnia and Croatia ! Today the burned out homes and bombed out villages are to be found in Kosovo enclave in Serbia ! The most horrible crimes, unimaginable at least by us, are being committed by their powerful rulers, whilst NATO forces look on !

Just think of the six insignificant counties of Northern Ireland ! They have been killing each other, on Christian denominational grounds, for the last

fourteen years !

Think of the Basque separatists !

Look at the Swiss bankers holding on, till the last minute, to the loot from the Holocaust victims of Nazi death camps !

A little island, Cyprus, they have divided into two, and missile launchers owned by Greeks and Turks, are facing each other over there !

In Chechnya, accounts are being settled, in bloody fields !

Papon, a Vichy career official, was sentenced to ten years' jail for sending thousands of French Jews to Hitler's Concentration Camps !

The White Christian Europeans have never apologised for the countless crimes that they committed upon all the colonial peoples for centuries !

What kind of human beings are these ?

Would the world be better off if all those of European descent were

exterminated at one stroke ?

How can we teach civilised behaviour to such people ? How long is it going to take to re-educate them ?

Four of the White Forces, USA, UK, France and Russia possess Nuclear Weapons ! Who is going to disarm them ?

Israel is refusing to vacate more than 8 to 13 per cent of the West Bank ! At border check points, they are killing Arab pass-holders !

The White Christian capitalist Europeans are a scourge upon the earth !

Why is it that 99 % of all archaeological sites, related to the man-eating Neanderthals, are to be found in Europe ? What sort of genetic configuration was represented by the *H. Neanderthalensis* ? Can we actually work out a genome for Neanderthals ? It seems to me that this is a more urgent task than the marking out of the *H. Sapiens* genome ! ■

## UF DEBACLES IN TAMILNADU, ASSAM & KARNATAKA SEND POLL PREDICTIONS FOR A SIXER !

As far as *Mankind* is concerned, our estimate of the 1998 poll results, went wrong principally because the DMK-TMC front unexpectedly collapsed in Tamilnadu, the UF member AGP met a similar fate in Assam, and the Janata Dal went down heavily in Karnataka, Bihar and Orissa !

We had predicted 228 seats for the BJP combine, 139 for the Congress and Allies and 163 for the UF. (*MK*, Jan-Feb 1998, p.18)

If Jayalalitha and friends had not won as many as 27 in Tamilnadu in alliance with the BJP; and if the AGP had not scored exactly zero in Assam; or had the Janata Dal not won exactly six all over the country, especially just 3 in Karnataka; we might have had our predicted distributions confirmed.

The United Front, excluding TDP and NC, collapsed nationally to just 84, and the BJP picked up the slack, more

## SUMMARY EXECUTION OF 9th PLAN BY MADHU "ADHU" DANDAVATE !

Madhu Dandavate did not retire from the Planning Commission before making a grand contribution to our ever-increasing load of bureaucraties. To the immense fund of jargon, cliché and *naukershahi* persiflage, he has added the precious term "Executive Summary."

What does this mean ? Could it mean rubbishy nothing ? Since Gujral's government had fallen several months ago, Madhu had become a mere Caretaker Vice-chairman of the PC.

There was no Draft 9th Plan that he had had time to prepare, which could be presented to any National Development Council. Therefore he got the echelons of minions at the Nirman Bhavan to throw together some stray ideas and stats, and to make this grand gesture of justification for expenditure of crores of rupees mis-spent during his brief term, and termed the hotch-potch "Executive Summary". Will there be another "Clerical Summary"? or perhaps

or less.

In Rajasthan and Maharashtra, Congress might have done a little better than our anticipation, but on the other hand, it did very badly in Madhya Pradesh, UP, Bihar, in fact, Congress suffered a debacle in the entire North and North-West.

That is why, we maintain that BJP was handed over power on a platter by the INC in the 1998 polls to the 12<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha ! Sonia will definitely use this FACT as a bargaining counter, to secure some sort of Immunity for her trusts, and for her progeny, from the BJP, in the Bofors case ! ■

"Caretaker Interim Summary"? Or "Computer Print-out Precis"? Or some such Joke ?

In any case what does the Executive Summary offer ?

• "Draft 9th Plan Offers No Hope To The Poor," sums up the *Times of India* on 2.3.98. The draft plan portrays a grim picture with regard to provision of basic services to the poor. It will not be until A.D. 2010, or even A.D. 2015, before every citizen has access to drinking water, sanitation and housing," the Executive Summary indicates on p.43. It took the Commission almost 18 months to

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prepare a voluminous 2-part Draft after consulting expert groups, Central departments, state governments, non-government organisations and several local bodies. Having failed to secure the approval of the Union Cabinet or the National Development Council owing to the fall of the UF government, **the document has been reduced to " a statement of possibilities."**

• "The private sector did not invest more because infrastructural facilities were poor. The government shied away from development, since fiscal deficit was high. To remedy this, the draft has proposed that the government spend on infrastructure, " which would encourage the private sector to make investments."

Thus the veteran Socialist Madhu Dandavate has, towards the end of his life, come a full circle. To zero ! **Infrastructure is to be developed, so that private enterprise can develop !** In fact private enterprise had been waiting for govt. exhortations for the last 50 years, before going in for basic development ! **As our study of Big Business Houses, published elsewhere in this issue, indicates, Tatas have developed by merely 360 times and Birlas by merely in excess of 180 times, over the last half century, without helping India to realise basic development ! Both were so far developing only themselves !** Now, under the directions of the Executive Summary, they will begin to develop the country !

• "The draft has laid down other policy measures, that could facilitate investment by the private sector, such as reform of the financial and **insurance sector and raising user charges** for utilities like power and transport."

Now citizens will pay for using roads ! Perhaps also for drainage lines ! Definitely for drinking water ! Foreign insurers and other fund-owners are lining up in queues to give us billions of rupees to build infrastructural facilities ! Their

hearts are bleeding and tears are flowing in torrents from the eyes of flinty-eyed bankers of the West !

• "At the same time, the Govt. has to take bold measures (Dandavate is always fond of bold measures !— Exe.Edr.) to finance its additional expenditure while keeping the fiscal deficit down ..... improve tax revenue,....reduce expenditure,.... Government should spend 9.8% of GDP, instead of 8.6%.....!

**In short, Dandavate wants the govt. to square the circle !**

• Also," the PC has suggested that the rupee be depreciated in order to boost exports."

When Manmohan Singh began large-scale depreciation of the rupee in mid-1991, the rupee-dollar exchange rate was Rs.17 to the dollar ! Now, it is nearly Rs. 40 to the dollar ! **This is not enough!** It is only minus a little over two times ! The rupee must go down at least five times, to Rs.85 to the dollar !

Since, every rupee reduction in exchange value results in an increase of net foreign debt burden upon the people of India by Rs.10,000 crores, a reduction by Rs. 45 (from present Rs. 40 to advisable Rs.85 !), will add only Rs.450,000 crores to our debt ! Since exports have in the last seven years never kept pace with imports of Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Pizzas, Nestle, Cadbury, Bakeman's Biscuits, Ford-Mahindra cars, Thomson TV Sets and **such other vital and basic necessities**, our net deficit (on visible and invisible accounts ) will probably rise to only Rs. 30,000 crores per annum ! At the moment the Drain from India is at the rate of Rs.12,000 crores per year ! This will be covered by FII investments in our Stock Exchanges of \$ 50 billion ! This will enable us to cover our Import Bill for four-and-a-half days ! The next crisis, which will overtake us in five days, will take us nearer to our goal of Capital Account Convertibility. (Dandavate is

very fond of CAC !— Exe.Edr.) As India is a big and historic nation, we will neither follow the Mexican example of end-1995 nor the Indonesian-Thai-Malaysian-Philippino examples of end 1997. We will have a unique grand mammoth Indian bust up which will eclipse all other Latin American and ASEAN crises put together !

We will not further describe the impending giant, unique, fabulous Indian economic crisis ! Dandavate has instructed the PC, before departing for destination unknown ( a govt. flat in a little known corner of Delhi ) with his bag and baggage, that it will issue at the appropriate time another fine "Executive Summary" to carry us over to the Next-after-one-crisis !

• In the meantime "the government should reduce its monopoly on sources of long-term funds such as insurance, pension and provident funds."

This opening up of the insurance sector, to privatisation, initially only to Indians and almost immediately thereafter to their partners, the foreigners, will enable us to plan better to meet future crises !

The 9th Plan Draft by Dandavate recommends that we plan for the Ninth Greater than Mexican and Deeper than Indonesian crisis, right from today !

We are Indians ! We are full of foresight ! We can chart a *Vaastu* Horoscope, keeping the Nirman Bhavan in the centre !

We can combine the *Vaastu* chart with the personal horoscopes of Manmohan Singh, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, P. Chidambaram, Jairam Ramesh, Madhu Dandavate and Yeshwant Sinha !

We can move all the " forecasts " to the 9th "House" or "Degree." **This will in fact become the Final 9th Plan Document !** It will provide for all the Nine Crises, all uniquely Indian and massive, that are impending for the Ninth Plan Period of 1997-2002 ! ■

methods that smack of Gandhism. Such techniques generally do not work, especially if the opponents have no conscience ! The Hunger Strike, especially of the indefinite sort, turns into farcical human chain efforts, which merely provoke derision.

## A FEW LESSONS FROM THE FTII FAILURE !

The students of FTII had to accept defeat and call off their struggle against Director Agashe, who has temporarily triumphed ! We trust that the youngsters

will draw appropriate lessons from the turn of events.

First of all, they must give up the tactic of Hunger Strike. I am against all

Secondly, before resorting to strike action, the students must engage in a prolonged agit-prop effort. They must form a Student Citizen Forum, and patiently explain their position to the people of Pune. They must present one or more well-reasoned documents challenging Agashe's Nine Conceptualisations and Zero Semester. They should challenge the Neurosis expert to public debate and show him up for what he is, a bureaucratic bully !

Thirdly, they must boycott all his attempts to compulsorily educate them ! There should be Zero Attendance in all his classes ! After all, Zero Semester means partial closure of the FTII to new entrants, and the same wonderful principle should be extended to include the Old Boys and Girls as well ! I am sure, Agashe, if he believes in logic, would have no objection to Zero Audience for his Zero Semester classes !

Fourthly, instead of beating about the bush and confusing everybody around, the Demand for the Director's Resignation should be made right from the start. The demand may fall on deaf ears, as it has, but it must become the focal point of the struggle right from the outset !

## SHAMEFUL ACCUSATIONS AGAINST VICTORIOUS MPs BY COMPRADOR LIBERAL SIMPLETONS !

In Comprador India, everything is confused. The police is the most politicised element of the quartet that really rules over us. The four great limbs of our *naukershahi* are the uncivil civilians, the mercenary military men, the unjust judiciary, and the criminal police.

Let me recall my own young days. The first charge against me was that of nothing less than MURDER ! At the age of just over 15 ! Apparently, I had tried to burn a policeman alive, by hitting him with a torch that I was carrying as a member of a small torchlight procession that I was leading along the winding streets of a suburb of Bombay. The case against me, KING GEORGE VI vs VINAYAK PUROHIT went on for nearly two years. It appears fantastic to write today that I escaped the gallows because the constable I had hit on the chest with

Fifthly, the students must engage in no struggle that can be beaten by mere delay ! In India, the *naukershahi* has made nonsense of all the time frame situations ! If by just not preparing for a new semester, a Zero Semester can be realised in practice, the students should refuse to engage in such a battle ! After all, it takes two to make a fight and the boys and girls can refuse to join an issue that they cannot win !

Sixthly, the students must cease to rely on eminent alumni to win their battles. Agashe broke down and wept when Saeed Mirza and K. K. Mahajan met him. Such drama leads nowhere and does not ensure success.

Seventhly, the student leaders should explain in detail, and in written form, the consequences of the Privatisation and Self-Finance proposals made by the Director. How the quality of the films made by them will be affected must be spelt out.

At least these are some of the lessons which we feel the students must learn. During the last two years, some of the agitating students may have felt that solidarity to their cause by certain local Stalinist helped ! Neither C. M. Ibrahim

nor Jaipal Reddy came across with any decisive action, and all the efforts to reach them through local Stalinists were in vain. Now perhaps they will try to reach Sushma Swaraj by devious channels. We do not believe that anything positive can emerge from such insidious paths. They would be better advised to conduct their future agitations in a transparent, open and bold manner and to be satisfied with nothing less than a written commitment from the authorities. To precipitately launch a hunger strike, to call it off without any guarantees in writing and to re-launch strike action without proper preparation, could only lead to repeated frustrations and demoralisations, which could and should be avoided in the period ahead.

We have stood by the students and the few words of advice are merely meant to equip them better with weapons that will serve them more effectively in the days to come. Let the bovine bum, who is the present Director of the FTII gloat over his momentary triumph. But no tinpot-tyrant can succeed forever against reasoned and reasonable demands of the youth of our country. The future necessarily belongs to them ! ■

would have classified me, aged fifteen-and-a-half, as a hardened criminal and would have placed me in his list of, "Shameful 70" that he published first under the headline, *Towards a Cleaner Poll in Outlook* of 23.2.98 and which he has now followed up with *27 Shades of Shame in Outlook* of 23.3.98.

Vinod Mehta and his ilk are really stupid liberal bourgeois, who do not understand the first thing about the Indian police, or the Indian bureaucracy, or the British colonial background to Indian politics when the British police regularly staged pogroms which they called communal riots with the help of Hindu and Muslim criminals and when the Stalinist Communists acted as *agent provocateurs* to apprehend us, of the August Movement who were nationalists and socialist revolutionaries.

Let me repeat, Vinod Mehta and similar fancy jet-setters DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE FIRST THING ABOUT THE INDIAN POLICE AND THE DIRTY HISTORICAL COLONIAL BACKGROUND FROM  
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## WHICH THESE UNDERWORLD-LINKED RUFFIANS SPRANG !

Therefore, I personally can only smile at the headline *27 Shades of Shame*. The sub-heading goes even funnier : " *In the rogue's gallery of the 12th Lok Sabha are criminal MPs, dons and the Ayodhya accused.*" I would only advise people like Vinod Mehta to read a little more of the nationalist literature of those days, especially texts like Subhas Bose's autobiography where he refers to the spying and police informing that went on in the colleges and universities of those days or the biography of C. F. Andrews in the *Builders of Modern India Series* where Andrews actually quotes from the letter that he had written to the Viceroy, complaining about the police presence in educational institutions (Andrews was, for a while, private tutor to Viceroy's children).

One can only laugh at the naivete with which Vinod Mehta and his tribe of editors of mass circulation, glossy, coloured, profit-making news magazines, accept the charges framed by the police against all decent men and women of India, especially against those who are rather poor.

The British colonial police and the Indian comprador police are habituated to framing false charges against their

selected targets which naturally varied from time to time. Not the slightest credence can be placed in those chargesheets.

The only class of offences in which there possibly might be some substance are those of corruption and possession of wealth beyond ostensible means. Even these can be fabrications, but, in general, there is a likelihood that at least a fraction of them may be true. Therefore, let us look at the so-called *27 Shades of Shame* and consider the residue after removal of all highly political cases like Babri demolition, etc. As long as Rajiv and Narasimha Rao were not arrested for creating the whole Ayodhya mess, no government has any business to selectively chargesheet some stray BJP leaders.

If carried to the logical extreme, Jawahar, Indira, Rajiv and Rao could all be apprehended and made to serve life terms for criminal activities carried on by them on scores, if not hundreds of counts.

Approval by Congress and Communists of the Partition of 1947 makes every Congress and Communist leader guilty of conspiracy to murder, rape and kidnap, in hundreds and thousands, if not lakhs of instances !

What do these fancy partying

fellows know of the real politics of the freedom struggle, or even of the post-freedom period ?

In our pre-election issue, we published the original naive list of 72 as outlined in *Outlook* by its editor, Vinod Mehta. We see no merit in reprinting the names of 27 out of the 72, who won the elections to the 12th Lok Sabha. We find most of them to be really innocent politicians, generally affiliated to the Left and Dalit parties who have been for a very long time, the targets of Congress-naukers' vendetta.

Our stand does not mean that Jayalalitha or the original accused in the Jain Hawala Case or the Bihar Fodder Case are innocent. But these elements are guilty, independent of the police chargesheets and for accumulation of wealth beyond ostensible means. That is a separate issue and we shall be conducting an awareness campaign in the columns of *Mankind* against these rotten elements as and when the occasion arises. That is a different matter altogether.

In the meantime, let me assure Vinod Mehta that I was not a murderer or any sort of hardened criminal, either at the age of fifteen-and-a-half or at any time thereafter ! ■

## ELA GANDHI DEMANDS APOLOGY FROM INDIANS FOR ASSOCIATION WITH APARTHEID IN S. AFRICA

*Mankind* has repeatedly pointed out the infamous Anti-Black and Pro-Imperialist role played by the so-called Father of the Nation, M. K. Gandhi, in South Africa, during his stay there from 1892 to 1915.

- The Fighter for Truth, Gandhi, actively supported the imperialist Whites against the Blacks in the Zulu Wars of 1890s, because Truth was always with the Whites !

- The Apostle of Peace actively participated in the Boer War of 1899-1902, on the British imperialist side.

- The Prophet of Non-violence personally aided Britain in the First World War, both in S. Africa and in England in 1914-15.

- The Great Soul recruited soldiers for the First World War in Gujarat, India,

and received the Kaiser-i-Hind medal from the British for his efforts. This medal he returned later, but the men he induced to join the war did not thereby retrospectively become unrecruited.

- The Fees and Conditionalities attached to Pass Books and Identity Documents issued to Indians, were made even more stringent and costlier after Gandhi's intervention in S.A. affairs. Smuts conceded nothing to Gandhi, whose non-violent methods totally failed in S. Africa. The Great Man who conducted Experiments to Discover Truth, returned to India in 1915, a defeated and demoralised man !

Now Ela Gandhi, M.K.'s granddaughter, joins *Mankind*, to confirm its indictment.

Ela, a member of the Parliament of S.

Africa, has declared that "Indians too should apologise for apartheid" just as the Whites are being asked to do. Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Chairman Desmond Tutu has called upon Whites to confess and be absolved ! She said that "Indians too had benefitted from apartheid and failed to unite the entire community against the former White racist regime." (*Times of India*, 16.3.98). *Indian Express*, of 14.3.98 gives more details : "We accepted residential areas, schools, hospitals and welfare benefits, many of which were not extended to African people" says Ela.

*Mankind* is happy to receive unexpected support from Ms. Ela Gandhi and requests all believers in non-violence, either as philosophy or as political tactic, to ponder over the close association that the richer comprador Indians had established with the White regime in S. Africa, during the years when Gandhi was planning the strategy to be pursued by them. ■

# NO HOUR IS AUSPICIOUS FOR BJP ! ALL ROADS LEAD TO DISASTER !

## ELECTION 1998

### THE FARCICAL STORY :

#### 1. The Overall Picture : March 1998

The 1998 General Elections to the 12th Lok Sabha were precipitated by the Congress withdrawal of support to the I. K. Gujral Ministry of the United Front. The ostensible reason was the failure of the UF government to remove DMK nominees from the UF ministry, as the DMK had been indicted for collaboration with LTTE in the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. This issue was completely buried by the Congress during the Election Campaign and therefore, nobody knew why the midterm poll, costing over 750 crores to the public exchequer, was ever undertaken. During the campaign, even Sonia did not attack the DMK, and the local Congress outfit, the Tamil Nadu Congress, remained firmly attached to the DMK. At the end of the futile poll exercise costing at least another three to four thousand crores to the political parties and their financial backers, once again the UF-Congress alliance was sought to be resurrected without any qualms or remorse or sense of shame, and for ten days the air was rife with the statement by Stalinist scoundrel Surjeet and other luminaries of the Left like Yechuri, Bardhan, Karat, Mulayam, Amar Singh, Laloo Yadav, B. P. Maurya, Kanshi Ram and others that a Secular Front must be formed to prevent the BJP and its allies from coming to power. Nothing of the sort happened ! The Left, after thoroughly disgracing itself, beat a precipitate retreat, as soon as Sonia Gandhi, a non-MP, became the leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party, and in comical Italo-English confessed that the Congress did not have the numbers to stake any claim to power !

The supreme question remains unanswered. WHY DID THE CONGRESS FORCE THE ELECTIONS ?

BOFORS IS THE ONLY

ANSWER, AS ANALYSED BY *MANKIND* (March, p.19; and Jan-Feb, p.4) AND AS CONFIRMED BY **INDER GUJRAL, GEORGE FERNANDES AND ATAL BEHARI VAJPAYEE.**

**ACTUALLY, THE CONGRESS, HELPED THE BJP TO COME TO POWER IN 1998 !** In 1996, the BJP had held only 6 seats in the South against its 38 victories now; only one in the East against its 25 now; only 114 in the North against 136 now, despite a loss of 7 in Rajasthan. Only in the West did it suffer a setback, a net loss from 49 in 1996 to 29 now; with an increase of actually 3 in Gujarat, which did not compensate for a much heavier loss in Maharashtra, where the BJP-SS combine won only 10 seats against 33 in 1996 ! Thus, Maharashtra is the only place, where Congress had a resurgence. Thanks to the betrayal by Mulayam Singh and the Ambedkarites, who jointly buoyed up Sharad Pawar, and despite the horrible record of endless crimes against the Indian people by the INC over the last 50 years.

Anyway, the BJP was in a much weaker position in May 1996 than in February 1998. It had improved its overall tally, together with that of its allies, from about 175 in 1996 to its present strength of about 265 in 1998. In the last two years, apart from its old allies Samata (George Fernandes), SAD (P. S. Badal), Shiv Sena (Bal Thackeray) and HVP (Bansilal), it was allowed time to pick up new allies in AIADMK (Jayalalitha), BJD (Naveen Patnaik), Trinamul Congress (Mamata Banerjee), Lokshakti (R. K. Hegde), PMK (P. Ramadoss), MDMK (V. Gopalaswamy) and HLD (O. P. Chautala).

Obviously Congress was hell bent on self-destruction. The party had panicked ! It had to avoid the Bofors exposure at any cost. (Kesri's personal peccadilloes and receipt of 3 1/2 crore of

foreign money as Congress Treasurer, may have further contributed to the hurry with which support was withdrawn from Deve Gowda and Inder Gujral)

It was clear during the tenures of both Deve Gowda (about 11 months) and of Inder Gujral (about 7 months), that Congress cannot live without power for too long. The Congress Party was manoeuvring, right from the time of the fall of Vajpayee's 13-day-old Government in 1996, to somehow crawl back into power. At that time the Stalinists had not realised the extreme danger posed by Mamata Banerjee's Trinamul Congress to Jyoti Basu in West Bengal. Mulayam was also smarting under his dismissal in 1993 by the Congress government at the Centre. Laloo had not yet broken with the central leadership of the Janata Dal. Therefore the UF insisted on maintaining an equidistance from both BJP and the Congress and barred Congress entry into the UF ministry.

But by early 1998, Mulayam had been frightened into lending a helping hand to the Congress in Maharashtra. Laloo had broken with the central leadership of the Janata Dal (Sharad Yadav, Deve Gowda, S. R. Bommai and J. H. Patel) and Surjeet and Jyoti Basu had realised that Mamata Banerjee was likely to become the next Chief Minister of West Bengal. Therefore, the Left led by the nose by Stalinists and crypto Stalinists, like Surjeet, Gujral and Bhandari, rushed post-haste to prop-up the rapidly disintegrating Congress.

It is amazing that the leaders of the so-called radical movement of India should have abandoned so completely their earlier Anti-Congress stand ! Let us remember that the Anti-Congress stand of the Left was not a mere whim ! Nor was it pure parliamentary ploy to work out successful electoral combinations ! **The Anti-Congress stand of the revolutionary nationalists and socialists of India was firmly grounded on the long Congress record of compradorism, corruption and anti-people criminality !** It was a fundamental tenet ! Congress was the epitome of all that went wrong during the last 50 years !

It is stupid and short-sighted on the part of the Left to talk glibly about Anti-Congressism as though it was merely an

electioneering slogan ! In fact, Anti-Congressism is founded upon clear-cut ideological principles !

**The people of India need a New Constituent Assembly elected for the FIRST TIME on Direct, Universal, Adult, Equal, Franchise.**

The people of India need a New Economic Policy that rejects the Structural Adjustment Programme prescribed by the IMF, WB and WTO. A programme which immediately needs to stop the haemorrhaging of the Indian economy and the Drain of Wealth abroad through Trade Deficits, Foreign Loans, Devaluations and Net Invisible Outflows. Today, India is losing wealth at the rate of Rs.17,000 crores (1990-91) and Rs.13,000 crores (1992-93) and thereabouts per year (*Economic Survey 1996-97* p. 5-72). **THIS MUST CEASE !** We must not import, including Net Invisibles, anything more than we export ! We must not accumulate any more foreign debt ! We must not devalue any further ! We must stoutly repudiate the LPGW (Liberalisation, Privatisation, Globalisation and Westernisation) Programme being frosted upon us.

Anti-Congressism was solidly based upon these two simple demands : For a New Constitution and for a New Economic Policy !

Stalinists like Surjeet, Basu, Yechuri, Karat and Nayanar are trivialising the role of ideology in history ! There are rudderless ghosts, who have no future and who will be wiped out from history within the next few years !

**In short, the Congress has assisted in every possible way, the elevation of the BJP to the seat of power at the Centre.**

Had the BJP been allowed to remain in power, weak and divided as it was in 1996, unsupported by powerful aids in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Orissa and West Bengal, as was the situation at that time, the BJP would have exposed itself most thoroughly in a matter of months ! The BJP in Maharashtra had re-negotiated the deal with Enron within a fortnight of coming to power, and similar bigger scams would have overtaken its activities at the Centre in a matter of just a few weeks ! The Indian people would have been spared the expense of a futile general election exercise ! The Indian people would have discarded both the Congress and the BJP into the dustbin of history by now, that is by early 1998 ! The Centrist and Leftist forces of India would have perhaps by now managed a parliamentary majority for themselves !

**UNFORTUNATELY, THAT WAS NOT TO BE !**

**As revolutionaries, we know, we cannot substitute our knowledge for the experience of the masses ! Otherwise, we would have a revolution tomorrow morning !**

We must patiently wait and carry the masses every step of the way ! A betrayal of the interests of the Indian people, will inevitably be perpetrated by the BJP and its allies as soon as they have come to power, at the latest by the day after tomorrow !

The countdown for the overthrow of all BJP pretensions begins on Thursday, the 19th of March 1998, when Vajpayee and his gang are supposed to take the oath of office at an auspicious hour.

**THERE IS NO HOUR THAT CAN BE AUSPICIOUS FOR THE BJP AND ITS ALLIES ! ALL HOURS AND DAYS**

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**WILL PROVE TO BE INAUSPICIOUS FOR THE BJP AND ITS COHORTS ! THE BJP WILL MEET ITS DOOM THE MOMENT IT ASSUMES RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE COMPRADOR NAUKERSHAHI REGIME THAT IS RUNNING INDIA. THE SOONER THE BJP COMES TO POWER, THE BETTER ! THE SOONER IT WILL FALL ! IT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO BLAME THE CONGRESS, OR ANYONE ELSE, FOR ITS OWN MISDEEDS, WHICH ARE GOING TO COMMENCE FROM 19th MARCH, 1998.**

## **2. The Congress Party**

Having considered the overall picture, we can now examine some details. If we take the Vindhya as the divide between the North and the South, the first point to be noticed is that the Congress is very weak in the North. The Congress tally is :

J&K 1; Punjab 0; HP 1; Har. 3; UP 0; Bihar 5; WB 1; Assam 10; MP 10; Raj. 18; Gujarat 7; Orissa 5; Delhi 1; Megh. 2; Nag. 1; Tri. 0; Manipur 0; Arunachal 0; Mizoram 0; Dadra & NH 0; Daman & Diu 0;

In short, in the North, the Congress has been reduced to about 72 seats out of a total of 333, or 1 in 5 !

In the South, that is

Maha. 33; Andhra 22; Karnataka 9; Kerala 8; Tamil Nadu 0; Goa 2; Pondicherry 0; Lakshwadeep 1; A&N Islands 1;

The Congress still retains pockets of strength, so that it scored 76 out of 210, or 1 in 3.

The Congress has been totally wiped out from Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, from out of the 15 major states of India and scored just 1 in West Bengal. It had a very low score in Gujarat (7 out of 26); Karnataka (9 out of 28); Orissa (5 out of 21); Madhya Pradesh (10 out of 40); Haryana (3 out of 10) and Delhi (1 out of 7).

The TMC was the local Congress outfit in Tamil Nadu. It became an ally of the DMK before the 1996 elections to the 11th Lok Sabha. Its strength is now reduced to just 3 from 20 in 1996. This shows that even as a regional force making local alliances, the Congress has no future. This has a lesson for Sharad Pawar, who believes that he is vying for the PM's position. He is living in a fool's paradise if he thinks that he will always have Sonia's support ! Should he swear total allegiance to her, and agree to suppress forever, the details of Rajiv's hand in the Bofors scam, even then **Sonia will always prefer to deal directly with, whosoever is in power** as Finance Minister and as Home Minister in the BJP setup ! Sonia does not need Sharad Pawar as a friendly broker. Therefore, L. K. Advani, who has become the next Home Minister and Yeshwant Sinha who has become the Finance Minister, will be offered a suitable price for serving Sonia's interests and those of her progeny !

Sonia will make a deal directly with the BJP and pay up a few hundred crores ! After all, *Kiske Baap ki Diwali ?* As far as Sonia's campaign on behalf of the Congress during the 1998 elections is concerned, it is now universally agreed that her impact was either zero or negative ! At the moment, her sycophants are shouting that but for her intervention, the Congress would have suffered a worse fate, and would have been reduced from 140 to less than 100 ! They are alleging that because of her charismatic presence and oratory, the

Congress has managed to retain just about its 1996 score !

**Mankind is not interested in sycophantic overtures to the Canal Attendant's presumptuous First Family !** We have previously denounced Sonia's Mafia dynastic interventions in Indian politics. No foreign-born NATO-mole has any right to intervene in Indian politics. If necessary a Constitutional Amendment to that effect must be immediately carried out, pending formulation of a New Constitution by a New Constituent Assembly !

Sonia has settled in our country in order to guard her vast property interests. **Her trusts have grabbed thousands of crores of rupees worth of real estate in Delhi and in many other cities and towns of India ! All the properties managed by the trusts, controlled by her, should be immediately nationalised and she should be expelled from the country as an undesirable alien associated with criminals like Quattrochi, Win Chadda, Ajitabh Bachchan !** (See "*Sonia's Empire*" in this issue)

Anyway, by its own suicidal policies, the Congress has made possible BJP rule over the country and thus, the Congress faces the prospect of remaining out of power for a further period of unknown duration. **Without power, it will rapidly disintegrate in the next two or three years !** The final outcome of Bofors, is not only Rajiv's death, but also the suicide of a hundred year old party !

We had predicted in our article *Caravan of Colonial and Neo-Colonial Gurus and Guides* (MK, July-Aug 97, pp. 27-43) that Sonia will soon head the Congress. This prophecy has been fulfilled in less than nine months !

We are making another prediction that the Indian people will find the moral and physical courage, in the next two or three years, to ostracize and isolate Sonia Maino Gandhi to such an extent that she is forced to frequently travel abroad in a virtual exile, and is deprived of effective control over **her Indian properties and wealth, which would at present prices total over Rs. 25,000 crores ! Included in her Empire, is the most valuable plot of land in the entire country, situated at the crossing of Janpath and Rajpath, and extending upto India Gate, in New Delhi !**

Let us make another point clear. The Congress Party can never be secular. It was born in the Communal Division of the country, which the British Imperialists had practised from the 1880s. The Congress had accepted all the Communal Awards forced upon the country from time to time by British imperialism. The Congress fully participated in the Communal Division of the Country, carried out in 1947.

The British, who created the Congress Party through the machinations of Viceroy Dufferin and Home Secretary A. O. Hume ICS, always considered the Congress as the Hindu party. The Congress denied this characterisation but accepted its role as a Hindu spokesperson whenever the English insisted.

In any case, the Congress can never be a secular party, since it has participated in the greatest Communal Crime of World History, which was the Partition of India in 1947.

**Furthermore, the Congress can never be a secular party since it will always be Pro-Islamic and Pro-Christian ! That is exactly what the Western Powers want the GOI to be !** Pakistan is the West's favourite child, and it can be protected

only by forcing India's Comprador Congress rulers to follow a non-confrontationist and appeasing policy with regard to Islam and Pakistan. Which is exactly what the Congress *Naukersshahi* Combine had been doing in India, for the last half century.

Hindu Temples and Sikh Gurudwaras can be destroyed by the hundreds in Pakistan and in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Such Temples and Gurudwaras can be destroyed by the score, even in Indian-occupied Kashmir. Hindu Pandits can be massacred and driven from their ancestral homes within Indian-occupied Kashmir valley ! **National Conference leader Farookh Abdullah can be made to advise the Pandits not to return to their homes in Kashmir valley !**

All this is supposed to be entirely secular ! No Compensation need be paid for the enormous ethnic cleansing carried out in Pakistan !

As for the Non-Secular Pro-Christian bias of the Congress-*naukersshahi* government of India, we have the evidence of the London-based subversive Christian movement led by Phizo for over 20 years. Phizo's place has been taken by Thuingaleng Muivah and Issac Chisi Swu of NSCN(IM) who are carrying on merrily even 50 years after so-called independence ! (See *A Grand Deception in Kohima* in today's *Indian Express*, 18.3.98)

The US government has installed in Afghanistan a fundamentalist ruling party, armed to the teeth with American weapons. This, they accomplished with the help of Pakistan, whose stock is so high that he is being dined and wined and feted in Washington as though he was royalty (See *Pak Army Chief Hits It Off In Washington*, *Indian Express*, 19.3.98) The government of India under Congress-*naukersshahi* rule for the past 50 years was never allowed to be secular ! It can never be ! It was always Pro-Islamic and Pro-Christian as required by the Western powers led by America and Britain !

### **3. Mass Education Needs Three Steps**

Anti-Congressism is merely THE FIRST STEP.

We can be sure that he who votes for Congress or sympathises with its programme and policies, will never be a member of the Radical Militant Left Movement.

For him, it is necessary to take the first step of Anti-Congressism, before he can attempt to run as a revolutionary nationalist and socialist.

The Indian National Congress is not an ordinary liberal bourgeois party like the Democratic and Republican Parties of USA, or the Conservative Party of UK, or like the Christian Democratic Parties of Continental Europe. **The Congress is a *naukersshahi* party with an extremely authoritarian character.** The Congress does not tolerate any dissent and the *naukersshahi* shoots down all opposition elements exactly in the colonial manner ! The number of unarmed people killed in India in police firing from 1947 to 1998 would number several lakhs ! The Congress *naukersshahi* combine has imposed Preventive Detention Laws upon the country for all the years since 1947 except for one year during the Janata Party rule (Even that against the then P. M. Morarji Desai's wishes !) Not satisfied with the draconian provisions of the Indian Penal Code and the P.D. Acts, the Congress has imposed other special laws applicable to various parts of the country, like the Special Regulations for the North-East States, and above all, it has



extended TADA from J&K and Punjab to almost all the states of the Indian Union.

**There are no human rights in India especially for the poor.**

That is why, Anti-Congressism is the first step.

We have to patiently argue with the people and our cadres, that the authoritarian Semi-fascist Congress-*naukershahi* rule has to be overthrown in order to establish the democratic rights of the Indian people.

Secondly, from the beginning of Nehru's rule from Sept. 1946 as Vice-Chairman of the Viceroy's Executive Council, India has carried out all the neo-colonialist and comprador policies, which the western powers required. The rupee was devalued in 1949 in consonance with the Sterling devaluation of the time. The Partition of 1947 was implemented to the letter as per British dictates and Muslim interests have been consistently appeased as per the wishes of Anglo-America. There is nothing communal about our demand for compensation worth billions of dollars from Pakistan for its thorough-going ethnic cleansing ! Only 4 per cent of the people of West Pakistan belong to the minorities today, as against about 30 per cent in 1947 ! Thousands of Hindu Temples and Sikh Gurudwaras have been demolished in Pakistan. For this, full compensation must be paid to the Hindus and the Sikhs !

Ethnic cleansing within Pakistan cannot be allowed to go on under an Anglo-American shield !

We must demand a re-unification of India and Pakistan so that the billions of dollars expended on defence by both countries, that fill coffers of the western armament producers, cease forthwith !

This money is urgently needed for the upliftment of the masses of both countries ! Thirdly, we must denounce the hypocritical socialism professed by Jawaharlal Nehru, which actually resulted in the extraordinary growth rates for Indian Monopoly Houses led by the Tatas and the Birlas. The Tata Group and the Birla Group increased their assets by 361 and 199 per cent respectively during Nehru's pseudo-socialist rule ! Continuing their assaults upon the Indian working classes and taking the entire period of Congress misrule from 1951-1997, we can record an overall increase in the assets of the House of Tatas from Rs. 116 to Rs. 41,679 crores or an increase of 35,930 per cent (360 times) and of the House of Birlas from Rs. 153 to Rs. 27,645 crores or 18,069 per cent (180 times) !

It is obvious that this is not socialism in any sense ! It is only Jawahar's pseudo-socialism ! This is not "*Garibi hatao*" ("Eliminate Poverty") in the true sense under Indira's rule. It was only *Garibi hatao* ("Finish-off the Poor"). It was not clean administration by Rajiv, it was Bofors mal-administration ! It was not freeing the economy from Licence-Quota-Permit-Raj by Narasimha Rao and Manmohan Singh. It was merely verbal balloon flying with L.P.G. ! (L.P.G. stands for both - Liquid Petroleum Gas and Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation.)

As stated earlier in this article, the bleeding of India is today, preceding at the rate of tens of thousands of crores, as imports are uncontrolled, as exports are not rising fast enough, as devaluations are outpacing exports, as foreign debt is accumulating rapidly and as invisible outflows are cascading !

We must never forget that the reduction by one rupee in the exchange value to the dollar adds Rs. 10,000 crores to the burden of our foreign debt !

All these facts must be dinned into the minds of our cadres. They may be summarised under three heads -

- Violations of Democratic Rights by successive governments led by J. Nehru (1956-64); I. Gandhi (1st Term 1966-75, Emergency 1975-77, 2nd Term 1980-84); R. Gandhi (1984-89) and the Rao-Singh Disaster Duo (1991-96).
- Neo-Colonial behests carried out faithfully by the comprador-*naukershahi* combine over the last five decades. For instance, the devaluations of the rupee from Rs. 3.3 to the dollar in 1947 to Rs. 39.50 to the dollar in 1998 ! or the Gold Smuggling that was allowed to go on till 1990s by the London Gold Council !
- The Anti-People Economic Policies pursued by our Congress *naukershahi* combine over the last fifty years, which necessitates the twin demands for a New Constituent Assembly and for a New Economic Policy.

But the Anti-Congress stand is only the first step !

The next step through which we must guide our cadres is the Anti-BJP stand !

The BJP programme is pseudo-swadeshi ! The BJP does not stand for re-unification of India and Pakistan ! The BJP accepts the LPG Programme of the Congress. The BJP has surrendered to the Structural Adjustment Programme imposed upon India by the *Trimurti* of WB, IMF and WTO !

English must be banished ! Otherwise the children of our landless labourers can never receive an education that will be equal to that received by the children of our elite !

So long as the Big Five retain their nuclear arsenals, the world is under acute threat. India must be free to exercise its nuclear option if attacked by any of the Big Five and their satellites, like Pakistan or Israel or South Africa or any present or future NATO member.

Article 370 must be abrogated. Kashmir must have the same equal status as all the other states of the Indian Union.

There must be a Uniform Civil Code for all Indians.

India, Pakistan and Bangladesh must be re-unified in a Confederation of Socialist States of the Indian Sub-Continent !

This is not all. We must expose the pseudo-swadeshi platform of the BJP and demand true revolutionary nationalism to combat the neo-colonial hegemony over the world established by the G-7 and OECD powers.

There is a third step yet ! After exposing Congress perfidy and BJP chicanery, we must proceed to expose the hollowness of the claims of Stalinists and Reformist Socialists.

We have time and again listed the heinous Stalinist crimes against the Indian people.

- Foremost among them is the support that the United Communist Party of India extended to the formation of Pakistan, which resulted in the massacre of six lakh innocents in British police created communal riots.

The Partition of India in 1947 spawned 1.7 crore refugees, the largest single such event known to world history.

- Betrayal of the freedom fighters of the August-1942 Movement by the United Communist Party of India and the party's intimate collaboration with the British police during

the Second World War.

- The dastardly collaboration of the United Communist Party with the Razakars of Hyderabad, and their joint resistance to the Indian army in 1948.
- The support to the Indira government extended by both the Communist Parties during the Internal Emergency of 1975-77 and thereafter.

This is only a partial list of Stalinist crimes against the Indian people. **In general, the Stalinists of India have promoted a non-revolutionary line of parliamentary reformism which is perhaps the greatest harm that they have done.**

We are revolutionary socialists and nationalists. Our arguments cut both ways. They cut to size the Congress and BJP on one side and mow down equally the Stalinists and the Reformist Socialists on the other.

We do not accept the Common Minimum Programme of the UF government or the National Agenda of the BJP.

We want a genuine socialist orientation.

We have explained our socialist nationalist and revolutionary credo quite fully in *MK*, Oct 1995, *MK* Oct 1996, and *MK* Oct 1997 issues. Thus, these are the THREE STEPS : **STEP 1** : Anti-Congressism that exposes the authoritarian, corrupt, comprador and anti-people policies of the Congress-*Naukershahi* regime of the last 50 years.

**STEP 2** : The Anti-BJP stand, that denounces the pseudo-swadeshi pretensions of the BJP and insists upon genuine and true nationalism that defies the neo-colonial dictates of the world bourgeoisie.

**STEP 3** : Anti-Stalinist and Anti-Reformist Socialist stand, which explains fully the rationale behind our demand for a New Constitution formulated by a New Constituent Assembly elected for the first time on the basis of Direct, Equal, Universal, Adult, Franchise and for a New Economic Policy that stops the drain of resources from India and which assures the *Panchbhuta* or fine essentials of life, namely, Food, Clothing, Housing, Education and Health Care, to all our people.

In Indian parlance, we may state that We, the people of India, must assume that *Vaman-Avataar* and take three giant steps to conquer the universe. We must destroy the triple devils of neo-colonialism, anti-people authoritarianism and poverty. The world belongs to its labouring masses and they shall possess it !

#### 4. The Role of Indian Bureaucrats

We must realise that under the present Dominion Status Constitution of 1946-49, we are being ruled not by any elected parliament but by a permanent bureaucracy or *naukershahi*, that uses the elected parliamentarians as a mask for its Irresponsible, Non-Transparent, Corrupt, Unaccountable, Wasteful and Autocratic rule.

We have again and again emphasised in the columns of *Mankind*, that our ruling class is not a liberal bourgeois elite of the Anglo-American or European sort. We have a comprador-*naukershahi* combine ruling over us. The *naukershahs* are particularly obnoxious. They are insensitive, corrupt, brahminical, dictatorial, fascist in their outlook, secretive, specialists in intrigue, petty-minded and supremely

sanctimonious.

**From the time that the INC was founded by Dufferin and Hume in 1885, the Congress has been the political expression of the colonial and post-colonial bureaucracy in India.** Several top civilians have been Congress Presidents, like Sir William Wedderburn, Romesh Chandra Dutt and Sir Henry Cotton. The same tradition continues to this day. Almost every high-profile bureaucrat retires and joins the Congress, like Manmohan Singh, Natwar Singh, R. K. Dhawan, Mani Shankar Aiyer, Jitendra Prasad, Jogi, etc.

The Congress has always protected the ICS and IAS swines, who have fattened themselves by the most shameless corruption practised at the expense of the Indian people. As far as I can remember, not a single IAS officer has ever been jailed. Every Secretary of the Government of India, (there are atleast 60 of them at any one time) is a multimillionaire several times over. Each Secretary's official salary is Rs. 6 lakhs per annum, plus innumerable perks and palatial residences.

In fact, every Congress minister learns his first lessons in corrupt finagling from his bureaucratic assistants. Furthermore, in the recent past, the average Congress minister was educationally less qualified than his IAS Secretary (or Jt. Secretary, Addl. Secy., Deputy Secy., etc.) especially he was less familiar with the English language ! Since all the administrative work was carried out in English, the *naukershahs* in India tended to dominate linguistically, intellectually and culturally over their ministerial "bosses".

Therefore, the new BJP government of India will be under tremendous pressure from their own bureaucratic minions, whose standard technique is first to create a situation that the new government is no better than the preceding Congress one, and therefore, the Congress may as well come back to power.

The BJP must resist every effort by the bureaucracy to slow down and sabotage the BJP's anti-Congress programme.

Secondly, all the Western powers invariably swing behind the Indian bureaucracy in order to preserve the supremacy of Western values and ways in Indian society.

The domination of English language is not an isolated function. It is the total complex of Western culture that goes along with English language domination.

If the BJP intends to impose a Swadeshi imprint upon its governance, it will have to fight tooth and nail, every bureaucrat of any consequence in our political setup. They will not succeed by merely wearing *dhotis* and *mundus*. They will have to insist that the Western dress, the tie, the bow, the hat, the suit are all banned from our Mantralayas and Sachivalayas. All the Western affectations must go. The handshake must go. **Simplicity, economy, decency, fairness and openness of conduct must become our watchwords.** Every top bureaucrat must be made to attend a people's court of grievances every day, for at least one hour ! Every grievance or complaint or plea for assistance must be attended to meticulously. No official will be allowed to plead confidentiality or secrecy in any matter that does not involve an immediate and perceptible threat to national security.

The BJP ministers will have to set an example of rectitude and probity to their bureaucrats. **All in all, there will be relentless comprador pressure, particularly from**

*naukershahs*, upon the BJP government to abandon every shred of genuine Swadeshism in favour of some sort of Westernisation !

## 5. The Mass Media Under the LPG Regime

From the very beginning, the Congress-*naukershahi* regime of India has thoroughly bribed and tamed the press, radio and television. All mediapersons have been tremendously uplifted by the regime of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation.

Whatever the mediapersons may think of themselves, as sages, as prophets or futurologists, as acute investigators, as great wielders of the pen, actually, their function is that of advertisement canvassers. They are the slightly disguised Leopold Blooms of our modern world.

Of course, the newspaper proprietors and owners of satellite channels use the journalists for pursuing their private gains. Within the license-quota-permit-raj, that flourished in India from 1947 to 1991, and which has been only partially dismantled during the last seven years, the press barons obtained land allotments, import licenses for machinery and newsprint, and many other benefits with the help of the editors and journalists of the papers run by them.

So pampered were the journalists in India that a special employment and remuneration law has been enacted for their benefit. There is no such law for railwaymen or postmen.

Indian journalists have received innumerable largesses from successive Congress regimes at the Centre and in the States. Land has been given virtually free to *Patrakar* colonies everywhere in India. Flats and apartments have been built for them. They have been taken on junkets abroad, and within the country by every big or small minister. Telephones, LPG cylinders, and special allocations of every sort have been made for them. No creature comfort has been denied to them that lies within the power of the government to bestow.

Every red-blooded-minister has, around him, a special set of favoured journalists just as he has a favourite bunch of bureaucrats, police officials and criminals hovering around their seats of power. No minister lacks such satellites and hangers-on.

Furthermore, the parasitical services' sector of the Indian economy has received tremendous boost from the LPG trend. Ordinary journalists have become multimillionaires as anchor persons for all sorts of chat shows and news presentations. Star News, BBC World, SONY, CNN, MSNBC, CNBC, and a number of other foreign-owned channels have assumed a dominant position in the Indian market.

They have spread the Consumerist Culture.

They are all attacking the Up Market Segment of the Indian middle-classes.

**That is why every Indian journalist is a supporter of globalisation and westernisation.**

Therefore, the journalists who have been the lapdogs of the Indian National Congress for the last five decades are instinctively inclined to support the return of the Congress to power.

\* Just for the record, we will note that statehood was conferred on Goa, Diu & Daman, Nagaland in 1963, on Himachal Pradesh in 1971, on Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura in 1972, on Sikkim in 1974 and Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh in 1987. -

They will seek to create internal dissensions within the BJP and between the BJP and its Allies. They will plant rumours and spread canards. They will make themselves available to the Western embassies in New Delhi. They will obtain "Inside Information" from bureaucrats and undermine the authority of the ministers. **The media will stoop to any and every possible dirty trick in order to uproot any and every non-Congress government at the Centre or in the States.**

## 6. States' Scenario

A major reorganisation of States was carried out in 1956 and the anomalous amalgamation of Gujarat and Maharashtra was rectified in 1960 and Punjab and Haryana were divided in a completely non-secular and fundamentalist communalist manner in 1966. As far as our study of the political developments in the major states is concerned, the process of reorganisation was complete by 1966.\*

There were changes that affected Assam after 1971, but these need not detain us here.

By and large, we may pinpoint four critical years when major breakthroughs occurred at the State level in India. The first two, 1957 and 1967, did not affect the Centre, but the next two, 1977 and 1989, involved the Centre as well as the States.

**1957 and 1967** : The most dramatic event of the year 1957, was the coming into power in Kerala of a United Front government led by the Stalinist, E.M.S. Namboodiripad. This was probably due to the princely patronage that the United Communist Party must have received from the ruling families of Travancore and Cochin in return for their support to the attempts made by Travancore-Cochin to become independent, in 1947-48.

Similar protest votes were organised by feudal relics in other parts of the country as well :

**ANDHRA PRADESH** : The PDF won seven out of 25 seats in 1952, seven out of 43 in 1962 and 10 out of 41 in 1971. This was obviously related to the Razakar-Communist association during the last two years of Nizam's rule in Hyderabad.

**GUJARAT** : In Gujarat, which was a jigsaw puzzle of princely states during colonial times, Swatantra Party led by the renegade socialist Minoo Masani won as many as 12 out of 24 seats in the 1967 poll to the fourth Lok Sabha.

**MADHYA PRADESH** : The Sanyukta Vidhayak Dal came to power in 1967. Similar opposition fronts also came into power in BIHAR, ORISSA, PUNJAB, TAMIL NADU, UTTAR PRADESH and WEST BENGAL.

**TAMIL NADU** : The DMK first came to power in 1967 and has not looked back since then. Either DMK or its breakaway group, AIADMK, have been continuously in power in the State from 1967 to the present. Upto 1991, the DMK and the AIADMK used to concede most parliamentary seats to their alliance partner, the INC. But both in 1996 and 1998, the Congress won no seats at all from the State. (In the 1998 poll the Tamil Manila Congress, a breakaway group from the INC, won only three seats.)

**WEST BENGAL** : Most political observers in India have forgotten that in West Bengal too it was the Bangla Congress leader, A. K. Mukherjee, who initiated the breakthrough against

the INC in 1967. He became the Chief Minister of the state three times, in March 1967, February 1969 and April 1971.

**BIHAR** : The period of political turmoil has been continuous in Bihar from 1967 to the present. There have been six episodes of President's rule : June 1968 to June 1969, July 1970 to February 1971, January 1972 to March 1972, May 1977 to June 1977, February 1980 to June 1980 and March 1995 to April 1995. At the same time, there have been from 1967 to the present, 23 Chief Ministers belonging to the Bharatiya Kranti Dal, Shoshit Dal, Congress (which alone has had 10 different Chief Ministers), Janata Party and Janata Dal.

**PUNJAB** : The Shiromani Akali Dal has been in almost continuous power since 1967, except five years of President's rule (1987-92) and five years of rule by Giani Zail Singh (1972-77)

**1977 and 1989** : Since the time of the imposition of Internal Emergency by Indira Gandhi in 1975, the Congress Party has never been the same again.

We must also recollect that Indira imposed two major vertical splits upon the INC in 1969 and 1978.

The States in which the Janata Party and its offshoots swept into power in 1977 were Assam (1978), Bihar, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra (1978), Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

**ASSAM** : Though G. C. Chandra of the Janata Party was in power only for 6 months in 1978, he paved the way for the Assam Gana Parishad leader Prafulla Mohanta's assumption of power in 1985. He is in power today, though in the 1998 parliamentary polls, he lost all the five seats he had held in 1996.

**ANDHRA PRADESH** : The situation is similar to that in Assam. The TDP has been embarrassed by a loss of four seats in the 1998 polls, but it has managed to retain 12 crucial MPs, who are playing a vital balancing role in the 12th Lok Sabha.

**BIHAR** : The Janata Dal was split by Laloo Prasad Yadav, who has managed to retain 17 out of the 22 seats which the united Janata Dal had won in 1996. However, the BJP has made important gains in Bihar, as it has made in Andhra Pradesh.

**GUJARAT** : The Congress tactic of splitting the BJP with the help of Shankersinh Vaghela has backfired, and the BJP has not only won 19 parliamentary seats out of Gujarat's 26, but it has swept the Assembly elections, where the Congress and the RJP are reduced to insignificance.

**HARYANA** : Because of his strict enforcement of the prohibition policy, Bansi Lal's HVP has suffered severe electoral reverse in the 1998 polls and the Haryana Lok Dal of Devi Lal and his son, Om Prakash Chautala, has marched to the forefront.

**HIMACHAL PRADESH** : An absolute stalemate has been created by Scamster Sukh Ram's Himachal Vikas Party and the state is now under BJP rule.

**KARNATAKA** : In Karnataka, the Congress had retained its hold over both the Lok Sabha and the State Assembly polls till very recent times. However, in 1996, the Janata Dal won 16 seats to the 11th Lok Sabha. Almost all these seats the Janata Dal managed to lose in 1998, either to Hegde's Lok Shakti or the BJP.

**KERALA** : In this state, the Congress and the CPI(M) have created a tweedledum and tweedledee situation. There is no difference between the UDF led by the Congress and the LDF led by the Stalinists. Caste and Communal forces have been so neatly balanced that a few thousand votes makes the margin of victory or defeat. For instance, in 1996, the parliamentary seats were divided seven-seven by the two fronts and in 1998, eight and eight.

**MADHYA PRADESH** : In Madhya Pradesh, the BJP has picked up 30 out of the 40 parliamentary seats, whilst the Congress is in power at the state level. The critical year was in 1989, when the BJP had picked up 27 seats, a performance which it repeated in 1996.

**MAHARASHTRA** : In Maharashtra, the ruling BJP-SS government has suffered a severe setback as the Congress combined with the Samajwadi Party and the RPI to capture 37 seats out of the 48, leaving only four to BJP and six to Shiv Sena.

**ORISSA** : In Orissa, the Congress after suffering a serious reverse in 1989 had crept back into power in 1991 and 1996. However, in 1998, Biju's son, Naveen Patnaik, has managed to reverse his father's eccentric ways and captured nine seats out of 21. This makes the Biju Janata Dal equal in strength to CPI's all India tally of nine.

**PUNJAB** : In Punjab, the Shiromani Akali Dal and the BJP have won all the 13 seats, since even Inder Gujral's victory in Jalandhar was due to the generosity of the Akali Dal.

**RAJASTHAN** : In Rajasthan, the BJP government has been embarrassed by a result similar to the one in Maharashtra and Assam. The Congress managed to obtain as many as 18 seats.

**UTTAR PRADESH** : In Uttar Pradesh, the largest state in the Indian Union commanding 85 seats in Parliament, the Congress has been zeroised as in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. We refer the reader to the Partywise-Statewise-Regionwise break-up that we have shown in the table, *Elections 1998*.

## CONCLUSION

The 1998 General Elections to the 12th Lok Sabha indicate a stalemate.

The Left Forces have not been able to advance because of their failure to adopt the Three-Step strategy advocated by us in section 3 above.

Under the present Dominion Status Constitution of 1946-49, the *naukershahi* is being allowed to repeatedly create a situation of NOT MUCH DIFFERENCE !

Our Parliament, in any case, has too few members. Cuba, with a population of just about one crore has 630 members in its Parliament, whilst India, with a population of over 97 crores has merely 543 MPs. Thus, Cuba has an effective democratic representation that is over 100 times greater than in India !

Since our Parliamentarians lack real power, and since the *naukershahs* retain all the power in their hands, to run an ARBITRARY, AUTHORITARIAN, UNACCOUNTABLE, NON-TRANSPARENT, CORRUPT, IRREMOVABLE, SECRETIVE, SEMI-COLONIAL, INHUMAN government, it is inevitable that repeated, futile General Elections will result in more and more stalemates and hung Parliaments.

Therefore, we Revolutionary, Nationalists and Socialists

**TABLE I**  
**Votes won by major parties and alliances as a proportion of total valid votes,**  
**Lok Sabha elections, 1998 (in per cent)**

State/ Union Territory	Parties and alliances					
	BJP	BJP allies	Congress (I)	Congress (I) allies	United Front	Other Parties and Independents
Andhra Pradesh	18.30	1.20	37.55	—	38.37	4.58
Arunachal Pradesh	21.75	—	23.90	—	1.89	52.47
Assam	24.47	—	38.97	—	18.16	18.40
Bihar	22.03	15.46	6.94	24.75	15.50	15.31
Goa	30.18	—	31.53	—	13.15	25.14
Gujarat	47.72	—	37.95	—	3.47	10.87
Haryana	18.89	11.60	26.02	—	1.07	42.42
Himachal Pradesh	48.60	—	43.57	—	2.02	5.81
Jammu and Kashmir	23.31	—	22.54	—	36.66	17.49
Karnataka	26.96	11.50	36.23	—	21.82	3.49
Kerala	8.02	—	36.55	7.13	42.40	5.90
Madhya Pradesh	45.86	—	38.46	—	2.65	13.04
Maharashtra	23.11	19.26	43.48	2.61	3.81	7.72
Manipur	12.61	—	18.60	—	20.47	48.32
Meghalaya	9.01	—	47.62	—	1.99	41.38
Mizoram	2.94	—	34.86	—	—	62.20
Nagaland	—	—	86.70	—	—	13.30
Orissa	21.43	27.80	40.27	—	6.45	4.05
Punjab	14.90	32.87	25.87	9.44	8.64	8.28
Rajasthan	41.65	—	44.45	—	6.57	7.32
Sikkim	—	—	33.11	65.72	—	1.17
Tamil Nadu	6.86	41.75	5.43	—	43.42	2.53
Tripura	8.19	—	42.12	—	48.80	0.90
Uttar Pradesh	36.44	1.49	5.99	1.16	29.48	25.44
West Bengal	10.00	24.14	14.98	2.03	46.65	2.19
Andaman and Nicobar	35.53	—	35.91	—	5.67	22.89
Chandigarh	42.39	—	38.72	—	1.61	17.28
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	52.29	—	4.02	—	—	43.69
Daman & Diu	41.96	—	1.98	—	—	56.06
Delhi	53.51	—	42.64	—	2.76	1.08
Lakshadweep	—	—	51.55	—	48.45	—
Pondicherry	—	25.09	32.13	—	41.11	1.67
India	25.46	11.59	25.68	3.59	22.42	11.26
India (Totals)		37.05		29.27	22.42	11.26

Notes : 1. Total Number of constituencies considered : 537

2. Results were not available for Ladakh and Udhampur (Jammu and Kashmir), Patna (Bihar) and Mandi (Himachal Pradesh)

3. Data for Purulia (West Bengal) and Sitamarhi (Bihar) were omitted because of errors in the data on the website of the Election Commission.

(contd. from previous pg.)

have no alternative but to replace the present Constitution with a new one formulated by a New Constituent Assembly which will be elected for the first time on the basis of a DIRECT, UNIVERSAL, EQUAL, ADULT FRANCHISE, which, at the same time, will formulate a people-friendly economic policy that will

combat the neo-colonial programme of LPGW (Liberalisation, Privatisation, Globalisation and Westernisation).

That means that we must adopt the Three-Step strategy of anti-Congressism, of true and genuine Swadeshism and Nationalism, and of anti-Stalinism and anti-Reformism !

**TABLE II**  
**ELECTIONS 1998-PARTY-WISE, STATE-WISE, REGION-WISE BREAKUP**

REGION	STATE	TOTAL SEATS	RIGHTIST FORCES		CENTRIST FORCES		LEFTIST FORCES		NOTES
			BJP & ALLIES	INC & ALLIES	REGIONAL & IND.	JD	STALINISTS	SOCIALISTS	
SOUTH	ANDHRA	42	4	22	TDP=12, MIM=1	1	CPI=2	-	— AIADMK=18, PMK=4, TRC=1 MDMK=3, JP=1 — KCM=1, MUL=2
	TAMIL NADU	39	13+27 (see notes)	-	DMK=5, TMC=3	-	CPI=1	-	
	KARNATAKA	28	13+3 (LS)	9	—	3	-	-	
	KERALA	20	-	8+3 (see notes)	—	-	CPM=6, CPI=2	RSP=1	
		129	50	42	21	4	11	1	
EAST	W. BENGAL	42	1+7 (TC)	1	-	-	CPI(M)=24, CPI=3	RSP=4, FB=2	
	ORISSA	21	7+9 (BJD)	5	-	-	-	-	
	ASSAM	14	1	10+1 (UMF)	IND=1, ASDC=1	-	-	-	
		77	25	17	2	-	27	6	
WEST	MAHARASHTRA	48	6+4 (SS)	33+4 (RPI)	IND=1	-	-	-	
	GUJARAT	26	19	7	-	-	-	-	
		74	29	44	1	-	-	-	
NORTH	UP	85	57+2 (SAMATA)	-	BSP=5	-	-	SP=20, SJP=1	
	BIHAR	54	20+10 (SAMATA)	5+17 (RJD) +1 (RJP)	-	1	-	-	
	MP	40	30	10	-	-	-	-	
	RAJASTHAN	25	5	18	IND=1, INC (SECULAR)=1	-	-	-	
	PUNJAB	13	3+8 (SAD)	-	IND=1	1	-	-	
	HARYANA	10	1+1 (HVP)	3	HLD=4, IND=1	-	-	-	
	227	137	54	13	2	-	21		
N-W STATES	DELHI	7	6	1	-	-	-	-	Udhampur and Ladakh yet to be polled. Polling not held for one seat.
	J & K	6	1	1	NC=2	-	-	-	
	HP	4	2	1	-	-	-	-	
	CHANDIGARH	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	
	18	10	3	2	-	-	-	3 seats undecided.	
N-E STATES	ARUNACHAL	2	-	-	AC=2	-	-	-	
	MANIPUR	2	-	-	MSC=1	-	CPI=1	-	
	TRIPURA	2	-	-	-	-	CPI(M)=2	-	
	MEGHALAYA	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	
	SIKKIM	1	-	-	SDF=1	-	-	-	
	NAGALAND	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	
	MIZORAM	1	-	0+1 (IND)	-	-	-	-	
	11	-	4	4	-	3	-		
THE REST	GOA	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	
	DAMAN & DIU	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	
	D & N.H	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	
	PONDICHERRY	1	-	-	DMK=1	-	-	-	
	LAKSHADWEEP	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	
	A & N	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	
	7	2	4	1	-	-	-		
<b>TOTAL</b>		543	253	168	44	6	41	28	3 results awaited

**TABLE III—NEW COUNCIL OF CENTRAL MINISTERS : 1998**

<b>CABINET MINISTER</b>	<b>MINISTRY</b>	<b>PARTY</b>	<b>STATE</b>
1. A. B. Vajpayee	PM. & External Affairs	BJP	U.P.
2. L.K. Advani	Home	BJP	Gujarat
3. Ananth Kumar	Civil Aviation	BJP	Karnataka
4. Sikander Bakht	Industry	BJP	U.P.
5. S.S. Barnala	Chemicals, Fertilisers with add. charge of Food	SAD	Punjab
6. George Fernandes	Defence	Samata Party	Bihar
7. Ramakrishna Hegde	Commerce	Lok Shakti	Karnataka
8. Dr. Satyanarayana Jatya	Labour	BJP	M.P.
9. Dr. M.M. Joshi	Human Development & Science & Technology	BJP	U.P.
10. Ram Jethmalani	Urban Development	SS	Maharashtra
11. K. Ramamurthy	Petroleum and Natural Gas	TRC	Tamil Nadu
12. Madanlal Khurana	Parliamentary Affairs and Tourism	BJP	Delhi
13. R. Kumaramangalam	Energy	BJP	Tamil Nadu
14. M. Thambi Durai	Law, Justice and Company Affairs	AIADMK	Tamil Nadu
15. Nitish Kumar	Railways	Samata Party	Bihar
16. Navcen Patnaik	Steel & Mines	BJD	Orissa
17. Suresh Prabhu	Environment & Forests	SS	Maharashtra
18. R. Muthiah	Surface Transport	AIADMK	Tamil Nadu
19. Yeshwant Sinha	Finance	BJP	Bihar
20. Buta Singh	Communications	Ind.	Rajasthan
21. Sushma Swaraj	Information & Broadcasting	BJP	Delhi
22. Kashiram Rana	Textiles	BJP	Gujarat
<b>MINISTER OF STATE WITH INDEPENDENT CHARGE</b>	<b>MINISTRY</b>	<b>PARTY</b>	<b>STATE</b>
23. Dalit Ezhilimalai	Health and Family Welfare	PMK	Tamil Nadu
24. Maneka Gandhi	Welfare	Ind.	U.P.
25. Babagouda Patil	Rural Development	BJP	Karnataka
26. Dilip Ray	Coal	BJD	Orissa
<b>MINISTER OF STATE</b>	<b>MINISTRY</b>	<b>PARTY</b>	<b>STATE</b>
27. Omak Apang	Tourism	Arunachal Congress	Arunachal Pradesh
28. Sukhbir Singh Badal	Industry	SAD	Punjab
29. Bandaru Dattatreya	Urban Development	BJP	A.P.
30. Ramesh Bais	Steel & Mines	BJP	M.P.
31. Uma Bharati	Human Resources Development	BJP	M.P.
32. S.K. Gangwar	Petroleum & Natural Gas	BJP	U.P.
33. R.K. Kumar	Finance (Revenue, Banking, Insurance) & Parliamentary Affairs	AIADMK	Tamil Nadu
34. Babulal Marandi	Environment & Forest	BJP	Bihar
35. Mukhtar Naqvi	Information & Broadcasting	BJP	U.P.
36. Ram Naik	Railways & Parliamentary Affairs	BJP	Maharashtra
37. A.K. Patel	Chemicals & Fertilisers	BJP	Gujarat
38. Debendra Pradhan	Surface Transport	BJP	Orissa
39. Kabindra Purkayastha	Communications	BJP	Assam
40. Vasundhara Raje	External Affairs	BJP	Rajasthan
41. Sompal	Agriculture	BJP	U.P.
42. Satyapal Singh Yadav	Civil Supplies	BJP	U.P.
43. R. Janarthanam	Personnel, Public	AIADMK	Tamil Nadu

## Table IV One-Member Parties

We have reached the ultimate nadir in powerlessness and farcicality.

We have written in *Mankind*, time and again, that our current Dominion Status Constitution of 1946-49 is a mockery, a travesty and a fraud.

Our elected representatives have no powers, which are effectively concentrated in the hands of an **IRREMOVABLE BUREAUCRACY THAT IS UNACCOUNTABLE, IRRESPONSIBLE, NON-TRANSPARENT AND TOTALLY CORRUPT**. All projects undertaken by our *naukershahi* are always subject to time and cost overruns. No one is ever punished, and no defalcation ever returned to the public treasury.

A final touch of mockery is added by the coming into being of One-Member Political Parties. The 1998 elections to the 12th Lok Sabha have brought to light the existence of many such one-MP-political formations.

These one-member parties have no programmes or ideologies. The entire preoccupation of these one-member parties is to spend one crore per year, per member, as Special Constituency Grant; and to carry on with the time-honoured Delhi Socialites' occupation of *sifarish* and *pairavi*. This fetches them a regular income and makes them influential busybodies.

They are the principal conduits of criminalisation in politics.

They survive mainly on charity by the bigger political parties which either leave the seats uncontested, or otherwise ensure a virtual walkover by these one-member outfits.

These one-member parties are a living testimony to the complete breakdown of our supposedly democratic process

- **Lallum Gauma** : He is the combined candidate of the opposition People's Conference and the Mizo National Front, which defeated the Congress for the first time.
- **Sheeshram Ola** : He is the AICC (Secular) candidate from Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan. He along with Satpal Maharaj refused to rejoin the INC when the Tiwari unit merged with it. He was a minister in the Deve Gowda and Inder Gujral ministries. He defeated the BJP candidate by 38,000 votes in the elections to the 12th Lok Sabha.
- **Chandrashekhar** : He is the sole member from the Samajwadi Janata Party to win a Lok Sabha seat. He is the SJP candidate from Ballia in UP. He is a ex-PM, who refused to face a confidence vote in 1979-80.
- **S. K. Bwismathiary** : He is the All Bodo Student's Union leader and candidate from Assam.
- **Subramaniam Swamy** : is the Janata Party M.P. from Madurai in Tamil Nadu. A few years ago he had ranted and raved against Jayalalitha and her misdemeanours. In this election, however, he had aligned himself with her and is now again peeved with her because she couldn't secure the Finance Ministry for him. He even stayed away from the House on the day of the Confidence Vote.
- **Satnam Singh Kainth** : He is the BSP rebel from Phillaur in Punjab who revolted against Mayawati and Kanshi Ram.
- **Vazhapadi K. Ramamurthy** : He is another party hopper. Now a cabinet minister in the Vajpayee Ministry, he was first with the Congress, and consequently became Jayalalitha's friend-turned-foe-turned-friend ! Vazhapadi and Swami had dug up the TIDCO scam in which Jayalalitha is indicted. In the current elections to the 12th Lok Sabha, he was once aligned with Jayalalitha.
- **P. C. Thomas** : is the Kerala Congress (Mani) candidate from Muvattupuzha in Kerala. He is also the only representative

of his party in the Lok Sabha, but the shots are called by Mani, the man who formed the party after breaking away from the Congress in order to cash in on the Christian votes.

- **G. M. Banatwala** : He represents the Muslim League from Ponnani in Kerala. Formerly a Bombay university professor, he cannot speak a word of Malayalam but he has been winning the Lok Sabha elections from here since 1977. He is also a senior partner in the Congress-led United Democratic Front.
- **Anand Mohan Singh** : A member of Shankersinh Vaghela's Rashtriya Janata Party, he won from Sheohar, in Bihar, after aligning with Laloo's Rashtriya Janata Dal. He has 35 criminal cases registered against him and has taken over Pappu Yadav's place in Laloo's gang.
- **Omak Apang** : He is the Arunachal Congress MP from Arunachal Pradesh. The Arunachal Congress was formed by his father Gegong Apang after he split with the Congress in September 1996. He views the Congress as the enemy and had decided that his party would support an anti-Congress government. Consequently, his son is now the Minister of State for Tourism in Vajpayee's government.
- **S. S. Owaisi** : Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi is the Majlis-e-Ittehadul-Muslimeen MP from Hyderabad. He is anti-BJP as well as anti-Congress. It has been alleged that he is a former Razakar leader.
- **L. Chauba Singh** : Member of the Manipur State Congress which broke away from the INC ten years ago. The MSC is staunchly anti-Congress, and as a result of the anti-Congressism wave in the northeast region, all votes invariably have gone against the Congress and in favour of other parties.
- **Jayanta Rongpi** : He belongs to the Autonomous State Demand Committee, Hill District of Assam. He got away scot free from the JMM scam. Rongpi, the lone Naxalite. MP from Assam in the last three Lok Sabhas, also got Rs. 1 crore from P. V. Narasimha Rao's men to absent himself from the house for the crucial Confidence Vote of 1993. Rongpi, who is linked to the Vinod Mishra faction of the CPI(ML), escaped the CBI net. His ASDC has a stranglehold over the twin hill districts of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar hills.
- **Bhim Dahal** : of the Sikkim Democratic Front had won the 1996 elections with Congress help, but this time, in the 1998 elections, he did not seek Congress support and won.
- **Maneka Gandhi** : is technically an independent, but in reality she has converted herself into a great crusader for environmental causes and for protection of wildlife. She is also a one-woman TV chat show hostess, fighting against cruelty to animals. Of course, her Green Wildlife and PCA preoccupations are so many and so pressing that she has no time for taking up matters concerning human beings. As Vasant Thakore, salt worker of Kutch says : "A government that cares for asses rather than human beings, must consist of asses !" Appropriately, Maneka Gandhi has been given the portfolio of Welfare, where she will have full scope for exercising her asinine cruelty towards human beings.
- **Buta Singh** : is also technically an Independent elected from Rajasthan. He is a Sikh and a Congressman and was a close aide of Rajiv, who helped Rajiv to make merry whilst organising the 9th Asian Games of 1982. Total cost to the public treasury of the Games was over Rs. 1,000 crores (Stadia, Olympic Village, Flyovers, etc). Buta Singh's mission at present, is somehow to run away from Punjab and the Sikh community, and thereby avoid the opprobrium that has become permanently attached to him for his role in promoting "Operation Bluestar". He was Rajiv's Home Minister too.



**Table V**  
**LIKELY POLITICAL SCENARIO IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE**

12th LOK SABHA : BJP & Allies RECEIVED 274 VOTES AGAINST 261 FOR CONGRESS AND UNITED FRONT.

**SOUTH** : ANDHRA (42) : TDP GOVT. IN POWER IN STATE, LOSES 4 L.S. SEATS TO BJP, FROM 1996. TDP ABOUT TO JOIN BJP GOVT. IN CENTRE.

TAMIL NADU (39) : DMK-TMC GOVT. IN POWER IN STATE LOSES HEAVILY TO AIADMK, WHICH SECURES LAW PORTFOLIO AT CENTRE TO FREE JAYALALITHA FROM CORRUPTION CHARGES.

KARNATAKA (28) : COLLAPSE OF JD GOVT. IN STATE IMMINENT. LOK SHAKTI (HEGDE) ABOUT TO TAKEOVER. HEGDE ALREADY CENTRAL MINISTER.

KERALA (20) : LDF GOVT. IN POWER IN STATE SHAKEN. LDF FRAGMENTS WILL NOW GRAVITATE TO BJP.

**EAST** : WEST BENGAL (42) : CPM LED FRONT RETAINS 33 LS SEATS FROM 1996, TRINAMOL SECURES 7, BJP MARKS FIRST WIN IN CALCUTTA, AND CPM VOTE SHARE DOWN TO 47% AGAINST BJP, TRINAMOL AND INC COMBINED SHARE OF 51%. TRINAMOL ABOUT TO JOIN CENTRE.

ORISSA (21) : FALL OF CONGRESS GOVT. IN STATE IMMINENT. BJD (Naveen Patnaik) ALREADY PART OF CENTRAL MINISTRY.

ASSAM (14) : COLLAPSE OF AGP GOVT. IN STATE IMMINENT. AGP LOSES ALL 5 SEATS, FROM 1996, TO SCORE 0 IN 1998.

**N.E. STATES** : TRIPURA AND MEGHALAYA INSTALL NON-CONGRESS GOVTS.

**WEST** : MAHARASHTRA (48) : AGAINST 18 BJP AND 13 SS SEATS IN 1996, NOW INC 33 AND RPI 4 IN 1998. RPI MAY JOIN BJP IN CENTRE IN NEAR FUTURE.

GUJARAT (26) : RJP GOVT. ALREADY FALLEN. WAGHELA WIPED OUT. KESHUBHAI PATEL BACK IN POWER IN STATE.

**NORTH** : UP (85) : KALYAN SINGH GOVT. STRENGTHENED. BHANDARI RESIGNS. BJP SCORES 57 LS SEATS.

BIHAR (54) : RJD OF LALOO BATTERED BY SAMATA AND BJP, BUT RETAINS 17 OUT OF 22 LS SEATS OF 1996. BLANK BY CPI AND CPM. SAMATA SECURES TWO CABINET BERTHS AT CENTRE, AND IS NOW POISED TO TAKEOVER AT STATE LEVEL.

M.P. (40) : CONGRESS GOVT. IN STATE ABOUT TO COLLAPSE. BJP SECURES 30 LS SEATS.

RAJASTHAN (25) : BJP GOVT. IN STATE SHAKEN BECAUSE OF 18 CONGRESS VICTORIES IN 1998. BUTA SINGH (IND) JOINS CENTRAL BJP MINISTRY.

PUNJAB (13) : SAD FIRMLY IN SADDLE WITH A SEAT IN CENTRAL CABINET.

HARYANA (10) : HLD (CHAUTALA) BEATS BJP ALLY HVP (BANSI LAL), BUT BOTH PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO BJP.

DELHI (7) : BJP RETAINS 6.

J & K (6) : NC (ABDULLA) GOVT. IN STATE SHAKEN, HENCE SUPPORTS BJP AT CENTRE. MAY JOIN BJP MINISTRY.

HIMACHAL (4) : BJP & SUKHRAM'S HVC JOIN FORCES TO FORM STATE GOVT.

**REST OF INDIA (20)** : TOO SCATTERED TO MATTER. OVERALL RESULTS :

1. CONGRESS CAUSES THE RISE TO POWER OF BJP.  
2. SONIA GANDHI WILL NOW MAKE A DEAL WITH BJP ABOUT BOFORS SO AS TO HAND OVER SMOOTHLY HER REAL ESTATE AND OTHER HAWALA WEALTH OF OVER Rs 25,000 CRORES TO PRIYANKA AND RAHUL.

3. THIS IMMINENT SONIA-VAJPAYEE-ADVANI DEAL WILL LEAD TO MAJOR SPLITS IN THE CONGRESS IN NEAR FUTURE.

4. TDP, TRINAMOL, NC POISED TO JOIN BJP GOVT. IN CENTRE.

5. TMC IN TAMIL NADU, small segments of KERALA UDF, AGP IN ASSAM, RPI IN MAHARASHTRA, BSP IN UP, RJD IN BIHAR, HLD IN HARYANA MAY SOON FOLLOW AND BECOME BJP ALLIES.

6. IN BRIEF, THERE ARE ONLY TWO POLITICAL PARTIES IN INDIA WITH MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED MPS, VIZ, BJP WITH 178 (ABOUT 33% OF TOTAL); AND INC WITH 140 OR 25 %.

THERE ARE SIX OTHER PARTIES WITH TWO-DIGIT STRENGTH OF OVER TEN MEMBERS, VIZ, CPI(M) 32, SP 20, AIADMK 18, RJD 17, SAMATA 12, AND TDP 12, MAKING A TOTAL OF 111, OR 20% OF THE 12TH LOK SABHA.

FURTHER, THERE ARE 19 POLITICAL FORMATIONS WITH LESS THAN 10 MPs EACH. BIJU JD 9, CPI 9, AKALI 8, TRINAMOL 7, JD 6, DMK 6, SHIV SENA 6, RSP 5, BAHUJAN SP 5, RPI 4, HLD 4, PMK 4, LOKSHAKTI 3, MDMK 3, TMC 3, MUSLIM LEAGUE 2, FORWARD BLOC 2, ARUNACHAL CONGRESS 2, NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2, IN ALL 90 OR 16 % OF THE HOUSE.

FINALLY, WE HAVE LISTED IN TABLE IV, 17 INDIVIDUALS WHO FORM ONE-MEMBER PARTIES. THESE MAKE UP ABOUT 4 % OF THE HOUSE.

DURING THE CONFIDENCE VOTE, 274 VOTED FOR VAJPAYEE'S COALITION GOVERNMENT AND 261 AGAINST, MAKING A TOTAL OF 535. THE BREAK UP OF 535 IS : BJP 178, INC 140, SIX REGIONAL FRAGMENTS (SEE ABOVE) 111, 19 SMALL PARTIES 90, OF WHICH NC 2 ABSTAINED, AND 17 SINGLE-MEMBER PARTIES OF WHICH ONE SWAMY ABSTAINED.

WE SHALL DEAL WITH THE LEADING POLITICAL FIGURES REPRESENTING THE ABOVE POLITICAL FORCES IN A SEPARATE ARTICLE IN THE NEXT ISSUE.

# WAH, KYA KAHEN !

Asso. Edr.

## THE RICHEST LAND HOLDER IN INDIA IS SONIA MAINO GANDHI !

Stefano Maino is a name not so familiar to Indian ears. A mention of his Gandhi connection however makes us curious about him as a person. Yes, he was Ms. Sonia Gandhi's father.

He was a man, who stood up for himself. He was a soldier who had fought against the Russian Reds, alongside Hitler's Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front in World War II. **He had happy memories of his fascist past and would often revel in declaring his unwavering loyalty to Mussolini.** A man who believed in dignity of labour established himself in a small construction business by the 1960s. His workworn hands did not fail him in this business too. Later in his life, he became the proud owner of a bungalow which was built in the industrial town of Orbassano on the outskirts of Turin, for his wife and his three daughters, Sonia, Nadia and Anoushka. He was a humble man and did not entertain any intentions of crossing the Indian threshold when his daughter Sonia, became a 'bahu' of the Indian Royal Family. Once when he had to face the allegations that the Maino family had grown rich due to its Gandhi connection, he refuted them outrightly, "After Sonia's marriage everyone thinks we have got rich and made free trips to India. But we have paid for everything-ourselves. Sonia's marriage has been an expensive thing for us." (*Outlook*, 23.2.98) During the summer holidays, Sonia along with her family, including an ayah for her children, would come to visit her parents causing a considerable expense for them in return. Of course, he did not mind it because he was a self-made man and had full confidence in his capability. **He never mentioned any money that he might have held in trust for the Indian bahu !** In fact, he was the one who encouraged several of his friends to visit India as tourists, which would have helped India's foreign exchange position, as he proudly

asserted !

This is a mini-sketch of a man called Stefano Maino as reported by old friend Jawid Laiq in *Outlook*. (23.2.98)

Whatever be the portrayal of Stefano Maino, undoubtedly his daughter has developed a great passion for this country which she has adopted by her marriage. Being conscious of the fact that the legacy of the Nehrus and the Parsi Gandhis rest with her, she is trying hard to create a niche for herself and her children in India.

Sonia Maino's interests in India have been summarised in a Table published alongside. We do not know whether *Outlook* is aware of all these vast private concerns of Sonia Gandhi nee Maino.

There are eight trusts and committees chairpersoned by Sonia, covering almost every aspect of policy-making from diplomacy to public life. It is no exaggeration that she has built up a mini empire for herself. Sonia oversees a combined corpus of about Rs. 40 crores in cash plus tens of thousands of crores of rupees in real estate. Sonia's NGOs are generally funded either by the state and central organisations or by Indian business houses. These can be in the form of donations, international mega seminar costs, and sponsorship of various programmes. She exercises personal supervision in all matters pertaining to her trusts. She presides over all the meetings and gives clearance to various project proposals. She would visit the site after a project has taken off. It is she who decides who will be awarded the Indira Gandhi Peace Prize, who gets Nehru Scholarships and even what kind of trees will be planted around the two memorials of Rajiv. On the board of trusts and the executive committees are her personal friends, members of Rajiv's kitchen cabinet, bureaucrats and politicians for whom Sonia's word remains a word of utmost honour and absolute respect,

which is to be carried out at all costs. If the RGF wishes the use of Hyderabad House for a seminar or a luncheon, the Ministry of External Affairs would willingly overlook the convention that it is to be reserved exclusively for official banquets in honour of visiting heads of state and other dignitaries. For a Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies (RGICS) Seminar held in 1994 the then Human Resource Development Minister, Arjun Singh had provided for air tickets for 20 overseas guests.

In short, Sonia's trusts have misappropriated public properties worth at least Rs. 25,000 crores, and all her current expenses are paid for from Govt. departments.

In addition, Sonia has acquired the richest real estate prize in New Delhi. Property worth over Rs. 10,000 crores, right in the heart of the city, at the corner of Rajpath and Janpath. We have reported upon this colossal fraud in our issue of *Mankind* (November 96 pp.3-4). Sonia's great acquisition is the Indira Gandhi National Centre of Arts (IGNCA) located there. It has been turned into a private concern by a 'Gang of Six' with Sonia as its President. The sweeping amendments in the IGNCAs original trust deed were brought about with the consent of and ratification by former HRD Minister, Madhavrao Scindia, on May 18, 1995. These were incredibly audacious changes made chiefly to pre-empt the fall of the Narasimha Rao government. One, a new category of life trustees was introduced whereas in the IGNCAs original trust deed, which had provided for retirement of one third of trustees after every 10 years. Two, any three or four of the life trustees can henceforth appoint for life 'ex-officio' and 'co-opted' trustees. These life trustees would have the power to amend the original trust deed by keeping it beyond the purview of governmental accountability. In another major amendment, they eliminated the President's privilege to set up a committee from time to time to review the functioning of the IGNCAs and enforce its recommendations. The Department of Culture, HRD Ministry, apart from the IGNCAs, funds more than 30 top national institutions, like the Gandhi Smriti, Nehru Memorial

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Museum and Library, and the three National Akademies. But as a senior official pointed out, the interest on IGNCA's corpus fund, donated from the public treasury, was greater than the annual budget of the three National Akademies put together. There can be no property in Delhi as valuable as the IGNCA holding. "The government has already invested Rs. 120 crores in IGNCA. This includes a grant of Rs. 50

crores as a corpus fund — the largest handout to any cultural institution in the country. But the IGNCA's most valuable asset is 21 acres of land stretching along Rajpath, from the Janpath intersection to the tip of India Gate. Other than these extravagant gifts, the Ministry of Human Resources Development (HRD), is committed to spend another Rs. 160 crores on the IGNCA's buildings." (Mankind, Nov. 96, p.4)

Sonia is a dowager who is all set to influence public life through the trusts and their activities. Hitherto alien to political life, she suddenly became a prominent figure when she entered into election campaign rallies for the Congress in January 1998. She is now both the President of the Congress and Leader of its Parliamentary Party. The Constitution of the INC Parliamentary Wing was amended to accommodate her.

#### SONIA'S EMPIRE

	Rajiv Gandhi Foundation (RGF)	Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies (RGICS)	Jawahar Bhavan Trust (JBT)	Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust (IGMT)	Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund (JNMF)	Vir Bhumi & Sriperumbudur Memorial Concept Committees	Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Museum and Library	Indira Gandhi National Centre of the Arts (IGNCA)
Setup :	1991	1992	1989	1985	1965	1991	1965	1987
Corpus :	Rs. 24 crore	Rs. 3 crore	Not known	Rs. 3 crore	Rs. 7 crore	Funded by the Ministry of Rural Development	Funded by the HRD Ministry	Rs. 50 crore
A separate independent audit of the value of all the properties grabbed by the Sonia Trusts is urgently needed. The Teen Murti Marg property worth over Rs. 5,000 crores. The Janpath property over Rs. 10,000 crores.								
Board of Trustees :	Shankar Dayal Sharma Sam Pitroda Suman Dubey Amitabh Bachchan V. Krishnamurthy Rahul Gandhi Priyanka Gandhi Mani Shankar Aiyar Sekhar Raha Montek Singh Ahluwalia R.P. Goenka	Vice Chairman : Abid Hussain	Suman Dubey, P.Chidambaram Arjun Singh Ahmed Patel Murli Deora Rajendra Kumari Bajpai Mohammed Yunus	Vice Chairman : K. Natwar Singh. Of the 24 trustees P.V. Narasimha Rao and former President R. Venkataraman are the prominent ones.	Vice Chairman : Karan Singh. Of the 29 members of the Board of trustees, the then PM P.V. Narasimha Rao, S.S.Ray, V.P. Singh, & G. Parthasarthy are some of the prominent ones.	Committee members : Arjun Singh Sunita Kohli and Romi Chopra, among others.	Vice Chairman : N. D. Tiwari	The Board of trustees for life comprises of Sonia Gandhi as President, former President R. Venkataraman, H.Y. Sharada Prasad and Kapila Vatsyayan, who are authorised to appoint more trustees for life.
Function	Helping women & children through various projects, and activities in the areas of literacy, health, aviation, and science and technology	A think-tank for projecting public policy. Organises international conferences and seminars in India.	A public trust for maintenance of Jawahar Bhavan, houses RGF and runs the Universal Elementary Education Programme	Organises lectures once every two years when it gives away the Indira Gandhi Peace Prize.	Awards the Nehru Fellowships. Also looks after Anand Bhavan and Swaraj Bhavan in Allahabad.	A Ministry of Rural Development Project, which is solely co-ordinated by Sonia.	A govt. committee that looks after the memorabilia of the Nehrus. Organises seminars and special exhibitions	Essentially, all Sonia's Trusts belong to corrupt politics, camouflaged to various degrees by academic and cultural pretensions*

\* This function applies uniformly to all the Trusts and Committees which are a part of Sonia's mini empire.

#### MAJOR RGF DONORS (Rs. in Lakh)

1. SONIA GANDHI (Money from Rajiv's peace prize donated by the Govt. of India)	32.00	6. BAJAJ TEMPO LTD. (Firodia Company, Pune)	45.00	12. CESC LTD. (R.P. Goenka Company)	37.50
2. OSWAL AGRO MILLS (Abhey Oswal company)	50.00	7. PEERLESS GENERAL FINANCE (Run by P.C. Sen)	75.00	13. ITC LTD. (Calcutta-based Multinational)	50.00
3. BINDAL AGRO CHEM (Abhey Oswal company)	50.00	8. LALIT SURI (owns Holiday Inn, Delhi)	50.00	14. UNITECH LTD. (R.C. Chandra company)	60.00
4. ZUARI AGRO CHEM (K.K. Birla Company)	25.00	9. JYOTSNA SURI (Lalit Suri's wife)	25.00	15. VINOD ARORA (Dubai Based NRI. No known Gandhi link)	93.94
5. BAJAJ AUTO LTD. (Rahul Bajaj Company)	50.00	10. DEEKSHA HOLDING LTD. (Lalit Suri Company)	115.00	<b>Total</b>	<b>808.44</b>
		11. ROHAN MOTORS LTD (Lalit Suri Company)	50.00	<b>Note : These are contributions since 1991 upto 1995.</b>	

1. Abid Hussain Member Planning Commission 1985-90); Former IAS Secretary, Industry & Commerce (1981-85); Chairman Indo-Soviet Planning Group;
2. P. Chidambaram Former Finance Minister 1996-98; MP (1984-88), resigned due to Harshad Mehta's scam
3. V. Krishnamurthy Chairman & Managing Director BHEL (1972-77); Secretary Heavy Industry (1977-81); Chairman Maruti (1982-85); Chairman SAIL (1985-89); Arrested for involvement in Harshad Mehta scam. **The most corrupt and richest former bureaucrat known in India.**
4. Sekhar Raha A Senior ICI executive
5. Suman Dubey Rajiv's Information Adviser, Formerly with *India Today*.
6. Amitabh Bachchan Notorious Actor and Former MP involved in FERA violations.
7. R. Venkatraman MP (1950-57) & (1977-84); Minister Madras Govt. (1957-67); Planning Commission Member (1967-71); Minister Finance (1980-82); Minister Defence (1982-84); Vice President (1984-87); President (1987-92).
8. H.Y. Sharada Prasad *Indian Express* (1945-55); Publications Division (1957-66).
9. Kapila Vatsyayan A *naukershah* from the 1950s to 1990. Retired as Secretary, Department of Culture, after multiple extensions, in 1990.

(Source : *India Today*, 11.1.95 *Mankind*, Nov. 1996, for data on IGCA)

## TATAS ACT AS NEO-COLONIAL TROJAN HORSES

The much-talked of Bangalore International Airport project is yet to get the final okay of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Union Cabinet.

What made the Ministry of Civil Aviation to stall its clearance when it had finally agreed to give it a float in September last year? The proposal involving two important Tata projects — the new airport at Bangalore and the proposed launching of the Tata Airlines, first came before the Civil Aviation Ministry two years ago in February 1995, when the Congress government was in power. The then aviation minister Ghulam Nabi Azad rejected it on the grounds that no new airline could be given permission to operate. Then came the UF government at the centre. Whereas the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) had cleared the proposal, the Aviation Minister, C. M. Ibrahim, was of the view that no foreign airline should be allowed to have a large stake in a domestic airline. It had been earlier proposed that the Tata Airline would have a 40 per cent equity investment by Singapore Airlines. When

the proposal came before the Cabinet Committee on Foreign Investment (CCFI), the domestic civil aviation policy was cleared by the cabinet. It allowed foreign equity in airlines up to 40 per cent, but confirmed that no foreign airline or airport authority, would be permitted to invest in an Indian airline. Reprimand was given also to the other airlines like Jet and ModiLuft who were asked to renegotiate the agreements with their foreign partners. Tatas also reworked their relationship with SIA and agreed to a technical tie-up with Singapore Airlines.

In the meantime the Deve Gowda government fell and I.K. Gujral became the new Prime Minister. In order to facilitate a smooth processing of the Tata project, Gujral inducted M. K. Kaw as Secretary, Civil Aviation, in place of Yogesh Chandra.

However, the Ministry of Civil Aviation was not satisfied on many counts. First, it was yet to be made clear whether the project would be on the build-own-operate (BOO) principle or build - operate - transfer (BOT) basis. It

was to be a joint venture project as led by Tata consortium, where the government of Karnataka was doling out 3,500 acres of land for just 6 percent equity. Supposing the project failed how would 6% equity stake in favour of Karnataka Government compensate? Moreover C.M. Ibrahim was sceptical about the technical tie-up with Singapore Airlines fearing that eventually this would mean its entry into the project.

As a result, persuasive efforts of M.K.Kaw were not successful thanks to the unequivocal stand taken by the ministry. Also, C.M. Ibrahim, referred the Tata Airline clearance along with other civil-aviation related projects, to the Election Commission (EC). He wanted to know whether a caretaker government could approve the project.

It is not going to be smooth sailing for the Tata project. However the Tatas are equally confident that now with the clearance of the project by FIPB twice and go ahead given by the Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs), equity participation in the project by SIA will be cleared. If not the erstwhile caretaker government, then next BJP government will have no choice but to okay it. ■

## OUR FEET DO NOT BURN ON FUNERAL PYRES AS THEY ARE FULL OF SALT !

For the salt workers in Gujarat, life is miserable due to their unfathomable living condition. More than 40,000 salt workers of Rann of Kutch are dwelling in a flimsy, unforgiving terrain, which consists of a 'razai', few vessels and earthen pots with water sparingly used.

But there are few fortunate ones, who own a battered bicycle to pedal 25 kms to reach the nearest town !

The salt merchants, along with the moneylenders, are both deceiving the salt workers by making them contractual workers for a lifetime ! In return, no

interest is charged for the loan given to them ! Dashrathbhai, a fifth generation salt worker from Kuda village says : " For seven months, we are stuck in this place. There is absolutely no water, no electricity, no hospitals and no schools. Every month, salt trader gives me Rs. 3000 as advance to produce salt - Rs. 2500 is spent on a barrel of crude oil for diesel pump. We have to pay Rs. 500 a season for drinking water brought in

tankers that belong to merchants. Finally, if the salt company buys us rubber boots, they deduct it from the amount due to us. In the end, we have nothing left." (*Outlook* 2.3.98) As a result, Dashrath has engaged himself in loading and transportation of salt till such time as he can clear the advance given to him. Severely caught in debt trap, the *agarias* are forced to sell their salt to the same merchants and then work in the same industrial unit till they clear off their "advances".

Initially, a co-operative was setup in 1952 and now, there are 117 co-operatives, but only 32 of them are functioning. These co-operatives were setup to safeguard the interests of the poor salt workers! These co-operatives are running in such a sorry state that they themselves owe more than Rs. 6 crores

as arrears to the district bank and hence, they have no other alternative, but to avail of the advances made by the merchants.

The salt workers earn Rs. 40-50 per metric tonne of salt i.e. 5-6 paise for a kilo, whereas salt merchants get more than Rs. 180-200 per metric tonne i.e. 25-30 paise per kilo. It means, a profit of more than 500 per cent! Even after India's independence, the extent of exploitation has not lessened! The *agarias* have no land, no livestock and even the banks have stopped giving them loans. And all this has led them to the doors of the moneylenders, who by their cunning eat up the entire profit in the trade!

The salt traders are continuously taking advantage of the ignorant and helpless salt workers. Political awareness

is absent. Ratilal and Vasant Thakore Kharaghoda describe a *morchha* organised by Congress leader, Sanat Mehta in Sept. 1997, in which, 15,000 *agarias* were taken to Ahmedabad to protest against the revoking of their licences, as their pans fell under the wild ass sanctuary zone. Vasant Thakore says: "A government that cares for asses rather than human beings must consist of asses! These *netas*, supposedly fighting for our rights, are doing everything to benefit only the merchants."

For the workers of Rann of Kutch, even death brings no salvation as Ladhoben says: "Our profession is an accursed one. When we die, our feet do not burn because there is so much salt in them." There is absolutely no respite, no freedom for them, at least in this life! ■

## MANU CHHABRIA BANKRUPTS DUNLOP!

Manu Chhabria, the Dubai-based absentee-CEO of Dunlop India, has done it again. Taking advantage of the fluid state of the country before the Lok Sabha polls, the company administration closed down the Dunlop factory in West Bengal. The reason given by the company is that labour militancy has forced them to shut down operations.

However, this is far from the truth. Like all of Manu Chhabria's businesses, the Rs. 562.99 crore Dunlop too has been showing falling profits, reduction in market share and an acute cash crunch. Bankers had turned down Dunlop's request for the trebling of its working

capital requirements and the Financial Institutions had refused to fund its expansion plans. As a result of a 65 per cent fall in the sales of its tyres (from 2,701,000 in 1989-90 to 942,000 in 1996-97), Dunlop's market share had come down from 13.6 per cent in 1990-91 to 3.25 per cent in 1996-97.

In 1995-96, Dunlop had booked net profits of Rs. 95 crores, but this was solely due to a sale of property worth Rs. 170 crores to a subsidiary. In 1997, it showed net profits of Rs. 5.14 crores on a turnover of Rs. 562.99 crores. Furthermore workers had not been paid their wages since October 1997.

In the whole Dunlop drama, the loss has solely been that of the workers. They have not been paid their wages, and basic amenities like electricity and telephone connections have been cut off, but the management has had to face no such problem.

Money has been siphoned off from the company and the politicians from both, the CPI(M) and the Trinamool Congress have made it an election issue in order to garner votes, while the 4,300 workers of Sahagunj and 2,000 more at Ambattur (not counting the 1000 casual labourers), once again join the ranks of the growing millions of unemployed of West Bengal. ■

## 22 LAKH BEEDI WORKERS OF M.P. HAVE ONLY 1.2 LAKH INDIVIDUAL BANK ACCOUNTS!

The general elections always bring to the fore, issues which are ordinarily relegated to the back-seat. Whereas Tendu leaf issue dominated Chhattisgarh area of Madhya Pradesh, the plight of beedi-workers got attention as an election issue in Nizamsagar area of Andhra Pradesh. *Mankind* has already voiced its concern over the degenerating and substandard living conditions of one crore of workers employed in the Beedi industry in different states of India. (*MK*,

Jan-Feb 96, Vol I, No. 4/5, p.21) This gives us an opportunity to reinstate our claim that the plight of beedi workers could not be bettered by appointing commissions year after year. Being caught in a nexus of manufacturers, contractors, bureaucrats and politicians, there is no easy way out for the beedi workers. Only an organised struggle fought bitterly both in the courts and in the streets could bring for them some succour!

The beedi industry being labour intensive, can provide work to men, women and children by engaging them in various related activities like collection of tendu leaves, rolling beedis or their packaging and distribution. But the hopes of earning a good standard of living die when money-power comes in to the picture.

Sagar district of Madhya Pradesh has the largest number of beedi workers out of a total of 2 million for the state. And many of them suffer from chronic ailments. They have respiratory problems and stomach diseases, and suspected cancer. Many of them also suffer from tuberculosis, asthma, scabies, cervical

spondylitis etc. Most of the workers live in slum areas. They have to roll beedis sitting hunch-backed for long hours of the day in their huts and hovels. By earning a wage as low as Rs.20-22 per day and living in conditions of poor sanitation, unsafe drinking water, it is difficult to imagine that they would be able to cater to their basic necessities effectively. Workers doing their work at home, have to deal with contractors or subcontractors. As such they do not come in direct relationship with the owners of the beedi companies. The supply of raw materials to the beedi workers is usually inadequate. Workers who are unable to complete the quota of beedis have to go in the open market and purchase the required material to complete the quota, or they have to borrow finished beedis from an intermediary at 10% to 15% interest per month ! Else they will have to be satisfied with the deductions made in their day's salary.

These intermediaries or *sattedars* as they are called in Madhya Pradesh, came into the picture as soon as the Minimum Wages Act and Factories Act 1948 came into force. The laws provided for better working conditions. The factory-owners decided to close the worksheds as they were required to pay the minimum wage to their workers. *Sattedar's* word soon became law unto itself, since he was the go between for

the employer and the employee. The Beedi and Cigar workers (Conditions of Employment )Act 1966 gave statutory recognition to the home-bred beedi worker as an employee. The welfare provisions of this Act granted leave wages, bonus and maternity benefits. However this did not help to bring any change in their living conditions. In Madhya Pradesh alone, thirty two years later, only eight lakh out of an estimated 22 lakh beedi workers were found to have been issued identity cards. *Sattedar* would give out a wage slip at random and would even change the names of the actual workers in the pay registers without their knowledge. The log books given to the employers, to keep account of the amounts of raw materials given to the beedi workers, the number of beedis made by him/her, and the amount of payment for the same were not maintained. Moreover, it was also found that log book issued to the woman worker was made not in her name but in the name of her son or husband. This was chiefly done to avoid payment of a maternity benefit which was granted to the woman worker under the provisions of the act. Similarly benefits of the Provident Fund Act 1977 were not given. It was found that though *sattedars* were deducting money from the account of each employee every month, it was found

to be deposited in just 1.20 lakh accounts, though the total number of beedi workers in Madhya Pradesh were 22 lakhs.

Even the condition of Tendu leaf pluckers in M.P. is no better. The policy which the Congress government adopted in 1989, wherein the Tendu leaves were collected by co-operative societies and were sold by the Madhya Pradesh Minor Forest Produce Federation. However the pluckers who got Rs. 150 crores as incentive wages received a hard blow at the hands of the BJP government which came to power in March 1990. A new policy followed by the government led to a loss of Rs. 212 crores to the state exchequer. Ms. Sonia Gandhi referred to the issue during her campaign in the state. BJP on its part would not like the responsibility for the unrestrained exploitation of the beedi workers. When the National Commission on Rural Labour 1993, drew the government's attention to this, Virendra Kumar, the local BJP MP, said, " I know that they are in a bad shape. But I couldn't do much because I got very little time and the government at the Centre was not ours." (*Outlook*, 16.2.98). When will the politicians, instead of passing the buck to each other, learn to respond to the needs and grievances of the masses, whose votes they solicit in order to elevate themselves to power ? ■

## OH FOR A NEW NAUKERSHAH, A NEW SCAM, A NEW CHARGE SHEET AND A NEW INVESTIGATION !

P.V. Prabhakar Rao, former Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's son and the prime accused in the 133 crore urea scam had been absconding for the past two months, after being discharged on Jan. 14 from hospital, following complaints of heart ailment.

Prabhakar Rao is one of the prime accused in the Urea Scam. The Enforcement Directorate's case against him is that an unknown Turkish company, Karsan, had been given a Rs. 133 crore contract by the public sector National Fertilizers Ltd. in early 1995 for the supply of urea. The money was paid to the Turkish company at one go for the delivery of two lakh tonnes of urea, without any insurance cover and

bank guarantees. Part of that money was routed back to India through hawala channels as kickbacks. The ED has now got proof to show that \$ 2 mln. (Rs. 6.4 crore), out of the total of \$ 4 mln. (Rs. 12.8 crore) — which were paid as kickbacks by Karsan — were received in India. Out of the \$ 2 mln., \$ 0.5 mln. (Rs. 1.6 crore) was routed through a front company Quinone India Ltd. Another \$ 1 million (Rs. 3.2 crore) was deposited with Sai Krishna Impex, out of which Anand Mohan, an employee of Sai Krishna Impex, a firm in Hyderabad owned by another accused Sambasiva Rao, gave Rs. 2 crore to Prabhakar Rao.

Despite all these accusations against him and the so-called

"availability of ample proof" by the ED, Prabhakar Rao decided to ignore summons, leave police custody and abscond as long as it suited him.

A recent trend to be found in India is that major scams worth hundreds of crores of rupees are unearthed, the accused are invariably leading political figures or their kith and kin, and with unflinching consistency all of them either go scot free, or are out on bail, or there is not enough evidence against them (when in the first place, they are all chargesheeted on the basis of this "not-enough-evidence") ! Or they die of old age whilst dodging the summons-servers of the courts !

If this is to go on regularly, then why waste the tax payers' money for all this evidence-gathering, chargesheeting and all the unnecessary and useless legal rigmarole ? Let the politician-

*naukershah*-criminal nexus and their dealings continue in peace !

As for Prabhakar Rao, he will continue challenging non-bailable warrants, avoiding court summons,

leaving police custody without permission, surrendering and going through the whole circle all over again, till his case too drops out of sight and joins the heap of unresolved scams ! It

will then be time for another scam, another chargesheet and a new *naukershah*, who will begin to operate as though he was the first one to come across such goings on ! ■

## ALANG, A HIGHLY PROFITABLE DEATH TRAP !

When one talks about ship-breaking in India, the name that comes to the forefront is that of Alang. Alang, located on the Gulf of Khambatta on the Saurashtra coast along a 8-kms long beach-stretch, has emerged as the World's largest ship-breaking yard. It was in 1994-95 that Alang overtook China in shipbreaking activity and accounted for 40 per cent of the ships broken in the world. (i.e. 301 ships of 21,73,000 ldt). It houses over 200 discarded ships of various shapes and sizes such as freighters, tankers, cruisers, warships and fish-processing vessels as well. It is a shipbreaking yard spread out in 183 plots along the beach that employs 40,000 workers. A yard which came into being in 1982 has developed into a Rs. 2,000 crore-a-year business. A business that has earned the dubious distinction of being lethal and horrifying over the years.

The growth of the ship breaking industry in India can be attributed to the better availability of skilled labour in this country as the most important factor. Though the labour cost in India is at par with that in Pakistan, Bangladesh and China, the quality of labour in India is far more skilled. However, the labourers are a neglected lot in the profit-margin equations of the Indian ship-breakers. Occupational hazards are such that death looms large over the lives of the workers with Alang officially claiming at least 20 lives in a year. In last year's April disaster, 50 workers were reported to have perished in an explosion on Plot 48. In another incident of January this year, a cylinder burst in Plot 10 claiming another five lives. An average of 2,000 workers are treated for injuries every month at the Red Cross hospital at Alang.

The Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB), an official body supposedly supervising the yard, has been overlooking all safety guidelines till June 30 / MANKIND : APRIL 98

last year. Hundreds of poor, illiterate and innocent people have fallen prey to the horrendous death trap that is our ship-breaking industry !

This industry is covered under various statutes — the Explosives Act 1984, Explosive Substances Act 1908, Petroleum Storage Act 1976, Factory Act 1948, etc. But in practice this industry is operating without any safety guidelines ! Workers clamber up and down a rusted ship without protective helmets, boots, masks or goggles. There are neither work plans nor engineers to guide and train workers about the potential dangers they face from explosive and poisonous substances. Workers have to carry heavy pressurised oxygen cylinders on their shoulders and may accidentally drop them, causing calamities. Giant boilers, generators and steel plates are taken off their moorings to fall on to the lower decks in to the hull, to the beach, hitting the men in the process. Burns and injuries due to flying metal sheets, falling hulls and caving in of cabins and masts are a daily occurrence.

The apathy on the part of the shipbreakers is equally responsible for the shipbreaking yard to turn into a death factory. All ships have to be gas free before they can be beached. It is also a statutory requirement to remove all hazardous substances such as asbestos, PCBs and lead before scrapping the vessels. Ignorance, negligence, and sheer callousness on the part of the shipbreakers, often lead to explosions.

The general state of health of workers is very poor. Many of them have respiratory problems due to open burning of huge amounts of solid wastes such as broken steel pipes, asbestos sheets, glass, wool and foam materials, plastic and rubber pipes. Deteriorating health and hygiene conditions in turn give rise to serious health hazards for the workers. Workers live in shanties built with contaminated plastic and wood from the

ships. There is inadequate supply of power and water. They have to pay Rs. 10 for a bucket of filthy water. Their meagre wages are not adequate enough to afford them toilets, washrooms, taps or electricity. Since there are no proper latrines, human waste is dumped directly into the sea. According to the Red Cross estimates, 350 leprosy cases were detected last year. The number of workers having gastro-enteric and malaria infections are innumerable.

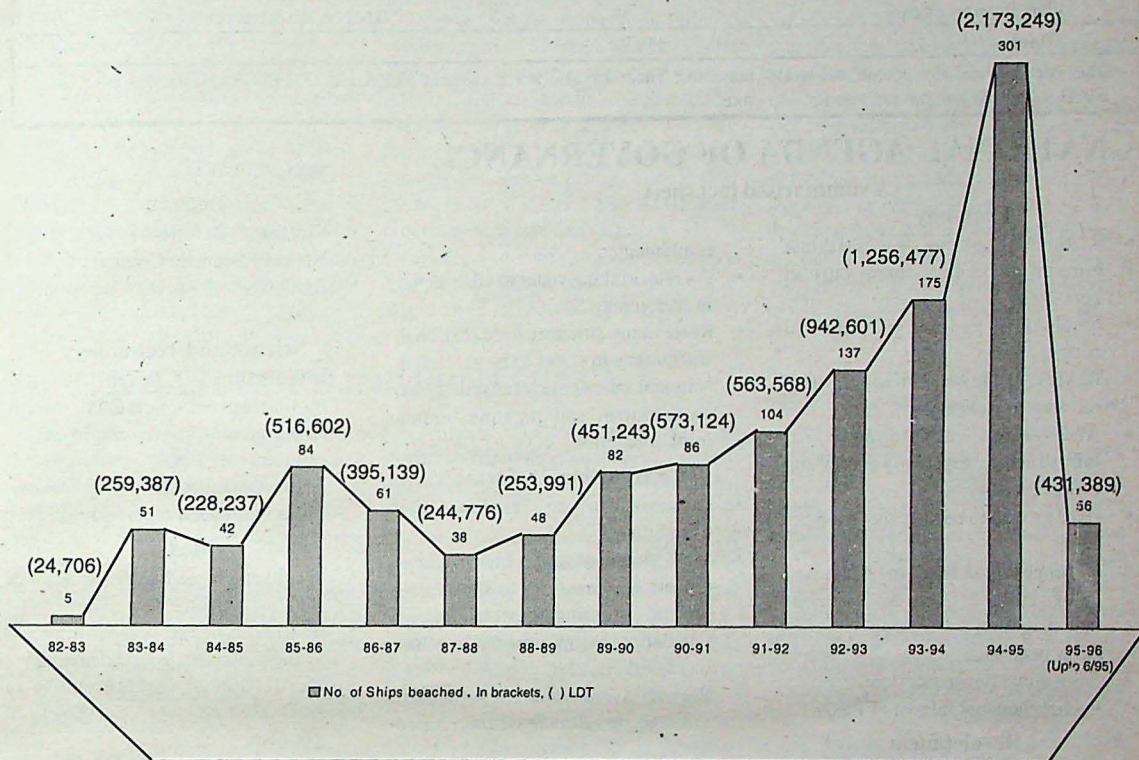
Alang is going to be an unending nightmare. But immigrants from the poorest districts of Bihar, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh flock here in search of work. A novice is paid as low as Rs. 40 per day. And he has to work for exhausting eight hours a day. The more dangerous the work, the higher the wages. Amongst the workers, the gas cutters earn as high as Rs. 130 a day. Since they have to perform the most dangerous work of dismantling the engine rooms which house the fuel tanks; or cutting the topmost portion of the ship. But as one gas-cutter explains it, "I know my life is always in danger, but this is the only way I can support my family back home." (*Outlook*, 16.2.98) The workers are not registered. The overall life is very hard for them as the yard-owners do not deal with them directly. They are hired, fired and paid through *muqadams*, who often make them work extra long hours in order to meet the deadlines.

The situation is likely to worsen even further in the days to come. As OECD countries have imposed new regulations for the oil tankers; that by 2010, they must have double hulls. It means the world's 6,700 tankers will be rapidly scrapped in South Asia, where else but in Alang ! With the US Navy and Maritime Administration having received official exemption from clearing the vessels of hazardous substances, before scrapping, they have 170 ships ready to go to India. Selling of scrap has turned in to a flourishing business for the shipbreakers. And they have become

a powerful lobby. Ship breaking industry is also a golden goose for the State and Central government, through sales tax,

custom duty and central excise, besides providing much needed steel. And with the politicians busy in satisfying their

greed for money and power, who has time to look after the hapless state of these poor workers ? ■



### NUMBER OF SHIPS BROKEN UP : WORLD-WIDE

Year	TYPE			Total (GRT)
	Tankers	Bulk Carriers (incl. OBOs)	General Cargo	
1986	6,844,020	8,539,724	347,599	18,858,343
1987	2,453,293	5,579,495	2,591,419	10,629,207
1988	1,246,773	1,077,612	1,835,847	4,160,232
1989	659,641	420,736	916,791	1,997,168
1990	280,410	497,594	769,454	1,547,488
1991	592,212	602,866	901,148	2,096,226
1992	3,371,400	1,583,505	1,170,182	6,175,087
1993	7,405,695	1,543,348	1,113,163	10,063,206
1994	5,156,387	2,028,742	1,267,964	8,453,093



## CASES AGAINST JAYALALITHA

CASE	Amount in Rs. cr.	Status
Coal Import case	117.00	Trial on in special court
TIDCO disinvestment case	28.29	High Court verdict challenged
Colour TV procurement case	8.53	Trial on in special court
Jaya Publications land deal	3.13	Trial on in special court
Meena Advertising case	2.00	Trial on in special court
Sasi Enterprises case	0.59	Trial on in special court
<b>Total</b>	<b>159.54</b>	

This does not include income and wealth tax cases. There are also seven cases of FERA and COFEPOSA violations involving Sasikala and her kin that run into Rs. 110 crore.

## NATIONAL AGENDA OF GOVERNANCE

### A summarised fact sheet

#### Economy

- Reforms with strong swadeshi thrust
- Foreign direct investment only in core areas
- Employment generation in informal sectors
- Review of laws and regulations relating to industry
- Accelerated development of infrastructure, especially energy and power production
- GDP growth to be brought to 7-8 per cent
- 60 per cent plan funds to be invested in agriculture, rural development and irrigation
- Crop insurance
- Farm subsidies to continue
- Comprehensive reform of PSUs

#### Development

- Primacy to removal of unemployment
- National charters for children, social issues
- Elimination of child labour
- 33 per cent seats in assemblies, Parliament for women
- Free education for girls up to college level, including professional courses
- National housing and habitat policy to provide housing for all
- Twenty lakh new houses every year
- Compulsory primary education to be

implemented

- Potable drinking water to all villages in five years
- Reservation structure in educational institutions in states to be protected
- National water policy for settlement of disputes, and its time bound implementation

#### Constitutional reforms

- Commission to review the Constitution
- More financial and administrative powers and functions to states
- Special attention to states where population below poverty line has increased
- Backward area commission for each state to develop least developed areas
- Electoral reforms on the basis of Goswami Committee report
- National judicial commission to recommend judicial appointments and draw up a code of ethics for the judiciary

#### International relations

- Peaceful relationship with neighbours on reciprocal basis
- Reorientation of diplomacy to pursue national, economic and commercial goals
- India's interests to be more robustly

asserted in WTO

#### Defence

- Strategic defence review by a National Security Council
- Induction of nuclear weapons if needed

#### Science and Technology

- Integration of scientific and technological efforts with development programme in socio-economic sectors
- National informatics policy, to make India a software superpower

#### Media

- Improvement of the Prasar Bharati Act
- Enactment of the broadcasting bill to regulate private broadcasting
- Restriction of foreign equity in private television broadcasting to 20 per cent
- Prevention of cross-holding to avoid monopoly in the media

#### Environment

- National environment policy to balance development and ecology
- Set up legal framework for protecting environment

#### States

- Centre-State relations based on Sarkaria Commission report
- Full statehood to Delhi
- Creation of Uttaranchal, Vananchal, Chattisgarh states ■

## SWAMY'S SHENANIGANS

Subramaniam Swamy is once again in the news. Recently aligned with Jayalalitha, he was peeved when he, the one-member Janata Party, was denied the Finance portfolio in the Vajpayee Cabinet. As a result of this, he stayed out

of vote of confidence motion citing a very silly excuse that he thought it was going to be a voice vote and not a division vote.

That Swamy hates Vajpayee can be easily made out from his book *Swami and Friends — a Few Enemies Too*, serialised

in the Tamil Weekly, *Kumudham*. In the book, Swamy blames Vajpayee for most of his lost opportunities. He writes that he was denied a cabinet berth in the Morarji Desai Cabinet of 1977 and had to make do with a Minister of State position because, "Atal Behari Vajpayee interfered and spoiled it. Just to get out

of the prison on parole, Vajpayee had given a letter of apology to Indira Gandhi and had created a bad precedent. He could not stomach the fame I got as an 'Emergency Hero' for my outstanding resistance to the Emergency." (*Kumudham*, 20.2.97)

Further accusations made by Swamy against Vajpayee are that :

- "Vajpayee's only concern was to please the Soviet Union."
- "Swamy's visit to China was derailed by Vajpayee."

- Though Charan Singh got a bad name for pulling down the Morarji government, the real culprits were Vajpayee and Ramakrishna Hegde. They deliberately engineered a duel between Charan Singh and Morarji and in the process pushed down Morarji." (*Ibid*)

In every issue of *Kumudham*

## KHASI COUP IN MEGHALAYA

The state of Meghalaya went to the Parliamentary elections alongside assembly elections in February this year. The results of the two elections however, were of a different kind. While this North-Eastern hill state returned Congressmen in both the parliamentary seats, i.e. the former Lok Sabha speaker P.A.Sangma and the former Mizoram governor P.R. Kyndiah; the Congress could win only 25 of the state's 60 assembly seats. Thus, the party fell six seats short of a clear majority in the 60 member Meghalaya assembly.

A vertical split in the house, saw the Congress bagging 25 and its tribal rival the United Democratic Party winning 20 seats. The Hill State People's Democratic Party (HSPDP), the BJP and the People's Democratic Movement (PDM) got 3 seats each. One seat went to the Garo National Council and five to independents.

Congress with this wafer-thin majority, was sure to woo the small regional groupings to form the

(February 20, 1997; March 20, 1994; April 24, 1997) Swamy has commented on Vajpayee's public and personal life. He puts the blame of the split of the Janata Party firmly on Vajpayee's shoulder and at one place has even accused Vajpayee of having a drinking problem. According to Swamy, the Janata Party was split by Vajpayee in order to retaliate against Morarji, when the latter had abused Vajpayee, then his External Affairs Minister, for getting drunk at a Japanese diplomat's party. Swamy further writes, "It was Vajpayee who first planted the idea of prime ministership in the mind of Charan Singh. He kept meeting Morarji and Charan Singh separately and started spreading stories against each other. Popular perception is that it was Charan Singh who broke

government. S.C. Marak, who was elected leader of the 25 member Congress legislature party, submitted a list of 31 legislators to the governor in support of his claim. Governor Jacob, going by the convention of inviting the single largest party to form the government asked Marak to take over and prove his majority within a fortnight. However on the day of the swearing in itself, the UDP leader B.B.Lyngdoh paraded before the governor 32 members in his support. The Khasi leader lived upto his promise while staking his claim. As a list submitted earlier by the party revealed the support of three MLA's each of the BJP, the HSPDP and the PDM, one of the GNC and two independents — F.A. Khonglam and Abu Thaher Mandal. Thus the Congress government was unseated by a Khasi coup before it was formed.

During its 25 years of existence, Meghalaya has been ruled for 20 years by a Garo Chief Minister. But Non-tribal/tribal divide between the communities of

Janata. But the fact is that it was Vajpayee who destroyed the fort called Janata." (*Ibid*)

Why Swamy hates Vajpayee and makes him out to be a villain we don't know. But after reading the excerpts from Swamy's book, we certainly know why Vajpayee hates Swamy. After all this mud-slinging on the former, within a year, Swamy expects Vajpayee to induct him in his Cabinet, which is extremely foolhardy on his part. Compared to our other politicians, Vajpayee certainly has a much cleaner image, but a saint he definitely is not. No wonder then that Swamy finds himself left out high and dry. Though we hold no love for Vajpayee, we definitely view Swamy as a villain and are glad that he has no role to play in the present BJP government. ■

the Garos, the Khasis and the Jaintias ensure that Meghalaya will almost always have a coalition government. It had four such governments between 1988 and 1993. Although the Marak government that took over in 1993 completed its full term of office, with just 24 Congress MLA's it had to lure other parties by forming a jumbo ministry of 26 ministers in a 60 member house. With growing tensions between the two major communities of Garos and Khasis, each major party will be prone to play up the ethnic sentiments in the years to come. Now that the grand old man of Khasi politics, Brington Buhai Lyngdoh has staged a comeback after 15 years, only time will tell how long his government will last. Since it had had two short stints in power earlier in 1979 and 1983 which lasted for two years and barely for three weeks respectively!

*Mankind* wishes the Khasis well!  
Overthrow of Congress governments everywhere is the necessary first step in the regeneration of Indian democracy! ■

## INDIA'S BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES BEING LOOTED BY THE WEST!

Ricetec Inc., a United States company, has secured the patent on basmati rice from the U.S. Patent Office and will be able to use the name to sell and export its rice. The patent could at some stage give this company the right

to restrict the production of this rice by others.

Learning from the case of turmeric (*Mankind*, Nov. 1997), the Indian government has hired a Delhi law firm to prove to the US Patent Office that

basmati is a part of ancient Indian plantlore and therefore cannot be exploited for profit outside India.

India exported basmati rice at Rs.1,198 crores in 1996-97 which is almost three-fourths of the global rice exports of this variety. The patent granted to Ricetec Inc. could become a serious threat to India's rice farmers and

exporters.

The turmeric and the basmati cases indicate grave danger to India's treasure of traditional knowledge about plants, herbs and spices. Products delivered from more than 100 Indian trees and herbs have been granted foreign patents. More than 7,000 plants with medicinal properties and 326 species of wild crop varieties are known in India. More than one-third of India's animal and plant species are found nowhere else in the world.

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) recently found that 'picroliv' a product derived from the roots of a perennial herb, *picrorhiza kurroa*, found in north-western Himalayas, on which the CSIR had obtained a US patent, is already produced and marketed by a US company in America. CSIR is going to file a case in American courts to stop this piracy. 'Picroliv' is very effective in treating liver diseases caused by hepatitis virus or excessive drinking. CSIR has not marketed the drug as it is undergoing trials which are mandatory for an allopathic drug to qualify for marketing globally.

Another instance of piracy is the marketing of 'bioperine' by an American company, Sabinsa Corporation in the US. The Regional Rural Laboratory (RRL) in Jammu and Kashmir had developed and

patented 'piperine', isolated from black pepper, as a tuberculosis drug. 'Bioperine' is the same compound as 'piperine'. The RRL had patented its formulation in US and Europe.

**Scientists are demanding an inquiry to investigate whether information is leaked to the foreign companies from inside the CSIR laboratories and whether drug development in CSIR is deliberately delayed to benefit foreign companies.** The cases of piracy are by companies owned by Non-Resident Indians with contacts in CSIR laboratories. Two out of the three directors of Sabinsa Corporation are Indians settled in the US.

India needs to take systematic steps to combat the misappropriation of its natural resources and centuries of empirical knowledge by the developed world.

A thorough and exhaustive listing of Indian plants and their traditional medicinal uses is urgently needed to fight patent piracy.

India's patent laws also need to change to recognise patent and drugs and agro-chemicals and not just on methods of making them. India must also enact laws to protect traditional Indian biological knowledge and products. The rights of Indian farmers over seeds and plants they have used for centuries also need to be protected by introducing new

laws.

India's sluggish patent office must also be shaken out of its stupor. It takes seven years to clear a patent as against two years in the US. Experts must be found to advise Indian scientists, farmers and entrepreneurs to deal more effectively with foreign patent offices.

The 1996 Tribal Intellectual Property Bill in Kerala is a good model for conserving India's biodiversity and for an equitable sharing of access and benefits from our natural resources. Government scientists in Kerala observed that local Kani tribals did not get tired after eating the leaves of a plant called *Trichopus zeylanicus*. The scientists isolated the compound in a laboratory and put the product on the market in 1991 under the name *Jeevani*. Rs. 6.8 lakhs has been put away as the share of the tribals in a bank account. Karnataka is also formulating similar legislation. In the Philippines, a law has been enacted to protect indigenous and community rights.

India thus has to fight the pirating of its biological resources on two fronts. It has to mobilise developing countries and seek redress in WTO. At the same time, local communities have to be mobilised to fight this misappropriation of their traditional resources and have to be supported by the necessary legal enactments. ■

## DYNASTY'S TYPISTS BECOME BIG BOSSES

'Mr. Faithful' is the other name for Vincent George, Ms. Sonia Gandhi's personal assistant. Different people came to be associated with the Nehru-Gandhi family over the years. But in his record for loyalty to the family, George stands much taller than his predecessors. A valet of Jawahar became a member of the UP Assembly. M.O. Mathai, PA to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru did not hesitate in bringing his master's name to disrepute in his much publicised autobiography in the 70's. Mathai also claimed that Indira became his mistress, atleast for a while! R.K.Dhawan a man, better known as a power-broker in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in the 80's, soon fell from grace with the new Prime Minister Rajiv

Gandhi, when Rajiv came to power. Prior to Dhawan, Yashpal Kapoor had served Indira very faithfully, so much so that he had been placed in charge of *National Herald*.

Vincent George joined the staff of Ms. Indira Gandhi in 1977 at 12 Willingdon Crescent and preferred to stay with the family to this date. A person who had been winner of the "fastest typist in Kerala" prize, maintained the same pace while climbing up the rungs of power. In 1984 he entered the PMO as the youngest private secretary to a Prime Minister. Soon he sought the entrance into Rajiv's inner circle. There he came to be described as "King George" by the

partymen and lobbyists. Even after Rajiv Gandhi's assassination in 1991, he remained at 10 Janpath though the place had ceased to be the centre of political activity.

Vincent George has learnt to adjust his life to the ups and downs in the Gandhis' political fortunes. It makes little difference to him whether his mistress chooses to remain aloof from power politics or decides to actively participate in it. Anybody seeking an audience with Sonia, no matter how important the person is, will have to prove his credentials before Vincent George first. For he will always be there to guard access to Ms. Sonia Gandhi, the new President of the AICC and Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party (without being an MP herself) ■

# CHALO, DUNIYA DEKHEN !

- Asso. Edr.

## COUNTDOWN TO PARTITION

*Countdown to Partition : The Final Days* is a collection of a series of articles written by Ajit Bhattacharjee a mainstream journalist in 1997. It gives a graphic account of the negotiations that took place in the period before the 1947 Transfer of Power which resulted in the Partition of the country.

The book reiterates many facts which are well-known to the participants in the country's freedom struggle. The Congress government of post-1947 India has sought to obfuscate many of these facts in order to hide the infamous role of the Indian National Congress leaders in the events leading to a turbulent transfer of power and Partition.

At the end of the Second World War, Britain had been reduced to a state of economic ruin. The Conservative government of Winston Churchill had been defeated by Clement Attlee's Labour Party. The Labour government knew that it could not hold India with the help of "disloyal" Indian army and decided to let go of the British Indian empire. But the Indian National Congress leaders — principally Nehru, Patel and Azad — did not grasp the weak position of the British in post World War II international scene and adopted an unnecessarily beggarly attitude in the negotiations with the British.

Bhattacharjee quotes Nehru in a conversation with British author Leonard Mosley in 1960 : **"The truth is that we were tired men, and we were getting on in years. Few of us could stand the prospect of going to prison again — and if we had stood for a united India ... prison obviously awaited us ... The plan for partition offered a way out and we took it."** (pp. xxv-xxvi)

Mountbatten was chosen by the ruling British establishment to negotiate with the Congress and Muslim League leaders as well as the princes. Mountbatten proposed a transfer of power with the Partition of the country into two states which should accept Dominion Status under the British

crown. Nehru and Patel agreed to this scheme.

The All India Congress Committee called a session to endorse the Partition of the country. Only the Socialist group in the Congress led by Jayaprakash Narayan and Rammanohar Lohia opposed the bifurcation of the country. **Gandhi pleaded his inability to oppose the Congress leadership.**

Nehru and Patel accepted Mountbatten's suggestion that he should be the Governor-General of India. Jinnah refused to allow Mountbatten to become the first Governor-General of Pakistan. Jinnah also refused to have the British royal crest on the flag of Pakistan. **But the Indian leaders allowed Mountbatten to have this crest on the flag of the Governor-General of India.**

The entire effort was to make the transfer of power as smooth as possible and every care was taken to pander to British feelings. The British flag was not lowered at the midnight of August 14th but was brought down, respectfully folded and given to the British representative in the evening of August 14. Free India's tricolour was raised only the next morning as agreed to by Nehru at the behest of Mountbatten. The oath of office taken by Mountbatten as the first Governor-General of India said **he would be "faithful to His Majesty, his heirs and successors"**. This was not objected to by Nehru. The princely states of India, a majority of which had always acted as a strong support to the British rule, were also a party to the negotiations on the eve of independence. They were manoeuvring to preserve as many of their decadent, feudal privileges as possible after the Transfer of Power. When they realised that after August 15, 1947, the British representative would cease to be able to mediate for them, many of them agreed to accede to India. But Hyderabad, Kashmir, Travancore, Bhopal, Jodhpur, Indore and Junagadh continued to resist. V. P. Menon, secretary in the department of states, backed by Patel, took a firm

line and insisted on the removal of Sir Conrad Corfield of the Political Department who was in favour of the princely states remaining independent:

Jodhpur was situated on the border of India and Pakistan. Its ruler threatened V. P. Menon with a revolver, and got thoroughly drunk before signing the Instrument of Accession.

The dewan of Travancore, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyer, left the state after he was attacked and hospitalised. The ruler of Travancore decided to join the Indian Union.

The Nizam declared Hyderabad an independent province and mobilised the Razakars to resist accession to India. But the Indian army with the support of the local population foiled this attempt.

Although Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir signed the treaty of accession to India, Pakistan sent an army of occupation into Kashmir. Nehru was prevented from visiting Kashmir by Mountbatten and Patel. **Gandhi went to Kashmir after assuring Mountbatten that he would make no political speeches. Nehru's decision to solicit world opinion on Kashmir and take the issue to the United Nations was under the influence of Mountbatten.** The Kashmir problem continues to fester upto the present.

Patel assured Mountbatten that the "courtesy relations" between the princely states and the British crown could continue after August 15, 1947. The rulers of Jodhpur and Bikaner were given the Grand Cross of the Star of India after the transfer of power.

Sir Cyril Radcliffe, a British jurist with no experience of Indian affairs was made the chairman of the Boundary Commission to partition Punjab, Bengal and Assam. He was asked to complete the enormous task in five weeks. He was directly reporting to Mountbatten and never consulted either the INC or the Muslim League leaders. Radcliffe gave his report to Mountbatten on August 9, 1947 but the latter kept it a secret so that

the British would not be blamed for the communal riots and killings after August 15. In his report to the British Government, Mountbatten wrote : **"From an administrative point of view there was considerable advantage in immediate publication. However it has been obvious that the later we postponed the publication, the less would be odium on the British."**

On his way back from Jammu, Gandhi visited the refugee camp at Wah, near Rawalpindi. The Hindu and Sikh families there were worried about their fate after August 15. Gandhi advised them to accept Jinnah's assurance that

minorities would be safe. Gandhi was given a hostile reception by slogan shouting refugees at Amritsar station.

Communal violence was erupting all over Punjab and Bengal. Lahore and Amritsar were experiencing a series of pre-planned bomb explosions and stabbings. British Intelligence reports by the Punjab CID said that Tara Singh, the Akali Dal leader, was collecting arms through sympathetic Sikh army officers to hit back at Muslim League leaders. He and his supporters were placed under arrest when the Boundary Commission award was announced.

On August 4, 1947, Nehru

submitted the list of his first cabinet to Mountbatten. This list included the names of B. R. Ambedkar, Shyama Prasad Mukerji and Shanmukham Chetty on Gandhi's advice.

Fifty years ago, the desire of the Congress leadership to climb into positions of centralised power quickly led to India's partition and the consequent massacres and uprooting of seventeen millions of men, women and children. It also left both the Dominion Status countries vulnerable to the machinations of the neo-colonial powers led by America even after the apparent withdrawal of direct British rule. ■

## THE NEHRU-GANDHIS OF PAKISTAN !

The *New York Times*, in its 9th Jan., 198 Friday edition published a story about the 'royal' family of Pakistan which only confirmed a famous dictum that 'absolute power corrupts absolutely'. And why Pakistan which has been ranked as the second most corrupt country in the world by Transparency International would be an exception to it ? **This story is the saga of power and riches of the Bhutto family.** On the basis of the investigation conducted for full three months on the documents procured from the Nawaz Sharif government, this story has been written by John Burns, the *London Times*' South Asia Bureau Chief and two time Pulitzer Prize winner.

**The story reports about more than \$1.6 billion (Rs. 6,400 crores) in foreign bank accounts and properties amassed by the Bhutto family.** But the greatest share went into the account of Asif Zardari, former Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's husband, who left no stone unturned while milking his country dry for tens of millions of dollars.

A man known for long in Pakistani circles as Mr. Ten Per Cent, exploited every possible opportunity that came his way to make money. **Defence Contracts, power plant projects, the privatisation of state-owned industries, the awarding of broadcast licenses, the granting of an export monopoly for the country's huge rice harvest, purchase of planes for Pakistan International Airlines, assignment of textile export quotas, granting of oil and gas permits, authorisations to build sugar mills, sale of government lands and what not !**

This was done unabashedly riding roughshod over the bureaucracy during his wife's two terms in the office as the Prime Minister. It is believed that he might **have duped his country to the tune of \$1.5 billion (Rs. 6,000 crores).**

He was appointed as Investment Minister, reporting only to the Prime Minister, during Benazir Bhutto's second term as Prime Minister. After moving in the Prime Minister's new residence Zardari ordered 4.6 hectares of protected woodland on an adjoining hilltop to be cleared for a polo field and attendant facilities. When a senior government agent objected to the diversion of \$1.3 million from a budget for parks and other public amenities, he was summarily dismissed and the work for the polo ground proceeded apace.

Bhutto family's foreign assets came into the picture when the Pakistan government hired Jules Kroll Associates, a New York investigative agency to probe into corruption abroad. When the agency got hold of a cache of documents believed to have come from the Geneva office of Jens Schlegelmilch, the Bhutto family's attorney in Europe, the fuller picture came to the surface, detailing the kickbacks received by the family in almost every sphere of government activity. Crucial role played by western institutions in such dubious dealings and the network of banks that handled the money came to light. These documents were made available **only** when the Pakistani government agreed to conclude a deal of \$1 million in cash with an informer.

The corruption binge began when Benazir Bhutto confidante Schlegelmilch established a British Virgin Island Company called Capricorn Trading SA, with Asif Zardari as its principal owner. Nine months later on October 5, 1994, an account was opened at the Dubai offices of the Citibank in the name of Capricorn Trading. Immediately on the same day, a Citibank deposit slip showed a deposit of \$5 million for the account by the ARY Traders, a company formed by a gold bullion dealer in the Middle East. Another Citibank slip showed that two days later the same company had paid in another \$5 million. In November 1994, Abdul Razzak, aforesaid gold bullion dealer of the Middle East, received a letter from Pakistan's Commerce Ministry granting him a license which made him Pakistan's sole authorised gold importer for at least the next two years.

Another lucrative deal discovered after investigations was regarding the sale of 32 Mirage 2000-5 fighter planes to Pakistan. Dassault Aviation the French military contractor along with the two other companies involved with the manufacture of the Mirages; Sncma, an engine manufacturer, and Thomson-CSF, a maker of aviation electronics, were made to pay off Zardari and a Pakistani partner of this \$4 billion jet fighter deal. This deal was cancelled when Bhutto's government was dismissed. Then there are other disclosures where the Bhuttos made money even from the routine domestic contracts meant for propping up the Pakistani economy. In one deal, a

Swiss company hired to curb customs fraud in Pakistan paid millions of dollars between 1994 and 1996 to offshore companies controlled by Zardari and Benazir's mother, Nusrat Bhutto. In another scam, Pakistani Government gave clearance to preshipment 'verification' of all major imports to two Swiss companies, Societe Generale de Surveillance SA and a subsidiary, Cotecna Inspection SA. The Swiss companies had promised to pay "commissions" totalling 9 per cent to three offshore companies standing in the name of Zardari and Nusrat Bhutto. The two Swiss companies inspected more

than \$15.4 billion in imports into Pakistan from Jan. 95 to March 1997, making more than \$ 131 millions for themselves and paying out more than \$11.8 million to the Bhutto family.

While the Swiss officials have already frozen 17 bank accounts belonging to the Bhutto family (See *Mankind*, Vol. 3, No. 3, Dec. 1997), authorities in Britain and France are following a trail. Benazir Bhutto however describes the investigation as a persecution. She looks at it as a political vendetta waged to cause her financial collapse. She accused Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of launching a witch hunt

to divert attention from corruption within his own ranks. She accused Sharif of hiding the assets of a US-based company owned by his family and not having repaid massive bank loans.

It was Benazir who had once remarked, "avaricious politicians had looted developing countries and left them without the means to tackle their social problems." How very true ! While launching verbal attack on one another for bilking the country of tens of millions, both the top politicians seem to be unconcerned about 130 million people of their own country who have no proper shelter, no proper education, no hospitals or even safe drinking water. ■

## PAKHTOONS ON THE WARPATH

The Awami National Party (ANP) walked out of the alliance formed with Pakistani Muslim League (PML), the party in power ! It was a hard blow for the coalition government when one federal minister and three provincial ministers in the North West Frontier Province chose to resign in the last week of February ! The matter of contention was Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's decision to go back on a verbal agreement reached at the time of forging an alliance with the ANP.

All that the ANP had asked for at the time of extending its support to the PML government was a constitutional change to be made for christening the frontier province as Pakhtoonkhwa. This was a part of their electoral manifesto and Nawaz Sharif had agreed to fulfil this promise, while asking for some time for its realisation. But when the Prime Minister announced recently, "there is no written agreement with the ANP to change the name of NWFP to Pakhtoonkhwa", (*Outlook*, 9.3.98) the ANP leadership was taken aback. The ANP withdrew its support to the coalition government, the ANP leader, Khan Abdul Wali Khan, son of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, reacted sharply, "How can

we have faith in an alliance where there is backtracking from a verbal agreement?" (*Outlook*, 9.3.98)

The ANP, a party originally known as the National Awami Party (NAP) was founded by Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, better known as Frontier Gandhi in India. The NAP was championing the cause of Pakhtoonistan which included Pakhtoon-dominated areas of Afghanistan as well. The party was banned in the '70s for its 'anti-national' activities. The ANP and another Pakhtoon party, the Pakhtoonkhwa Quami Milli Awami Party changed its course of action and brought down their demand to Pakhtoonkhwa, i.e. to a demand for the land of the Pakhtoons within Pakistan. The NWFP is largely settled by Pakhtoons with the non-Pakhtoons comprising only 25% of the population. A demand for the change in name of NWFP, which in essence is a cartographer's title was made on the ground, "NWFP is no name for the Pakhtoons. If the Sindhis have Sindh, the Punjabis have Punjab and the Baloch have Balochistan, it is time that we too had a name of our own." (*Outlook*, 9.3.98)

But the Punjabi establishment is not going to be sympathetic to this demand for Pakhtoonkhwa. With the "Punjabistan" of the country underway, the other provinces are also unhappy over the stepmotherly treatment meted out to them. Sindhi parliamentarians attempted to voice their grievances on the floor of the house about the attempts to shift the head office of one of the leading banks to Lahore from Sindh.

There is no denying the fact that the days ahead are going to be tumultuous days for a Punjabi Prime Minister. A man engulfed in the judicial and constitutional crisis not long ago, Sharif was buoyed up by the army. But can he boast now of uniting all the parties in Parliament ? The nationalist forces in different provinces are sure to pressurise the government to bring about amendments for greater provincial autonomy. But the PML now with no support from the ANP in the Senate is a party short of absolute majority. As every amendment bill passed by the National Assembly requires to be ratified by a two-third majority in the Senate, the impending package of constitutional amendments appears to be an impossible proposition. ■

## PINOCHET'S CRIMES

Augusto Pinochet, a former dictator of Chile secured for himself a permanent seat in the Senate as he was to retire as Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Army on the same day i.e. on 11th March 1998. During his rule, he had

incorporated an amnesty clause in the Constitution and thereby granted himself a permanent immunity ! His senatorial membership grants him continued immunity from prosecution for deaths and disappearances of thousands of

dissidents under his rule.

In fact it was Pinochet who had brought a long democratic tradition in Chile to an end by engineering a military coup against a socialist democratic government of Chile in 1973. Salvador

Allende was his predecessor and was a founder member of the Chilean Socialist Party. Chile was the first South American country to elect a Marxist government under Allende's leadership in 1970. It was President Allende, who entrusted Pinochet with the highest military post in 1973. But the President was to realise his mistake within a fortnight as two military jets launched an airstrike on La Moneda, the Presidential palace. Allende was killed and Chile fell to the ruthless dictates of Pinochet. **A total of 3,197 Leftists and presumed Leftist sympathisers were executed or disappeared at the hands of Pinochet's security forces during his 17 years rule.** There had been one political homicide every other day during these 17 long years. He was not to spare any of his detractors. General Carlos Prats Gonzales, an Army Commander during Allende years who was living a life in exile in Buenos Aires was killed along with his wife by a car bomb. Air Commander Prats had refused to collude in a coup plot. Former Chilean Minister Orlando Letelier was extinguished by a similar bomb in Washington; DC.

Ultimately, Pinochet had to bow

down before the wishes of Chileans. He was forced to relinquish power after a referendum in 1990. But he saw to it that he would retain control of the army and the power structures raised during his period would remain in their place. He still has his support base in the Senate consisting of the right-wing opposition.

Today, Chile is a democratic republic governed by a coalition of Christian Democrats and Socialists. But retired Gen. Pinochet still wields a huge influence over administration. When two of the most dreaded men in Chile, better known as the members of 'Dina' were convicted for the Letelier killing, a special jail worth \$2.7 million had to be constructed in the village of Punta de Peuco at the behest of Pinochet. And it is costing the exchequer \$10,000 a day for the upkeep of these two VIP prisoners! Two years ago, armed police picked up Communist Party President Gladys Marin. And for what offence? For her offence of talking of their ex-President in rather harsh language.

Last Wednesday several of his opponents had gathered outside the Congress building in protest against this new trick played on them by their

dictator. Some 155 people were arrested for raising slogans against Pinochet and burning his effigy outside the Congress. Police fought back protesters with clubs, water cannon and tear gas to prevent them from entering the Congress building. Gladys Marin, was one among several to receive body blows from police batons.

In January, the Chilean Communist Party filed a law suit against Pinochet in the Santiago Court of Appeals, hoping to block his entry to the Senate. But to no avail! Government legislators would like to push for Pinochet's impeachment. However there are slim chances of success. As numerically dominant right-wing opposition is sure to side with Pinochet. And the ruling coalition is not ready to resolve its differences by coming together against their common enemy.

The story can be summed up in Isabel Allende's words, a Socialist party lawmaker and niece of Salvador Allende, "Today is a grey and bitter day for Chilean democracy, because the person who closed down Congress, today tries to shield himself with (it)." (*Indian Express*, 13.3.98) ■

## MOHAJIRS REAP THE FRUITS OF PARTITION !

The Mohajir Qoumi Movement, which represents the Mohajirs of Pakistan is, at present, the third largest party in the country, the second largest in Sindh province and is now a part of the current government of Pakistan. Despite all this, the persecution of this minority community continues unabated. The Mohajirs represent the Indian immigrants, mainly to the Sindh region of Pakistan after Partition.

"With roots mainly in the middle classes, they were better educated and more skilled. Because they could benefit from the reorganisation after Partition,

they faced rivalry from the original inhabitants of the regions which constituted Pakistan" (*Indian Express*, 8.1.98)

After settling in Pakistan, the Mohajirs became an integral part of the bureaucracy and economy of Sindh, but gradually the governments became more and more Punjabi dominated, and eventually this led to the persecution of the Mohajirs. The Mohajirs reacted by first, founding the All-Pakistan Mohajir Students Organisation (APMSO), and then, the Mohajir Qoumi Movement, which is at present, the most vibrant

ethnic group in the whole of Pakistan.

Despite being part of the present government, many of the party's rank-and-file members are being murdered. The MQM's leader Altaf Hussain was implicated on charges of involvement in the December 5, 1997 killings of American diplomats. This story was later discredited.

For the present however, violence, generated by the government's security forces continues to be a dominant part of Karachi life and the 20 million Mohajirs continue to live under fear of death and persecution in Pakistan. ■

## HITLERITE CRIMES !

German historians, till recently, claimed that the Holocaust was the result of the radicalisation of the Nazi regime, and not due to direct orders of Hitler.

But another German historian, Christian Gerlach, in the German historical journal *Werkstattgeschichte* has written that, "Hitler gave the order on December 12, 1941, during a meeting of Nazi German regional governors in the 38 / MANKIND : APRIL 98

chancellory of his Third Reich." (*Times of India*, 16.1.98)

This he has quoted from the private diaries of Nazi propaganda maestro Joseph Goebbels and Gestapo chief Heinrich Himmler unearthed from the secret archives of the Soviet Union.

In his diary Goebbels further states "With regards to the Jewish question, the Fuehrer decided to make a clean sweep.

This was not loose talk, World War was happening; annihilation of Jewishness was thus the necessary consequence."

These findings further incriminate Hitler and his cronies. As far as *Mankind* is concerned, Hitler was always guilty of the war crimes and was personally responsible for the Holocaust, and nothing anyone says or writes can absolve him of the crimes. Ever ! ■

## PHILIPPINES AND BOFORS !

Ferdinand Marcos may be dead and gone, but the proof of his crimes lives on in the form of bank accounts in various countries across the world. The loot is believed to be in banks in Switzerland, the U.S. and Hong Kong.

In a recent speech, Philippine President Fidel Ramos had said that "if the existence of accounts is confirmed and there is money left in them, then we

will file a petition for the recovery of the money." (*Indian Express*, 1.3.98)

Last year, a senate inquiry had listed down more than 60 Marcos' accounts — some in the name of foundations — in Switzerland, Hong Kong and New York, in addition to the \$500 million recovered earlier. After a 12-year investigation conducted by Manila, the Swiss supreme court ordered

the transfer of \$500 million in Marcos' secret bank accounts to the Philippines.

So, while the Philippines is well on the way to recovering most of the loot stashed away by their former President, successive Indian governments are still dawdling over whether to disclose names of beneficiaries of the Bofors deals or not, even twelve years later ! ■

## CAPITALISTS TRADE IN DEATH AND DESTRUCTION !

The government officials from EU member countries have started negotiations on a joint code of conduct for arms sale to different countries. Negotiations are based on the British government's own "ethical foreign policy" guidelines. It is ironical that the same government who hitherto impudently disregarded the "ethical" principles in its foreign policy operations, is now showing its anxiety to promote an ethical foreign policy ! Ethics of Murder ? Morality of Plunder ?

Britain and the U.S. are the world's largest exporters of arms. Of the 33 per cent of EU's share in the world arms export market, Britain alone accounts for 55 per cent of European arms exports. For Britain, the world's largest exporter of arms; the Middle East is the most lucrative market as "designed instability" has come to stay in the region. As such, Britain's arm exports to West Asia are twice its total arms exports to the rest of the world.

When Margaret Thatcher was in power, an important subsidy i.e. the

export credit guarantee scheme was doled out to the defence industry. It is under this scheme that the British government guaranteed loans from the British banks to those willing purchasers who wanted to buy arms from Britain. Margaret Thatcher personally negotiated loans for Iraq in the hope that this will be a booster to British business interests. Even the Labour Party which came to power on the promise of transforming defence manufacturing to civilian use, failed to live up to its promises when it approved 22 export licences for ammunition, bombs and surveillance equipment to Indonesia. British government has also approved 86 separate licences for the export of armoured vehicles, mortars and rifles to Turkey.

Thus Britain is putting the lives of the people outside Britain at risk by its arm sales. The British government in defence, argues that it is in fact providing jobs to a large number of Britons. That is the world must die a violent death for the prosperity of the British Armament Industry !

Table given below indicates the percentage of share of each country in the arms export market. ■

Arms Export market share : (Per Cent) 1995	
US	54
Russia	11
EU	33
China	2
Arms export EU market share (Per Cent) 1995	
UK	55
France	23
Germany	13
Sweden	3
Italy	2
Netherlands	2
Spain	1
Belgium	1
Arms export to the Middle East (\$ bn) 1993-95	
US	17
UK	12
Russia	2

## LAST RESORT BECOMES FIRST OPTION !

Aggressive marketing of credit cards by banks has led to such a situation in the USA that almost everybody is a credit card user, even for the smallest of purchases. But this rampant use of credit cards has given rise to an alarming number of household debts and personal bankruptcies. A report by the Consumer Federation of America estimated that 5.5 million to 6.0 million households each had an average credit card debt load of more than \$7,000 and paid out more than \$1000 in annual interest and fees.

The number of personal bankruptcies are on the rise per year. Visa USA, a major credit card company, found out that the personal bankruptcy jumped 19.5 per cent nationwide to a record 1.34 million from 1.12 million in 1996.

Earlier, bankruptcy had a social stigma attached to it. Not so anymore. Due to this, many people are now willing to pursue it as a first option instead of as a last resort. As a result, personal bankruptcies have increased by more than 400 per cent since 1980.

In the USA, the state of West Virginia had the largest bankruptcy growth with a 54.2 per cent rise in 1997 while Wyoming was the smallest, with bankruptcies up 6.0 per cent. Among other states, New York bankruptcies rose 21.2 per cent and in California they rose 13.9 per cent. However, no state had recorded any decrease in the number of bankruptcies filed, which goes to show that Americans have now found a very easy method of walking away from debts which they are in a position to repay. ■



## MOSSAD AND SHIN BETH

Both USA and Israel want Israel to be the supreme power in West Asia. To this effect, USA is busy trying to impose a war upon Iraq which will hopefully decimate the country. Such a pre-emptive war will ensure that there is no other powerful country left in the West Asian region, apart from Israel of course, for years to come, if ever. That Clinton chose this very time to decide the West Asian region's politics in order to deflect attention from his homefront is very

conveniently left out by the American media. But that's another story.

As part of the ongoing process to ensure its hegemony in the region, the Israeli government has allocated \$770 million for the Mossad and the Shin Beth intelligence agencies, out of its \$59 billion annual budget.

The Shin Beth is responsible for domestic intelligence, including counter-terrorism and activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, and providing

protection for government officials. Mossad is the foreign spy branch.

"The exact budget for each of the agencies has not been spelled out in the budget but *Haaretz* newspaper calculated the global money to be allocated to the intelligence services by deducting known spending for other purposes from the "cash reserve fund" which covers the agencies' budgets." (*Indian Express*, 2.1.98) ■

## LITERACY MEANS NON-ILLITERACY !

According to Indian norms, a person who can read and write is considered literate. As per this definition, though 52 per cent of our population is literate, nearly 38 per cent of them never passed Class V. ■

* DROPOUT RATE :			
Countries	Rate	Top Indian States	Rate
Bangladesh	53	Manipur	68.3
Pakistan	52	Tripura	63.5
Nepal	48	Bihar	63.4
India	38	Sikkim	62.7
Sri Lanka	8	Arunachal Pradesh	60.7
US	0	Mizoram	57.6
Japan	0		
Guinea-Bissau	80		
	(Highest)		
* Children not reaching class V (%)			

## PEREGRINE GOES UNDER !

The crash of the Southeast Asian currency market has had its effects on all companies, banks, businesses etc. and many, if not most, have declared bankruptcy.

Peregrine Investment Holdings is one of the many successful businesses that had decided to wind up operations and declare bankruptcy. It is now in the hands of liquidators, Price Waterhouse.

Peregrine Investment Holdings was set up in 1988 and the investor group consisted of Hong Kong's premier tycoon Li Ka Shing, and China's red capitalist CITIC Pacific Chairman, Larry Yung. Peregrine's Chairman, British-born Philip Tose, and managing director Francis Leung, a Hong Kong native met while working for blue-chip London city stockbroker Vickers Da Costa in the then-British colony. The company then went public in 1990 by taking over a shell company.

The group rapidly expanded from a stockbroker with a strong corporate finance team to an Asian investment

bank involved in issuing corporate bonds and derivatives, as well as fund management and property investments. They also specialised in bringing Chinese firms into the market.

It launched its most ambitious venture, Peregrine Fixed Income Ltd., three and half years ago and this entity became the region's most active originator, trader and distributor of Asian fixed-income products, chiefly short term corporate debt. However, Peregrine's most ambitious project turned out to be the major cause of its downfall. As a result of shoring up a portfolio of rapidly depreciating Indonesian, South Korean and Thai corporate debt, Peregrine itself came into trouble. But the last straw which led to the winding up of operations of one of Southeast Asia's most famous success stories was a loan to an Indonesian taxi and bus company, Steady Safe PT, and Peregrine Investment Holdings Ltd. too became another statistic in the list of failures of the Southeast Asian stockmarket crash. ■

## HOW OLD IS THE UNIVERSE ?

US scientists have announced that they have traced the most distant object in the cosmos, a young galaxy that existed, when the universe was still an infant.

A team, which was led by Dr. Arjun Dey, a Post Doctoral fellow at John Hopkins University in Baltimore, said that this discovery will widen the stretch of human perception 90 million light years farther than it had ever extended before.

The newly found galaxy was named RD-1 by the astronomers, who confirmed that it was formed 820 million years after our universe was created by the Big Bang. This discovery, made by the largest optical and infrared telescopes in the world, will enable the scientists to determine how and when galaxies were formed.

According to Dey, "With the latest galaxy, scientists have set their eyes at the mysterious period less than a billion years after time and space began in the Big Bang explosion." Dey called this event an extremely exciting discovery, since so little is known about this stage of the universe in terms of the objects that lived there or, how galaxies, giant collections of stars, might form." (*Indian Express*, 16.3.98)

In addition, they are also trying to locate baby galaxies, that would turn into the one we live in, but probably would be in course of star formation. Infact, they are collapsing from the gaseous clouds and forming their first generation of stars.

The scientists used the largest optical and infra-red telescopes in the world — the 10 meter KECK I and II, on Mauna Kea, a dormant volcano on the island of Hawaii.

This led to an assumption that the universe is about 13 billion years old. However, this figure is not confirmed and is a matter of debate now. They, however, concluded that light has travelled so far as is known to a distance of about 12.22 billion light years (one light year is equal to the distance travelled by a light-ray in a year) ■

# INDIA'S PLACE IN THE SUN THE REAL RULERS OF INDIA : 59 MONOPOLY HOUSES

Vinayak Purohit

We have been publishing data on Indian monopolists from the beginning of the publication of the revived *Mankind* (May 1996, July 1996 and Jul.-Aug. 1997).

We are now updating the series on the major Monopoly Houses operating within the country. Our major sources have been :

- Vinayak Purohit, *Arts of Transitional India : 20th century*, Vol 1, 1986, pp. 356-7.
- *Mankind*, May 1996, p.65; July 1996; p.17; July-Aug. 1997, p.43.
- CMIE : *The Indian Corporate Sector*, April 1996.
- *Business Today* : India's Business Families, January 7-February 6, 1998,

We have presented the latest data in four parts :

Part A :- The Top Ten Houses - 10 (Tata, Birla, Ambani, Thapar, Goenka, Bajaj, Chidambaram, Singhanias, Mafatlal, Kirloskar).

Part B :- The Seniors or Old Stalwarts - 13. (The senior monopolists, who have been with us for a fairly long time, and who have had their ups and downs in fortunes).

Part C :- The MNC Group - 7. (ITC, Unilever, Philips, ICI, Coats Viyella, GEC Alstom, Glaxo).

Part D :- The remaining monopolists - 29. (These are the groups who have made the most out of the latest Liberalisation, Privatisation, Globalisation and Westernisation policy).

## GROUP A

### The Top Ten Houses

This is the oldest group of crooks in India, who have made the most out of

both, British Imperialist rule (1860 to 1946) and the following Congress *naukershahi* rule (1946-1998).

The Tata family fortune had its origins, like that of all the Parsis of Bombay (Wadias, Petits, Shapoorji-Pallonji, Readymoney, Godrejs, Cawasji Jehangirs, Mehtas, Wachas, Vakils, etc.), in opium cultivation and trade, ship-building, real estate and land reclamation, cotton ginning and textiles. It is the biggest monopoly group in the country, with fixed assets of over 44,000 crores in 1996-97 if ACC is included within the group. It has prospered, uniformly, under Jawahar's "Socialist" rule, Indira's "Garibi Hatao" rule, Rajiv's "Bofors" rule, and the latest "LPG" rule by the Rao - Singh duo. But their best years, percentage-wise, seem to have been under Indira Gandhi, whose husband was a Parsi (Improvement of 529% between 1966 and 1983). Overall, the Tata Group grew by 36,000 percent or by 360 times in the 46 years, 1951-97.

This growth rate may appear fantastic, but is quite normal for Indian Monopoly Houses. In fact, the House of Thapar grew by over 500 times and that of Kirloskar by 1,120 times !

The Birla fortune was also probably founded upon opium cultivation and trading in Malwa, Gwalior and Rajasthan. In any case, it later went into jute and cotton textiles, sugar and cement.

All the members of the Group of Top Ten have had textile links in their immediate past, except Kirloskars, who seem to have concentrated upon engineering.

The rise by 145 times, of the

Ambanis (Reliance) in just the last three decades, has been spectacular. It is very well-known in Indian business circles, that Indira Gandhi's Finance and Commerce Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, had a lot to do with Dhirubhai Ambani's first forays.

SPIC Chidambaram also seems to have burst upon the scene, suddenly, from 1981. Actually, this is a statistical illusion, for M.A. Chidambaram was very much there in the Nehru years, and had been assisted by Nehru's finance ministers, Shanmugam Chetty and John Mathai. But we do not have reliable data for Chidambaram's early years, from 1945 to 1980.

If we segregate the growth rates by political periods, then the best growth out of the top ten, from a very low level was realised by the Kirloskars in the Jawahar period (1946-64).

During Indira's 'Garibi Hatao' rule, almost everyone of the Top Ten Houses had a grand time. Tatas and Thapars grew by over 500 percent, Birlas by over 600 percent, Mafatlals by over 700 percent, Kirloskars by 800 percent and Singhanias and Bajajs by over 1,000 percent. The Bajaj group had its best years. It grew by 1097%, thanks to Morarji Desai, who was Indira's Finance Minister right through the earlier part of her rule, just as Pranab Mukherjee was her Finance Minister during her second term.

During Rajiv's 'Bofors' rule, the greatest beneficiary was M.A. Chidambaram, whose group grew by 2,893 percent, nearly 300 times.

In the fourth period of Rao - Singh's 'LPG' rule, Reliance and Bajaj grew by 386 percent each and the Mafatlals by 361 percent.

## GROUP B

### The 13 Seniors or Old Stalwarts

In a comprador society, it is always very difficult to define either the 'native' or the 'foreign'. Larsen and Toubro were started by a pair of Danish adventurers. The foreigners have gradually divested themselves of their holdings and today, next to the Indian financial institutions, the biggest holding is by Ambani's Reliance. However, the courts have presently placed in cold

storage the matter of true ownership of the conglomerate and Dhirubhai Ambani and his sons are biding their time.

The Mahindra posture is very low profile though they have grown from 1951 to 1997 by an astronomical three-and a half lakh percent ! During Nehru's 'Socialist' rule alone they grew by 2,000 percent.

The Modis of Delhi seem to have enjoyed most, Indira's 'Garibi Hatao' rule. They grew by 2,163 percent. Did R.K. Dhawan sponsor them ? Or perhaps Sanjay and Maneka must have done that directly.

TVS grew in the Indira years by 811 percent and the Sarabhais by 781 percent. Perhaps some *naukersshah* can work out the precise linkages and whose palm was greased the most generously !

Like Reliance, the United Breweries group of Vijay Mallya had their initial uplift during Indira's leftist rule, which for a couple of years was dependent on the CPM-CPI MPs support in the Lok Sabha. It is difficult to pinpoint precisely, the amount made by the Stalinist Party Leaders of the CPI and the CPI(M), who prevented Indira's government from falling.

The best years for Vijay Mallya's United Breweries were the Rajiv years. They grew by 508 percent.

Sri Ram have been making steady progress : 458 percent under Jawahar, a matching 482 percent under Indira and a respectable 224 percent under Rajiv and 172 percent under Narasimha Rao and Manmohan Singh. In all, some 9,308 percent between 1951 and 1997.

Kasturbhai Lalbhai's group of Arvind Mills of Ahmedabad and Atul Pharmaceuticals of Balsar, managed a sizzling 14,192 percent overall increase in the last half-century.

## GROUP C

### The 7 Multinationals.

We have reliable comparative data for only four big MNCs connected with India. The ITC group or Imperial Tobacco, Hindustan Lever of the Unilever group, Imperial Chemical Industries and Bird-Hailgers/Coats Viyella. Each of the four has had spectacular growth by over 1,000 percent, climaxing with plus 4,288 percent for the ITC group and 2,812 percent for Hindustan Lever.

It will be noticed that whilst the MNC group is not to be despised in terms of hundreds of crores of fixed assets acquired by them, by the standards of the Top Ten, or even the recent crop of LPG monopolists, their declared official holdings of fixed assets do not amount to much. The biggest member of the foreign group, the ITC had less than 2000 crores in fixed assets, which would make it smaller than the 35th Indian MRTP house.

However small the seven leading MNCs may be in the Indian context, the 52 Indian monopoly houses (The Top Ten, the 13 Seniors and 29 of the latest LPG Period) should not be in a great hurry to pat themselves on the back.

Onslaughts by MNCs now play a very small role in the new Neo-Colonial strategy of exploitation of the Third World.

The latest Neo-Colonial strategy is three pronged:

- Whole economies of the entire Third World are subordinated to the OECD powers principally by devaluations

and manipulations of national currencies of the poor countries. (The poor nations are also called Developing Countries, Non Industrialised Countries and the South.) The net flow of resources from the South to the North was \$52 bln. in 1988 and \$ 51 bln. in 1989. (*UNDP Report 1991, P. 23*). Apart from devaluations, restrictive trade practices, particularly to the free flow of labour, and other unequal procedures, also result in a net drain of wealth from the Third World to the First. In 1990, this loss amounted to a rate of \$ 500 bln. per year. For India, the net outflow on account of both Visible Trade Deficit and Net Invisibles was Rs. - 17,368 crores in 1990-91; Rs. - 2,237 crores in 1991-92; Rs. - 12,763 crores in 1992-93 and Rs. - 3,636 crores in 1993-94. The rupee dollar exchange rate declined from Rs. 3.3 to the dollar in 1946-47 to Rs. 17.9 in 1990-91 and Rs. 39.5 in 1998. The whole of the Indian economy was in the vicious economic grip of the West. Not just single commodities, whether raw or manufactured, everything produced in India was made cheap for the West, and everything sent or sold by the West was made expensive for India. This Double Loot resulted in a fifty times greater burden upon India over the half century of the country's bogus independence. (For further details see *India's Place in the Sun, Mankind* Nov. 1996, pp. 92-98, the latest data on Drain of Wealth from India is from *Economic Survey 1996-97, P.S-72*)

- At the same time the Neo-Colonial powers lead the countries of the Developing World into the Death Trap. For instance, India's total external debt was merely \$7.9 bln. in 1970 and this was blown up to \$99 bln. by end March 1995. (*Mankind* issue already cited and *Economic Survey 1996-97, p. S-108*) It is impossible for India or for any member of the Third World to extricate itself from the enormous ever rising burden of external debt. They incur more debt in order to repay past debts. For instance, in India's case, the burden of interest and instalment payments on external debt went up from Rs. 4,958 crores in 1990-91 to Rs. 6,346 crores in 1991-92, to Rs. 7,395 crores in 1992-93 and Rs. 8,170 crores in 1993-94. At the same time, the burden of repatriation of Profits, Dividends, Royalties and Fees went up from Rs. 8,873 crores in 1990-91 to Rs. 12,845 crores in 1991-92 to Rs. 15,169 crores in 1992-93 and to Rs. 18,244 crores in 1993-94. (Same source as above).

- At the same time Foreign Financial Institutions (FFIs) entered and grabbed the financial markets of the poor countries. Tatas and Birlas and Ambanis may own huge chunks of Fixed Assets in India, but huge chunks of their own capital are owned by the FFIs. Therefore who owns what in the Indian economy? And to what extent?

All in all, the dominance of the Indian monopoly houses is entirely illusory, since Indian national interests do not control our exchange rate with foreign currencies, since India is poised to accept more and more foreign loans in order to clear old debts, and as the Net Outflows go on mounting.

Actually, in a comprador society, it is almost impossible to define *Swadeshi* in such a way as to exclude all foreign interests. Larsen and Toubro, originally entirely foreign, has become totally indigenised. Hindustan Lever and ITC were in the same category till Unilever and BAT, the Dutch and

British parent companies, raised their stake quite recently in their respective Indian subsidiaries.

Historically, British cowardice was largely responsible for the sudden exodus in 1947, of all its four black-coated professionals (lawyers, doctors, accountants and architects), who were merrily mulcting India with blatantly racialist and fundamentalist patronage by the colonial administration. At the same time, a large number of managing agency houses, centred upon Calcutta, in contrast to Bombay, which was the centre of *Swadeshi* compradors, sold out their concerns to mainly Marwari, Gujarati and Parsi business houses.

There was no need for the Britishers to leave India. Nehru and his successors had provided for their security and profitability by preserving total continuity of the colonial, legal, administrative, financial, educational and cultural machinery. English language was continued, school and college text books remained the same, law was made to follow British precedents, the Imperial Civil Service became the Indian Civil Service, without, initially even a change of abbreviation, gold smuggling continued, the creative energies of the mass of the population remained unharnessed. **Nothing changed!**

By 1961, Jawahar had become bold enough to lay down the red carpet for Elizabeth II's visit to India. Everything was forgiven. The killing of thousands of Indian nationalist, terrorists, the detention of lakhs of Indians without trial, the banishment of thousands to the Andamans, the Deindustrialisation, Ruralisation and Pauperisation of Indians Via the Famines of Purchasing Power continued unabated! **Nothing was changed.** J.R.D. Tata, who was the principal comprador collaborator of British Imperialism, was made more and more prosperous by the new regime. When awarded the Padma Vibhushan, some years ago, JRD was innocent enough to remark, 'I have done nothing extraordinary to deserve the honour. I just lived my normal life and carried on my usual business activities.' Eventually JRD was awarded the highest civilian honour, Bharat Ratna by the Congress regime !

Since 1991, a regime of LPG has taken over, foreigners, especially foreign institutional investors, are free to invest in stocks, bonds and real estate, and to remit interest, dividends, royalties, fees and profits to any extent they like.

Therefore, the *Swadeshi* group of true Indians is merely a notion in the minds of the Indian comprador class.

We have, nevertheless, listed some seven prominent MNCs.

## GROUP D The LPG Group

There are 29 monopolists that fall in this D category. The biggest group is that of Essar/Ruia, which has accumulated assets to the tune of 15,000 crores, making it the fourth largest in the country after Tata, Birla and Reliance, but we have preferred their inclusion in the D category, since we do not have reliable data for the start that the group made under Dynastic rule.

Three other monopolists, Ispat/Mittals, Dhoots, and Rai/Usha, possess assets between 4,000 and 5,500 crores.

The Rai/Usha group has posted a remarkable increase of over 2,800 percent in just four years, from 1992-93 to 1996-97. The only other member of the D group, that has had a growth rate of over 2,000 percent in the last four years is the Ranbaxy group of Parvinder Singh. Just this week, it has been reported that Parvinder Singh has sold off part of his interests in Ranbaxy and his latest holding amounts to only 32 percent. In other words, he has cashed in on his assets. The reason for his ploy is not yet clear.

All the 29 members of the D group have multiplied their assets. The least successful Nahar/Oswal has doubled its assets. Seven have more than tripled, and eight have increased their wealth by four to twenty-eight times.

## CONCLUSION

It will be seen from our table that some fifty native Indian Monopoly Houses, assisted by seven foreign houses, own and control the Indian economy. The Congress-*naukersshahi* regime has ensured continued prosperity for all of them throughout the last half-century, through the 'Jawahar Socialist' period, the 'Indira Garibi Hatao' period, the 'Rajiv Bofors' period, and the 'Rao-Singh LPG' period.

We repeat, in a modified form, the lines written by John Dos Passos with reference to the American Monopoly House of Morgan :

Scams and speculations on the stock exchanges,  
Corruption, starvation and shortages,  
Bankruptcies, blackmoney transactions,  
Hunger, tuberculosis, malaria, and AIDS,  
Good growing weather for  
the Houses of Tatas and Birlas!

(See Table : The Congress Connection with  
Plutocrats on pp.44-46)

# THE CONGRESS CONNECTION

1	2	3	4 5 6			7 8 9		
No.	Name of Monopolist	Year of Foundation	Increase in Fixed Assets during Jawahar's "SOCIALIST" Rule (Rs. Crores)			Increase in Fixed Assets during Indira's "GARIBI HATAO" Rule (Rs. Crores)		
			1951	1963	BY %	1966	1983	BY %
<b>A - THE TOP TEN HOUSES</b>								
1.	Tata <sup>1</sup>	1863	116	418	360	505	2,672	529
2.	Birla <sup>2</sup>	1912	153	304	199	458	2,830	618
3.	Reliance	1966	-	-	-	166	563	339
4.	Thapar	1929	16	72	450	99	572	578
5.	Goenka	1979	-	47	-	65	-	-
6.	Bajaj	1926	-	21	-	35	384	1,097
7.	SPIC Chidambaram	1945	-	-	-	-	44 <sup>1981</sup>	-
8.	Singhania	1938	37	59	159	67	674	1,006
9.	Mafatlal	1905	13	46	354	93	695	747
10.	Kirloskar	1881	2	19	950	43	362	842
<b>B - THE SENIORS OR OLD STALWARTS</b>								
11.	Larsen & Toubro	-	-	-	-	-	424	-
12.	Mahindra	1947	1	20	2,000	38	292	768
13.	Modi	-	-	11	-	19	411	2,163
14.	United Breweries	1948	-	-	-	36	234	650
15.	TVS	-	-	22	-	44	357	811
16.	Sri Ram	1937	12	55	458	74	357	482
17.	Bangur	-	20	78	390	104	350	337
18.	Walchand	-	13	55	423	81	384	474
19.	Sarabhai	-	-	43	-	57	445	781
20.	Surajmal Nagarmal	-	-	81	-	96	-	-
21.	Sahu Jain	-	-	68	-	59	-	-
22.	Scindia	-	25	47	188	56	-	-
23.	Kasturbhai Lalbhai	1908	13	34	262	51	-	-
<b>C - THE MNC GROUP</b>								
24.	ITC Group	-	-	-	-	41	356	868
25.	Unilever	-	-	-	-	33	304	921
26.	Philips	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
27.	ICI	-	-	37	-	50	375	750
28.	Coats Viyella	-	34	-	-	69	-	-
29.	GEC Alsthom	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
30.	Glaxo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Notes :-

1. Does not include ACC group of cement companies whose assets amounted to 22 crores in 1951, 77 crores in 1963, 275 crores in 1980, 571 crores in 1983, 903 crores in 1989-90 and 2,521 crores in 1997.

2. The Birla Group which broke up in 1986 and whose five constituents stand as follows :

	1992-93	1996-97	By%
B.K. - K.M. Birla	8,929	19,309	216
K.K. Birla	2,017	3,408	169
M.P. Birla	890	1,319	148
S.K. Birla	1,239	1,228	1
G.P. - C.K. Birla	2,111	2,381	113

# WITH PLUTOCRATS

10 Increase in Fixed Assets during Rajiv's "BOFORS" Rule (Rs. Crores)			11 Increase in Fixed Assets during Rao - Singh's "LPG" Rule (Rs. Crores)			12 Overall increase in Fixed Assets - % Rise		13	14	15	16	17 No.
1983	1989-90	BY %	1992-93	1996-97	BY %	1951-97						
2,672	8,531	319	20,761	41,679	201	35,930	1951-97					1
2,830	8,473	299	15,186	27,645	182	18,069	1951-97					2
563	3,600	639	6,239	24,102	386	14,519	1966-97					3
572	2,177	381	3,811	8,112	213	50,700	1951-97					4
-	-	-	4,460	6,174	138	13,136	1951-97					5
384	1,391	362	1,402	5,410	386	25,762	1963-97					6
44 <sup>1981</sup>	1,273	2,893	2,442	5,035	206	11,443	1981-97					7
674	2,139	317	2,480	4,971	200	13,435	1951-97					8
695	1,344	193	638	2,300	361	17,692	1951-97					9
362	633	175	984	2,239	228	1,11,950	1951-97					10
424	1,682	397	-	2,440 <sup>1994-95</sup>	-	575	1983-95					11
292	-	-	1,312	3,545	270	3,54,500	1951-97					12
411	-	-	-	893 <sup>1994-95</sup>	-	8,118	1951-97					13
234	1,189	508	1,150	1,661	144	4,614	1966-97					14
357	929	260	-	1,078 <sup>1994-95</sup>	-	4,900	1963-95					15
357	799	224	651	1,117	172	9,308	1951-97					16
350	657	188	-	-	-	3,285	1951-90					17
384	626	163	-	518 <sup>1994-95</sup>	-	3,985	1951-95					18
445	463	104	-	-	-	1,078	1963-90					19
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					20
-	-	-	-	349 <sup>1994-95</sup>	-	513	1963-95					21
-	-	-	-	-	-	(Fallen Sick) <sup>3</sup>						22
-	-	-	857	1,845	215	14,192	1951-97					23
356	742	208	-	1,758 <sup>1994-95</sup>	-	4,288	1966-95					24
-	1,209	-	-	928 <sup>1994-95</sup>	-	2,812	1966-95					25
-	-	-	-	332 <sup>1994-95</sup>	-	-	-					26
375	674	180	-	430 <sup>1994-95</sup>	-	1,162	1963-95					27
-	-	-	-	561 <sup>1994-95</sup>	-	1,650	1951-95					28
-	-	-	-	120 <sup>1994-95</sup>	-	-	-					29
-	-	-	-	194 <sup>1994-95</sup>	-	-	-					30

<sup>3</sup> It is important to remember that Scindia, and a little later, ACC, were infected by the Naukershahi Rot. N. Dandekar, an ICS officer of eminence in the '50s and '60s, in the Nehru Era, bamboozled the unsophisticated Indian comprador bourgeois, and helped himself to become Chairman, first of Scindia and later of ACC. He introduced a regime of "Morning Managerial Meetings" and "Minutes and Notes" and completely ruined Scindia. It was Dharamsey Khatau who had sponsored Dandekar. I was an officer in Scindia between 1952 and 1958. I observed the wrecking activities of Dandekar at close quarters, but was too junior

in rank to be able to stop it. The ACC would have suffered from the same sabotage and suffocation in waste paper, had Dandekar lived long enough. But luckily for ACC and Tatas, he died. Dharamsey Khatau of Textile base, also died around the same time. That is how, ACC has survived and half-prospered under Palkhivala, who has himself been removed by Ratan Tata, in recent months. What Dharamsey's interest was in thoroughly and quickly ruining Scindia, I do not wish to guess, but certainly he and Dandekar led Sumati Morarji up the garden path.

THE CONGRESS CONNECTION WITH PLUTOCRATS ( Contd. )

1 No.	2 Name of Monopolist	3 Year of Foundation	13 14 15			
			Increase in Fixed Assets during Rao -Singh's "LPG" Rule ( Rs. Crores )			
			1992-93	1996-97	BY %	
<b>D - THE LPG GROUP</b>						
31.	Essar/Ruia	1970	3,994	15,664	392	1992-97
32.	Ispat/Mittals	1966	1,690	5,518	327	1992-97
33.	Dhoot	1985	1,663	4,125	248	1992-97
34.	Rai/Usha	1962	142	4,028	2,837	1992-97
35.	Nandas	1944	834	3,382	406	1992-97
36.	Jindal	1970	1,127	3,450	306	1992-97
37.	Lloyds/Gupta	1970	426	3,329	781	1992-97
38.	Hinduja	1983	1,760	3,012	171	1992-97
39.	Indo Rama/Lohia	1986	303	2,935	967	1992-97
40.	Khaitan/Williamson/Major Group	1863	1,493	2,841	190	1992-97
41.	Mehtas	1959	653	2,815	431	1992-97
42.	Nagarjuna/Raju	1974	1,602	2,451	153	1992-97
43.	Wadia	1880	972	2,441	251	1992-97
44.	Ranbaxy/Parvinder singh	1961	103	2,180	2,117	1992-97
45.	Murugappa	1938	858	1,983	231	1992-97
46.	Godrej	1898	862	1,978	229	1992-97
47.	Nahar/J.L.Oswal	1933	471	1,512	109	1992-97
48.	BPL/Nambiar	1965	482	1,466	304	1992-97
49.	Wipro/Premji	1948	323	1,413	437	1992-97
50.	S.P.Oswal/Vardhman Group	1933	578	1,385	240	1992-97
51.	Sivasailam/Amalgamations	1938-9	267	1,304	488	1992-97
52.	Bhilwara/Jhunhunwala	1953	426	1,275	299	1992-97
53.	Piramal	1935	400	1,225	306	1992-97
54.	Munjhal/Hero	1956	439	1,222	278	1992-97
55.	Chhabria	1985	779	1,110	141	1992-97
56.	Kalyani	1961	512	1,078	211	1992-97
57.	Ruchi/Sahas	1973	301	1,031	343	1992-97
58.	MRF/Mammen Mappillai	1946	350	697	199	1992-97
59.	Apollo	1947	348	593	170	1992-97

# THE IMF AND CRISIS IN RUSSIA

Aleksandr Buzgalin and Andrei Kolganov

When we examine the so-called radical economic reforms in Russia in the first half of the 1990s, it seems hard to provide any rational explanation for a policy of apparently deliberate destruction of Russia's industrial, human and other potential. The only possible explanation seems to be that a very simple principle was adopted: gradual radicalisation of economic policy to create an economy meeting the "standards" set by our Western "colleagues". This principle was formulated by right-wing Sovietologists and other experts in a number of theoretical and popular publications in the late 1980s. Early in 1990, a manifesto for this policy was published under the title "500 days" (originally "400 Days"); it had been prepared by Grigory Yavlinsky, an economist little known at the time. The document seemed an amazing blend of market radicalism and reckless adventurism: it set absolutely unrealistic deadlines for reform. Nevertheless, a well-orchestrated chorus sang the praises of this adventure more and more loudly.

## The IMF's "advice"

Early in 1991, the voice of radical "free-marketeters" was given ponderous reinforcement by official documents of the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Experts from these organisations, commissioned by the "Big Seven" governments, compiled a three volume report entitled *A Study of the Soviet Economy* (3 vols., Paris: OECD Publications Service, Feb. 1991).

The greater part of this monumental work did in fact contain an analysis of the state of the Soviet economy. Recommendations for its reformation, however, also took up much space. What did representatives of these prestigious organisations urge us to do? "...The

desired transition to a market economy would be best facilitated by an early, faster and more comprehensive liberalisation of prices..." (vol. 2, p. 9). That recommendation was carried out. The recommendations to exclude the prices of municipal services (including municipal transport), housing rent and electric power from the general price liberalisation process were also carried out.

In the initial stage of reforms, the government was urged to import large quantities of staple foods in order to limit the rise of free prices. That recommendation was also carried out — without much success in limiting price rises, even though food imports largely ousted domestic foodstuffs from the market.

The government was urged to carry out rapid privatisation of the state sector following price liberalisation. At the same time, it was told that state-owned enterprises should not be sold at high prices, on the grounds that a high price paid by a new owner would limit the possibility of subsequent investments. This recommendation was also carried out: half of industry was privatised within two years, and enterprises were sold at give-away prices.

In the process of privatisation, another recommendation was not to place enterprises under collective management by their workers but only to give workers stocks or shares on an individual basis. At the same time, contrary to world wide experience with full and partial worker ownership, the government was told not to discourage workers from freely selling their shares. That recommendation was fully carried out as well.

The "experts" pointed out that the USSR should increase the share of manufactured goods in its exports. However, it was specified from the beginning that in the short term "it would be more effective to concentrate efforts

on expanding exports of energy sources and raw materials, where quicker results are probable" (vol. 2 p. 61). The Yeltsin government did just that. But petroleum production had started to fall as early as the late 1980s. Where were resources for expanding exports to be found? The answer was simple: domestic prices should be brought close to world prices, the price rise would reduce domestic consumption, and resources for export would become available. The same should be done to the prices of iron and steel and nonferrous metals. Of course, part of the plants would have to be closed down. That recommendation was dutifully carried out.

Another recommendation was "to set up a ceiling to wage increases to prevent a wage-price spiral, and maintain the minimum wage in order to protect those economically weak against inflation" (vol. 2, p. 182). The government successfully coped with the task of setting the ceiling. As for the minimum wage, however, there was a setback: it was now a mere one-fourth of the subsistence minimum.

Introduction of convertibility of the rouble was called the main prerequisite for attracting foreign investment. That recommendation was carried out. True, we have so far been waiting in vain for the investments. Incidentally, the section of recommendations devoted to foreign aid contains no mention of investments. In considering the role of the manufacturing industry, the report foresaw a 20 percent reduction in industrial output in the first year of reform, cautiously noting at the same time: "Production will possibly be ruined to a greater extent than expected" (vol. 3, p. 354). That was a correct conjecture.

As for the Soviet economy's development prospects, experts based their calculations on only two factors: development of the export potential of the energy-producing sector and, in this context, the possibility of reducing Soviet foreign debt to the West. All the other aspects, as one could guess, worried them much less.

Significantly, having accepted these recommendations as its main guide to action, the Yeltsin government displayed independence in many details. All these details referred to civilizing the market



(particularly, the financial market) : here our domestic reformers proved unruly. They were unwilling to follow the advice to introduce insurance for citizens' bank deposits; to set a rigid limit to credits issued to the largest 3 to 4 borrowers; to secure open publication of information about banks, including auditing inspection findings, etc. The government was also unwilling or unable to comply with such recommendations as the speediest possible of business legislation defining rules of operation for the new adoption market entities (legislation on the stock market still contains too many "blank spots"); a clear definition of the rights of ownership before privatisation; disclosure of information about companies to their clients, etc.

With the exception of the above "trifles", the IMF recommendations for "shock therapy" were accepted for implementation. It is important to emphasise the fact that the Gorbachev administration in 1991 started heeding these recommendations more and more, and the Yeltsin administration which succeeded it adopted them almost without reservations.

#### "Shock": Cui bono ?

Who in Russia has gained by implementing the IMF

recommendations ?

It goes without saying that "the development of capitalism in the USSR" ran its course not in the 16th or 17th century but on the threshold of the 21st century, and not in a country like Somalia but in an advanced industrial economic system with a high level of monopoly. The new capitalist order fell heir to a rotting "salad" of socio-economic relations such as mutant socialism, state capitalism, non-economic coercion and a black market, in a country where fragmentation of institutions (or simply a mess), a socio-cultural and ethical crisis, indifference and crime were growing. In that situation "market reforms" could not in practice mean anything but large-scale redistribution of real economic power among the former half-masters of our economic life, now "liberated" from centralised patronage. But who are they ?

At one pole, there was a concentration of paternalistic-minded, middle-and lower-level bureaucrats, ranging from managing directors of factories to top executives of government departments and regional authorities. At the other pole, there was a new social stratum which had arisen on the basis partly of

### SURVIVING THE IMF ?

In the winter of 1995 the Russian Duma (lower house of parliament) voted to raise the minimum wage and minimum old-age pension. President Yeltsin came out against the idea. In fact the Duma's proposal violates promises made to the IMF to cut the budget deficit from more than 10 percent to 1-2 percent. The neo-liberal press accused the Duma of "populism". But the people actually living on the minimum wage or pension, who of course do not matter, see the issue a little differently.\*

● What can you do with the minimum wage of 20,500 rubles (\$ 5 US) ? You can buy either : 20 kilos of bread; or one kilo of sausage; or 400 grams of cheese. You can decide which to buy; it has to last you a month. Laughable, you say ? Millions of people on welfare get even less. Most unemployed people get nothing. (Officially recognised unemployed people make up 1.9 percent of the labour force; unrecognised unemployed people, who receive no benefits, 7.1 percent — without counting people on involuntary, unpaid layoff).

● What is the minimum old-age pension of \$15 worth ? It is enough to provide you with about 10 very modest warm meals at home. Retired people have the right to free public transport. As a rule they live off bread, tea and jam.

● What can you buy with the "basket of 19 basic food products" for \$ 26.75 ? Enough for "bare physiological survival" ? The experts answer unanimously : Impossible. In any event the 19 products hardly exist at the prices given. A litre of Russian milk for \$ 0.50 is hard to find. The equivalent litre of "Stabilac", which can be found in any supermarket, cost three times as much.

● Can you atleast buy the "bare minimum" with \$ 33 a month, the wage which a third to a half of workers earn ? Not really. How about with the average wage of almost \$ 84 a month ? You are welcome to try : take your shopping cart and go ahead. The experts estimate that a reasonable household budget in Moscow is between \$ 625 (modest) and \$ 2000 (comfortable) a month. This is more realistic.\*

So are we simply dealing with "official lies" ? Price indexes are undoubtedly being manipulated. But it is possible to maintain that "incomes are rising". The "increase" is based on averages. What do averages mean in a country where income polarisation is growing at a dizzying pace ? Mass impoverishment can be accompanied by enrichment of the 1 percent of "new Russians" who earn \$ 20,000 a month or more. If it is true that about half of these "super-rich" people live in Moscow — i.e. about 300,000 people — then you can understand why there are such visible signs of wealth in the capital. This in itself is not enough to pull up the statistical averages. But if it is also true that a significant minority of the population — 5-10 percent — has an average monthly income of more than \$1250, then the mystery can be explained. In short, at most seven million Russians are getting a piece of the pie, not counting those who are scrounging for the crumbs. But where is this "pie", when "everything is falling apart" ?

Jean-Marie Chauvier

\* Figures in this passage are converted into US dollars in order to help the reader. Wages are of course paid in rubles. Rubles are also the currency used in trade, except in a few luxurious stores where purchases are made in either dollars or rubles according to the exchange rate that day.

\* *Kommersant*, 7 feb. 1995.

\* *Moscow Times*, cited by *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 28 Jan. 1995. On incomes compare *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 21 Jan. 1995; *Ekonomika izhizn* no. 5, Feb. 1995; *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 1 Feb. 1995 (state statistical data)

legalised criminal business; partly of new private business oriented towards profiteering middleman operations, foreign trade, and so on; and partly of government executives (also mainly from the lower and middle levels) and intellectuals representing them, who were craving political and ideological power (as well as money).

With the growing self-disintegration of the bureaucratic management system (which is precisely the term we would use to characterise the essence of economic "reforms" in the late 1980s), those at the first pole, the bureaucrats, gained real power at "their" enterprises (though it was not legally formalised until the late 1980s). Those at the second pole, the ex and the semi-criminals, gradually concentrated in their hands the steadily consolidating private and semi-private capital (mainly joint-venture companies, joint-stock companies, or parasitic cooperatives attaching themselves to state-owned enterprises), accumulating money and forces for a breakthrough to political power.

Taking a retrospective look at the real economic interests of these two groups in the period just after the half-hearted reforms had been initiated, it is clear enough that the paternalistic-minded directors of large enterprises and their "allies" were interested: first, in a market where they could take advantage of their monopoly positions while continuing to sponge on the

state budget, pursuing a paternalistic social policy and maintaining a "class peace" with "their" workers.

Second, they obviously stood to gain from legal recognition and enforcement of their basic property rights so that they could legally control "their" enterprises.

Third, a sub-set of them (those concentrating on import-export trade, primarily in fuel and energy, non-ferrous metals and so on) were to gain an enormous amount from a policy of liberalising foreign economic activities and bringing domestic prices close to world price levels (which would mean, in fact, a steep rise in prices of raw and other materials and a spiraling cost inflation). Another group within the directors' corps (the military-industrial complex and others) stood much more to gain from a policy of reinforcing Russia's status as a successor to the USSR in world geopolitics by supporting national production and protectionism.

(It may be noted as a short digression that the originally inconspicuous, inessential differences between these two sub-groups gradually widened towards 1993, so much so that the struggle between export-oriented directors and the military-industrial complex began to affect directly the economic policy of the president's team in Russia during the last two years — but we may be getting too far ahead of ourselves.)

As for the second group of forces who were forcing their

### WATCH OUT FOR THE PRIVATISERS !

Privatisation is entering its second stage, called "privatisation for money", following the first stage of "privatisation for vouchers". The whole population received vouchers in late 1992 with which they could buy shares. Now the real "capitalists" are getting their turn. These "capitalists" emerged from the initial concentration of once-collective wealth. Now it is time for them to re-divide the wealth among themselves and conquer new sectors that are for sale: the oil industry, telecommunications, and the vast market of urban land and public housing now in the hands of firms and local governments. The potential buyers are new financiers and old nomenklatura, which has been pulled apart between the different government bodies.

A fierce struggle is beginning over this next stage of privatisation, while the results of the first stage are still being debated:

- The so-called "people's" privatisation, which began with 146 million vouchers and was continued by only 40 million shareholders, only benefitted "certain groups". In Moscow, with 11 million vouchers we see now that the process is over that only 5 percent of the shares are in the hands of actual human beings, 25 percent are in the hands of potential investors, and 70 percent are in the hands of firms whose activities are considered "purely speculative".
- Public property was sold off at very low prices, before prices were "freed" in 1992, and this "jumble-sale" is continuing.
- Criminal organisations with origins in the "shadow economy" dominate the new capital market, backed by powerful networks inside the government, security services and even armed forces.

On January 18, in a letter to Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, State Property Management Committee President Vladimir Polevanov made even more serious charges. He said that privatisations took place "illegally", with criminal organisations and foreign companies reaping the benefits. Some 500 companies worth \$ 200 billion were sold to foreign companies and to Russian companies acting as their "stalking horses". Outside takers of aluminium, non-ferrous metal, electronics and aerospace industries and "sensitive" research institutes, could expose Russia to two major threats, he said: breakdown of several technological chains and "weakening of national security". Polevanov therefore demanded that "forced privatisations" be slowed down, that "illegally" sold companies be nationalised, that a strategy to safe guard national independence be put in place, and that "vertical" holding companies be formed to allow the integration of industrial and agro-industrial complexes.

This considered verdict on government policy was hardly publicised or publicly discussed at all. The neo-liberal media suspected Polevanov of ties to "ultra-nationalists". The IMF expressed concern. Polevanov was forced to resign.

Jean-Marie Chauvier

way to economic and political power at the end of perestroika, the hot new rich who had risen from the illegal private business of the past and semi-legal business of the present, they pursued slightly different economic interests.

Their business, which is concentrated primarily in the transactions sector because of the specific conditions of its genesis (to put it in simpler terms, in the field of speculative trade in commodities, primarily imports, finances, real estate, etc.), would evidently benefit from preserving and strengthening a situation in which transaction activity was far more lucrative than production. Why? Because the level of concentration of semi-criminal private capital at the time was still too low for large long-term investments in production. That capital needed business with a fast turnover of funds, a super-high profit rate (during its semi-legal life it had grown "accustomed" to an almost 100 percent annual profit), and the possibility of continuing to use methods of coercion, corruption, racketeering, and so on

on a wide scale.

What was precisely the type of economic reform needed to achieve such targets? First, a liberalisation of prices, preferably a runaway liberalisation. Why? Because enormous structural imbalances, imbalances of costs in particular, had grown in our economy as a result of its specific development, internal antagonisms and a crisis in the economic planning system. The gaps in prices between regions and a still wider gap between domestic prices in Russia and world market prices were so great that speculative operations became the most lucrative field for investments.

One example: in the early 1990s, the monthly salary of a highly skilled specialist was equivalent to the price of a simple cassette tape recorder made in Korea. Indeed, it was profitable (fantastically profitable!) to exchange the product of the monthly work of an industrial worker, engineer or scientist for an electronic toy whose price in the USA is less than the daily earnings of a

### TO LIVE AND DIE IN RUSSIA, 1991-94

	1991	1993	1994
Population (millions)	148.7	148.4	148.1
Birth rate	12.1	9.4	9.7
Death rate	11.4	14.5	15.8
Natural population growth	0.7	-5.1	-6.1
Infant mortality (per 100)	17.8	19.9	
Male life expectancy	63.5	59	
Female life expectancy	74.3	72.7	

Sources: *Russian State Statistics*; *Vprosy Ekonomiki* no 1, 1995; 1994 *UNICEF Report*.

The decline in the Russian Federation's population — 600,000 in three years — would probably have been twice as high if there had not been a compensating influx of refugees, estimated at 669,114 people from mid-1992 to 1994.<sup>4</sup>

The birth rate increased slightly in 1994 after falling continuously for decades (from 16 in 1980 to 14.6 in 1989) and falling more rapidly from 1989 to 1993. The death rate more or less stable from 1980 to 1990, grew drastically once the crisis reached its height. It is growing in the working-age population — by a third in 1988-93 — especially among men between 35 and 60 and women between 30 and 50. According to a UNICEF report, "excess mortality" (independent of changes in the population's age structure) amounted in 1992-93 to 313,700 men and 182,000 women. The increase in mortality in 1989-93, 134.6 percent, is comparable to that of the 1930-33 collectivisation crisis and famine: 149.5 percent.<sup>5</sup>

Most often cited as causes of this increase in the death rate are workplace accidents, homicides and suicides (particularly due to alcoholism), as well as new epidemics of infectious diseases. According to UNICEF, suicides grew from 1989 to 1993, among men aged 20 to 59, by 53 percent in Russia, 50 percent in Romania, 33 percent in Poland, 17 percent in Ukraine, 16 percent in Bulgaria, 3 percent in Slovakia and 2 percent in Hungary. The most affected regions are those where unemployment is high. In all these countries (except for Romania and Slovakia, but including the Czech Republic), the number of suicides is also increasing among young men between 5 and 19 years old.

According to Evgeny Mikhailov, who is in charge of demographic statistics, the number of deaths in Russia from 1994 to 2005 could exceed the number of births by 12 million (80 percent). "Of the new generation of boys, 46 percent will not live to collect their pensions."<sup>6</sup>

Jean-Marie Chauvier

The material from Jean-Marie Chauvier included alongside this article is excerpted and translated from an article published in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Apr.-May 1995.

<sup>4</sup> Federal Migration Services, *Argumenty i Fakty* n° 6, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> 1994 *UNICEF Report*

<sup>6</sup> *Rossiya*, 1 Feb. 1995

garbage collector.

Second, the reforms were to provide the conditions for gradual concentration of the means of production in the hands of the "new Russians", who were springing up on the basis of speculative trade as fast as mushrooms spring up after rain. Since this process occurred in a developed industrial country, a process different from but in some respects similar to the primary accumulation of capital through the enclosure of the commons in England was necessary in Russia: privatisation. At the same time, it was necessary to select a model of macro-economic policy and reformation of state bureaucratic property that would reduce the number of state-owned enterprises to a minimum.

This goal was clearly served quite well by such steps as sale of state-owned enterprises at their residual balance-sheet value (at 1991 prices: i.e., allowing for inflation and depreciation of equipment, almost for free).

Third, it was necessary for post-"socialist" accumulation and concentration of capital to prevent working people from becoming the owners of former state enterprises. Instead they were to be deprived of their savings and prevented from saving more.

The mechanism needed for that purpose was not very difficult to find. It was a changeover from moderate market reforms to "shock therapy": liberalisation of prices inevitably causing hyperinflation, along with a wage freeze or an extremely limited wage indexation, "forgetting" at the same time to apply indexation to the population's savings. In addition, it was useful to forget that under "free market" conditions the monopolist is invariably the winner in a deal with a fragmented and unorganised contractor: on the Russian market the purchaser of labour-power had every chance of winning out over its seller (the worker) provided the trade unions were weakened and disorganised. The latter task was also to be accomplished in the course of future "reforms". Finally, it was extremely important to carve up the former state property in a way that would place it not into the hands of those who had been building it up for seventy years, no matter how well or badly, but of those who had amassed money capital.

All this generated the social "demand" for future reforms, which had objectively grown out of the contradictions of perestroika, on the part of the economic forces who were the country's *de facto* rulers. They were to secure the transformation of the state speculative market into corporate speculative capitalism, and to erect a dependable barrier to economic and political democracy in the country.

As a result, the alignment of forces in the "home stretch" of Gorbachev's reforms (1989-1991) gradually shifted more and more in favour of the future playwrights and actors of the play "A Shock Without Therapy in Russia". By 1991, the latter also acquired experienced promoters of a high class. Jeffrey Sachs and the IMF figures behind him, who had secured an over 30 percent fall in industrial production in Poland in 1990-1991, chose to play on a new, Russian, field in order to break their former record in ruining an economy.

The development of a bureaucratically-regulated, corporate-monopoly market and partial legalisation of small and medium sized private property, in conditions of growing institutional fragmentation, inevitably excited the nomenklatura's

desire to exchange its former power — slipping out of its hands and increasingly illusory — for tangible property. The partly legalised private capital developed a no less objective interest in its accelerated growth, primarily by means of speculative trade and expropriation of state property created by the labours of the people. Both groups of "masters of life" waited for a chance to unite in the ecstasy of profiteering and privatisation in the muddy waters of "shock therapy". Shock therapy was, in addition, applied with bureaucratic inconsistency and for that reason in a situation of growing chaos.

A strange system of economic regulation took shape. The administrative-bureaucratic system for planning, maintaining the right proportions and securing growth had disintegrated, while a market system of self-regulation had failed to take shape. The economy therefore became largely unmanageable and slipped down to the brink of chaos.

In the field of property relations, the government very quickly gave up its timid attempt to encourage the economic powers of working people, and took the road leading to a concentration of property rights in the hands of the new generation of the nomenklatura and the directors' corps along with the "new Russians". The estrangement of the working people from property was not reduced, and as a rule, no motivation for work based on newly-evolved "owner mentality" arose.

In the sphere of social relations, the priority of social values proclaimed at the advent of perestroika was finally renounced. For the first time in many decades, the living standards of the mass of the working people began to decline not only relatively but absolutely, the social protection system deteriorated, and social differentiation accelerated. Inflation became overt and soared at unprecedented rates.

All these factors brought our country to the brink of a social as well as economic crisis. In a multinational country with a disintegrating system of centralised bureaucratic authority, they inevitably produced a threat of interethnic conflicts and increasing chauvinistic sentiments.

#### **"Reforms": promise and reality**

In theory, the government under Gaidar, who was put at the head of the cabinet in 1992, proposed to apply a model similar to the recipes of the International Monetary Fund. (The Russian government's memorandum to the International Monetary Fund prepared in February 1992 was perhaps the only document containing an integral conception of "reforms".) In the political lobbies and in mass consciousness this model became imprinted on people's minds as "shock therapy", which was soon renamed as "shock without therapy". The conformity of the economic policy of 1992-1993 to the standard monetarist recipes is now often disputed, but three years ago this conformity was clearly visible, all the more so since Yeltsin's foreign advisors (Jeffrey Sachs, in the first place) represented the right wing neo-liberal school of "Chicago boys".

The model of "shock therapy" was supposed to be put into operation in Russia in 1992. The population was given propaganda meals, full of promises of market paradise and of reforms "not at the expense of the people" and "without a price rise"; the real programme was known only to professionals. The

targets set for "shock therapy" were : accelerated transition to a market economy and private capitalist property in conditions of financial stabilisation, control over inflation and an open economy. More specifically, the realists' programme was : in one year, to overcome the shortages and bring about full shop counters and shining shop windows, by means of a moderate rate of inflation and a recession; in two years, to check inflation and recession; and in three years, to enter the market economy with a stable growth of the most progressive sectors.

Speaking on TV on the third anniversary of the advent of radical reforms, Egor Gaidar complained that he had not been allowed to bring them to completion, that he had been interrupted after two years, and that even during the first two years his work was interfered with all the time. Nevertheless, in his opinion, a number of positive results were achieved in Russia : shortages were almost completely eradicated, and the population's real incomes, after a precipitous fall in 1992, began to grow and would possibly regain the level of 1991 after a year. In short, there were good reasons for optimism.

Hardly. As Mark Twain said, there are three kinds of lies : lies, damned lies, and statistics. If one is to believe something, let us try to believe official statistics. What do they tell us ? Overall, during 1991-1994, industrial production in Russia fell by roughly 56 percent, and GDP by 40 percent.

The annual industrial production increment (decline) indicators were as follows:

1991	1992	1993	1994
-8.3%	-17.6%	-15.6%	-24.0%*

(\* ) Projection based on first 11 months

The investment rate fell even more rapidly. In 1994 alone, investments fell by 27 percent overall and by 37 percent in the productive industry. The profit performance rate in industry fell from 32 percent in 1993 to 17 percent during the first half of 1994. This means that the sources of financing for capital investments are shrinking. The state is constantly reducing its share in financing the economy, while enterprises' own financial base is undermined by the current crisis. As far as investment credits are concerned, their share is negligible.

As measured by internationally accepted International Labour Organisation (ILO) methods, the unemployment rate in November 1994 was 5.1 million, i.e., 6.8 percent of the labour force. Another 4.8 million people were employed part-time. The proportion of the jobless out of work for over eight months increased from 13 percent in mid-1993 to 26 percent in mid-1994.

In the first half of 1994, real wages and salaries fell by 17 percent, while their share in the population's income shrank by 16 percent. The share of incomes from entrepreneurship, by contrast, doubled in the first half-year. The incomes of the richest 20 percent of the population increased by 30 percent, while the incomes of the bottom 20 percent fell by 15 percent.

At the same time, according to preliminary estimates, the population's real income declined catastrophically during the period 1991-93. In the first nine months of 1994, there were incipient signs of income growth; but first, they were seen only in the highest income brackets; second, they failed to offset even slightly the loss of income in the years of "reform" (real incomes are still roughly 40-45 percent lower than in 1990);

and third, this growth came to a halt in November 1994.

It should be noted that the rise in prices of the "consumer basket" of high income population groups occurs much more slowly than with middle-income groups, and even more slowly than with the basket of 19 products which constitute the physiological consumption minimum. With this factor taken into consideration, real differentiation of incomes will prove even greater than what is reported by official statistics. According to official statistics, the relationship of the incomes of 10 percent of the population in the lowest income brackets to the incomes of 10 percent of the population in the highest income brackets was 1:14 late in 1994.

The foreign economic effects of the "shock" were no less dramatic than its social effects. Russia's foreign debt remains enormous (over \$ 80 billion US). Possibilities for its repayment are slim, because the state budget is permanently plagued by an acute deficit, while production is declining catastrophically. At the same time, over the years of reform a special atmosphere was generated in the country, in which legal export and smuggling of free capital out of the country became the most rational way of using it for any entrepreneur who had any. The reason is simple : the Russian economy has become a scene of extremely lucrative speculative deals with a great probability of earning enormous profits from short term operations but without any guarantee of stability and preservation of capital. As a result over the years of reform, the net export of capital has approached the level of \$ 100 billion. Is it not indeed a piquant situation ? The advocates of the IMF policy justify compliance with its recipes of "tightening one's belt" by arguing that otherwise Russia will not be given credits, which we have been promised for several years now (so far we have been given a few billion a year). In the mean time Russia has already lost up to \$ 100 billion by pursuing a policy in the spirits of IMF recipes.

The results of "reform" in the spirit of the IMF can be summed up as follows : an extremely deep economic crisis accompanied by de-industrialisation and wasteful consumption of the country's natural resources; a steep fall in the quality of life, including a decline in real incomes, a crisis of education, public health, science and culture; the transfer of economic and political power into the hands of the new generation of the nomenclatura, even more cynical than the old one, which is allied with the "new Russians"; the working people remain, as before, alienated from property, the labour market, and the products of their labour; and on the international scene, Russia is increasingly turning into a dependant, export-oriented economy, simultaneously bogged down in debt and exporting capital to developed countries.

All these results had been predicted long before the advent of "reform". Efforts to achieve them, as we have tried to show, were made not by mistake or stupidity on the part of the government but in the interests of the social forces in power in the country. This is precisely why the question of an alternative to this systemic crisis is not one of correcting socio-economic policy but a problem of radically changing economic and political power: the present masters of Russia have no interest in any other policy.

(Source : Eric Toussaint & Peter Drucker (eds.): *IMF/World Bank/WTO The Free Market Fiasco*, 1995)

# ADDA AT NUKKAD

Communication from M. Rashid,  
Columnist, *Madhyamam*,  
Kozhikkode, Kerala

## DR. DAMODARA KURUP

Most of the people connected with freedom struggle have faded into obscurity; among them was the Keralite C. P. Damodara Kurup.

Damodara Kurup was born the son of a police head constable in a lower middle class family on the outskirts of Calicut city. This writer was his classmate during high school education. At that time there was only one student's organisation, All India Students Federation led by Communists. The efforts by this writer to make him a member of Students Federation proved to be a failure.

Damodara Kurup was known as a bookworm, till he part in Quit India movement in 1942 August to the amazement of every one. He started taking active participation in the Quit India struggle. Following which he was arrested and sentenced to two months rigorous imprisonment. Even after he was released from Kannur Central jail, he continued to take part in the movement along with fellow students like this writer.

While he was studying for his intermediate, he was actively involved in Student's Congress, which supported Quit India movement and established his link with Congress Socialist Party. After completing intermediate he went to Bombay for job seeking as other educated middle class Malayali youths. Simultaneously he carried out his studies along with a job as typist in a private firm. He passed his B.A. Honours with flying colours.

At that time he established links with Bolshevik Leninist Party which was a known Trotskyist group in Bombay. Following which he focused his attention on learning Marxism. Com. Damodara Kurup had become a Marxist scholar and played a main role in imparting real Marxist education to many Malayalee

youths including this writer.

From Bombay he started a Malayalam monthly called "THEEPPORI" (Spark). The publication which was the first Trotskyist Journal in Malayalam was stopped due to financial difficulties. At that time the Communist party had an influence among Bombay Malayalees. He took initiative to organise Kerala Marxist League in Bombay with the aim of introducing Trotskyism and to expose Stalinism.

Com. Damodara Kurup had also worked as the secretary of Mazdoor Communist party which was formed by Trotskyists who opposed the merger of Bolshevik Leninist party into the Indian Socialist party.

Alongwith the political activities he did his research in the Sociology department of the Bombay University. The topic of the research was Soviet Union. He registered for Ph. D. to prove the theory of Trotsky that Soviet Union was a degenerated workers' state and the ruling bureaucracy is not a class but a caste, by using official data of Soviet Union. But the inference of his research was that the Soviet Union was a monopoly capitalist state. The thesis was published under the title '*Evolutions of Soviet Society*'. Even those who do not agree with these conclusions would surely appreciate his perseverance and his intellectual honesty.

Dr. Kurup who had been working in *Free Press Journal* (Bombay) and a Malayalam daily had written so many articles to expose Stalinism. At that time Damodara Kurup was a nightmare to Malayalee Stalinist intellectuals. In his last years Kurup's mental condition deteriorated and he withdrew from all activities including writing. ■

Letter from U. K. Sengottaian  
108, Cutchery Street,  
ERODE 638 001

27.2.98

Dear Sir,

Sanskrit is one of the richest languages of the world. But it is

considered as a dead language. But it is not so. "We are dead towards that language". Socialist party is (or was) one of the richest political parties of the world in thought and action. But our people are dead towards that party or ideology.

Only non-issues are dominating the scene. Issue-based politics has been replaced by tissue-based non-politics. Basic issues have been neglected by all parties. Violence has become order of the day. Corruption is ruling this country. Country is changing the government but government is not changing the country. Western governments are sucking our blood through their open imperialism. Subjects are subject to a system which is collapsing systematically.

In this precarious situation, let all the genuine socialist minded people of India unite to create a positive atmosphere paving way towards socialism through non-violent means. ["To do something is better than to be something" — LOHIA ]

Yours,

U. K. Sengottaian  
Erode- Tamil Nadu ■

Letter from Rabi Shankar  
Menda/ Sonepur, 63  
ORISSA

16.2.98

Dear Sir,

Happy to get two copies of "*Mankind*". Thank you. Here at Bolangir and Sonepur district of Orissa, there is no organisation of ours. But so many like-minded friends are with us. My home is in Bolangir. And I'm working in Menda which comes under Sonepur dist., 43 kms away from this place. We have started a new organisation "Rachana" whose first meeting was held in Municipality hall in last 31st Jan. 98. A journal of this organisation was published and circulated among the members and well wishers in Oriya. Alongwith this card I will post you a copy. So many things have to write to you but unable to write in a foreign language. For me, this is a learning period.

By 28th Feb. 98, Rachana, our tiny organisation going to have its next meeting to welcome a Gandhian Scholar Marx Lindley. If you are free in May of this year, could you make arrangement to come to Bolangir.

Hoping for a positive response, I remain.

Comradely yours,  
Rabi Shankar ■

Communication from *Voice of the Vanguard*, Organ of the Central Committee, Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (People's War), Nov. - Dec. 1997

### NIMAD ADIVASIS

The adivasis of the Nimad region of Madhya Pradesh are organising themselves under the banner of Adivasi Mukti Sanghatan (AMS) and its sister organisations like Adivasi Ekta Sanghatan of Khandwa, Adivasi Kisan Sanghatan of Bhagwanpura, Adivasi Shakti Sanghatan in Badwa region, Jagrit Adivasi Dalit Sanghatan in Rajpur and Badwani regions in Khargone district. AMS was formed in 1992.

Initially, AMS took up problems of drinking water and proper running of village school. But very soon, it took up more crucial issues like the land distribution, exploitation of the tribals by moneylenders, illegal occupation of tribal lands by non-tribals, and exploitation of the tribals by forest and police officials and contractors. This has led to frequent clashes between the adivasis on the one hand and the rich non-tribals and forest officials on the other.

The forest officials used to collect Rs. 2,000/- per year from each adivasi family and also subject them to various other extortions. The AMS put a stop to this by uniting the adivasis in the last six years. The forest officials used to extort large sums of money for allowing the adivasis to cultivate the forest lands every year. The AMS put pressure on the Madhya Pradesh government to implement existing policies relating to transfer of ownership as a result of which 6000 adivasis benefited.

The adivasis have been systematically evicted from their lands by non-tribal occupants. The AMS took up a sustained struggle to secure the tribals' land from the non-tribals.

The adivasis are forced to cultivate forest lands because of their eviction from their traditionally owned land by non-

tribals. The forest officials file cases against the adivasis for encroachment on forest lands. The AMS has undertaken a systematic campaign that the adivasis have the right to cultivate forest lands. It has also educated the tribals about forest conservation. The large-scale destroyers of forests are the timber contractors. But, now the tribals are resisting this indiscriminate felling of trees by timber contractors.

The AMS also undertook a survey of the forest lands which have been legalised for cultivation by the state government and encouraged the adivasis to cultivate these lands without paying any bribes to forest officials.

The campaign undertaken by the AMS to stop the illicit liquor trade has brought it in direct confrontation with the top politicians in M.P. including the Deputy Chief Minister, Subhash Yadav.

Though the AMS professes Gandhian ideals, in practice, it has helped the adivasis to become militant by taking up all their crucial problems and by building a strong organisational network from the village level.

The AMS took up the exploitation of the adivasis by the money-lenders and relieved them from the clutches of the latter who never wrote off the loans long after they were paid. A small cooperative system was started to encourage adivasi men and women to save some money. This has also made a dent in the business of the moneylenders.

Subhash Yadav, the Deputy Chief Minister and his henchmen at the local level have started unleashing the state repressive machinery on the tribals.

Yadav has launched a misinformation campaign against the AMS labelling it a terrorist organisation and all the leading activists of the AMS were booked under false cases of extortion and murder, arrested and released after many days.

Yadav has also floated an organisation called Adivasi Samaj Sudhar Shanti Sena in June 1997 with a few tribal patels and *patwaris* (local revenue officials) to divide the adivasis. The Sena is targeting the AMS and its activists and a number of clashes have taken place.

Kalia Bhai was an activist of the AMS in Julwania village. He participated in a dispute settlement with one Bhim Singh Patel and his son. The son was made to pay a fine. Bhim Singh got Jhagadia Patel of the neighbouring village Kabri, who is a supporter of Subhash Yadav, to attack Kalia's house on August 25, 1997. The mob led by Jhagadia Patel gang-raped Kalia's wife Uma and other tribal women and killed their infant children. The next day, the infuriated tribals killed Jhagadia Patel. The government announced a reward of Rs. 10,000/- for Kalia's capture. Subhash Yadav personally attended Jhagadia Patel's funeral with the district collector and the superintendent of police.

On August 27th 1997, 400 forest officials and heavily armed police rushed to Mandwa village in district Khandwa and completely damaged the standing crops. The 30 adivasis who were working in these fields resisted this damage and were fired upon. Two of them seriously injured and were carried away by the police. They died later and were cremated by the police despite their relatives pleas to hand over the bodies to them.

Fearing reprisals from the Sena and the government machinery, Kalia and 16 AMS activists surrendered to the DIG of Police at Indore on 14th Sept. 1997 after hiding in the jungle for 20 days. While they were being taken to Kabri village to help the police to recover fire-arms, 200 Sena goons blocked the road. The police handed over Kalia to the Sena ruffians who killed him on the spot.

The adivasi movement in Khargone and Khandwa districts of Madhya Pradesh seems to have reached a stage where traditional legal methods of protest will not suffice. The tribals are likely to face heavy repression from the local landed interests and the state machinery as they intensify their struggle to take back their land which is illegally occupied by non-tribals. Hundreds of tribal youths are being subjected to torture and death in fake encounters for occupying lands which once belonged to them. The movement in the Nimad region will have to increasingly concentrate on arming the tribals to effectively face this repression.

# JUSTICE FOR WOMEN JUSTICE FOR ALL

Ammu Abraham, Aruna Burte, Aruna Soni, Lalita Das,  
Leena Nanjiani, Susan Mathai,  
Yvonne Mathias

## SUPPORT WORK DONE BY WOMEN'S CENTRE:

### Classification

1. Severe beating accompanied by other forms of harassment by husband and/or in-laws	57
2. Dowry	6
3. Thrown out of marital home	6
4. Desertion	10
5. Bigamy	1
6. Extra marital affairs of husband	5
7. Non-consummation of marriage (Probably due to husband's impotence and/or other reasons)	4
8. Adultery by husband	1
9. Extreme sexual harassment by husband	1
10. Cheating by husband	2
11. Unnatural death (by burning)	1
12. Incest	2
13. Harassment of widows (for property, including house)	5
14. Single women, minor daughters, divorcees or deserted women harassed by family/or neighbour/or friends	6
15. Breach of promise of marriage by boyfriend	4
16. Sexual intimidation at educational institution	1
17. Legal cases already in court	2
18. H.I.V. case	1
19. Misc.	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>

This year, a total of 118 new women came to the Women's Centre seeking help and moral support in dealing with harassment and discrimination. 86 Hindu, 16 Muslim, 9 Christian, 5 Boudh and 2 Parsi women came to seek the Centre's intervention in their problems. 67 of them were of the age group of 20 to 30 years and 37 between 30 and 40 years. 7 women were between 40 to 50 years and 4 were above 50. 3 girls were below 20 years. Young women between 20 and 30 are the ones being harassed

most, but they also approach women's groups more easily for support. Women above 50 and young girls also face violence in their lives by virtue of being women, but perhaps they are more reluctant or less able to question it.

Out of the 118 women 26 were graduates, 9 were post-graduates and 7 had acquired additional qualifications after H.S.C. or graduation, 13 women had studied upto H.S.C. & 12 upto S.S.C. 45 women were found to be educated though below S.S.C. and only 6 women were totally uneducated.

65 women out of 118 were economically engaged outside the house. 31 were in unskilled jobs and 23 in semiskilled jobs while one woman was in skilled occupation and 10 were self-employed. Out of the rest of 53,50 were home makers.

Out of the 65 women who were engaged in outside employment, 16 were earning between 4000/- and 5000/- & 4 between 3000/- and 4000/- p.m. 10 women were earning between 2000/- to 3000/- p.m. and 18 between 1000/- and 2000/-. 11 were earning between 500 and 1000 and 6 had incomes below 500/-.

Out of 101 husbands, 22 were graduates and 6 post graduates, 1 had done his Doctorate and 4 had acquired additional qualifications after H.S.C. or graduation. 10 had studied upto H.S.C. & 11 upto S.S.C., 24 were below S.S.C. & only 4 were uneducated. Surprisingly 11 husbands had not disclosed their educational background to their wives.

7 of the husbands were engaged in skilled work and 33 in semiskilled work. 19 were unskilled labourers and 17 were self employed. It is worth noting that out of the 101 husbands, 23 were not working, either inside the house or outside and the economic burden of the family was entirely on the wives' shoulders. The rest had not disclosed their occupation. 7 of the working husbands were earning more than Rs. 50,000/- p.m. 21 earned more than

Rs. 5000/- p.m., 9 between Rs. 2000 to 3000, 3 between 1000 to 2000 and 4 between 500 to 1500. 20 husbands did not disclose their income to their wives.

In the above economic situation of the families, out of 101 husbands, 34 were found to be habitual drinkers of alcohol. Some of these husbands had been so affected by alcohol that they were incontinent. Some others were harassing their wives by demanding money for drinks and some wives felt that alcohol was making their husbands insensitive and violent. (The wives felt that these men were otherwise quite sensitive and gentle !)

Out of the women who came to the Centre, 101 were married women and had come because of matrimonial problems, while 17 were unmarried single women or widows. We also found that in the category of married women, seventeen had broken tradition so far as to go in for self-arranged marriages, but not that far that they abandoned the religious form of marriage ceremony. Only 5 women showed enough independence from the family and community to have civil marriages. 79 women out of the 101 had had arranged marriages with the religious marriage ceremony. This year, 52 of the married women out of the 101 reported that they lived in nuclear families. Looking back at more than a decade of reaching out to women in Bombay, this is definitely a change since earlier the number of women who came from nuclear families used to be a very small percentage.

### Single women — Surviving in Trishanku (limbo) :

As mentioned above, 118 women approached the Centre for support during the year, out of which 101 women came with marital problems. While 6 single women had approached the Centre last year, this year there were 17. Out of these, 6 were women who had not got married and were experiencing harassment and violence in their parental home. The women's movement had focused on campaigning about violence against women in the marital family and raised awareness about this issue. The laws that protect or give justice to women also concentrate on violence against women in the marital family; there are no laws to protect women in the parental family. Women are disempowered in the parental family too, without equal inheritance rights and treated as second class family members compared to their brothers.



This system leads to institutionalised discrimination against them, sometimes leading to even extreme physical violence. Out of the above 6 women, 3 had lost their fathers and were harassed by brothers or cousins for property. They were between the ages of 25 and 45 years. 5 out of the 6 were working, economically independent and were extending financial support to their parental families. Yet they were harassed mentally in day-to-day life and constantly reminded that society looked down upon the whole family because of their marital status, or rather their non-status. They were constantly given the message that they were unwanted members in the parental family. We found that the state machinery also reflects the same attitudes towards single women's problems. For an unmarried woman, to raise her voice against the parental family even when treated unjustly is to break a strongly entrenched social taboo, which is stronger even than the one that silences married women from speaking out against injustice in the marital family. If at all a woman gathers the courage to do that, society, the state machinery (like the police) and even friends will create an atmosphere where she begins to feel guilty. There is a need to be vocal about such harassment and for that women should seek the support of women's groups. It is encouraging that 6 women had come to the Centre for such problems for the first time.

It is not only single women who are yet to be married who are harassed; widows who are single women, are harassed for property by in-laws and their family. 5 widows came to the Centre to seek support. All of them were tortured by in-laws, asked to leave the matrimonial home and were denied property rights. They were doubly tortured when they faced lack of support from the parental families. To claim property rights, women have to go through long legal battles during which monetary and emotional support is needed. In the absence of proper support structures, very few women are actually able to sustain their struggles and claim their rights as widows.

Women maybe mercilessly beaten up and their lives threatened by husbands or in-laws; but still, their parents want them to go back to the matrimonial home. If the married daughter seeks shelter in her parental home to struggle against harassment, most of the time she is met with a non-welcoming attitude. Of the 6 women who were harassed for dowry who had come to the Centre during the year, all were asked to and forced by parents and brothers to go back to their marital homes in spite of their lives being in danger.

For example, Dalbir, aged 25 years and educated upto S.S.C., was married off by her parents. After marriage, the husband left his job and her in-laws sold her jewellery. They then started asking her to bring money from her parents. The husband was given to gambling, drinking and going to prostitutes. Several times D. got vaginal infections. When she used to tell her husband to stop all this, she was beaten up by him. Within 2 years of her marriage she returned to her parents several times and was forced to go back. This time she had managed to get the Centre's address through a friend who had earlier sought our support. D. came to the Centre without telling anybody about it. She told us that her mother and brother were insistent about sending her back. She was actually beaten up by her mother as she was refusing to go back. She asked us where she could stay if she left the house. We tried to talk to her mother but she refused to co-operate and did not allow D. to go to the police or to come back to the Centre. After 3 months had passed, one day she called us to say that she was going

back to her husband and in-laws. In a joint meeting her husband had assured her parents that he will not harass D. any longer. D. felt that her life was in danger, but still felt compelled to give in to her parents' wishes in the matter. She felt that she could not afford to antagonise her parents too when her marital life was already unhappy.

Such experiences show women's vulnerability as they are not safe in their marital home, nor welcome back in the parental home as equal members of the family. Women are still pressurised to accept their disempowerment by parents because of social status. The husbands and in-laws take advantage of this situation and violence against women continues to grow in society. 57 women out of the total 188 women who came to the Centre were victims of severe beating by the husband as well as subject to other forms of harassment. 65 women were earning money through outside work and were also bearing the economic responsibility of the house, but continuing to face harassment. One woman had not stepped out of her marital home which was a joint family in 15 years of married life and she had no support from her parental family. Thus, the parental family and the marital family together maintain the system which disinherits women from property, power and even dignity and life itself.

We also observed that 49 women out of the 101 married women lived in joint families, but the joint family was not a supportive structure for them. Other family members' interference worsened the situation of the concerned women.

#### **Sexual Harassment in Marriage and Courtship — Silence Prevails**

During support work, we found that women tend not to speak about their sexual problems. Most of the married women who come to the Centre are actually sexually harassed by their husbands in their day to day life. But the women have accepted it as a part of marital life and do not vocalise the thought that they are sexually harassed, except in cases of extreme perversions. Women maybe suffering excessive sexual demands or a complete absence of sexual relationship in marriage. The latter may be due to impotence of the husband or a deliberate withholding as an exercise of power over the wife.

This year, 4 young married women came to the Centre without having their marriages consummated. That the marriages were not consummated was found out after quite a lot of discussion. Women were hesitant and reluctant to speak about it in any detail. 3 out of the 4 were not clear about the 'technical' aspects of sexual intercourse and had vague ideas about the relevant anatomical details of either the male or the female. Even after it had become clear that there were problems related to sexual intercourse after marriage, the women had not been advised by even the elder women of the parental family. In the given situation it was very difficult to establish whether the marriage had been consummated or not. These situations are an expression of the social expectation that women should have absolutely no control over sexuality even in marriage and that they should be completely controlled by their husbands who are in turn expected to be knowledgeable about the matter. Women's total ignorance about biological matters and about their own bodies is equated with chastity and even innocence. To get legal relief and rights, women have to be informed and articulate about the experiences and problems faced by them.

While talking about women's lack of control over sexual relations with men, the problem is not only that of women who are already married, but also during the premarital stage.

We would like to relate the experience of 19 year old Sudha who was raped by a man who promised to marry her. She was four months pregnant when she came to the Centre along with her widowed mother. Both Sudha and her mother were domestic workers.

For six months, a 23 year old boy from the neighbourhood followed her around at her place of work. Apparently he was interested in marrying her. Sudha asked him to speak to her mother. But he said that he was afraid to do that. One day he took S. to the terrace of the building where she worked. She went with him willingly enough, but was raped. She kept the fact from even her mother. A doctor to whom the mother took Sudha for general weakness failed to diagnose pregnancy and instead said that she had jaundice. Eventually the mother discovered the pregnancy and went to the community panchayat to seek justice, but justice was denied to her by the members of the panchayat.

S. was questioned in a gathering of 25 to 30 men and asked questions like 'how many times did he climb on you' and 'do you know what sexual intercourse is'. The boy denied that it was his child and refused to accept S. as his wife. Her mother was extremely humiliated and went back home with S. The accused and his friends then began to threaten, taunt and pass vulgar jokes and remarks whenever they passed by. They were harassed in the community where they lived. So S.'s mother came to the Centre to ask for shelter for S. and for help in stopping this humiliation. She did not want to file a rape case nor wanted to force the boy to marry S. since he had denied paternity in front of the caste panchayat. The Centre managed to find shelter for S. in one of the charity homes where she has delivered a baby girl. The mother did lodge a police complaint about the harassment by the boy and the accused was caught by the police and questioned. With the intervention of senior police officers, the Centre has managed to stop the man and his friends from terrorising the basti and S.'s family. S. is giving the child up for adoption.

S. seems to have believed that the boy really wanted to marry her and therefore was willing to go to the terrace alone with him. But she did not expect that he would actually impregnate her before marriage. She was unable to control things at that stage. After the event, she felt completely compromised and did not feel that she could even speak to her mother about it, though finally her mother was her only refuge in the community.

### Claiming Rights in Marriage

Women approach support groups like the Centre hoping to resolve their problems. Their immediate demand is usually that the harassment be stopped and that the behaviour and attitudes of those who are creating the problem be changed. The majority of women do not want to walk out of the family, instead they want to remain there and fight to improve the situation. **Only two out of the 101 married women who came during the year, actually opted for litigation to obtain a divorce.**

Our experience of support work always brings home to us the 'importance' of a man and marriage in the individual lives of women in a patriarchal society. Without a MAN to create a family with, society does not allow a woman to live with dignity. Without the man and the marital family, women are not granted an acknowledged space in society. Therefore, whatever type of man he is, alcoholic, womaniser or wife beater, still most women seem to prefer to remain within the marital

and to try to defend their rights within it. As a result, a large part of the support work of the Women's Centre is helping women to claim their rights associated with marriage which are given to them by law.

Here we would like to share our experiences regarding the right of women to '*stridhan*' and how even that is denied by society and the system.

**Stridhan** : Even in the early years of support work, the Women's Centre had tried to empower women to claim their personal belongings from their marital family when they were thrown out of it or they had found it necessary to leave. Centre workers and volunteers used to accompany her to her matrimonial home, with a written list of her belongings. After retrieving it, women had to go to the nearest police station and inform the police to avoid charges of theft. Sometimes the in-laws were co-operative, and if not, then police help was sought. But many times the police was not co-operative and simply used to ask the women to go to court. And mostly, it was not possible to retrieve the women's jewellery which is the traditional form of wealth allowed to them to compensate for the deprivation of inheritance rights. Women could only take recourse to a civil remedy by filing a civil case to recover her *Stridhan*.

But now she has a criminal remedy too. The supreme court passed a judgement (in the case of Pratibha Rani V/S. Suraj Kumar reported in Criminal Law Journal, 817 of 1985) which says, "*Stridhan* — Entrustment to husband or in-laws : Wife's absolute ownership does not stand transferred to co-ownership or partnership. Husband and in-laws being trustees of such property are bound to return the same if and when demanded by the woman. Criminal proceedings for its misappropriation against husband or in-laws maintainable U/ S 405, 406 of Indian Penal Code."

The jewellery of most married women is usually not in their sole custody and mostly they do not have access to it at all. Many husbands and in-laws are under the impression that a married woman can be thrown out of the marital home or driven out of it without her property. They feel that her life itself is owned by them; so naturally they think that her property is definitely theirs. The above judgement has clarified that such a refusal to part with a married woman's *stridhan* amounts to criminal misappropriation of someone else's property held in trust. **The Supreme Court has made sections 405 and 406 applicable to a very common situation faced by harassed married women in this country and legally empowered them.**

In June 1987, a circular was issued by the Bombay Commissioner of Police drawing the attention of all police stations to this judgement, the consequent legal position when a woman complained of the husband or in-laws misappropriating her *stridhan* and the implications for police investigations. **Yet, ten years later, one still finds that most police stations in the city claim that they have never heard of this provision and refuse to apply it to help women in crisis situations.** The police should register an F.I.R., search the residence of the accused (husband or in-laws), prepare the panchnama and seize the property after blanket identification by the wife. The property has to be kept in police custody and the wife can approach a magistrate's court for release. If the police completely refuses to co-operate, a wife can also file a private complaint in a magistrate's court and obtain a search warrant. The judge may refer the matter to the police for inquiry

and give an order to register the case, recover the property and arrest the accused. All women can seek this criminal remedy to retrieve their *stridhan*.

Last year, 7 women approached the Centre to seek our support and intervention in the process of retrieving their *stridhan*. 6 out of the 7 were not aware of this right available to them under law. One woman had gone to the police, but she was not supported properly by the police who did not invoke the section. In fact, in most cases, women's groups like ours have to not only inform the women about their rights, but have to go with them to the concerned police station and spend hours arguing with the policemen to make them use this legal provision in each case. The Centre first tries to help women get their *stridhan* through the Jamats or other community leaders wherever it is possible and applicable. If community leaders are not agreeable and the relatives are adamant about not parting with the *stridhan*, the Centre supports the woman to approach the police to take action. Usually the police is reluctant to invoke Sec. 406 I.P.C.

Here we relate some of our experiences in these cases in some detail since other women's groups also seem to have problems in persuading the police to take appropriate action. Neema came to the Centre because of non-consummation of her arranged marriage to a rickshaw driver. By then she had decided that she wanted to leave and had already tried to get her *stridhan* back through the intervention of elderly relatives. But the in-laws refused to part with it. The Centre decided to go to the police, but the Sr. Inspector told us to go to court. He said that section 406 I.P.C. did not apply to *stridhan*. But when we decided to meet the station-in-charge, he asked us to wait. An hour later he called the husband to the police station. Instead of the husband, his elder brother who had actual possession of the *stridhan* arrived. Initially he refused to part with it, but after arguments he agreed and returned the jewellery which was worth Rs. 50,000/- along with Neema's other belongings. Neema belongs to a lower middle class family and for her this *stridhan* is the only economic base to rebuild her life. Prompt intervention by the police by proper application of such laws can be of great help to women like Neema in rebuilding their lives; but rarely do the police actually invoke section 406 unless a women's group intervenes and forces them to.

In the case of Maria we had to 'threaten' the station-in-charge of yet another police station with a visit to the Commissioner of Police before getting any cooperation. The Centre workers then had to accompany the police to the marital home and argue with the father-in-law who had custody of *stridhan*, as well as with the neighbours who turned up to advocate a 'more humane approach' (jaane do) before retrieving the *stridhan*. This, in a case where an unsuspecting young woman was married off in an arranged marriage to a boy with some mental disorder, who was unable to consummate the marriage, but was physically violent to his wife. The police and the neighbours behaved as if taking stern action to recover *stridhan* somehow indicates greediness which is inappropriate for young, married women, without bothering to wonder how these women are going to survive.

Mansi's was a case where though the usual police inaction was evident, for once a police officer admitted that the police had made a mistake and actually rectified it. M. came to the Centre to seek support to recover her *stridhan* as she was harassed within 15 days of her marriage for dowry in spite of her parents giving Rs. 2.50 lakhs at the time of marriage. M.

returned to her parents when she was beaten up and felt insecure in the marital home. A written complaint was given to the police asking them to take action under sections 498[A], 403, 406, 349, 351, 508, 34 and 114 of I.P.C. for harassment, misappropriation of *stridhan* and assault. The police filed an FIR including harassment and assault, but leaving the *stridhan* issue out. When M. came to the Centre the case had already been in the court for 2 years and there was some doubt about whether the original 'error' of the police, deliberate or otherwise could be rectified at this stage. We consulted a lawyer, but were assured that nothing can be done about it as the chargesheet had already been filed in the court. But the Centre decided to try to get justice in this matter and approached the station-in-charge of the Bhayander police station where the case was filed. When there was no co-operation there, the matter was taken to the Deputy Commissioner of police of Zone VIII for clarification. He agreed that a mistake had been made by the investigative officer of police. He also informed us that even if sec. 406 is not applied, the police still has to recover the *stridhan* in a case of dowry demand at the stage of investigations itself and before filing the chargesheet under section 498A in court. The Centre was referred to the superintendent of police of Thane (Rural) as the case was under his jurisdiction. We met the S.P. next and discussed the whole case. He quite frankly admitted that he was unaware of sec. 406 and its application to *stridhan* as he had just been transferred from the C.B.I. II [Passports], but went through the copy of the 1987 police circular provided by us and convinced himself. The S.P. then issued the necessary order to the local police stations to take action. Accordingly sec. 406 was invoked, search warrant issued and M's *stridhan* confiscated from the matrimonial home. But this action was again challenged by the husband in court making his wife and the police party to it. The public prosecutor felt that M.'s case was strong and the police decided to fight it out. After 5 months, the judgement was made in favour of M. who recovered her *stridhan*. The Centre had requested the S.P. to circulate the above circular to all police stations in the jurisdiction of Thane (Rural) with necessary orders and he agreed to do so.

This is indeed a rare example of genuine admission of mistake by the police and rectification of it. There is need to raise the issue of non-application of section 406 to help women right across the country to create awareness among women and the police. If what has been described above is the situation in metropolitan Mumbai which has had a vibrant women's liberation movement for nearly two decades, the experience of women in claiming their rights cannot be much better elsewhere in the country. Even after conscientising the public and the police for nearly 15 years about violence against women and women's rights, the Centre still finds that women's groups have to fight for justice for individual women from police station to police station. Though affirmation and welfare programmes for women are increasing in number, women continue to be faced by entrenched patriarchal values in every social and political institution. In this situation, women's groups must continue to challenge the system, the state and society and the struggle must go on.

#### CAMPAIGNS, INTERVENTIONS :

Over the year, April 1996 to the end of March 1997, the Women's Centre highlighted some issues through meetings and participated in interventions with other women's groups in the city.

#### I. The Police Commissioner creates Women's Vigilance

## Committee

The first such meeting called by the Centre was in July 1996 to discuss the then Bombay Police Commissioner Mr. O.P. Tyagi's proposal for a Women's Vigilance Committee. Having succeeded in setting up a widely publicised network of 'Mohalla Committees' attached to the police stations in the city, apparently to promote communal harmony after the 1993 communal riots, Commissioner Tyagi had decided to set up a Women's Vigilance Committee (Mahila Dakshata Samiti) to deal with gender disharmony in the city. **Citizens' committees sponsored and set up by the police are in danger of becoming just police committees, at best being public relations instruments for the police and the ruling party and at worst helping to cover up their violations of citizens' rights.** The Centre was keen to avoid both these possibilities while we agreed that a vigilance committee was needed.

The Commissioner's order creating the MDS laid down its objectives rather vaguely "[1] to oversee problems of violence and crime against women (whatever that means), [2] to discuss ways and means to evolve solution to the problems of violence and crimes against women requiring police intervention, [3] to monitor the cases of crime against women and [4] to activate support from various NGOs for the care of women victims of violence, wherever needed." We found the vagueness of the objectives and the proposed composition of the Samiti disturbing. The list of members included autonomous feminist groups like the Women's Centre and the Forum against Oppression of Women, women's groups broadly linked to the left and democratic parties or attached to the two social work colleges in the city and editors of some women's magazines, along with a large number of women corporators of the Shiv Sena and the BJP. The ruling alliance's corporators had no experience in or history of struggle against violence against women and their secular credentials were suspect. Some of them were allegedly involved in the 1993 communal riots and even had related criminal charges pending against them at police stations.

Just as secular perspectives and culture cannot be simply assumed just because somebody joins a mohalla committee, commitment to gender justice cannot be assumed either, just because a corporator is a woman and became a corporator through 30% reservation for women in the Municipal Corporation. The current women corporators have not been elected on a platform of justice to women victims of violence or of rebellion against patriarchy. In fact it is quite the opposite. They were fielded by political parties who have made no secret of their contempt for women and gender justice as well as for minority community rights and Dalits.

The Centre called a meeting of the 'older' women's groups to discuss these issues. These were women's groups in the city who have worked on women's issues for nearly 15 years and have done so with a common commitment to social justice and to secular and democratic polity. The Women's Centre, NFIW, AIDWA, Mahila Dakshata Samiti (not the police one!), Vaacha, Majlis, Stree Mukti Sanghatna, FAOW, Awaaz-e-Niswan and the Mahila Vikas Kendra of Kherwadi attended the meeting.

The consensus letter signed and sent by all of us to Mr. Tyagi tried to redefine the objectives of the MDS and suggested that it should be a vigilance committee of activists at the interface of women and the police, meaning that it is not at the interface of the police and the public, reducing it to a public

relations exercise of the police. A women's movement vigilance committee was indeed needed in order to,

- "a) make women to approach police stations in case of need, more and more aware of their rights at the police stations and
- b) to provide an avenue for women who are victims of violence to voice their dissatisfaction and complaints (with the police), if any, to a committee of women activists who have sufficient years' experience in dealing with cases of violence against women from different class, caste and community backgrounds."

With this purpose in mind, we made four suggestions :

1. that only representatives of well-known women's organisations who have worked for the past 10 to 15 years from a point of view of both gender justice and secularism should constitute the committee,
2. that check-lists for different crimes against women like rape, suspected dowry-death or wife-murder, constant harassment of married women etc. could be prepared in collaboration with women's groups to monitor the police effectively,
3. that the Samiti representatives connected to the respective police stations should sit once in two weeks or once a month at appointed times at that police station to meet women complainants and that all police stations should be made to put up a large notice in 3 languages atleast (Hindi, Marathi and English), announcing the sitting so that women complainants would know that they can approach the committee at a specific time if they had any complaints against the police and
4. that the secular and non-partisan credentials of the Samiti members was crucial in ensuring that the issue of violence against women is not communalised.

The Commissioner politely ignored our letter and the Mahila Dakshata Samiti of the Mumbai police came into existence with much media publicity. One of the first requests made at its meeting by a ruling woman corporator from the BJP was that the police force should give her and her colleagues training in counselling women victims of violence since they themselves did not know what it meant ! So much for being able to monitor the police. By the time this report is being written, the saffron coalition in the MDS has fulfilled all our expectations and started a new campaign against the alleged 'misuse' of section 498. They have joined the ranks of the few lawyers and the men of the Purush Hakk (men's rights group) who have made it their life's goal to demolish this provision, which flawed though it may be even from women's perspective, is the only defence available to a married woman who is mentally and physically harassed beyond endurance.

### [3] Miss World vs. the Bharatiya Naari :

On 31st October 1996, the Centre joined other groups of the Stree Atyachar Virodhi Kriti Samiti in Bombay in a protest rally to oppose the hosting of Miss World Contest in Bangalore and the attendant promotion of the global cosmetics industry and Indian tourism in the name of the 'New Indian Woman'.

The image of the 'New Indian Woman' (NIW) has been created by the advertisement industry and its votaries in the media to match India's New Economic Policy (NEP). The NIW is supposed to correspond to the era of economic liberalisation promoted by the NEP and she is expected to be approved by all who are liberal, including women's liberation groups. The creation of the NIW is also a response to earlier criticisms by women's groups of the very idea of 'beauty' contests, because

they propagate and confirm a standardised and stereotyped notion of beauty. The 'New Indian Woman' is positioned to be a post-feminist role model for Indian women. She has been peddled as being both beautiful and 'a woman of substance', rendering women's liberation redundant; to be materially, intellectually and spiritually integrated, combining beauty, brains and social commitment to spastic children and other underprivileged. Both aspects of this integrated and liberated creature were supposed to blossom forth at the Miss World Contest in Bangalore. But there were several sub-contests — of hair, lips, eyes, legs and so on — each bit sponsored by multinational firms of the beauty industry. This led to the image of the integrated New Indian Woman fracturing into separate body parts; completing the objectification of the female body.

Meanwhile, some 'New Women's Groups' who hark back to 'old values' and see the role of the women's movement to be mainly a defense of India's alleged 'golden past' decided that this is the ideal opportunity to defend the 'Old Indian Woman', the Bharatiya Nari, the embodiment and preserver of our ancient culture. They felt that such beauty contests expose women's bodies through swim suits and thus destroy our culture. To dramatise their opposition to the Miss World contest which was seen to be threatening the Bharatiya culture, one of these saffron women's groups in Bangalore, the Mahila Jagaran Manch, threatened self-immolation during the event. (Fire perhaps comes automatically to the minds of some women who are worried about the fate of the Bharatiya culture. Fire is our traditional Bharatiya instrument for purification of women; which is why no other culture has Sati and dowry deaths).

During the Bombay rally and in interviews to the media in India and abroad, the Centre tried to convey that our opposition to Beauty contests was not the same as that of the saffron women's groups. Both the ad media created New Indian Woman as well as the Hindutva created Bharatiya Nari are oppressive stereotypes for actual women. Having threatened suicide in the international media, the leader of the Mahila Jagaran Manch simply absconded during the actual contest which was held under state security. But the more prolonged contest for either the money or the votes of actual Indian women continues through the use of these two apparently opposed stereotypes — the liberalised and globalised New Indian Woman and the saffron-clad Bharatiya Naari. Women's liberation groups are struggling to make themselves heard in the middle of this, about women's rights and the real empowerment of women.

#### [4] Right to Religious Conversion - a Secular, Democratic and Fundamental Right :

In January 1997, several Shiv Sena activists attacked a school in Bombay, run by Roman Catholic nuns of the Canossa Convent. The provocation was said to be the desire of an ex-student of the school, born a Hindu, to convert to Christianity. Her parents were distraught and said that a teacher of the school had influenced their daughter. The girl who was about to become a major said that she loved Jesus Christ and will become a Christian as soon as she turned 18. The Sena chose to attack the school even though the student had already passed out and though the sisters refused to take responsibility as the teacher concerned was not a Catholic, but a 'born-again' Christian.

Soon after, the local Sena leader demanded that the school admit students recommended by him. The ultimate motive was power to control admissions into minority community managed educational institutions. But at the time of the attack, the debate

was all about religious conversions and even some activists and social workers seeking communal harmony seemed ambiguous about whether Article 25 (1) of the Indian Constitution which guarantees religious freedom was really worth defending. The article says, "Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion."

It is the propagation that many people who consider themselves to be quite secular seem to have problems with. The Women's Centre held a meeting to discuss the import and the importance of this fundamental right as well as the alleged participation of a member of the Police's Women's Vigilance Committee in the attack.

Justice (Rtd.) Hosbet Suresh of the Indian People's Human Rights tribunal was asked to clarify the relevant constitutional provisions in the light of the Canossa incident. He felt that since neither violence nor fraud was involved between the teacher and the ex-student, the attack was meant to silence dissent. The teacher and the student were saying something different from others. The right to be different, the right to dissent is being increasingly squashed. **We Indians rejected the two-nation theory and opted for a multi-cultural and pluralistic society. But the imposition of 'cultural nationalism' is beginning to silence all of us.** Article 25(1), he said, also mentions freedom of conscience along with freedom of religion. Freedom of conscience means freedom of choice and freedom to choose one's religion. The right to propagate religion gives meaning to choice of religion, because choice involves not only knowledge, but an act of will. Propagation of religion is not only to impart knowledge, but to create intellectual and moral conviction leading to action, i.e., adoption of a religion. Freedom of conscience and freedom of religion are connected and are accepted propositions taken from international declarations. **Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adds something which article 25 of our Constitution has not incorporated explicitly i.e., the right to change one's religion or belief.** This could be incorporated through judicial interpretation.

All this, Justice Suresh felt, brings us to the question of secularism and the secular state. The Constitution does not spell out what secularism is. The Constituent Assembly decided not to even include the word in the definition of the Indian Republic calling it only 'Sovereign Democratic Republic'. The explanation offered then was that it is not necessary because 'the majority of the people of India are secular'. Justice Suresh said that this is a mistaken notion; one can only say that the majority of the people of India, Hindu, Muslim, Christian and others are religious. Basing the secularity of the State on the alleged secularity of the 'majority of the people' has led to the present situation. The majority of the people of India are Hindus and it is taken for granted that Hindus are secular and have always considered that all religions are equal. The Courts too have interpreted secularism as '*Sarvadharmasamabhava*' or all religions are equal. Justice Suresh felt that it is not possible for the State to deal with all religions equally, as is implied by '*sarvadharmasamabhava*', or to meet the aspirations of all religions equally. Secularism can only mean that the State shall have nothing to do with religion. In Article 25, where freedom of religion is given, it only means that there shall be no politics in religion, just as there shall be no religion in politics.

# FAMINE

Frank A. Southard, Jr.

Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, Vol-6, 1949.

FAMINE is a state of extreme hunger suffered by the population of a region as a result of the failure of the accustomed food supply. It is to be distinguished from the more or less constant undernourishment of chronically poverty stricken districts. Famine may be the consequence of drought, prolonged winters, cold summers, floods or plagues of locusts or rodents. The ravages of war and the devastation of rural regions during periods of upheaval may prevent adequate food production, and the breakdown of systems of distribution may affect regions dependent upon importation for food. Other less direct factors may contribute to famine. Deforestation may increase the danger of floods. Overpopulation in some regions may reduce the acreage per farm until it is barely sufficient to afford miserable sustenance in good years, precluding the storage of surplus for lean seasons.

Except in tropical regions the peril of famine in primitive society has always been great because of crude methods of food production and the absence of adequate methods of storage. Early civilisations were also subject to famine. Egypt was afflicted with both drought and locust plagues. The development of large urban populations in Greece and Rome increased the difficulties of securing sufficient food in years of bad harvest. In mediaeval Europe, when peasant farmers living in isolated and self-sufficing communities formed the majority of the population, a crop failure in one locality meant famine even if harvests were normal only a short distance away. The approximately four hundred and fifty recorded famines from the year 1000 to 1855 were largely confined

to small local regions such as Wales, Lorraine and Alsace. These dearths were caused by long, cold winters, which hindered planting, or by dry or cold summers, which prevented growth, and by floods, locusts and war. That eastern Europe was not untouched by famine in mediaeval times is indicated by the plaint of the chronicler of Novgorod.

Famine has been almost banished from the western world only during the last century. The revolution in agriculture has removed food production from the list of famine factors in spite of vast urbanisation which has occurred. The crops of a locality may be destroyed by drought, hail and frost, but the progress which has been made in the storage of surpluses and the increase in facilities for transport have reduced the effect of such disasters. Developments in food preservation such as canning, drying, pickling and freezing are also famine preventives. Poverty stricken urban dwellers may starve to death, but ample food exists. When famines do occur in occidental societies the farmers are especially affected, as in the famine stricken area in the United States in 1930-31, when the poverty of the farmers made it impossible for them to purchase sufficient food from the ample supply existing in the country.

Although famines are unusual in civilised societies, there have been severe famines in modern Europe and there are still chronic famine areas in the world. The Irish famine from 1846 to 1851, which was the most disastrous in western Europe in the nineteenth century, was caused by the potato blight. It resulted in over a million deaths and was a factor

in the emigration of a million and a half people within a decade. The famine was intensified by the miserable poverty of the people who were dependent on potatoes for sustenance. In 1841 almost one half of the farms in Ireland contained less than three acres, making it impossible for the farmers to accumulate reserve supplies.

Russia was scourged by major famines eleven times between 1845 and 1922. Although drought was the immediate cause of these crop failures, the steadily increasing population and progressively smaller farms contributed. In 1905, although 12.5 dessiatines (of 2.7 acres each) were considered necessary for the adequate sustenance of a family, 70 percent of the households in 47 regions had fewer than 10. The peasant population suffered even in normal times from lack of food because of the extremely primitive agricultural methods, and as a result in 1890 the death rate was higher by 30 percent in rural districts than for Russia as a whole. Since no adequate reserves could be maintained, even a partial crop failure precipitated a famine. Added factors in the famine of 1921-22 were the international blockade against the Soviet Union, the severe decrease in planting due to counter revolutionary disorders and the opposition of the peasants to foodstuff requisitions.

In north China the scant 21 inches of rain falls in the spring, making the wheat crop possible, and in the summer, when millet and kaoliang are planted. Failure of rain at either time is serious; failure at both times is fatal. Some of the rivers silt up, partly because of deforestation. A break in the dikes on such rivers means floods, the severity of which is increased by the slow drainage of flood waters from the level fields. Locusts plague some regions, particularly in Shensi, where they have caused 20 of the 162 historical famines. Although 4.7 acres are necessary to raise sufficient wheat for the average family in north China, 55 percent of the farms

contain 1.5 acres or less. The size of the individual rice fields is also inadequate and as a result the majority of families have scarcely enough food in normal times and cannot lay aside reserves. Insufficient credit, poor roads in the interior, the burden of large armies, foreign aggression and the lack of a stable government have aggravated these conditions and have contributed to an economy which is peculiarly susceptible to famine.

There seems never to have been a country-wide drought in India. In famine regions imported food has been obtainable but the widespread and extreme poverty of the rural population made the purchase of such food largely impossible. The agricultural workers, dependent on the produce of their land for sustenance, have almost no reserve and are prostrated in the event of crop failure. **HEAVY TAXES ... AND THE BRITISH DRAIN UPON INDIAN RESOURCES HAVE BEEN OFFERED AS EXPLANATIONS OF INDIAN POVERTY.**

Unless relief is unusually efficient famine involves a temporarily increased death rate due either to starvation or to the increased disease resulting from weakened resistance. The aggregate death list from famine would be as staggering, were it carefully kept, as those of many wars. Although the data are sadly incomplete, the greatest death toll has probably been that in the widespread famines in India, China and Russia. The ten famines in India between 1868 and 1900 are estimated to have resulted in fifteen million deaths, and nine million fatalities were caused by the famine in north China from 1876 to 1879. Little is known of the mortality of the approximately 600 recorded famines in Europe from 6 A.D. to 1855. The periodic famines in semi-arid Iran seem to have served to keep the population within the limits set by the environment. But in spite of the large death rates they occasion, famines can in no sense be considered permanent checks on overpopulation. Their temporary effects are readily compensated for in succeeding periods of relative plenty.

When a country experiences famine only as a rare and extraordinary disaster, the effect is likely to be ephemeral; but if famine is a recurring phenomenon it may leave its mark on the social, economic and spiritual life of the society; it may be a factor in epidemics, a motive for migration and a regulator of population growth. In considering famine as a possible factor in migration one must distinguish between the wanderings of small groups of people and the larger movements which are more clearly migratory. Famine conditions in one region have often prompted a stricken population to move into more favoured places. Delafosse records Wadaian depredation in western Darfur about 1830, stimulated by famine in Wadai. Petrie believes that the famine conditions of dry years caused the pastoral races living in arid regions to migrate to the richer lands. It is less certain that dry periods and famines precipitate larger movements of peoples. It has been suggested that the

Arab migration started from a great famine in Arabia in 600 A.D. and was kept in motion by a series of dearths from 816 to 1072, and the prolonged drought on the steppes about 3000 B.C. seems to have urged groups of nomads westward and southward into northern plain and Hungary. A series of droughts with frequent famine may have urged nomadic tribes to move in search of better grazing land, but that famine has been a significant factor in inducing the people of a settled economy to migrate seems open to doubt. The agricultural regions of China and the Pueblo culture of America have suffered countless famines and have passively withstood their effects or have developed a reasonably famine proof economy.

The judgement of epidemiologists is that disease is the invariable consequence of famine. The debility resulting from lack of food or from vile food substitutes paved the way for cholera, typhus and malaria in India, and the famine in Florence in 1347 was the forerunner of the plague of 1348. Famines do not produce new or special epidemics, but under famine conditions the typical diseases flourish. The so-called famine typhus is spotted fever, and the diseases which followed the famines in Upper Silesia in 1848 and in Finland in 1867-68 were the malaria and typhus common to the region.

Famines are reflected in religious belief and ritual. The Hopi Indians, for example, who are dependent on corn have a series of extremely elaborate corn and rain producing ceremonies, of which the snake dance is the best known. There is a distinction between ritual for the production of food and rain and the ceremonies which take place after famine or drought ensue. Fertility rites to prevent famine abound in primitive and ancient religions and have their modern counterparts. In Biblical times famine was often considered a sign of the wrath of God (see II Samuel XXI), and the idea survives in the prayers for rain offered by many Christian churches in times of drought.

The development of some primitive social customs may have been conditioned by food scarcity. Sumner interpreted abortion and infanticide to be often protective devices against famine and other calamities arising from overpopulation. In Australia, for example, where limited food and water made wandering necessary, women with two infants were unable to accompany their husbands. Curschmann listed the following socio-economic changes among the aftereffects of mediaeval European famines: an increase in the price of grain, a rise in rates of interest, a general desertion of stricken villages and farms, the impoverishment of the people, the destruction of livestock and an increase in restlessness and disease. **OTHER STUDENTS HAVE SEEN A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE VERY PREVALENT FAMINES IN EUROPE IN THE MIDDLE AGES AND RELIGIOUS EXALTATION AND MANIA, GROUP MOVEMENTS AND POLITICAL AND SOCIAL TURBULENCE.**

Occasionally some constructive institution has risen from a famine situation, as did Raiffeisen's rural cooperative credit societies, which were organised in Germany to meet the needs created by the famine of 1848.

Where famines are frequent some attempt has usually been made to store food or water. In savage societies the storage of food to carry the tribe through dearth has been the most prevalent method of famine prevention. The New Zealand Maori, the Hopi and Moqui of America, for example, regularly store food as an insurance against scarcity. Traces of grain and fruit stone storage rooms have been found in the Swiss lakeland prehistoric remains. The irrigation systems of primitive cultures such as those of Easter Island and the Arizona Pueblos play a role in famine prevention. The Badarian culture in lower Egypt about 12,000 B.C. used underground granaries, and the storage of grain in conical structures under the supervision of a superintendent of the granaries was systematically carried out under the pharaohs. The Incas confiscated and held in storehouses all surplus foodstuffs in an effort to maintain a three-year supply from which public distribution could be made in time of dearth. The canal and irrigation system of Sumer (3000 B.C.), the irrigation works of the Incas, the flood prevention dikes on the Hwang Ho (2000 B.C.), are illustrative famine prevention activities of ancient civilisation. **IN INDIA BEFORE THE ADVENT OF ENGLISH RULE THE NATIVE RULERS AND THE WEALTHIER FARMERS MAINTAINED RESERVE SUPPLIES IN GOOD YEARS. PROBABLY THE FIRST TO INTRODUCE VIGOROUS FAMINE RELIEF IN INDIA WAS MUHAMMAD TUGHLAK, WHO IN 1343 DISTRIBUTED SIX MONTHS' SUPPLY OF GRAIN TO THE INHABITANTS OF DELHI, MADE GRANTS FROM THE TREASURY FOR FARMING AND WELL DIGGING AND UNSUCCESSFULLY ATTEMPTED TO INTRODUCE COMPULSORY LABOUR. SHAH JEHAN, WHO IN 1630 MADE EXTENSIVE DOLES OF FOOD AND MONEY AND REMITTED TAXES, INITIATED THE EXTENSION OF RELIEF TO RURAL DISTRICTS. IRRIGATION WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT PREVENTIVE EFFORT AGAINST FAMINE IN THIS EARLY PERIOD.**

In mediaeval Europe occasional storage of grain was the only means used to attempt to prevent food scarcity with the exception of scattered regulatory laws. The English government placed various prohibitions on forestalling and engrossing—practises closely akin to modern speculation and monopoly. The Assize of Bread issued in 1202 was an attempt to prevent speculation in bread by varying its weight with changes in the price of wheat. This and the later Assize of Bread and Ale issued by Henry III in 1266 were antispeculation or antimonopoly acts rather than price fixing laws and were the products of an economy in which the monopoly acts

rather than price fixing laws and were the products of the monopolising of food in times of dearth increased the hardship experienced by the poor. The famine relief of this period was left largely to the casual alms of the wealthy and to the church. Charlemagne considered the famine of 780 to be God's punishment of man's sin and consequently ordered masses said. His famine relief program included the conservation of food, the prohibition of food export, the regulation of corn prices and the maintenance of feeding stations, but this program was not followed in later years by other princes or by cities, save for the occasional prohibition of exports and regulation of grain prices. The series of bad harvests all over Europe from 1527 to 1536 probably hastened the development of poor law relief in England and on the continent, through which some social responsibility was assumed for destitute persons.

Progress has been made both in famine prevention and in famine relief. The United States and England, impelled by political purposes or by the obligations imposed by empire, have participated in efforts to alleviate and conquer famine in post-war eastern Europe. The Russian peasant under the czarist regime had a legal claim against the government for famine relief, and each community was required to keep an emergency grain store and was allotted famine funds; but in practice this system usually collapsed. During this same period the British were developing a system of famine relief in India, where by 1860 famine sufferers were divided into those who could labor on public works, those who were unable to leave their homes—a classification which has since formed the basis for relief work. In 1869 the government introduced the important principle of granting *tuccavee*, or cash relief, to farmers in order to enable them to remain on their farms for the following year. The famine code of 1883 recommended village relief in preference to the much disliked poorhouse, which was to be retained for the aid of wandering famine victims, urged that work be offered immediately before efficiency was impaired by debility and that *tuccavee* grants be supplemented by tax remission. With some unsuccessful modifications this plan was applied in the famines of 1896-99 and 1899-1900.

During the war and post-war years famine conditions developed in Poland, Armenia, the Ukraine and Russia, and the governments of those countries were unable to render adequate relief. American agencies led in relief efforts, although considerable sums of money were expended by governments and societies in other countries. The greatest of these famine relief programs was that in Russia from 1921 to 1923, in which roughly \$70,000,000 was expended by the following organisation: the Soviet government \$11,387,000; the United States government, \$22,662,000; the American Relief Administration, \$23,440,000; the American Red Cross, \$3,805,000; American religious and charitable groups,

(Contd. on p.66)



# GUILTY MEN OF INDIA'S PARTITION

Rammanohar Lohia

## INTRODUCTION

What began in my mind as a review of Maulana Azad's "India Wins Freedom" became an independent account of the country's partition, as soon as I started setting it on paper. The account may not be as ordered or chronological, at least outwardly, as some may have wished it to be, but it is perhaps therefore a little warmer and truer. While reading the proofs, I became aware of having sought two objectives, one, to slay errors and untruths and to highlight certain happenings and aspects of the truth and, two, to outline the basic causes that led to the partition. Among these causes, I enumerated, first, British chicanery, secondly, declining years of Congress leadership, thirdly, objective condition of Hindu-Muslim rioting, fourthly, lack of grit and stamina among the people, fifthly, Gandhiji's non-violence, sixthly, Muslim League's separatism, seventhly, inability to seize opportunities as they came, and, eighthly, Hindu *hauteur*.

(Exc. Edr's Note : Lohia has referred to "British Chicanery", as one of the important reasons for Partition of India. However he forgot to elaborate on this theme. Most of the so-called communal riots that took place in the country were actually pogroms of mass killing carried out by the British imperialist police force in the name of religion. Of the approximately 500 districts of United India of those days, every district was headed by a British DSP whose principal assistants were either Britishers or Anglo-Indians. Every British-run police *thana* in United India had close connections with the underworld, which was encouraged to carry on bullion and narcotics smuggling. These underworld dons kept up a high price for gold in the world market, and at the same time maintained a still higher

internal price of gold (The world price of gold remained high because the demand for gold in India formed a very high proportion of the world demand. At the same time, all other avenues of profitable investments by Indians were blocked by British Imperialism, so that an artificial pent-up demand for gold was generated in India.) The British police conspired with *goondas* belonging to both Hindu and Muslim communities to create riots in pursuance of the overarching divide and rule policy of imperialism. This divide and rule policy came into greater prominence after the 30s, when the Round Table Conferences were held in London, and especially after 1941, when the Muslim League was instructed for the first time to demand Pakistan and Partition of India. The demand for Pakistan was powerfully promoted in 1941 during the Second World War precisely in order to wean away the Muslim masses from the nationalist movement which was becoming more and more extremist. Subhas Bose secretly left India in 1941 to travel via Afghanistan and Russia to Germany and Japan and ultimately launched the Indian National Army in 1942-43. The Congress Socialists took advantage of the leftward turn in Congress politics from August 1942 to assume leadership of the underground liberation movement.

In brief, the communal riots, especially of the 1930s, and 1940s, were not grass-roots at all, but were merely called communal by the British imperialist police who actually carried out pogroms in the name of religion!).

Not much importance need be attached to Mr. Rajagopalachariar's or the Communist support to partition and the opposition to it by fanatical Hinduism or right nationalism. These were no primary events.

Communist treachery plays no

primary role. It does not cause a development; the causing is done from elsewhere. Communist support to partition did not produce Pakistan. At its worst, it acted like an incubator. Nobody remembers it now except as a government propagandist argument against communism. I am somewhat intrigued by this aspect of Communist treachery, that it left no lasting bad taste in the mouth of the people. Other traitors are not so fortunate. It would be worthwhile to try to argue the Communist case from inside; what must have been in the mind of the Communist, when he supported partition.

Indian Communists supported partition presumably in the hope that they would thereby gain hold on the newborn State of Pakistan, obtain influence among Indian Muslims and run no big risk of alienating the unformed and effete Hindu mind. Their calculations have been proved to be wrong except in the small measure that they have acquired some pockets of influence among India's Muslims and have roused no strong indignation among the Hindus. They have therefore done no mischief to themselves, but have brought no benefit to the country.

I do not think that there are any primary causes of partition outside of those I have enumerated. Even these derive their essence from two great elements of the Indian situation in relation to the Hindu-Muslim problem. In the past eight hundred years of their relationship, the Hindus and Muslims have continually suffered from a see-saw of estrangement, so that their emotional incorporation into a single nation has so far been defeated. At the same time, the temper of the Indian people has learnt the arts of adjustment and patient acceptance and surrender, in such measure that **nowhere else on earth has slavery been so mistaken for world brotherhood**, or treachery for statesmanship, or subordination for accommodation. These two elements have governed the Hindu-Muslim problem. Without them, British chicanery or creeping old age of Congress leaders would have been inconsequential details of history and could not have borne the bitter fruit they did.

The estrangement of the Muslim from the Hindu has continued into the years of Freedom. I suspect that it is deeper today than it was before the partition. Estrangement produced partition, which therefore could not possibly dissolve it in an automatic way. Into the effect enters the cause. Nothing has been done in the years of freedom to bring the Muslim close to the Hindu, to remove the seeds of estrangement from their souls. Among the unforgivable crimes of the Congress government is precisely its failure to bring together the estranged souls, in fact, its unwillingness even to attempt the task.

**At the back of this crime are the desire for vote-catching and the philosophy of cosmopolitanism.** Almost all political elements in the land, particularly such as pride themselves on their secularism, suffer from these. Vote-catching can last as a deadly enterprise for a long time. Nobody, who wishes to succeed, can escape the competition in decline that electioneering imposes. After a time sanity may be restored but neither the time nor the agency has yet come. To obtain votes, appeals to Hindu and Muslim are still overwhelmingly separate. Secular parties have not yet dared to appeal to Hindu and Muslim in such fashion as to cure them of their evil thoughts or habits. To this desire for selfish gain, the philosophy of cosmopolitanism has provided the altruistic justification. The need to tackle and try to solve each problem separately has not been felt by the cosmopolites. They have assumed that industrialisation and a modernised economy would dissolve the Hindu-Muslim estrangement, foolishly imagining a relationship where none exists. **This silly belief in the magic properties of industrialisation coupled with the desire for vote-catching has led twelve years after partition and freedom to such a ghastly situation in Kerala that supposedly nationalist and democratic parties combined with the Muslim League, thereby causing directly recrudescence of outspoken Muslim Leaguism and separatism all over the country.** Twelve years after the country was partitioned, Congressism and Praja Socialism found it necessary once again to undertake and complete another foul act of separatism.

Undoubtedly, such social solutions must be sought as interdining or intermarriage, also economic solutions such as full employment or nationalisation or equality, also political solutions such as guaranteed representation of backward castes and groups. Without these solutions, the problem of estrangement can never be laid to rest, but with them alone, it will ever be there in some form, quiescent or virulent. Factors of religion and history must be considered seriously. It is these that sour the minds and hearts of men.

**Complete equality among gods and prophets of religion can never be achieved except perhaps through atheism and destruction of religious worship.** What may be achieved is near-equality with a very thorough schooling in comparative religious matters and a general uplifting of the mind, it may be possible to put Ram and Mohammed on almost equally high pedestals, but never wholly so, for the person professing one religion and not another or born into it will most certainly have a special regard for it, however private. The irrational aim of trying to keep religions apart and to

awaken completely equal regard for them should not therefore be sought. What should be sought is respect and understanding for another's faith. A historical and comparative study of religions is the best way to awaken these. A sugary sentimentalism in these matters is as valueless as fanaticism is destructive and divisive. A restrained and calm appraisal of religious doctrines and faith in their achievements on the one hand and their drawbacks on the other would be of value.

**The force that separates most is a particular view of history.** Groups and communities are formed principally through the view they hold of what has happened. Hindus and Muslims of India hold separate views of their common history. Such Hindus are rare as would acknowledge a Muslim ruler or man of note as their ancestor. Correspondingly, a Muslim who recognises his ancestor in a Hindu of note is rare. A certain number of glib fools has not been wanting, who have in their quest for national unity lumped together all Muslim rulers and invaders on the register of Hindu ancestry. Such a smooth operation is of no use. It bespeaks adolescence at its best and a foulsmelling indolence at its worst. There would be no Hindu-Muslim problem today or when partition was effected, if Hindus and Muslims had been able to interpret their history unitedly and learnt to live in peace. **The Hindu and Muslim views of their common history have differed in the past as they do today and that is a main cause of their separation in identity and action.**

I have felt lately that the Moguls with the exception of the great Akbar and the clever Jahangir were a relapse into estrangement, while the Pathans had reached an unusual degree of approximation with the Hindu. Jaysi and Rahiman are as bright stars of Hindi poetry as any Hindus. In fact, Rahiman is a name that embodies the Indianisation of Islam. It is like the name of Russian Muslims, whose Islamic names have been traditionally Russianised by the addition of such suffixes as 'ov' or 'in' or that of Indonesian Muslims, most of whose Hindu names have not been changed in spite of the conversion to Islam. I cannot say yet how far Jodhabai was able to see in her personal situation the piquancy of a national approximation. I have recently heard of the poetess Taju, dyer by trade and Muslim by birth, around the time of 1857, whose Krishna poetry matches Mira's devotion. There seems almost to be a law that approximation is more often the work of persons of low caste or learning, and estrangement that of the ruling or more learned castes, while it may well be that, in critical times, approximation tends to degenerate into extinction and estrangement to stiffen into maintenance of identity.

When often I have suggested removal of Hindu tuft and Muslim beard and other external marks and rationalisation of forms of dress, name and living, I have fully known that they are only steps towards approximation and endearment. **Even as first acts, they are almost impossible to undertake, unless a corresponding change in mental attitudes takes place alongside. The external appearance of a person is in large measure the twin of his internal attitudes.** Conviction, habit and a substratum of self-respect, of the degenerating into arrogant assertion of irrational identity, produce both appearance and attitude. If history were read more truthfully

and intelligently and religious prophets were better understood, a miracle-making movement would arise such as would make Hindu and Muslim indistinguishable in their appearance. Their minds would at the same time approximate.

I had at one time hoped overmuch. In a speech I made at the Gole Market of Delhi immediately after partition, from which Mr. Jinnah quoted extensively and angrily and which made him intervene with the India Government, I made a forecast of early India-Pakistan reunion into Hindustan. Never before or after have I made such an unwise forecast. My wish ran away with my intelligence. Nobody could indeed have foreseen Gandhiji's death at that time. In any case, my calculations were based on his continuing presence. Even so, the other factors which entered into my calculation have been found to be slender or almost lacking. I had hoped that India would prosper under a national Government, at least to some degree. Such a prosperity on this side of the frontier would have aroused unsettling envy on the other side. Such a hope did not indeed last out the first few months of freedom and vanished after Gandhiji's death. How I could have been so ardent but foolish, albeit for a few months, I cannot to this day understand except on the premise of Gandhiji's continuing presence. I like millions of others foolishly expected miracles

from that man. There are no miracles except discovery of and adherence to truth and hard work. A second factor that went wrong related precisely to my hope in growing approximation between Hindu and Muslim in India, as would have influenced the mind of Pakistan towards reunion.

I was definitely unwise on the score of time, but was I so in respect of the quality of my forecast? The frontier between India and Pakistan has few natural barriers and consists of slender waters of ponds and rivers and not of separating seas. Attempts are being made to divide the single language into two, that of Pakistan becoming in vocabulary almost wholly Arabic or Persian and that of India entirely Sanskritic. Such attempt may reasonably be expected not to succeed. Unintelligibility or lifelessness would so assail these efforts at an artificially selective language that they would be given up at no distant future. I am of course assuming that the world would not continue to be wicked indefinitely. The Atlantic-Soviet rivalry would diminish at least to the point when it does not seek to spin India and Pakistan against each other. Physical and cultural approximation between Hindu and Muslim inside India and as a consequence or simultaneously, that between Pakistan and India resulting in reunion of Hindustan is a wish and a prayer and also a probability.

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## FAMINE (Contd. from p.63)

\$5,017,000; European governments and relief organisations, about \$4,000,000. The disbursement of 85 percent of the funds was administered by the American Relief Administration. The combined American relief organisations fed a total of eleven million Russians at the peak of the famine, while an additional million were fed by other foreign agencies. The relief administration established a central organisation in Russia, which received supplies and disbursed them to urban and rural kitchens, where relief was directly administered in the form of cooked food. Seed grain and medical relief were also dispensed. By the latter part of 1922 relief to adults was discontinued, and in June, 1923, the American Relief Administration withdrew from Russia.

The conflict between the recognition of government obligation to assist famine victims and the procedure of delegating relief to private agencies dependent upon uncertain individual contributions is still raging. In the United States during the famine of 1930-31 the federal

administration opposed the use of government funds for food relief to the farmers suffering from drought, contending that there should be no interference with private relief measures.

India although constantly threatened with local food shortage has evolved a system of relief in which poverty rather than actual food shortage is the chief characteristic. The Soviet government has made prodigious advances in increasing agricultural output through its government farms and by the socialisation of peasant farms, and as a result the possibility of future famines in the Soviet Union is slight.

Consult: Walford, Cornelius, "The Famines of the World, Past and Present" in Royal Statistical Society, *Journal*, vol. xli (1878) 433-526; Curschmann, Fritz, *Hungersnote im mittelalter* (Leipsic 1900); Thompson, J.W., *An Economic and Social History of the Middle Ages* (New York 1928) p. 762-64; Nash, Vaughan, *The Great Famine and Its Causes* (London 1900); Sunderland, J. T., "The Causes of Famines in India" in Canadian Institute, *Transactions*, vol. viii (1995-10) 213-39; Gill, C.A., *The Genesis of Epidemics* (New York 1928); Scott, J.E., *In Famine Land* (New York 1994); Mallory, W. H., *China: Land of Famine* (New York 1994); Fisher, H.H., *The Famine in Soviet Russia* (New York 1927); Golder, F.A., and Hutchinson, L., *On the Trail of the Russian Famine* (Palo Alto 1927).

## CAPTIONS FOR FRONT AND BACK COVERS

### Front Cover

In our humble opinion, the dome and the minaret carried by Persians to Byzantium in early centuries A.D., and by Islam to Spain from the 7th century A.D. were derived from the *Stupa* and the *Lat* of Buddhist India. (7th century B.C. to 4th century A.D.) The drawing at the bottom of the front cover depicts a reconstruction of the Great *Stupa* at Sanchi. In fact, it may as well be a reconstruction of any Islamic mosque or place of worship of today.

The dome has an uncanny resemblance to the *Stupa*, especially one raised upon a drum with an ambulatory path or *pradakshina patha* placed at the top of the stairways, a little way up, on the outer surface of the *Stupa*. Since no rubble piled up anyhow could remain stable, it became necessary for *Stupa*-builders, who successively attempted greater and greater heights, to make brick compartments within the *Stupa* structure. These compartments prevented rubble and sand from shifting and thereby destabilising the structure. As soon as the rounded brick-built inner compartments evolved, the next, almost automatic step was the arch, the barrel vault and the dome at the junction of the two barrel vaults.

Similarly, the minaret derives from the *yashti*, *yupa*, the *dhwajastambha*, or the *chhatravali* pole placed in the centre of the *harmika*, which itself was located on the top of the *Stupa*.

Originally, the *yashti* or the *yupa* was the pole to which the animals to be sacrificed were tethered. It also became known as the victor's standard / banner, which proclaimed his victory over his enemies. This victory banner was carried on the *yashti* or the *yupa* and then became *kirtistambha*.

As the *axis mundi* or world axis, it passed through the centre of the *Stupa* and at the top end, a *harmika* was built around it. The same top end extended upwards to become the *chhatravali* or a series of umbrellas which sheltered the universe of peace.

We have already emphasised how the Buddhist transformed the *yupa* or *lat* to which the sacrificial animal was tied into a benign symbol, wherein, the animal (bull, elephant, lion, etc.) became the finial, sitting peacefully and gracefully at the top of the supposedly bloody sacrificial pillar.

Ultimately, this *yupa* / *yashti* / *lat* became the minaret, just as the *Stupa*, in whose vicinity it had always been placed, became the dome.

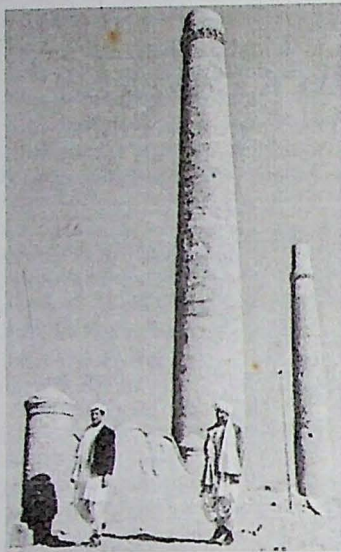
Conceptwise, Buddhist architecture was possibly the greatest known to the world. The *chaitya* was metamorphosed into the church, the *Stupa* grew into two great end products, the *pagoda* of the Far East and the dome-minaret combination of the Middle East. Finally, the Buddhist *vihara* became many things : the monasterial complex, the caravansarai around an open courtyard, the hospital, the university campus. The *vihara* possibly evolved from the vedic *ashrama*, which was a pastoralist camp, a landscaped area, a hunting lodge, a residential hostel for students, a teacher's residence, an infirmary for men and animals, a traveller's lodge and resthouse, and any number of similar functional embodiments.

For a sketch of Indian architectural history we refer the reader to Vinayak Purohit, *Indian Architecture : Background and Balance Sheet, Mankind*, November '95, pp 87-91. Also see, same paper, reworked in *Indian Architect and Builder*, Vol 9, No. 1, 1995, p. 225.

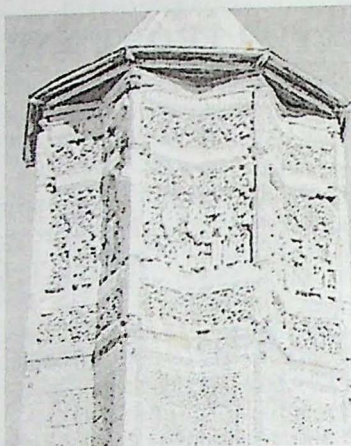
### Back Cover

On the back cover we have reproduced the Allahabad Asokan Pillar (a) as well as the victory tower (b), erected by Masud III at Ghana in 1099-1115 A.D. and the twin minarets recently discovered at Herat, Afghanistan (c). In Illustration (d), we have shown the conjectural restoration of the Amravati *Stupa*, of the 3rd century A.D. This may be compared with the diagram of the Great *Stupa* at Sanchi, shown on the front cover.

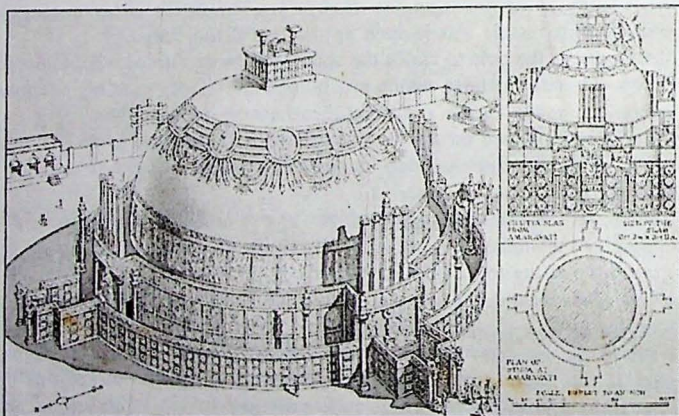
In (e), on the back cover, we have shown the disposition of elements of a standard mosque.



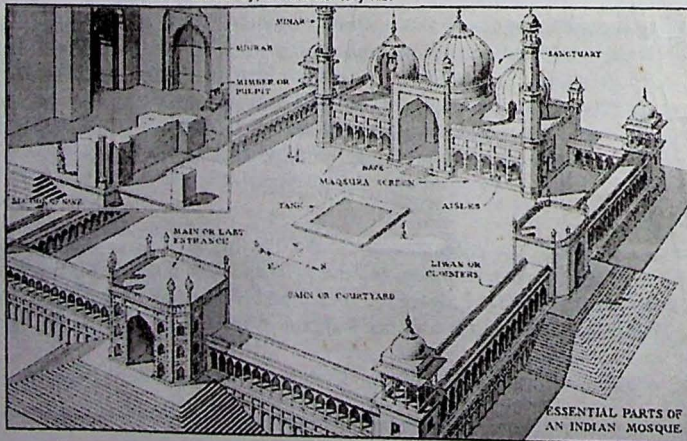
A. Ancient Minarets in Herat City, Afghanistan.



B. Detail of the victory tower of Mas'ud III, constructed 1099-1115, in Ghazni, Afghanistan



D. Conjectural restoration derived from the bas-reliefs of the Amravati Stupa, Madras Presidency, cir. 3rd century A.D.



E. Essential parts of an Indian Mosque.



C. Lat at Allahabad.