

Pranay Gupte On Tunisia • Graham Greene On Practical Joke

Fiction By Nayantara Sahgal

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The Definitive RSS Exposé

Sasthi Brata
Interviews
Farrukh
Dhondy

Growing Up Gay In Bombay

Bihar After
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THIRTY-FOUR YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH, George Orwell will be all over and everywhere in 1984. In varying ways, we have already lived through *Nineteen Eighty-four*. In less than half the time span Orwell had charted to his 1984, the gloomy picture of a future world under totalitarianism that he painted had become all too real—half the world was under totalitarian regimes of various hues. Even India, where he was born, and where he had returned for police service for five years, was almost totalitarian for two years, Big *Sister* watching and all that!

The grand, extravagant style in which Mrs Indira Gandhi is playing her international role makes one wonder if she is converting her elective office into some kind of Imperial Prime Ministership. Even if the real cost of holding the last Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meeting in New Delhi and Goa was just 25% of the conservative newspaper estimate of Rs 40 crores, Mrs Gandhi is guilty of obscene waste. (Obscene is the word her own father, and Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru used to apply to even minor ostentations. When SK Patil was the Congress boss of Bombay, and Jawaharlal Nehru was being given a civic reception in the city on the occasion of one of his birthdays, he almost threw away the silver casket the hapless Mr Patil was presenting at the public function. To him it was expensive, in silver and thus ostentatious.)

Mrs Gandhi, as Prime Minister, travels in a style that is imperial in its material trappings—chartered jets, elaborate *bandobast* and large retinues. I have seen Nehru travel to Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conferences in London by commercial flight, accompanied by just K Ram, who was his Principal Private Secretary for many years. There may have been a security man but he was not seen. His courtesy to the crew, after the flight, was to be seen to be believed. The pretensions of his daughter so alien to his tradition must disturb the good man in the heavens above as it must disturb many of us here. (So conscious was Nehru of economy and propriety, as Mrs Gandhi if anyone must surely know, that once when Krishna Menon sent him a routine memo about a forthcoming visit to New York for UN work indicating that a Mr X, a Foreign Service Officer was accompanying him, Nehru crossed out the name, and wrote: 'Only the DM may go.') If during those days there was so much decorum and dignity, much of the credit goes to the good man Nehru. Today, everything around Mrs Gandhi is a grey area. We may yet see the spectacle of even her spiritual guru being hauled to jail.

It is common knowledge in London that the UK Government does not spend even the equivalent of Rs one crore on Commonwealth Prime Ministers Meetings in London. The Australians are reported to have spent a little more three or four years ago. In affluent America, the total budget for entertainment of all state guests is ten million dollars per year and the President is obliged to go to the Congress even if he needs one million dollars more. In all democracies, small and big, prior approval of expenses, especially expenses on entertaining, is obligatory but obviously Mrs Gandhi does not seem to be accountable.

The visiting Heads of Governments, all under severe economic pressures back home, must have been vastly amused at Mrs Gandhi's opening speech at the CHOGM. Said she, "The policies of the industrialised countries to control inflation have caused a sharp slow-down in their economic activity and have raised levels of unemployment, besides imposing heavier burdens of privation on developing countries, who face declining or negative growth rates, increasing balance of payment deficits and mounting debt burdens . . ." One can only hope our Prime Minister was not serious, and that she was treating them just as she treats audiences at home.

If Mrs Gandhi is really in search of a slot in the history books as a stateswoman and as posters and hoardings put up by her supporters would have us believe, then we should be grateful that large gatherings, even Heads of State are not taken seriously, even by the participants themselves.

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Letters



MADHOK ON SWAMY

The write-up on Subramaniam Swamy and his interview (**Imprint**, November 1983) speak volumes for his self-confidence and courage. At a time when immoral hypocrites, with their slogans of socialism and secularism hold sway over almost all the political parties in India, Dr Swamy's plea for market economy and integrity in private and public life comes as a breath of fresh air.

Socialism or state capitalism has close connection with authoritarianism. No socialist state of the world is a democratic state. Whenever and wherever economic power is added to the police power of the state, it becomes a satan which rides roughshod over the liberty and rights of the people. That is why all dictators swear by socialism.

Swamy joined the Jana Sangh in 1974 after I was forced to leave it. Within a year Swamy decided to leave it for the very same reasons. His assessment of the Jana Sangh bosses of that time, who now run the BJP and their godfathers is substantially correct. It goes to his credit that he has withstood their onslaught and foiled their attempts to murder him politically.

India needs change but not just a change of faces. People want a change in policies and political culture. Tom-tomming about socialism and secularism has gone on too long without any positive results. In the economic field India needs more competition, less monopoly and more attention to villages, small industries and agriculture. Above all, India needs honest and clean leadership. That explains Swamy's confidence that he will come to the top in the near future.

Balraj Madhok
New Delhi

Whether Subramaniam Swamy will become the Prime Minister of India is open to conjecture, but he certainly is running for it right now. He is well-known and a brilliant economist and academician. Perhaps under his leadership the country can make rapid progress in the economic field.

RD Sinha
Calcutta

Only astrologers can predict whether Swamy will become the Prime Minister in 1989 or not. But none can deny that Swamy has stirred the hearts of the intelligentsia in the country through his outspokenness. The interview clearly shows that Swamy speaks out only because of his irresistible urge to speak the truth bluntly and uncompromisingly and not out of any personal bias. His admiration for Chandrashekhar's qualities as a man reveals his open-mindedness.

K Baskar
Tuticorin

The feature on Subramaniam Swamy was a disappointing ten-page exercise in journalistic garbage. It would have been more interesting to read about a paranoid who suffered from delusions of grandeur, ranting and raving that he was going to be the Prime Minister or was the reincarnation of a god or a great man. Psychopathologically the two would not be very different, except that in Swamy's case, the sickness has been clouded by a cover of self-righteousness.

Your feature has exposed him as a small, scheming political adventurer who, under cover of doing good to the country, is interested in doing good to himself. Every step he has taken, any decision arrived at, has been a calculated move to improve his political mirror image. Your feature has advocated his case like a paid attorney and consequently, is not very convincing.

Rakesh Duda
Calcutta

Paris Of The East?

Arun Chacko in his column entitled *Paris Of The East* derides modern Delhi, calling it Jagmohan's Delhi but, in fact, the new Delhi is Mrs Gandhi's creation. Delhi symbolises India's socialist hypocrisy. While the rest of India crumbles, New Delhi dons brighter attire.

The pity is that even with all the effort put into it, new New Delhi is *not* the Paris Of The East. Tourists still prefer to flock to other Asian capitals while the five star hotels in Delhi remain empty.

K Susrita
Calcutta

Delhi is what Mr Chacko describes

it to be—rude, corrupt and uncultured. However, Mr Chacko has failed to mention the most irresponsible, inefficient and irritating public utility service of them all—the DTC or more appropriately, the Death Trap for Commuters!

Anupam Fouzdar
New Delhi

VOICES OF EMERGENCY

John Oliver Perry's incoherent letter of protest (*Imprint*, December 1983) speaks for itself. I shall merely add two points:

* It is worth noting that Perry does not deny any part of my account of the interview. So, what *is* Perry blabbering on about?

* After Perry threw me out of his hotel room I rang Prabhubhai Sanghvi to say that unfortunate though the incident was, I had no hard feelings. He thanked me and apologised for Perry's behaviour. Then Perry rang me and did the same. Then Perry made his mistake. He tried to 'bribe' me, saying

he was in India to collect long interviews with Indian poets for the Tufts archives and would I like to have my views on tape. I 'thanked' him politely and said I did not think my poetic output justified the 'honour'.

Perry then wrote me a letter which speaks for itself.

On the principle that an interview must end somewhere (if the actress goes to bed with the journalist afterwards that is *not* part of the interview) I chose not to include this sordid epilogue. But Perry's hysterical letter has forced my hand. (See below.)

—Dhiren Bhagat

Dreamers Of The Air?

Ashok Gopal is perhaps uncharitable to Minister HKL Bhagat's effort to expand the TV network in India (*Imprint*, November 1983). The 47-HPT and 132-LPT new TV stations will result in at least five million new TV sets and about one million new jobs.



The expansion of TV services in the rural areas is sure to bring modernisation there. Sometimes even propaganda can achieve results.

PK Palit
West Bengal

on Sept. 6: 67 Grove Hill Ave, Newton, MA 02460



Aug 6, 83
Hotel Rosewood

99/C, Tulsiwadi, Tardeo, BOMBAY - 400 034. ☐ Phone : 890263/54/55.

Dear Dhiren Bhagat
I'm glad we could have a telephonic exchange to say "no hard feelings" and make appropriate apologies. Of course, you do not need my permission to write an independent review — but psychologically & not logically/rationally, it may be rather difficult for you to do so after all that upsetting argument, so I want to offer whatever space I occupy for your greater ease. And thanks for your generosity.

I've been feeling nasty about myself & raked your PK.

Kitsch For Kitsch Sake

So, *Imprint* seems to be assuming a new, *Debonair* look! (*Imprint*, November 1983.) Were the photographs on pages 85 and 87 those of Moushumi Chatterjee and Padmini Kolhapure?

Chimanbhai Patel
Ahmedabad

Page 85 was Moushumi, page 87 was not Padmini.

Swraj Paul: Clean?

When I read your intelligent interview with Swraj Paul (*Imprint*, November 1983) I had nothing but praise for his incisive intellect and certainly a pat for Mrs Gandhi and her henchmen for holding a protective umbrella over Paul. Some of the acts of leniency shown by Mrs Gandhi need not necessarily be conciliatory concessions to his blind loyalty to her when she was in distress, but I am unable to understand how some of the constitutional institutions kept mum when he started investing indiscriminately long before the Parliament authorised and encouraged investments from non-resident Indians.

US Iyer
Madras

When continuous use
can mean clogged burners,
can you really take
a gas stove's efficiency
for granted?

You have our word on it.

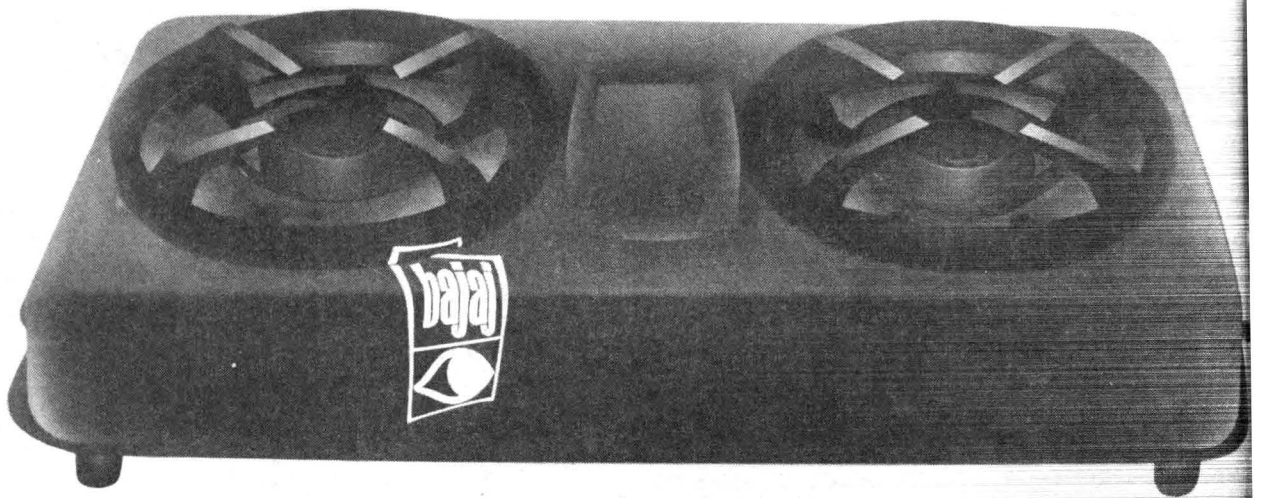
A lot of things can happen when the burners of gas stoves get clogged. Flames get shorter. Cooking takes longer. A great deal of gas is wasted. The only way to prevent mishaps from happening is to look for a reliable brand name before you even begin looking around for a gas stove.

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When it comes to appliances, there are no certificates that cover quality, durability and safety. Except the name Bajaj.



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VOLUME XXIII NO 10

CONTENTS

JANUARY 1984

7 UNCONVENTIONAL WISDOM

Waiting For More Anands
By *Rajiv Tiwari*

A close look at Dr Verghese Kurien and his attempts to repeat the success of Amul elsewhere.

9 UP-FRONT

Maharajahs Old And New
By *Arun Chacko*

The princes are fast disappearing but Indians still need a monarchical figure to look up to.

11 MEDIA

America's Desi Press
By *Nayana Dolwani*

It keeps tabs on the navratri functions and matrimonial alliances of the West.

13 CINEMA

Cinema's Middle-Roaders
By *Ashish Rajadhyaksha*

The 'new' Indian cinema is catering to needs that the commercial cinema was unable to do. But will it last?

17 MAKING MONEY IN THE EIGHTIES

What are going to be the growth sectors of the economy in the years ahead? What should you invest in? Who are the bright new industrialists of the future?

A guide to money in the '80s along with expert advice from Dilip Thakore, Nusli Davar and Arvind Dalal. And



a study of the most amazing success story of the last ten years: Dhirubhai Ambani and Reliance.

Cover Transparency: *Ashok Gupta.*

31 THE RSS: THE DEFINITIVE EXPOSE



By *AG Noorani*

Is the RSS really as harmless as it makes itself out to be? A scathing look at what the RSS would have us believe and what it actually is.

42 OPTIONS

A Roadside Repast
Vikram Sinha on the gastronomic delight of the streets—bhelpuri.

A Tunisian Holiday
Pranay Gupte on a little-known but immensely enjoyable vacation spot.

Imitation To Invention
KK Hebbar on the growth of his art over the years.

51 GROWING UP GAY IN BOMBAY



By *ARK*

A first person account of what it is like to be homosexual in a repressive society.

57 IMPRINT: BRIEF

Bihar After Jagannath
By *Anand Khurana*

India's worst-run state may never be the same again—even after Dr Mishra's departure.

62 IN MY OWN ROOM

Dev Anand

Photographed By *Ashok Gupta*

Interviewed By *Malavika Sanghvi*

64 THE BEATLES AND THE MAHARISHI

By *Peter Brown and Steven Gaines*

Extracts from a daring, new book which finally reveals the truth about the Beatles.

74 GRAHAM GREENE

The Anglo-Texan Society: The Joke That Went Wrong
The author's addiction to practical jokes took him a step too far. . .

77 THE EXPATRIATES



Farrukh Dhondy
By *Sasthi Brata*

In a hard-hitting interview, the London writer admits to the dilemmas of an Indian writer in a racist society.

80 FICTION

Martand
By *Nayantara Sahgal*

A short story by one of India's most controversial writers.

83 IMAGES

Of Locks And Thieves
By *Ketaki Sheth*

A pictorial look at Indian and English antique markets.

86 ASTROLOGY

Bejan Daruwalla's predictions for 1984—the year of the entrepreneur and businessman.

Going shopping to Hong Kong? Bargains begin here.



The special, low excursion return fare to Hong Kong.

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UNCONVENTIONAL WISDOM

BY RAJIV TIWARI

WAITING FOR MORE ANANDS

A close look at Dr Verghese Kurien and his attempts to repeat the success of Amul.

THIRTEEN YEARS AGO a milk-marketing and socio-developmental programme called Operation Flood was embarked upon to create the White Revolution that was expected to sweep through the country transforming it into a land of milk, if not honey; leaving in its wake lakhs of prosperous peasant families who would benefit by selling their milk surplus through a co-operative system that was geared towards channelling this milk into the four metros of the country.

The scheme envisaged completion of this project by March 1975, but Operation Flood began a first phase which began Operation Flood II (due for completion in 1985) and as 1984 begins, Dr Kurien, the great helmsman of this White Revolution, is still far from achieving certain targets he had laid down over thirteen years ago.

To deal with the criticism that is now increasingly being levelled against the entire programme, a booklet called *Operation Flood: A Reality* is now being handed out as part of the media blitz that Operation Flood authorities indulge in whenever the programme comes in for any criticism.

The opening paragraph on the first page of this composite monograph begins by clearly stating that "The major objective of Operation Flood is to replicate the Anand Pattern milk co-operatives in the rural milk sheds and link these with the urban milk markets. Operation Flood was started in July 1970 with the objective of setting up 18 Anand Pattern Milk Co-operative Unions. . ."

Rajiv Tiwari is on the staff of Bombay's The Sunday Observer. He has been following Operation Flood for the past few years.



The Anand complex and (inset), Dr Kurien.

In the desire to create 'many Anands' lay the key to Operation Flood's success. Anand is the headquarters of the National Dairy Development Board which oversees the implementation of the programme and is also the source of such well-known milk products like Amul cheese, chocolates, milk powder, nutrients, *shrikhand* etc and has been the prime (and only) show-piece of the potential that lay in the milk-marketing scheme that Dr Kurien had envisaged.

Operation Flood had been touted as a national programme, for the common weal of all the states and 18 districts that it was meant to have covered.

Today, however, the impact of the programme is restricted primarily to

Gujarat and only secondarily to Tamil Nadu, both of which had a healthy co-operative movement even before the Anand Pattern was conceived. At first this may be dismissed as merely an aberration that developed in the course of the programme's implementation but a closer examination will reveal an inherent contradiction in the scheme that has inexorably drawn it towards promoting a lopsided growth, with the six district unions of Gujarat achieving a preponderance that belies any overall national development.

Apart from the unparalleled amount of funds allocated to Gujarat, the record number of co-operative milk unions and milk procurement levels that have been recorded by Gujarat and Tamil Nadu (and only recently in Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra) are in inverse proportion to the experiences of states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Kerala and Haryana which together, barely approximate even half

the levels that Gujarat has established in every respect.

Dr Kurien would like to have us believe that the programme has not received much support from these laggard states, and that explains their poor performance. This is not wrong as these states lack the large, commercial farmer lobbies like the Patels of Gujarat who have ensured the success of the programme because they stand to gain from it—just as the Jat Sikhs became the backbone of the Green Revolution. But this would also be a tacit, and yet clear admission of the failure of Operation Flood to mobilise the small, marginal farmers, and landless labourers, whom it had promised to uplift. Dr Kurien and his associates at Anand have sought very hard to dispel what

State dairy corporations have been coerced into accepting the Anand model after the NDDB cornered the funds for dairy development.

they call 'misapprehensions' regarding Operation Flood and have, in fact, voluntarily replied to 16 charges in their most recent public relations effort. Two of these charges are: "Is it true that except in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, the Anand Pattern Dairy Co-operatives have not worked?" and, "Can Amul or the Anand Pattern be replicated elsewhere in the country without substantial hidden subsidies, loans and grants which have been made available to Amul since its inception?"

Both the questions are answered by a barrage of figures but their real answers lie outside the cited statistics. The booklet itself concedes, "The milk co-operatives in Gujarat have developed to a very advanced stage in comparison to those in other states. Co-operative dairying had strong roots in Gujarat since 1946 when the first union was registered in Kaira." The clever phrasing does not, however, indicate that a modern dairy plant was established at Anand in 1929 and, to go back even further, the first dairy plant was established in 1900. Nor does it mention that in 1950, the Kaira District Co-operative Milk Producers Union had wrested the monopoly rights to supply milk to the Bombay milk scheme, the largest metropolitan market in the country. It also fails to note that the Kaira union grew under the political patronage of individuals such as Vallabhbhai Patel, BG Kher, Morarji Desai and KM Munshi, apart from the vigorous lobbying for growth by the Patels of Gujarat, who exercise a strong influence over state politics.

Since 1970 when Operation Flood began, the Anand union became its official show-piece. Today, of course the 'Anand model' has even been exported to neighbouring countries and in the process has become the repository of vast amounts of aid that have been allocated to nurture it.

In 1973, the six district unions of Gujarat—Kaira, Mehasana, Sabarkantha, Banaskantha, Baroda and Surat—were brought together in the

Gujarat Milk Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation, an apex marketing body that has a virtually unchallengeable hold over the milk and milk products market in the country.

The six Gujarat unions have thus been in a position to build up the infrastructure necessary to ensure their success. Operation Flood hinged on two aspects: one, the dairy surplus received from the European Economic Community; two, and more importantly, to enhance milk production by raising the genetic stocks of cattle and providing the dairy farmer with the several inputs required to make their business profitable.

On both these counts, an impressive range of facilities have been located in Gujarat, beyond all proportion to the rest of the country. However, the splendid complex at Anand is not an indication of widespread modernisation. Dr Kurien has not been able to extend his programme to the relatively backward region of Saurashtra.

At the root of the problem in replicating Anand is the capital intensive, high-technology base which has been adopted for bringing home the White Revolution. The success of the Anand Pattern depends entirely on the provision of large doses of capital that will enable surplus-producing farmers to rear cross-bred cattle and maintain them at their optimum potential. If these farmers are to get remunerative prices for their surplus milk, the apex-level district and state marketing federations must necessarily adopt a commercial thrust to their activities at the cost of a developmental drive.

The Gujarat marketing federation has been able to emerge at the forefront of the programme only because of the biased provision of these services. Just as Punjab was made the focus for the provision of capital and technological inputs during the Green Revolution, Anand and Gujarat have cornered these inputs for their own progress.

To counter the arguments that the Gujarat dairy federation has been

developed as a show-piece to attract more aid from EEC donors as well as the government, the NDDB has said that the government was keen to develop the dairy industry as fast as possible. The NDDB, therefore, contends that if it had decided to spread the money evenly over the whole country it would have served no useful purpose.

As if this is not damaging enough for a programme that purports to espouse socio-developmental objectives, the various state government dairy corporations have also been coerced into accepting the Anand Pattern. This was possible after the NDDB/IDC cornered almost all the funds for dairy development and set themselves up as the providers of the necessary technical know-how.

Till the Third Five Year Plan, the government had employed a model of phased-out growth with low-technology inputs which were labour intensive and which consequently led to a far more even, decentralised progress. With the benediction of the country's rarified political circles, Dr Kurien successfully promoted his Anand Pattern, centralised with a concentration of technocrats and professionals at Anand and Baroda who now control the entire programme.

The only hitch in the programme is that while Anand, with its early record of successful dairying has been able to assimilate the model, absorb the technology and capital to emerge as the trail-blazer, the rest of the country is not akin to Amul. In fact, there is a generation gap between the developmental levels achieved in Gujarat and the rest of the country.

Dr Kurien's aim, it must be re-emphasised, was to create 18 Anands, fourteen of which were located outside Gujarat. Thirteen years later we are still waiting for even *one* more Anand to emerge outside Gujarat. Dr Kurien has a number of promises to keep and many miles to go before he sleeps.

◆

BY ARUN CHACKO

MAHARAJAHS OLD AND NEW

The only princes left are Sonny Ramphal and his CHOGM cohorts.

"THE ORACLE OF Delphi once told the Spartans," the charming former Maharajah of Suket and Member of Parliament is fond of repeating, "When the gods wish to destroy you, they shower you with wealth and luxury.

"Receiving privy purses, enjoying privileges which are due to a head of state, psychologically and economically debilitated the princes," Mr Lalit Sen, as he likes to be called, continued softly. "It made most of them live in an ivory tower.

"Anybody would fall into that sort of trap if one wasn't sensitive or careful enough to realise what was happening," he added. "If you got used to that soft living, it ruined many aspects of the human spirit, many potentialities of human endeavour."

Thirty-five years after they gave up their kingdoms, and 12 years after they lost their privy purses and privileges, a surprising number of India's legendary maharajahs agree. Though few see themselves as a group any more, they nevertheless remain apprehensive about the ability of their tribe to face the future.

In the cold light of day, even former die-hards on the privy purse etc issues which generated so much fire over a decade ago, now concede its inevitability. But they are unanimous in agreeing, if there was one single blow that well and truly felled their ilk, it was the overnight obliteration of their tax-free purses. The memory still rankles.

MORE OFTEN THAN not just the scions of mainly the top ruling houses managed to cut their losses and quickly

Arun Chacko is Associate Editor of Boston's The World Paper. He is based in Delhi and writes frequently on sub-continental affairs.



consolidate their financial position. Of course they had larger amounts to play around with. Hence the royal families of Baroda, Kashmir, Jaipur, Jodhpur etc are still able to maintain truly extraordinary standards of living by any yardstick.

Elsewhere, given strict upbringing, education or considerable self discipline, some houses still have their head above water. But today there are a lot of rulers, big names in the Indian firmament, who survive by regularly disposing off valuable family property, furniture, carpets or antiques. Even if they could afford to meet day to day expenses, they maintain, the taxman's avarice invariably results in a negative income.

Others have rapidly gone through

large inheritances, and stripped magnificently furnished palaces to the shell. Still others cannot afford to send their children to decent schools, or get their daughters married. Can't question the Oracle of Delphi!

Princelings were intellectually no inferior to their peers, and on the sports field often much better. But whereas their middle class colleagues quickly went on to establish themselves for fear of starving, royalty often opted to return to indisciplined, feudal lives, inefficiently farm reduced family land, or live off rapidly crumbling property.

Today apathy and decay are the most pronounced features of once magnificent homes and life-styles. A great many are conscious of, and resent, the recent affluence of rich businessmen whose wealth, even the richest maharajahs maintain, far exceeds theirs.

But there are some notable exceptions. The Gujarat princes, some with postage stamp sized kingdoms, quickly realised their future lay in business, which they very successfully established. Obviously it doesn't matter if you're a blue blooded Gujarati Rajput or trader, you still have the Midas touch.

BASICALLY, INDIANS BOTH seem to appreciate and need a monarchical figure. It's surprising how, so many years after the abolition of the princely states, the former ruling families arouse as much loyalty and regard in their old principalities as they still do.

Immediately after Independence, and right on to 1971, princes merely had to stand for election to win, irrespective of whether they campaigned, were effective representatives, or

Our ruling princes ought to understand that the quality of the bashes they throw does not determine international status. Economic and military clout do.

their forefathers had tyrannised the local people. Today it's a little harder to get re-elected, despite the overwhelming advantage of easy recognisability. And many do. But their charisma remains limited to their former principalities.

At a national level, the mantle of monarchy has undoubtedly fallen on the Nehrus and their descendants. The same awe and *Mai-Baap* attitude the rank and file had for their maharajahs has obviously been transferred.

* * *

HOWEVER, THE NEED to perform better does not refer to the spate of international circuses held in New Delhi. It is in tackling far more pressing national problems—Punjab, Assam or poverty, all of which threaten our

unity.

Modern India's ruling princes ought to understand the quality of bashes they throw for heads of state does not determine international status. Economic and military clout do. No country with 40 per cent below the poverty line, one of the world's lowest per capitas, and horrendous social problems can have much of either, irrespective of what polite visitors might say under the influence of free champagne and caviar.

If it's only a question of throwing a good party, the maharajahs can still do that with more colour and class. They would not, for instance, tart up the magnificent red sandstone Ashoka Hotel by whitewashing it. Makes you wonder if the Red Fort too is in poss-

ible trouble.

Also, apart from possibly Mr Shridath Ramphal, no one believes that the Commonwealth today amounts to very much. CHOGM seemed an enormous avoidable waste of public money, which God knows is in exceedingly short supply for worthwhile projects.

Obviously, once again the crucial distinction between the state's and ruler's personal resources and interests has got blurred, memorably depicted by the recent film *Heat And Dust*. Unfortunately, the similarities don't end there. India too seems to be groaning, like the people of the ominous sounding principality of 'Khatm' under a handsome but short-sighted Nawab. ♦

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Kumbh Mela



RAGHUR SINGH

BY NAYANA DOLWANI

AMERICA'S DESI PRESS

It keeps tabs on navratri functions, matrimonial alliances and Asha Bhonsle nights.

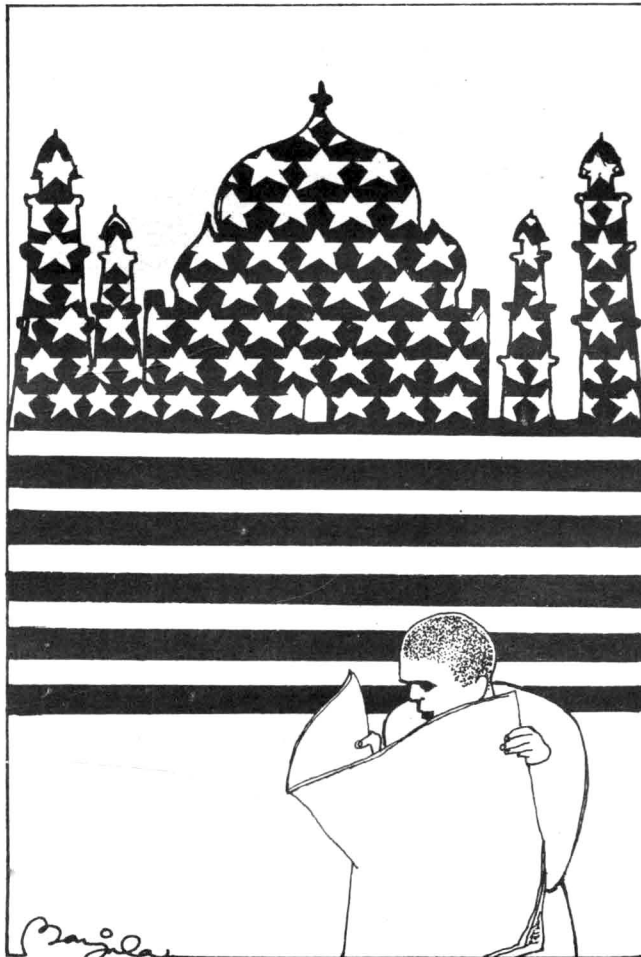
IN THE SUBWAY I stared stone-faced past hordes of silk-shirted lady lawyers in three-piece suits, I wallowed in the suave scent of middle-aged executives reading the restaurant guide of the *New York Times*. It is New York, it must be. I just walked past the slant-topped Citicorp building and saw the sun glinting against the fountains of the Rockefeller Centre as I rushed to work, the winter wind tugging at my scarf and making my eyes water. . .

New York, it may be. But in the brown carpeted 'conference room' of our office, with its two strict sofas, it is India, as Narendra Singh of Nagpur tells me the aims and hopes of his life.

Narendra Singh is an acupunctureist with books, international committee-memberships and a clinic in Nagpur with an amazing record of cures for incurable diseases to his name. "I want to give new points to the world," he says, very earnestly, the weak winter sun bouncing off his spectacles, casting dancing patterns on the wall across. Two such points, all his very own discovery, are located on the testicles. When punctured in the right way at the right time, they are a cure for azoospermia. I take notes with a nearly straight face, as he informs me that he has named these points Narendra T1 and Narendra T2. We lean back against the sofas, silent, pondering the significance of these two points on the testes, forever to be known as Narendra T1 and Narendra T2.

Yes I know this is America, the land that gave hamburgers to the world, but the voice on the phone, so

Nayana Dolwani lives in New York where she is on the staff of News India.



very Indian, wants to know please, if I can very kindly direct him to the *navratri* function to be held in Queens. And where else would I be, when the morning mail brings invitations to *puja* sessions, a photograph of Sri Chinmoy playing golf with dignitaries from Ceylon, and a free-lancer's interview with Dilip Kumar!

It is New York, yes, and it is India too, in this space warp of working for an Indian newspaper in America.

Working nine to five in the neon-lit newsroom, with journalists I could have known back home, our talk lingers as often on where to get the best *lassi* in Bombay, as it does on the windchill factor in New York. Writing exclusively for the Indian community in America, working for papers with names

like *India West*, *India Abroad* and *New India*, we have our roles neatly laid out before us. We bring the Indians news of home (reading the American papers, all you'll get is floods and riots and teeming millions), and we bring them news of the Indian community in America.

It is but natural then, that we tend to know more about what Mrs G uses to dye her hair (Clairol, if you must know) than we do about Andropov's latest diatribe on Ronald Reagan. We learn to skim the morning papers too, with a practised eye, blanking out almost all else in our search for names like Shah and Choudhary. Almost unconsciously, we slide into this world of creating an India in America.

Reminders that we are in the promised land do creep in from day to day. What with Fathers' day sales of *Basmati* rice, matrimonial ads asking for tall, fair, comely, *Kshatriya* girls with green cards and the first ever Mother's day Asian Indian Tennis match to be held in New York all vying for space in our paper, it is difficult to get down to serious business.

With 20 pages of Indian news to be gleaned each week from Reuter, week-old *Indian Expresses* and *Feminas*, it isn't always easy, this task of creating an India in our land of opportunity. And the Indians in the country hardly help at all.

The Indians in America do not stab their wives. They do not steal their neighbours' cars. They rarely even venture to commit suicide. They are a journalists' nightmare. They talk in soft voices, as they sit in their suburban houses, minding their own business, watching their 1.8 televisions with their 1.4 children. Unlike our

Indians in America are too busy consolidating their position and finding their feet to be overly concerned about finding a voice.

British counterparts, we do not write controversial novels, and we never attack policemen.

Being a first generation immigrant community, mostly professionals and businessmen, we Indians in America are too busy consolidating our positions and finding our feet, to be overly concerned about finding a voice.

In our search for news then, we must be thankful to the good Lord for granting us Bhagwan Rajneesh (may he never tire of creating controversy), Swraj Paul (we have great hope in him), and the movie *Gandhi* (of the 13 articles I have written around the film my favourite is the one about how the popcorn lines at theatres are more co-operative in the interval, influenced, no doubt by the philosophy of the

Mahatma). And in the rush to meet the weekly deadline, we must shamefacedly admit to including an occasional student who just won a debating prize.

It is only when we are threatened that we feel the need for a voice. Recently, with the Simpson Mazzoli Bill that threatens to curtail immigration to the United States, Indians have seen the wisdom of cultivating a political lobby. With the nightmare of the bill turning into a law, and cutting off the family reunification clause, maybe forever, we have begun to organise ourselves, supporting political candidates sympathetic to our cause. We know now, that if we are to have a foothold in the country, we must make our presence felt.

Along with the smell of *masalas*, the glitter of Asha Bhonsle nights and the screams of Hindi movies on home video, the Indians are here to stay. And upon the fledgling Indian newspapers (still miles behind their slick, sophisticated American counterparts) falls the task of recording their deeds, and of encouraging the community as it gropes for an identity.

Meanwhile, from deadline to deadline, we stumble along, with hysterical phone calls accusing us of 'exposing the weakness of our community to the white man' and letters that beg to be allowed to write for our 'esteemed newspaper'. It is no wonder then, that I always hear Hindi music playing in my head, as I walk along the streets of New York. ♦



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BY ASHISH RAJADHYAKSHA

CINEMA'S MIDDLE-ROADERS

The 'new' cinema caters to needs that the commercial cinema was unable to do.

INDIAN CINEMA IS now in a critical situation. The crisis in Hindi commercial cinema has only escalated in the last two years and video has not helped. Doordarshan plans a major overhaul through 1984 and several possible consequences of this might materially affect the whole commercial film industry.

More than that, it is clear that the spokesmen for the film industry are now no longer its barons. An industry that has, for 30 years sought in vain to organise itself along more systematic lines, now finds itself being controlled increasingly by state policy. And this policy in itself is being defined along what we can call 'middle-of-the-road' lines, making the term never more relevant than now.

A brief history: the commercial Hindi cinema as we know it today came into being in the late '40s and early '50s under certain circumstances. The SK Patil Film Enquiry Committee of 1951 documents how, in the space of three years, the earlier studio system was completely replaced by a new fly-by-night system. In 1946, 151 producers made 200 films. Of these, 94 dropped out of the industry the following year. In 1947, 214 producers made 283 films; of these 156 were new to filmmaking, 160 dropped out the following year. Likewise in 1948, 211 producers made 264 films; 157 newcomers, 151 drop-outs. And so it has gone on all these years. . . How has the Hindi film industry survived with a break-even rate of less than 20 per cent to become the world's largest manufacturer of feature films?

Ashish Rajadhyaksha is a free lance film critic. He is the author of A Return To The Epic, a book on Ritwik Ghatak.



The answer, it is increasingly clear, lies outside economics. It is obvious that the industry has traditionally provided a mass-culture for an otherwise cultureless lumpen. It is aimed at the vast numbers that make up our urban middle and lower classes, who have turned their backs on their traditional ties and who cannot afford imported cultural forms.

In many ways the new cinema—the cinema after *Bhuvan Shome* and *Ankur*, now the cinema of Shyam Benegal, Basu Bhattacharya, Sai Paranjpe, Govind Nihalani, Muzaffar Ali, Jabbar Patel and so many more—has been catering to 'needs' that the commercial cinema was either unable or unwilling to do. It has defined and expressed a reactionary tendency with-

in our conservative middle class with means far more sophisticated than commercial cinema has ever used. Its main instruments have been from techniques of mass communication—slipping a 'message' under the garb of the dubious concept of entertainment.

Its central core, is of *illusion*. We can see this best in Shyam Benegal's work. His first three films, till *Manthan*, have been what are called 'realist' films—films in which the key dramatic characters mingle indistinguishably from the other characters of the city or village. Interestingly, these three films have provided the industry today with more stars than the entire commercial industry may have done in the corresponding period.

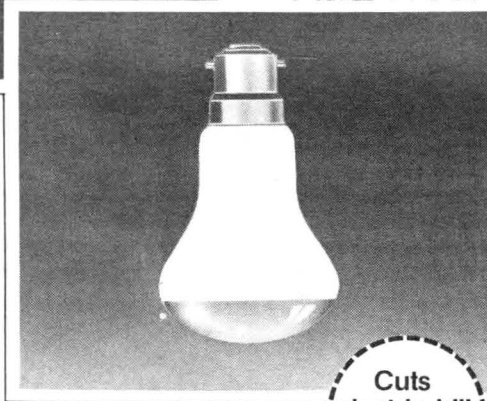
How do we reconcile the contradiction? They lead immediately to the question: beneath the veneer of 'realist' make-up and 'realist' dialogue, are the other conventions of acting, characterisation and narrative in his films equally 'realist' or do they go in quite the contrary direction?

Recall the initial procession shot in *Ankur*. Within roughly five seconds, as the figures come into view, the audience spots the heroine (Shabana Azmi). There is never any question of a mistake. Or recall the scene where Sadhu Meher gives Shabana Azmi the money. While she cries and he sits before her with a pitiable expression, the camera holds as long as it takes for the sheer sentiment to thoroughly seep into the audience. There are repeated sequences in which the presence of the 'star' or actor demonstrating his or her histrionic ability, *bursts through the realist facade*: Shabana hurling abuses at her employer in *Ankur*; Girish Karnad's outburst in



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The new cinema tackles complex 'real' experiences and integrates them into the traditional style. Its audience includes the conservative middle classes.

Nishant; Naseeruddin Shah's charged passages in *Manthan*.

There is a long tradition of illusionism in Hollywood cinema. Illusionism implies the reality of the distribution market and the sensuous, tangible reality of the 'star' parasitically feeding upon another reality, the reality of everyday life. The material experience of reality is extracted, repackaged into a commodity and resold to the people. The audience learns to distinguish between the tangible reality of commercial cinema, and the apparent reality—the presence of Amitabh Bachchan versus him *acting* a coolie. They are then able to enjoy the situations which are drawn from everyday working class life, because they are abstracted, made enjoyable.

Shyam Benegal, or any of the other filmmakers in this category, do not seem to use the obvious conventions of commercial cinema. But the many conventions of creating the star, or the unique individual, *apart* from the others, through colour, lighting and editing are all there. There are many such devices for isolating the 'extras' from the 'star'—the star is lit in a different way, the heroine possibly with back-lighting; he has a different pitch of voice from the rest; the camera lingers on his face for a fraction of a second more than it would on the others if he were in a crowd. . . All these devices were not always there in cinema. The father of American cinema, DW Griffith, used to make vast spectacles, but as Eisenstein points out, even bit players walking down streets somehow come alive. V Shantaram made *Amrit Manthan* around 1935, with a massive cast. But there are no 'extras' in his film the way there would be in, say *Razia Sultan* or *Mandi*.

Once such a 'realist' form is established, its uses are enormous and varied and these should be seen politically.

The 'reality' upon which Shyam Benegal and Govind Nihalani have based their work is political but their

audiences (and they have a vast audience in the city) range from the apparently liberal to some of the most conservative middle class sections. Why do these sections lap up films about peasant uprisings and ruling class exploitation?

The answer seems to be in the wave of conservatism that swept India's urban middle classes after the 1971 war, the refugee problem and the many spontaneous peasant uprisings in the East and the South. There can be no doubt that the middle-of-the-road cinema is a direct offshoot of this conservative swing.

It has succeeded in confining the very notion of progressivism into certain images, or ideas, of mythical events. In the '60s the American media had done almost exactly the same thing with Vietnam and the peace rallies. The connection is not arbitrary; Americanised ideas of mass communications have been the inspiration for our middle-roads. Through Benegal's work, then, it is possible to participate vicariously in the revolutionary act. Nowhere do his films impress you as being directly involved in issues concerning peasant revolt. Indeed, as we have seen, the very idea of peasant revolt as an apparent reality, is sold to the audience as a commodity. Or, as with Nihalani's *Ardh Satya*, the participation in this media-converted reality is accompanied by a massive catharsis of emotions.

So the new cinema has taken a step beyond the commercial cinema in tackling increasingly complex 'real' experiences and in integrating them into the traditional style. With Shashi Kapoor, for instance, this cinema has almost made a programme of providing a different elite entertainment for our upper classes. Kapoor's ability to purchase an entire lot of these 'radical' filmmakers has in a way demonstrated their underlying positions, for he has never hidden his own—he ironically, insists he does not make political films!

So the new cinema has taken a step beyond the commercial film in tackling increasingly complex 'real' experiences and in integrating them into the traditional style of entertainment for our urban middle and lower classes. This is not of course the reality of the people of the slums and *chawls* who pay to see the cinema. The new cinema's reality is an essentially romantic but seemingly more *authentic* reality. It is, ultimately, the reality of regionalism.

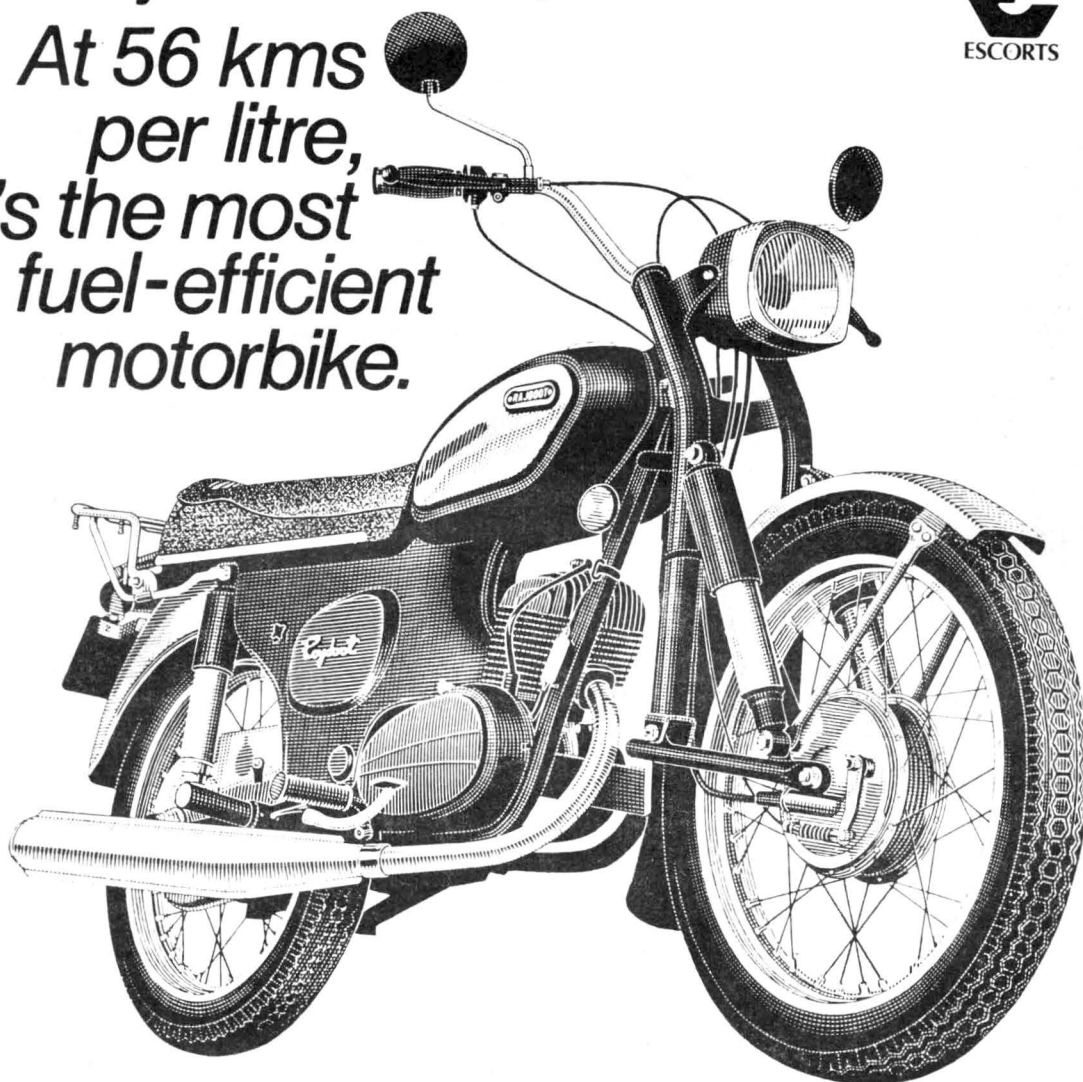
Regionalism, initially emanating from Bengal—with Satyajit Ray, Chidananda Das Gupta and the rest of the Bengal school—got its big push as a movement only with the Kannada new wave, Malayalam cinema and now, the new Hindi cinema that claims to provide a more 'authentic' view of the Indian reality to its urban audiences. The very idea of a cultural reality that can be geographically defined is a useful concept for local élites—NT Rama Rao's entire manifesto is based on such a promise—of restoring to the people of Andhra Pradesh their 'heritage'. As art, the contribution of such an idea is debatable but as politics its usefulness is immense: two southern Chief Ministers are ex-film stars and the Tamil cinema was almost entirely dominated by DMK regionalism.

What is happening today is that this patent false position is being re-integrated by the Shyam Benegals of the present into a more modern form, for more sophisticated purposes than it has been put to by the regionalist filmmakers of the past. Lately television too has become a medium for this regionalist art. It is not, therefore at all surprising that, as the government pushes through its idea of a more Americanised model of television, the men who should join M/S Pupul Jayakar and Ravi Shankar on the cultural advisory committee should be Shyam Benegal and Basu Bhattacharya.

We should be in for big changes through 1984. And the signs are ominous. ♦

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MAKING MONEY IN THE EIGHTIES

A guide to winners and losers, movers and shakers, and how to keep your resources growing in the years ahead.

INVESTMENT HAS PROBABLY BEEN THE REAL growth industry of the last decade. The number of individuals holding shares has increased phenomenally, and nearly every major share issue seems to be over-subscribed. A new generation of magazines has turned businessmen like Dhirubhai Ambani and Aditya Birla into celebrities and public consciousness of corporate affairs is probably higher than it has ever been.

But, beneath the glossy portraits on the covers of Annual Reports, the confusing rises and falls in share prices, and the often contradictory advice offered by expert analysts, does anybody have a clear idea of who is really going to make money in the rest of the decade? Does anybody really know what the growth sectors of the economy are going to be? Can anyone pick individual companies that are going to be the high fliers and top performers of the future? And finally, where should you put your money and how should you invest?

This month, we offer a guide to making money in the '80s, with definite picks for the future and unequivocal advice about where to put your money.

Our cover story package begins with a survey of the Indian economy, from the point of view of the investor, that was largely researched by Kumar Raj. His conclusion is that private industry has never had it better.

Then, four experts offer their advice and predictions for the year ahead. TK Seshadri, Editor of *Asian Finance*, Hong Kong's most respected financial magazine, offers an uncon-

ventional overview of the world economy. He claims that economic recovery may be further away than most people expect and argues that an increase in the price of oil would actually be a good thing. He also warns against investing in gold or silver. Seshadri was interviewed on a rare trip to Bombay.

Investment analysts, Nusli Davar and Arvind Dalal assess the future of the private sector and give tips on shares to buy and sell.

Dilip Thakore, the Editor of *Business World*, offers his overview of the Indian economy. Thakore feels that inflation may stage a come-back and both the private and public sectors have grown lazy and uncompetitive. But he picks some unusual companies as the growth firms of the future.

All three, Davar, Thakore and Dalal insist that Reliance Textiles is the company to watch in the years ahead. In view of their optimism, Reliance's past growth and the company's involvement in a recent controversy over Non-Resident Investments, we study the company's progress and profile (on the basis of a rare interview), the company's Chairman, Dhirubhai Ambani.

Finally, we end by suggesting a portfolio for the small investor who wishes to make money at the Stock Exchange.

In the months ahead, **Imprint** will follow the progress of its portfolio and will assess the performances of those industries and companies that our experts have picked as the ones to watch in the future.



A BROAD PERSPECTIVE: 1984

The Economy

Opinions on the state of the economy vary. There are those who feel that Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee has done a great job, and that the Indian economy is now healthy enough to withstand both, world-wide recessions and domestic drought. And there are those who feel that inflation is not really under control, that the gross national product is not growing as fast as it should, and that we can look forward to years of relatively low growth and high prices.

But everybody is agreed on one thing. The state of Indian industry is poised for a big change. If the government continues with its liberal policies towards the private sector, then it is going to be possible to make a lot of money in the years ahead. The stock markets will boom, new companies will come up, new areas of the economy will grow phenomenally and new groups will rise to the top. Says investment analyst, Nusli Davar: "I expect great changes in the years ahead."

The Private Sector

The government is now better disposed towards the private sector than it has been at any time in the last decade. The economy has been opened up, the import policy has been liberalised, foreign collaborations have been assisted and the licensing procedure has been streamlined. If this keeps up, then the private sector is poised for a great leap forward. For example, licensed capacity for two-wheeler production has more than trebled from 1980 levels, the licensed capacity for commercial vehicles and passenger cars has been doubled and import duties on capital goods, basic materials and electronic consumer goods have been slashed.

While these changes have been widely welcomed, they suggest that existing companies which have operated in a monopolistic or oligopolistic environment may lose out. For instance, the Malhotras who have dominated the

Indian blade industry for years (Topaz, Supermax etc) did their best to oppose new companies coming up in collaboration with Wilkinson and Gillette. Rahul Bajaj, Chairman of Bajaj Auto has also indirectly criticised the government for allowing Lohia Machines and Andhra Pradesh Scooters to join hands with Piago of Italy to manufacture two-wheelers. It seems fair to say that those who made money in the '70s and '80s may now suffer, because of increased competition.

The automobile industry is also going to feel the effects of increased competition. The stranglehold of Premier Automobiles and Hindustan Motors had endured since the '50s when the last automobile licences were issued. Though the government had planned to introduce a small car in the '70s, the scheme was effectively scuttled when Sanjay Gandhi was given the licence. Now that the Suzuki in Maruti clothing is in the market, the automobile industry is being shaken up. Hindustan Motors are updating their technology and increasing their capacity. Premier has new models planned, Standard Motors (who shut down in the '70s) are planning to re-open, and Sunrise (Dolphin Cars) of Bangalore have also asked to be allowed to augment their capacity.

As a result of all this activity, we are likely to have better, more modern and more fuel-efficient cars. In real terms, prices should also go down in the years ahead.

The effects of liberal licensing are being felt in various sectors of the economy, many of which should show phenomenal growth in the near future. Take the case of the electronics industry. When IBM exited, following a row with the Janata government, several new groups applied for licences to manufacture computers in India. Initially, only a few of them got licences—DCM, the Sarabhais and HCL. But now, more than 50 groups have applied for, and been granted licences. They include such corporate giants as the Tatas on the one hand, and also smaller

companies like Leela Lace Industries on the other. As a result, a computer which sold for over Rs five lakh in the '70s can be bought under Rs one lakh today. "There is going to be a great growth in this sector as India is dragged, kicking and screaming into the computer age," predicts Dilip Thakore, Editor of *Business World*. Much the same is true of most other electronic items such as televisions, calculators, tape recorders, video recorders and the like. Electronics is a growth sector for those who would make money in the '80s.

The first colour TV to be manufactured domestically, Weston, was priced at around Rs 18,000 in early 1982. Just before the Asiad, the government allowed individuals to import colour TV sets at a lower rate of duty, and the domestic price crashed to Rs 14,000 to meet the competition. It dropped further in 1983 when the government allowed producers to import kits that they could assemble into TV sets domestically, and the number of brands in the Indian market increased sharply. Now, a public sector brand, Uptron, is available at just Rs 5,600. Thus, in two years, the price of a consumer product dropped from Rs 18,000 to Rs 5,600—a situation that would have been unimaginable in the '70s.

Official Policy

The private sector must depend on the public sector because it controls all infrastructural industries. And the public sector's performance continues to be disappointing. This year too, there have been serious shortfalls in certain crucial sectors such as power, coal and railways. In the case of power, the shortfall is likely to be as high as over ten per cent in terms of electricity generated (170 billion units as against 191 billion planned) and over 25 per cent in capacity augmentation (14,000 to 14,500 MW as against 19,660 MW). The effects of this shortfall can be felt in the performance of the private sector.

Last year, the public sector continued to perform badly. Overall investment in public sector projects, including infrastructural and industrial projects stood at a staggering Rs 80,000 crore while it made a net loss of Rs 2,000 crore in 1982.

The government seems to have realised that this cannot go on and after the mid-term appraisal of the Sixth Plan, the Planning Minister warned the states that state-owned public sector projects would have to become more efficient while Mrs Gandhi has now begun to speak of a ten per cent return on investment in the public sector.

The logical solution would be to invite the private sector into areas hitherto reserved for the public sector and there are signs that the government intends to do this. The private sector has been invited to enter the power generation field. Tatas have been awarded a letter of intent for a fertiliser plant after more than a decade of trying, and Escorts have been allowed to establish a dry dock facility, hitherto a public sector monopoly. Recently, the Defence Minister also told Parliament that the private sector would be allowed to manufacture certain defence products.

Was There A Slump?

Was there really a recession in 1982? Did we come out of it in 1983? Will it return in the years ahead?

In 1982, the Finance Ministry seemed as determined to deny that there was a demand recession as industry seemed keen to claim that there was one. Looking back, it seems that the Finance Ministry was right. The industrial lobby based its claim on the grounds that the lack of demand for goods had caused production to drop and prices to fall. Statistics make this a difficult claim to sustain. A study of 300 industries by *Business Standard* revealed that sales in 1982-83 were 12.8 per cent higher than in the previous year. Profitability also went up by 19.4 per cent over the previous year.

What really happened was that certain sectors suffered a set back mainly due to changes in fiscal and monetary policy. The two sectors usually said to be feeling the effects of the recession were soda ash and commercial vehicles.

TELCO claimed in late 1981 that it had a waiting list for more than three years. Then in mid-1982, the company suddenly announced that it had a stockpile of 5000 trucks—the sudden reversal in its fortunes was attributed to the demand recession. In fact, what had happened was that the Reserve Bank had issued instructions withdrawing the credit that had been extended for buying trucks. Naturally, truck sales were adversely affected—but this was no argument in favour of a generalised recession. In the case of soda ash, the industry was hit by import liberalisation. When Tata Chemicals slashed prices by 25 per cent in mid-1982, it cleared a soda ash stockpile of a year, in no time at all.

It is generally misleading to talk in terms of demand recessions in India because most Western concepts cannot be easily transplanted to our economy. We function in a seller's market.

Prices And Inflation

Many analysts feel that inflation is going to be our big problem in the years ahead. Says former Harvard economist, Subramaniam

Swamy: "I expect a relatively high level of inflation next year. Generally, prices should come down at this time of the year. Nevertheless, this year, they are continuing to rise. This suggests that they are going to go up in the next year." Agrees Dilip Thakore: "The forces of inflation are regrouping themselves." Others express concern over the sharp growth in the money supply in the last few months and expect that it will lead to a rise in prices next year.

Certainly, present trends are not very encouraging. In mid-November 1983, wholesale prices rose 9.2 per cent over the last year. In the same time period the year before, the rise recorded was merely 2.8 per cent. The latest wholesale price index shows that the major increases are in the prices of food and primary articles. The annual rise in prices for primary food products was 17.4 per cent while it was 13.6 per cent in the case of manufactured food products.

The short-term solution for the government would be to import food from abroad and to flood the domestic market. This might explain the recent grain purchases from Australia. But

this will not solve the problem in the long run.

What is required is a strong check on the growth of the money supply, a drive to reduce price manipulation by middle men, and a crackdown on black money. In 1981, despite a high rate of industrial production, prices continued to rise till credit was tightened and a drive to unearth black money was undertaken. Then, the rate of inflation dropped from 14 per cent to 2.8 per cent in a few months. As black money accounts for a staggering 50 per cent of our national income, it stands to reason that straightforward fiscal policy alone cannot control inflation.

The Best Way To Invest

Since 1961, consumer prices have risen five-fold. So anyone who had put his money in fixed deposits will actually have lost money. On the other hand, real estate prices rose twenty-fold. Since 1971, gold prices have gone up nine-fold, far ahead of the rate of inflation. A recent study in *India Today* revealed that anyone who invested in gold in 1970-71 trebled his purchasing power while anyone who invested in stocks and shares over the same period, halved it. According to this study, the real price of all shares went down during this period. Further, the study projected that prices will go up 75 per cent in five years from now while stocks would go up only by 33 per cent.

Is it really worth investing in anything except for gold and real estate? The answer is 'yes' for two reasons. Firstly, not everybody can afford gold or real estate at today's prices. And secondly, there are a handful of shares that have kept pace with inflation. In some cases, the yield has even topped gold and real estate. The classic case is, of course, Reliance Textiles. (See story elsewhere in this feature.) Anybody who bought a Rs ten Reliance share in 1971, would today hold (after bonus issues) 16 shares. Each share would be worth Rs 106. That means that the Rs ten investment would be worth Rs 1,696 today. This is a phenomenal return. A Rs ten investment in gold would be worth only Rs 90 today. So there are always shares that are worth buying. ♦

By TK Seshadri

THE WORLD ECONOMY



An End To The Slump?

Generally, everybody is expecting a world recovery in 1984. It is felt that once the US economy begins doing well, the world economy will follow suit.

I think this is too optimistic. Firstly, 1984 is an election year in the US and in that sort of climate, anything can happen. Secondly, Paul Volcker of the Federal Reserve seems to have told the White House that he will not increase interest rates. Thirdly, the US budget deficit will keep the cost of credit high. So I think that those who expect a speedy recovery in the US are going to be disappointed.

While both Japan and Germany will do well, I don't believe that recovery in these economies will be strong enough to benefit the world economy. So don't expect any boom in 1984.

Will World Oil Prices Rise?

There is a tendency to gloat over the stability of world oil prices that I do not share. I believe that world economic recovery cannot be effected at an oil price of \$29 a barrel. For recovery to take place, the price should go up.

This is an unconventional view so I will explain myself. At the moment, the OPEC countries are net borrowers from the world banking system. Should the price go up to even \$32 a barrel, then they would again move into surplus and begin spending the extra revenue. This will increase the velocity of money within the world economy and could lead the world out of a recessionary situation.

Of course this will have some negative effects in the beginning. Less Developed Countries (LDC's) will be affected by such an oil price hike but finally even they will benefit. Most LDC's economies are ready to step out of a recessionary situation, and an increase in world trade will give them just the opportunity they need.

This may seem like a screwball prescription but I firmly believe that a

small increase in the price of oil is the only way of pushing the world economy into a boom. And in any case, I think OPEC will probably raise the price of oil in 1984. Otherwise the next major recession will come soon and may be devastating.

World Price Levels

Most countries of the world have now controlled inflation. In 99 per cent of the cases it is now down to single figures. I don't see much change in that over the next few years. I think prices will remain largely static.

However, with an increase in the velocity of money—should oil prices go up as I expect—it is possible that there may be some rise in the world price level.

In India, the only certainty we can rely on is uncertainty. The latest issue of the *Finance And Development Quarterly*, jointly produced by the World Bank and the IMF, carries a paper on Underground Economies. According to those calculations, 50 per cent of India's national income is in the black economy. It becomes difficult to make certain predictions when so much money is unaccounted for.

Investing In Gold And Silver

Gold is no longer as significant as it once was. It is significant now only in terms of the US dollar. If the dollar is strong, then the gold price is weak and vice versa. Future increases in the value of gold will depend entirely on US interest rates, and dollar movements. Surveys that show how gold has multiplied in value in the '70s while share prices have tumbled in real terms, offer no lessons for the future. The '70s were an exceptional period of high inflation. Such a situation will not recur.

It is madness to invest in gold in the present economic context. Firstly, it is not an interest-bearing asset and secondly, the price of gold should always be looked at in relation to the

US dollar. Should one buy gold when the rupee is Rs 10 to the dollar, what will happen when the rate drops to Rs 15 to the dollar?

Generally, buy no commodities. Buy financial instruments. The world is committed to increasing the supply of all commodities. Nobody is increasing the supply of instruments.

It's my view that there is a built-in tendency to lose in gold in real terms. People who argue otherwise generally overlook the loss of interest they suffer as a result of investment in idle assets. My advice is to leave gold to people in Bhuleshwar and Jhaveri Bazaar. It has no other significance.

Indian Export Prospects

Should there be a world economic recovery then Indian exports will go up by 10 to 15 per cent. But this is not worth gloating over. It is nothing India can take credit for.

What India should aim for is a 20 to 25 per cent increase every year. Until that happens, there is nothing to be proud of. Generally, Indian industry works on very high profit margins, does not produce goods of world class, and is simply uncompetitive.

But now, I think there is enormous potential. Fortunately, we are able to compete in some non-traditional sectors like computer software and electronics. If India concentrates on these products, then there is a possibility of a breakthrough in the '80s.

There has also been a tendency on the part of Indian companies to expand into the Far East. In my view, this is not a very good idea because countries like Malaysia and Indonesia have no real reason to encourage Indian companies when they can have their pick of the best international corporations.

Indian industry simply cannot compete. I recently did a study of 250 Japanese companies, and found that in the top ten, profit margins were under two per cent. How can our companies then hope to compete abroad?

Dreams woven with velvet and pearls

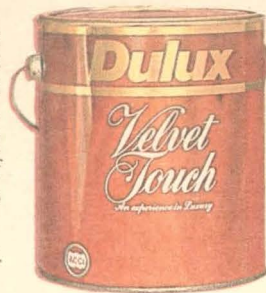


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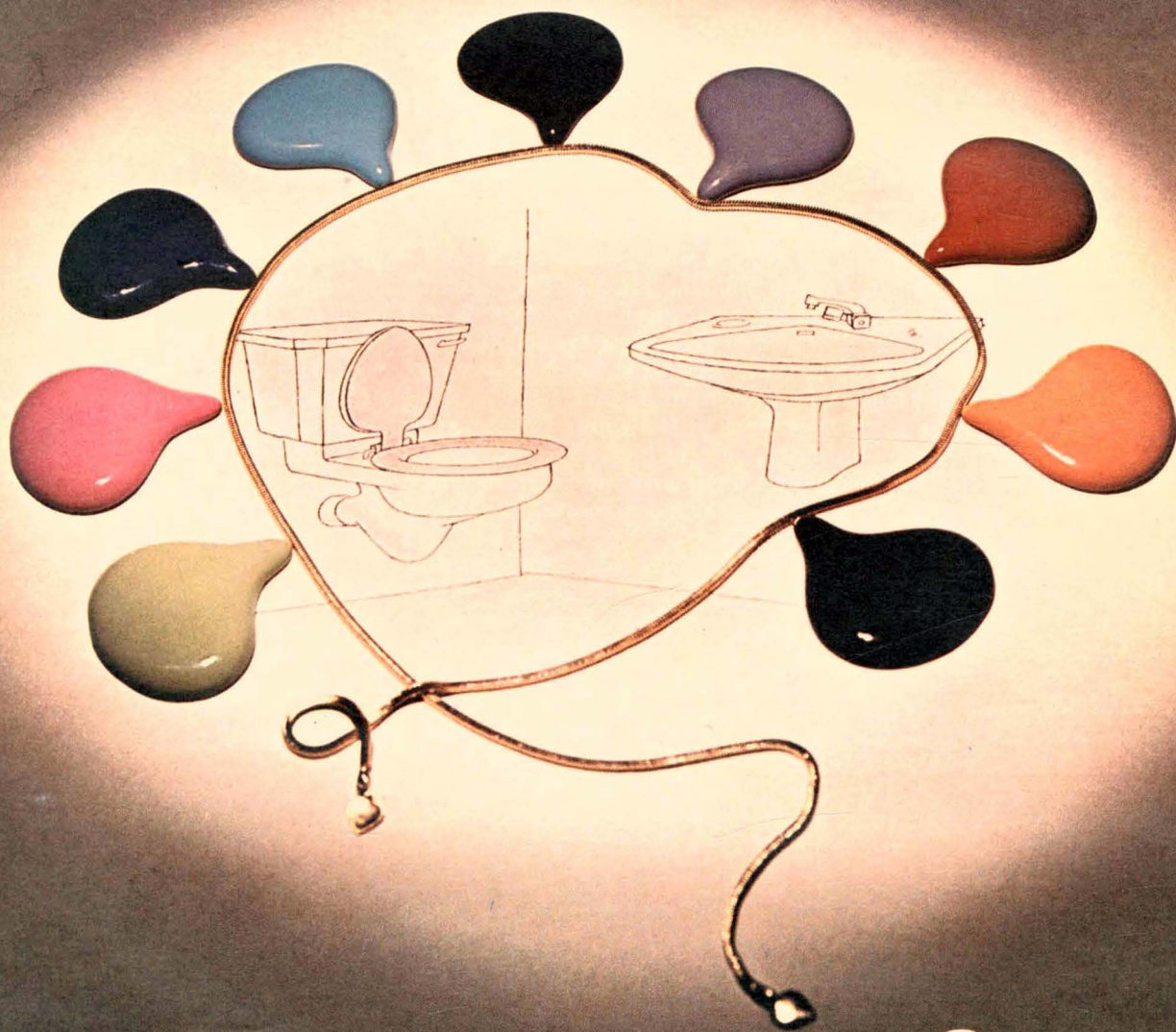


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By Dilip Thakore

AN OVERVIEW



The Indian Economy

I see a regrouping of the forces of inflation because in spite of a good monsoon the price indices are ominously stable. The problem is one of inadequacies of supply because the infrastructure industries—power, coal, railways, banking—are in the public sector which is woefully mismanaged. For example, the average capacity utilisation in the vital power generation sector is a mere 48 per cent and unlikely to improve unless the coal-railway-power tangle is sorted out. And unless it is sorted out through the introduction of managerial efficiencies, a wide demand-supply gap is likely to persist within the economy.

The Public Sector

There are oases of excellence such as BHEL and HMT, but on the whole, the wastage of resources in the public sector is a scandal. The most dramatic example of the consequences of this wastage is the power sector. According to a FICCI study, we lose production valued at Rs 10,000 crore each year because of inadequate power generation.

The same is true of other segments of the public sector.

The Private Sector

Partly because it is so dependent on a poorly managed public sector infrastructure, the private sector hasn't been allowed to attain its full potential. Nevertheless, it is clear that given the benefit of over-protective government policies even the private sector has become lazy and inefficient.

There is clear evidence that Indian industry is becoming uncompetitive when you consider that in 1947 our share of world exports was one per cent. Now it is down to 0.44 per cent.

Liberal Official Policy

The new liberalised import policy is commendable in that it provides some competition for

indigenous firms. But the licensing system needs to be looked at again. Many licences granted are not implemented which has led to the creation of a sellers' market dominated by a few firms. The discretionary power of politicians and civil servants to grant licences and permission needs to be drastically reduced.

In recent months there has been a move towards removing the plethora of controls imposed upon the economy. While this is a good thing, it also shows how much time has been wasted—a gargantuan system of controls has been set up and is now being slowly dismantled.

I think it also shows how government policy in India has always gone against the grain of the entrepreneurial genius of the Indian people.

Non-Resident Money

The entire non-resident investment scheme was based on just one factor: the exploitation of the sentiment of non-resident Indians. It was hoped that their sentimental attachment to India would prompt overseas Indians into sending their money here. But it is foolish to devise schemes of this sort based solely on sentiment because non-residents are making business decisions when they invest in this country. And once a policy is formulated, events must be allowed to take their own course. It is foolish to back-track in the middle and destroy investor confidence. By introducing so much paper work and so many ifs and buts, the Union Government has effectively torpedoed the NRI scheme.

Once the scheme had been announced, the government should have stood by it. If changes in management control resulted, too bad. It is wrong to change the rules halfway through the game. In any case, it is very wrong for managements to refuse to register shares purchased for value. This could destroy confidence in the stock markets with far-reaching effects on the ability of the corporate sector to mobilise

finance for growth and expansion.

Where To Look For Growth

The Automotive Sector: I think that as two-wheelers become cheaper, a tremendous growth in this sector is on the cards. One only hopes that the government realises that it could increase its revenues by steadily decreasing excise duties.

But one neglected aspect of the automotive boom is the road construction sector. In the years ahead, the roads are likely to be choked: the quantity and the quality are both very poor. This is a sector in which any investment would show results at once.

Agro-Implements: There is a growing market for all kinds of agricultural inputs. Diesel engines, improved ploughs—that sort of product will sell well in the next few years.

Luxury Goods: If inflation does not rise to a very high level, then I see a large increase in the market for so-called luxury goods: TVs, videos etc. There is so much money in the parallel economy that it is bound to affect the demand for such goods.

Firms That Will Grow

Reliance: A company to watch. There is a misconception that it is a one-man show. On the contrary, it has many very good managers, some of whom it has hired recently.

The Allana Group: Not a business house that has been much in the public eye but one with a great future ahead of it. It has a turnover of Rs120 crore—is probably India's largest exporter of agricultural produce. Its buffalo meat exports alone amount to Rs 50 crore.

Oswal Agro: This company is growing faster than did Reliance in its heyday. It already has a 17 per cent share of the national toilet soap market in competition against Hindustan Lever, Tata Oil Mills and others and has also gone into the production of soya bean and other oils. It could well be the Reliance of the '80s. ♦

By Nusli Davar

THE PRIVATE SECTOR



Economic Scene

If this government stays in power after the next elections, then I think that the prospects are good. Pranab Mukherjee has done a marvellous job. Despite a world-wide recession and droughts at home, we have got away virtually unscathed.

The only dangers I see are the dip in the value of the rupee and the repayment of the IMF loan. I hope that we don't end up reeling like Brazil or Mexico.

Non-Resident Money

It is a pity that a section of the press and some industrialists have tried to scuttle the scheme. It is the logical source of funds for us, and needs to be encouraged.

If non-residents do take over some companies, then I see nothing wrong. All I would suggest is that when a take-over bid is announced, financial institutions should either lose their vote or they should liquidate their holdings through a public issue.

But what this controversy has so far ignored is another aspect of the scheme. The majority of the money is coming in for fixed deposits not for shares. And the rates of interest we are offering on these deposits are much too high. We could probably get loans on the money markets abroad at lower rates. This is the area that needs to be looked at carefully.

The State Of The Private Sector

I think that the private sector has it quite easy at the moment. There is this myth about us being the highest taxed nation that needs exploding. The incentives that the government gives to industry in the form of financing and tax rebates, particularly if you go to a backward area, are very substantial.

It is possible for companies to grow phenomenally in India as the example of Reliance proves. I believe that we are going to see a lot of groups grow-

ing very rapidly in the years ahead, and by the end of the decade, the list of the top ten industrial houses could read very differently.

Industries In Trouble

Steel will continue to do badly. The engineering recession may deepen. The textile machinery industry will remain in a bad way.

This is an unconventional view but I think that the worst is over for the textile industry. It is a cyclical industry so the cycle should be getting over. Things can only get better.

Groups To Watch

The Nagarjuna Group: KVK Raju is, in many ways, the Dhirubhai Ambani of the South. He started out as a factory manager in Union Carbide and then went into business for himself and has done phenomenally well. He was the man who popularised leasing to a certain degree, who started India's first mutual fund: Nagarjuna Investments. He is now planning to bring a Rs 500-crore project to the market. In the last six years, he has built up an impressive group (Nagarjuna Steel, Nagarjuna Coated Tubes, Deccan Cement, Nagarjuna Exim and Deccan Finance and Leasing) that will continue to grow in the '80s.

High Fliers And Quick Growers

Aditya Birla: He is going to surpass his grandfather in his achievements. Just look at the way he took over Indian Rayon. At the time, the Rs 100 share was selling for Rs 22. Now, the share (subdivided into ten Rs 10 shares) is selling for Rs 71. All this in the space of five years.

He moved into cement at the right time, his companies abroad are doing well and Indian Rayon will diversify. Moreover, I think he will get the largest chunk of the Birla companies. The industrialist of the future.

Harsh Goenka: A silent worker

with a shrewd grasp of figures who realises that if you master finance, everything else follows. Projections suggest that he will have a Rs 1,000-crore group in a couple of years. His take-over style is brilliant, though I think he made a mistake by letting Premier off the hook. My feeling is that by the end of the decade, the top four groups will be: Tata, Birla, Reliance and Goenka. And Harsh Goenka will be the Dhirubhai Ambani of his generation.

Ambani Brothers: Dhirubhai has been blessed twice over. His two sons Mukesh and Anil are the definite high fliers of the '80s. The manner in which Mukesh executed the Rs 110-crore Patalganga project ahead of schedule must definitely put him in the front line today. Anil Ambani is following in his brother's and father's footsteps and between the two of them it does seem that Reliance will be bidding for the number one slot before 1990.

Advice To Small Investors

I strongly recommend that the small investor should look for a small company. Low-priced shares are where the cream lies. I recommended Oswal Agro in June when the price was Rs 22. Today the price is Rs 91. Every year, the small investor can find three or four shares like this. It is always easier for a small company to double its capital than it is for a large one, so there is always a greater chance of the share going up.

What The Future Holds

My feeling is that the Tatas will not grow at a very high rate, that Aditya's companies in the Birla group will grow well but that all the others, the Mafatlals, the Singhnias etc will be left behind by the newer groups like Reliance and Goenka.

Let's see how many more groups like Goenka and Reliance the rest of the '80s have in store for us.

By Arvind Dalal

THE STOCK MARKET



The Stock Market Boom

1984 is going to be a good year for the market and I'm optimistic about share prices in the next two or three years. My confidence seems to be shared by the average investor. In 1967, there were just 17 lakh shareholders in the country. Today there are 72 lakh. And by the end of 1985, there should be one crore.

There are two major reasons for the boom. Firstly, Indians have always had a high propensity to save. In the old days, people would put their money into gold, silver or property. Now all three of them are priced beyond the reach of the man with Rs 10,000 or so to invest. On the other hand, shares are easily affordable. Secondly, some black money has entered the market. Those with relatively low cash incomes (Rs 20,000 p.a. or so) like to invest in long term bonds in the hope of laundering their money.

New Issues To Expect

In recent years, cumulative debentures have become increasingly popular. Such debentures offer an annual interest of around 15 per cent which, when compounded over three years or so, works out to even more. Some of them have buy-back clauses which means that you can get your money back in a year. As the rate of interest offered is higher than that offered for fixed deposits, they are very popular.

In the next few months, there will be debenture issues from Century Enka, ACC, JK Synthetics, Ceat, Premier Auto and Century Spinning and Weaving. All are recommended.

Tough Times For Textiles

There are tough times ahead for the textile industry. Basically, the textile industry survived because of cheap labour in the old days. Now, with rising wages, its high labour intensity has become a drawback.

No textile shares are worth buying

with the exception of Reliance, where a lot of the profit comes from the yarn business. It may not be worth selling just yet if you have some shares to dispose of because prices are so low, but a few shares are worth keeping: Lalbhai, Standard, and perhaps Bombay Dyeing. Otherwise, look for a way of getting out of textiles.

Stay Away From Leasing

The great boom of our times but one that I am sceptical about. It seems to me to be too much like the mini-steel plant boom of 1974. Just as that bubble burst, so too will this one. What is the principle behind leasing? You buy something at 16 per cent interest and lease it out at 24 per cent. It is the eight per cent difference that is supposed to pay expenses, cover risks and yield great profits. Does that sound very promising? My advice is to steer clear.

Buy Fertiliser Shares

A good buy. We are basically an agricultural country and agricultural products will always have a market. I expect that fertilisers will be much in demand in the coming months and this is the right time to buy Gujarat State Fertiliser shares or those of Gujarat Narmada Fertilisers. Expect a rise of 25 per cent in the near future, and a long term benefit too.

Expect A Cement Boom

There seems little doubt now that there will be a glut for parts of 1984 as several new cement plants come into stream at the same time. But a glut in cement cannot last. There is an export potential and the government can always help the industry by launching public works.

So my recommendation is to buy cement shares, particularly if the companies are located in states without power shortages: ACC and Mangalam Cement for example. The two Birla companies that have gone into cement

are also good buys: Gwalior Rayon and Indian Rayon.

Cables

This is a gamble but risk-takers would do well to invest in cable shares. Prices are depressed now because state government electricity boards simply don't have the funds to buy cables. But there is a good chance that this will change in 1984, in which case, people who buy Universal Cable and Mahendra Electricals now stand to make money.

Get Out Of Shipping

If you still have any shipping shares, prepare to sell. 1984 is going to be another bad year. The only shipping share worth holding on to at the moment is Great Eastern which may go up.

The Birlas Will Grow

The new generation is proving itself to be much better than anyone expected. By now everybody has recognised the brilliance of Aditya Birla, but there are others too who are doing well. Hindustan Motors was trading between 11 and 15 when Chandrakant Birla took it over a few years ago. The share is now 42 and remains a good buy. Also to be watched is Sudarshan Birla of OCM and Digjam.

BK Birla's Jayshree Tea has had a good year and will do equally well in 1984. Other Birla shares worth buying are Kesoram, Century, Indian Rayon and Gwalior Rayon.

Luxury Goods Will Sell

Just as a lot of black money is flowing into the stock market, a lot of it is going on consumer goods. My own feeling is that other things being equal, the boom in consumer goods will continue. So look closely at consumer goods industries: refrigerators, television sets, furniture, fans, formica and the like. ♦

RELIANCE: A SUCCESS STORY

JUST FIVE YEARS ago, the spectacular growth of Reliance Textiles was being dismissed by most financial analysts in Bombay as a bubble that could easily burst. Dhirubhai Ambani, 50, Reliance's Chairman, was being dubbed a wheeler-dealer and a fixer who used corruption instead of solid, management acumen.

Today, most of the sceptics have been silenced. If the Reliance bubble is going to burst, then it is certainly taking its time about it; the company appears to be going from strength to strength.

Reliance's figures speak for themselves. Anybody who bought a Rs 10 share in the company when it went public in 1977 would today have 16 shares, each of them priced at Rs 106—a total value of Rs 1,696 on a Rs 10 investment. The company's turn over has shot up from Rs 60 lakh in 1966 to Rs 482 crore in 1983 and it has come from nowhere to become India's fifth largest group. It is projected, that by 1985-86, it will probably be the third largest group in the country and by 1990, it stands a chance of giving the Tatas and the Birlas a run for their money. Most financial analysts are certain that Reliance will maintain its spectacular growth rate. All three of the experts *Imprint* consulted for this feature, Nusli Davar, Dilip Thakore and Arvind Dalal, agreed that Reliance would be the group to watch in the years ahead. Says Davar: "Dhirubhai is fortunate in having built up an excellent team of managers. His sons too have followed in their father's footsteps. After this current expansion programme is carried out, there can be no stopping Reliance."

ALL IN ALL, it isn't bad going for a man who never even finished his schooling. Dhirubhai Ambani (born Dhirajlal) was the son of a Junagadh schoolteacher who sailed off to Aden at the age of 16 to find employment as a clerk. Eight years later he was back and had set up the Reliance Commercial Corporation to trade in rayon, nylon and such com-

modities as pepper, cashew nuts and the like.

Ambani's early experiences in the rayon and nylon trade were to set the pattern for his latter-day success. At the time, firms that exported rayon fabrics were allowed to import nylon in return. Ambani discovered that nylon sold at a premium of 100 per cent to 300 per cent (at one stage, it was 700 per cent), in the domestic market and his Reliance Commercial Corporation soon became one of the largest exporters in the industry.

In February 1966, Ambani opened a small textile mill in Naroda, Gujarat, so that he could export his own manufactures. It was a relatively small operation with a turn over of Rs 60 lakh and an asset value of Rs 28 lakh. While the manufacturing operation flourished in the export market, Ambani continued to make high profits from the yarn trade.



The company's greatest growth came in the post-1977 period when its turn over went up from Rs 68 crore in 1977 to Rs 482 crore in 1983. The stock market had taken to the Reliance share even though some leading stockbrokers were wary of Ambani's spectacular success. Says Arvind Dalal: "I must admit that all of us thought that Reliance was a bubble. We thought that there was overtrading in the share and that one day, this bubble would burst. Of course, we were wrong."

AROUND THIS TIME, Ambani's reputation as a fixer also began to catch up with him. Critics of Reliance pointed to his close links with politicians from every party and claimed that through judicious use of influence and resources, he had arranged to have government policies manipulated to his advantage. The first criticism related to the high unit value scheme which, it was alleged, had been devised solely so that Reliance could profit from it. Then, there were allegations that the Collector of Customs (Bombay), a friend of Ambani's was giving his imports preferential treatment. Others claimed that Customs men looked the other way when Reliance imported texturising machinery under false pretences. As the allegations mounted up, sections of the textile establishment began to treat Ambani as a wheeler-dealer whose success could not last. They were wrong.

In 1981, Ambani compounded his success by launching a Rs 80-crore polyester filament yarn (PFY) project in collaboration with Dupont, the US multi-national. The plant, located at Patalganga, 80 kms from Bombay, was constructed in record time and is now already in stream. Characteristically, the government came to Ambani's assistance again. Till June 1980, the duty on imported PFY had been Rs 56.35 per kg. After Ambani began his project, it went up steadily. In February 1981, it became Rs 58.80, in February 1983, it went up to Rs 61.25 and then just as his plant was ready, it

shot up to Rs 90 per kg. While other textile companies were outraged, the government paid no attention to their protests and Reliance profited again.

ONLY ONCE DID Ambani seem to be in any kind of trouble. In 1982, he floated a convertible debenture issue open to Reliance shareholders, debenture holders of the previous issues and fixed deposit certificate holders. It seemed a good opportunity for some enterprising brokers to make a packet. They sold Reliance shares in the hope of bringing the price down, so that they could eventually buy back the shares at a low price and corner the market. It was a well organised scheme and one that couldn't have gone wrong. Except of course that Ambani is a born fighter who loves such challenges. As soon as the brokers began unloading the shares, Ambani and his associates began buying them. Some brokers, confident that the price would crash had even contracted to sell shares they did not own. They hoped that when the time for delivery came, the price would be so low that it would be possible for them to then buy the shares at a throw-away price and sell them at the higher price prevailing at the time they had agreed to sell them. Much to their dismay, the price did not go down and no new shares came on the market. Yet, they had to deliver them on the stipulated day.

Finally, the Stock Exchange suspended trading in Reliance shares while a settlement was negotiated with the buyers of the shares (never publicly identified, but widely believed to be Ambani and his associates). Some brokers were ruined and the entire exercise backfired badly on them with only Ambani and Reliance coming out on top.

AMBANI'S RECENT TROUBLES are linked to this stock market battle. Where did he get the money to buy up all the shares? All the time it was rumoured that Arabs and non-residents had provided the funds. Only this year did it clearly emerge that Rs 22.9 crore had been invested in Reliance by various foreign companies under the Non-Resident Investment scheme. This money came in handy to beat the share manipulations.

However, the names of the companies that had sent the money caused

Ambani's high degree of personal motivation, manipulative skills and shrewd understanding of the Indian economy account for his success.

some curiosity: Iota Investment and Fiasco Investment to name two. Further, when Pranab Mukherjee released details of the investments to the Rajya Sabha on July 26, 1983, he claimed that they were all UK companies. *The Telegraph*, a Calcutta paper, was able to show that these companies did exist, but that they were not registered in the UK when the investments were made. Moreover, the day after Pranab Mukherjee made his Rajya Sabha statement, somebody hurriedly went and registered them with the UK Registrar of Companies. *The Telegraph's* disclosures led to a debate in Parliament and caused a momentary stir.

Ambani's explanation is simple. The eleven companies who invested the money were UK companies only in the broadest sense of the term. Actually, they were registered in the Isle of Man, a tax haven under the control of Britain, which offers registration facilities to companies eager to beat the UK tax laws. Mukherjee had erred by calling them UK companies. He should have pointed out that they were registered in the Isle of Man (later, Mukherjee accepted this). To back up this claim, Ambani produced certificates of registration which proved quite conclusively that the companies were all registered in 1982.

So who registered the second set of companies in London, the day after Mukherjee's statement? Ambani says he doesn't know but it is widely believed that a corporate rival registered them solely to embarrass Reliance. Reliance executives believe that this person then leaked the story in an effort to discredit Ambani. Whoever it was, it seems unlikely that the full story will ever emerge.

WHAT MAKES RELIANCE tick? While there can be no denying Ambani's manipulative skills, it is naive to believe that he is the only wheeler-dealer in a corporate environment that is as pure as the driven snow. Every industrial group in the country attempts to buy influence, but nobody has matched Reliance's success.

Those who know Ambani say that the clues to his growth lie in his background. Unlike most of his rivals, he was neither born to affluence, nor did he study management techniques. As a clerk who became a trader, he understood how bureaucrats and government policy functioned in India, and lacking the preconceptions of his rivals, attempted to base his company's success on that insight. In a sense, he is the best of a new breed of Indian industrialists—a creation of the '60s when the politico-bureaucratic axis that was to determine the future of the Indian economy had emerged.

He also has a high degree of personal motivation. A workaholic, he takes no holidays and keeps his close associates busy on Sundays. And perhaps most important, he is not a worrier. His philosophy of life is simple. He believes that every individual is born into an orbit, that he will probably remain in for the rest of his life. The world is a series of orbits, hierarchically stacked up with peons and clerks at the bottom and top industrialists and politicians at the top. To be successful, you must break out of your orbit and enter the one above it. After a spin in that orbit, you must break into the next one. And so on, till you reach the top.

That Ambani will go even further, now seems assured. He has ambitious plans for the manufacture of photographic film and petroleum by-products, will enter oil exploration and may go into leasing. What many of his critics do not realise is that unusually for an Indian industrialist, he maintains an obsessive interest in the economy. A full time brains trust is continually preparing position papers on such subjects as the IMF loan, and the shortfall in the Sixth Plan. As a result he has a shrewd understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the Indian economy and can spot an opening before anybody else. That, combined with his grasp of the way the Indian government operates, should put Reliance in the Tata-Birla class in a decade or so. ♦

A young man's privilege



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A SUGGESTED PORTFOLIO

If you had a lakh of rupees to invest, what would you do?

Would you simply put it in a bank in a fixed deposit account? Or would you buy gold and wait for the value to appreciate? We reckoned that many people would put it in the stock market, given the stock boom of the last decade.

Because the advice offered by brokers, analysts and tipsters is often confusing, we asked our two investment experts Nusli Davar and Arvind Dalal to work out actual portfolios, telling people exactly which shares to buy.

Nusli Davar



Arvind Dalal



A PORTFOLIO IS not something that one builds overnight. After all, when an individual comes to you for creating a portfolio, the sum of money can vary from Rs 50,000 to Rs 2,000,000. Normally this represents a man's life savings, therefore one cannot be naive and say buy this and this and this. It normally takes two to six months to build an effective portfolio.

To build a successful portfolio a lot of hard work and meticulous planning is necessary. Secondly, I believe that every portfolio has to be tailor-made to suit the requirements of the individual. The level of savings, the potential growth in savings, income past, present and future including the possible length of the future, the liabilities and financial burdens, future marriages in the family and the means to finance them, availability of housing, the ability to take risks (both financial as well as psychological ability) are some of the various factors to be considered when one builds a portfolio.

A good portfolio (generally speaking) should be well diversified and at the highest levels whilst excluding income generating instruments it should include growth shares (such as Reliance, Mazda Leasing, Pressman Leasings, Genelac, Assam Frontier, Indian Rayon, Zuari Agro, Oswal Agro, etc), bullion and Real Estate.

At the opposite level a portfolio should include a few defensive investments such as WIMCO, Ahmedabad Electricity, TELCO, TISCO Convertible portion only (these currently have little downside risk) coupled with a few growth shares such as Assam Frontier, Nagarjuna Investment Trust, Genelac, Indian Rayon, Pieco, Zuari Agro and Mazda Leasing. Such a portfolio normally includes non-convertibles picked up at discounts to give a higher yield, fixed deposits, a bit of bullion but obviously excludes real estate.

But as I have emphasised before, these suggestions are of a general nature. A portfolio, like a coat, must be cut differently according to each man's cloth.

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- Rs 3,300 100 Mcleod Russell @ Rs 33
- Rs 6,100 100 Kesoram Industries @ Rs 61
- Rs 4,150 100 Hindustan Motors @ Rs 41.50
- Rs 2,800 400 Firth India @ Rs 7
- Rs 5,800 10 Gujarat State Fertiliser Co @ Rs 580
- Rs 3,325 10 Madras Cement @ Rs 332.50
- Rs 2,800 100 Warren Tea @ Rs 28
- Rs 7,050 6 Straw Products Convertible Debentures @ Rs 1,175

Rs 49,725

Rs 1,00,000

- Rs 15,000 in Non-Convertible Debentures, say ACC/TISCO/Century Enka/Century Spinning.
- Rs 11,000 250 KG Khosla @ Rs 44
- Rs 8,250 250 Mcleod Russell @ Rs 33
- Rs 9,150 150 Kesoram Industries Ltd @ Rs 61
- Rs 8,300 200 Hindustan Motors @ Rs 41.50
- Rs 4,200 600 Firth India @ Rs 7
- Rs 8,700 15 Gujarat State Fertiliser Ltd @ Rs 61
- Rs 6,650 20 Madras Cement @ Rs 332.50
- Rs 5,600 200 Warren Tea @ Rs 28
- Rs 2,200 400 Rohtas Industries Ltd @ Rs 5.50
- Rs 5,950 200 Wimco @ Rs 29.75
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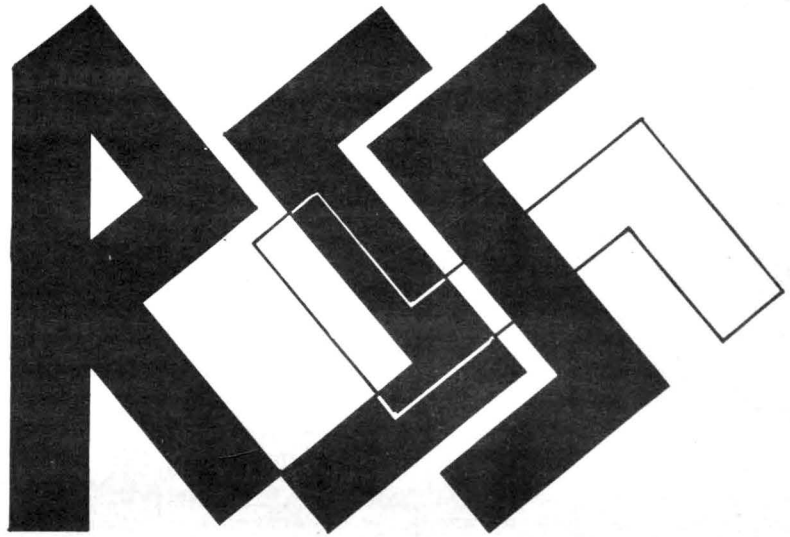
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— GRIFFIN —

THE



THE DEFINITIVE EXPOSE

The RSS would have us believe that it is no more than a Hindu cultural organisation repeatedly slandered by vested interests. But, **AG Noorani** argues, the RSS is far more sinister.

SINCE THE LIFTING OF THE Emergency seven years ago, every single political party or group has tasted adversity after a brief rise in its fortunes. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh alone has prospered. Between 1977 and 1982 its growth has been 'phenomenal' as Rajendra Singh, its General Secretary, proudly claimed on August 3, 1983. The total number of *shakhas* (branches) had increased from 6,000 to 19,000 and was expected to reach 21,000 by the end of 1983. If the smaller ones are included the total will reach 35,000 with 700,000 dedicated *swayamsevaks* (volunteers) attending the daily drills and meetings at dawn or dusk. Only recently has it spread to West Bengal, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. It has decided to concentrate more in the north-east.

He had good cause for exultation. Very recently (November 27) Kuldip Nayar quoted a Home Ministry note on the RSS's 'rapid strides'. It assessed the annual *Guru-*

With this issue Imprint begins a debate on the RSS. Next month, Ram Jethmalani replies to AG Noorani.



RSS Chief, Balasaheb Deoras.

dakshina collections at over a crore, tax free; listed its front bodies for labour, students, including the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and its centres abroad under various names, especially in the UK, the US, Kenya and Mauritius. The RSS has indeed, come a long way since March 24, 1977 when its Chief, Balasaheb Deoras, heaving a loud sigh of relief, exclaimed that its isolation was over. Rajendra Singh revealed that Deoras had met Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on the Meenakshipuram conversions issue. This in itself was no small achievement considering that on September 27, 1980 she had accused

the RSS of complicity in the riots occurring in northern India. It is unthinkable that Jawaharlal Nehru would have met the RSS chief in similar circumstances. Singh added, for good measure, that many a time the Congress (I) leadership had sought the RSS's help.

On the same day (August 3) the BJP's General Secretary, LK Advani, said he would talk to the RSS leadership on the 'vicious designs' of vested interests to separate the RSS from the BJP.

The RSS matters. It is extremely important, therefore,

The RSS calls itself a cultural body but this is misleading. Its own documents assert that it could change this policy and actively participate in day to day politics.



to know exactly what it is. We have a good glimpse of that straight from the horse's mouth in a solemn legal document of recent origin. It is miscellaneous application No 17 of 1978 filed in the court of the District Judge, Nagpur, by both, Singh and Deoras's younger brother, Bhaurao, on behalf of the RSS appealing against the decision of the Joint Charity Commissioner, MS Vaidya, holding that the RSS is a public trust and therefore liable to be registered under the Bombay Public Trusts Act, 1950. Singh signed it on March 6, 1978 and Bhaurao on February 26, 1979.

HOW DO THEY CHARACTERISE THE RSS?

They recall (in para 8) that it was founded on Dussera day 1925 by Dr KB Hedgewar for a particular reason. "The concept that a nation with a glorious past which, indeed, was a 'Hindu Rashtra' was being wiped out from the people and its interest was being ignored by the then political leaders particularly after the eclipse of Lokmanya Tilak from the political horizon after his death in 1920." The attack on Gandhi is fairly clear.

"The concept of 'Hindu nation' of the founder of RSS was based on cultural unity of the entire people living in the Bharatvarsh." Lest any imagine that 'the entire people' are included, they emphasise: "It is significant to note that the name was not chosen as 'Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh' though the Sangh is open to Hindus only. This is because of the faith of the Sangh that in India 'Rashtriya' (national) means 'of Hindus' which are the mainstream of the nation."

Failure to appreciate this vital point lies at the root of the continued misunderstanding of the RSS to this day by some. The RSS itself has, however, never wavered as we shall see.

Another reason for the name was 'to reflect the *political* ideology of the organisation though the Sangh as such never had politics of its own *as of policy*'. (All italics through the article are mine.)

All RSS documents bristle with distinctions and peculiarities. Some special features are listed. First: "The terms used have special significance and meaning as understood by the organisation in view of its philosophy as distinct from the ordinary meaning. . . One has to look as to how they are understood by the organisation and *not how such terms are commonly* used or interpreted by others. Such terms are Rashtriya, Dharma (religion), Sanskritik (cultural), Hindu Dharma etc."

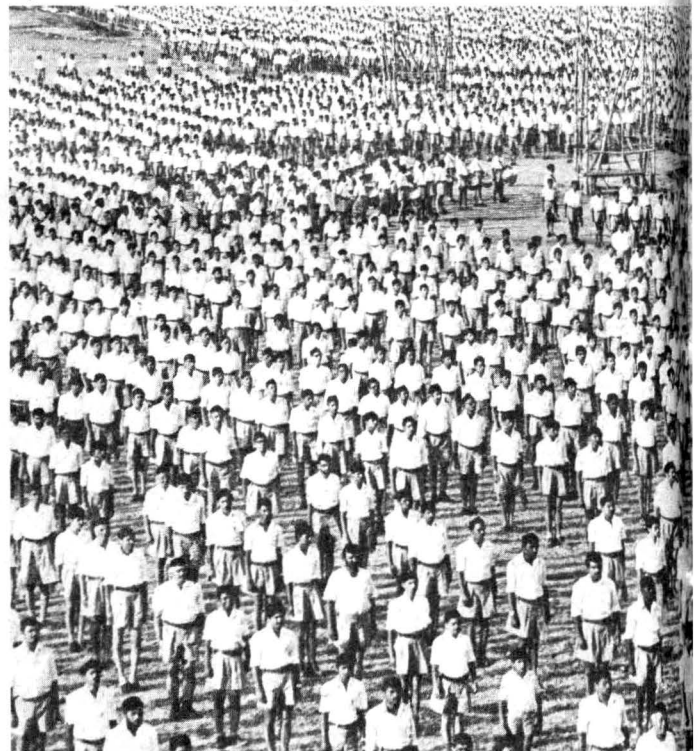
Secondly, Article 12 of the RSS Constitution appoints the Chief (*Sarsanghchalak*) as 'the guide and philosopher'. His writings and speeches have a particular relevance. 'The third important feature of the Constitution is its flexibility' and 'the fourth feature is that aims and objects are distinguished from policy' and 'policy is not a permanent feature'.

The RSS does not participate in "day to day politics though the Sangh has a political philosophy within its wide sweep of cultural work. *It is possible for the Sangh to change this policy and even participate in politics.*"

There is the special importance of the flag 'the *Bhagwa-Dhwaj*—the age-old symbol of Hindu Culture'. Another is "the limited democratic form and machinery provided for carrying out the work of the Sangh. There is no election at all levels but selection and nomination except the posts *Sarkaryawaha* (General Secretary) and *Prant Sanghchalaks* (State Chiefs)."

The document concludes, "that the work of the RSS is neither religious nor charitable but its objects are cultural and patriotic as contra-distinguished from religious or charitable. It is akin to political purposes though RSS is not *at present* a political party inasmuch as the RSS Constitution quoted above bars active political participation by the RSS, as such, as *a policy*. . . Tomorrow the policy could be changed and the RSS could participate in even day-to-day political activity *as a political party* because policy is not a permanent or irrevocable thing." As it is, individual members are free to join any political party (Article 4).

The character of this 'cultural body' is fully explained by the definition the Sangh assigns to 'culture'. "The word



700,000 dedicated swayamsevaks

In 1979 Deoras predicted that in ten years time the RSS would gain the popularity needed to form a government at the Centre.

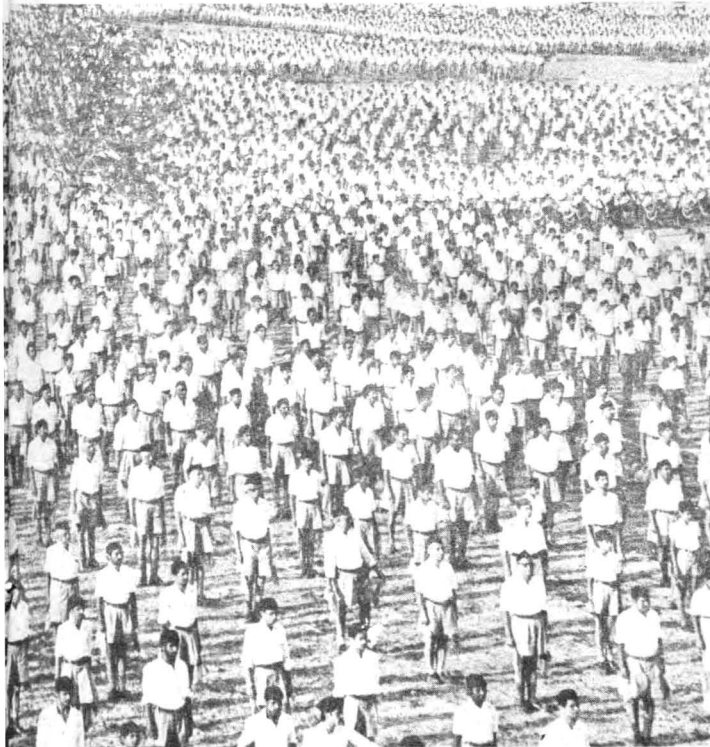


'Sanskritik' or cultural, used in the Sangh work has a very wide sweep and has to be understood as expounded by the Guide and Philosopher of the RSS, Shri Golwalkar in his speeches and writings. These include all aspects of the society or the nation, viz, *political*, social, economic, customary, morality, language, script and in general the Hindu way of life . . ."

Contrast this assertion in Para 26 of the document with that in Article 4(b) of the Constitution—"The Sangh, as such, has no politics and is devoted *purely* to cultural work." But if 'cultural' means what the RSS application solemnly says it does, is not Article 4(b) of its Constitution, also a solemn document, calculated to deceive?

In an appeal filed before the Appellate Assistant Commissioner of Income Tax, Nagpur, solemnly declared on May 29, 1972, by Balasaheb Deoras, the RSS had stated the direct opposite; namely, that it held the funds on trust for charitable purposes.

IF THE SANGH CAN RESORT TO SUCH STRATEGIES for filthy lucre what will it not do to grab power? The thought is not absent from its leaders' minds. UNI reported in 1979 under a Bhopal, September 16 date-line: "Deoras said today that his organisation would, in ten



attend the daily drills at dawn or dusk.

years, gain the popularity needed to form a Government at the Centre. 'Nobody can grudge such an eventuality in a democratic set-up,' he told a closed door meeting attended by nearly 100 people here."

Three days later he rushed back to Bhopal to contradict the report. The RSS's mouthpiece *Organiser* angrily denied the report and quoted Deoras as saying that it was not a closed door meeting at all and the entire proceedings had been taped and played back 'a few days later to local correspondents and they were all satisfied . . .' The UNI however had carried another story under a Bhopal, September 20 date-line which said that Deoras 'refused to oblige newsmen who insisted on listening to the taped version'.

The RSS appeal, affirmed the continuing validity and relevance of Deoras's predecessor, MS Golwalkar's writings. He died in 1973. His book, *We Or Our Nationhood Defined*, published in 1939 was *endorsed* in 1979 as giving 'a scientific base' to propagate the idea of 'India' being a 'Hindu Nation' and was explicitly relied on to provide an accurate version of the RSS's credo. So was his later work, *Bunch Of Thoughts*, published in 1966.

Sample these extracts from *We*: "Ever since that evil day, when Muslims first landed in Hindusthan, right upto the present moment the Hindu Nation has been gallantly fighting on to shake off the despoilers . . . The Race Spirit has been awakening."

But an 'effort was made to put the race on the wrong track' by propagating the concept of territorial nationalism. "The idea was spread that for the first time the people were going to live a National life, the Nation in the land naturally was composed of all those who happened to reside therein and that all these people were to unite on a common 'National' platform and win back 'freedom' by 'Constitutional means'. Wrong notions of democracy strengthened the view and we began to class ourselves with our old invaders and foes under the outlandish name Indian and tried to win them over to join hands with us in our struggle."

In India religion is "an all-absorbing entity . . . With us, every action in life, individual, social or political, is a command of Religion." Politics are to be conducted 'as one of the commands of Religion'.

What of the non-Hindus? "All those not belonging to the national—i.e. Hindu—Race, Religion, Culture and Language, naturally fall out of the pale of real 'National life'.

"We repeat, in Hindusthan, the land of the Hindus, live and should live the Hindu Nation—satisfying all the five essential requirements of the scientific nation concept of the modern world . . . All others are either traitors and enemies to the National cause, or, to take a charitable view, idiots."

But the 'idiots' can be cured. "The foreign races in

Golwalkar quoted the Nazi massacre of the Jews and claimed it was a good lesson for those in Hindusthan to learn and profit by.



Hindusthan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of the glorification of the Hindu race and culture, i.e. of the Hindu nation and must lose their separate existence to merge in the Hindu race, or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu Nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment—not even citizen's rights. There is, at least, should be, no other course for them to adopt. We are an old nation, let us deal, as old nations ought to and do deal, with the foreign races, who have chosen to live in our country."

Golwalkar left none in doubt as to the techniques of cure he favoured. "To keep up the purity of the Race and its culture, Germany shocked the world by her purging the country of the Semitic Races—the Jews. Race pride at its highest has been manifested here. Germany has also shown how well-nigh impossible it is for races and cultures, having differences going to the root, to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindusthan to learn and profit by."

Educated Hindus are sneered at. "This 'educated' class of Hindus became in truth slaves of the English, as the late Dr SV Ketkar has aptly described them. They had cut their traces, lost their footing in the National past, and become deculturised, denationalised people."

WHEN ONE TURNS TO BUNCH OF THOUGHTS, published a quarter century later, one is amazed at the continuity of the refrain. If anything, it is more strident.

"It is the grand world-unifying thought of Hindus alone that can supply the abiding basis for human brotherhood." Their history "stands in glowing contrast to the bloodstained pages of the history of expansion of Islam, Christianity and now Communism . . ."

The difference begins at the very birth. "Some wise men of today tell us that no man is born as Hindu or Muslim or Christian but as a simple human being. This may be true about others. But for a Hindu, he gets the first *Samskar* when he is still in the mother's womb. We are therefore born as Hindus. About the others, they are born to this world as simple, unnamed human beings and later on, either circumcised or baptised, they become Muslims or Christians."

Rather inconsistently, the RSS would like to reclaim people who are born inferior at birth. How and why?

"Everybody knows that only a handful of Muslims came here as enemies and invaders. So also only a few foreign Christian missionaries came here. Now the Muslims and Christians have enormously grown in number."

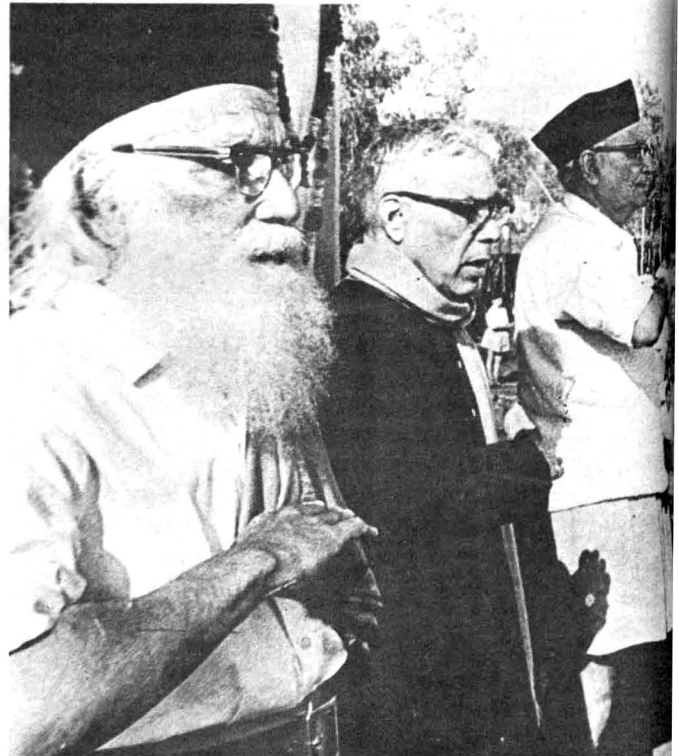
This was by force or deception. So "It is our duty to call these our forlorn brothers, suffering under religious slavery for centuries, back to their ancestral home. As honest freedom-loving men, let them overthrow all signs of slavery."

The concept of territorial nationalism is rejected. "They forgot that here was already a full-fledged ancient nation of the Hindus and the various communities which were living in the country were here either as guests, the Jews and Parsis, or as invaders, the Muslims and Christians."

The Congress is the villain. It accepted territorial nationalism and sold the past. "In their phantom chase of achieving new unity and new nationality, our leaders raised the slogan of 'Hindu-Muslim unity' . . . The name 'India' given by the British was accepted. Taking that name, the 'new nation' was called the 'Indian Nation'. And the Hindu was asked to rename himself as 'Indian'."

Gandhi was singled out for attack. "But here, we had leaders who were, as if, pledged to sap all manliness from their own people. However, this is not a mere accident of history. This leadership only came as a bitter climax of the despicable tribe of so many of our ancestors who during the past 1200 years sold their national honour and freedom to foreigners. . ."

In a pamphlet, *Why Hindu Rashtra?* he amplified: "Un-



Discipline is paramount in the RSS. Balasaheb Deoras

Deoras's concept of nationalism is a peculiarly Hindu one. "We reject geographical nationalism. . . ." he announced. "Life here revolves around the Hindu society."



fortunately in our country our Constitution has equated the children of the soil with the aggressor, and given equal rights to everybody, just as a person without understanding may give equal rights to his children and to the thieves in his house and distribute the property among all."

T HIS IS THE IDEOLOGICAL LEGACY WHICH Deoras acquired when he became *Sarsangchalak* in 1973 and affirmed in 1979 in court. In an interview published on January 14, 1974, he drew a "distinction between religions which have risen from the Indian soil like Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism, on the one hand, and those like Islam and Christianity which have come from outside." On November 7, 1982 he defined 'Hindu' in identical terms and then said, "Indeed, Hindu is National."

But even then he always left a loophole by using the word in two different senses in one and the same pronouncement. "All those who feel attuned to this life current of our national culture—*irrespective of their religious creeds*—are Hindus," he said at Nagpur on September 30, 1979, only to qualify it, "The guarantee for its (India's) secular character is not to be found merely in our Constitution nor in the assurance of a couple of leaders. It lies in the Hindu society which forms the overwhelming majority

in this country."

Several instances of such *double entendres* can be cited. "We consider all the natives of this land as Hindus, irrespective of religion." Yet the RSS's 'main stress is on organising *traditional Hindus*' (*Organiser*, April 6, 1980).

On the eve of the 1980 census he appealed to all sections of Hindus on October 19, 1979, to indicate their religion as 'Hindu' and their castes within brackets. This would help in retaining the majority character of the Hindus and the RSS would fight to retain their majority character. Exactly a month earlier he had said that the word had been widened to include others as well.

Deoras was reacting to pressures but kept steadfastly on the Golwalkar line. By January 15, 1983, all pretence was cast aside. "We reject geographical nationalism," he said in a manner reminiscent of Golwalkar. "Nationalism has its roots in people's minds, in their ways of thinking, their sentiments. That is why we stick to the word 'Hindu'. . . Life here revolves round the Hindu Society."

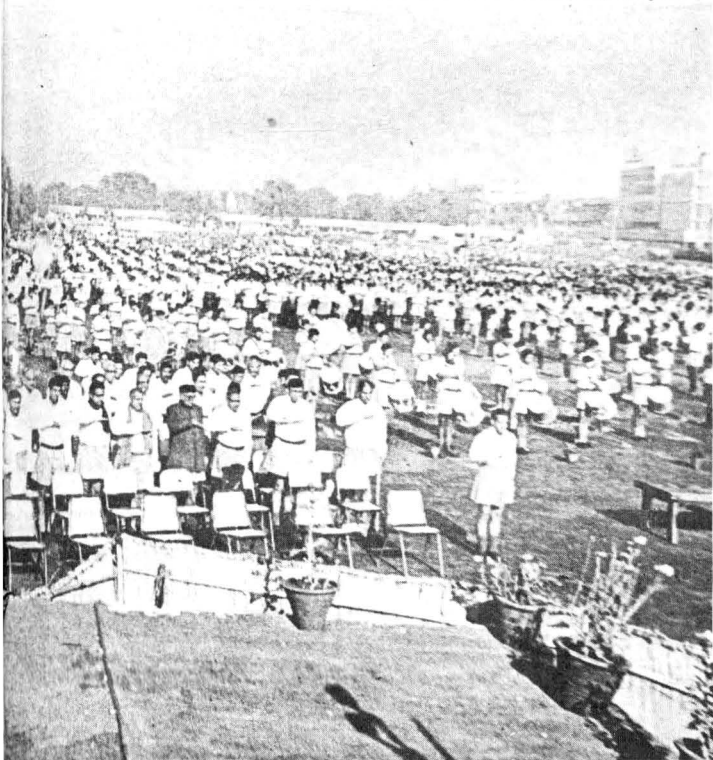
On September 11, 1983, he remarked, "Some people say we should replace the expression 'Hindu Rashtra' by 'Bharatiya Rashtra'," an obvious riposte to the BJP president, Atal Behari Vajpayee's plea to that effect in a recent issue of *Panchjanya* the RSS Hindi weekly. "There is no objection to 'Bharatiya'. But if anybody wants to change it because he is ashamed of the word 'Hindu' we cannot accept the suggestion. After all the word 'Hindu' is more current than the word 'Bharatiya'."

It was a sneering retort but a predictable one, for had not Golwalkar said in *Bunch Of Thoughts* that while *Bharatiya* connotes the same meaning as *Hindu* it is commonly used as a translation of the word 'Indian' which includes all the various communities like the Muslim, Christian, Parsi, etc residing in this land. So, the word 'Bharatiya' too is likely to mislead us when we want to denote our particular society. The word 'Hindu' alone connotes correctly and completely the meaning that we want to convey."

If you still do not understand Deoras's riddles, read further—"In this *land* of ours, Bharat, the national life is of the Hindu people. In short, this is the Hindu Nation."

Golwalkar reveals that when the RSS was given its name, some felt it should bear the prefix 'Hindu' not 'Rashtriya' lest its 'doors should have to be kept open to all other people in the country'. Hedgewar scotched the idea. "Doctorji used to say that in our land the word 'Rashtriya' naturally means 'Hindu' and therefore the word 'Hindu' need not be used."

To know the connotation of 'Rashtriya' in the RSS's name is to know what it stands for. The RSS stands for the concept of Hindu *Rashtra*, Deoras has said time and again (on September 27, 1981, for instance). He rejects sugges-



and his associates take the salute at an RSS rally.

JP accepted support from the RSS during his struggle against Mrs Gandhi. . . He was cynically betrayed by them and died a disillusioned man.



tions of change to Bharatiya because he wants to keep out of the Raj 'other people in the country'. Such an exclusive concept can be inspired by hate alone and in turn, generates hate. To believe that Hinduism, 'despite the degenerating contact with the debased civilizations of the Muslims and the Europeans, for the last ten centuries is still the noblest in the world' is surely to promote group hatred.

As for the Muslim "if we glorify woman as a symbol of sacred motherhood he would like to molest her. He was tooth and nail opposed to our way of life in all aspects—religious, cultural, social etc."

He can be reclaimed only if he reverts to 'the original dress, language, view of life etc'. The form of worship may be retained but 'Muslims should have no objection to bringing Islam in line with reason and so facilitate their passage back to the mother society'. Significantly this gem was published in September 1974 in the reign of Deoras who has himself asserted (April 4, 1980): "History says that Muslim conversion was by force all over the world."

IF ANYTHING, DEORAS HAS BEEN MORE DARING than his predecessor about shedding the 'cultural' garb. The appeal in the Nagpur Court is eloquent enough. He has also declared: "We consider politics as an inseparable part of life, yet that is no end. We are equally concerned about other aspects of life."

Golwalkar had bared both the RSS ambition and technique as far back as 1949. "If the Congress completely disintegrates and anarchy rules the country and there is nobody to take over. . . we may sacrifice part of our normal cultural activities and accept the responsibility." Asked point blank: "Is it a fact that the Sangh plans to capture power?" he replied, "We have kept before ourselves the ideal of Bhagwan Shri Krishna who held a big empire under his thumb but refused to become an emperor himself." The ideal can be fully realised if the BJP, kept under the RSS's thumb, captures power as the 'national alternative'.

The RSS is not accused of *organising* Gandhi's murder. It was accused even by Sardar Patel of spreading 'communal poison'. He wrote to Golwalkar on September 11, 1948: "As a final result of the poison, the country had to suffer the sacrifice of the invaluable life of Gandhiji. . . the RSS men expressed joy and distributed sweets after Gandhiji's death."

Two decades after his death *Organiser* could remember him only in such terms (January 11, 1970) in an editorial: "It was in support of Nehru's pro-Pakistan stand that Gandhiji went on fast and, in the process, turned the people's wrath on himself." So, Godse's crime was an expression of 'the people's wrath'. In 1961 Deen Dayal Upadhyaya said: "With all respect for Gandhiji, let us cease

to call him 'Father of the Nation'. If we understand the old basis of nationalism then it will be clear that it is nothing but Hinduism."

Gandhi was included in the RSS morning prayer in 1965 but a few years later RSS members in the Delhi Municipal Corporation still objected to his being described as 'Father of the Nation'.

JP was cynically betrayed by the RSS and died a disillusioned man. At the Second National Conference against Communalism held in New Delhi in January 1968, JP said: "The secular protestations of the Jana Sangh will never be taken seriously unless it cuts the bonds that tie it firmly to the RSS machine. Nor can the RSS be treated as a cultural organisation as long as it remains the mentor and effective manipulator of a political party."

Six years later JP accepted support from both during his struggle against Mrs Gandhi's corrupt government. During the Emergency, the RSS Chief wrote cringing letters from prison to Mrs Gandhi, SB Chavan, Maharashtra's CM and to Vinoba Bhave.

If his repeated offers had been accepted, he would have cheerfully worked for the 20-point programme under Mrs Gandhi's leadership.

Copies of these letters, were sent to jails and demoralised



Deoras has been even more daring than his

During the Emergency, RSS members wrote letters of apology while **Panchjanya**, the RSS organ, welcomed Sanjay Gandhi's entry into politics and praised him.



the RSS detainees. Madhu Limaye spent 19 months in three jails which were in RSS areas and knew of the RSS detainees' letters of apology. Baba Udhav, the Pune labour leader testified: "Written queries were circulated in the Yeravada Central Jail three or four times asking detainees if they would be prepared to sign an undertaking. I have seen with my own eyes the majority of the RSS detainees signing their assent to do so." (*Janata*, September 16, 1979.)

The RSS's organ, *Panchjanya*, welcomed Sanjay Gandhi's entry into politics (December 21, 1975) and praised him more than once.

The Emergency over, JP tried to retrieve the position. Madhu Limaye, one of the Janata Party's General Secretaries informed him of the discussions with Deoras and secured his approval. The problem was two-fold—opening of the RSS to non-Hindus and 'the formation of an integrated volunteer organisation' which, while autonomous, would have 'friendly relations' with the Janata. The RSS rejected both.

In an interview with *Samayika Varta*, a weekly, JP said that there was no justification for the RSS to continue as a separate body. "I have noticed a change in their outlook. They no longer have a feeling of animosity towards other communities. But in their heart of hearts they still believe

in the concept of Hindu Rashtra."

Muley wrote to JP (September 23, 1977) expressing his 'bewilderment'. The RSS would continue as before to espouse the Hindu Rashtra ideal.

JP and Deoras met twice on October 30 and November 1 but it was too late. Deoras had skilfully bought time when the pressure was greatest immediately after the elections. In March and April he had repeatedly expressed willingness to consider membership of non-Hindus in the RSS.

On March 28, 1977, Deoras said that the 'long awaited moment' had come to consider the question of widening the base of the movement.

On April 11, Deoras went so far as to declare that the RSS's doors *would* be opened to Muslims but a decision had yet to be taken.

TAKEN IT WAS ON JUNE 27, BY THE RSS's general body, the Pratinidhi Sabha, which played for time—the 'highly sensitive problem has to be tackled with care and caution'.

Deoras blandly told JP that 'Hindu' and 'Bharatiya' were synonymous and that the RSS was seriously considering the minorities membership but 'undue haste would not help'. JP addressed an RSS camp (November 3, 1977) praised it as 'a revolutionary organisation . . . there is no other organisation in the country which can match you', and gently counselled 'basic change in the role of the Sangh' and "a modification in its aims and objectives. Though it is not a reality even then people identify it with Hindu communal and caste interests."

On April 8, 1979, *Dinman*, a Hindi weekly, published the draft of a letter from JP to Prime Minister Desai which he had proposed to send before he fell ill and was removed to Jaslok Hospital on March 18. *Dinman's* correspondent Anand Kumar had met JP and his colleagues in Patna. The text is set out in full:

"Some friends have repeatedly complained that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh is making efforts to grab the leadership in the Government. Like other political parties the RSS is free to influence politics and it is doing so. But my only objection is that the RSS people are trying to influence politics under the garb of a cultural organisation. I have advised the leaders of the RSS to merge themselves with organisations sympathetic to them or get affiliated with the Janata Party. But, they declined my advice on the plea that they have nothing to do with politics. I absolutely do not agree with this logic of the RSS. I still feel that the RSS should merge itself with the pro-Janata organisations. But if it is bent upon retaining its own distinct identity I would then repeat that it should include in it non-Hindus—Muslims, Christians, etc. *I have always*



predecessor in revealing the RSS's open militarism.

Even Vajpayee asked: "Why does it not open its doors to non-Hindus?" But the RSS says it is trying to preserve the Hindu society.



condemned Hindu nationalism of the RSS. For it is a dangerous doctrine and is against the ideal of composite Indian nationalism. In a democracy every organisation has a right to propagate its philosophy or ideology—this is the essence of democracy. *But when it aspires to dominate politics, we would have to be careful to see whether such philosophy or ideology threatens the basic philosophy of Indian nationalism.* I have no quarrel with the association of the RSS with the Janata Party. *But it will have to give up its Hindu image and become completely secular.* If it does not do so, *it should keep its hands off politics, and snap its ties with every faction of the Janata Party.*

"But as Prime Minister of India, it is your duty to make efforts to improve the RSS or make it a secular force. *Its efforts to upset the secular basis of Indian nationalism and the government should be opposed by all thinking individuals.*"

The *Dinman* correspondent also quoted JP as having said verbally, "Every time the RSS people assure me that they would internally improve. But I do not know what they do after going from here. It is continuing like this for the last four years. After all there is a limit to everything." (*Janata*, May 13, 1979.) JP had broken with the RSS.

THE STORY DOES NOT END THERE. ON JULY 8, 1976, when Charan Singh raised the RSS issue and said, 'it was a question of dual membership which could not be allowed', OP Tyagi replied on behalf of the Jana Sangh: "The new party can lay down whatever conditions it sees fit." In December 1977 when the Janata tried to do just that by amending the Constitution to deny membership to a member of 'any other organisation whose aims, objectives and activities are inconsistent' with the Janata—something unexceptionable altogether—the JS objected. The issue was deferred indefinitely. In April 1980, the JS left the Janata on the RSS issue and set up the Bharatiya Janata Party. Reason? The RSS had backed out of its pact with Chandrashekhar, publicly announced by both on July 24, 1979, on the dual membership—a record of broken assurances (1949, 1976, 1977 and 1979).

The BJP lost no time in demonstrating that it was the BJS anew but was eager to exploit the Janata's name.

Faced with a clear choice between an explicitly secular Janata and the communal RSS, the Jana Sanghis preferred their mentor of old. The BJP's record since on every issue of communal significance, especially the riots, reveals it to be the heir of JS not JP.

Vajpayee alone resisted, consistently, but in vain. "When we joined the Janata Party, *we had given up our old beliefs and faiths* in the interest of the country and there was no question of going back." The JS had been dissolved and 'we

have accepted the ideology and the programme of the Janata Party' (November 6, 1977). A sincere admission of the incompatibility of JS with JP. On the same day Deoras made an even more significant admission of incompatibility. Non-Hindus could object to the RSS's flag, prayer and many such things. The RSS wished to retain the incompatibles.

Vajpayee tried to persuade it and gave up. "Personally, I feel that the RSS should open its doors to all Indians irrespective of religion. But the RSS says that it is trying to serve the Hindu society . . . they have changed and they will have to change much more." (*Sunday*, March 15, 1979.) Came the famous article in *Indian Express* (August 2, 1979). Dilating on the 'RSS bogey', he wrote, "Having said this, I must also add that the RSS, claiming to be a social and cultural organisation, should have taken greater pains to demonstrate that they did not seek a political role. . . the question could legitimately be asked—why does it not open its doors to non-Hindus? . . . The other course of action open to the RSS could be to function only as a Hindu religion-cum-social-cultural organisation wedded to the task of eradicating the evils prevailing in Hindu society. . ."

Later (December 18, 1979) he advised it to change its 'methodology, ideology, programme and activities', replace



Deoras (with Hedgewar in the background)

The hate which the RSS exudes leads inescapably to violence. The RSS believes in its use. It is part of its credo.



the 'Hindu Rashtra' ideal with 'Bharat Rashtra' and 'clarify its role'. He noted that the RSS had *not* undergone any change although he and others had advised its leadership on two different occasions, in 1948 and in 1977.

In August 1983 Vajpayee reverted to the theme in an interview to *Panchjanya* and asked the RSS to take a stand on economic issues. Deoras reacted swiftly and sneeringly on September 11.

THE HATE WHICH THE RSS EXUDES LEADS inescapably to violence. The RSS believes in the use of violence. It is part of its credo.

On June 11, 1970, Golwalkar waxed eloquent before a group of editors like Kuldip Nayar and Girilal Jain. The communal atmosphere was tense in the wake of the Ahmedabad and Bhiwandi riots. *Organiser* reported this exchange: "Q: Who will teach Muslims to identify themselves completely with the country and its culture? A: You and me, all of us. Q: Can you teach by beating? A: Beating is of two kinds: mother beating her child—out of love and solicitude for the child's welfare."

Yet, he complained, "Misunderstandings are sought to be created about the training in the use of *danda* (lathi), *yogchap* (lezim), *Khadga* (sword), *vetracharma* (canefight)



addressing the annual function in New Delhi.

etc that is imparted in the RSS branches."

The etc has now widened to include karate (Singh on June 18, 1979). Well might Vajpayee say (March 1979) that the 'RSS is a cultural organisation and culture includes physical culture'. A group which spreads hate and *believes* in use of violence is a menace not only to law and order but to democracy itself. "What has our good behaviour towards Muslim faith and the Muslim people brought us?" Golwalkar asked.

The alternative is propounded openly. "Is there any place for violence in the life of a society? Yes, but it should be used as a surgeon's knife . . . to cure society of any malady that needs such a surgical intervention."

Golwalkar said also: "In this task of self-protection we might have to destroy evil persons. . . If these *Asur* (evil forces) are to be defeated through the use of force, force should be used. . . Generally speaking, it is a matter of common experience that evil forces do not understand the language of logic and sweet nature. They can be controlled by force."

The RSS began early. On October 7, 1947, the DSP, Pune wrote to the Government that 'the RSS's volunteers were responsible for Hindu-Muslim riots in certain rural areas of Poona District'. Its record since has been a gory one. Deoras has uttered one lie after another to cover it.

"In none of the court judgements or in the Report of any Commission of Inquiry appointed by the Government has it been said that *the volunteers of the Sangh were involved*," he wrote to Mrs Gandhi on August 22, 1975.

More brazenly, he claimed in November 1979: "Indira Gandhi has also said that no enquiry commission appointed during her rule even (sic) has found the RSS guilty of inciting communal disturbances."

The man could not have been unaware of the fact that in her famous speech in the Lok Sabha on July 22, 1975 she quoted from two such Reports while denouncing the RSS. There are a good few of them.

THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE communal disturbances at Ahmedabad and places nearby on and after September 18, 1969, was headed by Mr Justice P Jaganmohan Reddy of the Supreme Court with two High Court Judges as other members. Its Report submitted on October 21, 1970, noted: "The agitation had received the blessing of the local Bharatiya Jana Sangh workers who did not want to involve themselves directly but suggested the formation of an organisation known as Hindu Dharma Raksha Samiti with Harishchandra Panchal, an old RSS worker, as its convener." This was just a fortnight before the riots. The Samiti had issued pamphlets calling on the Hindus "to prepare for 'Dharma

There are well-authenticated reports about the RSS's guilt in the 1981 Biharsharif riots and its misdeeds in Assam and the South have been well-documented.



Yudha' without waiting for justice to be done by the Government, to sever all economic and social relations with the community that has attacked their religion, viz the Muslims." This was incitement.

The Report noted: "The definite part played in various districts which were affected by the workers of the Jana Sangh and Hindu Mahasabha organisations or by persons having leanings towards them. There is evidence definitely that they took a leading part in the Districts of Amreli, Banaskantha, Mehsana and Baroda."

The united front tactics operated in the Bhiwandi and Jalgaon riots as well. There was the Rashtriya Utsav Mandal in the former and the Shree Ram Tarun Mandal in the latter.

A Commission of Inquiry consisting of Mr Justice DP Madon reported: "The guiding spirit of the RUM was Dr Vyas, President of the Bhiwandi Branch of Jana Sangh. The majority of its members belonged to the Jana Sangh or were from the Jana Sangh . . .

"The Organisation which has both directly and indirectly provoked the disturbances which took place in Bhiwandi, Khoni and Nagaon on May 7, 1970 and thereafter, is the Rashtriya Utsav Mandal, the majority of the members of which belonged to the Jana Sangh or were pro-Jana Sangh and the rest, apart from a few exceptions, belonged to the Shiv Sena . . . The organisations which have fomented communal tension in Jalgaon are:—

1. The Jalgaon City Branch of the Jana Sangh and
2. The Shree Ram Tarun Mandal which was completely controlled and managed by the Jalgaon City Branch of the Jana Sangh and the Jalgaon District Branch of the Jana Sangh."

The Madon Commission also took note of Golwalkar's speeches.

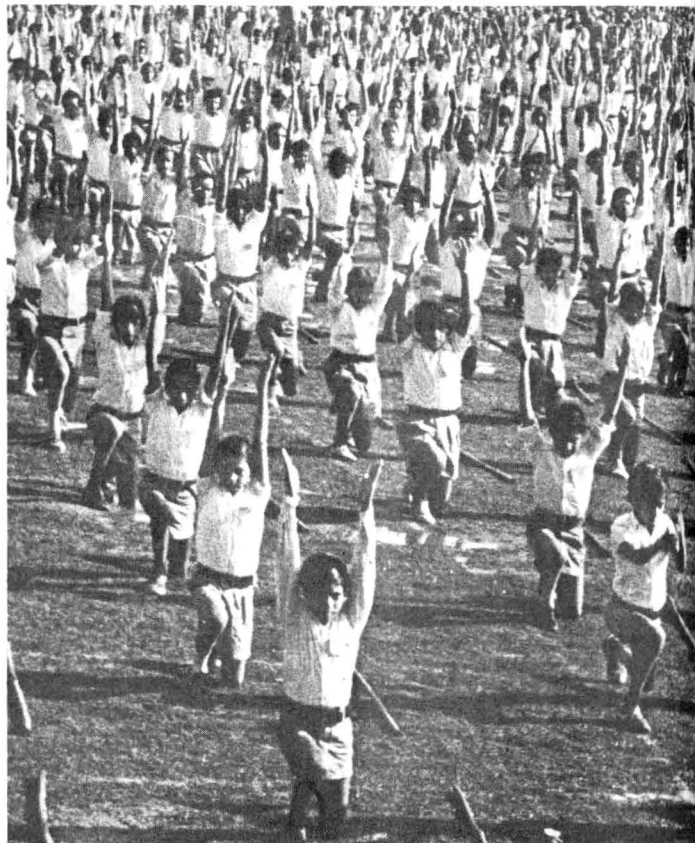
In two other Reports even the Jana Sangh cover could not conceal the RSS. The Report of the Commission of Inquiry consisting of Mr Justice Vithayathil on the Tellicherry riots in December 1971 said, "I have no doubt that the RSS had taken an active part in rousing up anti-Muslim feeling among the Hindus of Tellicherry and in preparing the background for the disturbances." The Commission noted with disgust that *Bunch Of Thoughts* was distributed free in Tellicherry in Malayalam.

The Report of the Commission of Inquiry headed by Mr Justice Jitendra Narain into the Jamshedpur riots in April 1979 was submitted on August 31, 1981. Chapter 8 deals with the RSS. Deoras addressed an RSS Conference on April 1, 1979, ten days before the outbreak of the disturbances. The Report observed that 'his speech amounted to communal propaganda' and held 'the RSS responsible for creating a climate for the disturbances that took place on April 11, 1979 and thereafter. . .'

"The Commission, therefore, concludes that Shri Dina Nath Pandey was a member of the RSS, his actions followed a line which was in fulfilment of the general scheme of the Hindu Communalists of Jamshedpur and that they were also aimed at achieving the plan announced in the leaflet circulated by them. His conduct had, thus, directly contributed to the outbreak of the riot at Jamshedpur on the occasion of the Ram Navami festival of 1979."

These are the findings of Commissions of Inquiry headed by judges and set up by law. There are, besides, reports of investigations by academics as well as journalists of repute. On January 1, 1969, *Indian Express* carried a detailed report on the RSS which noted 'the growth of the RSS has coincided with the recent wave of communal riots in the country'. *The Statesman's* Special Representative in Eastern India also blamed the RSS and the Jana Sangh's workers for building up the tension before the Rourkela riots in 1964.

There are well-authenticated reports about the RSS's guilt in the Biharsharif riots in 1981. Its misdeeds in Assam and in the south have been well-documented.



The RSS starts them young: 'the Hindu gets

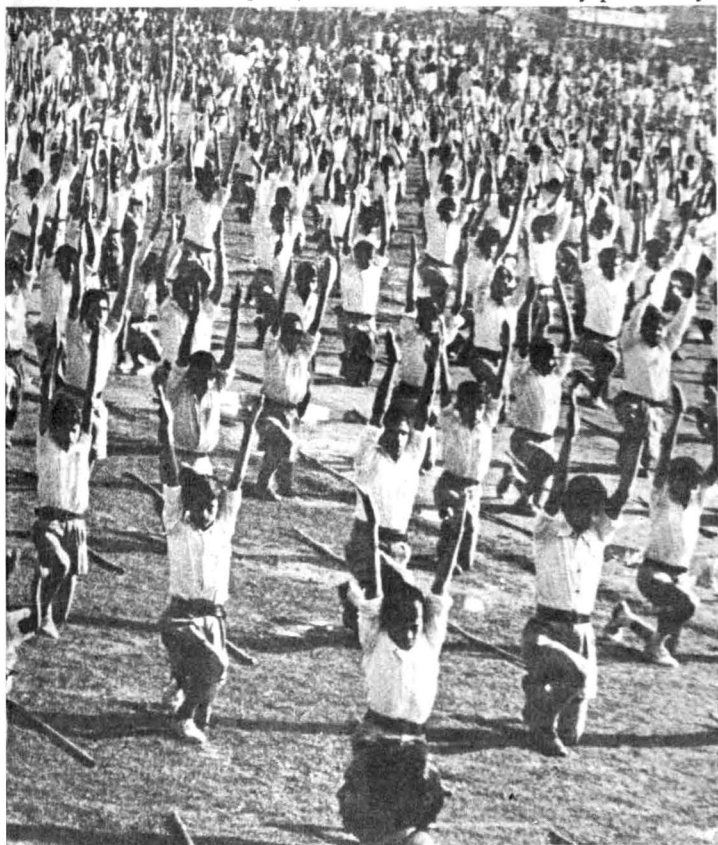
The RSS's counterparts elsewhere like the John Birch Society are part of the lunatic fringe. If political authority passes into such hands the consequences can only be imagined.



THERE ARE THOSE WHO WOULD SHUT THEIR eyes to all this because the RSS, they feel, would be of help against Mrs Gandhi. The view is as foolish as it is opportunistic. There is a remarkable continuity in the RSS and Mrs Gandhi's double-talk on their relations with each other.

The Indira Gandhi-Golwalkar correspondence has strangely gone unnoticed. At the end of the Bangladesh war, Golwalkar wrote (December 22, 1971): "The biggest measure of credit for this achievement goes to you." It was sent through Hansraj Gupta. Mrs Gandhi replied on January 13, 1972 thanking him for 'your good wishes' and throwing a broad hint that 'it is in the interest of the nation to preserve this unity'. Golwalkar took the hint and replied (January 18): "It is true that a feeling of unity should always be present in the nation. *Everyone* has to know his responsibility and endeavour to this end." Golwalkar was ready for a deal.

Deoras not only advised the Janata to 'forgive and forget' (May 5, 1977) but, on Mrs Gandhi's return to power, he said on February 12, 1980 that there was 'every possibility'



the first samskar while he is still in the womb'.

of the RSS co-operating with the Congress (I). Mrs Gandhi had 'changed' and ideologically there was no difference with the Congress (I).

On Sanjay Gandhi's death, Deoras said that "he had made a powerful impact on national politics. That was not merely because of his family connections but also because of his individual qualities and personality." These words were meant to please the mother.

Recently, *Organiser* approvingly described her as a 'political Hindu' (July 3, 1983).

"Even the saints cannot be said to be above politics," Singh said (March 12, 1978). Its counterparts elsewhere like the John Birch Society are part of the lunatic fringe. This is where repeated compromises by democrats with a vicious force has taken us. "Those who believe in democracy cannot afford to ignore this phenomenon. If political authority passes into such hands, the consequences can only be imagined, not described." The author of these words, Charan Singh, is now an RSS ally.

Does it matter whether such a body opts for 'Bharat Rashtra' or sticks to its goal of 'Hindu Rashtra'? Experience has proved the futility of verbal formulae to tame a totalitarian body. The RSS's basic outlook which most in the BJP share, is what matters and it brooks no compromises. It deserves to be fought by all democrats.

The alternative is not Mrs Gandhi's authoritarian and corrupt politics. It is the Gandhian alternative of double rejection of both evils. Chandrashekhar said on October 1, 1983: "As long as the RSS confines itself to cultural affairs there is no problem. But the problem arises when they take a political stand." It is utterly unrealistic to expect the RSS to be other than 'cultural' in its own way. More realistic was his statement on October 16 that the United Front and the National Democratic Alliance cannot have an alliance because "the main difference between them is the attitude to minorities. Though it may look minor it is a major basic and fundamental issue on which political parties should be clear in their minds."

We shall hear pleas of expediency and of the RSS's 'discipline' and 'dedication'. There was someone before us who was treated to the same pleas and his reply was devastating. Pyarelal records in *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase* (Vol II p 440): "A member of Gandhiji's party interjected that the RSS people had done a fine job of work at Wah refugee camp. They had shown discipline, courage and capacity for hard work." We have heard much the same thing about Morvi, Andhra and the rest. What did Gandhiji say?—"But don't forget," answered Gandhiji, "even so had Hitler's Nazis and Fascists under Mussolini." He characterised the RSS as a 'communal body with a totalitarian outlook'. He never compromised with it. ♦

Options-Focus

IMITATION TO INVENTION

KK Hebbar on how his art has changed over the years.

KK Hebbar, a doyen in the field of painting, was in the news recently when he bagged the 1983 Soviet Land Nebru Award. Born in 1912, in South Kanara, Hebbar studied at the JJ School Of Art, Bombay, and also went on to Academy Julian, Paris, for higher studies. A winner of several awards, one of them being the Padmasbri in 1961, Hebbar is today also the Chairman of the Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi.

Q. *Did your interest in art start with painting or was painting an art form you arrived at after experimenting with other forms?*

A. As a child, I was interested in all creative work. But later on I found that I could express myself best through colour and lines. Children have an innate faculty towards colour, movement and sound. In some, this faculty is less developed and in others it is more refined. If given a chance to develop, these can be expressed in the form of an art.

When did you seriously contemplate art as a career?

At 21.

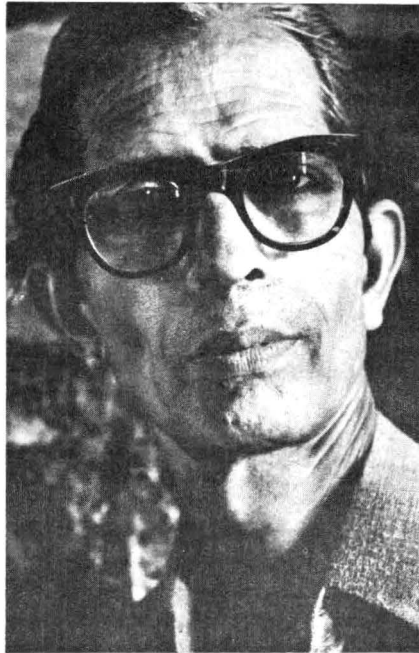
Who have you been influenced by?

Painting is different from music and dancing which follow a set tradition. I first learnt art under Dandavatimath and then later on from Charles Gerrard, the Director of the JJ School of Art. Gerrard encouraged individuality in expression. And as time went by, my own individuality was given a free rein while painting.

What inspires your work?

Nature and life around me. In my paintings I bring out the way I

Anju D Aggarwal is a Bombay-based freelance journalist. Her articles appear in Eve's Weekly and Mid-day.



perceive the universe. The theme of my paintings comprise my entire life's experiences. What I see, think and feel. In my painting, *Primitive Man*, I have tried to show man's aspiration for spirituality.

Do you see a change in your style over the past few years?

My style of painting has changed over the years from imitative expression to creative expression. Charles Gerrard once said to me, "Recording of life around had better be left to the camera. You must look into the world rather than at it." I, however, began by imitating things around me. It was only later, much later, that my inventive capacity came.

Which individual artist do you admire and why?

Picasso, for his inexhaustible creative energy and Braque for his sonorous colour sense.

Would you describe your work as being India-influenced or would you say it is a combination of Western and

Eastern influences?

I am not chauvinistic about being either Western or Indian. But, people say that my work has an Indian influence. This may be, because there is an absence of linearity in my paintings. I don't follow the photographic reality. There is a certain degree of decorativeness, idealism and an inner quality in my work.

Don't you think painting as an art is becoming more and more commercialised?

This depends on the sincerity and the integrity of the artist.

How would you rate the potential of the younger artists?

They are exploring new possibilities and avenues. They also strive to express and establish their individuality. Today, young artists in India are not inferior to their contemporaries abroad. But I have noticed that the younger artists are often too impatient, they want to exhibit even before they are accepted in the professional field.

Paintings need space to be fully appreciated. With today's life-style and the compact and crowded housing in the cities, do you have many customers for paintings?

Space apart, people cannot afford to buy them. But there are museums where people can look at them and derive pleasure. But, even here, we need more museums like the National Gallery of Modern Art in Delhi.

Could you comment on the facilities and opportunities for exhibiting in India?

It is easier to exhibit your work in India, than it is abroad. Abroad, you have to go through gallery owners who agree to exhibit your work only if they like it. In India, one can hire galleries.

— Anju D Aggarwal

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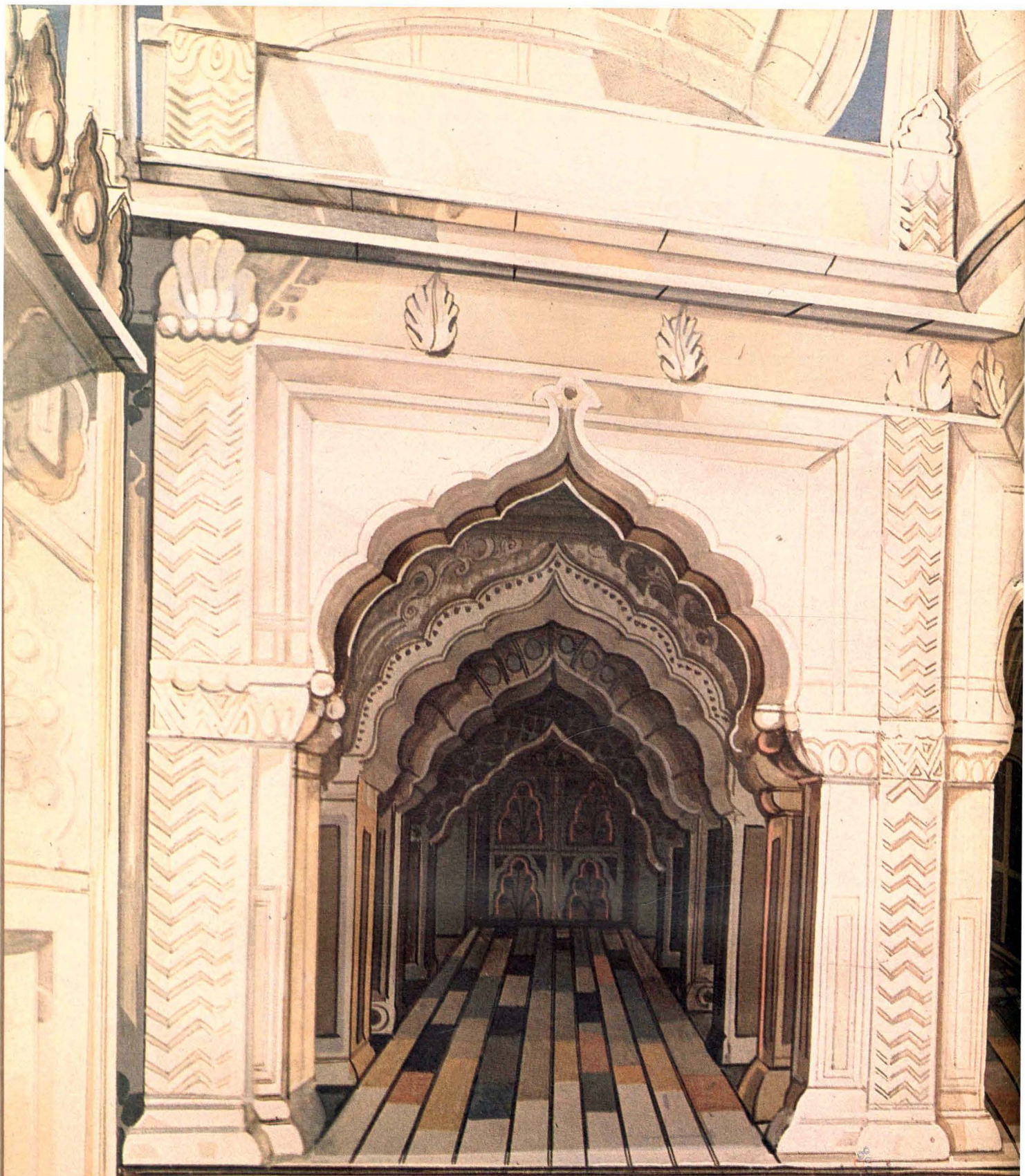


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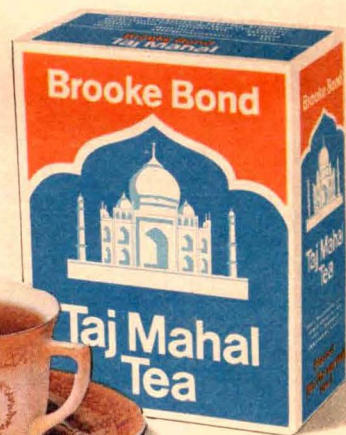
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Options-Travel

A TUNISIAN HOLIDAY

Pranay Gupte on an unusual vacation spot.

ONE AFTERNOON IN Rome—where I'd flown to obtain my Tunisian visa—I collapsed into a nap after a heavy meal of pasta and veal. I must not have been asleep for more than half an hour, yet two astonishing dreams played themselves out in my subconscious. In one, I was ambling through the ruins of ancient Carthage, which was founded in 814 BC by Didon, the Carthaginian queen of great beauty. I turned a corner and suddenly ran into Colonel Muammar El-Qaddafi, the leader of neighbouring Libya. "This place I take over next," Colonel Qaddafi bellowed. "No!" I screamed. Many days later in Tunisia, I was to hear sobering stories of Libyan subversive attempts to destabilise the Tunisian government. The other dream found me in an oasis of date palms. I was thirsty and pleaded with a robed Arab for some refreshment. "No water," he said, grimly, "The tourists have taken it all." Later I would understand what a blessing and a burden tourism has been for Tunisia.

* * *

ON THE HOUR-LONG flight from Rome to Tunis, I found myself seated next to a man from the Arab League. He was returning to his headquarters in Tunis after an absence of a month, during which he had travelled to many of the 20 states belonging to the League's membership roster. Now he was glad to be going home again, although Tunisia was not where he was born. The man was a Palestinian.

"I think the other Arabs have much to learn from the Tunisians," he said, presently. He had downed his fifth beer.

"What do you mean?" I said, mildly anticipating a preview from him of Tunisia's forthcoming multiparty elections for a new national assembly, which I was flying to cover for my

Pranay Gupte, a New York Times correspondent, is currently writing a book on population. He visited Tunisia in 1981 to cover the election for his paper.



newspaper. At a time when the trend in the Arab world generally was to clamp down on dissenting and opposition groups, President Habib Bourguiba was actually opening up his authoritarian political system to opponents in an experiment in democracy.

"What I mean is this," the Arab replied, in a *melange* of French and Arabic. "The Tunisians have taken a beautiful country and made it even more beautiful so that outsiders can come and enjoy it. What the Tunisians are saying to the world is: Come visit us. Our doors are open. Mix with our people, enjoy our mixture of Arab and French hospitality. We want your cash and in exchange we will give you much pleasure. We are not afraid of strangers."

For a moment, he sounded like a representative of the Tunisian tourist office (although as I would later find out, these representatives are soft-spoken and do not engage in hard-sell). My next impulse was to shrug his monologue off as one of those fanciful, flowery flights of rhetoric that I en-

counter so often in the Third World, and especially in the Middle East. But the man had become mellow—perhaps it was the beer, perhaps the fact that our plane was skimming the azure Mediterranean on its descent into Tunis airport—and he said, quietly, "I am very fond of Tunisia."

That encounter stayed with me over the next two weeks in Tunisia. The country—which is slightly larger than New York state and has a population of seven million people—was, without hyperbole, the pleasantest Arab state I have ever visited. I went there for work, and I have never before worked in such a relaxed environment. I went there expecting some political turbulence, and found that I was in one of the most stable states in the region. I had heard about Habib Bourguiba's 'Police State', and I discovered an astonishing atmosphere of personal freedom, where young men and women carried on lively political debate in sidewalk cafes, where Moslem youths dated and held hands in public, where movies featured nudity and beaches featured nude sunbathers.

* * *

THE PALESTINIAN ON the plane was entirely right. Tunisia wants foreign visitors—because they fetch this country its second biggest source of revenue. The export of crude oil brings Tunisia about \$600 million annually, and tourism about \$ 550 million. About 1.7 million Western tourists—mostly West Germans, Italians, French and Scandinavians—come here each year. The Tunisians complain that not nearly enough Americans visit: only 15,000 last year.

Some Arabs from neighbouring countries come here as well, drawn by the liberties in life-style, the bars, the nightclubs, the nude beaches on the Mediterranean. Arab money—from Kuwait and Bahrain—has resulted in a boom in the construction of seaside resorts such as Hammamet, Sousse, Sfax and Monastir, the hometown of Presi-

Options-Travel

dent Bourguiba and his Prime Minister, Mohammed Mzali. There are now an estimated 90,000 hotel beds in Tunisia, more than there were in Lebanon before the tragic civil war of 1975. Tunisia, in fact, now gets many of the Gulf Arabs who used to travel to Lebanon and to Egypt for entertainment.

A measure of the gains tourism has made in Tunisia is the annual revenue figure: ten years ago, tourism brought in \$65 million. By 1982, the figure had climbed to ten times that amount.

Why should the tourist go to Tunisia?

To begin with, there is the physical beauty of the place. The beaches are probably the best in North Africa. The ruins of Carthage, the remains of Roman settlements near Thuburbo-Majus and elsewhere are carefully preserved by the Bourguiba government, and the country is a delight for archaeologists. For those interested in exploring the Moslem heritage of the country, there is Kairouan, where the first mosque built by Moslems in Africa still stands. And for those who want to savour the romance of the desert, there are oases such as Nefta where camels can be hired for long rides through the sands and dinners can be relished in tents under clear skies fired with stars.

There is also the allure of value. Tunisia is among the cheapest vacation spots in Africa. The longest single taxi ride in the capital city of Tunis will cost no more than Rs 30.

* * *

TUNISIA IS A safe place. I walked throughout Tunis, a charming city of date-palms, bougainvillea, eucalyptus and olive trees, at all hours and never felt in the slightest danger of being mugged. The only time I was accosted was late one night in the Medina, the old section of Tunis, when Mohammed Atef, a photographer and I were walking through the narrow alleys looking for an ancient restaurant. A smart-looking woman, dressed in a short skirt and high heels, came up to me and asked in Arabic if I wanted her services.

Prostitution, in fact, has been legalised in a discreet sort of way. In Tunis, for example, there is a whole 'red light' block in the Medina. The clients tend to be working class stiffs, or soldiers



on furlough. In Kairouan, too, there is a similar district. I was told that few foreigners visit these prostitutes—sex is so freely available in the Mediterranean resort towns that most visitors have no need to plunge into what is an unsavoury part of the Tunisian scene.

There are critics in Tunisia, such as members of the clandestine Islamic fundamentalist groups, who say that prostitution has been on the increase because of the influx of tourists. That is arguable, but there is the unquestioned fact that overt homosexuality in the capital city of Tunis is markedly increasing and that the patrons of local homosexuals tend to be foreigners.

Actually, Tunis has always been a rather liberal city as far as morals and mores go—the French colonialists (who granted Tunisia independence in 1956) injected a somewhat loose, relaxed atmosphere here. The writer André Gide would travel to Tunis to pick up boys.

One evening, I sauntered down to the Café De Paris on Bourguiba Avenue. I sipped a cup of green, Tunisian mint tea (I am now an addict to this tea, and I strongly recommend it for anyone who wishes an immediate period of serendipity) and stared at the procession of people on the avenue. It was the magic hour of the evening when the setting sun's rays gently bounced off the white facades of the

buildings along the road. The kiosks selling foreign magazines and flowers were brightly lit up.

Someone tapped me on the shoulder. It was a man, no more than 20 years old.

"Do you wish my friendship?" he said, in French. In Tunisia, I had been told by my friend Godfrey Norris—formerly of Reuters—that the word 'friendship' was a code for sexual services, especially of the homosexual sort.

I declined. Then he offered me a cigarette. I declined again. Undaunted, the youth started talking about politics, about how the ruling Destour Socialist Party of President Bourguiba had captured all 136 seats in the elections for the assembly along with its electoral ally, the Union of Tunisian workers. The election, the youth declared flatly—echoing a widespread belief in the country—was 'rigged' by the President's people.

It turned out that the youth was the son of a high government official—or so he said. He later offered to bring me a woman. I declined this too.

Shortly after this episode, I was invited to dinner at the home of an Islamic scholar, whose sympathies were with the Moslem fundamentalists who have been outlawed by Mr Bourguiba, Tunisia's President-for-life. My story did not surprise my host.

"This is what this regime has made Tunisia into—decadent, impure, corrupt," he said, with choler in his voice. "This regime claims to modernise Tunisia, but it is taking us into decadence."

Again and again throughout my travels, this criticism surfaced, particularly from conservative Moslems who resented President Bourguiba's twin policies of modernisation and secularisation. A state that is constitutionally Moslem as Tunisia is, these critics said, should not tolerate Western life-styles. The President should clamp down on the lewd behaviour of tourists and foreigners, the critics said.

But despite these criticisms, Tunisia is undoubtedly one of the most charming of African nations where the prospective vacationer can pursue pleasure in the midst of ancient ruins. ♦

A ROADSIDE REPAST

There's more to bhel than meets the eye.

LET'S COME CLEAN right at the beginning. *Bhelpuri* may well be Bombay's favourite roadside repast, the sort of delicious concoction you come across on the busy streets. But it wasn't something invented by enterprising street vendors, eager to contribute something to the gourmet map of the city that afforded them sustenance. On the contrary, *bhelpuri* began life as a restaurant dish.

If legend is to be believed, then *bhelpuri* was invented by Vithal's restaurant in Bombay. It was not, if one is to be honest, an entirely original concoction. The North has had its *gol-gappas* for nearly as long as anybody can remember, puffed *puris* filled with a sour *jeera pani*, sometimes with a few chick peas thrown in. And the *bhaiyas* who brought *gol-gappas* to Bombay (as *pani puri*) also brought along such Northern delicacies as *dahi batata puri* (a *gol-gappa* with boiled potatoes, *dahi* and a sweet chutney added) and *pakodi puri* (correctly, deep-fried *pakodis* with *dahi* or chutney or both). *Bhelpuri* was a logical successor to such dishes.

All you did was, to avoid puffing the *puri* so it remained hard and biscuit-like and then you crushed it and mixed it with snacks—already popular with Bombay's Gujaratis—*mumra* or puffed rice, thin *sev*, boiled potatoes and (sometimes) onions. To this *mélange*, you added two or three chutneys, generally two of them hot and spicy, and one, thick and sweet. And so, *bhelpuri* was born.

In the beginning, *bhelpuri* was a communal delight, favoured by the Gujaratis for whom it had been created. But soon the *pani puriwalla bhaiyas* took to it. It became the favourite of Chowpatty's beach vendors and took on a life quite independent of its origins. As more and more people discovered it, it began to be regarded as the dish that typified Bombay, and

Vikram Sinha, our food columnist is also the restaurant reviewer for Bombay's The Sunday Observer.



when it was served in other cities it was always called 'Bombay *bhelpuri*'.

Since those early days, *bhelpuri* has come into its own. It was gradually accepted as the basic Bombay *chaat* dish, and entire restaurants grew up around it. Of these, perhaps the most famous is the Shetty chain with its branches all over Bombay. Shetty's is owned by South Indians: another indication of how *bhelpuri* has grown away from its Gujarati origins. Most Bombay snack bars now have a *bhelpuri* section, and even the Sea Lounge at Bombay's Taj Mahal Hotel serves its own version.

As Indians have travelled so has *bhel*. In London, the Diwana Bhelpoori House on Drummond Street is packed out night after night with trendy Camden Labour Party types who fondly imagine that *bhel* qualifies as a healthy, vegetarian, ethnic food, forgetting that most of its ingredients are deep-fried. Other establishments, with names like Wah Bhel and the Baba Bhelpoori House cater to a similar crowd. The Bombay Brasserie, currently the 'in' place with London's upper crust, also serves a version of *bhel* (more like *sev puri*, really) that has caught on. For a genuine, *Gujju* style *bhel* though, you need to travel to Wembley or

Leicester where at any of several four-table restaurants, fat *manibens* serve up home-made versions of this classic dish.

In America, *bhelpuri* is not as much a restaurant dish as something that expatriate Indians serve at home. In many Indian houses, if you drop in unexpectedly, the chances are that your hosts will pull out a polythene bag full of *bhel* ingredients, chop some onions and offer the concoction to you along with individual serving size prepacked sachets of chutney. The American style *bhel* may not taste as good as the real thing, but it is certainly convenient.

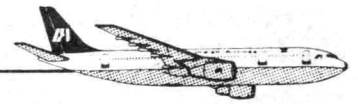
In Bombay too, *bhel* has entered the jet-age. Shetty's send ready-made plastic packages of *bhel* ingredients by air to most parts of the country. And more and more high society parties are turning into *bhelpuri* bashes (though the catering is nearly always done by Go Go snacks from their kitchen near Wilson College). Film director Manmohan Desai, for instance, swears by a particular *bhelpuriwalla* who sits near the stock market and caters to Desai's favoured guests.

And while more recent crazes like *pav bhaji* have come and gone, it seems that *bhelpuri* will go on forever.

—Vikram Sinha

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Growing Up Gay In Bombay

By ARK

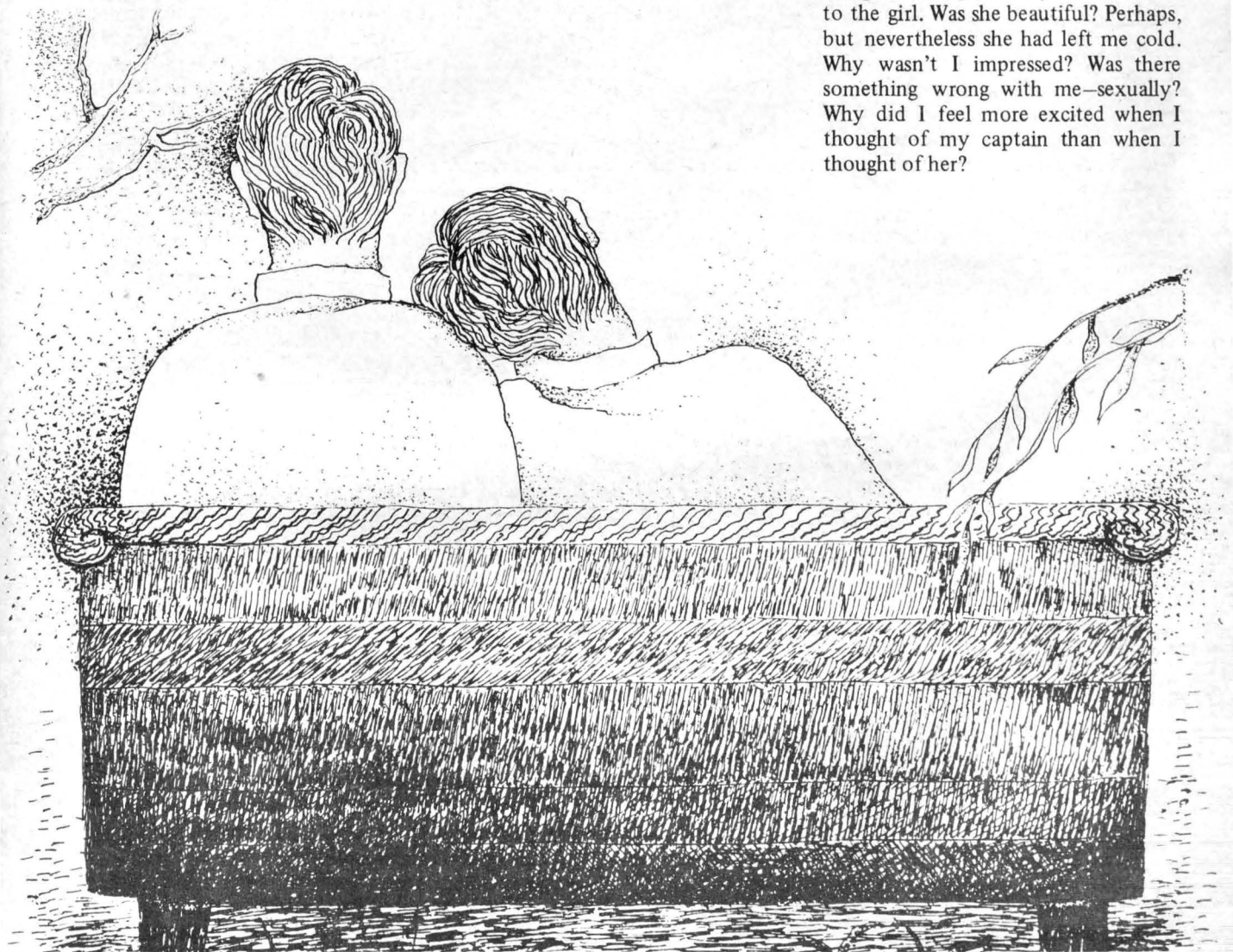
*A first person account
of what it is like to be a
homosexual in a repressive
society.*

IT WAS AT A FOOTBALL GAME that I first discovered I was gay. I was only 12 then but I still remember the incident with astonishing clarity. Everything was going fine until I became aware of an absorbed silence.

The game had stopped and both teams had turned simultaneously to watch a beautiful girl pass by. Wolf whistles and hoots followed her out of sight. "Boy, isn't she hot?" one of the boys whispered in mock imitation of a manly voice. After a few other remarks, the game was resumed.

I was bewildered. What was so special about her that merited this attention? My captain was, to my mind at least, a lot sexier. Seeing the way the whole group had reacted to her I felt uneasy. There was something wrong—but I couldn't pin it down.

That night I didn't get much sleep. I kept thinking of everyone's reaction to the girl. Was she beautiful? Perhaps, but nevertheless she had left me cold. Why wasn't I impressed? Was there something wrong with me—sexually? Why did I feel more excited when I thought of my captain than when I thought of her?



That night I struggled to a painful conclusion. There was nothing wrong with me—I had normal sexual reactions except that the objects of my fantasy were always male. A curvaceous figure was only an object for cold appraisal; a hairy chest—a definite turn-on.

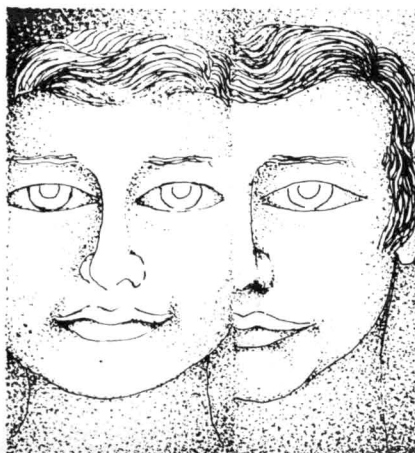
EVER SINCE THAT NIGHT, things have not been the same. I could rationalise that I was normal—but I was different. What's worse I was aware I was different.

In spite of this it was a crazy, exhilarating period. As I made my first, tentative advances to my male friends I received an overwhelming response. Anyone who says homosexuality is a restricted phenomenon just has no idea what he's talking about. During the ages 12 to 15 I slept with more boys than can be imagined. I discovered how I could get my way—at the NCC camps I could get other boys to work for me by just sleeping with them. At home I seduced my servants, the *dhobi*, the *eggwallah*—you name them, I had them.

It was easy enough at that stage, for most boys have a latent bi-sexuality that I could thrive on. When I was 14 I had my first affair—with my captain who was 16. It was all very heady. It broke up, of course, when he discovered girls and decided that I was part of his past.

That part was difficult to take. I thought to myself: what does she have that I don't? I honestly could not understand! I began to study human beings—both male and female—with a conscious intensity. As far as I could see I belonged to neither category. I didn't fancy girls—as the other guys did; on the other hand I was obviously not a girl—even in my mental make-up. Then where did I fit in? How was I to cope? How could I overcome this very obvious handicap of being a man who desired men?

I suppose I stumbled on to the answer quite by accident. After Senior Cambridge a family doctor, who was driving down to Calcutta, asked me if



I realised quite early that I had normal sexual reactions except that the objects of my fantasy were always male.

I'd like to go with him. My parents were agreeable. The first night, at the Mhow guest-house, things began to happen. He asked me very seriously: "Ashok, if I give you a peg of rum would you tell your parents about it?"

And I answered, "No. If you gave me a rum I'd drink it but I'd never tell my parents . . ."

That night he came over from his bed to mine. Although he was 38, a married man, I'd hesitate to say he seduced me. After all I had been giving out the right vibes all evening! That night we made love. The next morning he cried in my arms, apologised for what he'd done. I could see that the fear of being exposed and the shame were tearing into him.

For the first time in my life I began to understand the power I wielded over men—the guys who came to me for pleasure and paraded a macho-image by day. There was nothing worse for them than the fear of being told on—exposed. They considered it a guilty secret and as long as they thought that, I had the power to control them, hurt them.

I had discovered the power that all open gays have over those still in the closet: the power of sex.

THE REST OF MY TEENAGE years were spent experimenting and learning. The very awkwardness of my situation, trapped in the no-man's land between male and female, opened up an amazing number of avenues. I could sit for hours with the girls, giggling and discussing handsome males, exchanging interesting titbits of gossip and information. My sexual horror of females did not extend to friendship. Some of my best friends are girls. They, on the other hand, sensed that I lacked the predatory instinct, that sex was far from my mind.

Ironically these platonic friendships opened up the male world to me. All through school and college it was well-known that to get introduced to a girl you only had to know Ashok.

It was around this time that I began cruising at the Oval and started to discover the gay community. The Oval was known for the navy guys who could be picked up—and for its rough trade. For the first time I fell in love—with a stunning Keralite, V-shaped body, a Lieutenant in the Navy. I used to hang around the Oval from six in the evening, sometimes till as late as 11 pm waiting for him to turn up. This went on for a year until I realised he had crooked me off a lot of money and my watch.

But there was something lacking. All this was too good to last. Till this time I was still in the closet—a secret homosexual. To say that I was gay—openly—and to live my life without shame was something I couldn't get around to. I did not have the courage.

Surprisingly, the person who brought me out was Papa. It all started when I forgot to take my towel in with me to the bathroom. Fatso, my youngest brother, brought it for me and handed it in through a special ventilator we've had constructed. To avoid being seen by him I stood up on the basin, which crashed. When I came out my father asked me how it had happened. Desperate to cover up the reason I said I had switched on the hot

water tap and the cement had melted. I have never received a bigger pasting in my life. Papa told me two things I never forgot: "Don't think your parents can't see through you. If you are going to lie make it a good lie; for if you can't tell a lie that can pass off then the best thing is to tell the truth and face the music."

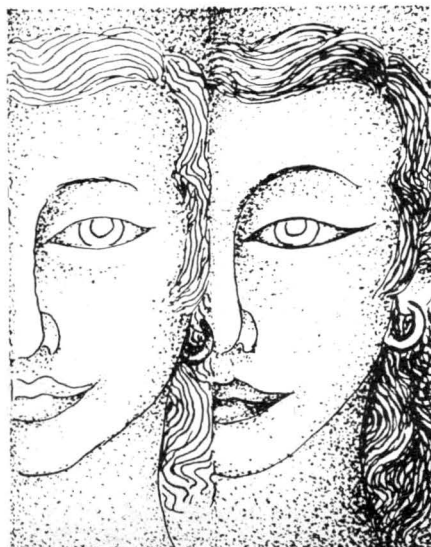
I think, unwittingly, this was the thing that helped me most to come to terms with myself and to eventually come out into the open. All along there was a tacit understanding between Papa and me. That made what came later much easier to bear. I used to feel if *he* thought it was right then it doesn't matter what anyone else says.

MY FAMILY REACTED violently to my open confession. For years after my father's death I helped and encouraged my younger brothers to get them through college. All that time it was an unstated fact that I was gay. Though I never actually said anything, my mother had guessed ever since I was 13. It's difficult to put on a convincing act for someone who raised you, fed you. Intuitively she knew and being a good Hindu she hated it.

As I grew older it became more obvious. I was the odd one out. Guys used to drop in at all times expecting me to go out with them, pleading with me to come have dinner. My mother was constantly firing servants who I had slept with. But till such time as I was the eldest earner in the family nobody dared to say anything. But when they grew up and became independent everything boomeranged on me.

Suddenly the family became acutely conscious of my homosexuality. My mother refused to allow me to bring anyone into the house. My brothers began to laugh and snicker about it. No matter what went wrong, in my job or at home, they could use only this against me—the fact that I was gay.

Things came to a head after a nasty row. "I wish you had died when you were born!" my mother finally shout-



My youngest brother once told me: "Stay away from us; go out in the streets and do it." I never forgave him.

ed. That really got me. How could a mother say that about her own child? For the first time in years I stumbled into my bedroom and cried. How had things gone so wrong?

The contrast was clear. The only person who could have understood me—Papa—was dead. The rest of the family tried to pretend that I was not one of them. My youngest brother once told me: "Stay away from us, go out in the streets and do it." The emotions added up. These words are the sort I can never forgive and will not forget.

Bit by bit the insults were added on. The family ceased to exist for me. I would still rush to their help when they needed me: but I did not expect them to do the same. I remember the time I developed a high fever—104° I was practically delirious, in need of medicine. Everyone in the family went about their own business leaving me to myself. On the third day, when I was weak from hunger and fatigue my aunt *did* ask me if I needed anything. I refused. No matter how badly off, nobody wants pity.

Finally it was my boyfriend who rang up, discovered the condition I was in and brought me some Crocin. The incident really shook me. I had realised long ago that the family could not adjust to my homosexuality. But the fact that this hatred had obscured their basic human values was something I could not understand. I am and always will be the son who has brought shame into a respectable orthodox Hindu family.

IT WAS A DIFFICULT TIME. Nobody chooses to be gay. You just end up that way. And confronted with sneers, you turn to the people closest to you. But my family simply was not interested. My discretion, my desire to spare them needless embarrassment were all forgotten; now that they no longer needed me, I had become an albatross around their necks.

So, there was no longer any need to hide, to burrow deep into the closet. Rejected at home, I chose to come out with a vengeance. If the family that I was born into felt that I wasn't good enough for them, then I would create my own family of gay friends; one that was good enough for me.

It always amazes me when 'foreign-returned' heterosexuals make awed references to Fire Island and other gay haunts abroad. Somehow they never realise that right under their noses, exists a well-organised and relatively open gay community.

It was to this community I turned. Each night, I would cruise gay pick-up spots like the Oval and the Cooperage Bandstand. Later I learnt to 'cottage'—that is, to seek out public lavatories frequented by gays. I discovered how one could pick up foreign gays in the lobbies of the Taj and the Oberoi. And I taught myself the eye signals that gays give each other. On local trains, on the way home from work, I would keep my eyes open. If I saw a man I desired, I would eyeball him by staring directly into his face and then letting my gaze wander down to his crotch. If

the guy was interested, he would shift to my corner of the train and grasp a handhold, rubbing his wrist against mine in the process. Contact established, we would go off to a convenient spot.

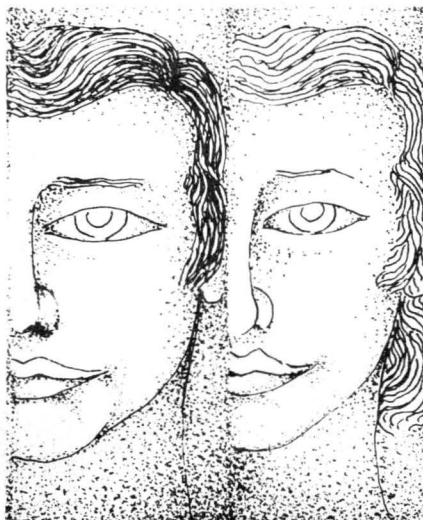
Then, I became more specific in my preferences. I decided that I liked factory workers best of all. I began to cruise industrial areas, picking up different men every night. Taxi-drivers were my other source of diversion. Late at night, I would enter a cab, ogle suggestively at the driver and ask for a light. You'd be surprised how many cabbies I picked up this way.

It was, I suppose, a promiscuous lifestyle but within the framework of the gay world, not an unusual one. Those heterosexuals who bother to try and understand us, always claim that we are extraordinarily promiscuous, that no straight person would ever change partners with the alacrity that we gays display.

It is not an unfair comment, but nevertheless one that must be seen in context. Heterosexual men are always eyeing women, leering at passing college girls and lusting after other people's wives. That they don't end up going to bed with them is more a result of a lack of opportunity than anything else. We gays have the same impulses, but we are not under the same social pressures to remain virginal or monogamous. So we simply go ahead and don't just leer impotently.

This is not to say that the gay scene is one giant orgy with frequent swapping and wild swinging. Of course, emotion does come into it. Unlike heterosexuals though, we are not forced to pretend that sex without love is pointless: it may not be as enjoyable, but, let's be honest, it does have its attractions!

There are gay marriages—long, happy unions of people who love and understand each other—and there are gay love affairs that are just as deep and intense as their straight counterparts. I myself have been in love many times and I have been involved in



**Gay marriages
don't last very
long for there are
no social
pressures to keep
them going.
When the love
dies, so does the
marriage.**

meaningful relationships. After all, why should our love be different?

It is true that gay marriages don't last as long as their heterosexual counterparts, but then, look at the different circumstances. Even if a husband and wife lose interest in each other after six years, social pressures keep the marriage going; or they feel they must stay together for the sake of the children. A gay marriage, on the other hand, is honest. When the love dies, so does the marriage.

I've lost interest in explaining all this to my straight friends. Too many of them believe in the caricature of gays: limp-wristed pansies who wish they had been born girls and long to do no more than be sodomised each night. I've tried to explain that this is not true, that we can be as macho as the next man, that because you like men, it doesn't necessarily follow that you want to be a woman. And of course, all the nonsense about buggery is too silly for words. There is much more to homosexual love-making than anal sex. But is it really worth explaining all this? After all, we are what we

are, whatever others may think.

And as one of my straight friends jokes: buggers can't be choosers.

I HAD ALWAYS BEEN A LITTLE apprehensive about how my colleagues at work would react to my homosexuality. It is just as well that I chose to be a journalist, because people in the media world tend to be more open.

But there were some anxious times. To begin with, I chose not to tell anybody that I was gay. I made no attempt to conceal it either but believed that it was unnecessary to broadcast my homosexuality. But there could be no denying that I was different. I simply did not react the way that the straight reporters did.

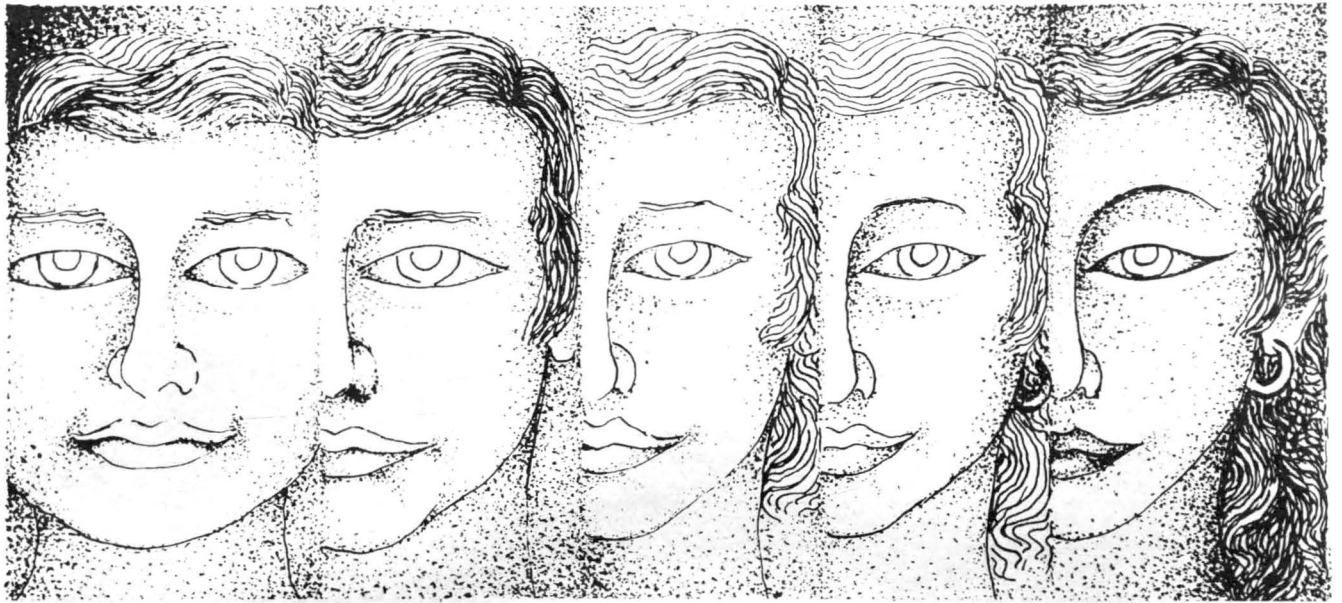
This was brought home to me when an attractive female reporter joined our staff. Not only was she pretty but she also knew how to use her sexuality to keep the male reporters under her thumb. A fleeting smile, a gentle squeeze, a wide-eyed look of vulnerability and she had them all eating out of her hand. Then, of course, she began to play one off against the other and in the process, advanced her own prospects.

I was the only one who remained immune to her blandishments. She had nothing that I wanted and as somebody who had a little experience of manipulating men myself, I knew exactly what she was up to. She too sensed that I would be a hard nut to crack and finally, she realised that I was gay. From that point on, we were implacable foes and she marked me as the one man who saw through her.

Later, I left that paper and she too went to another city. But recently, I went back to my old Chief Reporter. "What finally happened?" I enquired.

"My God, you were right!" he moaned. "She was such a tease, that bitch!"

Most of my reporter friends caught on that I was gay fairly quickly. Sometimes the revelation was unexpected. One night we were all taking a local



train back home after the night shift, when a party of gays, their cruising over, boarded the same compartment. Recognising me, one of them came and sat next to us and began recounting his experiences. "And you know, I picked up this huge taxi-driver..." My reporter friends, simple Karnataka boys from conservative families, first turned red, then purple and finally got up and left.

The cat was out of the bag.

To be fair, none of them reacted adversely. Those that couldn't cope with the revelation simply chose to ignore it while the others acted as though it was of no consequence. But for some of them, my homosexuality represented a weapon to be used in case one was necessary. How often did I hear at the end of a professional row: "You bloody homo!" Finally, there was no escaping that I was different and that my difference would always set me apart.

In my experience, those heterosexuals who go in for gay bashing generally have problems of their own. My newspaper had once sent me to a five star hotel to cover a party. A female hotel executive walked up to me and asked right out: "Is it true that you are a homo?"

"It takes one bitch to know another," I shot back. She was so startled that she dropped her glass. But I was being unfair. I knew that her husband had just come out of the closet and she was therefore going through an anti-gay phase.

This is in fact, a major problem. A large proportion of the city's gay population is still in the closet; many of the men have made unsuccessful marriages and pass off as straight during the day. Only at night do they creep out of their closets and go berserk at Bandstand or Oval.

Us open gays are therefore placed in an awkward situation. The guy you slept with last night might run into you in the street the next day—except that this time, he will be accompanied by his wife and children. How are we to react to him then? At one party, I had an encounter with a macho, advertising type. The next day, he looked through me: his heterosexual cover was back on. This happens all the time. At first, I used to be hurt by it, but now I've come to appreciate their problem.

AND WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Visions of growing old, increasingly lonely are a common nightmare. There are no children to turn to, no family to fall back on. Older gays are only now beginning to ponder their future. Will there be regrets? What happens when we are no longer 'desirable' and youthful?

I have often thought of it. And I sincerely feel that I shall not miss having lived my life as a gay. There are so many options open to us here. Liv-

ing in a male-dominated society has its advantages. One can retire to an ashram, do all the things one has always wanted to do.

There is a slight fear though of being left out in the cold and to compensate I am making a conscious effort to expand my family. Everyone I now know and deal with are potential 'family' to me. If even that fails, I console myself, I always have reading and my other interests to look forward to. Strange as it may seem I don't expect other gays to look after me—I'm just not the sort to rely on others and expect a dependent relationship.

All my friends think I'm crazy worrying about the future decades in advance. Certainly, after I finish the night shift and travel home on the 'gay special' (so called because it has all the queens from the Oval crowding it to reach back home) it's hard to imagine it could be a lonely life someday. The excited chatter all around is of one big happy family. Guys are eyeing each other and getting picked up all the time. It's exciting and great fun—a feeling of kinship and warmth a heterosexual will never understand.

I have no regrets. If I had to live my life again I just know I would choose to grow up gay once more. ♦

Where technology takes the reins...

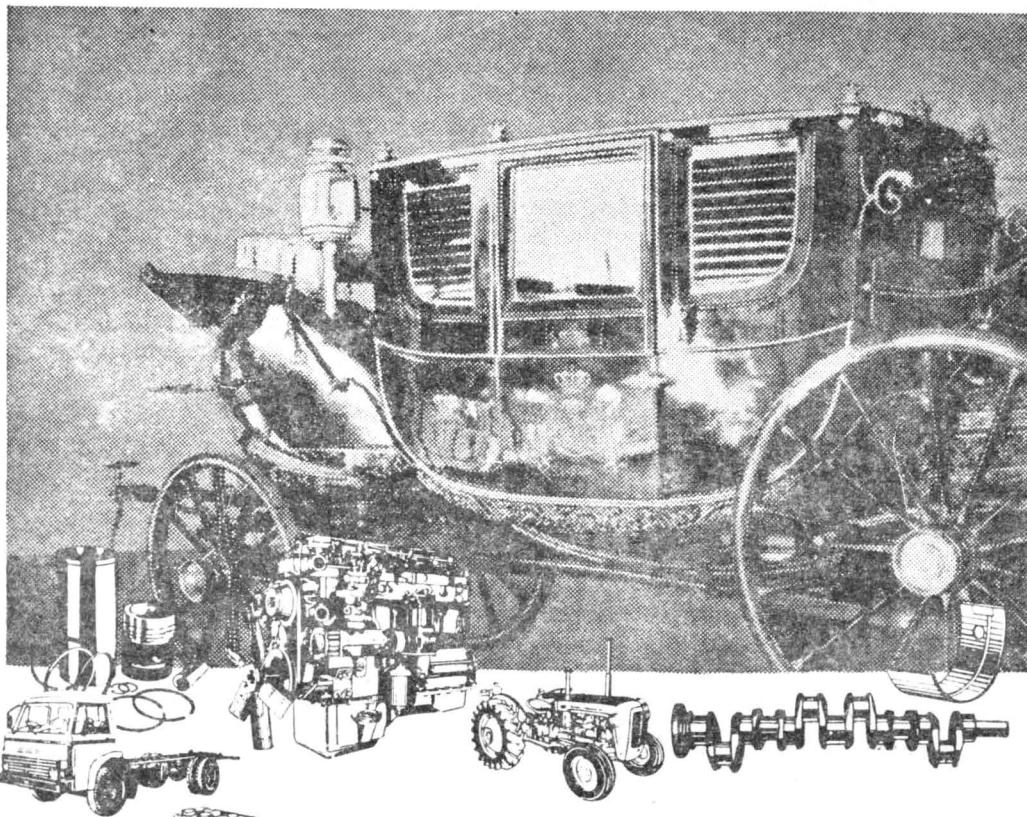
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BIHAR AFTER JAGANNATH

Anand Khurana revisits the land of Bobby and Bhagalpur to try and make sense of the scandals of India's worst-run state.

"KYON BABU," ASKED the swarthy, pock-marked man seated beside me on the Howrah Express, eyeing my baggage with press labels affixed on it. "Kya aap patraakar hai? (Are you a journalist)?" I nodded, adding that it was my first trip to Bihar. "Tab to babuji bach ke rehna (In that case, you had better watch out)," he said, "Bihar to Dagdar babu ka desh hai aur aap jaise likhne likhane walon ko to zara sambhal kar rehna padega (Bihar is Doctor sahib's land and writers like you will have to be very careful)."

However, it was not 'Dagdar babu's desh' by the time the train deposited me at Patna railway station. The Man from Delhi, Chandrasekhar Singh, had taken over from Chief Minister, Dr

Jagannath Mishra and the city was agog with this piece of news. It was goodbye to the man who had tried to gag the media, allowed criminals to rule the roost and had given the 'go ahead' to politicians and officials to make as much money as they could. The three-year, scandal-ridden reign of Dr Mishra had finally come to an end a day before Independence Day this year, but while there was an air of festivity, some people seemed indifferent to the change. For instance, the taxi-driver who dropped me at my hotel, summed up the development succinctly: "Yahan to sahib, kai aaye, kai gaye—koi farak nahin padega (Many have come and gone; it won't make any difference)."

Now that the dust over the when-will-Dr-Mishra-quit-if-ever-he-quits issue has more or less settled, with the Maithil Brahmin reluctantly stepping down from the Chief Minister's post, the state has begun to recover from his second innings (he was earlier Chief Minister for two years during the Emergency era).

LICENSED TO KILL

"THIS IS TO announce with great pleasure that the Government Homeopathic Board of the Bihar Government has started enlistment and registration

The medical scandals • The Bobby murder case • The education mess • Corrupt Vice Chancellors •

of homeopathic practitioners under Section 29 of the Homeopathic Act, 1953. Desirous candidates should send three copies of their photographs, experience certificate, full name, father's name, date of birth and full address along with Rs 700 by money order. For original application send Rs five by money order. You will get registration certificate within a month. As the registration system is open for only a few days, please apply immediately."

Issued by Secretary, Medical Advisors Association, Kidwai Nagar, Kanpur.

About a year ago, similar advertisements appeared in different regional newspapers all over the country. If the registration fee demanded in Kanpur was Rs 70, then it was Rs 900 in Pune and Rs 500 in Nagaland. Interestingly, no such advertisement was carried by any Bihar newspaper.

After a legal battle, the Central Council of Homeopaths put an end to the affair but not before Rs 1.26 crores had been guzzled by certain officials. Investigations revealed that an estimated 18,000 persons had applied for a 'license to kill' and that health department officials had cheerfully licensed 'doctors' without closely checking their qualifications. A spokesman of the Bihar Homeopathic Board however, said that only 2,000 persons had got themselves registered and Rs 40 was collected from each!

Anything could happen in Dr Mishra's Bihar and nothing that his government did or did not do, came as a surprise. There is no doubt that the state government's health cadre, which has over 5,000 doctors on its rolls, badly needs a shot in the arm. Till a few months ago, of the nine medical colleges in the state, five were without principals; 15 mobile British-manufactured medical vans costing about Rs three lakhs each, have been rotting in Delhi while the state officials pass files to secure their release after paying the customs duties; fake medical degrees



Bobby: a controversial murder.

are sold for anything between Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000; street dogs are a common sight in the general wards of hospitals. According to Dr Rajiv Ranjan Prasad, President of the Bihar State Health Care Centre, the state has nearly 80,000 quacks, most of whom operate in the far-flung hilly areas. No wonder, that an *Indian Express* editorial commented: "Morality and probity in public affairs are admittedly at a discount all over the country. . . but Bihar would appear to have invested each misdemeanour, each infraction with a twist particularly abhorrent to civilised behaviour."

POLITICAL MURDER

PATNA IS ALSO full of talk about the controversial Bobby murder case. In the summer of this year, Bobby, a young telephone operator who handled the PABX of the Vidhan Sabha and was later a typist was found dead in mysterious circumstances. She was an adopted daughter of Rajeshwari Saroj Das, a Congress (I) Vidhan Parishad member. According to Das, Bobby—

who was known to be a high-class call girl catering to local politicians—was brought by her from a Patna-based missionary organisation when she was only six months old. Ms Das, who has been in active politics for nearly five decades and is believed to have assets worth Rs 30 lakhs, said that Bobby's marriage had broken up and she had then fallen into the 'bad company' of boyfriends, drugs and drinks.

One of these boyfriends was Raghuvir Jha, the controversial son of Radhanandan Jha, Chairman of the Vidhan Sabha. According to Ms Das, on the night of May 7, Jha junior (along with a friend) had come on the pretext of seeing her ailing daughter and had then administered a fatal dose of pesticide mixed in glucose water. According to reliable sources, the Bobby affair smacks of political overtones, probably involving a few ministers.

BUYING A DEGREE

LIKE HEALTH SERVICES, education too, is in a bad way in the state. Casteism is clearly evident in appointments and handing out favours. Take for instance, Bihar University (located at Muzaffarpur) whose last three Vice Chancellors have played the 'caste game' to the best of their abilities. If Dr Shakilur Rehman was accused of siding with the Rajputs, then his successor Dr Shyamanandan Kishore favoured the Bhumihars while the present Vice Chancellor, Dr Narmadeshwar Jha, is said to have dispensed largesse to Rajputs and Maithil Brahmins. Dr Jha, who was previously attached to Bhagalpur University, has a long list of charges against his name: elevating a clansman *chaprasi* to a clerk, reappointing a lecturer who was sacked for remaining absent without explanation for two years, spending Rs two lakhs on his house during the

The examination racket • The industrial failures • Rajiv Gandhi's dissatisfaction • Mishra on Mishra

last one year, taking Rs 20,000 from the University funds to buy a colour television set for his residence, transferring a blind professor to far-flung Betia and appointing a woman Maithil Brahmin...

Two years ago, when Magadh University introduced the evaluation of books under a centralised system, it also made corruption 'centralised'. Under this system, the answer papers are brought to one place and the examiners are asked to clear the books within a deadline. On questioning student leaders, I found that roll numbers are openly circulated among the group of examiners and marked VI (Very Important) or VVI (Very Very Important). The venue has the look of a *mela* with students and guardians trying to contact the examiners with chits and envelopes stuffed with currency notes!

Predictably, it is said that Veena Mishra, wife of Dr Mishra, had obtained a second division in her graduate examination, but then the magic wand was waved and—hey presto!—the lady secured first division. Mass copying is the 'in' thing and *goondaism* prevails on almost all the campuses. The results of some exams have not been declared even after a year and thousands of students remain in a state of suspense. According to the rules, answer books are required to be retained at least three years after the exams, but pages from these have found their way to the *kabadiwallahs* after two months!

MEAGRE PROFITS

BIHAR UNDER DAGDAR *babu* had also fared poorly on the industrial front. Investigations reveal that of the nearly 50 state undertakings, only seven showed a profit in 1981-82. Six undertakings accounted for a loss of Rs 213 crores (as on March 31, 1982). The major loss-making undertakings



Thakur: allegations of corruption.

are headed by the Bihar Electricity Board whose total investment is Rs 1,029 crores with the annual establishment costs running to Rs 60 crores; a figure that is disproportionate to the size of its operations. One example of reckless expenditure by these undertakings is the Bihar State Small Industries Corporation whose accumulated loss till last year was Rs 7.42 crores. The telephone bills of its erstwhile Chairman, a Congress (I) MP, showed a total of Rs 10,205 while another Rs 19,806 were spent on furnishing his residence. The chairman however, preferred to spend most of the time in Delhi.

The state government closed the 1982-83 financial year with an overdraft of over Rs 400 crores to oil its top-heavy bureaucratic machinery. As if this was not enough, the government also surrendered another Rs 400 crores of non-planned and planned schemes during the year. Karpooi Thakur, a former Chief Minister and leader of the Opposition in the legislative assembly, told *Imprint* that he considered Dr Mishra's government 'thoroughly corrupt, inefficient and dishonest'. He alleged that the previous Chief Minister was directly involved in

taking Rs two crores from a private wire manufacturing firm for granting favours, another Rs two lakhs for appointing JN Singh as Managing Director of Bihar State Construction Corporation and pocketing a lakh of rupees for appointing civil engineers.

BLACK MISDEEDS

"The nightmarish days of the Janata rule are over. The sun is once again peeping through the horizon and the national panorama is dotted with achievements." So, Dr Mishra said a few months ago, while releasing a ten-page official document, adding that "India has another Bhagwad Gita in the form of the revised 20-point programme." In a recent interview to a Delhi-based weekly, Dr Mishra tried to put up a brave front despite his name being scratched from Mrs Gandhi's book. "My achievements during my three-year rule are many," he boasted. "A book can be written on them."

Indeed! There is a lot that can be said about Mishra.

The last few days of Dr Mishra's reign were extremely busy ones. Obviously, sensing that the dissidents had caught up with him and the 'heir apparent', Rajiv Gandhi, wanted to get rid of Chief Ministers with 'dirty' records because of the imminence of the next General Election, Dr Mishra regularised the services of 5,000 subordinate engineers whose case had been hanging fire for the last three years. During the last week before he quit, Dr Mishra also appointed one of his cronies, a lecturer in the Bihar University, to a post meant for a highly qualified management professional and which was reserved for a scheduled caste candidate.

Indeed, the period was marked by last minute rush, telephones buzzing, secretaries running about with stacks of files and the Doctor affixing his

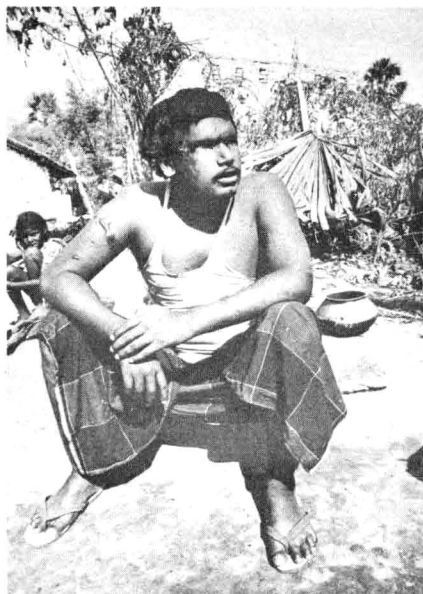
● Jagannath on the rampage ● IAS agitation ● Harijan repression ● The aftermath of Bhagalpur ●

bold signature on them. Nevertheless, it seems that Dr Mishra's benevolence will come to naught as the new Chief Minister has announced that all government decisions taken during the first half of August will be reviewed. It is obvious, going by the way Chandrasekhar Singh has launched his 'cleaning drive'—removing Dr Shyamanandan Kishore, advisor to the education department who was considered close to Dr Mishra and suspending five department officials along with three engineers of the Gandak Flood Protection Division—that he is all set to whitewash the previous ministry's 'black misdeeds'.

Whether or not the new incumbent does wield a new brush, the streets of Patna were badly in need of people to yield the broomsticks. The city's Municipal Corporation workers had struck work and the pavements in certain colonies were overflowing with offal and night soil. Earlier in April, the employees of the Corporation had not been paid their salaries for over a month—a sum of Rs 33 lakhs. In February this year, eight towns had been declared *bhangi mukta* (free from scavenging) under Protection of the Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the government inserted advertisements in local newspapers announcing that '1,000 scavengers have been freed from the demeaning practice of carrying night soil on their heads'.

"*Arre sahib,*" said Bhoora, a sweeper. "*Yeh to sab kehne ki baat hai. Ham chamar logon ki halat aaj wahi hai jo pachaas saal pehle thi* (All this is a sham; we scavengers, are no better off than what we were 50 years ago)."

Discontent is also brewing among the bureaucrats who are compelled to toe the line. In an Annual General Meeting of the Bihar Branch of the Indian Administrative Association held in June this year, a resolution was adopted resenting arbitrary transfers and discrimination in postings. The resolution also urged the state government in the 'wider interests of the



Bhagalpur blindings: reign of terror.

morale of the Service and larger interests of the administration' to set this right. Four months earlier, representatives of 11 associations of Bihar's gazetted officials had flatly refused to do election duty in the assembly polls in Assam. The Indian Administrative Association is headed by Abash Kumar Chatterjee, whose professional career has been marked by perennial clashes with local politicians. From the very beginning, Chatterjee, who topped the IAS list in 1966, clashed with the Bihari political mafia when he refused to dance to their tune. Shunted from district to district and job to job, Chatterjee was alternately Director of Bihar State Export Corporation, Special Secretary of Mines, General Manager of Bihar State Transport Corporation—the list seems endless. The middle-aged bureaucrat however, created a furore by turning down a promotion to the super-time scale, a coveted landmark in a civil servant's career. Chatterjee's protest acted as a catalyst for the growing resentment among government officials against political interference and the affair was even discussed in Parliament.

REIGN OF TERROR

WHAT IS BEING discussed all over the country these days is the deterioration of the law and order situation in Bihar. "Human beings are shot like birds," said Karpoori Thakur in an impassioned voice. "Women are raped day in and day out; dacoity, loot and murder have become the order of the day." The Opposition leader's words are no exaggeration, for policemen are known to have shot helpless villagers in concocted 'encounters'. On October 3, 1982 ten Harijan labourers were tied with thick ropes, taken to the paddy fields and shot dead in cold blood. Their crime: demanding a few rupees more in wages from landowners of a village in Patna district.

The memories of the Bhagalpur blindings—when undertrials had their eyeballs pierced and acid poured into them—still linger but the police, it seems, are still bent upon creating a reign of terror, particularly in the rural areas. According to Thakur, more than 100 people have been killed in police 'encounters' in eight districts. He has also demanded the setting up of a judicial commission headed by either a Supreme Court or High Court judge to go into the matter.

Official statistics show that Bihar is the least-policed, most crime-prone state in India with only one police station for every 68 villages and one policeman standing guard in every village, despite the Rs 60 crores being spent on police administration. For the period 1975-81, 7.5-lakh cognisable crimes were committed all over the state. About some four months back, an adivasi succumbed to merciless flogging by policemen in Gua town in the mining area of Singhbhum. At least 20,000 undertrials languish in dingy cells, sometimes for years.

In a precedent-setting judgement, the Supreme Court recently directed the Bihar Government to 'compensate'

Rudal Sah, who was forced to remain in jail for more than 14 years even after his acquittal, by paying him Rs 35,000. Sah was released in the winter of last year after spending 29 years behind bars. He was imprisoned in 1953 for murdering his wife and acquitted by a judgement in 1968. In a similar case, Khedu Bhattacharya, found guilty of committing a petty theft, was lodged in Hazaribagh Central Jail for 28 years. Arun Shourie, who wrote a series of scathing articles when he was the Executive Editor of the *Indian Express*, says that low-caste prisoners in Bihar jails are made to work as domestic servants of the high-caste prisoners and their rations also diverted to the 'privileged' prisoners.

So much has been said and written about the draconian Press Bill introduced by Dr Mishra that it would be pointless to discuss it further. However, I would like to point out when all newspapers went on strike in support of the beleaguered Bihar journalists on September 3, last year, the pro-establishment *National Herald* was one of the handful of papers that appeared. "We stand by press freedom," its editorial proclaimed, "but there is no

Slavery is still rampant in Jagannath's home district.

point in crying wolf at every move."

And a few snippets that I gleaned during my trip.

The Mahatma Gandhi Setu Bridge spanning 5.5 kms and which cost Rs 50 crores to build, was inaugurated twice—once by the Prime Minister on March 2 and later by the Chief Minister on March 19 when he led a convoy of 500 cars and jeeps across the bridge, during whose construction incidentally, 16 workmen lost their lives.

Slavery is still rampant in Bihar villages. In Dr Mishra's home district, Saharsa, Rozid Mian inherited the debts of his elder brother who had died in bondage. It so happened that the Muslim landless labourer had taken two *maunds* of *marua*, a coarse grain, from a landlord. One *maund* however, was returned. But for the next 21 years

Mian, and later his brother worked as slaves for the *zamindaar* who insisted that his loan, which had by then accumulated to 200 *maunds*, be paid off before he freed them.

An uncertain future stares the 35 cataract patients who lost their eyesight after being operated at a free camp held by the Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Trust last December. . . .

One could go on and on and yet it would be uncovering just the tip of the iceberg. Like a Juggernaut, Jagannath Mishra, has outlived the Bhagalpur blindings, the Press Bill, the Patna Urban Co-operative Bank case, only to quit reluctantly after seeing the frowns on the residents of 1, Safdarjang Road. Atal Behari Vajpayee summed up Dr Mishra's second innings quite aptly: "*Pind chutta* (good riddance). . . ."

The end?

No, not really because stalking the corridors of power in Patna is Dr Mishra who is all set to form a regional party, tentatively called 'Mithila Desam' (shades of 'Telugu Desam'). Reportedly, Shatrughan Sinha, the Bhari who has made it good in the Bombay film industry, is likely to pitch in.

Juggernaut is truly timeless. ♦

BIHAR'S CHIEF MINISTERS

The roll of Chief Ministers of the ninth largest state has 20 distinguished names. The latest addition to the list is that of 56-year-old Chandrasekhar Singh:

1. Dr Shree Krishna Sinha	January 2, 1946 to January 31, 1961
2. Deepnarain Singh	February 1, 1961 to February 18, 1961
3. Pandit Binodanand Jha	February 18, 1961 to October 1, 1963
4. Krishna Ballav Sahay	October 2, 1963 to March 5, 1967
5. Mahamaya Prasad Sinha	March 5, 1967 to January 28, 1968
6. Satish Prasad Singh	January 28, 1968 to February 1, 1968
7. Bindeshwari Prasad Mandal	February 1, 1968 to March 22, 1968
8. Bhola Paswan Shastri	March 22, 1968 to June 29, 1968
★ President's Rule	June 29, 1968 to February 26, 1969
9. Harihar Prasad Singh	February 26, 1969 to June 22, 1969
10. Bhola Paswan Shastri	June 22, 1969 to July 4, 1969
★ President's Rule	July 4, 1969 to February 16, 1970
11. Daroga Prasad Rai	February 16, 1970 to December 22, 1970
12. Karpoori Thakur	December 22, 1970 to June 2, 1971
13. Bhola Paswan Shastri	June 2, 1971 to January 9, 1972
★ President's Rule	January 9, 1972 to March 19, 1972
14. Kedar Pande	March 19, 1972 to July 2, 1973
15. Abdul Ghaffoor	July 2, 1973 to April 11, 1975
16. Dr Jagannath Mishra	April 11, 1975 to April 30, 1977
★ President's Rule	May 1, 1977 to June 24, 1977
17. Karpoori Thakur	June 24, 1977 to April 21, 1979
18. Ram Sunder Das	April 21, 1979 to February 17, 1980
★ President's Rule	February 18, 1980 to June 8, 1980
19. Dr Jagannath Mishra	June 8, 1980 to August 14, 1983
20. Chandrasekhar Singh	August 14, 1983 to —

Dev Anand

Photographed By
Ashok Gupta

"IT'S NOT THE kind of room that I want to have or should have," says Dev Anand throwing his hands up. "It's just there. Those photographs, for instance," he says, gesturing towards large colour bromides of Christie O'Neal, his last heroine, which take up most of the wall facing the entrance and lend the room a surreal touch, "Now I should have removed those photographs months ago."

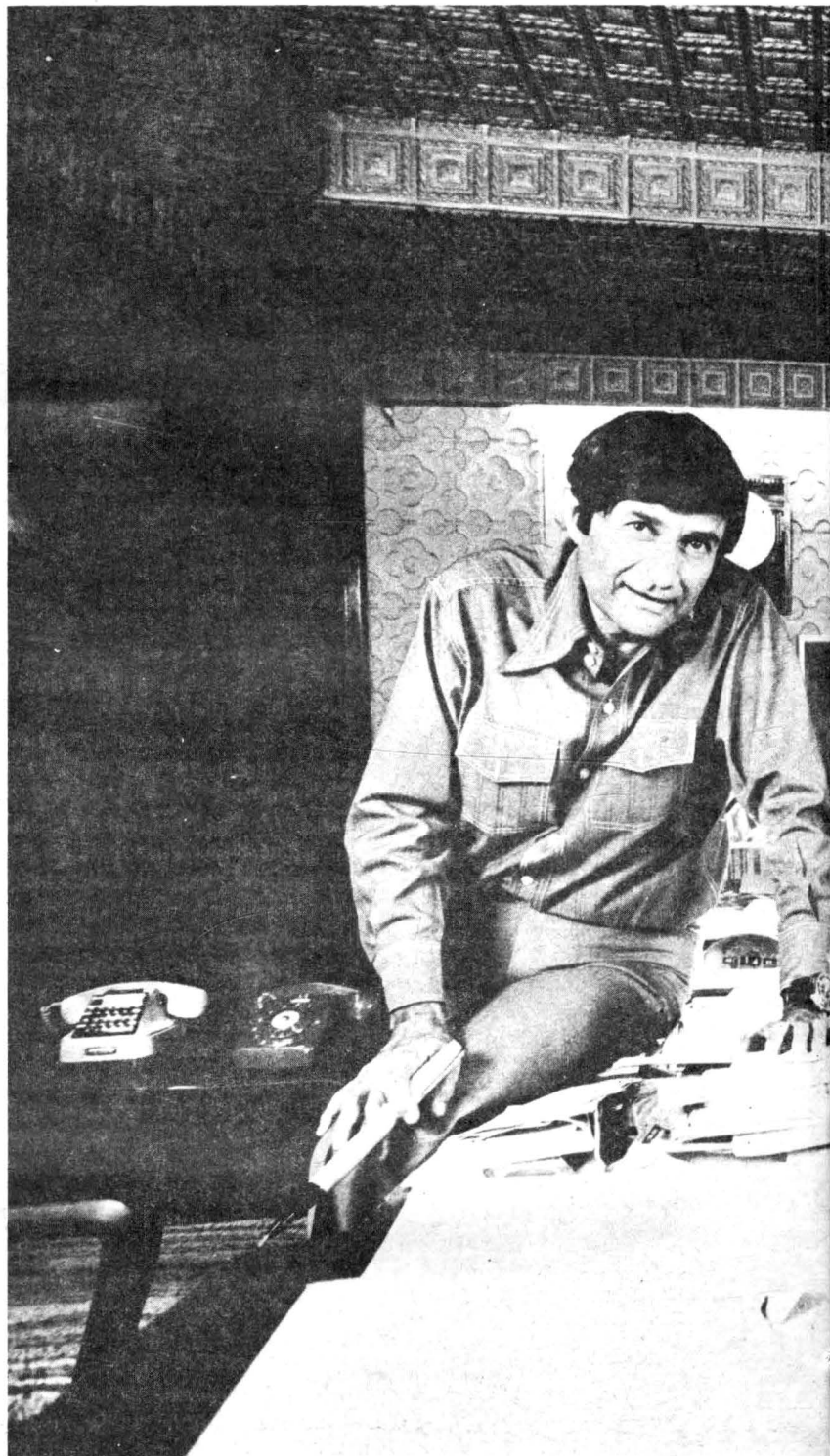
It is a large room by any standards, last in a long corridor that runs the gamut of the Navketan headquarters on the first floor of a shed-like structure in Santacruz. The entrance to Navketan is by way of a steep ladder and once you reach the top, you are a little winded and quite prepared for the unexpected.

Leaving telephone operators, huge papier mache fascimiles of elephants and the sound of film dialogue being run on moviolas behind, you reach Dev's office where he 'interviews bit actors, signs cheques, holds discussions with distributors—you know that kind of thing'. The room has evolved around a facet of Dev's personality that has been slightly elusive: that of a dynamic producer and chief executive of Navketan films.

It is a room that resembles a film set and was designed by Dev's assistant art director, a Mr Desai, who went to town on it—especially the plaster of Paris tiles and the multi-designed wallpaper. "I didn't really care much for the design," shrugs Dev, "but then I didn't want to hurt his feelings by changing it."

The wall which has the Christie O'Neal pictures also has a profusion of plaques and citations, faced by a formica-topped table in the art deco style, that was so trendy around the time the room was done. This table, along with the one that rests by the corner of both sofas, is overloaded with papers and one can discern *Hare Rama* publicity material and *Ishq* prints.

In line with the second sofa is a cabinet that houses a small portable



black and white television set, one speaker, a record player that doesn't work and more awards, citations and plaques, ostensibly for the music of *Hare Rama* and the direction of *Guide*, *Kaala Bazaar* and *Kaala Paani*. The awards are displayed randomly, haphazardly, hardly in a way which would catch the visitor's eye. Also on the wall are two oils by the well-known contemporary artist, Harkishan,

and a colour photograph of Dev's son, Sunil, who makes his debut in *Anand Aur Anand* Dev's newest film, yet to be released.

The wall on the left has an impressive collection of books, including the discourses of Bhagwan Rajneesh, an edition of the Frank and Wagnall dictionary, a collection of short stories by Oscar Wilde, a copy of the Indian *Who's Who*, biographies of Yeats,



Frank Capra and Turgenev and the entire series of Crescent Great Cities lying in a carton.

These and other items lying around the room give you a fair idea of the man's personality. There are, for instance, a heap of sandalwood garlands given by some fans, and a bouquet of paper flowers, both of which he keeps 'because they never fade'. There are also wax displays of vases and flowers

bought from Nainital while shooting a film; grotesque clown masks used for *Swami Dada*; and two other oil paintings done by a friend of his, Srinivasan, from Kerala.

Dev goes down memory lane and tells of the many old and forgotten heroes who have been born out of this room. "SD Burman composed some of his greatest music sitting right here," he says. "Sahir used to spend a lot of

time here. So many actors and actresses have been launched from this room."

And of course, when it all gets to be too tense and he desperately needs a break or some creative inputs, Dev escapes from this room. "To anywhere, Mahableshwar, anywhere where there are open spaces and away from these four walls." ♦

Interviewed By Malavika Sanghvi

Finally, The Inside Story

Peter Brown reveals the truth about the Beatles.

SO HE'S FINALLY GONE AND done it. Peter Brown, the ultimate Beatles insider, the man who ran Apple, who fixed John and Yoko's wedding and who knew them from their early Liverpool days, has, at last, written the definitive book about the Beatles.

The Love You Make (the title comes from the last song on *Abbey Road*: "And in the end/the love you make is equal/to the love you take") is a blow-by-blow account of the rise and messy fall of the Beatles. There is none of the usual 'Fab Four—greatest composers since Schubert', PR nonsense. This is the real story, warts and all.

The best section is the one that deals with the early days. The way Brown tells it, the Beatles may have remained another quartet of noisy, Northern fools, had Brian Epstein not fallen in love with John Lennon (he finally seduced him in Barcelona in April 1963) and decided to turn the group into stars. He also points out how astonishingly young all of them were at their peak (Paul McCartney

was 25 when *Sergeant Pepper* came out, while George Harrison was only 24). Predictably, they were unable to make the transition from being merely working class Liverpool lads to being hailed as the men who typified the '60s.

Of the four, John probably comes across the worst. Spoilt, selfish, arrogant, callous, pretentious and finally, quite stupid, he never really came to terms with the world around him and resorted to

THE LOVE YOU MAKE AN INSIDERS STORY OF THE BEATLES



role-playing—hip poet, psychedelic wizard, trendy rebel, social revolutionary and last of all, house husband. Paul was the vain one. Convinced that it was his destiny to run the group, he ultimately destroyed it with his intriguing and complaining. George was the perpetual also-ran, a talented musician, completely overshadowed by John and Paul, while Ringo was the joke sidekick.

There are plenty of revelations here. Certainly, the John and Yoko story has never been better explained and the India chapter (excerpted in this issue) is full of information that has never before been divulged, including the saga of how George and John ran away from Rishikesh.

Allan Klein, always a shadowy figure in other accounts of the Beatles saga, finally emerges as a flesh and blood character, full of big talk and crude abuse. It is clear that Brown hated him on sight, though the Eastmans, Paul's family-in-law and Klein's rivals, don't come off much better.

There are some gentle surprises. Ever since Lennon's *Rolling Stone* interviews came out, there has been a tendency to regard George Martin as a mere hanger-on. Here he is restored to his rightful place as the man behind much of the music. Brown also sets the record straight on Apple. It is generally believed that Apple Corporation was a disaster from the word 'go'. Not true, claims Brown. Apple's problem was that it was Paul's idea. It fell

apart when John started interfering but till then, it managed all right.

But finally, what the book proves is that it is perfectly possible for four not very nice people to produce music that can change the world. ♦

A Beatles Who's Who

John Lennon
Paul McCartney
George Harrison
Ringo Starr

} The Beatles

Cynthia Lennon: John's first wife. He left her and their son Julian for Yoko Ono.

Jane Asher: Paul's steady girl-friend. He married Linda Eastman after she left him.

Patti Harrison: George's first wife. She ran off with Eric Clapton.

Maureen Starkey: Ringo's first wife. She called him 'Ritchie' not Ringo.

Jennie Boyd: Patti Harrison's sister.

Mal Evans: Beatle hanger-on. Later shot by Los Angeles police 'by mistake'.

Neil Aspinall: 'The fifth Beatle'. Along with Peter Brown, he managed the Beatles' affairs.

'Magic' Alex: Alex Mardas, a Greek sidekick of John Lennon. He lived off the Beatles.

The Love You Make by Peter Brown and Steven Gaines is published in hardcover by Macmillans and has been imported into India by Ganges Book Flow.

THE BEATLES AND THE MAHARISHI

By Peter Brown and Steven Gaines

IT WAS IN FEBRUARY 1968, just as Apple was about to go into full swing, that the Beatles informed me they intended to finish the Transcendental Meditation course they had begun the previous August in Bangor. But this time the Beatles had agreed not just to a ten-day course but to go off to Rishikesh in the remote wilderness of north India for three months of serious study. The mastery of Transcendental Meditation, they hoped, would give them the wisdom to run Apple. In Rishikesh, they said, they would live in an ashram—without any drugs or alcohol.

The Beatles' faith in the tiny Maharishi Mahesh Yogi seemed unshakable. Through the winter they had remained serious devotees of the guru and visited him frequently in his London flat in South Kensington. They still went to his lectures, and George Harrison and John Lennon became vegetarians, although John had almost immediately gone back to his regimen of drugs after Brian Epstein's death. The Beatles were even contemplating, as an offshoot of Apple Films, financing a major motion picture about the Maharishi, the proceeds of which would fund a Transcendental Meditation University in London.

I had my doubts about the efficacy of the Beatles' going off to India with the Maharishi in the middle of the formation of Apple, particularly because of certain incidents that led me to believe the Maharishi was using the Beatles' name for his personal gain. One day I received a call from the lawyers for ABC Television in America. They said that the Maharishi had been negotiating with them for a TV special



George, Peter Brown and Paul with the Maharishi.

that he said would include an appearance by the Beatles. ABC's lawyers were calling me to confirm the Beatles' co-operation. I told them that the Beatles had no intention of appearing on the Maharishi's show. But only a week later the lawyers were back on the phone; the Maharishi was insisting he could deliver them.

I called the Maharishi in Malmö in Sweden, where he was lecturing, and explained the problem to him, but his answers were obscure and indefinite. I decided to fly to Malmö to insist that he should not represent the Beatles as being part of his projects. There the Maharishi greeted me warmly but only giggled and nodded and chattered on like a mouse on speed as I laid down the law. The following week in London I was again contacted by ABC's lawyers, who said the Maharishi was still insisting the Beatles would appear on his TV show and was soliciting sponsors with this understanding. I went to Malmö again, this time with Paul McCartney and George Harrison in tow. We met the Maharishi and tried to explain to him that he must not use their names to exploit his business affairs, and that they definitely would *not* appear on his TV special, but the

Maharishi just nodded and giggled again. "He's not a modern man," George said forgivingly on the plane home. "He just doesn't understand these things."

On February 16 the Beatles set out for Rishikesh. The travelling party consisted of John and Cynthia Lennon, George and Pattie Harrison, Paul McCartney, Jane Asher, Ringo and Maureen Starr, Jennie Boyd, Donovan and Mal Evans. They travelled first by jet to Delhi, then by taxi and jeep and eventually

on the backs of donkeys. When the road became impossible for even the donkeys to navigate, they walked the last half mile, crossing a narrow rope bridge over a muddy chasm before they reached the gates of the ashram. Their luggage followed later on ox-drawn carts. For the first time in years, the Beatles were cut off from the world—and the press from the Beatles. The absence of news of what was happening in the ashram tantalised the public. The whole world seemed to know that the Beatles had gone off to India to discover the 'truth', and millions waited expectantly for them to come down from the mountain and spread the Word. Here, told for the first time, is what really happened in the ashram.

The Beatles were joined at the ashram by Beach Boy Mike Love, jazz musician Paul Horn, American actress Mia Farrow, her sister Tia, and her brother John, plus some twenty other noncelebrated students, an assortment of discontented Americans from California and some aging Swedish widows.

The ashram turned out to be more like a hotel than the spartan guru's camp the Beatles expected. The sleeping quarters were in a complex of pic-



Recently, Cynthia had become aware of a small Japanese woman called Yoko Ono. John swore that he had no romantic involvement with her. But Rishikesh offered an escape from Yoko.

turesque stone bungalows with four or five bedrooms in each. The Beatles' rooms had four-poster beds and solid English furniture. Each was equipped with a modern bath and toilet, and there was even an electric fire for cold nights. Meals were eaten communally at long, hand-carved tables under a vine-covered trellis next to the Ganges. Food was served to them by a large staff of servants and prepared in a completely modern kitchen by a trained chef. The Maharishi's house, a short distance away from the rest of the compound, was a long, low, modern building with its own kitchen and staff. There was even a woman to give the girls a daily massage. The most eyebrow-raising of all the luxury accoutrements was the landing pad for the helicopter used to ferry the Maharishi in and out of the compound on his appointed rounds throughout India. This was the man whom George had excused as 'not a modern man'.

Once settled into the ashram they began to study in earnest. They woke at dawn each morning for an early breakfast, then went to long lectures, and spent the afternoons in meditation sessions. A friendly competition started among them to see who could meditate the longest, and there were heated debates at dinner every night about 'who was getting it' and who was not. John seemed really into it, others thought he was faking it and that George was the most readily spiritual of the group. They dressed in traditional Indian clothing, and although they had shaved their moustaches shortly before the trip, they let their

hair grow. It was the end of the rainy season when they arrived, but in a few weeks it turned warm and balmy, and they were able to bathe in the Ganges, still clear and clean in the late winter. At night in their bungalows they could hear the river crashing rhythmically on the banks.

Every evening after dinner, without the aid of drugs or alcohol, the boys would take their guitars out under the moonlight and sing and write songs. The quantity and quality of the songs composed in India was staggering, even to those who knew them. Thirty of the songs would comprise their next album. Everyone in the compound seemed touched by the muse. Donovan wrote his most beautiful song, *Jennifer Juniper*, for Pattie Harrison's sister Jennie. The mood was loving and mellow, and perhaps the best celebration the Beatles had in years was George's twenty-fifth birthday party, when the Maharishi presented him with a seven-pound cake and a fireworks display.

When they'd first arrived at the ashram, Cynthia had been stung to learn that John had arranged for them to sleep in separate quarters. John explained that the distance would be good for meditating, and anyway they would see each other constantly in the small camp. Despite the unromantic arrangement, Cynthia relished being in Rishikesh. The Maharishi's retreat was her one last hope for their marriage. Her life with John was in a shambles. He was little more than a frequent visitor to their home, and when he was there the house was filled with drug

dealers and other smarmy 'international leeches' as she called them.

And recently Cynthia had become aware of the presence of a small Japanese woman named Yoko Ono in their lives. She seemed to be everywhere; waiting in front of the house for them, or sitting in the back of the car. Her little book of instructional poems was left on the night table on John's side of the bed, like an omen. Although John swore to Cynthia over and over that he had no romantic interest in her, Cynthia was as relieved to get him away from Yoko Ono as she was from the drug dealers.

Little did Cynthia realise that John had considered taking Yoko Ono with him to India instead of her, or even in addition to her, if he could have figured out how to pull it off. It would have been much more fun to go to Rishikesh with Yoko. He felt no guilt about Yoko, because he had not lied to Cynthia; it was an intellectual relationship, not a romantic one. Yoko's galling wit and gentle craziness titillated him. She was smart and opinionated, a grateful distraction from Cynthia's cloying kindness. Whenever John was about to tell Cynthia their marriage was over and he had to get away from her, she would look up to him with those sad, blue, believing eyes, and he didn't have the heart. So off they went to Rishikesh together, while Yoko waited impatiently for John's return.

Rishikesh gave Cynthia a chance to regain a sense of herself, away from the pressures of England. She meditated and returned to the easel, where she

Tamil Nadu— The Pilgrims' Paradise

Tamil Nadu has many famous ancient pilgrim centres offering comfort and solace to an unending stream of visitors.

The Golden City of Temples Kancheepuram is renowned as one of the seven sacred centres of the country and the episcopal seat of Adi Sankaracharya.



Kancheepuram

Rama sanctified the holy island of Rameswaram by worshipping Lord Siva here after his victory over Ravana. No pilgrimage is complete without a visit to Rameswaram.



Rameswaram

Kanniyakumari - the land's end - where the three seas meet is a sacred spot—Kumari Amman Temple, Gandhi Memorial and Vivekananda Memorial are other hallowed centres.

Known as the seat of Cosmic Dance, Chidambaram is one of the holy places for Saivites.



Kanniyakumari

Thirukazhukundram's hill temple is visited daily by two kites, believed to be Saints, who come and eat from the hands of the temple priest.

Nearby are the Pallava monuments at Mamallapuram.

Srirangam is known for its Vaishnavite temple dedicated to Lord Ranganathaswamy, which has magnificent towers.

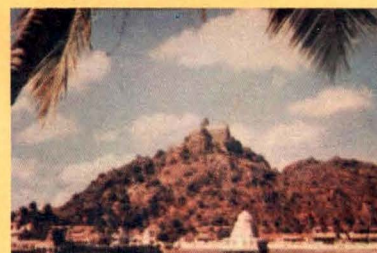
Madurai, also known as the Nectar city is planned in the pattern of a lotus flower, the great Meenakshi-Sundareswarar temple with its nine towers occupying the centre.

Other places, whose memories you will cherish in your mind are Thiruvannamalai, Tiruchendur and Palani.

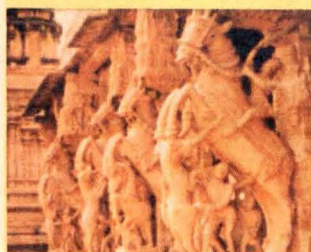
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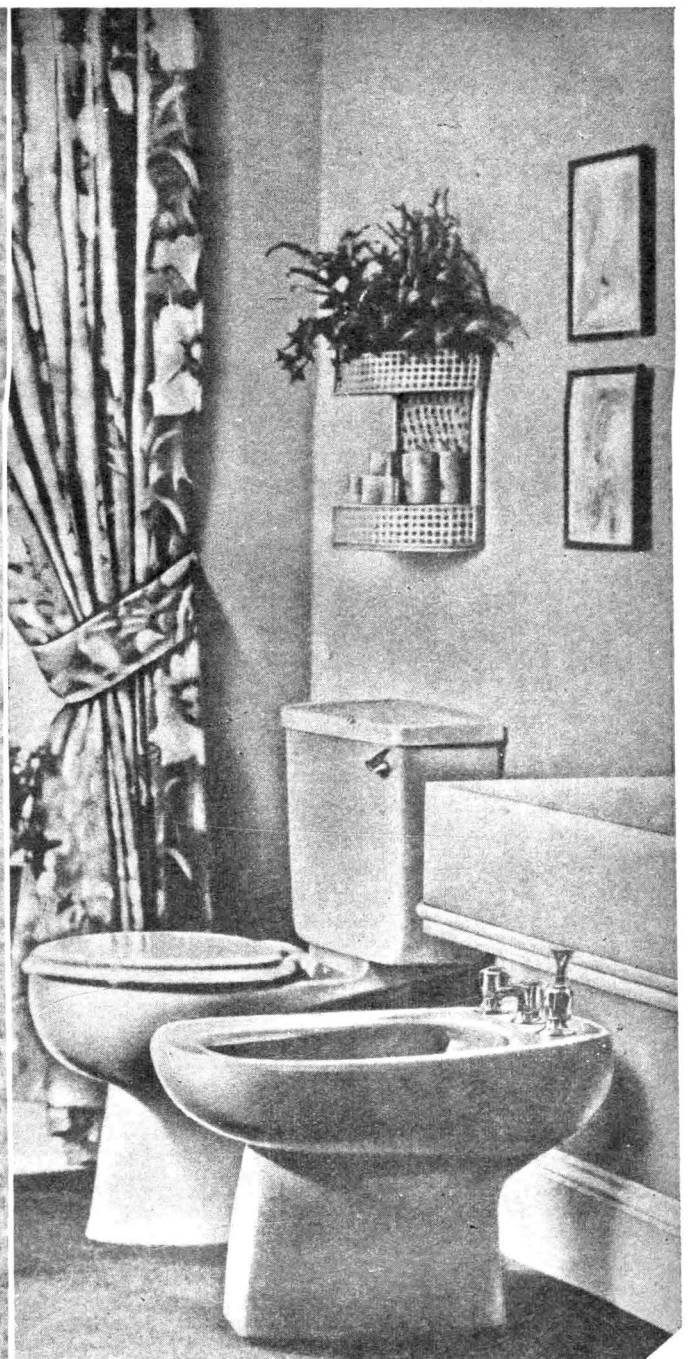
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68 : Imprint, January 1984

spent hours drawing and painting. She watched from a distance as John became healthier and stronger without drugs.

For one brief moment the Maharishi was even successful in raising some optimistically romantic sounds from John. Cynthia and John had told the Maharishi that Julian, their son was celebrating his fifth birthday in a few weeks. The following week they were asked to the Maharishi's house where they were presented with a made-to-order wardrobe for Julian befitting an Indian prince. The young couple were moved by the Maharishi's thoughtfulness, and they held hands while strolling along the Ganges. John was filled with warm, paternal feelings. "Oh Cyn," he said, "won't it be wonderful to be together with Julian again? Everything will be fantastic again, won't it? I can't wait, Cyn, can you?"

But the momentary surge of warmth soon passed, and John began to drift further away from her. Even in the small ashram he sometimes managed to avoid seeing her for days. He spent more and more time locked away in his room. Cynthia assumed he was meditating. He was not. He was writing long, rambling diatribes to a Japanese artist waiting for him in London. He got up early each morning and went to the post box to collect letters from Yoko, who wrote just as faithfully. "Look up at the sky," she wrote him, "and when you see a cloud think of me."

"I got so excited about her letters," John said. "There was nothin' in them that wives or mothers-in-law could've understood, and from India I started

thinkin' of her as a woman, not just an intellectual woman."

On the tenth day, Ringo and Maureen left for home. They told the reporters who greeted them in London they had to leave because Ringo's delicate stomach couldn't take the spicy food, but it was also because they hated the ashram. The clincher was Maureen's aversion to flying insects. The banks of the Ganges are not a good place to visit if one is afraid of flying insects. Each night before Maureen went to sleep, she would make a hapless 'Ritchie' kill every fly and insect in the room and dispose of the carcasses. Back in London, Ringo told friends that the ten days he spent in the ashram weren't as much fun as Butlin's Holiday Camp.

Paul and Jane stuck it out for six weeks. Paul simply wasn't getting it. Or believing it either. The mock seriousness of the Maharishi and the tediousness of meditation were too much like school for him. Paul and Jane were much too sophisticated for this mystical gibberish. But when they were greeted by the press at Heathrow, they said none of this, only that they missed London and wanted to get home.

John and George, however, remained true believers, despite the growing scepticism of their friends, Neil Aspinall among them. Neil was flying in and out of London to the ashram at regular intervals, keeping the Beatles informed on the progress of Apple, of which he was Managing Director. One of these trips concerned making a deal with the Maharishi for a film about him. Neil expected to have

a hard time explaining the business arrangements to the spiritual man, only to find the Maharishi employed a full-time accountant. For a long while Neil and the guru haggled over an additional two-and-a-half per cent. "Wait a minute," Neil thought, "this guy knows more about making deals than I do. He's really into scoring, the Maharishi."

The Maharishi's most powerful critic turned out to be Magic Alex. Alex Mardas was summoned to Rishikesh by John, who missed his company. When Alex arrived at the ashram, he was appalled at what he found. "An ashram with four-poster beds?" he demanded incredulously. "Masseurs and servants bringing water, houses with facilities, an accountant—I never saw a holy man with a book-keeper!"

According to Alex, the sweet old women at the ashram Cynthia liked so much for their warmth and openness were "mentally ill Swedish old ladies who had left their money to the Maharishi. There were also a couple of American actresses. Lots of people went to India," he said, "to find things they couldn't find at home, including a bunch of lost, pretty girls." Alex was disgusted to observe the Maharishi herding them together for a group photograph, like a class picture, which he would use for publicity.

It was also quite apparent that John was totally under the Maharishi's control. John had been completely free of drugs and alcohol for over a month by the time Alex arrived and he was the healthiest he had been in years, but Alex still felt the Maharishi was

The Beatles thought that the Maharishi was a gentle holy man.

They were amazed to find that he had a full-time accountant who haggled over every half per cent.



getting more than he was giving. After a week he heard that the Maharishi expected the Beatles to donate 10 to 25 per cent of their annual income to a Swiss account in his name. He reproved the Maharishi for this, accusing him of having too many mercenary motives in his association with the Beatles. He claims the Maharishi tried to placate him by offering to pay Alex to build a high-powered radio station on the grounds of the ashram so that he could broadcast his holy message to India's masses.

By the end of the tenth week, Alex was bent on undermining the Maharishi's influence. He began by smuggling wine into the compound, having bought it on trips to the local village. The men would not drink, but the girls did. Late at night Alex would distribute the wine to the women while John and George were writing songs. During one of these late night, secret drinking sessions, a pretty blonde nurse from California admitted that during a private consultation with the Maharishi she had been fed chicken for dinner.

The Maharishi's menu became a subject of great debate over the next week as word spread through the ashram that someone had accused him of smuggling chicken into the vegetarian community. Oddly, whether or not it was appropriate for Alex to be

smuggling wine in was never questioned. In general nobody at the camp cared if the Maharishi had a little chicken on the side once in a while, but then, in the eleventh week, the story got worse. The same girl confided to Alex that not only had she been fed chicken during one of her private consultations but that the Maharishi had made sexual advances toward her. The Maharishi began by asking to hold her hand so that his spiritual power would flow between them. It soon developed that he had a more complicated but very old-fashioned method for facilitating the flow.

When Alex transmitted this information to all the other women the following day, they were appropriately horrified. The thought that the Maharishi was not only a religious phoney but also one of such seedy proportions made some of them break down and weep. Cynthia, for one, didn't believe a word of it. She had long ago become acquainted with Alex's jealousy over anyone who had John's attention, and she didn't doubt that Alex would lie to destroy the Maharishi's hold. As for the testimony of the American nurse, Cynthia claimed to have seen the girl in Alex's room sitting at a candlelit table one night. While anyone else would have jumped to a sexual conclusion, Cynthia

became convinced that Alex was using 'black magic' to bewitch the girl.

Alex decided to set a trap for the Maharishi. On the nurse's next trip to the Maharishi's house, it was arranged for several 'witnesses' to hide in the bushes outside the Maharishi's windows. When the Maharishi began to make advances, the girl was to scream, and everyone would come running to her aid. The Beatles and their wives, when told of this plan, strongly disapproved of Alex's tactics and would have nothing to do with it.

Late that night Alex and the nurse returned from the Maharishi's house with another tale. The girl was again served chicken, after which the Maharishi made sexual advances, but for some reason the girl did not call out for help as planned. As the scene and the Maharishi began to unfold before Alex's eyes, Alex made a loud noise outside the window to distract him. Afraid they would be discovered by an intruder, the Maharishi straightened his clothing and sent the girl away at once.

John, George and Alex sat up arguing about it all night. George didn't believe it and he was furious with Alex. John had serious doubts. The Maharishi had indeed turned out to be as worldly and mercenary as the rest. John had expected a ticket to peace, but it turned out that the little LSD



John had wanted a ticket to peace but soon stories spread that the Maharishi had made sexual advances to a disciple. John began to have serious doubts. The Maharishi was very worldly. It was time to get out. The Beatles decided to leave.

Ringo had never been keen on the Maharishi. He had preferred Butlins to the ashram. But to this day, George's faith in the Maharishi has endured. Some people never learn. He still believes that the Maharishi was framed and that the Beatles were cheated out of a divine experience.



pills he nibbled on at home were more effective in the long run. The decision was made to leave early the next morning. Alex was afraid that the Maharishi might try to block their way by refusing to help them find transport and there was such urgency to their departure that Cynthia and Pattie were ordered to leave behind all their accumulated souvenirs. Shortly after breakfast, the Maharishi entered the compound and took his place, cross-legged, under a little grass canopy. Cynthia could see he was far from giggling. The three men went up to see him. John had been elected as spokesman although he hated the task. "We're leaving, Maharishi," he said.

The little man looked pained. "But why?" he asked.

John didn't have the courage to confront him. Evasively, he said, "You're the cosmic one, you should know." The Maharishi looked as if he wanted to kill him. The guru said all he could to persuade them to stay without discussing the true reason they were leaving. As far as his unnamed trespasses went, he said that the truth was like an iceberg with only ten per cent showing. It was not enough. Alex was dispatched to the nearby town of Dehradun to fetch taxis.

According to Alex, just as he, Alex, had predicted, the Maharishi had put

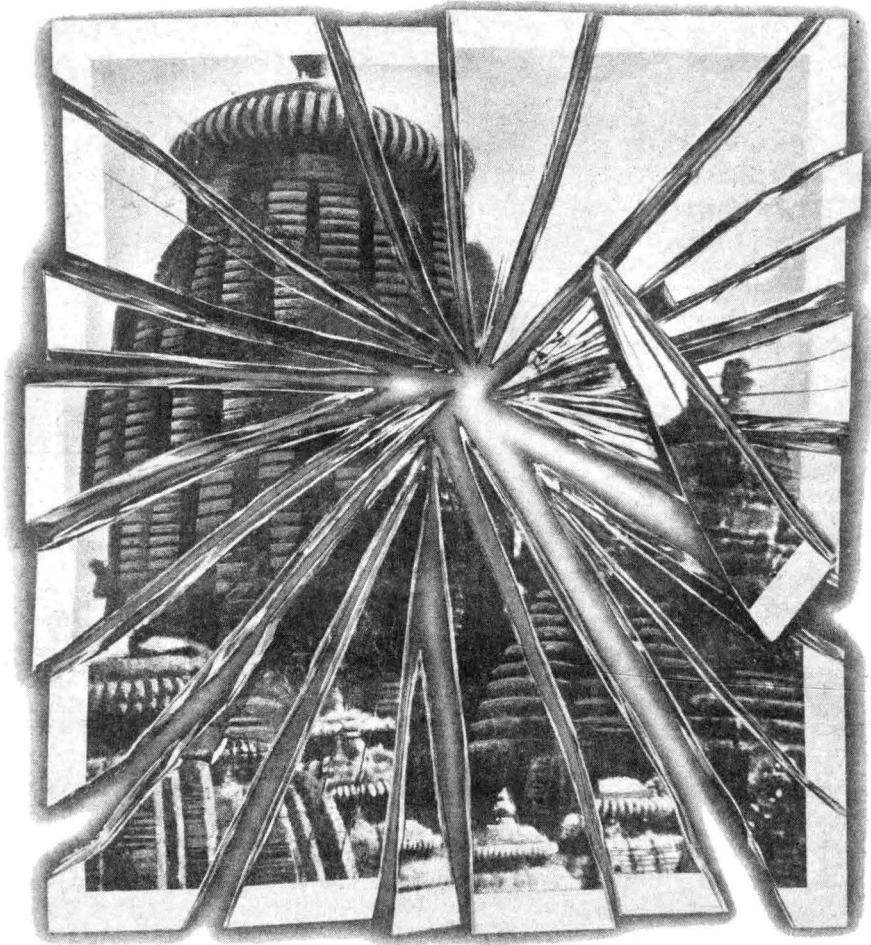
the word out in the small adjacent town that the Beatles were not to be assisted in leaving and Alex was made to understand by the townspeople that the Maharishi would put some sort of jinx on them if they helped. Alex even offered to buy two taxis and finally managed to rent two old cars and their drivers. He had them driven to the ashram, where they loaded whatever luggage could fit in the boots. They piled into the cars and drove off with the Maharishi watching sadly from the gates.

The cars broke down every few kilometres and John and Cynthia's car got a puncture. Everybody thought the Maharishi had put some sort of curse on them. There was no spare tyre and while Pattie and George went ahead for help, John and Cynthia and their driver sat beside a deserted road in the baking heat for more than three hours before two Western-educated travellers recognised John and stopped to give them a lift.

Exhausted and angry when they finally reached Delhi, they checked into the Oberoi and were immediately recognised. It was only a matter of twenty minutes before foreign correspondents and reporters from every wire service were milling about the lobby of the hotel, trying to get a statement from the Beatles about why they were leaving the ashram. Wisely, it was agreed

that while they were still in India they would say nothing of what had transpired. John and George told the press they had left because they had pressing business in London and they did not wish to be in a film the Maharishi was planning to shoot.

Back in London the Beatles decided to observe a code of silence about the incident. They decided that if the story were told in full, it would only reflect poorly on them. In later years bits and pieces did get out but were greatly distorted. One widely circulated story incorrectly names Mia Farrow as the Maharishi's co-respondent. Individually the Beatles had predictable reactions to the Maharishi incident. Ringo was benign, Paul was smug in an I-told-you-so sort of way, and George remained a stubborn believer and determined follower. To this day George's view is that Alex was lying and trying to slander the Maharishi in order to get John away from him. John had the strongest reaction of all: he felt used, for the millionth time and he was angry as hell. He took some of his anger out in a song about the Maharishi, but at the last minute he changed the title to *Sexy Sadie* to avoid a possible libel suit. The Maharishi was added to his long collection of disappointments, and John was once again open and gullible for the Next Big Thing to come. ♦



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GRAHAM GREENE

The Anglo-Texan Society: The Joke That Went Wrong

ONCE UPON A time, I regret to say, I was addicted to practical jokes. There was a lantern lecture to the upper forms of Highgate School in the guise of an explorer of Outer Mongolia; there was the occasion when Robert Scott, the future High Commissioner for East Africa, wearing a false moustache, impersonated Rudyard Kipling and addressed, at my invitation, a meeting outside Berkhamsted Town Hall in favour of the Boy Scout movement, with a retired admiral uneasily in the chair; there was a Mrs Montgomery who played havoc with the nerves of El Vino's proprietor and a Charing Cross Road bookseller and harassed the staff of Eyre and Spottiswoode. But I have learnt better now. I have learnt that nothing can be more difficult to stop than a practical joke which succeeds too well.

It all began on August 22, 1953, when a letter appeared in *The Times* under the heading *Anglo-Texan Society*. So on August 22 this year the Society—which I had conceived in a mood of tipsy frivolity with John Sutro after a pint or two of Black Velvet in the Edinburgh to London Express—ought to celebrate its coming of age, perhaps—who knows? with a dinner at the House of Lords and the presence of Royalty. Such a dinner has been held, for from the first day the joke escaped completely from my control and took wing into outer space, aided in its flight by the irresponsible genius of Sutro.

I was well out of the way on a trip to Kenya to report the Mau Mau rising

From next month Graham Greene's column will alternate with one by Truman Capote.

for a Sunday paper by the time my letter to *The Times* appeared:

Sir,

May we beg the courtesy of your columns to announce the formation of the Anglo-Texan Society? The Society has the general object of establishing cultural and social links between this country and the state of Texas which occupies a special historical position not only in relation to the United States but also in relation to Great Britain. It is hoped, when funds permit, to establish special premises in London for welcoming visitors from Texas and—if our ambitions are realised—

I regret to say that there was a time when I was addicted to practical jokes.

of providing them with a hospitality equal to that which Texas has traditionally given to English visitors. Those interested are asked to communicate with the undersigned at 1, Montague Square, London W1.

We are, Sir, yours, etc
GRAHAM GREENE, President
JOHN SUTRO, Vice-President

When I reached Nairobi a telegram was waiting for me from Sutro. "Letter appeared. Sixty enquiries on first day including Sir Hartly Shawcross, the Attorney General, and Samuel Guinness, the banker." The

Society was well and truly launched. If my mind had been less occupied with the Mau Mau I might have felt qualms. Was Sutro in my absence going too far? By the time I returned to London a month later he had already held a cocktail party, notepaper had been printed and soon a second announcement appeared in *The Times*. "The Society has by now been inaugurated. The officers include Mr Samuel Guinness and Sir Alfred Bossom, MP." John Sutro had quietly slid into the office of Chairman. I remained President.

Not one cynical reader of *The Times* ever questioned how a society could have been born with a self-elected president or wondered what exactly was the special historical position of Texas in relation to Great Britain or what kind of cultural links could possibly be formed with the Lone Star State. Americans regarded the letter more cynically and the comments of *The New York Times* were shrewd: "We could not believe our eyes. We remembered only too vividly Mr Greene's controlled but consuming anger towards us because of what he considered was a reactionary reign of terror over here. . . We can feel scepticism, like a calcium deposit, residing right in our bones. Mr Greene may be on the side of God, but he has created some fascinating diabolisms and plenty of hells in his time and we wonder whether Mr Greene doesn't have some insidious plot underfoot. Maybe like getting Texas, our richest, vastest, proudest state to secede from the Union."

I WOULD HAVE liked to have written and told *The New York Times* the real reason why the Society was founded—how Sutro and I had passed an enchanting and innocent evening in Edinburgh with two delightful Texan girls whom we had picked up in the lounge of the Caledonian Hotel and how, under the influence of a happy memory and the Black Velvet, I remarked to Sutro, with some difficulty in getting my S's clear, as the Yorkshire moors spun backward through the window: "Le's found an Anglo-Texan Sh-Society."

If it had not been for the Chairman, I doubt whether the Society would still be here to celebrate its twenty-first anniversary. The President, I'm afraid, tired of the joke rapidly and tried to disrupt the Society. For example there

It was a joke that had got out
of hand. Our invention had
taken on a life of its own and I
was a little frightened of what
might happen next. It was
time for me to depart.

was a rather terrible meeting at which a member showed a home movie of her holiday in Texas with a running commentary, all happy exclamations and family jokes. I wrote with simulated indignation to the Chairman: "I hope you will regard what I have to say in this letter as something inspired only by the wish to further the aims of the Anglo-Texan Society of which you and I were the founders. An organisation like this Society has to pass through its birth pains and we can only learn to direct its activities successfully if we are frank with each other about our failures. I cannot help feeling that the meeting last Friday was one of the failures which should not be repeated. It seemed to me that Mrs —'s address, with no such intention on her part, was liable to cause a great deal of ill-feeling. It was patronising and tactless in my view and liable to do a good deal of harm to Anglo-American relations if any unsympathetic Americans had been present in the audience. Nor do I think the film served any good purpose. . . I do not think that members will be satisfied with a film of an American visit, which however suitable for family consumption, is certainly not suitable for general exhibition. I had understood that the film was about Texas but Texas occupied only a small portion of it and I think it highly undesirable that members of the Anglo-Texan Society should be expected to sit through a succession of scenes featuring one of the members and her family. . . Nor do I think we should expect somebody in Sir Alfred Bossom's position to lend his house for a programme which would be more suitable in the privacy of a home.

"I feel very strongly that this is a point of principle which should be cleared up and I am quite ready to put my resignation in your hands as President if the Council so wishes, but I personally am not ready to sit through another meeting in which so many

remarks are made (however innocently) which must be offensive to any Texan or any American present in the audience. I think that I am as ready as anyone to criticise America in general terms, but I am not prepared to patronise America."

IT WAS DURING my annual absence in Vietnam that John Sutro, free from my carping and inhibiting presence, really let his imagination soar and with the aid of the American Air Force staged a giant barbecue at Denham Film Studios.



Fifteen hundred Texans mingled with the members of the Anglo-Texan Society and their guests. The Houston Fat Stock Show despatched four prize steers—2,500 pounds of prime beef—three hill-billy bands played *Beautiful Texas* and *San Antonio Rose*, 300 people rode to Denham in red London buses with destination signs, 'Texas from Piccadilly Circus', and the Governor of Texas sent a telegram to Mr Winthrop Aldrich, the United States Ambassador in London, commissioning him to act as Texas Ambassador for the day. Mr Aldrich handed over to John Sutro the flag of the Lone Star State and I feel certain that at the moment of crowning triumph Sutro put out of memory the night in

Edinburgh, the Black Velvet on the express and the ignoble hilarity of two tipsy travellers when they plotted their little joke. The future of the Society was established, soon there would be a proper President from the House of Lords (Lord Bossom, as Sir Alfred had become) and the Society would entertain the Duke of Edinburgh at the annual dinner.

It was more than time for me to depart. I wasn't really of presidential timber and perhaps I was a little frightened of what might happen next. There was a dinner one night to the head of the great Dallas store of Nieman Marcus, world famous for their luxurious Christmas catalogues, at Mr Samuel Guinness's house in Chelsea. I thought Mr Marcus seemed ill at ease, uncertain of why he was there with a table-load of strangers, so after dinner, walking with him in the garden, I unburdened my guilty conscience and told him the origin of the Society, swearing him to secrecy. At that moment I think he began to enjoy his evening.

On a suitable date, April 1, 1955, I wrote to Mr Guinness, resigning from the Presidency on the ground of my frequent absences abroad and Sutro, my fellow conspirator, resigned too from the Chairmanship, though he remained a member, an unsuspected skeleton in the Society's cupboard.

I received a very courteous letter from the new Chairman dated for some reason from the Time And Life building in New Bond Street. I hope I shall not seem conceited if I suggest that it provides the right valedictory note to the joke which went wrong:

"Mr Guinness read your letter of resignation as President of this Society at the last meeting of the Council on April 4. It was very regretfully received by us all as it arrived at the same time as Mr Sutro's resignation as Chairman. You and he were the Founders of the Society and did so much at its inception to get people together and to get things going. I am sure that I express the feelings not only of the Council but also of the members of the Society when I say how grateful we shall always be to the two of you for what you did."

What indeed had we done? How little parents know of their children and my imagination boggles when I think of the long distinguished future which lies ahead for the Anglo-Texan Society. ♦

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FARRUKH DHONDY:
**The
Dilemma
Of An
Indian
Writer In A
Racist
Society**

By Sasthi Brata

Farrukh Dhondy is one of England's most highly regarded Indian writers. While his short stories (Boomerang appeared in Imprint last September) have won him a measure of fame, he is probably best-known as the writer of a series of programmes on UK Asians that is currently being broadcast by British Television.

Sasthi Brata met Dhondy in London to discuss his left wing political views and his involvement in what Brata calls the 'race industry'.

Q: Is there a political message in your plays?

A: I think I started with a political message which was counter to the current of political left wing thought. The current seemed to say that blacks are victims, Britain is a racist society, blacks can't cope, feel sorry for them. What I was trying to say was, "It's not quite true. Blacks are tough, wily, will by and large overcome the irritant of racism in this society with reliance on their own culture."

Are you talking about 'blacks' as against Asians?

Asians as well as West Indians, because I wrote about both in my books.

You don't make a distinction between blacks and Asians?

I have learnt to talk about 'blacks' as

one entity because of my political background, because of the Black Panther Movement and what not. We fought long battles to establish the fact that the cultural differences between us should not be exploited politically; therefore that potential political unity was supreme.

Do you think that there is any validity in the accusation that here are a bunch of people who are doing very well for themselves by riding on an issue which happens to be faddish and fashionable at the moment? That it is a self-interested device rather than principle?

Most certainly. It is also an accusation made from the left. I say that the anti-racists in our society, some of them are sincere, but most of them who join the anti-racist industry are a bunch of people who are nascent, middle class

Asians, riding that issue to put themselves in position.

Does that apply to you?

I hope not.

What objective criteria would you adopt to see if it is so with a particular individual?

I have never professed anti-racism.

You may not profess anti-racism but you are part of what might be called the 'race industry'. Your subject matter is race, whether it is anti-racist or not.

My subject matter is the experience of my own existence as any writer's should be, or should start from. As a writer, I write about Asians because that is what I know. I don't think that puts me in the same camp as the anti-racists, because I vehemently take the

opposite position. Wherever I can I point out that one should not be in the business of exploiting race because I don't think that race is an important issue in Britain anyway. It exists, but it is not a historical determinant of Britain's future.

To repeat my earlier question, what objective criteria would you adopt to decide whether somebody is exploiting the race issue for personal purposes and/or whether that person is doing it because he or she genuinely believes in it?

You could ascertain whether they are gaining position, money, project funds by protesting anti-racism.

On the basis of your own experience and the kind of things you have written about, surely you yourself have made money and gained position out of that issue, whatever your personal stance may be?

Undoubtedly. There is a mini-current of history at this moment in this country which assists me. But I don't write about race. I write about black people.

That seems to me a fine semantic distinction, not a real one.

Not so fine when you think about it, because writing about black people does not mean that you are writing about race. It means you are writing about their lives, what they do, why they do it. To write about race is to put yourself in a category of protest.



“Writing about black people does not mean you are writing about race. It means you are writing about their lives.”

You are implying in some way that black people's existence is qualitatively different from the larger mass of the community.

Yes, I see some very final, viable and interesting distinctions between Asian people and white people. Their history is determinate, their ambitions are determined by that history.

You say you see sharp differences between white and black, yet you are

asserting that you don't write about race. Why are you shying away from that label?

Because writers about race usually treat blacks as victims and want the State or some other benevolent agency to compensate them as representatives of this victimisation. I have never asked for compensation as a representative of victims.

The fact that you haven't asked does not mean you are not getting it, whatever your professed stance. A critic might say that you are doing quite well out of this latest fashion in 'colour'. Two years ago there was no TV programme called Black On Black, for which you write regularly. And it is possible that two years ago there would not have been a particularly receptive market for your six plays. Whether you accept it or not, isn't it true that objectively you have benefited from race?

One may say speculatively that a white writer with the same potential talent (theoretically) will not make it through the thicket of selection that cultural barriers set up. Whereas I do. And I admit that there are writers I know who don't get as far as I have got because their trend is not in fashion. The compensatory trend of allowing Asian things here and there produces a very miserable kind of creativity from which I have dissociated myself because I am not in that business. I write about Indians because that's my background. It is not simply

A DHONDY BIOGRAPHY

Farrukh Dhondy was born in Bendorawala's Nursing Home in Poona in 1944. His father was in the old undivided Indian Army and at the time of Partition, the family was in Quetta. Farrukh grew up with his maternal aunts and went to Bishop's School and Wadia College. He was then selected for the elite Chemical Engineering department of Bombay University, which he casually left after six months. For a year he drifted about in Delhi and read voraciously. Returning to Bombay in 1961, he studied Physics Honours and stood first in the whole University. Dhondy went on to win a Tata Scholarship and came to England in 1964 and went up to Pembroke College, Cambridge, to read Natural Sciences. After two years and a Third, he switched to English and took a Second. But long before he came down from Cambridge, Dhondy had got into agit-prop, demonstrating against Peter Griffiths after the Smethwick by-election at the Cambridge Union debate. That was the first time he appeared on television as the 'cameras were looking for a black face among the demonstrators'.

After eighteen months spent in Leicester doing a Master's

degree in Modern English and American Literature, Dhondy came to London and started teaching in East End schools. At the same time he joined the Black Panther Movement and the Anti-Racist Society. For the next decade, he taught and agitated.

His first book of stories East End At Your Feet, was published in 1976 by Macmillan, for which he got the princely advance of 200 pounds. This was followed by The Siege Of Babylon and Poona Company. In 1982 he published a further collection called Trip Trap. His first TV play was titled Maids The Mad Shooter which was shown for Open University courses. Two stage plays followed: Mama Dragon (performed at the ICA and the Arts Theatre) and Shapesters (at the Riverside Studio). He has been writing the LWT sit-com series No Problem with Mustapha Matura as co-author. Dhondy is closely associated with The Black Theatre Cooperative and contributes regularly to the Channel 4 programme Black on Black.

He lives in a comfortable flat off Clapham Common in South London and has been writing full time since 1980. ♦

the exploitation of the post-Gandhi-Oscar phase.

Are you saying that a white man with the same experience of East End schools as yourself would not be able to write as authentically as you do?

No! I am saying there is a worn-outness about the subjects that surround white existence. It depends upon the experience. When you are something, your intimacy with what you are is greater than somebody who has observed it from the outside. A writer has observed characters and empathised with characters. And if he is, as narrator or as partial character, in empathy with the world he writes about, then you will get a more authentic piece about the exploitation of reality through words, than you would if it was simply observed.

The reverse of what you are saying is that an Asian or a black writer, however talented and sensitive, is at the end point incapable of writing authentically about white society.

Not quite. I am saying that an Asian writer would be extremely disadvantaged and would have to conquer a great handicap if he set out to write like Samuel Beckett or Noel Coward or like Gilbert and Sullivan. There would have to be a total conquest over experience. A fiction writer cruises on craft, but has to have the quiddity of observation on which to apply that craft.

Why then should a white writer deny himself the facility of writing about 'colour'?

The responsibility of an Indian writer would not be to point out the pathos of the Asian community as seen by the whites. His concerns should be different. My own concerns for instance are to demonstrate to the Asian community as to what is wrong with itself. Possibly, the ways of double-think we have got ourselves into, may not be interesting to a white writer.

Are you saying then that what you write about is ultimately of no interest to the white community?

I think that people sorting themselves out is always interesting to other people.

So, there is a message?

I think that writing is effective. I just don't know its effects. It should set up reverberations. So, stories which have



"If I write a play about an Asian girl being raped by other Asians, I know I will get a howl of protest."

messages which can be put in one sentence should in fact be written in one sentence.

Are you saying that you don't know the impact that your writing has?

I know the kind of responses I will get. If I write a play about an Asian girl being raped by other Asians, I know I will get a howl of protest. I feel that cultures religions have produced do have some reverberations which come out in very odd ways. And they interest me.

Would you be restrained from writing something whose effect might be explosive or racist in character?

No! I have recently come to that conclusion, that I wouldn't.

Have you written about an Asian girl being raped by other Asians?

I am about to. Work is in progress.

You don't feel that it is the business of the writer to consider the impact of what he is doing or going to say, if that impact is divisive and socially disruptive?

I think it is a very interesting subject for a writer to consider, but I would go ahead with a critical view of the Asian community at this juncture in British politics, because I believe that a critical view is of final assistance in the current which I support.

Have you ever been in love?

I don't know, I don't really know. I have been obsessed with women, obsessed with a particular woman. Isn't that love? I think love is an extremely difficult business to have any standards of comparisons for. I don't think love is an experience. It is not a state, it is a dialectic, it is a conversation. I have been in all sorts of states of love, or several different ones.

In order to pursue an objective, political or otherwise, what would you not do?

I would not turn my back on my notion of civilization. I wouldn't subject my reason to any kind of medieval or superstitious belief.

Would you murder?

Do you mean that in the course of revolution, do people die?

No. I mean where would you draw the line?

In self-defence I would kill somebody.

But not in order to further a cause?

I wouldn't kill Maurice Bishop if I were Bernard Coard.

Have you thought of joining active politics?

I am in active politics. But if you mean, would you join the Labour party? No. Join the democratic parties and stand for election? No.

So you abjure the apparatus of statecraft in seeking to further your revolutionary goals?

I think that statecraft is extremely important. But I don't think that Lenin stood for elections. I don't know that Mao Tse Tung stood for elections.

Are we then making some sort of identification?

Yes, if you ask me on whose historical side you are, I am on their's, rather than on Margaret Thatcher's or Hitler's or Ronald Reagan's.

What makes you write?

E M Forster said, and I agree with him, 'to win the respect of the people you respect'. To make an impression on the world in the most important way possible. To scribble your name on the lavatory walls of eternity: "Kilroy was here." To have left a cast of your mind in all its subconscious glory. To show off. ♦

MARTAND

By Nayantara Sahgal

MARTAND TOOK HIS lean length out of the comfortable depths of our best armchair and said reluctantly, "I'd better be going."

Naresh, my husband, did not reply.

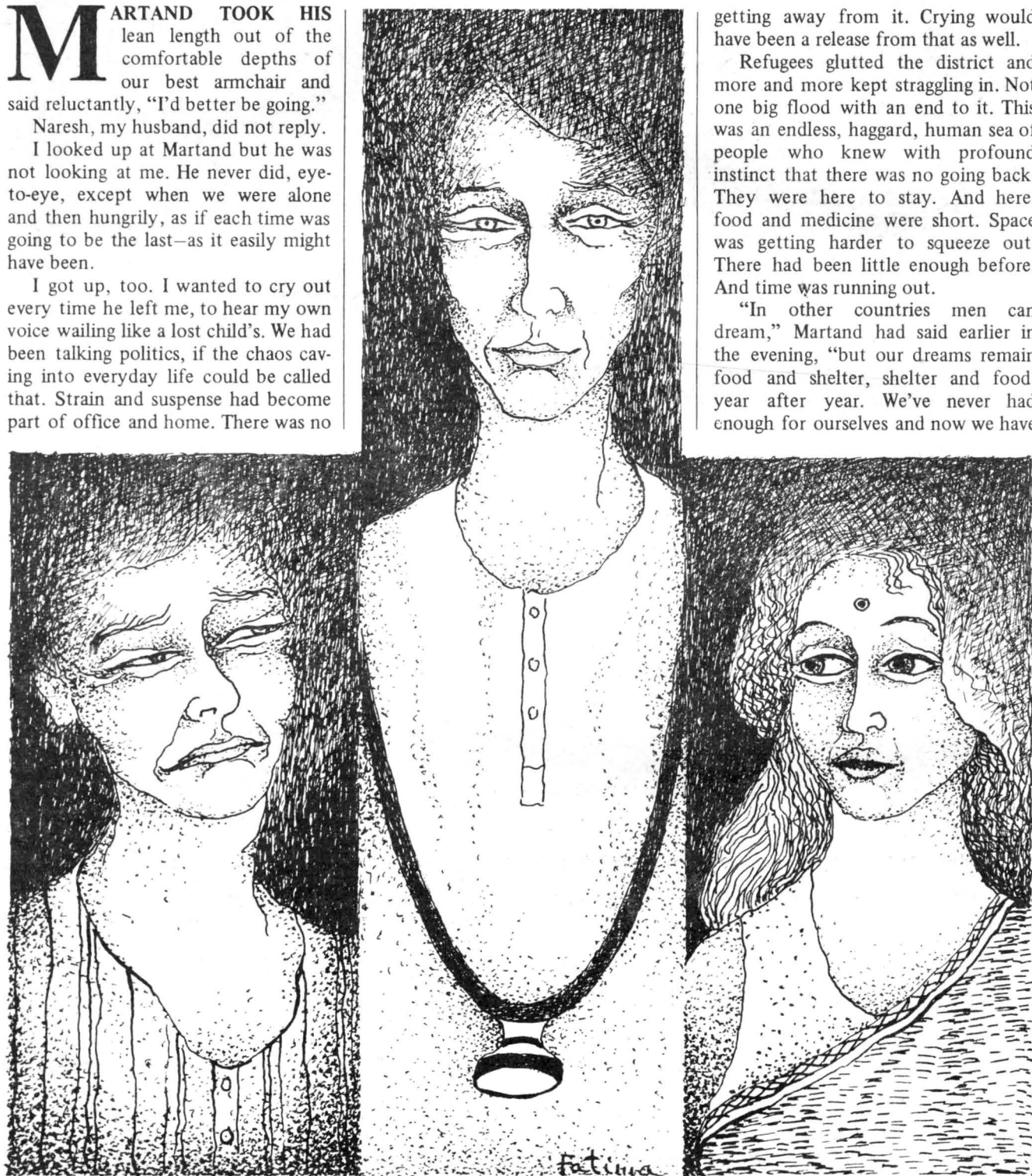
I looked up at Martand but he was not looking at me. He never did, eye-to-eye, except when we were alone and then hungrily, as if each time was going to be the last—as it easily might have been.

I got up, too. I wanted to cry out every time he left me, to hear my own voice wailing like a lost child's. We had been talking politics, if the chaos caving into everyday life could be called that. Strain and suspense had become part of office and home. There was no

getting away from it. Crying would have been a release from that as well.

Refugees glutted the district and more and more kept straggling in. Not one big flood with an end to it. This was an endless, haggard, human sea of people who knew with profound instinct that there was no going back. They were here to stay. And here, food and medicine were short. Space was getting harder to squeeze out. There had been little enough before. And time was running out.

"In other countries men can dream," Martand had said earlier in the evening, "but our dreams remain food and shelter, shelter and food, year after year. We've never had enough for ourselves and now we have



to provide for these extra God knows how many."

"We know how many," said Naresh bitterly. "Millions. Why beat about the bush? It's going to get desperate, wait and see, unless the refugees ease off."

It was clear that a serious crisis, the worst yet, might soon be upon us. Martand had agreed.

"It already is," Naresh had said with harsh finality. "We should have sealed the frontier long ago."

"And let them die," lay unspoken between us.

"Well it's not our problem," Naresh threw at us defiantly, as though either of us had protested.

"Isn't it?"

Martand had looked at my husband consideringly, compassionately, as he said it and I at the wall. I was caught between fact and vision, between the two men, belonging mind and body to each. I loved and believed in them both, but Martand, I knew, was trying to do the more difficult thing. He kept trying to hold a tide at bay, to turn it off its dreadful course, if he could, with the tone of his voice, the look in his eyes—such instruments as human beings are left with when hardly any other resource remains. Inner religion pitted against destruction. For Martand still had visions of a good world. For months Naresh and I had shared them, here in this very room till late into the night. Now, only I did.

We had talked all evening about the refugee crisis, but what a nerve-racking thing our own three-cornered companionship had become. What a lot of gaiety I needed simply to get through each day without continual mention of disaster. Disaster was always there. Was there ever a time it had not been? But now ordinary, everyday happiness had become part of it. I felt happy only when I was near Martand and then I would have to be careful not to let it show. That was how it had become, the once easy natural give and take between the three of us. Now only its outer crust remained, a paper-thin but sheltering wall that hid my private torment. I had lived inside it these six months. ever since we had met Martand soon after our Kashmir holiday.

Martand is the Kashmiri name for the Sun God and there is a temple to him in Kashmir—miles of drive past brilliant young green rice, in the earth's most beautiful valley flanked with tall straight poplars, fringed with feathery

willows, under serene expanses of sky. I had needed to go to Kashmir, quite apart from the pilgrimage I wanted to make to the temple. I had longed to get away from the frantic, teeming district in Naresh's charge to clean open space—Kashmiri space. There were other nearer hill stations but I couldn't bear the thought of any other. And then, incredibly, Naresh had got his leave. With every government officer so heavily overworked, we had hardly expected it.

Naresh had grumbled good-naturedly about the distance. "What a prejudiced lot you Kashmiris are, convinced there's no place like Kashmir." But he had given in.

There isn't, of course. Kashmir is unique. I did not want the rationed beauty of other places, a glimpse of hill and cloud. I wanted a pageant of it, the immense incomparable valley unravelling as we drove through it. I

I felt happy only when I was near Martand and even then I had to be careful not to let it show.

wanted to surrender to something bigger than necessity and I had to visit the Martand shrine. Where science had failed, faith might work.

The temple was off the motor road. It was 1,300 years old, a massive burnt-out saga of ruined glory with a broken Grecian colonnade surrounding it. When we got there, it seemed afire under the late afternoon sun, a tiger gold, its energy rippling visibly through its carvings. Then the light changed and softened before our eyes, sinking deeply into the stone, leaving it flesh-warm and pulsating. I put the flat of my hand on a lovely broken column, leaned my forehead against it and felt it all taken into me.

"Have you had enough?" Naresh asked indulgently.

He was sitting against one of the columns smoking his pipe.

"How's that going to get you a child, granted Martand is the fount of

fertility?" he asked.

Reluctantly I gave up my hand's contact with the stone and came to him with my answer.

"Now? Here?" he protested.

"Why not?" I pleaded. "There's no one for miles around."

"But the village is less than a mile away. Anyone could come along."

"Please, we're wasting time."

And we wasted no more. The gold fire in me caught up with Naresh as he pulled me down beside him.

Martand, when we first met him just after that holiday, reminded me of that ruined splendour. He looked descended from an ancient, princely lineage. I felt a shock of recognition and betrayal.

"You look frightened," were the first personal words he said to me.

I was. I should have waited for him. But I couldn't tell him that. Instead I told him he had an unusual name and asked him about his ancestry, and Martand laughed.

"If I tried awfully hard," he said, "I suppose I could find out my great-grandfather's name."

I must have looked scandalised.

"Is that very dreadful?" he had teased. "No, there's no blue blood in my veins. I come from solid middle class stock. Scholarships all through medical college. But there's romance in the ordinary. Romance isn't the heights. It's what a passing stranger recognises. It could even be in working in an inferno like this and learning to love it."

Naresh saw Martand out to his car and came back into the room. He was bone tired and irritable.

"He never knows when to leave. I've got an early meeting tomorrow. He probably has to be up at the crack of dawn too."

I said, to take his mind off Martand, "When do you think this refugee business will let up?"

"On Doomsday," he said violently. "That's when any problem in this country is going to let up."

He went into the bedroom to put away the whisky bottle while I rinsed out the glasses. A lot of whisky got drunk whenever Martand came.

Naresh came back. "He drinks like a fish, too," he said, helping me with the glasses.

Naresh was angry, but not about the drinking. He was angry with Martand for still having dreams, and with me for being enmeshed in them.

When we were in bed he said, "How long are we going to make excuses for not being able to meet targets, not having enough to feed and clothe people and make life livable for them? And now with this ghastly deluge going on and on, we'll never have enough of anything in our lifetime. Have you thought of that? I want to get out of this hell-hole and live a decent life somewhere where people have *enough* of everything. It doesn't seem too much to ask. Let's get out for a year or so."

I felt paralysed.

"I'm making some inquiries," he went on. "I could ask for a temporary posting at one of our missions abroad. Just for a breath of fresh air. I've had a bellyful here."

I lay in bed, trying to empty my mind of thinking. A lot of whisky had got drunk—by all of us. Martand had once said, "It helps to numb feelings. One can't watch all this unprotected and remain human." It was one of the few times he had admitted to strain.

"Do you agree we should get out then, darling?" Naresh mumbled.

And he fell asleep without waiting for an answer.

THERE WAS A CROWD AS USUAL outside Martand's clinic next morning, looking torpidly, dully at me as I walked through. Flies, dust, heavy, hopeless heat. Another day of learning to love it, I thought, and another minute till I open that door to Martand.

He was sitting at his desk, his sleeves rolled up, his feet in slippers, his stethoscope still around his neck. He had forgotten to take it off, like he sometimes forgot to eat, and continually forgot the huge dishevelment around him. He asked his assistant to bring some coffee.

"Sorry the cup isn't very elegant," he said when it came.

He was always saying things like that. Sorry, when he repaid a debt, about handing me grubby-looking change or a tattered note. Sorry that we could not see the hills from his window—there were none to see.

There was only a grim growing mass of humanity, almost machine-like in its menacing immobility as it waited. I couldn't see these people as individuals any more. It was It. Waiting for cholera shots, for rations, for clothes, for space, for air, for life, for hope, as if It could do nothing, nothing for Itself. A monster robot seeking succour, devour-

ing the pitiful little we had.

"Do you think the kingdom of heaven is a germ-free place?" asked Martand, giving me his smile over his coffee cup.

I put mine noisily down, spilling coffee. I felt a rush of hysteria and horror at all the sights and smells of suffering interminably around us. How could he stay so untarnished at the heart of them?

"Who cares? It's here in this mess we have to live. Oh Martand, I can't bear to stay or to go away. I can't bear anything any more."

"You must," he warned, no longer smiling. "There's a very long road ahead of us yet. Don't lose your nerve now."

He meant the refugee crisis, as well as the time span left to him and me to find our way to each other on the dangerous, joyful, heart-breaking road we were travelling together. He got up

*Naresh, mourning
Martand, had
found his faith in
goodness again,
while I knew that
everywhere was
evil.*

to go into the dispensary and carry on his work and I remembered why I had come.

"I found these peaches in the bazaar. There hasn't been any good fruit for such a long time, I had to bring them for you. I'm taking some home for us, too."

"Then take these with you. I'll come and eat them at your house. I'll come to dinner," he said.

"No don't. Naresh won't like it. He was very irritable last night."

"Was he? Why?"

There was that untouched *innocence* about Martand, a purity without which I could no longer live. That was why I couldn't give him up, however long we had to wait for this to work out. There was so little time to talk about personal problems, and when we were alone together we did not talk.

At the door to the dispensary Martand turned around to say, "Let

me speak to Naresh about us." It was not the first time he had urged this.

"No!" I cried.

"He is too good a man to deceive."

"Don't you know anything about human nature?" Panic made me shrill.

"All right, all right," said Martand softly. "I must go now, my love. Take care, won't you, as you drive home. It's a bad day today. Some of my staff are giving trouble and refusing to work. And thank you for the peaches."

I left his share on the table. For my cheap ideas of safety—my safety—I would deprive myself of the sight of him and the sound of his voice this evening. Safety in a mad world did not make much sense and I was not made for living a double life. My endurance was wearing thin. One of these days I would throw myself on Naresh's mercy and tell him. One of these days, but not today.

At home I washed the peaches and put them on the dining table. When I went back into the dining room with plates and cutlery, Naresh was standing there staring at them.

"You're home early," I said and I knew in a flash it was time—if at once—to tell him about Martand.

Naresh was waiting, a queer stricken look on his face of half-knowing, fearing, unbelieving, and the tension grew intolerable. I went up to him and he put his arms around me.

"Then you haven't heard," he said. "That's why I came—to tell you."

I looked up at him, all my terrors realised.

"Martand was stabbed," he said, "less than half an hour ago. Not by a refugee, by one of his own assistants. They sent for me immediately. I was with him when he died."

Naresh sobbed while I stood holding him, deadly calm, as if I had known this would happen. I still had my sight and hearing, but that was all. Nothing could move me any more.

"We'll go away," he wept, "we'll go away."

Yes, I thought, to a place where there was enough of everything and charity could be a virtue, not a crime. We would go where my child could be born in safety and where a man would not be murdered for loving mankind. As we clung together I knew we had both changed invisibly beyond recall. Naresh, mourning Martand, had found his faith in goodness again, while I, surely as I breathed, knew that everywhere within hand's reach was evil. ♦

Of Locks And Thieves

By Ketaki Sheth



Woman And Mirror, Camden Lock Market, London, 1983.

THE PHOTOGRAPHS ON these pages were never really intended as a series on antique markets. In fact, while visiting London's fashionable Sunday bazaar on the banks of Camden Lock, I had not set out to look specifically at *objets d'art*, or at the rising and falling waters of the Lock where dilapidated barges hoot past. I think what fascinated me more than the Ming jars or the Chinese rubbings, the Victorian silk embroidery-box-cum-granny's-stool or the handwritten letters and manuscripts of faded poets, were the people at Camden Lock.

Despite the steady drizzle and the plastic canopies shrouding each stall, the open-air market was crowded with spectators and performers, buyers and sellers, bidders and takers. The brassy music of the sax dominated the cacophony of sounds while mime artistes entertained the hundreds of performer gazers. From the large woman

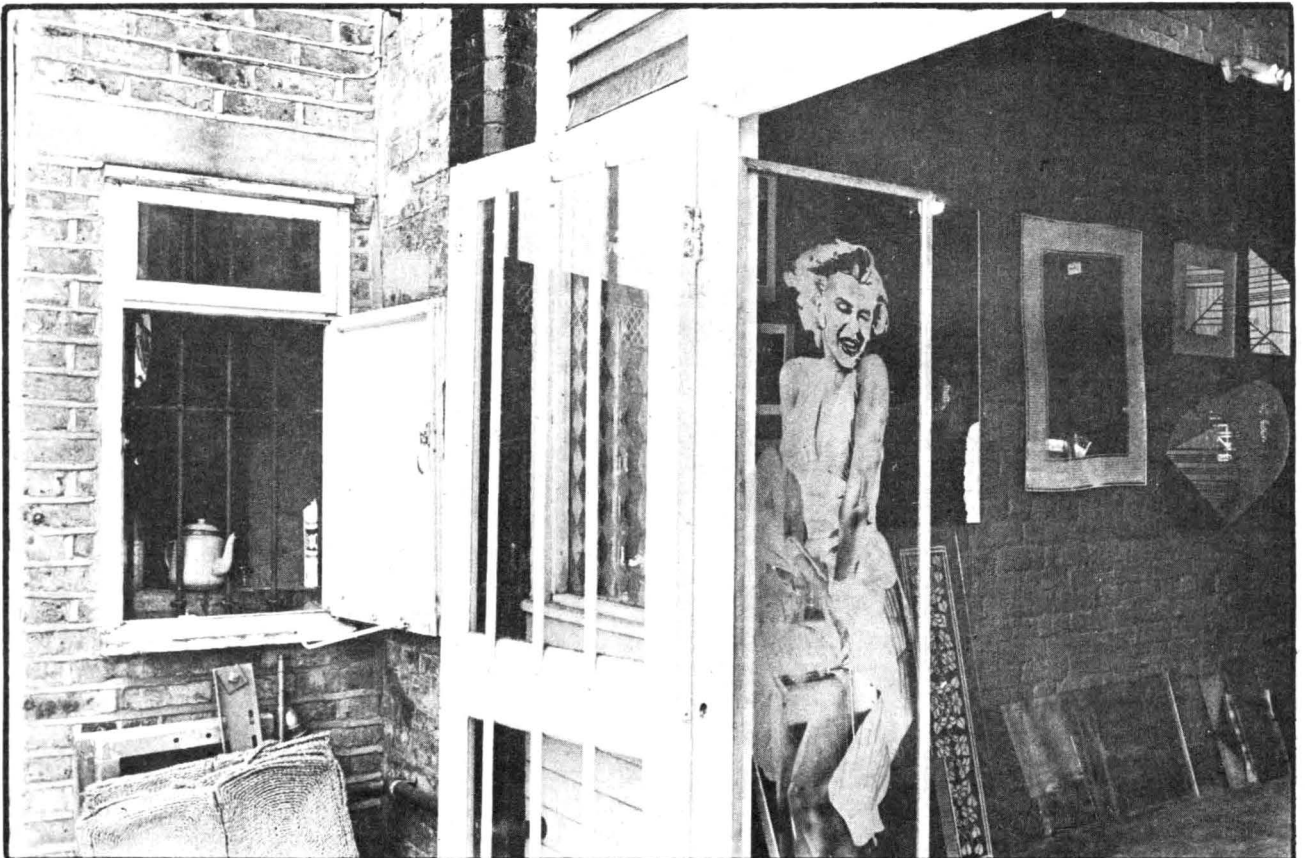
in her small straw hat selling butter dishes and rice jars—the largeness of her frame offset by the oval glitter of the hanging mirror—to the smoky dancing figure of Marilyn Monroe on translucent glass; from the 19th century costume seller amidst his mannequins and chiffoned draperies to the multi-hued punks with their sprayed and fashioned hairstyles, the Camden Lock market presents a fascinating venue for a diversity of people.

It was only when it was decided to carry some pictures of Camden Lock that I thought Mutton Street and its network of by-lanes in Chor Bazaar, offered an interesting visual contrast. Far from being a Sunday morning trendy affair, the Chor Bazaar is an ongoing economic centre for Victorian and *filmi* bargains, abounding in doors and locks, portraits and daguerrotypes, rusty washing machines and tinpot gramophones. And quite unlike the

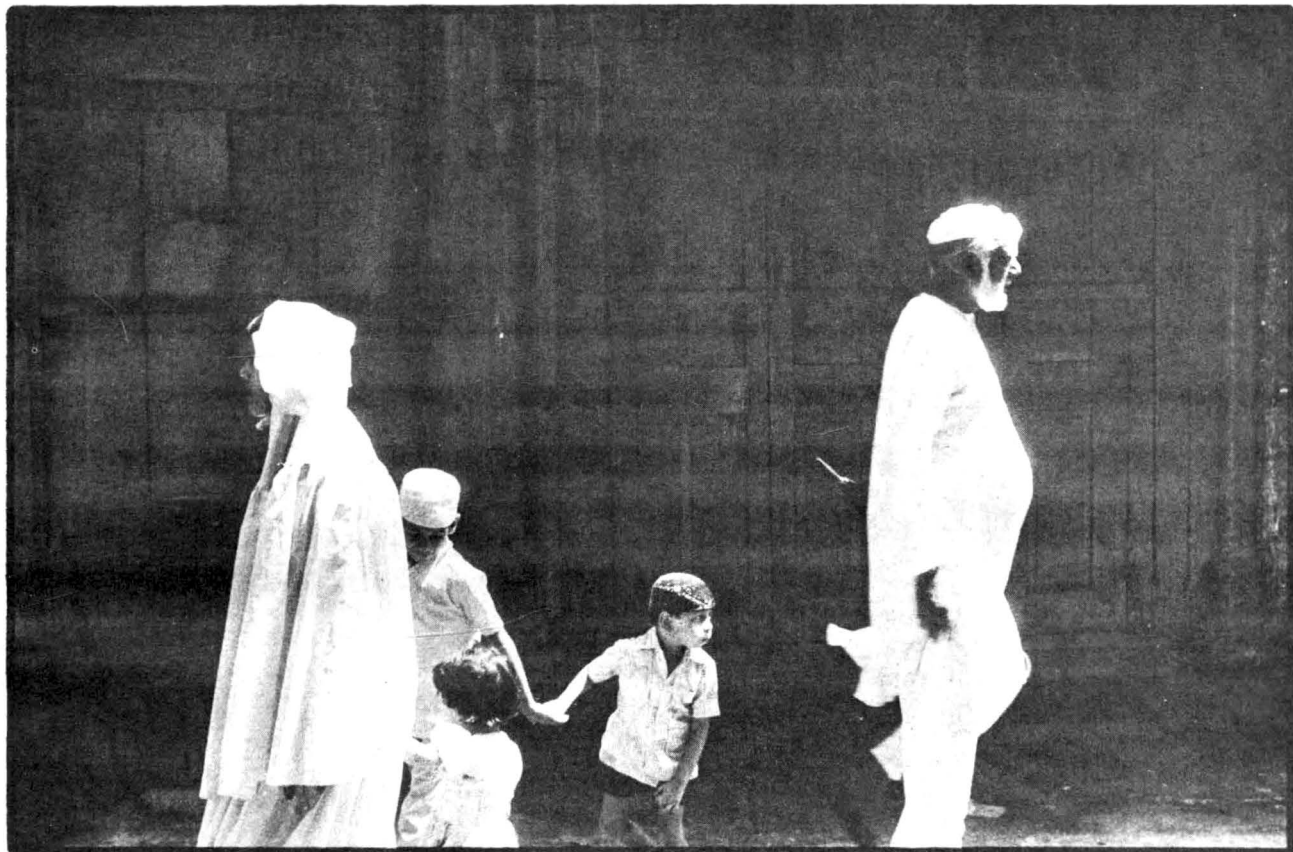
frenetic activity of Camden Lock, a Sunday afternoon at Chor Bazaar is 'siesta' time with only the roar of a scooter or the shuffling of feet of children being dragged to visit relatives, all attired in their Sunday best, as diversions to the placid listlessness that marks the bazaar. The doors of shops are thrown open and in the inviting shade of the interior, a sleepy proprietor reclines on his rosewood armchair, his trained eyes intermittently gravitating towards the odd customer whom he will shortly woo. In a neighbouring by-lane, the stench of meat fills the vacant streets as butchers lie in front of their stock moving only occasionally to swat the hovering spiral of flies. And somewhere, in a twisting gully, a frail clockseller, his face etched like the bark of a tree, pours over the yellowed and frayed pages of his ledger book while his family of clocks ticks away discordantly. ♦



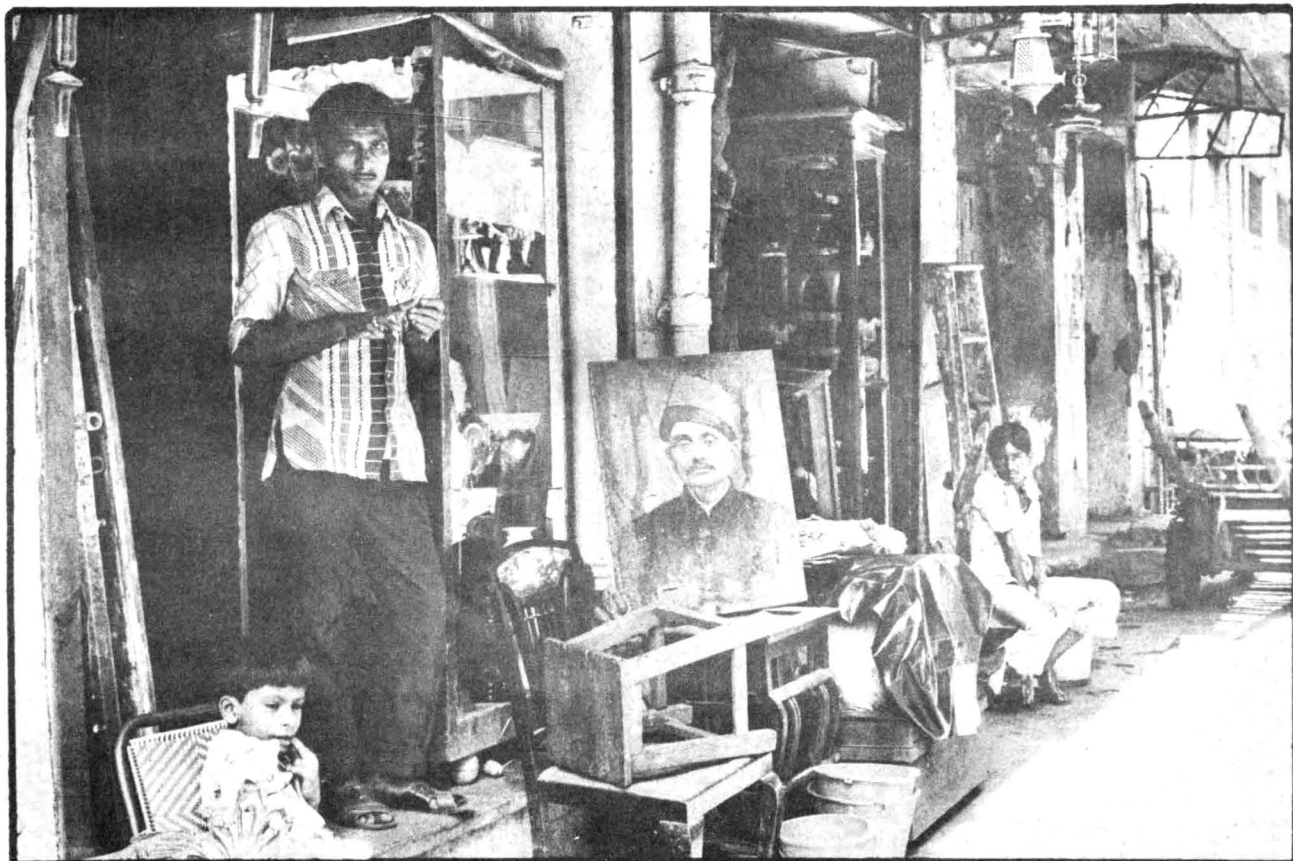
Costume Seller And Mannequins, Camden Lock Market, London, 1983.



Actress On Glass, Camden Lock Market, London, 1983.



Distracted Boy Outside Shop 73, Chor Bazaar, Bombay, 1983.



Man And Portrait, Chor Bazaar, Bombay, 1983.

Bejan Daruwalla's



ARIES: March 21 to April 20:

On your work front, a forward march. This means the opening of a new branch, the installation of machinery, the build-up of a huge complex and the launch of an enterprise. By August-September, the over-all picture should be clear. Loans and funds will be available, though there could be a delay here, as Mars couples with Saturn from January 11 to August 17.

October to December is a good period. This applies particularly to those of you interested in export-import, foreign trade and collaborations, and publicity campaigns. There is a marked danger of ill-health, a death in the family and you will be feeling rather low around March and November.

Bizarre relationships are in your destiny and a strange, mind-blowing experience is very probable. 1984 makes you slog your guts out. The results will be commensurate with the efforts you put in.



TAURUS: April 21 to May 21:

Journeys, trips, collaborations and a blue-print for the future, is in store for Taureans in 1984. The Mars-Saturn combination in your sector indicates marriage, alliance, ties and romance.

Jupiter in your ninth angle indicates evolutionary changes in your life. Ceremonies, religious rites, gains through farming and property, are foretold. For quite a few of you, your life will take a different course. There will be a shift in perspectives and in values and ideals. Immigration is not ruled out. This will have long-range consequences.

March, January, July, September and December are your best months for success and lasting alliances, and both mean much to you as you are steady and security-conscious. Your rough months are: February, April and possibly October-November.

Writers, teachers, artists, film stars, editors and poets will make a big splash.

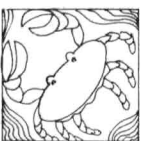


GEMINI: May 22 to June 21:

A windfall is indicated and you will be victorious! This is a year of joint-finances, legacies, windfalls and lotteries. Also, your hopes of a bonus and a fatter paycheck will come true.

Intimate relationships and religious rites are foretold. Personal relationships might be very practical. Cut out the romantic crap. If you must go into an affair, go into it with your eyes wide open. You could gain by the death of a relative or a dear one.

Health is definitely suspect, as Mars whirls away in your health angle from January to August. The whole period however will not be bad. Only January and February could be rough. Solid business partnerships, rather than flip-pant, romantic attachments should be your objective. Lucky months: February (despite health hazards), April, June, July-August, September and most certainly October. December is journey time. November and to a lesser extent January could be upsetting.



CANCER: June 22 to July 22:

Pluto in your fifth angle from August 28 onwards backs Saturn and this results in creativity, children, grandchildren and an official engagement if still unmarried. Also indicated is remarriage for divorcees and widowers. You will entertain in style and without your usual inhibitions.

This is not a year of single bliss. Company, crowds, gatherings, meetings, conferences and get-togethers will entice you. Also, you will radiate a magnetism, which will pull crowds to you. From January 20 to the year end, Jupiter moves in your seventh angle indicating collaborations, partnerships, stopovers, foreign contacts, publicity, ceremonies and dealings with the public. If you ever make it big, it will be in 1984-85. From November 21 onwards, it is a good time for romantic relationships. The first half of the year indicates travel while the second half pushes you into the limelight.



LEO: July 23 to August 23:

While you will have to work hard for rewards and recognition, rest assured that these will definitely come. There is a change of cycle in 1984. Your stars foretell less gadding about, more labour and seriousness.

The home and the domestic scene takes a battering. In practical terms it means: a break-up of a joint-family; danger to the health and well-being of parents and in-laws; a separation over property matters and an inner turmoil and restlessness.

November and February are your months of opposition. It would be best to go slow then, fusing tact with your extroversion. May brings occupational affairs and issues to the forefront. For loans and funds, this is a good year. You will succeed in launching a new enterprise. Employed Leons are in for a promotion. Leons like to wield power as well as to be seen doing so! A great opportunity on both the scores in 1984.



VIRGO: August 24 to September 23:

Away with inhibitions and guilt complexes and a feeling of cleanliness-next-to-godliness! Just enjoy yourself! Swim, make love. Get up late. Cultivate a hobby. Read, go for walks on the grass, an evening stroll. Take up gardening. Romance blooms. Creativity is at a high voltage and yet it will be superbly controlled.

Jupiter in your fifth angle from January 20 onwards helps to give a practical shape and purpose to your ideas and images. Mars influences education and research, news and views

Till August 17, there will be disputes, strikes, maybe a libel suit, as there's the conjunction of two malefics, Saturn and Mars. March is for partnerships and trips, January for creativity, birth of children and the whole year for alliance and ties. February, August, parts of April will be shaky. A year of promise and great achievement.

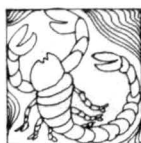
Annual Predictions



LIBRA: September 24 to October 23: Jupiter is in your fourth angle from January 20 right into 1985, and emphasises your home and property sector. Quite possibly, all this could be in partnerships. Also it means your money squeeze will lessen in 1984. A contract could give you great satisfaction. January, April, July, October and January 1985 are the probable months for it. The entry of Neptune on November 21, further emphasises the home front which dominates your thinking and life right up to 1996-1997, with 1996 being the culmination point.

Your finances will be bright. On the home front, a family separation is not ruled out. You should not be rash in speech and action.

March through May is the only real bad patch with poor health and worries. You could fall out with colleagues and family, maybe over finances and funds. Many of you will be toying with immigration. A shift, a major transfer appears certain.



SCORPIO: October 24 to November 22: Less tensions and more pleasures are in store for you in 1984. Mars joins Saturn from January 11 to August 17. It is this energy of Mars, which will help you to vanquish enemies, make headway, though it will be at the cost of your health. Accidents are not ruled out. You will breed hatred in your enemies, but that's part of the game. Mars also provides for the pleasure principle, for a spurt of creativity. An exciting, volatile, first eight months.

As Jupiter is in fine placing with the duo of Mars-Saturn, it means: important legal deeds will be signed; trips and contacts will be made; success in your profession is predicted; interviews and conferences will be held and you will take a very practical approach in September to your problem. The effect of Pluto, till 1994 gives you the grit to galvanise your image and personality.



SAGITTARIUS: November 23 to December 21: A major financial deal is indicated in 1984 for you. Money will come in three instalments. Jupiter in your second sector indicates buying, selling, commission and investment.

There is a danger of accidents and hospitalisation to you and your dear ones during or before September. Mars-Saturn indicates loss, expenses, ill-health, confinement, a feeling of isolation and despondency.

Your months of power will be January, March, April, August, September, October, December. November and May could be both crucial and trying.

The launch of a new venture, be it business, films, education or showbiz is certain. Sagittarians will be in a mood to innovate and experiment and they do not mind the expense. Taxes will have to be paid. The double shift of Pluto and Neptune helps you to maintain secrecy, augment income, take a quiet trip abroad, start a project.



CAPRICORN: December 22 to January 20: Jupiter, the harbinger of good fortune, indicates expansion and progress. A year of power and poise. But health is clearly suspect.

Success is a question of the right attitude and timing and you will have both in 1984. Jupiter gives confidence, optimism, insight and right timing plus luck, chance and coincidence. Saturn and Mars indicates wish-fulfilment, gains and gaiety, promotion, marriage and alliance. There is a strong chance that widowers, divorcees, and confirmed bachelors will get married in 1984. There will be a certain ruthlessness and indifference in your dealings, which could be most upsetting to your dear ones. There are two reasons for it. It is, in a way, essential for success and secondly, the duo of Saturn-Mars impels you to behave in that manner. Therefore, try to be humane, at least try to appear so. There's the danger of being a workaholic.



AQUARIUS: January 21 to February 18: A chop and change on the work-front; secret deals and a rendezvous. Also, a tremendous burst of energy and endeavour to improve your prospects, whether you are in business or in simple employment, is in store for you in 1984. Success crowns your labour.

This year, Pluto and Neptune in your tenth and twelfth angles signify prestige, effort and power in your work areas. Also, mystery, magic, drugs and drinks, foreign tours and connections, astrology, the occult, secret knowledge, esoteric wisdom, intuition, ESP manifestation, introspection, an overhauling of goals.

Your tough months will be August, May, and perhaps November. Do anticipate opposition and plan accordingly. The fine months are January-February (though not without tension), March, April, June, September, October, December. 1984 is also the launch-pad to fame and fortune in 1985.



PISCES: February 19 to March 20: 1984 is a great year for you, indicating journeys, ceremonies, pilgrimages, publicity boosts, creativity, inspiration moves, research and knowledge. Also a year of promotions, prestige, power, ties, marriage, an official engagement, collaborations, gains and gaiety.

A resurgence of confidence and self-assurance is the legacy of Mars, which will be in your ninth angle from January 20 to August 18. Mars energises, activates, gives pep and push, helps you to step on the gas! It stokes the fires of your imagination. August 28 onwards, Pluto indicates growth, maturity and fulfilment. It should place you right at the top. 1984 is a year of opportunity for you.

It is a year when you will be in the centre of all activities and receive recognition and merit for all you do. Your timing at each opportunity will be impeccable.

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